

MIL MAGAZINE

Style Guide & Ethical Commitment

EDITORIAL HANDBOOK · 2024–2025

Media & Information Literacy — milmagazine.org

LANGUAGE · SECTIONS · TYPOGRAPHY · IMAGINATION · DIALOGUE · ESSAY · ETHICS

INTRODUCTION 00

What this style guide is for

MIL Magazine is more than a publication: it is a pedagogical instrument. Every text we publish must reflect that dual mission — to inform with rigour and to educate with clarity. This style guide sets out the editorial, writing and formatting standards that ensure consistency across all platforms and sections of MIL Magazine. It is a living document: it is updated when practice demands it.

It is designed for external contributors, in-house writers, editors and educators who wish to publish or work with the magazine's content. It is not a technical manual: it is a guide to shared criteria.

PART I — FOUNDATIONS 01

Media and Information Literacy, critical thinking and scientific method

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is today an essential competence and mode of action for democratic life, social cohesion and sustainable development. Yet its full potential is only realised when critical thinking is solidly articulated with scientific methodology and linked to ethical responsibility and social commitment.

MIL Magazine proceeds from a fundamental conviction: critical thinking needs scientific rigour to be transformative. Science needs critical thinking to be socially meaningful. And both, today, demand a firm ethical commitment to human rights and values.

MIL is not solely an educational, research or communicative practice, but a comprehensive framework for understanding and acting in the world, combining:

- critical analysis of messages, discourses, uses and practices of media systems,
 - responsible and ethical use of information, media and technologies,
 - application of scientific methods to generate reliable knowledge,
 - assumption of ethical and social commitments,
 - and the orientation of that knowledge toward solving real problems that affect humanity.
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PART I — FOUNDATIONS 02

The need to disseminate knowledge in social time

Academic and scientific production faces a central challenge today: it must respond to the demands of accelerated sociotechnological change, which requires new knowledge and new attitudes. Academic responses are often conditioned by long validation and publication timelines, while social and communicative problems evolve rapidly.

"Knowledge that does not reach society at the right moment does not enrich social change — it may limit science's transformative potential."

MIL Magazine was created to address this problem and to foster the active engagement of the scientific and educational world in social debate: to ensure that the circulation of knowledge is rigorous, comprehensible, contextualised and aligned with contemporary public debates and social needs.

PART I — FOUNDATIONS 03

What is MIL Magazine?

MIL Magazine is an international digital publication dedicated to academic dissemination, debate and the educational and social communication of Media and Information Literacy.

The publication is closely linked to the network of associations, chairs and platforms tied to UNESCO's work in the MIL field; especially the UNESCO Unitwin MILID International Cooperation Program and the MIL Alliance. It is promoted and supported by professors, researchers and doctoral candidates from UAB (Communication and Education Unit), Arab Academy and other universities integrated in the MIL Institute that share its values and objectives.

<p>Open knowledge platform</p> <p>Free and accessible dissemination of rigorous research on the contemporary media ecosystem.</p>	<p>Mediation space</p> <p>Bridge between academia, education, public policy and citizenship.</p>
<p>Distributed international newsroom</p> <p>Committed to global understanding, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue.</p>	<p>Community of thought and action</p> <p>Researchers, educators, students, professionals and institutions building collective knowledge.</p>

PRINCIPLE 01

Voice and Editorial Tone

The voice of MIL Magazine is committed, expert and accessible. It is not the voice of an activist haranguing a crowd, nor that of an academic addressing only peers. It is the voice of an informed educator speaking to an intelligent citizenry.

"We write for teachers, policymakers and engaged citizens. Our tone is urgent but never alarmist, critical but always constructive."

<p>Committed</p> <p>Texts take a clear stand in favour of media literacy values, digital rights and critical education. We do not feign neutrality where none exists.</p>	<p>Urgent, not alarmist</p> <p>We name real threats — disinformation, hate speech — without exaggerating or inducing fear. Urgency is conveyed through data and context, not hyperbole.</p>
<p>Global and situated</p> <p>We connect global phenomena (UNESCO, the European Parliament, transnational networks) with local realities and concrete experiences of teachers and students.</p>	<p>Solution-oriented</p> <p>Denouncing a problem is not enough. Every article should point toward solutions, initiatives, tools or frameworks for action — even if only briefly in the closing paragraph.</p>

PRINCIPLE 02

Article Structure

MIL Magazine articles follow a simple and effective architecture, designed for readers who combine deep reading with scanning. Structural clarity is not a concession to superficiality: it is a pedagogical requirement.

Anatomy of a MIL Magazine Article

Headline Declarative or factually impactful. Maximum 12 words. Do not begin with a gerund. E.g.: "Frances Haugen Testifies Before the European Parliament"	Subheadline (optional) Expands the headline with context or consequence. One sentence only. May include the relevant institution or date.
Opening paragraph The news hook. Establishes the event, date and key actor in the first 2–3 sentences. Answers what, who, when and where. It is an invitation to keep reading.	Body (3–5 paragraphs) Thematic development. Alternates data, institutional quotes and the author's own analysis. Each paragraph has one central idea. Maximum 4 sentences per paragraph.

Closing paragraph: Not a summary: an opening toward action or reader reflection. May include a rhetorical question, a call to action, or a broader perspective. Maximum 2 sentences.

PRINCIPLE 03

Language Standards

MIL Magazine's language must be accessible without being simplistic, precise without being excessively technical. Our readers do not need a glossary to understand what we write, but they expect to be treated as intellectually active adults.

We do this

– Active voice: "UNESCO launched the initiative..."

- Short paragraphs (2–4 sentences)
- Implicit institutional sourcing: "According to the European Commission..."
- Inclusive, gender-aware language wherever possible
- Precise action verbs: denounce, propose, challenge, reveal
- Numbers and data to anchor analysis

We avoid this

- Unexplained academic jargon: "epistemological affordances"
- Sentences exceeding 40 words
- Empty hyperbole: "the worst crisis in history"
- Agentless passive: "it was decided that..."
- Moralising adjectives without factual backing: "outrageous", "shameful"
- Opening with a direct rhetorical question: "Have you ever wondered...?"

PRINCIPLE 04

Sections and Genres

MIL Magazine organises its content into sections with distinct editorial identities. Knowing which section you are writing for is as important as knowing your subject.

<p>News</p> <p>Reports on media policy, digital regulation and institutional events. Reportorial tone. Verifiable facts. No explicit author opinion. 300–500 words.</p>	<p>Tribune</p> <p>Expert opinion column. The author can and should take a clear position. Solid argumentation, institutional perspective and a concrete proposal are expected. 600–800 words.</p>
<p>Education</p> <p>Focused on pedagogical practices, teaching resources and classroom experience. Language oriented to educators. May include lists, activities or methodological frameworks. 400–700 words.</p>	<p>Research</p> <p>Popularisation of academic research or reports from international bodies. Higher conceptual density, always with an accessible summary at the outset. 500–800 words.</p>
<p>Policy</p> <p>Analysis of regulatory frameworks, European directives or UNESCO recommendations. Audience: public policymakers. Structure: context → measure → implication. 400–700 words.</p>	<p>Classroom</p> <p>Resources directly applicable in the classroom: activity guides, debates, case studies. Practical and instructive tone. Numbered lists may be used freely. 300–600 words.</p>
<p>Fiction / Imagination</p> <p>Short story, literary chronicle, speculative fiction, flash fiction, media fable, dramatic monologue. Form must serve the theme, not authorial virtuosity. 500–1,200 words.</p>	<p>Essay</p> <p>The quality short essay: combines intellectual rigour, scientific or philosophical grounding, and aesthetic sensibility. 800–1,500 words.</p>

PRINCIPLE 05

Typography, Format and Visual Elements

MIL Magazine is a text-driven digital publication. Its visual effectiveness does not depend on elaborate graphic resources, but on typographic clarity and disciplined use of space.

Bold Reserved for proper names on first mention, key technical terms and relevant numerical data. Not used for general stylistic emphasis.	Italics For publication titles, expressions in another language and brief textual quotes integrated into a paragraph. Not for emotional emphasis.
Lists Only when items are genuinely parallel and enumerable. Maximum 6 items. Avoid in analysis pieces or Tribune; welcome in Education and Classroom sections.	Block quotes Use as a block when a quote exceeds 40 words. Always include full attribution: name, title, institution. Do not edit for style: transcribe faithfully.

Dates and numbers: Format: "5 October 2024". Numbers one to ten are written out; 11 and above use numerals. Percentages always as numerals: 87%.

PRINCIPLE 06

The Pedagogical Dimension

MIL Magazine is not merely an information outlet: it is a resource for media and information literacy education. This imposes an additional responsibility on every text we publish.

"A MIL Magazine article has not fulfilled its purpose if the reader knows more, but does not know what to do with that knowledge."

Transferability

Where possible, make explicit how the phenomenon described can be analysed using MIL tools: fact-checking, source analysis, understanding algorithmic bias.

Contextualisation

Do not assume the reader knows the institutional context. One contextualising phrase — "UNESCO, the UN agency responsible for education and culture..." — is sufficient.

Actionable closing

The final paragraph may include a resource, a concrete initiative or a question the reader can bring to the classroom or their professional practice.

Rigour and accessibility

Complex concepts are retained but explained and contextualised for diverse audiences. Neither hermetic academicism nor excessive simplification.

PRINCIPLE 07

Bilingual Policy: EN / ES

MIL Magazine publishes in both English and Spanish. This is not a policy of mechanical translation: each article is conceived for its language of publication. Spanish texts are not translations of English ones, and vice versa.

Independent versions

The same topic may be developed differently in each language, adapting examples, references and context to the audience of each edition.

Technical terms

MIL terms are given in English on first use, with the Spanish equivalent in parentheses where needed: media literacy (alfabetización mediática).

Equal standards

Both editions maintain the same editorial quality and intellectual rigour. Language is not a criterion of hierarchy.

Linguistic openness

The magazine is open to other languages when content and context justify it, with a summary in English or Spanish.

PRINCIPLE 08

Imagination, Narrative and Fiction

MIL Magazine recognises that the media landscape is not exhausted by analysis. Imaginative writing — the short story, the literary chronicle, speculative fiction, the essayistic narrative — can illuminate dimensions of the media ecosystem that the informational article cannot reach. Literature names what data cannot say.

"A well-crafted work of fiction can reveal the logic of the algorithm, the weight of disinformation or the lived experience of online harassment more powerfully than any statistical report."

This editorial commitment does not mean relaxing standards of rigour: it demands combining rigour with aesthetic sensibility. Imaginative texts published in MIL Magazine must be anchored in real phenomena of the MIL ecosystem. Each literary text is accompanied by a contextualising editorial note (50–100 words). Length: between 500 and 1,200 words.

PRINCIPLE 09

Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace

Fear of the other — constructed, amplified and disseminated through media — is one of the greatest obstacles to global understanding and peaceful coexistence. MIL Magazine dedicates priority space to intercultural dialogue, convinced that MIL is an essential tool for dismantling narratives of hatred and cultivating an active culture of peace.

"There is no complete media literacy without the capacity to recognise the other as a legitimate interlocutor. Dialogue is not a democratic luxury: it is democracy's condition of possibility."

Multiple perspectives

Texts on cultural conflicts, migrations, identities or religions must include, wherever possible, voices from the communities involved. We do not write about the other: we write with the other.

Hate speech

MIL Magazine never reproduces hate speech without explicit critical analysis. When cited, it is to deconstruct it, not to amplify it. Analytical framing is mandatory.

Diversity of sources

Priority is given to voices from regions under-represented in global media debate: Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, the Middle East. Geographic diversity of sources is an editorial quality criterion.

Peace as a frame

Texts on conflict are always framed from a resolution perspective: what conditions enable understanding, what MIL tools can contribute to reducing tension and prejudice.

PRINCIPLE 10

The Short Essay: Literary Quality and Open Debate

MIL Magazine opens its pages to the quality short essay: texts that combine intellectual rigour, scientific or philosophical grounding, and aesthetic sensibility, in the service of open debate and critical social intervention. The essay is the genre of intelligence in motion: it does not conclude — it interrogates.

"The MIL essay is neither an abbreviated academic article nor an inflated opinion piece. It begins from a concrete observation, elevates it toward a broader reflection and returns — transformed — to the reality from which it departed."

Intellectual grounding

The essay must be supported by empirical evidence, recognisable theoretical frameworks or solid philosophical traditions. Personal opinion alone is insufficient: it must be worked, argued, tested against counter-positions.

Literary quality

Attention to prose is expected: rhythm, lexical precision, originality of image or metaphor, tonal coherence. A mediocre but well-documented essay is less valuable than a brilliant one with equal rigour.

Openness to debate

The MIL essay does not close: it opens. It advances a thesis with conviction, but leaves room for reply. The reader should finish the text with more questions than answers.

Length and form

Between 800 and 1,500 words. No mandatory internal subheadings: structure emerges from the argument. Footnotes are permitted when strictly necessary.

Reference models for the MIL essay: Susan Sontag on the image of suffering. George Orwell on political language. Umberto Eco on the semiology of popular media. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on deconstructing the single story.

PRINCIPLE 11

Research, Doctoral Candidates and International Cooperation

MIL Magazine gives priority space to researchers in training — doctoral candidates, early-career academics, postdoctoral researchers — who wish to engage with international cooperation and communicate their work beyond the specialised academic circuit. The publication is a bridge between the research laboratory and the public sphere.

"Research that cannot be communicated to an informed general public is incomplete research. MIL Magazine is the space where that account takes shape."

Rigorous popularisation

Texts by researchers must present key findings accessibly, without sacrificing conceptual precision. An executive summary is mandatory: maximum 100 words before the body of the text.

International dimension

Priority is given to research establishing international comparisons, collaborations between universities in different countries, or addressing MIL phenomena in diverse geographical contexts.

Open data

Where possible, authors will link to data repositories or original publications. MIL Magazine promotes open science and methodological transparency as editorial values.

Collaboration network

Authors are encouraged to include a brief contact note or institutional affiliation to facilitate cooperation with interested readers.

PRINCIPLE 12

Conferences, Seminars and the MIL Community

MIL Magazine is not only a publication: it is the editorial hub of an academic, professional and civic community committed to media and information literacy. As such, it organises and covers international conferences, thematic seminars and meetings with the principal actors in the MIL field worldwide.

MIL Magazine maintains editorial relationships with the principal MIL bodies worldwide: UNESCO, IFLA, EBU, international university networks and media education platforms from all continents. Recommended conference chronicle format: event context (50 words) → key emerging ideas (3–5 points) → notable voices (brief direct quotes) → open perspectives for the field. Maximum 700 words.

PART III 00

Ethical Commitment for Authors

This ethical commitment rests on a consolidated tradition of norms and principles that journalism, science and education have built collectively over decades. It draws from the following international reference frameworks:

<p>IFJ · Ethical Journalism Network · SPJ</p> <p>Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists: truthfulness, accountability and respect for persons.</p>	<p>COPE — Committee on Publication Ethics</p> <p>International standard for editorial integrity, conflict of interest management, responsible authorship and error handling.</p>
<p>ALLEA — European Code of Conduct 2023</p> <p>Framework adopted by the European Commission in Horizon Europe. Principles of reliability, honesty, respect and responsibility in research.</p>	<p>UNESCO</p> <p>Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (2021), Media Development Indicators and the global MIL competency framework. Access to truthful information is a fundamental human right.</p>

"Rigour, honesty and respect for persons do not limit intellectual freedom: they make it possible and legitimate."

1. Rigour, transparency and method

Authors commit to grounding their claims in verifiable evidence, explicit methodologies and verifiable sources. Every article must allow the reader to reconstruct the intellectual path that sustains it.

- Declare the primary and secondary sources used, including reports, data, interviews and archival materials.
- Make explicit the methodology employed when the text is based on empirical research, content analysis or other systematic approaches.
- Distinguish clearly between verified data, reasoned interpretations and personal opinions.
- Update or correct any factual error detected after publication, through the editorial channels provided.

2. Authorship and intellectual honesty

MIL Magazine may publish texts previously edited in other media or platforms. In that case, the author is obliged to declare this explicitly at the time of submission, indicating the outlet, the original publication date and, when necessary, demonstrating that they have the authorisation of the original editor for its reproduction or adaptation.

- Indicate whether the text has been published in whole or in part previously, and under what conditions.
- Accredite reproduction authorisation when rights do not belong exclusively to the author.
- Cite correctly all direct and indirect sources used, including open-access or informally circulated sources.
- Not present as their own the work of other persons, including the undeclared use of generative artificial intelligence tools in the drafting of the text.
- Explicitly acknowledge contributions of co-authorship, collaboration or relevant intellectual advice.

3. Licence and publication rights

All content published in MIL Magazine is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA) licence, unless expressly stated otherwise. By submitting a text, the author accepts these conditions and guarantees that they hold the necessary rights over all included materials. Acceptance of the Creative Commons licence does not imply the assignment of moral authorship rights.

4. Identification, affiliation and conflict of interest

The byline of every article must include:

- Full name of the author or authors.
- Current institutional affiliation: university, research centre, organisation or institution.
- Research group, if applicable, with mention of the programme or project where relevant.
- Academic or professional status at the time of publication (doctoral researcher, educator, practitioner, independent researcher).
- Declaration of any real or potential conflict of interest — financial, institutional, personal or ideological. The existence of a conflict does not prevent publication; its concealment does.

5. Respect for persons and privacy protection

MIL Magazine frequently deals with phenomena involving real people. Authors are obliged to:

- Protect the identity of persons who have not given explicit consent to be publicly identified, especially in contexts of vulnerability.
- Obtain informed consent when using testimonies, interviews or identifiable personal materials.

- Handle personal data in accordance with applicable data protection regulations.
- Not reproduce private information that is not of legitimate public interest, even if technically available.

6. Human rights, dignity and hate speech

Every contribution must respect international human rights frameworks and UNESCO principles on communication, education and cultural diversity. Texts:

- Will not reproduce hate speech, incitement to violence or discriminatory content on grounds of origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other personal or social conditions, except when subject to explicit critical analysis.
- Will avoid stereotypes that reproduce structural inequalities, even those commonly circulated in public debate.
- Will address cultural, political or social conflicts from a perspective of understanding, without instrumentalising the suffering of persons.

7. Shared editorial responsibility

The acceptance of this ethical commitment does not exempt MIL Magazine's editorial team from its own editorial responsibility. The magazine commits to guaranteeing a transparent review process, to communicating clearly the criteria for acceptance and rejection, and to treating all contributors with respect and equity, regardless of their geographical origin, academic trajectory or institutional position. The ethical commitment in MIL Magazine is bidirectional: it demands as much from those who write as from those who publish.

EDITORIAL TOOL 00

Pre-submission Checklist

Before submitting an article to MIL Magazine, the author should be able to confirm each of the following:

- The headline is declarative, concrete and does not exceed 12 words.
- The opening paragraph answers what, who, when and where, and situates the topic within the MIL framework.
- No paragraph exceeds 4 sentences.
- The article falls within the word-count range appropriate to its section.
- Institutional citations include the full name of the body on first mention.
- Active voice is used predominantly throughout.

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- There are no evaluative adjectives without factual backing.
 - The closing paragraph points toward action, reflection or a concrete resource.
 - All hyperlinks have been verified and link descriptive text.
 - Dates follow the format established for the language of publication.
 - The article is assigned to a specific section.
 - Bold and italics are used sparingly and purposefully.
 - If imaginative or literary: a MIL contextualising note is attached (50–100 words).
 - If an essay: the thesis is identifiable and the text opens debate rather than closing it.
 - If research-based: an executive summary of maximum 100 words is included and, where possible, a link to open data.
 - If addressing cultural diversity or conflict: voices from the communities involved have been included and any hate speech is analytically framed.
 - The author has declared their institutional affiliation, research group and current status.
 - Conflicts of interest, if any, have been declared.
 - If the text has been previously published, the outlet and date have been indicated and the relevant authorisation obtained.
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