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Digital media publishers must lift their game and support their staff

The series of errors which led to the sacking of a Daily Mail Australia reporter this week are symptomatic of the lack of resources and absence of oversight experienced by young journalists in digital media.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) says that while journalists must be held accountable for their mistakes, it is unfair to expect junior staff to bear all the responsibility for errors which are the result of excessive workloads and cuts to sub-editing and other normal editorial processes.

Digital media employers should provide more support to reporting staff, who are frequently employed with minimal training and are expected to produce several stories a day.

At the very least, stories should go through a normal copy-editing process, said Katelin McInerney, director of MEAA Media.

McInerney said the error reportedly came after the reporter had been required to file five stories that morning. According to reports, Daily Mail Australia staff are required to upload their stories onto the website without going through any copy-editing process.

“Errors like the one made by the Daily Mail Australia journalist are inevitable in an environment which places quantity of content above quality, and does not provide the extra layer of checking that comes from sub-editors,” she said.

“The errors that led to her sacking would have been picked up by sub-editor and never seen the light of day.

“Good journalism requires editing – it is an integral part of the quality control and ethical obligations that more and more companies are outsourcing or pushing back onto already time-poor journalists.

“The fault in cases where basic editing processes are not implemented or followed lies with management and their failure to have adequate systems in place that provide the necessary checks and balances.”

In consultation with members working in digital media, MEAA has developed a [Charter for Good Jobs in Digital Media](#), which should be fairly paid, respected and have safe hours of work. “We are increasingly concerned that the management of digital media publishers are abandoning the practices of good journalism, placing intolerable pressure upon their employees,” she said.

“Regardless of the medium they work in – print, online or broadcast – journalists should have proper training, support and supervision. Unfortunately, that is often not the case, and publishers are letting down their staff.”

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