

Project: “DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM”  
Project funded by the European Union

## Manual: **INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM**



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**INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM**

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## INTRODUCTION – INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Investigative journalism is a form of journalism in which journalists investigate deeply a topic of interest, such as a serious crime, political corruption or corporate fraud.

Investigative journalist could spend months or even years in investigation and the preparation of a single report. This type of journalism is mostly practiced in printed media, certain magazines, network stations and freelance journalists. Investigative journalism is also called reporting for responsibility.

In the following pages you will be briefly familiarized with the basics of investigative journalism, as well as how you can apply and practice it:

- **The basics of investigative journalism;**
- **Selection of topics to be investigated;**
- **Starting the investigation;**
- **Information sources, spinning of information;**
- **Forensic interview;**
- **Basic investigative tools;**
- **Creating a “story”;**
- **General legal and ethical principles of journalism.**



## 1. THE BASICS OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Investigative journalism represents discovering, reporting and presenting news that some other people are trying to hide. The investigative journalism is in fact very similar to the standard reporting, except in that the persons who are in the focus of the story will usually not help you in your story and very often times they will endeavor to prevent it from being published.

The basic task of journalists is to provide the viewers, listeners and readers with information on what is happening in the community and society around them. Reporters do this by revealing facts and presenting them in the media they work with.

Journalists usually have an easy task, which is to get to specific information and facts, in places like the courts, the Parliament, public meetings, when they report about disasters, religious or sport events.

People often try to “feed” journalists with different information. Indeed, in many countries, primary job of thousands of people is public relations, spokesperson, commentators and other briefers for the needs of journalists.



Despite such situation, many things are happening, things that people try to hide from the public entirely or partially. In most cases, they are related to private (personal) issues, which have no major impact on other stakeholders - such as poor family relations or bad report from school. Such personal information can remain secret, but they still represent a risk to the reputation of the subject of interest (individual, company, regulatory body, etc.).

In many other cases, governments, ministries, companies, organizations and individuals try to cover up decisions or events that have or could have a serious impact on other people. When journalists try to report exactly on such decisions or events, that someone is trying to hide or keep them secret, and then it is considered to be investigative journalism.

One very influential figure in the journalism history, The great media publisher Lord Northcliffe, or Alfred Charles Williams Hansworth, who is also a founder of the tabloid journalism, of the “Daily Mail”, “Daily Mirror” that represented a revolution at the beginning of XX century in the printed media, and for a while the owner of the “Observer and Times”, when he actually took them over, to saved them bankruptcy; Lord Northcliffe as a giant and revolutionary in the British journalism before the First World War wrote a few important statements, still considered valid nowadays, among others the crucial: “News is everything that somebody, somewhere is trying to suppress and conceal, while everything else is advertisement.”

Another very well known quotation of him is that “Only bad news is good news” or the first written sentence in the journalism textbooks “It’s not news if a dog bites man, but when a man bites a dog.”

In other words, investigative journalism is just the same as real journalism.

However, in the theory of journalism many theorists are attempting to define investigative journalism and place it into a separate genre, as a special type of journalism, mainly emphasizing the effort, time spent, acquired experience and money spent, as well as the danger arising from its practice. So they always describe it as “one of the hardest types of journalism as a job that requires a lot of effort and time.”

Yet, in the theory of journalism, in the attempt to define it, almost all authors have a single and common starting point which has to exist in order to define it investigative journalism.

That is, it has to be based on original investigative work of the journalist, aiming to disclose information that an individual or organization, or part of the government insists to hide it, but such information must be reasonable indication of a problem of general interest.

There are several reasons why every society needs investigative journalism. Here are some of them:

- People have the right to know about the society in which they live in. They have the right to know about decisions, which may affect them and their lives, even if the people in governance might want to keep them a secret.
- People in power, regardless if they are Government officials, local figures of influence in public or private enterprises might abuse authority they have at the moment. They may be corrupt, abuse their official position, violate laws or do things that could be damaging to other people or simply they may be incompetent or unable to perform their tasks correctly. People mostly try to hide such information from the public. Journalists should report on such abuses.
- The duty of journalists is to continuously monitor how well people in authority carry out their tasks, especially those who are elected by the citizens. Journalists should find out whether and up to what extent the promises made during the election are fulfilled. Politicians and others, who do not keep their promise, will try to hide certain things, even to prevent publication of such information. Journalists should try to publish them.
- Journalists cannot take justice into their own hands and do something specifically to those who behave badly or violate the law; their role is to report about it and hope that the community or society will do the rest, to punish offenders or change the system if it is wrong.

It is said that every reporter is an investigative journalist, or at least it should be. But it is better to say that any journalist could be a journalist investigator.

### **Who should be a subject of investigation?**

Journalists should be able and willing to reveal information about abuse, corruption and criminal activities of all fields of public life, but the main areas of investigation are:

### **The Government, municipalities and the court as the subject of investigation**

Subject of investigation could be the municipal councils, mayors all the way to ministers and Central Government, and sometimes even governments of other countries. Sometimes politicians and public administration are actually corrupted and thus should be reported and removed from

their positions, but very often they hide information on decisions taken, because they know that if the public finds out, it will not like such decisions, and they might lose their positions. Often people in power don't inform about certain contracts they have signed and they are ready to do everything so that such information does not reach the public at any cost. For some of them it is irrelevant the extent of the damage that can be caused by signing such contracts, they are only interested in their personal interests. Some leaders are too long in their positions and forget that the public has a right to know about their actions. When the public elects people as their representatives and pay taxes to a particular institution, it (the public) has the right to know what those selected representatives are doing during their term, while elected officials must be aware that their transparency can have a serious impact in the next elections.

### **Companies as a subject of investigation**

Information about some companies violating the law should be published, while the companies often want their activities to remain secret due to various reasons. Often the information that private companies have made some wrong assessment, which might have cost them a certain loss or information about their development plan are kept secret from the public and from the competition. Through their PR departments they feed the public only with news they find convenient to be seen or heard by the public, whereas everything else is attempted to remain concealed and if possible never disclosed.

Regardless if they are private companies, they also have responsibility in front the public, because they are part of the community as well. Therefore, each private company can be a subject of investigation.

Generally, each institution, every company, personalities with influence and a role in society regardless if they are financed by public or private money, if they do something outside the legal framework could also be a subject of investigative journalism, aiming to let the public learn about it.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

### **Is the news worth it?**

Many newspapers, radios and internet portals on daily basis receive many reports or requests from citizens to “investigate” some alleged wrongdoing. Journalists have to be careful and cautious when choosing which topic or story will be the subject of their “investigation” or exploration, because often some reports can be made just for “fun”, out of revenge or deliberate deception to harm someone. Before starting to investigate a particular topic, journalists should seriously also verify the relevance of the information, as well as the source who has delivered that information. After verifying the credibility of the acquired information, they decide whether and how to approach it.

### **Be cautious when selecting your investigation story.**

Following are some criteria to look out for when choosing investigative stories: Are they something new, unusual and attractive to people? Sometimes some stories can affect just one individual or may be irrelevant and not worth to be analyzed. Bear in mind that your time and resources are limited, so you will not be able to commit to every idea that comes to you for a story. Use your judgment of a journalist.

Always stay alert for any potential stories. Sometimes people will bring you a story themselves, but often you do need to detect them. You might read or hear somewhere of an idea for an investigative story, but a good idea can pop up in your mind even while brushing your teeth. A good journalist never allows to losing or leaving out possible evidences for the story, he always takes notes, because later they might come into hand.

Listen to all the conversations of people, even the rumors on the bus, on the street, and often your barber can be a good source of information that would open an investigative story. Street talk may often be the starting information to open an investigative story, but NEVER write a story simply based on rumors and gossip.

### **Provide the facts!**

Since investigative reporting includes digging to find hidden facts, your task will not be as simple as reporting from a daily press conference. People in positions will always try to hide the truth from you. It is your duty to collect as many relevant facts as possible from as many as possible as people to support the story that you are investigating. The information you publish has to be accurate, therefore always double-check them.

Never anticipate dramatic results. True investigative journalism rarely looks like what we have seen in the movies. Most of the investigations require many hours of work in gathering many tiny details, which is time consuming. You and your editor must be aware of this, when you decide to prepare an investigative story. If you don't get enough time, you might not be able to successfully investigate the investigative story.

### **Connect the facts**

As you collect the facts, find their mutual connection, in order to make sure that they make sense. Investigative reporting usually looks like stacking a puzzle. At the beginning you have a bunch of pieces, but if slowly and carefully connect the pieces, the puzzle will show the real picture. However unlike an ordinary puzzle, when compiling the investigative story you will get all the pieces from the beginning, in this case you alone must identify the missing parts and find them.

### **Verifying the facts**

Remember, you are trying to find information that some people are trying to keep them secret. Traditional sources of information will not help in the investigation; therefore you will not be able to use them to verify the facts. They will probably try to act against and look for your mistakes in everything you explore and publish. If you make a mistake somewhere in the reporting, it is almost certain that they will sue you. Therefore you must always carefully check the facts. As an advice you can take the example of one of the most famous investigative stories the so-called Watergate Affair. Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein investigated a crime that eventually led to the withdrawal of the US President Richard Nixon from the Office. They knew their enemies will be waiting them to make a mistake along the way, so they agreed that the basic rule is not to publish the facts which have not been confirmed by at least two sources. This is a good example you could learn from and follow it if you aim to be a good investigative journalist.

However, remember that a lot of people whom you might interview about corruption could actually be corrupted as well. CRIMINALS TELL LIES, therefore suspiciously observe on any information that you get and always verify it with someone else, it is recommended to be someone you trust.



## Proof

In addition to the collection of facts, you should also gather evidence that would support those particular facts. This is especially important if you are sued for defamation due to your investigative story. Courts will only accept facts that can be proved. If someone tells you something in front of the camera or as an official statement, on the record, you will be able to show your notes or recorded material to the court, but if it is a written statement, it would not hurt to have it signed by the person you have interviewed, this would be same as if you got a legally valid statement under oath. The original documents are usually accepted as court evidence, but beware the copies may not, if they are not supported by evidence provided by the owner of the originals

## Credible sources

When investigating corruption or abuse, you will come across people who will give information only if you promise that you will never reveal their identity. This often happens when you investigate crime, because your resources are afraid of possible retaliation.

If you agree to these terms, do not forget that sometime in the future in the investigative procedure the judge can order you to tell the name of the confidential source who gave you the information. In such a situation you would be violating the law by refusing to reveal the name of your source and even end up in prison as an accomplice and for contempt of court.

If you promise to protect confidential source, you must do it, unless the source allows you to do otherwise. Therefore, if you are not ready to go to jail to protect your source, do not make such promise at all.

## Threats

Persons involved in the investigative story may threaten you to stop investigation. Threats can be of psychological nature or business nature (threaten to cease to advertise in your media). Sometimes the threats are even on personal basis alluding to physical violence. Mostly threats of physical violence do not happen, because the persons you are writing the story about come



to realize that if they hurt you it would only complicate their situation even more. However each threat ought to be reported immediately to your editor or the lawyer of the medium. This will help you share your concerns with someone who has more power and knowledge and could help you. It would help if the person who is threatening you is informed that you reported the threat to the authorities in your media. If you have witnesses or evidence of the threat, you can use them in your

investigative story, but only after counseling with your lawyer.

Investigative journalism always leads to unpleasant conflicts, therefore if you feel that it is too much for you to deal with such situations, stay away from investigative stories.

## Operate in accordance with the law

Journalists have no special privileges, even when investigating corruption. Unlike the police, journalists are not licensed to wiretap other people's phone calls or open other people's letters and emails. Journalists are not allowed to enter premises unless they get approval from its owner.

You have to work within the prescribed legal rules and regulations, but additionally to that, you may not use unethical methods to get to information. For example, you may not pretend to be someone else, for whom people would consider to be bound they should provide him the required information, such as a police officer, a government representative or tax inspector.

However, you do not always have to introduce yourself that you are a journalist. Whenever you have doubts about something you want to do for the investigation of the story, ask for legal advice the editor or your company lawyer.



## 2. HOW AND WHERE TO FIND A STORY WORTH INVESTIGATING?

Finding a good idea to investigate a story is not easy. Generally it is hardest part in investigative journalism.

In addition we point out different alternative ways and where to find a good topic for investigation:

### **Your personal experience**

Very often journalists complain that there are no good stories that could be subject of investigation. When you want to start an investigation, the best way is to rely on your own experience. Explore a story that you have been personally involved in. If you wonder whether your personal experience or personal information related to you may be a good subject for investigation, the answer is YES. However, in order the story to be a successful one, you shouldn't rely on memory, whenever you smell a story which you can develop based on your experience, take notes, make recordings or take photos. Then, you present your potential story to your editor, if he approves it, all the footage, the written citations or collected documents will be of paramount importance to you.

### **Your friends and family member's experience**

The experience of the people who surround you in everyday life can be a solid foundation to start an investigative story. Be aware, their experiences can be nothing more, but a starting point. Members of your family, friends or even neighbors may be in positions where you can come up with a great investigative story. First you need to do is to find out who works in which position and whether and how you could extract an interesting information from that particular individual. However, you should not forget that after all it is a relative or a friend that is being involved; therefore you should not do anything without informing them about your intention. Additionally, do not forget that regardless your relations with them they are not obliged to wish to help you at any cost.

### **Local newspapers, radio stations and the official gazette**

Listen and read all the time. Analyze everything you hear, observe things from a different aspect; an investigative story may appear where you don't expect, as part of an advertisement in the local newspaper, a debate show on radio. On a daily basis, newspapers publish vacancies for employment, different tenders for supplies or business plan decisions and activities of the companies. Read and maybe that's exactly where you will find the topic for investigation. The radios often have debates where you can hear things that are beyond the standard PR releases, that's where your story might be.

Read the official gazette, there you will most certainly find at least one investigative story in every issue.

### **Surveys, analysis the statistical data**

Thoroughly look through all the conducted surveys or analysis by the state institutions and private companies on various topics.

Open the site to the State Statistical Office <http://www.stat.gov.mk/> on a regular basis. In the published statistics for the state, you'll certainly find information worth to be investigated.

Check the reports published by the Ombudsman, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and all other civil society associations regularly from all fields of life.

### **Read and surf on the internet**

The internet is an unlimited space in which you can find lot of information from all areas of life at any time. “Dig in for” information from your area of interest in the investigation, you can easily find something that would be a starting point for a new investigation.

### **Check the public information**

Lately all state and municipal institutions adhere to the rule to inform the citizens about their activities. Their bulletin boards and web portals can be the place you can find information that would be valuable for investigation. However, keep in mind, despite the obligation to inform the public about an activity, if the opinion dislikes the information, it might end up as an article of lowest priority in a corner of the web site so that nobody would notice it. Thoroughly search through the portals and announcements of the public institutions.

### 3. STARTING AN INVESTIGATION

Once you find the sources and get information from them, there comes a point when you feel you should start investigating the story, but it is impossible to jump directly from the idea into starting the investigation, all you've got is just the starting point. Investigative stories carry the weight of social responsibility and different legal risks, so before you start investigating you must consult the team that you would be working with. Get the editor's approval, make sure that you have the support of colleagues, check the sources and make a plan for implementing the story.

- First you need a framework of structured questions, which will enable you to carry on with the idea of the theoretical story and hypotheses or questions that your investigative project should provide answers to.
- Carefully plan your investigation, think about justifications, resources, possible obstacles, timing and required budget.
- Through the plan you pave the path which your story shall move through
- Consider all sources: Primary, secondary, documents, people, and the digital form
- Be careful with the use of each source and make a methodology that will allow you to dig information from appropriate sources

## 4. SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SPINNING OF INFORMATION

### Potential sources of information

The sources of information for your investigative story may be various. In the next few paragraphs I will give you only a fraction of them and what to pay attention to while receiving and applying the information received from sources.

A source of information can be: different witnesses, current and former associates, experts in the field you're investigating, government and representatives of local institutions and so on.

- How much can sources be useful depends not only on the sources themselves but also from you, how effectively you can use them.
- Start with the specific subject of investigation, and then make a map of witnesses, people who are currently involved or have been involved previously, find experts and relevant officials and other contacts that could contribute to the story, and then make their selection.
- Carefully select the experts and find a way to deal with the various expert opinions without having to break the arguments.
- Pay particular attention to the organizing of contacts who act as "gate guardians and openers".
- Apply secret techniques only after you'll have carefully decided about the importance of the investigative story in correlation to the public interest.
- Evaluate the sources and documents that you manage methodologically. Apply the rule of "verification by two sources" to ensure that you have a confirmation for each information you plan to post.
- Avoid be spinned or used. Ask and check what is the reason and the motif that certain information is delivered to you..
- Try to persuade your sources to give you "on the record" information, and if they don't accept, cautiously convince them that you will not to reveal their identity.
- Avoid paying money to your sources for anything or in any way, because it may be misperceived as payment for the story.
- Protect yourself by securing all the data, statements and original documents acquired from your major sources
- Check whether the same story has ever been investigated before, if any segment of it has been explored at all.
- The most important principle is that, the relation between you and your sources is sacred. Do not make promises you cannot fulfill, you must be willing to endanger your freedom in order to preserve the identity of the source, if you promise it.

## 5. INTERVIEWING

The basic principles of planning and preparing are also related to the processing of every interview, though for processing interviews intended for investigative stories you need to be more experienced and have capabilities and a slightly different approach in carrying out the task. In the preparation of an interview intended for investigative story, the element of time is essential, and often the context is different. Therefore, when interviewing, you will need to apply a variety of strategies and techniques to ask questions in order to eventually achieve a different objective than when you perform a standard interview.

The preparation for an interview is crucial. Dedicate as much time as you can to investigate the topic on which you're doing the interview, collect the primary documents, structure the questions and if possible test them.

Before performing an interview with someone, answer the following questions yourselves:

- What is the topic on which you need concrete answers?
- Who is the person that can give you the most appropriate information?
- Whether and what is it you want to achieve by interviewing a certain person?
- Which interviewing format is best suitable to the given topic and person?
- Which interviewing technique should you apply?
- Where would you conduct the interview? The process of interviewing on camera is more complex.

Once you have answers to all these questions

- Set the interview in order to fit the circumstances of the story.
- Do not change your position. Even if the interview starts to develop in a different direction stay calm and do not forget that your neutral behavior when presenting positions gives better results.
- Have a strategy for the whole interview. Always start the interview with more relaxed and general questions to loosen the interlocutor and slowly during the interview move towards more direct and more specific questions, this way you will enable the interviewee to give you the answers to specific aspects.
- Use a technique of "mapping" the important issues, take notes on the contradictory responses of the interviewee, so that later you can ask additional questions.
- Always ask simple, clear and direct questions.
- A good interview is not an interview in which the journalist dominates the interlocutor.
- Before starting the conversation always agree on the basic rules (for example, whether the information is ON or OF THE RECORD) in order to avoid problems later in making the story.
- Do not forget that the questions are not important, what matters are the answers. Journalists may often say that there are no stupid questions, there are only stupid answers.

- The basic rule is never to ask questions that would make possible the answer to be reduced to a “Yes” or “No”. Such answer doesn’t say anything, and it is particularly unpleasant in electronic interviews.
- Never ask multiple questions at once.
- Follow responses carefully and if necessary make an additional question to the already posed question (follow up question) in order to draw specific information. Follow up question may be done by a derived quote or simply by rephrasing a specific part of the conversation. Make sure this part of the question to be direct, specific and simple.
- Control the pace and do not fear the moments of silence.
- Study the interlocutor’s strategy in order to discover whether he is avoiding the answers and if he is trying to conceal something.
- Not every interlocutor is prepared to provide good answers during an interview. If you detect that he is scared try to relax him by simple conversations before and at the beginning of the interview. Do not allow his fear of an interview (especially on camera) to be the reason to give up.
- If you need, then use covert interview, but be careful whether it corresponds to the ethical and moral norms. Implementation of this type of interview requires special training.
- Never draw answers in the interview out of the context.

## 6. TEN POINTS ON THE WAY TO INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

### 1. Expand your definition of investigative journalism

When you decide to spend your time in investigative journalism, then you will have to expand your definition of what you're going to investigate. The perception that investigative journalism is only about the search for money, power and corruption affairs, will often discourage you, because catching the trace on such a story is too complicated and intensive process, and often a subject to manipulations.

Therefore look around you, everything you deem suspicious or unclear may be a subject of a good investigative story. People want to read answers on questions that are very cryptic to them. Every day they see them, and yet do not have a logical explanation.

### 2. Build institutional support for your investigation

Let's make one thing clear! Investigative journalism is not an independent process, but group and teamwork. It's not an individual sport. Yes, it mostly depends on the personal impulse of the investigator, but he also needs help. Doing it all alone, or himself alone it means to be set to fail from the start.

For a good investigative journalist the most important thing is to have a team, or institutional (editorial) support. But you have to keep in mind that, that team and institutional unit is not formed partially depending on the object being investigated. It must be a team building effort since it is an evolutionary process in all editorial offices, and not just an ad hoc assembly of a few individuals. This team must a good internal understanding, or as they say "By the book".

### 3. Create and maintain your sources

When it comes to the perception that independent access is swimming in an open ocean without a compass, you must bear in mind that despite the team inside, an indirect team on the outside is needed as well. Such team is known as sources of information. Although, many of those who have that status and are in that role, do not consider it as the most suitable, and they call themselves "friends of justice", still investigative journalists have to find, as well as to support their sources.

It can be achieved through an open approach to communicating with a wide range of people who may or actually have contact with the relevant information. It is a process that is not done overnight. It is simply the hardest and the longest road in the evolvement of a journalist into an investigator. For creating mutual trust, the growth of that circle, sometimes it takes years.

It is essential to establish mutual trust between the journalist and the source. But it does not mean that the journalist should stop only there. Always, and I emphasize, always provide an extra two sources independent from one another.

### 4. Get well informed about the topic

It's not exaggerated if we say that the journalist must become an expert on the topic he is investigating. You have to know everything that has been publicly announced until the beginning of the investigation, the official positions of the parties in the stories, you must be familiar with, know what is important and what is secondary.

Nowadays, society and advances in technology enable easy process of searching and finding information via the internet, yet it is very important that every journalist builds his own archive.

#### **5. Search for documents. Maybe there's more than you think**

Original documents provide most reliable evidence. You must work hard to provide all the available documents for the story. The first step is to use all legal forms of access to public information. You then need to use your connections through the network of sources of information to acquire the most authentic documents. Here you should look out at legislation, to ensure that these documents do not have the sign of a “state secret”, it is something that will hinder proving your investigation.

But, everything that is a document from the public access, registration folders, annual reports, archives, data ... it all must be in your reach.

Yet, what you must keep in mind is the fact that sometimes the documents alone are worthless if the journalist does not know how to read and analyze them. That is why there is the team.

#### **6. Get out the office and look around. Encourage, make the journalistic material revive**

Journalism is not created in the newsroom, even less investigative journalism. The most credible source and information is the one that personal eye of the journalist will see. The witness investigator is the key to the development of a story. So, preparing yourself in the newsroom and off to the field.

#### **7. Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate**

This is a very important stage of the investigative process. Why? Because a process of investigation may last long, may come across many crossroads along the way that should be walked through by the information that constantly circulate. It is very important, extremely important not to get lost in your own investigation. Therefore you must constantly evaluate the process. What does it mean? It means that you need to constantly analyze the level, to which investigation is and whether to go deeper, or perhaps you should change the direction and detect if it is the right moment or when is the right time for publication? Ultimately you need to constantly assess whether to continue the investigation, or put an end on it and give it up? Within this process the issue of available financial and logistics resources is particularly important. Very often it depends on them to what extent we can deepen our investigation.

#### **8. Checking and verifying**

What does this step mean!? It is a process in which you should get feedback. To get the stakeholder's feedback. It is the time to secure the famously called “second page”. It can be a very complicated process, yet without realizing you don't have an investigative story, rather you will have a “racketeering journalism”. No one will believe your story if you're judging someone, without providing his truth about him.

Therefore everything you consider to be a system of communication has to be utilized to get to the position and the reaction of the person involved. If formal communications for a conversation are not successful, then you need to get out on the field. Where you can and you will succeed, sit around and wait for his reaction.

This step is crucial about the way the final phase of your investigation is going to look. That's why you have to prepare yourself for the interview with the concerned party.



- What do you exactly want to draw from the party concerned party;**
- Approach. "I am making an article so your views are needed"...**
- Leave nothing out**
- Ask questions again and again, until you get the needed response**
- Insist on confirmation, clarity and precision of answers. "So, to be clear, I just like to once again go over the subject.**
- Simple questions.**
- Do not evaluate the answer as bad or good. Analyze it, and allow him to talk, the more the interlocutor speaks, the better it is for you.**
- Remember! Your task is not to outsmart the interlocutor, but to get the answer from him.**
- The end of the interview isn't the end of the conversations. Always leave space for possible further consultation on something, which you feel is not clear to you.**

#### **9. How to approach major investigation. Organize your material**

Good organizing is the primary step to a successful investigation, and thus for it to be accepted by the viewers, listeners or readers...from the audience. The text of the story must be divided into parts that correspond to each case, and they are in a reasonable relation to the whole.

Here you should be considered all options to make it most attractive to the reader. If the story is possible in parts, then consider the alternative of partial disclosures. The division should be in separate elements and factual explanations. The material proves should be precise and clear. Everything you have available must be made available and understandable to the public. Specify the evidence.

#### **10. Journalist investigation in everyday journalism. Make time.**

There is no specific time of work hours in the investigative story. You will have to organize your time for everything else, while time for journalism is from waking up until going to bed. Sometimes the most important information or evidence will come to you outside your working hours or during your daily tasks.

## 7. BASIC TOOLS USED IN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Investigative journalists can use one or more of these investigative journalism tools, even for preparing an ordinary daily story.

- Analysis of documents, such as lawsuits, verdicts and other legal documents, tax databases, government reports, regulatory body reports and corporate financial submissions
- Public databases
- Investigation of technical issues, including oversight of government and business practices, as well as their effects
- Investigation of social and legal issues
- Searching for data sources to which you can subscribe, such as <http://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/gateway.page>
- Searching for bases with numerous official interviews, and databases with information from so-called whistleblowers
- You can use data management tools through a computer software or a well-developed safety system, so you can build the story, and at the same time to have total control over it.
- In Macedonia you can use online databases with the laws and legal procedures, such as <http://pravo.org.mk/>
- CAR Computer assisted reporting is one of the most practical tools for investigative journalism in the world. Unfortunately it's hardly used in Macedonia
- View and analyze numerical data, you can get an idea for a story or an approach from a different angle there.
- Improve your capabilities to analyze the figures, since numbers can always give an interesting story

## 8. CREATING THE STORY

- It is necessary to establish a method of processing information, which is collected prior to begin the creation of the story.



- Collect all the facts, quotes and ideas, and cross reference them in order to see whether they are contradictory.

- Observed the difference between the information collected and the actual evidence, specifically in the investigative story make sure the arguments are logical and that you not to exaggerate or minimize the specific problem due to careless generalized writing.

- Construct your story in a few paragraphs:

- Little stories that form the material as a whole from one aspect. Then arrange the paragraphs, so that you could display the path of the story you want to write. Use carefully selected quotations to add value to the story. Avoid drawing quotes out of the context.

- Write at least a trial version before writing the final story. Use that trial version to identify pros and cons, as well as to plan further investigation, of course if necessary. It might take a few trial versions

before you're satisfied with the outcome.

- Clarity is the most important quality when writing investigative story. If you do not have confidence that you are a good investigative journalist, simply arrange the facts clearly and in a specific order.
- If you want a more sophisticated structure for the story, formulas of WALL STREET JOURNAL, HIGH FIVES or PYRAMID work just great for investigative stories also.
- If you decide to use the approach of narrative journalism note that the focus should be the individual story or an incident, just hold the attention in the story of the essence, avoid too much maneuvering with less relevant information.
- A good introduction and conclusion are very important. Spend more time working on them. Introduction invites the reader or viewer to read or view the story to the end, whereas the conclusion leaves the final impression about the truth.
- When writing a story for electronic media stick to the video and audio portions and write for "the ear." Remember your audience will see and hear, not read, and therefore it cannot be undone, so you will have to make the structure and language easy to understand. The rules in the preparation of investigative story for electronic media are the same as for daily reporting.

Always write short, simple sentences so that everyone can understand. Carefully choose the tone pieces (quotes), do not repeat the statements with what you type in the text and read it in off tone. The ready story must be dynamic in order not to be boring to the viewers or listeners. When using figures always round them up, and in order to be more persuasive when you want to emphasize that you truly were on the scene make a Stand Up in which you say one of the sentences planned to be in the investigative story.

- The story written for printed media may be posted on the web in the same way as in the print media. It is advisable to amend it in order to adapt to the habits of visitors to the web portal. In particular the division of the story into smaller parts as well as providing appropriate indexing and linking will increase its rating on the internet.
- Use social networks as a supporting tool for better visibility of the information. In Macedonia Facebook, which according to the unofficial data has over 600 thousand users, is especially popular and the option of targeted boost helps specific information get to the right place. The second most popular social media in Macedonia is Twitter, where you can tweet the link to the text and thus more readers would have access to read the investigative story.

## 9. ETHICAL AND GENERAL LEGAL PRINCIPLES IN JOURNALISM

Respecting the truth and the public's right to obtain information are the fundamental principles of journalism. Journalists search, discover, record, ask questions, sometimes entertain, comment, but remember as well. They inform citizens and underpin democracy. They analyze the government, but at the same time control it, however they should be responsible and accountable.

All journalists, regardless if they work on an everyday story or deal with investigative journalism must always rely on the following 10 ethical standards:

1. Report and interpret honestly, commit to accuracy, fairness and disclosure of basic facts. You may not suppress or conceal relevant available facts and do not manipulate the truth.
2. Do everything in your power to have both sides, and make sure they get an equal opportunity to respond.
3. Do not place unnecessary emphasis based on personal perception of character, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religion or physical or intellectual disabilities.
4. Do not let self-interest, or any belief, commitment, payment or gift to undermine accuracy, fairness or independence.
5. Discover the conflicts of interest which affect or may affect the accuracy, integrity and independence of journalism.
6. Do not allow advertising or commercial promotion to undermine your accuracy, fairness and integrity.
7. Use fair, responsible and honest means to obtain information. Introduce yourself and your employer before seeking an interview for publication. Do not exploit the vulnerability of some individuals or their ignorance to the media.
8. Use current audiovisual pieces that are accurate and true. Any manipulation of such would lead readers, listeners and viewers astray.
9. Don't do plagiarism.
10. Respect other people's personal grief and desire for privacy. Journalists have the right to be resisted to coercion or imposition.



Journalistic freedom is guaranteed and regulated by international legal framework that guarantees substantial rights, freedom is also guaranteed by national legal codes that sometimes in some countries tend to be more restrictive.

Laws on defamation exist to protect individuals' dignity and reputation. Defamation is an offense for publishing anything that can impact a person's reputation. One is responsible for defamation even in situations when you have downloaded information from other media,

when quoting someone, or you have found something on the internet. Your primary defense in this situation would be that you have published the truth in public, but in order not to lose the case in court you must have evidence that is considered to be valid in your country.

Keep all materials and evidence safe, as well as contacts with the witnesses of the story that you consider it is, or you feel it could become a subject to a lawsuit for defamation until expiry period in which you might be sued.

All individuals, even public figures are entitled to privacy. Be careful when making a story not to cross the red line.

Laws that exist for keeping state secrets for national security can often be abused to limit the freedom of journalism.

Everyday reporting and operation in investigative stories also demand daily decisions related to ethics and morality.







