Media Ethics Example

CASE #1:

* READ: [Sinclair Made Dozens of Local News Anchors Recite the Same Script](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/02/business/media/sinclair-news-anchors-script.html)

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fHfgU8oMSo)

* Identify any potential ethical questions/solutions associated with the case referenced above.
  + Questions:
    - Is there data, facts to back up the claims made in the video?
      * The promo does not appear to provide statistics or data regarding the sharing of biased and false news, including among its competitors.
      * “But we’re concerned about the troubling trend of irresponsible, one sided news stories plaguing our country.”
        + There is no additional data to back up the claim of “one sided news stories plaguing our country.”
    - In the pursuit to minimize harm, what may be the impact?
      * Without the use of data, sources, statistics, the promo falls short of identifying a verified “plague” regarding fake news with the local news outlets. Could this hurt public opinion, trust of local journalists?
  + How would you handle the situation?
    - If you were presented an identical script, would you raise concerns?
      * In this case, the concerns are related to the validity of the claims and its singular message across nearly 200 local platforms. Is it ethical to have journalists read lines citing a “plague” of fake news without identifying data or information related to the claims, even as a promotional element?
      * What are the responsibilities of a journalist? If a journalist’s words and messages are held to a high standard of transparency, honesty and pursuit to minimize harm, does this promo fall in line with those standards?
  + Possible Solution:
    - Discuss how a singular message could appear across multiple platforms. Identify a purpose for the message and identify its impact on local stations and beyond.
    - If there is a valid issue at hand, ask your team to include data and information related to the claims.
    - If all stations are required to read the same script, the news company should develop an ethical standard related to transparency to ensure the audience is aware of the author and the message’s intended purpose.