New Online Course Offers Guide to Online Media Law for Bloggers and Others

The Poynter Institute's NewsU unveiled today a free online learning course that offers legal guidance on copyright, defamation and privacy for anyone who publishes content online. The course includes games, learning exercises and an assessment that evaluates the student's understanding of the material; the assessment is a prerequisite for individuals interested in joining the Media Bloggers Association, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to supporting the development of blogging as a distinct form of media.

St. Petersburg, FL (PRWEB) September 19, 2008 -- The Poynter Institute's News University announced today that it is launching a new e-learning course on media law designed specifically for individuals and journalists engaged in online publishing. Online Media Law: The Basics for Bloggers and Other Online Publishers addresses defamation, privacy and copyright - three important areas of media law that affect bloggers and others who are reporting on events in their communities and helping to hold those in power accountable (www.newsu.org/onlinemedialaw).

"Many people are using online publishing as a way to participate in the democratic process by reporting on local, regional and national events. This course allows NewsU to broaden its reach and bring educational opportunities to those who may not have a journalism background, as well as to experienced journalists who are launching their own blogs," said Howard Finberg, director of interactive learning at The Poynter Institute. NewsU is funded by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Poynter.

Online Media Law, which is being offered free to registered users of NewsU, was co-authored by David Ardia, Director of the Citizen Media Law Project, and Geanne Rosenberg, Chair of the Department of Journalism and the Writing Professions at City University of New York's Baruch College and author of the Top Ten Rules to Limit Legal Risk.

The course was developed in partnership with the Media Bloggers Association with contributions from the Citizen Media Law Project, which is jointly affiliated with Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society and the Center for Citizen Media; City University of New York's Graduate School of Journalism and Baruch College; and Media/Professional Insurance.

The course, which includes games and learning exercises, is designed to help participants understand their legal rights and responsibilities associated with their online publishing activities so they can protect themselves against lawsuits. The online course also provides resources to help bloggers and others improve the accuracy and quality of their reporting.

The e-learning course also includes an assessment, developed by Media/Professional Insurance, that evaluates the student's understanding of the material. This assessment, written by Media/Professional Insurance attorney Scott Swift, is a prerequisite for individuals interested in joining the Media Bloggers Association, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to supporting the development of blogging as a distinct form of media. By joining the Media Bloggers Association, individuals have the exclusive opportunity to purchase liability insurance for...
Bloggers through Media/Professional Insurance, a business unit of the Select Markets Division of AXIS Insurance.

Disclaimer: Online Media Law is designed as an educational tool only, and is not a substitute for legal advice. Individuals who have concerns about legal issues related to their online publishing should consult a qualified media attorney.

About NewsU @ The Poynter Institute
News University (www.newsu.org) is the e-learning home for more than 82,000 journalists, educators and students in 200 countries around the world. NewsU offers more than 65 focused, interactive courses that appeal to journalists at all levels of experience and in all types of media. Many courses take just an hour or two to complete and most are free. NewsU is funded by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The program is a project of The Poynter Institute, a leader in journalism training. Each year, Poynter conducts seminars in leadership and management; reporting, writing and editing; broadcast and online; ethics and diversity; and visual journalism.

About the Citizen Media Law Project
The Citizen Media Law Project (CMLP) is jointly affiliated with Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society and the Center for Citizen Media. The CMLP provides legal assistance, training, and resources for individuals and organizations involved in online and citizen media.

About City University of New York's Graduate School of Journalism
The City University of New York's Graduate School of Journalism is a publicly supported graduate school of journalism. CUNY's Baruch College offers journalism education to undergraduate students. CUNY's Graduate School of Journalism and Baruch College are both located in Manhattan.

About Media Bloggers Association
The Media Bloggers Association is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting, protecting and educating its members; supporting the development of blogging as a distinct form of media; and helping to extend the power of the press, with all the rights and responsibilities that entails, to every citizen.

About Media/Professional Insurance
Media/Professional Insurance, a business unit of the Select Markets Division of AXIS Insurance, offers media, cyber, technology and miscellaneous professional liability coverage for all sizes and classes of risk with media content, Internet-related exposures and a wide range of service-oriented businesses.

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Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.