

SEDIC CODE ^{OF} ETHICS

SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA
DE DOCUMENTACIÓN
E INFORMACIÓN CIENTÍFICA



SEDIC

SEDIC CODE of ETHICS

SEDIC Professional Ethics Working Group



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Revised and updated edition

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The review and drafting of the Code are the result of collaboration among the professionals and academics who make up SEDIC's Professional Ethics Working Group, enriched with the responses obtained from the survey on "Values and Professional Ethics 2022" conducted for this purpose.

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INTRODUCTION

The revised and updated edition of SEDIC's *Code of Ethics* is presented, approved by the SEDIC Board of Directors in September 2022.

The document maintains the fundamental moral principles and values adopted in its first draft (2013), delves into aspects related to social and technological changes affecting information management professionals, demanding greater attention to diversity, gender issues, transparency, sustainability, and the environment, protection of vulnerable individuals, and the social utility of institutions, and incorporates ethical values to address conflicts arising from the digitization of information, its processes, and services.

SEDIC CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble


Information managers, a professional collective composed of librarians, archivists, documentalists, and all those who deal with the treatment, analysis, dissemination, and preservation of information, work in diverse and changing cultural, administrative, economic, and technological environments.

The profession is embedded in a society undergoing profound transformation. Physical, analog, and face-to-face information services and resources have seen the incorporation of digital forms of communication, acquisition, processing, and analysis of information; professionals live with the changes adopted almost daily imperceptibly and, at the same time, observe both the benefits of digitization and the challenges it poses regarding digital rights for all those involved in protecting the inherent risks of emerging technologies, particularly those affecting service users and raising new ethical dilemmas specific to the digital ecosystem.

Ethical codes acquire their highest meaning in their updates as a reflection of the evolution of society itself. For this reason, it is necessary to adapt the traditional principles and values of information managers to the digital and social reality.

Ten years after its drafting, the *SEDIC / FESABID Information Managers' Code of Ethics* has been thoroughly reviewed and has incorporated the essential moral norms for an ethical performance of information management in today's world. In this way, the present Code:

Recognizes the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as the defining ethical essence document for the profession. Mainly articles 1 to 3 referring to the freedom, equality, and dignity of the person, articles 18 and 19 on freedom of expression, opinion, and access to information of the person, and articles 26 and 27 embodying the right to education and cultural life of communities, and the protection of intellectual property and copyright.



Assumes the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, *UNESCO Recommendations on Ethics in Artificial Intelligence*, the *European Declaration on Digital Principles and Rights of the Digital Decade*, as well as the ethical guidelines of the European Bureau of Library, Information, and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and the International Council on Archives (ICA).

Calls for action and responsibility of information managers and cultural institutions in building more just, transparent, and sustainable societies as mediators between information and citizens.

Acknowledges the impact and importance of artificial intelligence in society in general and information services in particular, the ethical concerns it raises, and encourages responsible practices in accordance with human rights principles.

Appeals to sustainability as a change in humanistic perspective and management model, with a technical component and a high degree of honesty to which all professionals should aspire.



Chapter I. DEFINITION

The *Code of Ethics for information management professionals* is a guide that complements specialized knowledge and technical and legal regulations and guides responsible and quality professional practice. Resulting from the evolution of society and the profession itself, it constitutes a reflection on its principles and values, which are manifested in a set of norms accepted by the professional collective and grounded in their experience.



Chapter II. OBJECTIVES

Define the specific principles and values of the profession.

Display a distinctive and professional quality image to all citizens through the values that guide information managers in the exercise of their economic and labor occupation, for which they are responsible, and what can be expected of them.

Consolidate the sense of belonging to a group, promoting the exchange of information and experiences among professionals individually and between professional associations and colleges.

Provide an ethical framework to refer to in the face of abuses, intrusions, dilemmas, and conflicts of values.

Create a flow of trust from society towards the professional collective as integral, expert individuals in the provision of information services.

Promote reflection among the professional collective about problematic and unforeseen situations that the evolution of society, resources, and services pose, and about the response according to values with which to face such reality.



Chapter III. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This *Code* should guide professional practice in both the public and private sectors and aims to provide guidance for other professionals who carry out their activity in organizations that manage information, without prejudice to other existing codes of ethics.

Chapter IV. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

The **ethical principles** inspiring the present *Code of Ethics* are:

- *Autonomy*, belief in the moral autonomy and dignity of human beings.
- *Justice*, neutrality, and impartiality to the detriment of personal biases.
- *Responsibility*, the ability to take responsibility for building a better society and accepting the consequences of decisions made.
- *Social utility*, meeting the information needs of all citizens.

In accordance with the listed Principles, the professional collective will apply the following **ethical Values** in the exercise of their activity:

1. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

- a) They will defend the full freedom of expression, information, and knowledge of individuals and avoid censorship and self-censorship in any aspect of their professional activity..
- b) The only limitations on intellectual freedom will be those derived from respect for human rights promulgated by the United Nations.

2. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- a) They will guarantee professional secrecy in the exercise of their work activity with the only limitations determined by the regulatory framework and legal regime.
- b) They will ensure equity, respect, and security in the information and data of users and professionals obtained in the provision of services, the use of technology, and access to digital resources and means.
- c) They will protect privacy and confidentiality in the information and data required in the management of the service or derived from its use and processing.
- d) They will respect personal and family privacy and the image of individuals in any context.

3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- a) They will provide the best possible access to information as a means for economic, social, and democratic development, making available to users the regulations governing their access, use, and dissemination.
- b) They will ensure free and equal access to resources for all citizens, without restrictions based on gender, ideological, educational, cultural, political, economic, or any other condition, or personal or social circumstance.
- c) They will support the universal right to knowledge and information, striving to provide updated, plural, reliable, balanced, and appropriate information to the needs of users of information and documentation services.
- d) They will promote critical media and information literacy of professionals and users, training them in searching, proper use, and evaluation of resources as a way to detect misinformation so that they can autonomously and responsibly extract all required information.
- e) They will facilitate access to data and information necessary for archiving and public interest, for innovation, scientific or historical research, statistics, or visualization, in accordance with current intellectual property and personal data protection legislation, avoiding privileged use.
- f) They will take care of the correct design and use of algorithms in services, technical processes, and information products, and avoid possible biases in the data that feed them. They will inform about the absence or presence of algorithms in the digital documentary treatment that may have been used for the encoding or enrichment of digital objects or metadata.
- g) It will be contrary to professional ethics to ask for or accept consideration for consultation or access to any product, except when such consideration is regulated by the organization or in the case of private centers or companies whose activity is linked to the sale of information.



4. TRANSPARENCY


- a) They will guarantee transparency in the selection, access, and supply processes of information resources.
- b) They will provide all information on the actions they carry out concerning the service they provide, permanently, comprehensibly, completely, and timely, accounting for their activity so that it can be scrutinized by the general public.
- c) They will support the principles of open government so that, through transparency, participation, and collaboration, citizens can contribute to the creation and improvement of public services, adapting them to their real needs.
- d) They will promote policies aimed at improving transparency and access to information of governments and public administrations.

5. COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY

- a) They will protect copyright and intellectual and industrial property rights in accordance with current legislation in all areas.
- b) They will promote the establishment of exceptions and limitations to copyright for the benefit of public libraries, archives, and documentation centers and non-profit institutions.
- c) They will disseminate knowledge of copyright within their organizations and instruct citizens and colleagues on the legal and intellectual consequences of plagiarism.
- d) They will encourage open access initiatives to guarantee the right to access information, with the only limitations set by the legal framework, the economic activity of the organization, and the defense of its conservation.
- e) They will explicitly identify and state the authorship and original source of the information.

6. PROFESSIONALISM

- a) They will assume a commitment to educational, social, and econo-




mic development, to research and innovation, to the understanding of the present and the past, and to the integral preservation of knowledge for future generations.

- b) They will contribute to the dignification and progress of the profession, as well as the social recognition of their activity..
- c) They will show independent, fair, and objective professional judgment, with honest and integral behavior, aspiring to the highest professional competence.
- d) They will advocate for fair and equitable working conditions, emphasizing equal opportunities without distinction of gender, a dignified and healthy work environment, and a reliable and secure contractual relationship.
- e) They will promote university education in Information Management and continuous training, embracing and respecting the plurality of different specializations that currently intertwine in a quality, innovative, and modern service in both the physical and digital environment.
- f) They will enhance the transfer of knowledge among professionals, collaborating in the exchange of experiences at conferences and in publications, and cooperating with other colleagues and related institutions.
- g) They will promote associationism in their field of work - among colleagues, citizens, and organizations - and especially among Information Management students, fostering membership in professional organizations as channels for strengthening and cohesion of the profession.

7. LOYALTY TO THE ORGANIZATION

- a) They will contribute to the achievement of the mission, vision, and objectives of their organization.
- b) They will demonstrate loyalty to the institution through the proper use of its name, respect for confidential information, care for material goods, and the practice of honest business relationships.

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- c) They will not participate in activities or comments that may harm the social image of the organization, except for disclosures made with a view to reporting illegal practices or conduct.
 - d) They will promote freedom of opinion, participation, and constructive debate among workers on matters of general interest and about the organization.

8. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION


- a) They will assume responsibility for the protection and conservation of documents against physical damage, deterioration, or theft.
- b) They will respect the document as a testimony of information and memory in order to guarantee its authenticity.
- c) They will carry out conservation policies responsibly and faithfully to the integrity of the original document.
- d) They will promote digitization as a means of protecting and consulting the document.
- e) They will ensure, with the support of strategies and policies designed for this purpose, the digital preservation of the document.

9. CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

- a) They will respect and preserve cultural heritage and assets.
- b) They will support diversity, whether gender, functional, social, cultural, or ideological, in the formation, description, and dissemination of collections and in other information resources as a path to achieving better dialogue and understanding.

10. SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- a) They will promote a work and professional environment committed to progress, poverty eradication, equality, solidarity, inclusion of all people, and protection of the planet.
- b) They will carry out responsible actions supported by the proper use of natural resources, respect and preservation of the environment, human capital development, and cooperation among institutions.

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- c) They will create safe knowledge and meeting spaces for all people, with special attention to vulnerable groups.
 - d) They will promote awareness-raising, dissemination, and training initiatives on sustainability and social responsibility.
 - e) They will consider free competition, publicity, transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, and environmental protection in the management of contracts and acquisitions of services and products.

11. QUALITY OF SERVICE

- a) They will have demanding personal and collective behavior in any aspect of their professional activity.
 - b) They will ensure compliance with service commitments, seeking excellence and continuous improvement.
 - c) They will promote service quality evaluation systems to gauge the satisfaction of users, professionals, and other stakeholders.
 - d) They will inform their superiors about the consequences of possible deficiencies in human, economic, technical, or other resources on the quality of service.
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Chapter V. CODE MANAGEMENT

1st. SEDIC will widely promote the values and principles contained in this *Code* among its members and organizations, citizens, and institutions.

2nd. The Ethics Working Group of SEDIC will ensure the monitoring of consultations or questions that arise and the dissemination of the Code. To guarantee its validity, this Code will be reviewed periodically to incorporate any changes that occur in the nature of the profession and the social and institutional environment.



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