

Editors' Code of Practice Committee

Submission to review public consultation

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Over the past 10 years I have sought enforcement by the Independent Press Standards Organisation of Section 1 of the Editors Code of Practice on accuracy. In particular, I have submitted complaints about both news articles and opinion articles that have contained inaccurate and misleading claims about climate change. My experience has been that some parts of the Press have taken the view that they can publish inaccurate and misleading information if it is expressed as opinion. One consequence of this approach is that opinion articles are not subjected to fact-checking before publication. This approach has been supported by IPSO, which, I note, does not consult with relevant subject experts when considering alleged breaches of Section 1 of the Code. I find this to be an unreasonable interpretation of the Code, and I have inferred that it therefore needs to be tightened to make it clearer and easier to enforce.

I propose that the first clause of Section 1 of the Code is amended, such that it states (additions in bold):

*The press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including **in comment and opinion articles, and headlines not supported by the text.***

This should be supported by guidance to IPSO that the interpretation of “must take care” in relation to comment and opinion articles mean fact-checking content before publication.

My unsatisfactory experience of IPSO’s failure to enforce Section 1 of the Code is documented in these contributions on the website of ‘Hacked Off’:

<https://hackinginquiry.org/special-report-chapter-one-the-climate-crisis-cover-up/>