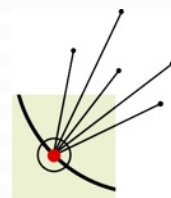




Media Ethics in a Technological Age



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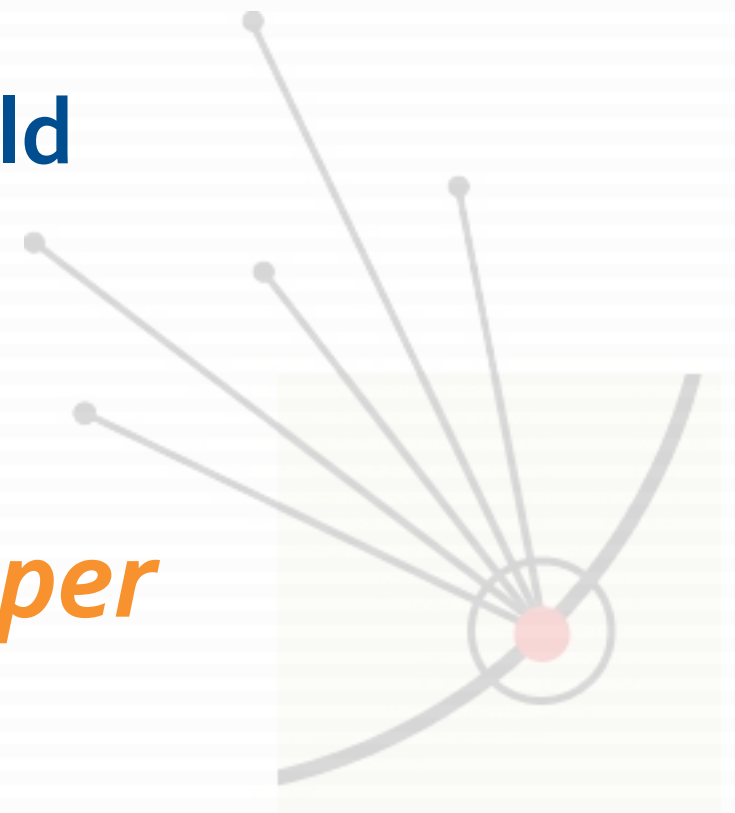
Introduction: The Digital Age



Information is the marketplace of the 21st century

Truth is the standard by which we should
judge the digital revolution in media

*Challenge: To make truth prosper
in an instrumental age*



Jacques Ellul: Society



Technological Society:

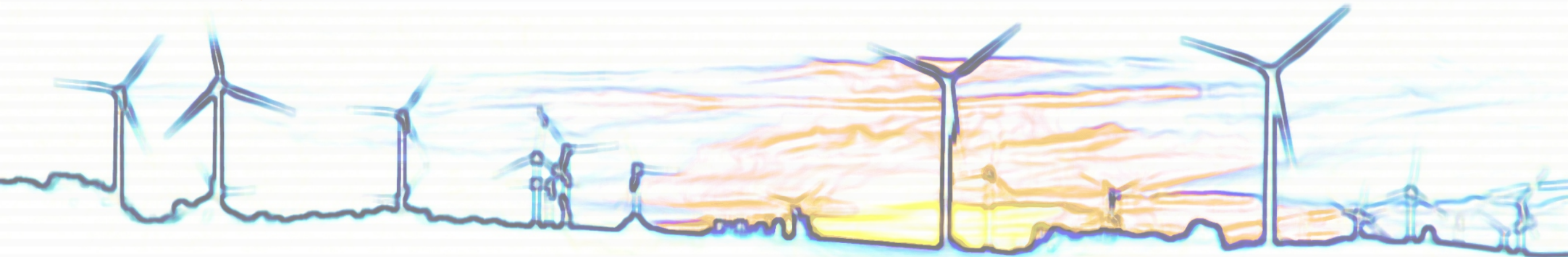
- ▶ Fundamental historical transition
- ▶ Engel's Law: Qualitative shift as numbers increase

Efficiency is the technological imperative

The Betrayal by Technology



Jacques Ellul: Amorality



Human ends are buried under preoccupation with technological means

Demise of the ethical:

- ▶ Life becomes not immoral, but amoral
- ▶ Whatever is gained in transmission is lost in ethics
- ▶ Technology takes on a life of its own
- ▶ Technological imperative drives media



Technological Age: New Paradigm?



Technology is not static, but a process; its meaning is rooted in human concerns

Our humanness restores the possibility of truth

Challenge of truth can only be met by a new worldview—replace technological values based on the sacredness of life



Truth: Meaning



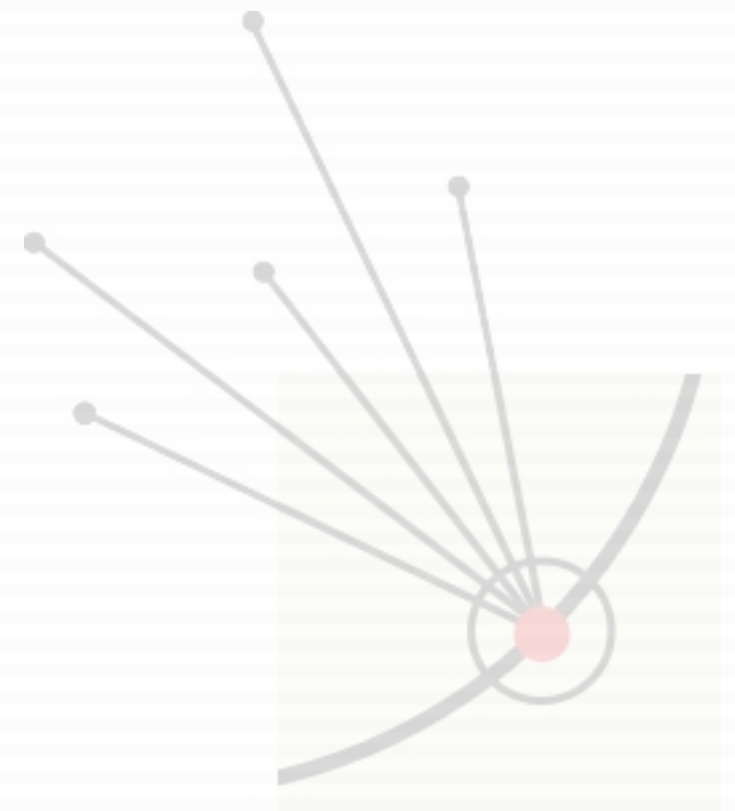
Truth is under attack, must be rescued and redefined

Emeth:

- ▶ Truth as genuine, authentic

Aletheia:

- ▶ Truth as openness, disclosure



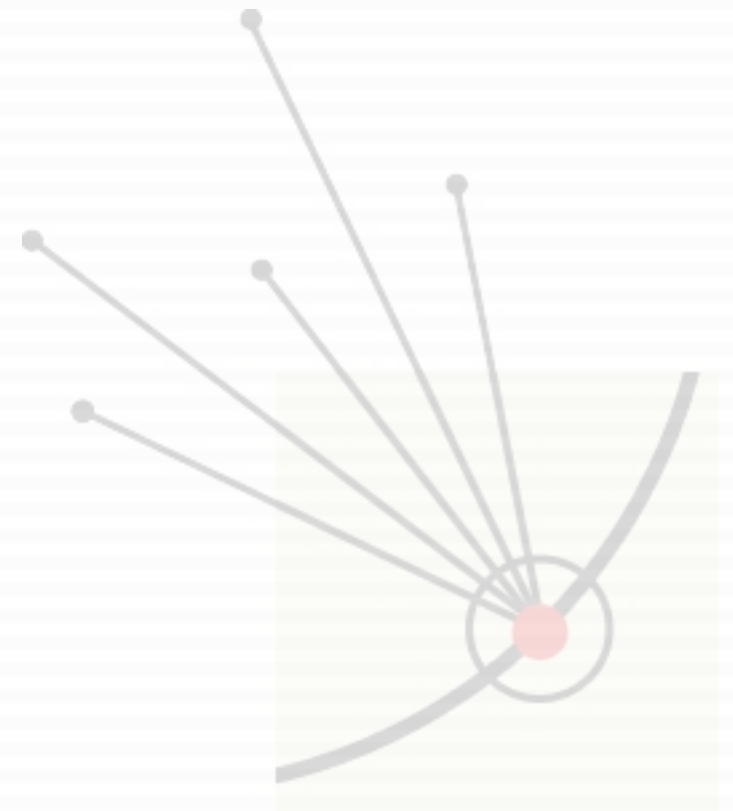
Truth: The Natural Order



Disclosing truth presumes a natural order

The organic whole is history's source

*Truth as authentic disclosure
gets to the heart of the matter,
nub of the issue, strikes gold*



Truth: Authentic Disclosure



Truth is the operating ideal for journalism ethics in a digital age

- ▶ The issue is not objectivity, neutrality, or facticity, but authentic disclosure

The truth must bring fundamental issues into view, opening them to audiences

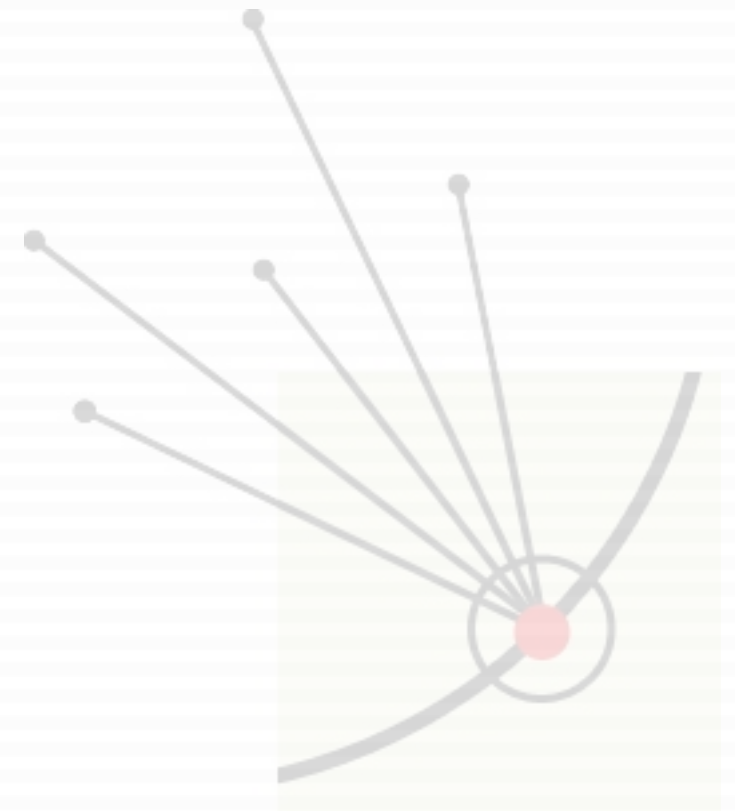


Truth: Interpretive Sufficiency



Living up to the truth-ideal is virtually impossible;
demise of objectivity and correspondence views of truth
has resulted in a crisis

*Substituting law for ethics is
arbitrary and dehumanizing*



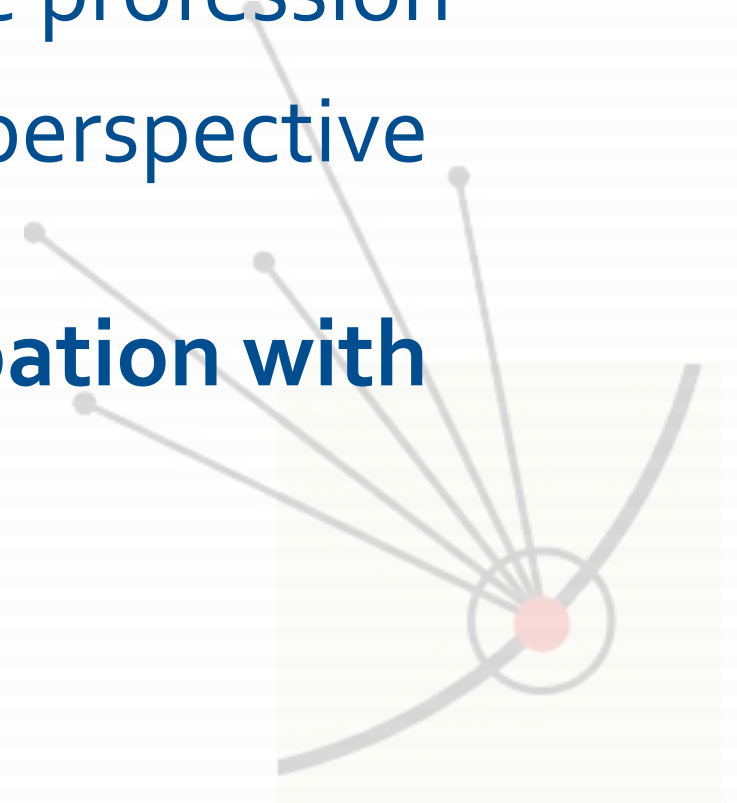
Ethics: Professional Morality



Journalism Ethics:

- ▶ Determined within the context of the profession
- ▶ Narrow focus, generally an insider's perspective

Human ends are buried under preoccupation with technological means



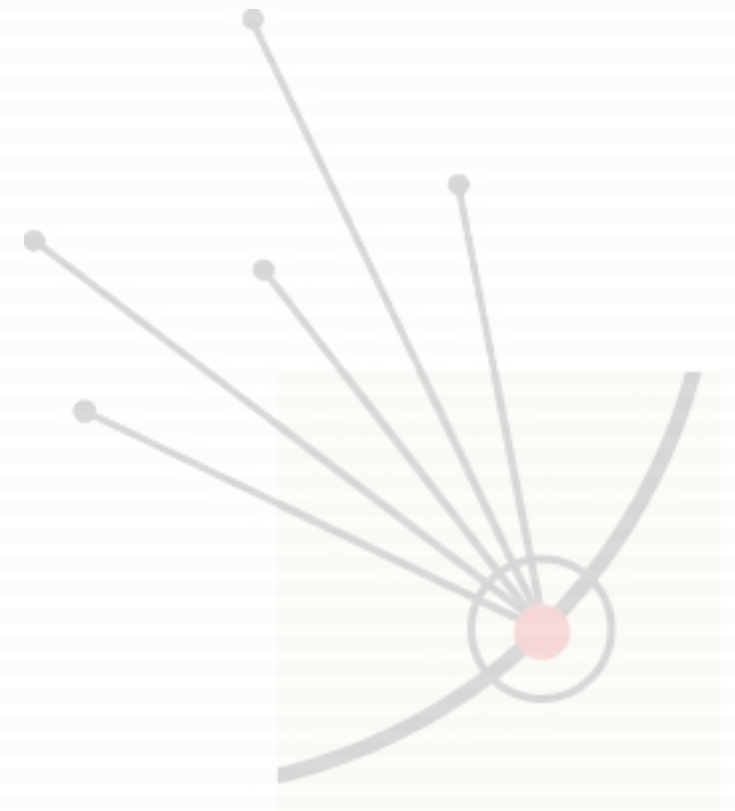
General Morality



Challenge is to ground journalism ethics in a larger context of general morality

Trust:

- ▶ When journalists live by the same moral rules that the public does



Universals: Global Scale



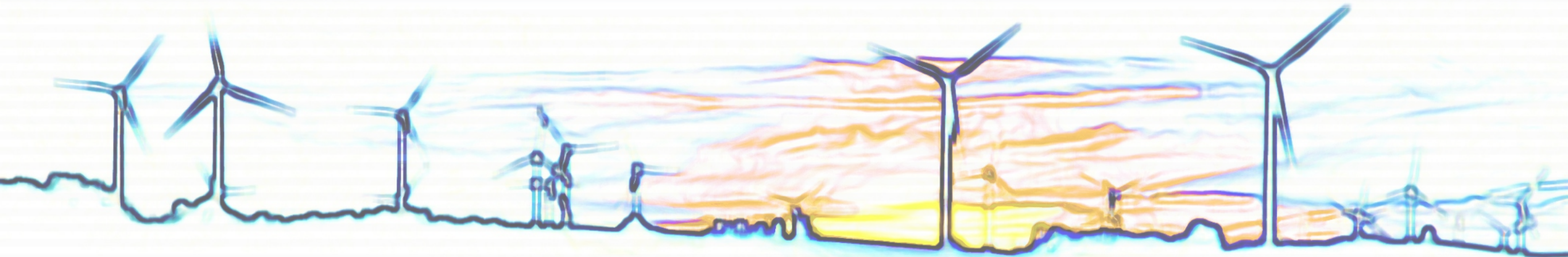
Ethics of general morality requires a worldwide scope in a technological age

Sacredness of life is a common commitment

Truth is integral to human consciousness and social formation



Conclusion: Truth as Disclosure



Public media must honor truth as obligatory to their mission and rationale

There are precious few oases for truth in a technoculture of inauthenticity. The best we can manage is ongoing struggle with no guarantee of success. But when communication technologies are agents of truth, news becomes a democratic resource.

