

PCC CODE OF PRACTICE INDISPENSABLE TO GOOD JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE, SAYS PCC CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Sir Christopher Meyer, has declared that good journalism in the digital age 'will need as never before to rest on the tried and tested principles of our system of self-regulation'.

Speaking at the Scottish Society of Editors conference in Glasgow today, Sir Christopher argued that the most critical issue in the digital age is trust. In a mass of online material, there is a 'crying need' to be able to distinguish between what is rubbish and what is quality. He spoke of the need for 'something which tells you that what you are reading or watching conforms to a set of rules, objectively and independently enforced, [and] that guarantees high journalistic standards'; and said he was hopeful that 'the day is not far off when a small PCC logo will be visible in a corner of the screen on every electronic page of every British newspaper and magazine'. Such a 'quality stamp' would be a visible indication that the publication conformed to the Code of Practice, and would address 'head-on the fundamental issue of trust'.

Sir Christopher went on to highlight the speed, flexibility and independence which have traditionally defined the PCC, and argued that these characteristics will make it even better suited to cope with the demands of the digital age.

New developments such as the importation of audio-visual content onto newspaper websites posed an 'exciting challenge' for the PCC and the industry as a whole, Sir Christopher said. Acknowledging that questions had been raised over how best to organise the regulation of content across the media, the PCC's decision earlier this year to extend the remit of the Code to include audio-visual content - which he described as 'perhaps the most important decision since the PCC was set up in 1991' - was both timely and a clear sign of the strength of self-regulation.

Ultimately, he stressed, new technology did not change 'one jot' the fundamental principle upon which the PCC is based: namely that, in a functioning democracy, it would be entirely wrong for the editorial content of newspapers and magazines to be regulated by an agency of the state.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

1. The PCC is an independently-run self-regulatory body that administers a Code of Practice for the newspaper and magazine industry.
2. The Code of Practice has applied to written words and still pictures on newspaper and magazine websites since 1997. In February 2007, the PCC announced that the remit of the Code would be extended to editorial audio-visual material. More information about this can be found [here](#).
3. Details of the first audio-visual complaint upheld by the PCC can be found [here](#).
4. The full text of Sir Christopher's speech can be found [here](#).
5. For further information, please contact Stephen Abell on 020 7831 0022; mobile 07980 264 359.
6. For more information about the PCC, please go to www.pcc.org.uk.

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