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From the Director

Pete Picton Esq
Online Editor
The Sun
1 Virginia Street
London E98 1SN

9th August 2006

Dear Pete

The PCC and the Editors' Code of Practice Committee is about to embark on a series of meetings with online editors to consult on the content of new guidance about how to deal with complaints about newspaper and magazine websites, with particular regard to audio-visual content.

This follows confirmation by the Press Standards Board of Finance – the committee of industry owners and managers which funds the system of self-regulation – that the Code of Practice does in principle include audio-visual journalistic material. There has been a reference in the Code for a number of years to 'online versions of publications', but the online services now offered are so diverse that it is in any case a good opportunity to think in depth about the application of the Code to publishers' internet operations.

Of course, much content – advertising, competitions, promotions, most user-generated material, third party websites and so on – is excluded from the PCC's jurisdiction. Our interest is in journalistic material where an editorial decision has been taken at some point about its commission or use.

With audio-visual material particularly, but not exclusively, in mind, we will be consulting among other things on how future complaints might be resolved, how the sanction of a critical adjudication might apply, the notion of 'due prominence' in correcting accuracy complaints about AV material, and the scope of the PCC's jurisdiction.

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Ian Beales – the Secretary of the Code Committee – and I will be hosting a series of small meetings here at the PCC on the 28th and 29th September. My PA Kim Baxter will be in touch soon to try to find a convenient time for you, and I will write again next month with a more detailed agenda. The aim is to publish new guidance – which will need to be approved by the boards of PressBoF, the Commission and the Code Committee – sometime in the autumn.

I look forward to seeing you next month.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Tim Toulmin



cc. Ian Beales Esq, Secretary, Editors' Code of Practice Committee.

