

# AMA Manual of Style

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## Editorial Freedom and Integrity

Annette Flanagin

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The freedom of the press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty. George Mason Editorial freedom implies a range of independence, from complete absence of external restraint and coercion to merely a sense of not being unduly hampered or frustrated. Integrity is the state of honesty, credibility, incorruptibility, and accountability. A biomedical journal has editorial integrity if it adheres to these values, but different journals have different levels of editorial freedom. The First Amendment of the US Constitution affirms several freedoms, including the freedom of the press. Thus, communication through the US press or other media is a right that

## Ensuring a Trust Relationship Between Journal Editors, Publishers, and Owners

Annette Flanagin

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As described by Davies and Rennie, the relationship between editors and publishers/owners is interdependent and must be based on mutual trust. However, there are bound to be uncertainties, concerns, and occasional conflicts that could threaten the trust relationship. To maintain trust, a formal agreement between the editor and owner should specify each party's expectations and the mission of the journal (for example, see JAMA's governance plan, and Key and Critical Objectives reproduced in Box ). If these expectations are not formalized in a governance plan or other document, are not mutually understood, or are intentionally disregarded (as happened in the

## Maintaining Editorial Freedom: Cases of Editorial Interference and the Rationale for Mission, Trust, and Effective Oversight and Governance

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Interference with editorial freedom has affected several prominent medical journals and has been well documented in the biomedical literature and the press. However, many other cases of such interference have not been made public or are discussed only anecdotally, privately, or via restricted electronic mailing lists. The experiences of JAMA, the New England Journal of Medicine, and the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) are presented here for the following reasons: there is sufficient literature documenting the relevant events; effective protective oversight mechanisms and governance plans were lacking or insufficient at the time; and the mechanisms for protection of editorial freedom