

# MARKKULA CENTER FOR APPLIED ETHICS RELEASES TRANSPARENCY GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE ONLINE NEWS DISTRIBUTION

*Roundtable Seeks Public Comment on  
New Recommendations in Effort to Better  
Support Democracy*

SANTA CLARA, CALIF., USA, November 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Santa Clara University's [Markkula Center for Applied Ethics](#) and its Journalism and Media Ethics Program announced the development of a [set of principles](#) that news platforms (social media and internet search companies who distribute news) can adopt to exercise ethical online news distribution practices.



## Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

*at Santa Clara University*

Markkula Center for Applied Ethics releases new  
guideline for responsible distribution of online news

The document is a set of recommendations from a cross-functional convening of leaders from technology, journalism, and academia, whose common interest is that both the creation of news and its distribution must better serve democracy. The series of four roundtable meetings took place between summer '21 and '22.

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*Subbu Vincent, Markkula  
Center for Applied Ethics*

After defining the problem, outlining key terminology, and following an applied ethics approach, the group's recommendations focused on the concept that news platforms and aggregators make their distribution mechanics more transparent. The Markkula Center is seeking public comment on the recommendations through December. They can be viewed and commented on at: <https://bit.ly/NewsDistributionEthics>

“Platforms that distribute news and information rarely collaborate, yet they may hold the key to managing

misinformation via social media,” said Don Heider, executive director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics.

“News is a public good, both for citizens and communities worldwide,” said Subramaniam Vincent, director of Journalism and Media Ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. “Since social media, search, and news aggregator platforms distribute the news—sometimes personalized or influenced by the user’s network—news distribution both carries and shapes public discourse and, consequently, impacts democracy.”

“The ability to distribute content widely via social media has led to increased misinformation and polarization,” said Cheryl Thompson-Morton, Black Media Initiative director, Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY. “My hope is that this work will lead to Black and community news outlets being more visible on platforms to protect our communities from misinformation.”

“Journalists, technologists, and platforms need to work together to create news distribution systems that enable self-determination, that do not harm our communities, and that empower the kinds of conversations that are essential to democracies,” said Connie Moon Sehat, Hacks/Hackers researcher-at-large and director, News Quality Initiative.

Vincent noted that content moderation receives tremendous attention in the media, but news distribution happens every second. “Starting with a foundation of ethics for news distribution, particularly for democracies, is as critical as the evolution of content moderation policies for user-generated content,” added Vincent.

Transparency will help build a mechanism for oversight and accountability for responsible news distribution. “In the ultimate analysis, oversight will benefit everyday news consumers because it means potentially less misinformation in the news, fewer stoked controversies soaking up air time, and more clarity on tricky topics,” said Vincent.

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics thanks [Craig Newmark Philanthropies](#) for their support of this project.

#### About the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

Founded in 1986 with a seed grant and initial endowment from Linda and A.C. “Mike” Markkula Jr., the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University brings the traditions of ethical thinking to bear on real world problems. Beyond a full range of programs for the SCU community, the Center also serves professionals in fields from business to health care, from government to the social sector, providing innovative approaches to problems from fake news to privacy protection. Through its website and international collaborations, the Center brings ethical decision-making resources to a global audience. For more information, please visit: <https://www.scu.edu/ethics/>.

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