Equity & ethics in data journalism: Hands-on approaches to getting your data right

Instructor: Heather Krause
 June 22 - July 19, 2020
Goal
For the next four weeks, we will explore the practical and conceptual foundations of embedding equity and ethics in data journalism stories.

Who is this Course for?
This course is open to anyone who is interested in data journalism, you are not expected to have high level technical or statistical skills. Anyone who is curious and willing to experiment will be able to learn successfully in this course.

Objectives

Participants will:

● Learn how to embed ethics into data journalism using a seven-step framework

● Practice implementing the checklists to improve their data journalism work

● Gain both conceptual and practical knowledge about the key emerging themes in ethics and data journalism such as culturally appropriate communication, algorithmic accountability, implicit bias, and racist/sexist models.

● Build a data journalism piece of their own by putting into practice the seven-step framework

● Work with tools and stories that they can use to build ethical data literacy with their colleagues, bosses, and funders

Tools/Applications Required
No specific tools are required.

How the course works
First of all, note that this is an asynchronous course. That means there are no live events scheduled at specific times. You can log in to the course and complete activities throughout the week at your own pace, at the times and on the days that are most convenient for you.

Despite its asynchronous nature, there are still structures in place for the duration of the course.

The material is organized into four weekly modules. Each module will be taught by Heather Krause, PStat, and will cover a different topic through videos, presentations, readings and discussion forums. There will be a quiz each week to test the knowledge you've gained through the course materials. The weekly quizzes, and weekly participation in the discussion forums, are the basic requirements for earning a certificate of participation at the end of the course.

This course is very flexible, and if you are behind with the materials, you have the entire length of the course to complete them. We do recommend you complete each of the following before the end of each week so you don't fall behind:

Video lectures

Readings and handouts/exercises

Participation in the discussion forums

Quizzes covering concepts from video lectures and/or readings

The course is divided into four weekly modules

Introduction Module - Getting started thinking about what equity and ethics in data journalism means

Module 1 - Essential concepts in equity and ethics for data journalism
In this module, students will get familiar with the basic ideas, language, and applications of ethics and equity in data journalism. We will look at some examples, learn some definitions, and discuss

This module will cover:

Key Concepts in Equity and Ethics such as privacy, consent, power, error, and bias

The seven steps of the Data Equity Lifecycle

Libraries of guidelines

Module 2 - Gathering and Collecting Data for your Data Story
In this module, we'll explore what you need to know and think about in acquiring data for your journalism. We'll learn ways to vet data that you get from other people as well as ways to collect your own data with an equity and ethics focus.

This module will cover:

Data Biographies

Samples and Populations

Weighting Data

Public vs Private vs Open Data

Checklist for ethical data collection and acquisition

Module 3 - Analyzing Data for your Data Story
Despite its name, "data science" is not an objective science. All methods of analysis embed a set of world views and value systems. We'll look at how to avoid common errors in analysis and what questions to ask when assessing other people's analysis for your data journalism pieces.

This module will cover:

The Four Most Common Data Fallacies

Denominators

Part of a Statistical Model

Algorithmic Accountability

Module 4 - Visualizing and Communicating Data for your Data Story
Data visualization "best practices" are not cross-culturally universal. It is extremely easy to send unintentional, accidentally dishonest or misleading messages when visualizing data. We'll be looking at ways to avoid these pitfalls and checklists and tools to help embed a sense of equity in the way you communicate and visualize your data journalism story.

This module will cover:

Learning to spot how data viz misleads

Understanding how to use a legend to embed equity in data viz

Do's and Don't of Ethical and Equitable Narrative and Word Choices