

# blastingnews

Editorial Handbook

*Last update June 2020*

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## Welcome to the Blasting News Editorial Handbook

This document explains the editorial standards and practices of Blasting News. For other information, such as how to join, technical advice on using the platform or questions on payments please email us at [country]@blastingnews.com.

### 1. Mission and Values

#### **Blasting News is an innovative global publisher offering independent and accurate journalism.**

Blasting News gives voice to the voiceless, therefore bringing unbiased and plural perspectives to its engaged audience. Blasting News' firm belief is that accurate information can be reported only through openness and plurality.

Blasting News has an ambitious objective: to report trustworthy news created by an independent, open community of contributors, ranging from professional journalists to passionate writers, independently of one's opinion, angle and views. It is a democratic, but curated, news platform where everyone has a voice.

As a consequence, Blasting News' mission is:

- To give to its contributors an international, curated, and professional platform to let their voices be heard.
- To give to its readers from around the world an independent, authoritative, trustworthy, and unbiased international news platform where they can find a plurality of points of view in the same unique space.

#### **Blasting News is independent.**

Blasting News is free from any political, corporate or religious influences. Blasting News encourages different perspectives and views on the same or various subjects. Blasting News does not have a political or economic agenda. It stands for neutrality achieved through openness and plurality. Blasting News' purpose is to serve a general audience.

#### **Blasting News is open and democratic.**

Blasting News has an innovative newsroom based in London. The team is composed of journalists from around the world who act as a hub to educate the blasters on best practices and oversee the quality of the content published. We do not believe that a linear and traditional form of publishing can guarantee the quality of our features and do not apply any Editorial pressure on the blasters to write, or not write, about any news articles they wish to produce. We have developed the technology to promote and publish the most interesting and high-quality news from all over the globe.

## **Blasting News is meritocratic.**

Blasting News' compensation system rewards quality, measured in terms of the engaged readership each news article gets, and in terms of subscriber interest. This innovative system has allowed us to give to our contributors around €12.0M as cash compensation since the company set-up. The compensation scheme is fully disclosed. Our revenue comes from advertisements sold on article pages and, in the near future, from subscriptions.

## **Blasting News is authoritative and trustworthy.**

Blasting News makes a great effort to identify and promote the highest quality news. The quality of the news is guaranteed both by human curations and proprietary algorithms. Curation is done before the publishing of any news. The algorithms play a role both before the news is published and after publication (deciding which news articles to promote and which to keep live without promotion).

## **2. Ethics**

### **2a) Our ethical code**

Blasting News forbids any type of offensive content including racism, sexism, pornography, pedophilia, and exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, geography, religion or social status. Content that promotes alcohol, illegal drugs, solvent abuse and smoking is not permitted. Material advocating violence, outside straight news reporting, and all sexual content (including nudity) is also banned. This is strictly enforced – Blasters can be, and are, banned for breaking these rules.

We hold everyone involved in Blasting News to the highest ethical standards of best practice in the media, technology industries and other online platforms.

Blasting News and its founders are committed to creating an open platform allowing for multiple, and sometimes controversial, points of view. But our fundamental ethical values are based on accuracy, fairness, honesty, decency and independence.

It is against Blasting News guidelines to publish content that misleads, distorts, exaggerates or purposefully adds shock value. We have absolutely no tolerance for disinformation and “fake news,” in any and all its forms. (See more on this in Section 6: “Verification, fact checking and “fake news.”)

Inaccurate content – whether accidental or deliberate – is a threat to the reputation of Blasting News, its contributors and everyone involved with the platform. In a hyperconnected and high-speed modern world, false information makes society less informed and can be dangerous, on a global scale.

We will deal with corrections, deletions, notice-and-takedown requirements, conflicts of interest and any issues of changes in a clear manner based on these policies. Legal compliance may require the deletion of material, editing and the banning and/or restriction of users.

Therefore:

- Blasters must be as accurate as possible in their work.
- Blasters must produce original work with integrity – plagiarism and click baiting are bannable offenses.
- Blasters must be fair, impartial, responsible and accountable.
- Blasters must not offend or harm and must always remain compassionate and aware of the impact of their words and images on the lives of others.
- Blasters must be independent voices, avoiding any conflict of interest.

(See our “How-to,” and “Sourcing” sections for more detailed information on producing content that conforms with these values.)

*Further reading on ethics:*

- *The Society of Professional Journalists toolbox.*

## **2b) What you can and can't submit**

We want stories on all sorts of topics and issues, and with multiple viewpoints. Articles are ranked on the homepage and sorted into channels in an unbiased way, regardless of their political views or ideologies. So every Blaster is strongly encouraged to choose freely what they want to work on, as long as our guidelines are respected.

Content that **CAN** be submitted for publication:

- Any newsworthy content using the News, Opinions, Listics, Live Events templates. (See the “How-to” entries in this guide for further information.)
- Evergreen content, but only in the Curiosities section.
- Recipes, but only in the Food section.

Content you **CANNOT** submit for publication:

- Any publicly offensive content – see our ethics code above;
- Graphic adult content (including nudity and any sexual references);
- Graphic violent and weapon-related content for the sake of causing shock or distress;
- Any content that intimidates/humiliates/advocates against an individual, group or organization;
- Deliberately provocative or sensationalist content. Blasting News reserves the right to judge this on a case by case basis;

- Press releases;
- Content that promotes dishonest behavior (including hacking and cracking);
- Content created through illegitimate techniques (copying, skimming, translating or violating copyrights and trademarks).
- Sponsored content/advertising, without prior **written permission**.

Blasting News employees and contributors must follow these rules in all their work. Failure by Blasting News contributors to abide by these may result in suspension or exclusion.

## 2c) Ethics specifics

Everything submitted and published on Blasting News must follow the ethical criteria as outlined above, but here are some specific cases worth outlining further:

**Crime:** Reporting on crime requires extra sensitivity. Blasting News content must not be sensationalist or create fear and panic. All crime reporting must be editorially justified and proportionate to the events and/or wrongdoing they describe.

- Articles must not encourage or incite any type of crime or disorder. Do not include the detailed description of criminal acts or techniques. Blasting News reporting on crime must be balanced with the rights and privacy of victims, families and the accused.
- Be very careful in naming those involved in criminal proceedings. This could put Blasters and the platform as a whole in legal and ethical danger.
- Do not name victims of rape or sexual attack/molestation.
- Exercise extreme caution in naming persons suspected but not officially charged with a crime.
- When someone has been charged with a crime, exercise care and choose language to refer to the accused so as not to imply guilt or innocence.
- If interviewing witnesses to crime, be sure that you do not report anything that might interfere in the legal process.

If in doubt on any of this, consult Blasting News staff for guidance.

**Death, suicide and distress:** all coverage of death and distress must be editorially justified. While graphic descriptions and images are sometimes appropriate to convey the true reality of a situation, always remember to respect the dignity and privacy of victims and their families.

- Never use gratuitous images of people in pain or suffering. There are very few circumstances in which it is justified to show the moment of death.

If in doubt on any of this, consult Blasting News staff for guidance.

**Health:** all Blasting News rules on robust sourcing and attribution are of extra importance when dealing with health issues.

- Everything that is referenced in this area must be reliable and responsible – the wellbeing of readers and contributors is at stake.
- Blasting News staff and Reviewers are extremely vigilant on this topic.

**Horoscopes:** this area is the only place on Blasting News where predictions are allowed.

**Hypnotism, exorcism, the occult and the paranormal:** while Blasting News does not have specific policies on this, remember we do not publish sensationalist or provocative content. Everything must also be sourced properly, which might prove challenging in these areas.

If in doubt on any of this, consult Blasting News staff for guidance.

**Imitative and "copycat" behavior:** children may be influenced by what they read, hear or see. So be careful not to produce material that may lead to dangerous imitation. This can include: the use of violence using common objects; illegal or irresponsible acts and the proper use of safety equipment.

**Live events:** the reporting of live events, such as sports games and TV programs on Blasting News has specific rules. These cover objectivity, content and permissions. Please read section "4e) How-to: Live events" for further information.

**Strong language:** all strong language must be avoided, unless specifically authorised by a member of the Blasting News staff.

**War, conflict, terror and emergencies:** the realities of the situation should be acknowledged and covered, while maintaining the dignity of those involved and dealing with political sensitivities in often emotionally charged situations. Do not use derogatory language to describe the individuals involved and do not speculate on events.

### 3. Content

### 3a) Blasting News articles' categories

Blasting News produces several types of articles and each are clearly labeled with their specific categories. These are **News**, **Videos**, **Opinions**, **Listicles**, **Live Events** and **Curiosities**. If users have questions or want to discuss these categories they can use the feedback link on every article. The main difference between the types of articles relates to the extent to which the blaster expresses their views. In a news or video article, the blaster should remain exempt from adding their opinion. In an Opinion article, the blaster should clearly express their opinion and convince the reader why they are right using facts.

- [News](#) - News is new, it's true and it answers the 5W+1H rule (who, what, why, where, when and how).
- [Opinion](#) - An opinion is the blasters specific point of view on the topic being written about. The opinion piece should clearly state what the blasters opinion is, why they have that opinion, with arguments/facts to back it up, and should try and convince the reader why their opinion is valid or true.
- [Listicles](#) - They must follow the specific template created by Blasting News, the titles should include the number of elements listed (e.g. 20 number 1 hits from the 80's and 90's), the titles cannot include calls to action and they cannot be sensationalist and any superlatives used must be backed up by a source (e.g. 20 best films of the decade according to IMDB).
- [Live Events](#) - They are approved on a case-by-case basis and monitored in real-time by the Blasting News staff. The same rules apply as for a typical news article (length, titles, sub-titles, images, etc). Once the event has ended, the title must be updated to reflect the fact that the event is no longer "live" - we suggest the final title be a short summary of the main events that occurred (e.g. Manchester beats Liverpool 2-0 with a last-minute goal).
- [Links](#) - They must follow a series of specific rules and they must be internal.

## 4. "How-to guides"

### 4a) How-to: News

*Some of the following is adapted from an article written by journalist Pete Young and is used on a CC BY-SA 3.0 license.*

#### What is news?

News is what is happening now, in your society, that means something to you and others. And it, when written and distributed, should be verifiable, so links to sources which can stand up the facts described in a story are essential.

News is new – the more recent the better. Blasting News defines news as information about current events, which happened no more than three days ago, or will occur in the future. We do not allow discussions or updates on events that happened more than three days ago.

News is true. If it isn't true, it isn't news. News is not a rumor. Names make news. (*Trump says ... Pope Benedict orders ... Lady Gaga discloses ...*) News has verbs. News answers the question, "Why?" News happens someplace. News involves time (today, yesterday, tomorrow). News is perishable. Old news isn't as important as fresh news. News doesn't need adjectives and adverbs to tell the story.

The best news writing doesn't shout. It uses cool, objective, and neutral language.

There are many ways to write a story. These are not rules, but guidelines. Here is a good way to structure a straight news story:

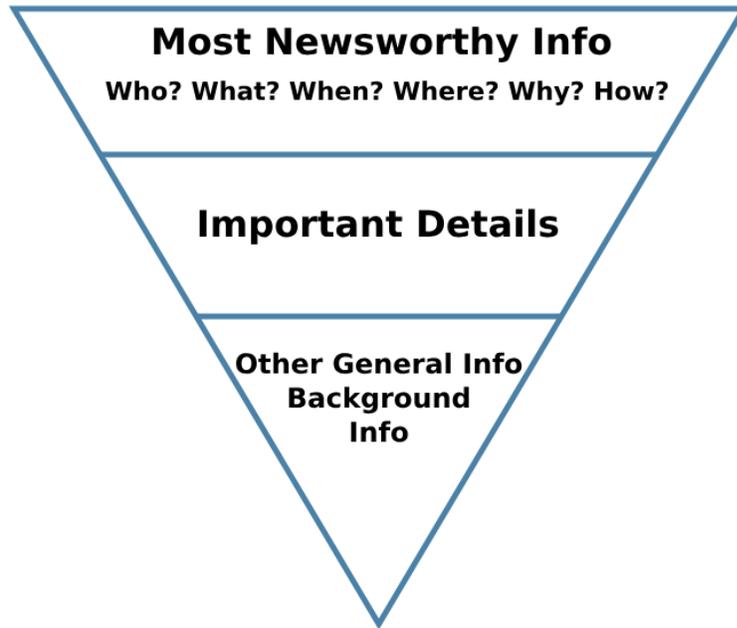
#### **TICK OFF THIS CHECKLIST:**

- **WHO** is this story about?
- **WHAT** is going on?
- **WHERE** did this take place?
- **WHEN** did this take place or when will it occur?
- **WHY** did this happen? Why should I (the reader) care? What difference does it make?
- **HOW?** Explain the process, the rationale, the events leading to what happened.

The basic information you need can be remembered in the shorthand formula "5Ws and an H." These are the fundamental questions every story needs to answer. It's also good for SEO. So make sure your news story answers all of these questions.

#### **The Inverted Pyramid:**

A good way of structuring information in a news report is often illustrated with the metaphor of an inverted pyramid. This is a method to get the basics of a story in the first sentences. The widest part at the top includes the most important information that you should include – this material should head the article. Then the narrower, lower, sections show the other details that should follow in order of diminishing importance.



Public domain image.

## **TOP TIPS FOR WRITING NEWS ARTICLES:**

### **WRITE THE HEADLINE FIRST**

- Writing the headline first helps you focus your thoughts and distill things to their essence. Pick the most important information for your headline. A headline is by definition short. A good rule of thumb is 60 characters. That means you must get to the point quickly. Headlines are always written in the present tense. If in doubt about how to start, ask yourself: “What’s the surprise?” (For more advice on headlines see the “Headlines and clickbaiting” section of this handbook.)

### **THE FIRST PARAGRAPH**

- The opening paragraph of a story is often called the lead (rhymes with need). It is a summary of the most important information. The lead should contain at least two of the 5Ws and H. It is often best to start with the subject first. A good lead is typically one sentence of 25 to 30 words.

### **THE SECOND PARAGRAPH**

- The second paragraph supports the lead by spelling out important details. More elements of the 5Ws that didn’t make it into the first paragraph often go here.

### **THE THIRD PARAGRAPH**

- A quote brings a story to life. Readers want to hear from someone directly involved. A good quote doesn't restate the lead. A quote can be a great way to answer the questions "How?" or "Why?" Be sure to include the context or circumstances of the quote ("said in a statement," said in an interview," said in a Twitter post").

### THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH

- The fourth paragraph of a story is called the "nut graph," or sometimes the "cosmic graf." A good nut graph puts the news in context. It explains the significance of the story, why the story matters, what impact it has, what's at stake, who's affected, whether this is a one-off event or part of something bigger.

### SHOW, DON'T TELL

- Showing information allows readers to make up their own minds. Facts, figures and examples provide proof. The secret to showing, versus telling, is to be specific.
  - So, not a generic statement: "Irma, one of the worst hurricanes ever recorded, bore down on Puerto Rico."
  - Rather a specific statement, backed by sources: "Irma, with the strongest winds of any Atlantic storm since 2005, bore down on Puerto Rico."

### SIZE AND SCOPE

- The biggest, the smallest, the first, the last: Try to incorporate a sense of scale. Be specific:
  - "the biggest annual increase since 2012"
  - "Costco, the biggest retailer in the US"
  - "the largest earthworm ever recorded in the U.K."
  - "the smallest increase in six months"

### DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ASSERTIONS AND FACTS

- A fact is indisputably true and can be proven in an objective, measurable way.
- An assertion is a statement of belief without evidence.

#### **Fact:**

- *The cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world.*
- *It is against the law to drive over the speed limit.*
- *Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in April of 1865 by John Wilkes Booth.*

#### **Assertion:**

- *America is the freest country on Earth.*
- *It's legal to drive over the speed limit as long as you are driving safely.*
- *Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in April of 1865 to keep slaves from getting the vote.*

- Both facts and assertions are different from opinion, which is a view, a judgment or an appraisal about a particular matter.

- Be skeptical. The difference between a fact and an assertion is verification, evidence and confirmation of truth.
- Upon hearing an assertion, the smart journalist will ask: "Says who?"

## QUOTATIONS

- Quotations are someone's exact words. Always. Use only the exact words within quotation marks.
- This rule is inviolable.
- What if someone uses bad grammar? You can use \*\*\*\* (i.e fuck you -> f\*\*\* you)
- What about adding a word to clarify the quotation? Use the quotation, then say what the speaker was referring to outside the quotes. "xxx,' said Jones, referring to the streetlight. Or: asked about the streetlight, Jones said, "xxx"
- If the quotation is really unclear, don't use it.

## REPORTING SUGGESTIONS

- The three most important things about journalism are accuracy, accuracy and accuracy.
- Credibility is the most important measure of your work. Trust, once lost, is hard to regain. The credibility of your writing reflects on everything and everyone associated with Blasting News.
- When you speak to someone, ask them to spell their names. Repeat it back. Did they say "b" or "d"? "S" or "f"? Better yet, ask if they have a card, or get them to print their names in your notebook.
- Take notes and record interviews. Take a picture of what you are reporting about. Photograph documents. Editors will ask for proof of any sources you cite.
- Verifying the facts is at the core of journalism.

**Warning:** the repetition of a keyword in an unnatural way ("keyword stuffing") will create an unprofessional article, with low readability, and which will be penalized by search engines' algorithms.

## MINIMIZING HARM

Blasting News holds itself to the highest ethical standards, so make sure your journalism always minimizes the potential harm it can produce.

The Society of Professional Journalists' code of ethics offers the following excellent advice:

*"Journalists should:*

- *Balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.*
- *Show compassion for those who may be affected by news coverage. Use heightened sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sex crimes, and sources or subjects who are inexperienced or unable to give consent. Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.*

- *Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.*
- *Realize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence or attention. Weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.*
- *Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.*
- *Balance a suspect's right to a fair trial with the public's right to know. Consider the implications of identifying criminal suspects before they face legal charges.*
- *Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach and permanence of publication. Provide updated and more complete information as appropriate."*

This advice is particularly important in breaking news situations, which leads us to...

#### **4b) How-to: Breaking News**

In this age of social media and instant global communications, misinformation during a breaking news event is particularly dangerous. If a false fact or situation is spread and then amplified across the world, it can put people in dangerous or even deadly situations. Unfortunately, whether it is deliberate or accidental, this happens much more often during breaking news. People are under pressure or panicky, want to know new information immediately and situations can be confusing or unclear.

This misinformation includes conspiracy theories, hoaxes and misinformation about the identity of people responsible for mass shootings to false images that appear on social media time and time again. This one, for example, appears after almost every hurricane:



**Jason Michael**

@Jeggit



Follow

Believe it or not, this is a shark on the freeway in Houston, Texas. [#HurricaneHarvy](#)

2:00 AM - Aug 28, 2017

6,497 77,884 124,972

During breaking news:

- Be **alert** and **check multiple sources**. (See the “Sources” section for more.)
- Be **skeptical**, if something “feels wrong” it probably is.
- Above all, **being right is always better than being first**.
- Some breaking news stories may not yet have much significance beyond the straight action of what is happening. Don’t strain for some significance that isn’t there yet.
- Your reputation, the integrity of Blasting News and even people’s lives might be at stake.

#### **4c) How-to: Opinions**

Blasting News welcomes a very wide range of articles for our opinion section. Submissions must, however, respect all Blasting News ethics, rules and editorial standards. Reviewers will reject content that expresses harassment, makes threatening statements against others, and/or can be considered offensive. Blasting News also does not accept opinions that support racism, sexism, pornography, pedophilia, and exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, geography, religion or social status.

There are many ways to write an opinion article, it's a much less defined art than writing straight news. But Blasting News staff and Reviewers are here to help, and here are some tips:

- Create a strong and clear message, stick to one interesting idea or argument and tell readers, early in the article, why they should care.
- Write using entertaining and energetic language – but don't rant, it could put people off.
- You're much more likely to convince people of your views with humor or careful argument.
- Timing is important. Tie the story to a news angle/event/happening if there is one. There should be, or at least a good answer to the question: Why are you writing this article now?
- Keep all sentences and paragraphs short and to the point.
- Don't use clichés, they add nothing to your writing. Find your own ways of expressing things.
- Use relevant information/facts/evidence to back up your argument AND anecdotes/stories/examples to make it more interesting, but don't use too many of either.
- Be very wary of using jargon and technical terms, if you can avoid them, do so, as it'll be much more accessible. Remember you're writing for the general reader.
- Be honest about possible holes in stories and disclose where the premise of an article may be flawed, unconvincing or overstated.
- So include any obvious points or the answers to questions that a reader might want to ask post-publication.
- Be even handed, ask yourself, if this story was about a family member, would you find it fair?
- If you're writing about a problem, propose ways to fix it.
- Conclude on a point that restates your key message.

#### **4d) How-to: Listicles**

Blasting News has a specific article template to help Blasters create content using the "listicle" format. Every listicle must also follow the general content rules applied to standard articles. Remember that sexually or violently explicit content is strictly forbidden, as well as content promoting drugs, weapons or illegal behavior.

Here are some specifics for listicles:

### **General Operational Rules**

A listicle must always use the standard template provided in the Blasting News platform. All listicles that are not published using the standard template will be automatically refused by the Reviewers.

### **The use of numbers in headlines to identify the elements is mandatory**

*Acceptable headline:* “10 well-dressed celebrities at the Grammys”

*Acceptable headline:* “The 10 meanest defenses of the season, according to NFL” (if backed up by a source, see superlatives section below)

*Acceptable headline:* “20 highly anticipated TV shows that are going to air this fall”

### **It is NOT acceptable to use a call to action or directly refer to the reader, in the headline or sub-headline**

A “call to action” refers to any attempt to draw attention to an article by blatantly asking readers to engage with the content.

#### **Example 1**

- *Unacceptable headline:* “Click to read about 10 well-dressed celebrities at the Grammys night”
- *Acceptable headline:* “10 well-dressed celebrities at the Grammys”

#### **Example 2:**

- *Unacceptable headline:* “25 rare pictures showing that celebrities are normal people, like us”
- *Acceptable headline:* “25 rare pictures showing that celebrities are normal people”

#### **Example 3:**

- *Unacceptable headline:* “See which Disney princess has the same star sign and personality as you”
- *Acceptable headline:* “Disney princesses’ star signs and personalities”

#### **Example 4:**

- *Unacceptable headline:* “11 famous people who had secret relationships that you did not know about”
- *Acceptable headline:* “11 famous people who had secret relationships”

### **It is NOT acceptable to use exaggeration in headlines and subheadlines**

An exaggerated headline or sub-headline refers to any attempt to draw attention to an article by using language that distorts, exaggerates, purposefully adds shock value or modifies the article’s reality.

#### **Example 1**

- *Unacceptable headline:* “The 10 most shocking outfits worn at the Grammys”
- *Acceptable headline:* “10 controversial outfits worn at the Grammys”

### Example 2

- *Unacceptable headline:* “The 10 most horrific car accidents ever caught on camera”
- *Acceptable headline:* “10 bad car accidents caught on camera”

### Example 3

- *Unacceptable headline:* “The 10 most scandalous celebrity betrayals that we still haven’t recovered from”
- *Acceptable headline:* “The 10 celebrity betrayals that recently hit Hollywood”

### **Superlatives are accepted in listicle headlines only if there is a reliable source or information backing them**

When using superlatives (best, worst, most, etc.), the source must be clearly stated either in the headline or subheadline. If listicles are based on personal opinions, superlatives in headlines are not allowed.

### Example 1

- *Unacceptable headline:* “The 10 most spectacular movies ever made”
- *If backed by a reliable source, acceptable headline:* “The 10 most spectacular movies ever made, according to IMDB”
- *If personal opinion, acceptable headline:* “10 spectacular Hollywood movies”

### Example 2

- *Unacceptable headline:* “The 10 most influential celebrities of the year”
- *If backed by a reliable source, acceptable headline:* “The 10 most influential celebrities of the year, according to Vogue”
- *If personal opinion, acceptable headline:* “10 influential celebrities of this year”

### **Titles must strictly adhere to the article content**

Don’t be deceptive! What is being promised in headlines and subheadlines must be reflected in the body of the article. Be meaningful in what you write: content with no adequate editorial value will be refused.

### Example 1

- *Headline:* “10 positive and inspirational quotes that are going to make it a better day”
- *Unacceptable body:* The body contains random and generic quotes that have nothing to do with positivity or do not have anywhere near enough strength to actually improve your day.

## 4e) How-to: Live events

### **Who can create Reporting Live articles?**

Authorized Blasters and Reviewers.

### **Which topics can you create 'Reporting Live' articles for?**

- Soccer matches (e.g.: Premier League, FLC, Champions League, Europa League) published in the SPORT category.
- Sporting Events (e.g.: Moto GP, Formula 1) published in the SPORT category.
- Live TV Shows (e.g.: X Factor, Oscars, BRITs, reality shows) published in the SHOWBIZ & TV category.

For other topics, BN Staff will evaluate individual cases based on the Blaster's request.

### **Basic rules:**

The Blaster must:

- Be an objective reporter (with no subjectivity).
- Guarantee reporting of the entire event/match for which he/she has requested authorization.
- Respect the guidelines given in this guide, otherwise risk being prohibited from doing live articles again, the removal of the article and non-payment of outstanding fees.
- You can create Reporting Live articles for more than one event and report on them simultaneously. We recommend that you do so.

### **Text length:**

The initial text should be at least 2,200 characters (spaces not included). We will give some examples of how to compose the first 2,000 characters of a football match below, which include lineups, tables, pre-match player and coach' statements.

### **Headline:**

The headline is chosen by the author. It must make clear that the information published is live and up-to-date reporting, and add other key information such as the TV station or website and date or time of the match. When reporting sporting events the title can be updated with partial results.

*Examples:*

Live TV / Man Utd – Chelsea: Sat, 1/12/18  
Live TV / Man Utd – Chelsea 0-1: Sky Sports 1

OR

Info streaming: Man Utd – Chelsea: BBC Sport, Wednesday, 19.45 GMT  
Info streaming: Man Utd – Chelsea 0-1: BBC Sport, 1/12/18

**Subtitle:**

We recommend that you also include the event title in the subtitle, preferably in the beginning, in order to make the article easier to read.

*Example:*

Man Utd – Chelsea live on Blasting News

**Text:**

It is good to share a description of the event, with some interesting/trivia topics at the beginning of the article. Here is an example from *The Telegraph* newspaper for a soccer match report introduction:

*OFFICIAL LINEUPS*

*Liverpool: Mignolet, Can, Skrtel, Lovren, Johnson, Markovic, Henderson, Lallana, Coutinho, Sterling, Sturridge. Subs: Ward, Toure, Lambert, Moreno, Sakho, Balotelli, Williams.*

*Blackburn: Eastwood, Henley, Baptiste, Kilgallon (c), Olsson, Marshall, Evans, Williamson, Conway, Cairney, Gestede. Subs: Steele, Spurr, Brown, Rhodes, Taylor, Henry, Lenihan.*

*15:55 CAN LIVERPOOL REMAIN UNBEATEN? Blackburn has already knocked out two top-flight sides in Swansea and Stoke but might find it tough to make it a hat-trick on Merseyside. Liverpool is in imperious form: the club is unbeaten in the Premier League in 2015 and has not lost at home in all competitions since early November. However the last times the sides met in the FA Cup at Anfield, in Jan 2000, Nathan Blake scored to secure Rovers a 1-0 victory.*

- The updates must always be inserted at the top of the article, so that the reader sees the reports as “from newest to oldest.”
- Each line must start with a time reference (like the minute of the match, for soccer, the lap number for a MotoGP race, etc.).
- When reporting on football matches it is good practice to repeat the name of the teams, but try not to overdo it, in order to avoid keyword stuffing (see below).

- When reporting on sports events, it is also good practice to repeat the event's name/title in the text, but once again do not over use it.

The text must be light, it should flow naturally and be easy to read. If Blasting News Staff reviews an article with unprofessional text and an unnatural use of keywords, the article will be removed, the Blaster will be downgraded and compensation will not be provided.

To improve readership by those readers who would like to move quickly within the text, it is important to divide the text into multiple sections, by inserting subtitles once again referring to the event's name.

*Examples:*

Arsenal – Liverpool: First half report live  
Arsenal – Liverpool: Second half report live

Nadal – Federer: First set report  
Nadal – Federer: Second set report

### **Images:**

It is mandatory to insert at least one main image related to the event. As a rule, you must always use images/videos that are published with “CC-BY” distribution license, always crediting the author. **If the image/video is not “CC-BY” you cannot use it.**

To find images and videos use the following:

- Flickr. Use the filter “Only Creative Commons.” You can only use “CC-BY” media. (NOTE: on Flickr, you must use “Only Creative Commons – commercial use” as a research filter.)
- YouTube. The same rules apply. Only “CC BY” videos. You can filter them on the search results.
- Pixabay. All the images are Creative Commons. You may use any image from Pixabay.
- Wikimedia Commons.

You may not use images from Instagram and Pinterest. It is allowed to embed posts.

*[The above websites and guidelines are provided to Blasters by way of example and for information purposes only. Blasting News shall not be liable for any use of such websites and/or images sourced from such websites. The guidelines are based on the terms and conditions published on the websites as of 02/18/2015 (the “Terms of the Third Parties’ Websites”). It is essential that the Blasters consider that the Terms of the Third Parties’ Websites may be modified, amended and/or completed by their respective websites with no prior notice and that, in any case, the guidelines include an excerpt of such Terms of the Third Parties’ Websites, which does not guarantee completeness or accuracy of their content. Blasting News urges Blasters to check, periodically and before any use, for any changes of the Terms of the Third Parties’ Websites. Blasting News shall not be liable for any use of inappropriate images downloaded from these websites in violation of any contractual terms or any laws, including laws regarding copyright. The liability for the use of the websites and of images sourced from them shall always and exclusively stay with the individual Blaster that selects and makes use of such websites and images.]*

All the images must be high-resolution, with at least 120 dpi.

The images must be horizontal, and sized 660x360 pixels.

To obtain the best results possible we advise you to choose bigger images (120 dpi, 1280x720px) and then resize them.

The image name and the image filename must correspond to the title of the event.

### **Visibility:**

You must set the visibility end date, considering the time of the event + 24 hours (e.g. If the football match ends at 19:00 of 08.03.2018, the visibility should end at 19:00 of 09.03.2018).

Once the event is over, you must change the report's title so that it no longer says that it is reporting live and add mention of the final results.

*Example:*

Arsenal vs Liverpool: live report and final results

### **How to tag Reporting Live:**

The article must have the tag #Live.

### **How to apply for Live Reporting coverage:**

Reviewers and authorized Blasters do not require any special permission.

Blasters must request authorization from Blasting News staff. To do so they must send an email to [country]@blastingnews.com at least 48 hours in advance, naming the event they want to cover, the date and time (beginning and finish).

If the request is accepted, the Blaster will be notified and must guarantee the coverage of the complete event for which he/she applied.

The authorized Blaster must NOT publish anything other than what he/she applied for, risking the suspension of his/her account and losing all pending fees.

If a Blaster applies for the authorization of live coverage and then does not cover the event, or covers only part, or does not follow the rules stated in this document they will lose the right to get live coverage authorization ever again and will not be paid for the article.

## **4f) How-to: Product reviews**

When writing reviews of a product or service, Blasters must remember that the primary objective of the article is to inform readers, not to promote an item or persuade people to buy it.

So:

- The description of the product/service/event has to be objective (possibly presenting pros and cons).
- The best way to avoid writing an advertorial is to offer alternatives and personal evaluation to the readers.
- Comparative reviews are very functional and can contain a higher added value.

#### 4g) How-to: Link

It is mandatory to insert at least one internal link (such as hyperlinks to other Blasting News articles, including match previews, statements, other reports).

Internal links must be inserted following this criteria:

- The links must NEVER be inserted in their extended form, instead they must be inserted inside an anchor text and include the Title (Alt) of that link. This link must appear natural to the reader so that reading the article is not affected.
- The anchor text should never be a single word. It must always be at least 3-4 words.
- The title of the linked article must contain the same keyword used in the anchor text.

*Examples:*

“How Palmeiras reached 11 million pounds in sponsorship” (read here <http://uk.blastingnews.com/sport/2015/03/how-palmeiras-reached-11-million-pounds-in-sponsorship-00294305.html>) – NO because the link must not be visible in the article.

“[How Palmeiras reached 11 million pounds in sponsorship](#)” – YES, this is a natural anchor for the link.

“How [Palmeiras](#) reached 11 million pounds in sponsorship” – NO, this is not a natural anchor for the link. By linking to only one word, it is unclear where the link will take you.

**You are NOT allowed to insert external links.**

#### 4h) How-to: SEO

**SEO** stands for Search Engine Optimization and it's the art of making your content appear at the top of the result pages of a web search engine. Google is the most used search engine in the world.

The higher your article is on a search engine result page, the more readers you will get, the more money you will make. So, how do you climb up the result page rankings? There is no magic formula, but the following tips will help you create more engaging and attractive articles.

Remember: you can always find a summary of these suggestions on the right side of the writing platform (the "SEO Golden Rules").

- **Put your readers first**

Become an expert on a specific category by focusing on a few topics within that category and gain a high reputation, by writing insightful, unique, and original stories.

Choose what you love the most and write everyday about it.

**For example**

If you are passionate about the NBA and the LA Lakers... Write frequently about them. Search engines will recognize your expertise and authority and they will increasingly propose your content to readers that love them.

**Searching for inspiration?**

Check out the Hot Trends Tool on the Dashboard of the Blasting News Writing Platform. It will give you plenty of suggestions, which are updated every 20 minutes!

- **Choose the Main Keyword for each of your articles.**

After you've chosen the topic you wish to write about, you should decide what is the Main Keyword of your article.

It is especially important to make sure you have a clear and specific keyword focus to offer to your readers and to search engines.

The Main Keyword highlights the key focus of your article and it can be made up of one or more words. We suggest using between one to three words.

Not sure which keyword to pick? Follow these tips:

- Go to the Google homepage
- Write on the Google search bar the generic topic of your article (for example: NBA).
- While you are typing Google will suggest you some more specific keywords (that you can also find at the end of the result page, if you choose to run the full search).

- Pick one of these keywords suggested by Google for your Main Keyword - Google suggested keywords are the hottest keywords to use as they represent the keywords that people are searching for!

**For Example:**

You decide to write an article about yesterday's NBA game. You now need to decide what is your Main Keyword: it could be "NBA results"; or "NBA yesterday scores"; or "Cleveland vs. Golden Gate".

Don't be too broad or too niche, when choosing your keywords. Simply choosing "NBA" wouldn't be suggestive enough, while on other hand "NBA results in Alaska" might be too narrow. Your gut feeling mixed with some Google suggestions, as explained before, can give you the right balance.

- **Start the title of your article with the Main Keyword**

Everyone's reading their news on mobile devices these days, and have no time to waste, so you want to create titles that grab their attention. The best way to do it, is placing your Main Keyword at the beginning of your title.

Make sure that your title is informative and relevant to the content. Don't go for tricky headlines, as they are counter productive: Search engines will punish you if the readers land on your article and don't read any of it.

**For example:**

If your Main Keyword is "NBA trade rumors". A good Title would be: "NBA trade rumors: DeMarcus Cousins and John Wall are going to the Celtics". On the other hand, if your Main Keyword is "DeMarcus Cousins"... A good Title would be "DeMarcus Cousins is on his way to Celtics, NBA trade rumors say".

- **Include sub-headings in your articles.**

Each sub-headline should be short and descriptive, and start - or include - the Main Keyword of the article.

Readers won't give you a second chance: as soon as they land on your article, they will quickly scroll to it before reading it to check if there is anything they really care about.

To make sure you grab their attention, it's good to create between two and four subheadings per article. Try following the 4th golden rule you find in the writing platform, which explains the perfect article structure.

Here are some numbers to keep in mind:

- The intro paragraph should be at least 500 characters long.

- Every other paragraph should be at least 750 characters long.
  - It is beneficial not to repeat the Main Keyword more than 6 to 8 times total.
  - However, there isn't a magic number... so repeat the main keyword and its variants in the subheadlines and in the body of your article as many times as you feel it's needed by your readers.
- **Place the best internal links inside your article.**  
Placing a link to other related articles published on Blasting News is one of the most important ways to create value for your readers, and search engines extensively appreciate it.

Place at least two links inside your article making sure to point to other related articles published on Blasting News, so that your readers will get more information about the topic; and to carefully choose the anchor text of your links, keeping it informative and, if possible, include the Main Keyword of your article in the link.

We understand that the research of related articles and the assessment of the best anchor text may take some time, but both the readers and search engines will give a premium because of it.

These are some of the most important tips we have found so far to make your readers, and search engines, more likely to like your articles.

Remember: it will take some time to get readers and search engines to notice you. Keep at it and don't give up if you don't see results at the very beginning.

## 5. Sources

### 5a) The importance of sourcing

Everything that is published on Blasting News must use the very best sources and attribution available. Every article must contain at least two sources, but generally the more that are included the better (within reason).

Our rules on sourcing are designed not to make life difficult for Blasters.

But we need proper sourcing to make sure everything is accurate and legitimate, tackling the problem of "fake news" rather than adding to it. This is vital to the reputation of Blasting News and everyone associated with the platform.

Sources must always be trustworthy: the reliability of your source is fundamental to the article. If something looks too good to be true, use a search-engine and check if other sources can verify the information.

In order to avoid bad sourcing, misleading content and false news, Blasting news forbids using sources that were funded disseminating false and unreliable news by international fact-checking orgs, including The Poynter Institute, NewsGuard, and Snopes among the others.

## 5b) What sourcing?

Primary, original and official sources are best. This includes official documents, government websites or publishers' press releases. These should always be sought out and used before sourcing to other media organizations.

If original sources are not available, attribute to secondary sourcing another respected media organization. Blasting News is not a member of the [The Trust Project](#) -- "an international consortium [...] with the goal of building a more trustworthy and trusted press" -- but has requested to be part of it; The Trust Project has not conducted an audit yet.

The Trust Project launched in 2017, is hosted by Santa Clara University's Markkula Center and it partners with Facebook, Google, Bing and Twitter. Its media members include the BBC, CBC News, Corriere della Sera, DPA, the Economist, El Pais, Il Sole 24, Kathimerini, La Repubblica, La Stampa, Mic, Sky News, the Toronto Star, Trinity Mirror and the Washington Post. These are recommended organizations for sourcing.

Following the suggestions given by The Trust Project, Blasting News will provide, when appropriate, three different classes of insight information:

- **Internal Original Materials:** Provide titles and links to internal documents gathered by the newsroom, such as transcripts of interviews, documents collected under transparency laws or leaked, and datasets that were collected and analyzed.
- **External Original Materials:** For public documents from governmental institutions, agencies, companies and private entities, and to the public bio pages of key persons interviewed, e.g. on Wikipedia or their own home pages provide titles and links to external materials and sources used. Scientific or other journal articles also fall under this category.
- **Secondary News Sources:** For secondary sources such as ethnic media, local media, or other news reports provide titles that were the basis for the piece. Trade journal articles also fall under this category.

## 5c) How to source

If you can use primary sources (e.g. official data, documents, information, interviews, press releases, Instagram or Facebook profiles, corporate sites, blogs), add URLs to all the relevant material. You can also email Blasting News staff attaching any relevant document or proof of interview.

If you are one of the sources, add a clearly described note on how you built up and fact-checked the news, including disclosure on your sources, e.g. who you interviewed, consulted documents, which checks you did.

With interviews:

- Link to a biography (or LinkedIn page) of the person interviewed when quoting an interview.
- Provide credentials and context of an interview source next to the quote.

Quotations must be marked, attributed clearly and written in exactly the same way as how they appeared in the original source. Do not ever change their meaning and write them with quotation marks (“ ”).

### **Unnamed sources policy:**

Under Blasting News’ policies and guidelines, material from anonymous sources may be used only if:

1. The material is information, and not opinion or speculation, and is vital to the news report.
2. The information is not available except under the conditions of anonymity imposed by the source.
3. The source is reliable, and in a position to have accurate information.

Blasting News strictly follows two statements contained in the SPJ Code of Ethics on anonymous sources:

Identify sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on sources' reliability.

A journalist’s most important professional possession is credibility. If news consumers don’t have faith that the stories they are reading or watching are accurate and fair, or if they suspect information attributed to an anonymous source has been fabricated, then the journalists effectively lose all of their credibility. To protect their credibility and the credibility of their stories, Blasters must use every possible avenue to confirm and attribute information before relying on unnamed sources.

If the only way to publish a story is to use anonymous sources, the writer owes it to the readers to identify the source as clearly as possible without exposing the identity of the individual who has been granted anonymity.

Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

Blasters can not take information from anonymous sources without the approval of a Blasting News central employee. We use information from anonymous sources to tell important stories that would otherwise go unreported.

The decision to use an anonymous source is not a decision made solely by the Blaster. To use an anonymous source, the Blaster must have the written consent of a Blasting News central employee.

A Blasting News central employee will grant permission if the source is considered to be credible and reliable, and if there is substantial journalistic justification for using the source's information without attribution. This requires deciding whether it is editorially justifiable to let the source speak anonymously, and having confidence that the source is in fact the same one mentioned in the content and is justified as reliable to speak on the information in question.

Blasting News should never be in the position of having to verify these factors after a story has been broadcasted or published.

## 6. Verification, fact checking and "fake news" (summary)

**"Fake News"** - news articles published that contain false or misleading information is against the core of Blasting News. Below a list of the different types of fake news:

1. satire or parody ("no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool")
2. false connection ("when headlines, visuals or captions don't support the content")
3. misleading content ("misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual")
4. false context ("when genuine content is shared with false contextual information")
5. impostor content ("when genuine sources are impersonated" with false, made-up sources)
6. manipulated content ("when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive", as with a "doctored" photo)
7. fabricated content ("new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm")

Blasters who post fake news will be expelled from the platform and any accrued earnings will be null & void.

**Fact-checking** - this is a crucial task that should be carried out by everyone involved with the process of publishing content through Blasting News (blasters, reviewers and Blasting News

staff). Take a critical point of view and use your instinct to query anything that looks too good to be true. Check other reputable sources and do your research. Poorly fact-checked news leads to poor-quality content which misinforms our readers. **For further details, please [click here](#).**

## 7. Editorial rules and style

### 7a) Headlines and clickbaiting

Blasting News takes clickbaiting very seriously, as it is offensive to our users and damages the platform's reputation.

The term "clickbait" is defined by Merriam-Webster as: "something (such as a headline) designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest."

A clickbait headline or sub-headline is a violation of Blasting News policies and will lead to the rejection of the submission and potential suspension and/or exclusion of the Blaster.

#### **Blasters and Reviewers must commit to the following rules:**

##### **1. Never use fake headlines and subheadlines**

If an article contains just one fake or misleading headline or sub-headline, Blasting News considers the entire submission as an attempt at clickbaiting, regardless of the validity of the story's overall content.

##### **2. Make sure that the headline gives all the key information**

A well-drafted headline should definitely encourage readers to click on the story, so it shouldn't be boring. But the main purpose of a Blasting News heading is to inform the reader about key aspects of the article, they must understand the most important information before even clicking on it.

It is forbidden to retain details to drive a click, so the headline must fully answer the question: "What is the key information in this article?" The headline must always provide answers, they must NOT generate questions. The sub-headline is a complement to the headline and must deliver more details about the information contained in the text.

##### **3. Use important keywords in the headline**

The best headlines include the article's keyword(s). Including keywords is beneficial for two reasons: it helps readers gain more value from the Blasting News platform and it helps Blastors by potentially increasing their article's SEO ranking.

##### **4. Never use "calls to action" in the headlines or sub-headlines**

It is forbidden to use a “call to action” in the headline or sub-headlines. This refers to any attempt to draw attention to the article by blatantly asking readers to engage with it (e.g. “Click here to read this article” or “Read this article to learn about the economy”).

## **5. Clearly state the intention of the content**

### *Videos*

If an article contains video content (e.g. embedded from YouTube), it is acceptable to include the word “Video” or similar, provided that the Blaster includes additional information about the content.

### *Rumors*

If the article is about a rumor (e.g. any unverified or unofficial information) the headline must include:

- A conditional verb or expression (e.g. “could be,” “might,” “may” instead of “is”).
- The word “Rumor” clearly and prominently stated in the headline.

### *Spoilers*

If an article contains spoilers, the headline must clearly state this by containing the word “Spoiler.”

## **6. Be cautious in using questions in headlines or sub-headlines (this usually leads to clickbaiting)**

Blasters must not use a question as an article’s headline when the answer is already known and then explained in the article.

It is acceptable to use a question as a part of an article’s headline when the question itself is genuine and the answer is not known yet. There must be an attempt to answer the question in the article.

A headline must not end with a question mark.

## **7. Be cautious with rumors and spoilers in headlines (usually this leads to clickbaiting)**

If the source of the rumor is a direct source, it is a best practice, whenever possible, to add this to the headline. However, if the source of the rumor is a secondary source (i.e. another publication), it is a best practice to add the source in the sub-headline and not the headline.

## **8. Give the proper context for events tied to a location or a city**

If the article is related to a specific location/city, always add this at the start of the headline.

## **9. Don't use dates in headlines, unless it is vital to do so**

Generally speaking, it is unacceptable to use dates in headlines (although very few exceptions may exist, including TV series reviews and spoilers). The news should be related to the day (or recent days) when it is published.

## **10. Never use sensationalist or alarming words in the heading or sub-headline**

It is forbidden to use language that distorts, exaggerates or modifies the reality of the article in a headline. Words that are deliberately meant to add shock value are also banned. Including such language in a headline is likely to mean that a Blasting News Senior will reject the entire article.

## **11. Headlines for special topics**

### *Health topics*

You must always cite related scientific studies in the headline or sub-headline.

### *Horoscopes*

Headlines on articles about horoscopes are more informative when they contain the word "Horoscope" and the date. It is not compulsory to add extra information (but it is allowed if the Blaster wants to). However, if the horoscope article is about a subset of zodiac signs, the headline must state that, and make clear that the horoscope is not complete.

### *Info streaming / info about live TV*

Tell the reader if you are giving information about streaming by including that information clearly in the headline. Make sure to explicitly state where and when the event will be streaming. It is unacceptable to promote information about streaming in the headline, unless "Info Streaming" is clearly and prominently stated at the start of the headline. This kind of content is acceptable only when it gives proper and useful information about the actual streaming of an event.

It is mandatory to include in the headline when (the explicit date) and where (the TV station) the event will be live. Whenever possible, also add the explicit time (e.g. at 8.30pm). If there is not enough space in the headline, put the time in the sub-headline.

## **7b) Style guide**

Blasting News aims to guarantee high-quality content for its readers and users. Editorial submissions must be written in fluent and correct U.S. English, in terms of style, grammar, syntax and punctuation.

Please avoid typos and language errors. We suggest you use spell checkers to catch mistakes (these are available [online](#), as well as in Word and most word processing programs). If a submitted article has multiple and severe errors it may be refused.

Blasting News employs American spelling and style (labor not labour, center not centre, apologize not apologise, etc.)

For items not covered in the separate style manual please consult the AP Stylebook [found here](#) and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary [found here](#) for all spellings.

## **Style Manual (separate document)**

### Acronyms

- Spell out acronyms in full on the first reference – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – then use only the acronym (CDC) thereafter.
- Use an abbreviated form without explanation only if there is no chance of any misunderstanding (e.g. UN, Nato, IRA, BBC).
- Where you would normally say the abbreviation as a string of letters – an initialism – use all capitals with no periods/full stops or spaces (e.g. FA, UNHCR, NUT). However, use lower case with an initial capital letter for acronyms where you would normally pronounce the set of letters as a word (e.g. Aids, Apec, Eta, Farc, Fifa, Nafta, Nasa, Opec).
- For names with initials, we avoid periods and spaces (i.e. JK Rowling and WH Smith). When abbreviating a phrase, rather than a name or title, use lower case (i.e. lbw, mph).

### ***Ages***

Use figures, rather than spelling out for all ages: the 7-year-old boy...

Hyphenate when using as an adjective.

- Example: The 180-year-old church was demolished.
- Example: The demolished church was 180 years old.

### ***Capital***

### ***letters***

Do not write entire words in CAPITAL letters. Blasting News generally uses sentence case capitalization, so capitalize the first word of every sentence, title and any subtitle. Our style is to minimize the use of capital letters generally. A few hints:

- Days of the week (e.g. Monday, Tuesday) and months of the year (e.g. January, February) have initial capital letters.
- Quotations start with a capital letter. Example: Ronaldo said: “My team is the best.”
- Currencies, such as dollars and euros, do not take capital letters (e.g. 2,000 euros).
- Job titles are capitalized only when the title precedes the name. Examples: “Home Secretary Harold Thomas said...” and “US President James Tucker traveled to...” but

“Harold Thomas, who has been home secretary since May...” and “James Tucker was the first US president to attend the ceremony since Bill Clinton.”

- Governments are not capped up. Example: The Italian government has resigned.
- For place names: use upper case for recognized regions and political/geographical areas (e.g. the Middle East, Western Europe). Otherwise, lower case (south-west France, east Lancashire, south London).

### **Commas**

When appropriately used, commas can eliminate ambiguity and make blocks of text more digestible – this is especially important when you are converting the spoken word into copy.

However, they can also create unnecessary clutter and may often be avoided, such as by not including a definite article with a title. Examples: “Foreign Secretary Erica Simmons protested” rather than “The Foreign Secretary, Erica Simmons, protested...”

### **Dashes**

Hyphen: -

En dash: –

Hyphens are used to join words to aid understanding. Example: The slow-moving truck held up traffic.

En dashes are meant to indicate ranges,  
Example: August 6–September 29, or 30–45 people.

En dashes are also used with a space on either side to inject a separate clause or thought mid-sentence — like this – or attach a related clause at the end of a sentence – this would be a second example.

Example: The Scottish writer and historian Sir Walter Scott – who wrote the novels *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy* – coined the term “freelance.”

Blasting News does not use longer en dashes (—).

### **Dates**

Use US style: November 15, May 11.

Never use shortened formats (15/11 or 11/5), unless there is a clear reason to do so (e.g. 9/11) or in Horoscopes.

### **Decades**

Example: 1990s

INCORRECT: 1990’s or The ‘90s

### **Headlines**

Capitalize the first word in a headline and proper nouns. Leave all other words lower-case.  
Example: UK's beleaguered prime minister meets Chinese president

The abbreviation for United States in a headline only is US (with no periods). The abbreviation for United States in all other text is U.S. (with periods). UK is always UK. Never U.K.

Do not use periods and semicolons anywhere in headlines. Use them in sub-headlines whenever appropriate. Always close the sub-headline with a period.

In headlines where the attribution is clear, do not include unnecessary quote marks. For example: "Britain won't hold referendum, says PM" rather than "Britain 'won't hold referendum', says PM"

### **Highlighting**

Use the bold feature to highlight words, but don't highlight more than 2-3 words per paragraph.

### **Money**

\$ indicates U.S. dollars.

Example: The company lost \$200,000.

INCORRECT: The company lost US\$200,000.

Indicate dollar currencies of other countries with a standard abbreviation.

Example: The company lost NZ\$200,000.

Euros, pounds, yuan, yen and other currencies are acceptable as either symbols or spelled. Never capitalize currencies when written out.

Example: £1

Example: 1 British pound

### **"News"**

Avoid adding the word "News" or "Latest News," unless it is vital. Avoid including it in headlines, sub-headlines and articles such as: "Today's latest news is ..."

Blasting News is a news platform, it is implied you are writing the latest news on a certain topic.

### **Numbers**

In general, spell out numbers one through nine. Use figures for 10 and above, in horoscope articles (Horoscope 3 of June 2018), ages, dates, and when referring to a unit of currency (\$3). Use figures in all tables, graphs and statistical forms.

With figures of four or more digits, use commas. Count three spaces to the left to place the first comma. Continue placing commas after every three digits.

### **Quotations**

Quotations in articles must be brief and marked with quotation marks.

Blasting News follows U.S. journalistic style on quotations, with the quote first followed by the person who said it. In almost all cases, end punctuation is included inside quotation marks.

Correct construction: “Raccoons are a real problem for mail carriers,” said Melanie Taylor, a spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service. “Each year, hundreds of postal employees are attacked by raccoons.”

Incorrect construction: (in both order and punctuation): “Raccoons are a real problem for mail carriers”, said Melanie Taylor, a spokesperson for the U.S. Postal Service. “Each year, hundreds of postal employees are attacked by raccoons”.

Use “said” or “says,” after quotations depending on the situation. “Said” typically for news stories; “says” typically for lighter topics. You can mix these up on occasion with “explained” or “stated” or similar terms, but be sparing. If in doubt, said/says is always best.

### **Quotation**

### **marks**

Quotation marks should be single in headlines and cross-headings. Example: American 'missionary' killed by isolated tribe

In all other text, use double-quotation marks. Use only high quotation marks “”, not low ones «».

Quotation marks should only be used to report direct quotes. No quotation marks are required for film, TV or song titles. Use capital letters in title case (capitalize the first letter of each word, except for certain small words, such as articles and short prepositions) to indicate that it is a title. For example: Madonna's early chart-toppers include Into the Groove and La Isla Bonita.

### **Serial comma (Oxford comma)**

Blasting News does not use serial (Oxford) commas. In a list of three or more, do not use a comma before the final conjunction.

Example: New tariffs were imposed on jeans, microchips and whiskey.

INCORRECT: New tariffs were imposed on jeans, microchips, and whiskey.

### **Spacing**

Words must be separated with one space only, not two.

## 7c) Writing tips

Use plain, simple language, short words and brief sentences.

As George Orwell famously wrote in Politics and the English Language:

- (i) Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.*
- (ii) Never use a long word where a short one will do.*
- (iii) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.*
- (iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.*
- (v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.*
- (vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.”*

Use active voice. In active voice, the subject performs the action stated by the verb. In passive voice sentences, the subject is acted upon by the verb.

*The raccoon bit the postal worker. (active)*

*The postal worker was bitten by the raccoon. (passive)*

Use terms ordinary people can understand. Use real-life examples where possible:

- An acre is hard to visualize if you're not a farmer. One acre contains 4,840 square yards and is about the same size as one football (soccer) pitch or 16 tennis courts.
- 1,000 feet high is about as tall as the Eiffel Tower

Use the full name of every person or organization the first time they're mentioned in the story. Use last names on the second reference.

Capitalize titles before a name, but don't capitalize after a name:

- US President Donald Trump
- Donald Trump, the US president

Don't use Mr, Mrs, Ms, Sir, Madam, etc. except in a quotation.

## 8. Approval process

Blasting News ensures the quality, accuracy and legality of its content through a careful and curated process.

Blasters submit stories as a “proposal for publication.” As soon as the submission is received, Blasting News adopts several layers of control to verify and check the article:

Step 1 - Automatic limitations and anti-plagiarism tools.

Step 2 - First-level control conducted by the Reviewers.

Step 3 - Second-level control conducted by the Blasting News internal editorial team.

After this, if the article meets our policies and standards, the content will be published.

Once the article is live it will also subject to the following monitoring:

Step 4 - Control made by algorithms.

Step 5 - Continuous control conducted by Blasting News editorial team.

Step 6 - Checks made by the readers.

See [more details on this process here](#).

## 9. Corrections policy

Blasting News holds itself to the same levels of transparency and accuracy as we require from our users. So when mistakes – however big or small – are made, we will correct them promptly, honestly and publicly.

Once an error is brought to our attention, Blasting News will immediately work to provide accurate information, note the severity of the mistake and clearly display the corrections within the article. These corrections will include:

1. The correct information.
2. What was incorrect in the originally published article.
3. The date (and time, if available) when the change was made.

The process of reporting errors on the platform is made easy and accessible with an email address and contact form at the start of each article.

If errors cannot be amended within the text, the corrections will be displayed clearly after the article's final paragraph.

For full transparency, we will provide clarification and admission of mistakes on Blasting News rather than completely removing inaccurate content.

## 10. Sharing on social media

Sharing news, content and stories on social media networks is a vital tool in making our voices heard and fulfilling the mission and purpose of Blasting News. However, any kind of spamming is strictly against our rules and ethos.

When joining Blasting News, every Blaster agrees to uphold the policies of every social network they engage with. They must also strictly follow this set of rules created by Blasting News.

Our condensed sharing policies:

1. You cannot share any Blasting News' article out of context – this is spam.
2. You cannot write clickbait titles (e.g. presenting false or misleading information in the headline).
3. You can only use real social media accounts, you cannot use accounts that do not represent your true identity.
4. You cannot share nudity or pornographic content.
5. You cannot offer money or prize incentives to make people click on your articles.
6. You cannot create or share from a fan page pretending to be a celebrity or a TV show (though you can create and/or share from these pages if clearly marking them as unofficial fan pages).
7. You cannot discriminate against a section of society, use racist language or promote violence.
8. You cannot use someone else's intellectual property, logos or trademarks.

**[Find Blasting News extended sharing policies here.](#)**

### **After publishing: promotion on social media**

All content published on the Blasting News websites will be indexed by search engines. The quality of the SEO and the popularity of the published articles will determine the search engines' speed and efficiency. To increase the popularity of the article you can:

- Share the article on your Facebook personal profile, through the “Recommend” button.
- Share the article on other social networks.
- Promote the articles on your personal blog or website.

Do not try to get “ghost” readers. Any behavior used to get more readers in a non--organic way will be punished with immediate suspension from the platform.

So Blasters are forbidden from using the following tools, and any similar services:

- Addmefast
- Ad.fly
- Hitleap.com

Blasting News takes a stand against all and any behavior that can be considered as spam. We are particularly reluctant to use directories and aggregators because they can be used to spam others.

**Use the Facebook Group.** The Blasting News US private Facebook group is an excellent place to get advice from other Blasters, Reviewers and Blasting News staff on how to share your articles. Once you have registered on Blasting News, please send a request to join the group.

### **Blasting News guidelines regarding Facebook use**

You have a contractual obligation to comply with Blasting News policies according to articles 8 and 10 of the Blasting News contract.

*Article 8: "Strict anti--fraud rules to counter misconduct aiming to unnaturally increase the number of unique users who read the individual editorial content are in force. They are namely but not exclusively ... the use of unfair practices on social networks, communities, forums and other blogs with the aim of directing the user to their own editorial content by showing pictures and contents different from those actually published on the site."*

*Article 10: "He/she agrees not to insert, publish, send by mail or transmit in any manner any unrequested or unauthorized advertising, promotional materials, "junk mail," "spam," "chain letters," or any other form of solicitation."*

You must comply with Facebook policies. The following pages summarize their critical principles, but find the full guidelines here:

<https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms>

[https://www.facebook.com/page\\_guidelines.php](https://www.facebook.com/page_guidelines.php)

<https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards>

The policies of other social networks are here, but you must engage with the rules of every platform you use:

<https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311>

<https://twitter.com/tos?lang=en>

<https://help.instagram.com/477434105621119/>

<https://www.instagram.com/about/legal/terms/>

<https://www.google.com/intl/en-US/+policy/content.html>

### **Facebook policies, constraints and infringements:**

- **Promotions:**

#### **Policy:**

"If you use Facebook to communicate or administer a promotion (ex: a contest or sweepstakes), you are responsible for the lawful operation of that promotion, including:

- a. The official rules;
  - b. Offer terms and eligibility requirements (ex: age and residency restrictions); and
  - c. Compliance with applicable rules and regulations governing the promotion and all prizes offered (ex: registration and obtaining necessary regulatory approvals)”
- (Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, III. Page Features, E. Promotions)

**Constraint:**

“Promotions may be administered on Pages or within apps on Facebook. Personal Timelines and friend connections must not be used to administer promotions (ex: “share on your Timeline to enter” or “share on your friend’s Timeline to get additional entries”, and “tag your friends in this post to enter” are not permitted).”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, III. Page Features, E. Promotions)

How you might break this policy:

By promoting your content using creative strategies that are not in line with Facebook’s policies, regardless of your mastery of social media or expertise in marketing.

What you should do:

If you want to organize a promotion or contest to spread your content better on Social Media, you must ensure that you are complying with all of Facebook’s policies and alert Blasting News staff at least five days in advance before organizing it.

- **Real identity rule:**

**Policy:**

“Facebook users provide their real names and information, and we need your help to keep it that way.” (Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, 4. Registration and Account Security)

“Using Your Authentic Identity How Facebook’s real name requirement creates a safer environment.” (Source: Community Standards, Keeping your account and personal information secure, Using your Authentic Identity)

**Constraint:**

“-You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission.

-You will not create more than one personal account.

-If we disable your account, you will not create another one without our permission.” (Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, 4. Registration and Account Security)

“People connect on Facebook using their authentic identities. When people stand behind their opinions and actions with their authentic name and reputation, our community is more accountable. If we discover that you have multiple personal profiles, we may ask you to close the additional profiles. We also remove any profiles that impersonate other people.”

(Source: Community Standards, Keeping your account and personal information secure, Using your Authentic Identity)

### How you might break this policy:

To reach the broadest possible audience, some writers create multiple profiles on Facebook so that they can post simultaneously across thousands of groups and pages, both related and unrelated to the subject of the article. This action constitutes spam and possibly harassment, and as such, it is not compliant with Facebook’s policies.

### What you should do:

Blasters are advised to keep one single profile on Facebook, with their real name, matching their Blasting News profile, preferably linking both through the available options.

Here is an example of a proper personal profile, in line with Facebook’s policies:



- Legal measures

### Policy:

“You are responsible for ensuring that your Page complies with all applicable laws, statutes, and regulations.” (Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, IV Page Content)

“We work hard to help keep your account secure and protect your personal information. By joining Facebook, you agree to use your authentic name and identity. You may not publish the personal information of others without their consent. Learn more about how we work to keep your information safe.” (Source: Community Standards, Keeping your account and personal information secure, Fraud and Spam)

### Constraint:

“Pages must not contain false, misleading, fraudulent, or deceptive claims or content.” (Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, IV Page Content)

“We work hard to help ensure that the information you share is secure. We investigate any suspected breach of security. Any attempt to compromise the security of a Profile, including fraud, may be referred to law enforcement. Using misleading or inaccurate information to artificially collect likes, followers or shares is not allowed. We also ask that you respect people by not contacting them for commercial purposes without their consent.”

(Source: Community Standards, Keeping your account and personal information secure, Fraud and Spam)

### **How you might break this policy:**

By posting links to articles with altered pictures and titles, thus providing misleading and/or false information. By using pages to change content previews, inserting images, titles, and descriptions that do not correspond to the real content.

### **What you should do:**

Post only original and real content, that is not misleading or fraudulent.

Make sure that what you write in the Facebook post corresponds completely with the content in your article. You always must create value and inform your readers.

- **Nudity**

### **Policy:**

“We restrict the display of nudity or sexual activity because some people in our community may be sensitive to this type of content. Additionally, we default to removing sexual imagery to prevent the sharing of non-consensual or underage content. Restrictions on the display of sexual activity also apply to digitally created content unless it is posted for educational, humorous or satirical purposes.”

(Source: Community Standards, Adult nudity and sexual activity)

### **Constraint:**

“Do not post images of nudity, sexual activity, fetish content or use sexually explicit language that goes beyond mere mention of a state of sexual arousal or an act of sexual activity.”

“We understand that nudity can be shared for a variety of reasons, including as a form of protest, to raise awareness about a cause or for educational or medical reasons. Where such intent is clear, we make allowances for the content. For example, while we restrict some images of female breasts that include the nipple, we allow other images, including those depicting acts of protest, women actively engaged in breastfeeding and photos of post-mastectomy scarring. We also allow photographs of paintings, sculptures and other art that depicts nude figures.”

(Source: Community Standards, Encouraging respectful behavior, Nudity)

**How you might break this policy:**

Explicit or adult content is not allowed on Blasting News. You must not include it when sharing Blasting News content on Facebook.

**What you should do:**

Do not produce or publish any kind of nudity, sexual or pornographic content.

Blasting News will monitor all content in great detail, remove inappropriate articles and then suspend users that repeatedly break these policies.

- **Operating guidelines**

**Policy:**

“A Page for a brand, entity (place or organization), or public figure may be administered only by an authorized representative of that brand, entity (place or organization) or public figure (an “official Page”).”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, I. General)

**Constraint:**

“Any user may create a Page to express support for or interest in a brand, entity (place or organization), or public figure, provided that it does not mislead others into thinking it is an official Page, or violate someone's rights. If your Page is not the official Page of a brand, entity (place or organization) or public figure, you must:

- - not speak in the voice of, or post content as though it was coming from, the authorized representative of the Page's subject matter; and
- make clear that the Page is not the official Page of the brand, entity (place or organization) or public figure.”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Facebook Pages Terms, I. General)

**How you might break this policy:**

By not stating that a page regarding public figures or brands is a Fan Page, and thus misleading readers into believing that it might be an official page.

**What you should do:**

If you are the owner of a Fan Page, make sure that its name and description make it clear that it is an unofficial page created by a fan.

Blasting News will monitor its contributors' actions on Facebook to guarantee that any page that shares Blasting News' content respects these terms.

- **Safety**

**Policy:**

“We do our best to keep Facebook safe, but we cannot guarantee it.”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, 3. Safety)

**Constraint:**

“-You will not post unauthorized commercial communications (such as spam) on Facebook.

-You will not use Facebook to do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory.”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, 3. Safety)

**How you might break this policy:**

A growing amount of articles published on Blasting News about companies include logos and trademarks, which may mislead the reader in believing that it is a commercial communication or sponsored material.

Additionally, information is often left without a proper update for a long time and so presenting potentially outdated information by the time readers access this content.

**What you should do:**

Blasting News writers must be aware of and follow the brand identity guidelines when using logos and trademarks (for example, most brands forbid the modification of logos). In the case below, the logo of a carmaker was wrongfully cropped, in blatant disregard for brand identity.



Additionally, every writer must include information regarding the application process and its deadlines, as well as making sure this information is kept updated. If the data becomes inaccurate, the writer has the responsibility to communicate this to the staff to avoid complaints by readers regarding inaccurate/outdated information.

- **Intellectual rights**

**Policy:**

“If you repeatedly infringe other people's intellectual property rights, we will disable your account when appropriate.”

(Source: Facebook Legal Terms, Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, 5. Protecting Other People's Rights)

**How you might break this policy:**

Some writers use images or other information protected by intellectual property rights without holding the rights to publish and/or modify them. This action is against both Facebook and Blasting News guidelines.

**What you should do:**

Blasters are advised to only use images and other information that they hold the rights to publish and/or modify, on a commercial basis.

At the same time, Blasting News' editors will check that all images and other information protected by intellectual property rights provided by writers are not infringing copyright.

## 11. Feedback policy

Blasting News encourages meaningful conversations between Blasters, Reviewers, readers and Blasting News editorial team.

We are committed to engaging with our readers and taking action based on their suggestions, queries, complaints and all other feedback.

We believe that news organizations have a responsibility to engage with the public on the values, issues and ideas of the times, and that news organizations have much to gain in return. In fact, actionable feedback may:

- Further develop an individual story or line of coverage.
- Help answer questions that a story may raise.
- Help identify related questions or issues that our audience – from a variety of different countries and demographics – is discussing or concerned about.
- Yield new and diverse stories, sources, experts and perspectives.

Blasting News commits to interacting with its users in these ways:

1. **Direct contact.** A page listing all editorial contributors providing Blasters and readers with clear information, email addresses and phone numbers, where they can ask questions or report complaints.
2. **Forum.** A channel dedicated to discussing our coverage. This also provides access to social media websites (such as Facebook), where readers can have a more direct and informal relationship with the Blasting News team.

3. **Complaints.** A dedicated form for complaints, easily accessible from every Blasting News article page, providing our users with a direct feedback system to report any error, suggestion or request for adjustment.
4. **Channel comments.** Anyone can comment in the Channel where the article is hosted, where all comments are moderated by the Channel Manager. Blasting News retains the right to edit or cancel comments, messages and content submitted by readers.
5. **Author data.** Verified social profiles (when available) are shown on author pages on the Blasting News platform, making contact information easily available.
6. **User feedback stories.** The direct feedback system, easily accessible from every Blasting News article page, is a key element of communication to report any error, suggestion or request for adjustment on each article.
7. **Article updates.** Changes to content will be made based on user comments and feedback.
8. **Audience polls.** Public votes will be conducted on questions such as the roll-out of new features, the coverage of new topics and other editorial decisions. The results will be published on the Blasting News platform.
9. **Key staff details.** When it is relevant and secure we make the contact information senior employees available, such as Community Managers, Content Managers and the Central Team in London and New York City.

This transparency and openness sits perfectly in line with Blasting News' ethics and philosophy. It is something we prioritize and are proud of.

## 12. Contacts

Email:

- Brasil: [corrections.pt@blastingnews.com](mailto:corrections.pt@blastingnews.com)
- France: [corrections.fr@blastingnews.com](mailto:corrections.fr@blastingnews.com)
- Italy: [corrections.it@blastingnews.com](mailto:corrections.it@blastingnews.com)
- Spain: [corrections.es@blastingnews.com](mailto:corrections.es@blastingnews.com)
- US/UK: [corrections.en@blastingnews.com](mailto:corrections.en@blastingnews.com)

Facebook group:

- Blasting News -US

Facebook fan page:

- <https://www.facebook.com/BlastingNewsUS>

## 13. Legal concerns and minimizing risk (summary)

**Reputation risk** - articles published with “fake news” or poorly fact-checked are a risk to the blaster and Blasting News’ reputation. If Blasting News is perceived to be a “fake news” platform or un-trusted news source, our capacity to continue to operate as an open platform is jeopardized.

**Legal risk** - publishing news articles that do not follow the basic guidelines can expose the Blaster to legal risk as the object of the article can initiate legal proceedings due to the content published (defamation, libel and slander). We want to avoid this at all costs.

**Copyright risk** - the use of images, sounds, videos that belong to other content creators, and who have not opened their content for public use, is prohibited. If you wish to upload your own images and use them in the news, video, listicle, etc - always make sure that they are free for use and give the proper credit to the original creators of the content (this does not mean that you can use copyright images and simply credit “Getty Images”, for example).

### **Detailed Legal section in a separate “Legal concerns and minimising risk” section**

#### **13a) Reputation risk and conflict of interest**

Everything in this guide is designed to protect and expand Blasting News’ reputation as an independent, democratic, accurate and impartial platform.

Anything that endangers that – from badly written articles to “fake news” – is a risk to the company as a whole, including Blasters, readers, staff and everyone associated with the platform.

The following section is general guidance on some important aspects of media law. It is not meant to be taken as legal advice from an attorney or a substitute for direct consultation with an attorney.

Laws vary according to different countries, jurisdictions and cultures, please contact a legal professional or Blasting News staff if you have specific questions.

#### **Conflict of interest:**

Any Blasting News representatives working on material that they have a personal link or relationship to is also a risk to our reputation and is strictly forbidden.

Blasters, Reviewers and any staff must not contribute any content about themselves, their family, friends, organization, clients, or their competitors.

There may be some rare exceptions to this, such as in opinion articles, but contributors must be transparent and clear about any potential conflict of interest, and contact Blasting News staff if they have concerns or queries.

#### **13b) Copyright risk**

Blasters must only submit original content, and verify all of the sources and information they use.

Blasters are forbidden to publish any advertising content or pre-written material. Each article submitted to Blasting News is scanned by automated, anti-plagiarism technology.

As a result, we will not publish content copied from other sites, content that violates copyright and trademark rights, or content that has a purely promotional objective. Blasters that violate this rule will be removed from the community after a warning.

Everything published on Blasting News is protected by copyright law. The reproduction of any of our content is only allowed with the explicit and prior approval of Blasting SA. To enquire about using our content, email us: [staff@blastingnews.com](mailto:staff@blastingnews.com).

Blasting Sagl can publish comments and content sent in by readers unless the reader explicitly asks Blasting News not to do so. According to the contract signed by all Blasters, the rights to articles published on the platform are the exclusive property of Blasting News. The use of this content on other platforms, in an identical form, is in violation of this contract.

All submitted articles must be 100% original. Quotations must be inserted between quotation marks and all sources must be cited. Blasting News uses algorithms that will automatically detect text content that has already been published elsewhere on the web.

If any copy/pasted work is detected the article will not be published, and its author will receive a warning. After three warnings, the Blaster will be suspended for seven days.

If the Blaster continues to violate this rule, further suspensions and bannings will be made.

This rule also applies in cases where content posted on Blasting News have been previously published on other platforms

### **Guidelines on the use of third party editorial content (images, videos and/or audio)**

The use of images, videos and/or audios created by third parties is typically permitted in one of the following situations:

- The use of the material is subject to copyright and the owner of the image, video and/or audio has authorized the use of the copyrighted material
- The material is subject to copyright and, under the applicable laws, such copyright has appropriately been bought and paid for by the Blaster (or Blasting Sagl)
- The material is marked and can be used under a Creative Commons CC BY license
- The content is in the public domain, as the related intellectual property rights have expired or been forfeited, or – for any other reason – the use of the image, video and/or audio is freely available to the public
- The material is hosted on a website that permits its free use.

Below is a list of well-known websites from which the Blaster might wish to download material to be used in the creation of new editorial content, together with a summary of the terms and conditions for their use.

The Blaster should be aware that this set of guidelines has a purely informational purpose and that the terms and conditions for the use of copyrighted material may vary from time to time. Blasting Sagl shall not be considered liable or otherwise responsible for any illegal or unauthorized use by the Blaster of the images, videos and/or audios sourced from the websites listed in this set of guidelines or other sources.

If the Blaster uses such images, videos and/or audio to create its Editorial Content, the Blaster remains responsible for checking the copyright status of the images, videos and/or audios downloaded from third party websites.

**Facebook:** “You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook ... In addition ... when you publish content or information using the Public setting, it means that you are allowing everyone, including people off of Facebook, to access and use that information, and to associate it with you (i.e., your name and profile picture)” (<https://www.facebook.com/legal/terms> – last revision: January 30, 2015).

**YouTube:** “Fair use is a legal doctrine that says you can reuse copyright-protected material under certain circumstances without getting permission from the copyright owner. Check out the videos below for helpful examples of fair use. Different countries have different rules about when it’s okay to use material without the copyright owner’s permission. For example, in the US, works of commentary, criticism, research, teaching, or news reporting might be considered fair use. Some other countries have a similar idea called fair dealing that may work differently” (<https://www.youtube.com/yt/copyright/en/fair-use.html>).

“In the United States, fair use is determined by a judge, who analyzes how each of the four factors of fair use applies to a specific case.

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes. Courts typically focus on whether the use is “transformative.” That is, whether it adds new expression or meaning to the original, or whether it merely copies from the original. Commercial uses are less likely to be considered fair, though it’s possible to monetize a video and still take advantage of the fair use defense.
2. The nature of the copyrighted work. Using material from primarily factual works is more likely to be fair than using purely fictional works.
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole. Borrowing small bits of material from an original work is more likely to be

considered fair use than borrowing large portions. However, even a small taking may weigh against fair use in some situations if it constitutes the “heart” of the work.

4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work. Uses that harm the copyright owner’s ability to profit from his or her original work are less likely to be fair uses. Courts have sometimes made an exception under this factor in cases involving parodies.”

(<https://www.youtube.com/yt/copyright/en/fair-use.html#yt-copyright-four-factors>)

**Flickr:** “Yahoo provides users with access to a rich collection of resources, including without limitation various communications tools, forums, shopping services, search services, personalized content and branded programming through its network of properties which may be accessed through any various medium or device now known or hereafter developed (the “Yahoo Services”)... You acknowledge and agree that the Yahoo Services and any necessary software used in connection with the Yahoo Services (“Software”) contain proprietary and confidential information that is protected by applicable intellectual property and other laws. You further acknowledge and agree that Content contained in advertisements or information presented to you through the Yahoo Services or by advertisers is protected by copyrights, trademarks, service marks, patents or other proprietary rights and laws. Except as expressly permitted by applicable law or as authorized by Yahoo or the applicable licensor (such as an advertiser), you agree not to modify, rent, lease, loan, sell, distribute, transmit, broadcast, publicly perform or create derivative works based on the Yahoo Services, such Content or the Software, in whole or in part” (terms of service: <https://info.yahoo.com/legal/us/yahoo/utos/utos-173.html> – last revision: March 16, 2012).

“Link back to Flickr when you post your Flickr content elsewhere. Flickr makes it possible to post content hosted on Flickr to other web sites. Pages on other web sites that display content hosted on flickr.com must provide a link from each photo or video back to its page on Flickr. This provides a way to get more information about the content and the photographer” (<https://www.flickr.com/help/guidelines> – last revision: October 2014).

“Many Flickr users have chosen to offer their work under a Creative Commons license, and you can browse or search through content under each type of license” (<https://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>).

**Pixabay:** “Via download provided Images on Pixabay are bound to Creative Commons Deed CC0. To the extent possible under law, uploaders of Pixabay have waived all copyright and related or neighboring rights to these Images. You are free to adapt and use the Images for commercial purposes without attributing the original author source. Although absolutely not required, a link back to Pixabay would be nice” (<http://pixabay.com/en/service/terms/> – last revision: November 24, 2014).

“You may upload photographs or graphics to the Website... By uploading, You release Images under Creative Commons Deed CC0 into the public domain. This applies worldwide. In case this

is not legally possible, You grant anyone the right to use this work for any purpose, without any conditions, unless such conditions are required by law”

(<http://pixabay.com/en/service/terms/> – last revision: November 24, 2014).

“All images on Pixabay are released into the Public Domain under Creative Commons CC0. Therefore, the images can be modified and may be used freely for any application – also commercially and in printed format. Attribution is appreciated, but not required. There are exceptions...” (<http://pixabay.com/en/blog/posts/public-domain-images-what-is-allowed-and-what-is-4/>).

**Instagram:** “By using our Service you understand and agree that we are providing a platform for you to post content, including photos, comments and other materials ("User Content"), to the Service and to share User Content publicly. This means that other Users may search for, see, use, or share any of your User Content that you make publicly available through the Service, consistent with the terms and conditions of this Privacy Policy and our Terms of Use ... Subject to your profile and privacy settings, any User Content that you make public is searchable by other Users and subject to use under our Instagram API” (<https://help.instagram.com/155833707900388> – last revision: January 19, 2013).

“The Service contains content owned or licensed by Instagram ("Instagram Content"). Instagram Content is protected by copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret and other laws, and, as between you and Instagram, Instagram owns and retains all rights in the Instagram Content and the Service. You will not remove, alter or conceal any copyright, trademark, service mark or other proprietary rights notices incorporated in or accompanying the Instagram Content and you will not reproduce, modify, adapt, prepare derivative works based on, perform, display, publish, distribute, transmit, broadcast, sell, license or otherwise exploit the Instagram Content” (<http://instagram.com/about/legal/terms/#> – last revision: January 19, 2013).

## Public Sources

- **U.S. Department of State:** “Unless a copyright is indicated, information on State Department websites is in the public domain and may be copied and distributed without permission. Citation of the U.S. State Department as source of the information is appreciated. (<http://www.state.gov/misc/87529.htm#copyright.com>).
- **U.S. White House:** “Pursuant to federal law, government-produced materials appearing on this site are not copyright protected ... Except where otherwise noted, third-party content on this site is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License” (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/copyright/>).

- **US House of Representatives:** “Pursuant to federal law, government-produced materials appearing on this site are not copyright protected” ([http://www.house.gov/content/site\\_tools/terms\\_of\\_use.php](http://www.house.gov/content/site_tools/terms_of_use.php)).
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- **UK Government:** “All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0 [permit- ting use and re-use of information in any format for commercial purposes without charge, but requiring re-users to indicate an attribution of the source of the information], except where otherwise stated” (<https://www.gov.uk/>).

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In all other cases, the use of images, videos and/or audios created by third parties is typically subject to the “copyright doctrine of fair use.” For more information read this guide at Stanford University Libraries.

Broadly speaking, but check each case carefully, such media may be used for the creation of editorial content if the Blaster:

- Makes comments on, or criticizes, the copyrighted materials (for a purpose other than the one they were originally created)
- Uses the copyrighted materials for illustration or example
- Captures the copyrighted materials incidentally or accidentally
- Reproduces, reposts or quotes the copyrighted materials to memorialize, preserve or rescue an experience, an event or a cultural phenomenon
- Copies, reports or recirculates materials with copyrighted content or part of materials with copyrighted content to begin a discussion
- Recombines elements of copyrighted materials to make a new work that depends for its meaning on (often unlikely) relationships between the elements.

### 13c) Legal risk: Defamation and libel

As we’ve made clear, there are many potential legal dangers out there. But perhaps the greatest single legal threat to anyone who writes and publishes words and pictures is defamation law. Violating this can lead to being sued for libel and possibly end up having to pay huge costs and damages.

Defamation law is extremely complicated, and vary across different countries and jurisdictions. The following is based on English defamation law, which is among the strictest legislation around.

This is an extremely simplified overview and general guidance. It is not meant to be taken as legal advice from an attorney or a substitute for direct consultation with an attorney. Please seek professional advice if this an area you are concerned about and do not take any unnecessary risks.

As explained clearly by the Media Law Resource Center:

Libel and slander are legal claims for false statements of fact about a person that are printed, broadcast, spoken or otherwise communicated to others. Libel generally refers to statements or visual depictions in written or other permanent form, while slander refers to verbal statements and gestures. The term defamation is often used to encompass both libel and slander.

Simply put, Blasters must avoid at all costs making defamatory statements that could lead to libel cases.

Defamatory statements are broadly defined as those which “tend” to expose a person to “hatred, ridicule or contempt,” cause them to be “shunned or avoided” or lowered in the estimation of “right-thinking members of society.”

As explained in the book McNae's Essential Law for Journalists by Mark Hanna and Mike Dodd:

“It is almost always defamatory to say of a person that he/she is a liar, or a cheat, or is insolvent or in financial difficulties; whether the statement is a libel will depend on whether the publisher has a defense – for example, it can be proved true.”

In the case of a business, a statement is judged defamatory if it could affect sales or profit.

If media companies lose defamation trials, they could have to pay huge damages and legal fees. Even if they win they might have to pay significant costs. So a huge amount – in fact the vast majority of libel cases – are settled outside of court.

Generally speaking, a good way to avoid defamation is simply yet another reason to follow good journalistic practices and standards, such as being thorough, fair and accurate, sourcing properly, and using careful language.

There are several others, but the most three common defenses a journalist could use in a libel case are:

- justification or “truth.”
- “honest comment.”

- privilege.

Truth is simply the defense that the statement concerned is true. While this may seem the strongest and simplest defense, it is often more complicated as the burden of proof lies on the journalist rather than the person claiming to have been defamed.

Honest comment or honest opinion can be used if the words in question were the writer's honestly held view on an issue of public importance or interest. This usually protects the writers of opinion articles.

Legal privilege gives journalists the right to report whatever is said, even if it is defamatory. Particular places and situations are privileged or have privilege. A courtroom, for example, often offers absolute privilege to reporters, and journalists can publish whatever is said there. At many public meetings, journalists have qualified privilege – they can report on whatever is said, but they must legally give whoever they quote a right to reply.

*For further information and reading, please refer to:*

- [Media Legal Defence Initiative - Manual on European Defamation Law](#)
- [Media Law Resource Center](#)
- [McNae's Essential Law for Journalists](#)
- [Carter-Ruck law firm](#)

## 14. Disclaimer, references and appendix

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### References:

- [Area converter](#)
- [Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers](#)
- [Op-Ed Writing Tips](#)

### Appendix:

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