

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

WORKSHOP & MEETING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR THE CARIBBEAN REGION

BARBADOS

19-21 JUNE 2017

UNESCO in partnership with the Public Media Alliance (PMA) and with support from Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) Secretariat invites applications to attend a workshop and meeting to create social media guidelines for the Caribbean region

The PMA in collaboration with UNESCO has designed a two and half day workshop and meeting to discuss and create social media guidelines for the Caribbean region. It will take place in Barbados from Monday June 19 to Wednesday June 21, 2017.

The contemporary world of media and communication is experiencing enormous disruptions. No longer can a selected few media organisations act as gatekeepers, deciding what is communicated to whom and when. Individuals can now access information directly from a multitude of multi-platform sources, both formally and informally via social media.

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become important communication tools for media outlets around the world. Social media now allows a dialogue between audiences and content producers, replacing what was in the past a predominantly one-way conversation from the station to the listener or viewer.

In addition, social media has become a useful and powerful journalistic tool, opening new ways of gathering and disseminating information, finding sources and getting opinions from the public.

Besides the benefits, social media also has its dangers and downsides. The ease of sending messages in seconds can mean thoughtless, insulting, harmful or even libelous comments – things that might not have been said if someone had to write a letter or make a phone call – instantly have a global reach. Social media can easily amplify the effects of any ethical misjudgments we might make. There are many instances of media professionals who have had their reputations harmed or even lost their jobs due to a careless tweet or Facebook post.

On the information side, social media allows for the discovery and dissemination of newsworthy material incredibly quickly but offer limited fact-checking capabilities for rumors, unsubstantiated claims and simple falsehoods. Bad information can go viral in a matter of minutes as the rise of “fake news” has shown. Therefore, media outlets must be careful about their social media use. The spreading of false reports can severely damage a media organisation’s credibility and brand.

This proposed workshop will address many of the issues outlined above and compile social media guidelines for media outlets in the Caribbean. The guidelines will set out policies and best practices to ensure that the media use social media productively and avoid common pitfalls.

The workshop facilitator is Paul Myers. Paul has a career in computing and internet research and development that dates to 1978. He joined the BBC in 1995 as an information researcher. As the internet grew in significance, Paul was able to blend his technical knowledge with the realities of his work in journalism. Thus, he could devise unique, innovative strategies that have led countless researchers to evidence what they may never have otherwise found. His ideas continue to shape the way professionals conduct online research and investigation.

Paul currently leads BBC Academy's Investigation Support project. This sees him work within programme teams, solving issues related to their research, whilst sharing vital new skills with those he works with.

He has worked with leading BBC programmes such as *Panorama*, *Watchdog*, and *Inside Out*, as well as with *BBC News*, *BBC Online*, local & national radio and the *BBC World Service*. Outside the BBC, Paul has worked with the United Nations, The Guardian Newspaper, KPMG, The Financial Times, Channel 4, CNN and the World Bank.

The workshop and meeting curriculum will include but not be limited to the following themes: accountability, accuracy and honesty, building communities, ethics and confidential information, hate speech, personal social media, responsiveness, security and verification.

Bursaries

UNESCO Caribbean is offering support to attend this meeting to media houses in the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Montserrat, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago once they are members of the PMA in good standing.

Bursaries, covering airfare, accommodation, terminal expenses, DSA, and workshop materials, are available to participants whose organisations who meet the eligibility criteria set by the funders and organisers. The training is also open to a limited number of self-funded participants. Please email jas@publicmediaalliance.org for further information.

To be eligible for the bursaries, participants must:

- Be practising media professionals, with a minimum of three (3) years' experience in the field.
- Be full-time/permanent broadcasters/journalists.
- Have experience in the use of online tools for research and in their daily work as a journalist/editor.
- Be actively engaged with media content, including, but not limited to print/broadcast/digital news and current affairs including photography, videography and editing.
- Be at a sufficiently senior level to influence institutional practices and policies relating to the use of social media in broadcasting.
- Have examples of their work or work in their country that highlights both good and bad practices of social media use.
- Be available to attend every day of the workshop in its entirety and contribute to the compiling of the social media guidelines.
- Have access to a laptop which they can bring with them to the workshop.
- Have all the necessary documentation in place to travel to Barbados.



Application Closing Date – 12 May 2017

To apply, complete the application form, and send it to PMA Membership Manager, Jasmine Chandler at jas@publicmediaalliance.org **no later than 12 May 2017**

Successful applicants will be notified by email from the PMA **by 26 May 2017**.

For further information contact jas@publicmediaalliance.org.