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# A blogger's obligation

(Notes on blogging ethics)

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# What obligation?

- Blogging and mass media
  - Both part of the public domain
  - Both have an audience
  - Both have an impact
- Blogging as part of new media
  - Helps shape public opinion
  - Performs three main functions
    - Information
    - Education
    - Entertainment

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# Blogging and mass media

- Blogging also covers mass media's three major fields
  - Journalism
  - Advertising and public relations
  - Entertainment
- THEREFORE, blogging is not necessarily journalism
  - A blogger has several options, limited only by his or her imagination...

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# What's the best option?

- IT'S ALL UP TO YOU, ACTUALLY...
  - Why do you blog?
  - What is your blog all about?
  - What are the needs of your online audience?
- Journalism, Advertising & PR and Entertainment have their own advantages

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## In the context of ethics...

- HOWEVER, they have their own codes of ethics that sometimes clash with each other
  - Journalism – accuracy in reporting
  - Advertising and PR – exaggeration of reality
  - Entertainment – suspended disbelief
- In the context of various social problems and the need to accurately and responsibly report them
  - I am **very biased** for JOURNALISTIC BLOGGING...

# Comparison

	<b>Journalism</b>	<b>Blogging</b>
Gatekeepers?	Yes	No
Pressures?	Owners, advertisers, interest groups, etc.	None, unless...
Cost of production?	Expensive (for print, radio, TV)	Minimal, even free
Assaults on free expression?	Yes (legal and extra- legal)	Yes (mainly legal, e.g., libel)

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# Bloggers' Code of Ethics

- “Responsible bloggers should recognize that they are publishing words publicly, and they have certain ethical obligations to their readers, the people they write about and society in general” (CyberJournalist.net)

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# Are journalists imposing on bloggers?

## DEFINITELY NOT.

- What's crucial to blogging is
  - adherence to standards
  - conscious effort to be responsible
- Journalism ethics – used as basis because this is the oldest and most developed in the field of media ethics
  - Bloggers' Code of Ethics actually based on Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics
  - Healthcare Blogger Code of Ethics has elements of journalistic practice



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# Solving ethical dilemmas

- Remember five basic principles of the practice of journalism (Lambeth)
  - ❑ Truth-telling
  - ❑ Justice
  - ❑ Freedom
  - ❑ Humaneness
  - ❑ Stewardship

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# Solving ethical dilemmas

- Remember three ethical commands (Poynter Institute)
  - Seek truth and report it as fully as possible
  - Act independently
  - Minimize harm

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# Bloggers' Code of Ethics

## (Cyberjournalist.net)

- Be honest and fair

- Bloggers should be honest and fair in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.

- Minimize harm

- Ethical bloggers treat sources and subjects as human beings deserving of respect.

- Be accountable

- Bloggers should admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

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# Things to watch out for

- Observance of proper use of English or Filipino language
  - e.g., grammar, syntax and diction
- Avoid name-calling, mudslinging
- Do not use rumors, unverified information as bases for blog entries
- Do not depend on “blog content providers” like unscientific surveys, tests; or even unreliable sources

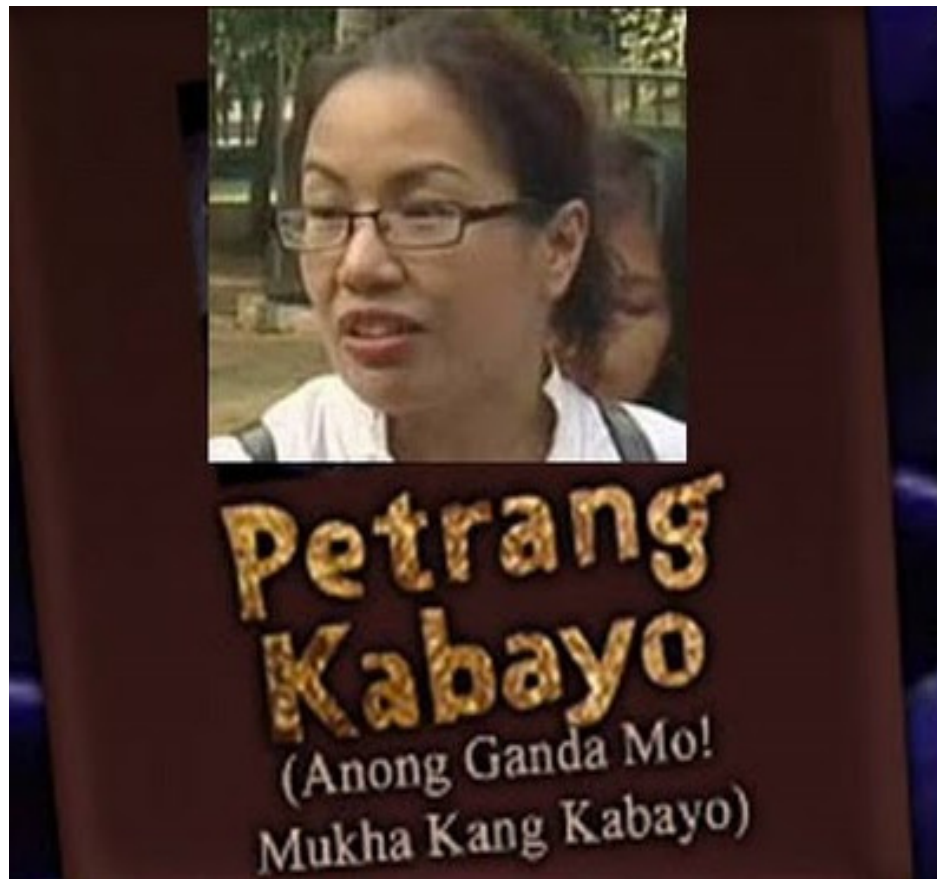
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# Some issues in blogging

- Plagiarism
- Blog monetization
  - Sponsored posts
  - Paid links
  - Ad placements interfering with content
- Blogs as purely aggregators; splogs
- Content determined mainly by SEO tactics like keyword density

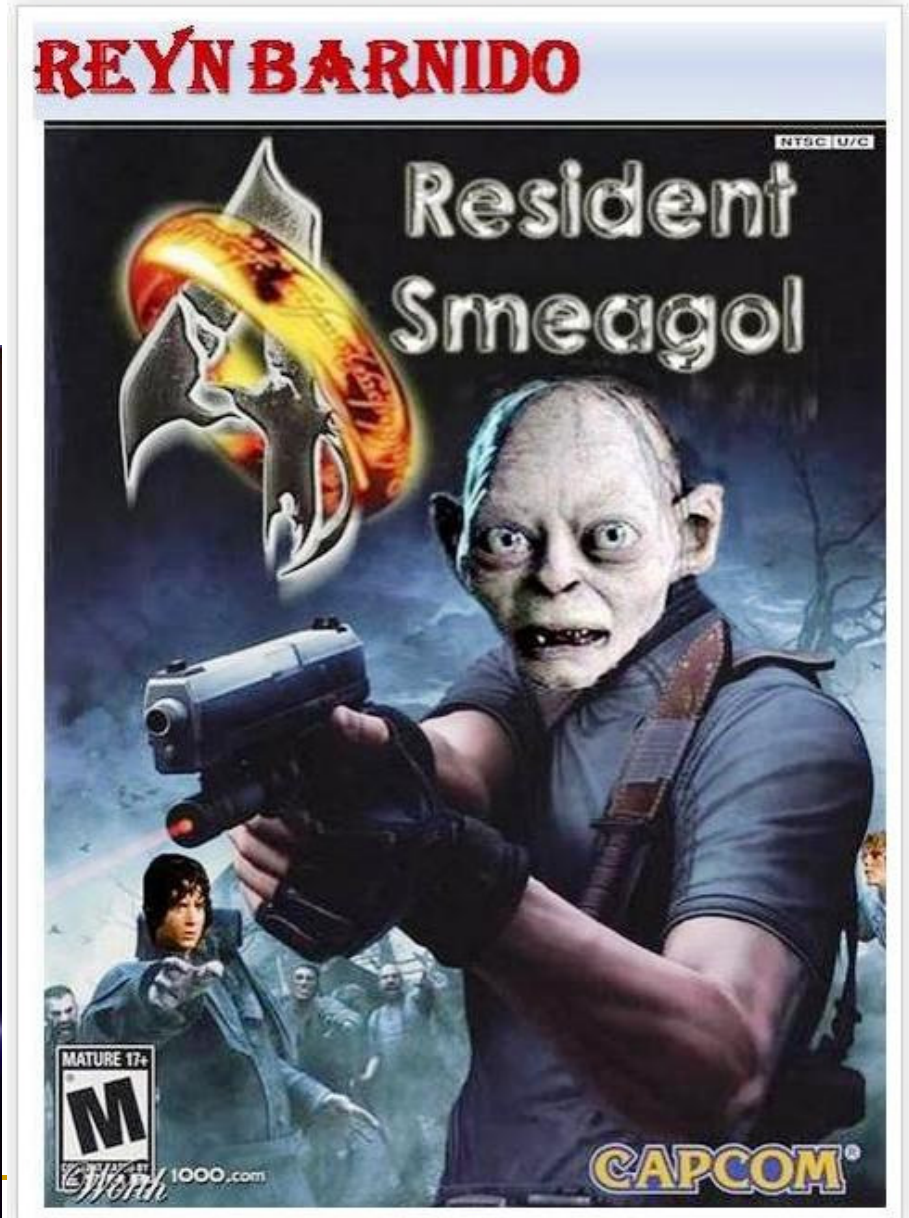
# How NOT to blog

- Character assassination



D. A. Arao

Reyn Barnido, writer Barrio Siete



WordCamp Philippines 2010 (Oct. 2)

Will you  
accept  
this?

- Deception
- No disclosure

Campaign Name: | [bgsprime.com](#)

Product Type: | Page Content

Marketing Materials: |

Link Text: | Online backgammon

Link URL: | <http://www.bgsprime.com>

Product Description: | POST SHOULD NOT BE PRESENTED AS PAID/SPONSORED IN ANY WAY.

1. Post should not be presented as paid/sponsored in any way.
2. The blog must not have disclosure specifically on the post.  
(a general disclosure is more than fine, but not specified in the post)
3. If you ever did a review/post to one of these sites, consider this offer as canceled. It is a mistake.

We require to link to three sites:  
<http://www.bgsprime.com>  
<http://www.onlinebackgammon.com>  
<http://www.backgammon.com>

Each should use one the following anchors:  
Backgammon - <http://www.onlinebackgammon.com>  
online backgammon - <http://www.bgsprime.com>  
Backgammon Online - <http://www.backgammon.com>

In addition, feel free to link to any of the inner pages. Post should look real and authentic and should be an integrated part of the blog. Please make sure to take the time and write a meaning full blog post. An insignificant post saying "I like Backgammon" or a like will not be accepted.

In addition, if your blog is about cats, it will be very strange making an post about backgammon. That is why I expect to receive a post that resembles the structure and theme of your blogs niche.

Make sure to place it in correct categories as well, not paid/ads/sponsored, etc...

Have Fun!

# Assessing blog content

- Quality of blog entry is measured not only by your post but also the comments you approve



**Anonymous said...**

Sus, nauututan lang kayo ng baklang estapadora, putak na kayo ng putak.

Sino ba kayo ha?

September 14, 2010 8:01 PM



**Anonymous said...**

Nauto ABS CBN ng bayot na kabayo!

September 14, 2010 11:09 PM



**rico said...**

ang pangit ni Barnido kamukha ni babalu

September 15, 2010 12:38 AM



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# Blogging Ethics 101

- Write responsibly. Don't blog if your MAIN objective is any of the following
  - ❑ Making money online through deception
  - ❑ Getting even with enemies
  - ❑ Anonymous ranting
  - ❑ Rumor mongering
  - ❑ Spreading innuendo and speculation
  - ❑ Personal misrepresentation
  - ❑ Self-gratification

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# What is the blogger's obligation?

- Just like the duty of journalists
  - TO HELP SHAPE PUBLIC OPINION BY PROVIDING RELEVANT INFORMATION
- To adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards of writing
  - BECAUSE OUR ONLINE AUDIENCE DESERVES NOTHING LESS
- This way, we can help raise the level of discourse to a HIGHER LEVEL

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# Thank you!

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