Digital photo manipulation: A descriptive analysis of codes of ethics and ethical decisions of photo editors.

Stephen Edwin Coleman, University of Southern Mississippi

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Committee Chair
Dr. Gene Wiggins

Committee Chair Department
Mass Communication and Journalism

Committee Member 2
Photography gave the world a lifelike memory. It is especially well suited for journalism but serves other areas exceptionally well also. Legions of photojournalists have used the medium with great energy; many also have used it with great integrity. The heirs of earlier photojournalists continue in the advantage of the significant improvements in technology to better communicate to readers and with heightened ethical awareness.” Fred Parrish, 2002

This study examined the decision and thought process photo editors make on handling manipulated images through digital photography. The findings found the practice of editing has not changed, but the way in which photographs has changed. Computer screens replaced light tables, and software replaced photographic loupes.

This study examined the code of ethics from various publications, both domestic and foreign locations, finding out if a code of ethics for newspapers has been updated to incorporate digital technology. Fifty percent of newspapers had a written code of ethics specifically dealing with digital photography. Domestic newspapers exceeded the foreign newspapers in addressing the issue of digital photography usage.

The research indicated digital technology allows altered images to be produced and published without the photo editor detecting any manipulation. The credibility of the publication may be lost if readers stop believing what is published.

Digital technology has created a paradigm shift in photography. Photographing images remains the same, but digital photography has changed the medium in which images are produced. The technology was the main factor in a paradigm shift. The advancement in technology helped speed the process in getting photographs published in publications. Through printed versions or internet publications, digital photographs have allowed for more images reproduced.

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