



5th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network (OPN)

**“Countering Disinformation to Promote
Responsible Public Discourse”**



ASSOCIATION OF
CARIBBEAN
MEDIWORKERS

- ACM is a network of journalists, media workers and media associations spanning the Caribbean Basin.
- It was established in Barbados in 2001 and is currently led by an executive of seven persons from across the region.
- Our membership includes media professionals and their representative associations from countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.
- ACM holds membership of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), ACP Press Clubs Federation and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) and is represented on the Latin American and Caribbean Forum for Media Development.

“Collaborating with the news media sector”



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On-going challenges of news media sector to provide accurate and real-time information to the public in a disinformation era, considering how media ethics (objectivity, fairness, balance, right to reply, among others) play a role in combating fake news.

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- **1. The advent of social media platforms for delivery of news and information by a variety of players, including non-journalistic operators has generated a number of challenges to traditional, legacy media;**
 - **a. Commercial competition against freely available, real-time content generators and the need to design new business models for legacy media.**
 - **b. The emergence of alternative platforms as primary sources of misinformation and disinformation**
 - **c. Challenges to the ethical application of traditional news values as a counter-balance against new media – timeliness, diversity of sources and borderlessness**
 - **d. The emergence of growing advocacy agendas – environment, politics and geo-politics, and other development-related issues**
 - **e. Privacy rights versus anonymity – Social media often hides behind confusion over the two. Legacy media consider themselves to have an obligation to disclose.**

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What challenges do the media face in terms of financing to support its work, given that advertisement revenues have been generally re-directed to social media platforms?

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- **a. The global technology corporations – Google, Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft – operate in direct competition with legacy media but without the same legal and corporate responsibilities – taxation, statutory reporting on operations**
- **b. Advertising markets are skewed in their favour – reach, pricing, targeted audiences**
- **c. Resulting drops in advertising revenues are serving to starve media outlets of the ability to produce independent, quality content**

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Provide an overview of tactics and tools news media sector has in order to do fact-checking, as well as ways to identify disinformation and misinformation.

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- **a. There is now an added obligation on the part of news organisations to counter social media misinformation – some of which is directed at them and, more often, their journalists**
- **b. There is now greater realisation by the traditional media industries in the Caribbean to cooperate, even across the lines of competition, to conduct joint campaigns against misinformation. Both in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago where there are industry associations, this is frequently discussed**
- **c. Media industry players are also generally supportive of legislation, that does not unduly impinge on free expression and press freedom to address concerns over cyber-crime**

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Initiatives and efforts made by the Association of Caribbean Media Workers and/or Guyana Press Association to combat disinformation, including workshops/trainings for journalists, media literacy campaigns, reporting code for journalists during electoral cycles, etc.

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- **a. There has been the production of information products via IFEX and other agencies to inform journalists on ways to protect themselves from being the targets of cyber-attacks through – online safety, monitoring and cross-agency and cross-country collaboration**
- **<https://youtu.be/ypVsOSL3uFE>**

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- **b. The ACM has been associated with efforts by UNESCO and other global agencies to promote Media and Information Literacy as a vital part of the effort to inform both journalists and their media audiences of the nature of mass communication dynamics and the employment of technological and other measures to address concerns**
- **c. The ACM has led training on the nature and use of social media in countries such as St Kitts and Nevis and Curacao and has produced a variety of presentations for delivery by media trainers in the Caribbean**
- **d. The Code of Conduct of the ACM was revised in 2013 to address the prevalence of plagiarism by practitioners in the face of expanded social media usage of content**

- **<https://acmpress.org/2015/10/12/revised-code-of-ethics/>**

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- e. The ACM has led media training on coverage of elections throughout its member associations and has published a handbook for improved coverage of elections in the Caribbean
- <https://acmpress.org/2013/11/06/election-handbook-for-caribbean-journalists/>
- f. The ACM participated in the production of public information material in promotion of the work of the parliament of Guyana
- <https://acmpress.org/2017/06/26/our-house-an-introduction-to-the-parliament-of-guyana/>

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Recommendations for parliamentary action to support freedom of expression, free press and media pluralism (including financial investments in the media), as well as ways to promote collaboration between news media sector and parliaments to combat disinformation.

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- a. The ACM has supported national campaigns in all its member countries to introduce access to information laws where they do not exist, and to strengthen such laws where they already exist but are either under-utilised or do not reach far enough to satisfy the information needs of our societies
- b. The ACM has also been at the forefront of efforts to withdraw criminal defamation from the statute books of Caribbean countries – Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago (partial)
- c. The ACM and its affiliates have urged caution in the enactment of data protection and cyber-crime legislation and their implications for freedom of expression and press freedom
- d. Broadcasting legislation in the Caribbean has been particularly problematic over the years and the ACM has joined with its national affiliates and partner organisations to ensure that regimes of prior-censorship and prohibitive conditions do not persist
- e. The ACM and its affiliates have been associated with efforts to secure improved working conditions for journalists in the coverage of parliamentary sittings

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