



Contemporary Media Ethics: A Practical Guide for Students, Scholars And Professionals

Bill W. Hornaday (Editor) Mitchell Land (Editor)

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A Practical, Open-Minded Approach for Studying Ethics in the Mass Media In March 1993, Australian police surrounded a homestead at Hanging Rock near Sydney where three men who had killed five people were holding two children hostage. During the ordeal, some journalists telephoned the house and talked directly with the hostage-takers and the children. Police and some citizens were outraged, claiming the media endangered the children. The journalists defended their actions. But did they do the right thing?

Contemporary Media Ethics was written to help mass communicators answer this question. But it doesn't pass judgment on the Hanging Rock incident or the other 20 real-world cases it examines from the professions of journalism, advertising and public relations. Instead, the book shows readers how to reach their own conclusions through a practical approach that begins with the "Point-of-Decision Pyramid"—a new deductive model created by the editors that emphasizes a philosophical foundation as a starting point and follows that up with a detailed analysis based on both the utilitarian and communitarian ethical perspectives. Should mass communicators take a utilitarian approach, which means making decisions based upon "the greatest good for the greatest number?" Or should they take a communitarian approach, which calls upon decision makers to balance personal ethics with an appeal to community values? Contemporary Media Ethics makes a unique contribution to the literature on media ethics because it systematically compares these two approaches and does so in a manner that is easy to understand and apply to real-world situations. This book is ideal for undergraduate and graduate media ethics classes.

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