



DRACONIC REALMS CREATIONS

COMMUNICATE TRUTH. CREATE IMPACT. INSPIRE REALMS.

We the People



Eric Bryden
FOUNDER & CEO



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION LAW & ETHICS HANDBOOK

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEGAL, ETHICAL,
AND RESPONSIBLE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION



INTEGRITY
Build Trust



LAW
Know the Rules



ETHICS
Do What's Right



PRIVACY
Protect People



INNOVATION
Use Technology
Responsibly



LEGACY
Create Impact

AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK FOR DRACONIC REALMS CREATIONS
2026 EDITION



DRACONIC REALMS CREATIONS

Digital Communication Law & Ethics Handbook

ILLUSTRATED EDITION · VERSION 1.0 · AUGUST 29,
2026

Eric Bryden
Founder & CEO

Digital Communication Law Handbook

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DRACONIC REALMS CREATIONS

Digital Communication Law & Ethics Handbook

VERSION 1.0 · AUGUST 29, 2026

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Draconic Realms Creations

Southern New Hampshire University

COM 530

Professor Doug Waters

Dedication

This handbook was developed as the final project for COM 530: Law and Ethics at Southern New Hampshire University.

It also serves as Version 1.0 of the future Draconic Realms Creations Employee Handbook.

Special thanks to Professor Doug Waters for encouraging creativity, innovation, and practical application throughout this course.

Preface

Digital communication has become one of the primary ways organizations interact with customers, employees, business partners, and the public. Websites, social media platforms, blogs, email marketing, podcasts, artificial intelligence, and digital advertising allow organizations to communicate instantly with audiences around the world. While these technologies create tremendous opportunities, they also introduce legal responsibilities that every employee must understand.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide employees with Draconic Realms Creations with a practical introduction to the laws and regulations governing digital communication. Understanding these legal principles helps employees communicate responsibly, protect the company's reputation, reduce legal risk, and uphold ethical standards in every form of digital communication.

This handbook examines the First Amendment and its application to digital communication, reviews landmark court cases that continue to shape communication law, explains how those legal decisions influence modern business communication, and concludes with recommended legal best practices for employees who create digital content on behalf of the organization.

Handbook Overview

The Digital Communication Law Handbook serves as an introductory guide for employees who create, manage, or distribute digital communications for Draconic Realms Creations. As a communications and digital media company, our success depends upon producing content that is accurate, ethical, creative, and legally compliant.

This handbook covers:

01 The First Amendment and its relationship to digital communication

02 Landmark court decisions affecting online communication

03 How businesses have adapted their messaging because of communication law

04 Best legal practices employees should follow when creating digital content

The information contained in this handbook is intended to educate employees and encourage sound decision-making. While it does not replace legal advice, it establishes a foundation for responsible digital communication within the organization.

PART I — DIGITAL COMMUNICATION LAW • CHAPTER 05 OF 24

The First Amendment and Digital Communication



SECTION I: LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to peacefully assemble, and the right to petition the government (U.S. Const. amend. I). These constitutional protections form the foundation of communication law in the United States and remain highly relevant in today's digital environment.

Although digital communication technologies did not exist when the Constitution was written, the principles established by the First Amendment continue to apply to modern forms of communication such as websites, blogs, podcasts, streaming platforms, online news organizations, and social media.

KEY CONCEPT

One important concept employees must understand is that the First Amendment primarily protects individuals from government restrictions on speech. It does not require private companies such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, or TikTok to publish every piece of content submitted by users. These private platforms establish their own community standards and may remove content that violates their policies.

EXAMPLE

Understanding the balance between constitutional protections and legal limitations helps organizations communicate confidently while reducing unnecessary legal risk.

Landmark Court Cases



New York Times Co. v. Sullivan (1964)



Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union (1997)



Packingham v. North Carolina (2017)



New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)



Changes to Company Content and Messaging

Landmark court decisions have significantly influenced how organizations communicate in the digital environment. Many companies now require employees to complete communication law training before representing the organization online. Businesses have adopted formal social media policies outlining appropriate employee conduct, confidentiality requirements, and acceptable online behavior. Employees are expected to distinguish personal opinions from official company statements and avoid publishing information that could damage the organization's reputation or violate legal standards.

Organizations have also strengthened their fact-checking procedures. Marketing departments, communication professionals, and public relations teams routinely verify information before publishing digital content to reduce the risk of defamation claims or misleading advertising (*New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 1964).

Copyright compliance has become another essential practice. Companies now license photographs, videos, music, graphics, and software rather than using copyrighted material without permission. Employees receive training on copyright, fair use, trademarks, and intellectual property to avoid legal disputes.

Privacy protections have expanded as businesses collect increasing amounts of customer information online. Organizations now implement privacy policies, obtain user consent when appropriate, protect confidential information, and follow applicable privacy regulations. The rapid growth of artificial intelligence has introduced additional responsibilities. Many organizations now require human review of AI-generated content before publication to verify factual accuracy, eliminate bias, protect confidential information, and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

Best Legal Practices for Employees

To promote responsible digital communication, employees should follow these best legal practices whenever creating or publishing content on behalf of Draconic Realms Creations.

✓ Verify all information before publication using reliable sources.

✓ Avoid defamatory or false statements about individuals or organizations.

✓ Respect copyright, trademark, and intellectual property laws.

✓ Obtain permission before using copyrighted images, music, videos, or written content.

✓ Protect confidential company and customer information.

✓ Clearly distinguish personal opinions from official company communications.

✓ Follow all organizational social media policies.

✓ Respect privacy rights and obtain appropriate consent when necessary.

✓ Review AI-generated content for accuracy before publication.

✓ Maintain professionalism and ethical conduct across all digital platforms.



Document the sources used when creating digital content.



Consult supervisors or legal counsel whenever uncertainty exists regarding communication law.

Following these practices helps employees reduce legal risk while supporting ethical, transparent, and effective communication.

References & AI Use Statement

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99 AI USE STATEMENT

Portions of this handbook were developed with the assistance of ChatGPT (OpenAI) for brainstorming, organization, grammar review, APA formatting guidance, and refinement of ideas. I reviewed, edited, and verified legal information using course materials and authoritative legal sources, and I take full responsibility for the final work submitted. Images were created with generative AI using my original prompts and were refined and formatted in Adobe Photoshop.

Introduction

Digital communication allows organizations to connect with audiences around the world in seconds. That same speed also increases the potential for misinformation, copyright violations, privacy concerns, and unethical messaging. As the founder of Draconic Realms Creations (DRC), I believe every employee has a responsibility to communicate honestly, ethically, and legally while representing the company. This code of ethics establishes the standards all employees should follow when creating digital content, communicating with customers, developing marketing materials, managing social media, producing music, publishing educational resources, or interacting with online communities.

The guidelines below were developed after reviewing professional ethical standards from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), and principles discussed throughout this course regarding media law, free speech, truthfulness, accountability, and digital responsibility.

Analysis of Existing Professional Codes of Ethics

Although professional organizations serve different industries, their ethical principles are remarkably similar. The Society of Professional Journalists ([SPJ], 2014) emphasizes seeking truth, minimizing harm, acting independently, and remaining accountable. Likewise, the Public Relations Society of America ([PRSA], n.d.) highlights honesty, fairness, advocacy, independence, expertise, and loyalty. These organizations recognize that ethical communication depends upon public trust.

Another common theme is transparency. Ethical communicators clearly identify sponsored content, avoid deceptive editing practices, and correct mistakes when they occur. Respect for intellectual property is another shared principle, requiring communicators to properly credit creators and comply with copyright laws.

Finally, nearly every professional code emphasizes accountability. Ethical communicators accept responsibility for their work, admit errors, and correct misinformation instead of ignoring or hiding mistakes. These recurring themes formed the foundation for the Draconic Realms Creations Code of Ethics.

Ethical Frameworks Behind Our Code

The Draconic Realms Creations Code of Ethics is also informed by established ethical frameworks. Kant’s categorical imperative supports truthfulness because communicators should never use deception or treat audiences merely as a means to an end. Utilitarianism requires considering whether a message produces more benefit than harm. Rawls’s justice-as-fairness asks communicators to create standards they would consider fair regardless of their position or identity. The Potter Box provides a practical process for defining the situation, identifying values, applying ethical principles, examining loyalties, and selecting a defensible action. Together, these frameworks support truthfulness, fairness, respect, accountability, and minimizing harm in digital communication (Wilkins et al., 2022).



Kant’s categorical imperative

Tell the truth, reject deception, and never treat an audience merely as a means to an end.



Utilitarianism

Consider the benefits, harms, and likely consequences for everyone affected.



Rawls's justice-as-fairness

Adopt communication standards that would remain fair regardless of a person's identity, influence, or position.



Potter Box

Define the situation, identify values, apply ethical principles, examine loyalties, and defend the final decision.

The Eight Ethical Principles

At Draconic Realms Creations, we are committed to honest, respectful, and responsible communication in every digital space. This Code of Ethics guides how we create, share, and engage with content, communities, and each other.

1

Always Communicate Truthfully

Employees must never intentionally publish false, misleading, or deceptive information.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Trust is the foundation of every successful organization. Customers who discover false information lose confidence in the company and its products.

📖 EXAMPLE

If an employee accidentally publishes incorrect information about a game guide or educational resource, the mistake should be corrected immediately with an explanation rather than quietly deleting the content.

2

Respect Copyright and Intellectual Property

Employees will only use media, music, graphics, videos, photographs, or written material that the company owns, has licensed, or has permission to use.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Respecting intellectual property protects creators while reducing legal risk under U.S. copyright law.

📖 EXAMPLE

Instead of copying artwork from another website, employees should create original graphics or purchase properly licensed assets.

3

Protect User Privacy

Employees must safeguard customer information and only collect data necessary to provide services.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Consumers expect organizations to protect personal information. Mishandling customer data damages trust and may violate privacy regulations.

📖 EXAMPLE

Customer email addresses collected for newsletters may never be sold or shared with outside organizations without permission.

4

Practice Transparency

Employees should clearly disclose sponsored content, affiliate partnerships, AI-assisted content when appropriate, and paid promotions.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Transparency allows audiences to evaluate information fairly and prevents deceptive marketing practices.

📖 EXAMPLE

If DRC earns a commission from recommending a software product, that relationship should be disclosed.

5

Treat Every Community Member with Respect

Employees will communicate professionally regardless of disagreements or criticism.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Digital communication lasts indefinitely and reflects upon the entire organization.

📖 EXAMPLE

Instead of responding emotionally to negative comments on social media, employees should acknowledge concerns respectfully and attempt to resolve problems professionally.

6

Verify Information Before Publishing

Employees should fact-check information using reliable sources before creating articles, videos, guides, or educational materials.

JUSTIFICATION

Publishing inaccurate information damages credibility and spreads misinformation.

EXAMPLE

Before publishing a Palworld guide or legal article, employees should verify facts using official documentation or multiple reliable sources.

7

Accept Responsibility and Correct Mistakes

Employees are expected to acknowledge mistakes promptly and provide corrections whenever inaccurate information has been published.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

Accountability strengthens public trust and demonstrates organizational integrity.

📖 EXAMPLE

If a news article or tutorial contains incorrect information, an updated version should clearly identify the correction instead of pretending the mistake never happened.

8

Use Artificial Intelligence Responsibly

Artificial intelligence should support creativity rather than replace human judgment.

🛡️ JUSTIFICATION

AI can improve productivity; but ethical responsibility remains with the human creator. Employees must review AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, originality, and legal compliance.

📖 EXAMPLE

If AI assists with writing marketing copy or educational content, employees must verify all facts before publication and ensure copyrighted material has not been improperly reproduced.

Best Ethical Practices for Employees

To ensure these ethical principles become part of everyday work, all Draconic Realms Creations employees should follow these best practices:

✓ Verify facts before publishing digital content.

✓ Cite reliable sources whenever information is based on outside research.

✓ Respect copyright laws and licensing agreements.

✓ Create original content whenever possible.

✓ Protect customer privacy and confidential information.

✓ Disclose sponsorships, affiliate relationships, and AI assistance when appropriate.

✓ Respond professionally to criticism and disagreements.

✓ Correct errors promptly and transparently.

✓ Consider the long-term impact of every digital message before publication.

✓ Ensure all communication reflects honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability.

Conclusion & Our Commitment

Digital communication carries significant ethical responsibilities because information can be shared instantly with global audiences. The Draconic Realms Creations Code of Ethics is designed to ensure employees communicate truthfully, respect intellectual property, protect user privacy, and remain accountable for their work. By following these guidelines, employees help strengthen public trust while supporting responsible communication practices that comply with legal standards and ethical expectations. As technology continues to evolve, these principles will remain essential for maintaining integrity, credibility, and professionalism across all digital platforms.

Our Commitment

We create with integrity. We communicate with respect. We build a community we are proud to be part of.

Together, we imagine, create, and conquer.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

DRACONIC REALMS CREATIONS · IMAGINE · CREATE · CONQUER

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99 AI ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Portions of this assignment were developed with the assistance of ChatGPT (OpenAI). The tool was used to support brainstorming, organization, editing, and refinement of written content. All ideas, interpretations, analysis, and final revisions were reviewed, verified, and approved by the author, who accepts full responsibility for the accuracy and originality of the submitted work.

The 2024 New Hampshire AI Robocall

The 2024 New Hampshire presidential primary robocall demonstrated how artificial intelligence can turn familiar communication practices into serious legal and ethical risks. The call used an AI-generated imitation of President Joe Biden's voice and encouraged voters not to participate in the primary. Because the recording was presented as an authentic message from the president, it was not simply political commentary. It was deceptive conduct designed to influence public behavior through a false identity (Associated Press, 2024). The incident shows why every message distributed under an organization's name must be treated as both a legal publication and a reflection of professional responsibility (Moore et al., 2022).

Existing law remained relevant even though generative AI was comparatively new. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act regulates automated calls and artificial or prerecorded voices. After the incident, the Federal Communications Commission clarified that AI-generated voices are covered by the statute's restrictions. The technology used to create the voice therefore did not create a loophole or remove responsibility from the people who produced and distributed the call (Federal Communications Commission [FCC], 2024).

Caller identification spoofing created another layer of deception by concealing the call's origin. Federal law prohibits knowingly transmitting inaccurate caller information with an intent to deceive, harm, or defraud. Combined with voice cloning, spoofing increased the message's credibility, potential harm, and the communicators' legal exposure (FCC, 2024).

Employee AI Prepublication Checklist

STOP Before You Publish — Draconic Realms Creations employee AI communication checklist.

Application of the First Amendment

The First Amendment protects political opinions, criticism of public officials, press freedom, and participation in public debate. Those protections are essential to democratic communication, but they are not unlimited permission to impersonate a speaker or use deception to manipulate an audience. In the New Hampshire case, regulators focused on the unlawful method of communication—an artificial voice, false attribution, and misleading caller identification—rather than suppressing a political viewpoint (Associated Press, 2024; FCC, 2024).

Several landmark decisions clarify this distinction. In *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* (1964), the Supreme Court protected robust criticism of public officials while recognizing potential liability for statements made with knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for the truth. *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union* (1997) extended strong First Amendment protection to online expression, but it did not place digital communication outside generally applicable laws against fraud and deception. *Packingham v. North Carolina* (2017) recognized social media as a vital forum for civic participation. That forum depends on audiences being able to evaluate who is speaking and whether a message is authentic.

New York Times Co. v. United States (1971) also placed a high burden on government attempts to stop publication in advance, but it did not authorize fraudulent impersonation. Together, these decisions show that freedom and responsibility reinforce each other. For Draconic Realms Creations, employees may express ideas and use emerging technology, but they must accurately identify sources and obtain authorization before reproducing another person's voice or likeness (Bryden, 2026).

Existing Laws, Best Practices, and Professional Ethics

The Draconic Realms Creations Digital Communication Law Handbook translates legal principles into workplace decisions. Its practices require employees to verify information, identify communication sources accurately, respect privacy and intellectual property, follow telecommunications rules, and review AI-generated material before publication. Applied to the New Hampshire robocall, these safeguards would have required proof of the speaker's identity and authorization. The fabricated recording should have been rejected before distribution because it failed basic standards of authenticity and truthfulness (Bryden, 2026).

Human review is especially important because an AI system cannot assume an organization's legal or moral responsibility. It can generate convincing audio, images, and text quickly, but it cannot determine whether publication is lawful, fair, or consistent with organizational values. A designated person must verify factual claims, permissions, disclosures, and applicable regulations before approving AI-assisted content. The people who publish a message remain accountable for its consequences, regardless of the technology used to create it.

Professional codes provide guidance beyond minimum legal compliance. The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics directs communicators to seek truth, minimize harm, act independently, and remain accountable and transparent. The robocall violated these principles by concealing its source, presenting fabricated information, confusing voters, and avoiding accountability (Society of Professional Journalists [SPJ], 2014). The Public Relations Society of America emphasizes advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty, and fairness. Unauthorized impersonation directly conflicts with honesty and damages confidence in professional communication (Public Relations Society of America [PRSA], n.d.).

Applying Ethical Frameworks

The robocall fails under Kant's categorical imperative because deceptive impersonation cannot become a universal communication rule without destroying trust. A utilitarian analysis shows that the harm to voters, elections, and public confidence outweighs any short-term political benefit. Rawls's justice-as-fairness also rejects a system in which individuals can have their identities appropriated and used to manipulate public participation.

Using the Potter Box, the situation, values, principles, and loyalties all point toward protecting voters, preserving truthful political participation, and rejecting deceptive AI impersonation as the most defensible action (Wilkins et al., 2022).

Draconic Realms Creations Ethical Practices and Conclusion

The Draconic Realms Creations Code of Ethics provides a practical response to the risks revealed by this case. Its eight principles require employees to communicate truthfully, respect copyright and intellectual property, protect user privacy, practice transparency, treat community members with respect, verify information before publication, accept responsibility and correct mistakes, and use AI responsibly (Bryden, 2026). The robocall violated truthfulness and transparency by presenting synthetic audio as authentic. It also disregarded respect and privacy by appropriating an identifiable person's voice without permission.

Verification and accountability are particularly important. AI-generated content can appear credible even when it is false, unauthorized, or misleading. Every AI-assisted message should receive human review for factual accuracy, permissions, source identification, likely audience harm, and compliance with relevant law. If an error is published, Draconic Realms Creations should acknowledge it openly, correct it promptly, document what occurred, and improve the review process. Accountability should begin within the organization rather than only after public criticism or government investigation.

Future protection requires a formal AI-governance program rather than case-by-case reactions. Draconic Realms Creations should provide employee training in media law and ethics, require documented approval for synthetic media, disclose AI assistance when appropriate, conduct periodic audits, maintain a misinformation response plan, and review its AI policies annually. These measures support creativity and accessibility while keeping meaningful human judgment at the center of publication (Moore et al., 2022).

The New Hampshire incident confirms that technological innovation does not erase established legal and ethical duties. The TCPA, caller-identification rules, First Amendment principles, professional codes, and organizational policies all point toward the same expectation: communicators must be truthful about who is speaking and responsible for how a message affects the public. Artificial intelligence should enhance creativity, education, and productivity, but it should never replace judgment or accountability. By combining legal compliance with the Draconic Realms Creations ethical principles, the organization can embrace new tools while protecting the trust of customers, students, clients, and communities.

STOP Before You Publish — Song & Video

Cover artwork for the case study's supporting song and video.

[🔗 Watch STOP Before You Publish on YouTube](#)

AI Use Statement

OpenAI's ChatGPT was used to assist with organizing, revising, and refining the written content and to generate the initial concept and artwork for the employee's AI prepublication checklist. Adobe Creative Cloud was used for final image preparation, design adjustments, formatting, and export. All AI-assisted written and visual content was reviewed, edited, and approved by the author, Eric Bryden, who accepts full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and final presentation of the work.

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Wilkins, L., Painter, C., & Patterson, P. (2022). *Media ethics: Issues and cases* (10th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Download the Updated Milestone Three Case Study

Music, Video & Downloads

Introductory Video

Truth Before the Click

ORIGINAL SONG

Truth Before the Click

Original theme song for the Draconic Realms Creations handbook.

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Code of Ethics

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original submitted
document.

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The 2024 New Hampshire AI Robocall

Milestone Three —
revised final submitted
document.

Download the
 Updated Milestone
Three Case Study

CLOSING · CHAPTER 24 OF 24

Thank You for Reading

Communication is more than the exchange of information.

It is the foundation of trust, leadership, creativity, and lasting relationships.

May the principles contained in this handbook guide every message we create and every
community we serve.

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