Publish your standards

WHAT IS IT?

Journalists who publish their standards provide a wider context for how and why their news organization does its work. These include a mission statement, overall ethics policies as well as rules on doing corrections and using anonymous sources. Publishing standards gives news consumers a measuring stick with which to assess news. Importantly, search engines and platforms can detect these indicators of trust and use them to surface authoritative news.

WHO’S BEHIND IT?

The nonpartisan Trust Project used comprehensive research to identify 37 “Trust Indicators” that people say give them greater confidence in the credibility of news. Publishing standards is one of eight core indicators of trustworthiness determined in collaboration with leaders of 75 news organizations. The Trust Project works with an international consortium of news organizations as well as external technology partners Facebook, Google, Twitter and Bing.

IS IT WORKING?

News organizations launching pilots of core indicators in late 2017 include The Washington Post, Mic, The Economist and several European news outlets. The initial results are promising: Initial tests of news consumers’ reaction to indicators created a “statistically significant shift in attitude about whether the site was trustworthy,” Trust Project director Sally Lehrman said.

HOW TO DO IT

News organizations can contact the Trust Project about participating in its next phase of implementation. For organizations that want to draft and publish policies, here are examples from news organizations in the pilot: Mic, The Economist, and the BBC.