

Code of Ethics (COE) History

In as much as you may consider I taking my stand in reference to the COE and am in fact, very concerned about what has happened to it and have been so for a very long time that:

- Professing to embrace the COE in their award programs but not abiding by it is an ethical lapse of monumental proportions.
- Many award program owners state copyright to the COE without proper attribution

Rhonda Serong, hereafter referred to as the Author personally chose CEM/CEMA as the guardian of the COE document on the one hand because she had faith they would uphold it and on the other hand because a few of the CEM/CEMA members edited, at her request, the final draft copy.

The author trusting CEM/CEMA re the COE was a grievous error in judgment as an un named person literally stole the COE claiming near ownership and certainly massive control over the COE document for / by / and-or on behalf of CEM/CEMA.

Then because some award program owners did recognize and ultimately acknowledge publicly within their award programs that the author had written the COE document (if you know the authors writing form it is easy to ascertain authorship). The author was taken to task by that certain CEM/CEMA person with a flurry of private and public statements, which were known by Denny Lancaster who was an active member of CEM/CEMA to be false and groundless.

The original declaration made by the author to CEM/CEMA was signed as Co-author of the Declaration of Ethics-was signed as such because:

1. As a few CEM/CEMA members assisted in editing the authors final draft of the COE the author believed they should be recognized.
2. The author needed all who read and or used the COE to gain an understanding of the reasoning behind the COE.

You will notice that -

- No where within the original declaration made by Rhonda Serong to CEM/CEMA does it state that CEM/CEMA owned or owns the COE.
- Within the original declaration made by Rhonda Serong to CEM/CEMA that the COE was gifted to the Awards Community.
- Within the original declaration made by Rhonda Serong to CEM/CEMA that any individuals, groups and or organizations believing in and standing behind the 'Code' may legally without restriction offer the 'Code' in the form of a document from their web site for use by other individuals, groups and or organizations who may wish to adhere to such a 'Code'.

CEM/CEMA never placed the COE in the Public Domain. Rhonda Serong did and has been trying to enforce a no copyright policy on same ever since.¹

Finally on August 15, 2008 a great wrong was made right with the following statement Rhonda Serong placed at ACN, quoted in part below with permission.

Quote: Although CEM/CEMA has been closed for some considerable time I have only today (August 15th, 2008) ascertained that the Code of Ethics (COE) document was never licensed within the Public Domain by CEM/CEMA as

was requested by myself many years past and as CEM/CEMA is no longer able to provide safe haven for the Code of Ethics (COE) document I have today, as the prime author of the Code of Ethics (COE) placed the document under a Creative Commons 3.0 Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike United States License and have also gifted the original Code of Ethics (COE) document to the Award Community News for the benefit of the overall Awards Community reserving the right for the owner of Award Community News and myself to jointly decide the future of the Code of Ethics (COE) should the Award Community News prematurely close.

Under the terms of the License we all remain free to remix, tweak, translate, redistribute and build upon our individual Code of Ethics (COE) documents non-commercially on condition we credit the Award Community News and license our Code of Ethics (COE) creations under identical terms as may be seen by accessing the image link we provide.

New users of the Code of Ethics (COE) can also download, remix, tweak, translate, redistribute and build upon the document producing new COE documents based on the Code of Ethics (COE) but all new work based on the Code of Ethics (COE) must carry the same license so any derivatives will also be non-commercial in nature with credit given to the Award Community News. **End Quote**

The original declaration made by Rhonda Serong to CEM/CEMA

To Whomever this may concern:

For the purposes of this statement the Code of Ethics/Statement of Ethics will be known as the 'Code'. Reason: As the 'Code' was created to be adapted for the use of individual Award Programs varying Titles may also be used.

The Spirit of the 'Code' and the reasoning behind the 'Code' being created and then gifted to the Awards Community were and remain as follows:

The Spirit of the 'Code' was and is that individuals, groups and/or organizations worldwide could have freely available a flexible standard format which could be used as the backbone of ethical Award Programs.

That no one individual, group and / or organization can or should own such a vehicle, therefore the 'Code', in its entirety, is International Property.

Any individuals, groups and/or organizations believing in and standing behind the 'Code' may legally without restriction offer the 'Code' in the form of a document from their website for use by other individuals, groups and / or organizations who may wish to adhere to such a 'Code'.

The 'Code' is to be offered to any individuals, groups and/or organizations without restrictions: this means that mandatory group and/or organization membership may not be part of the overall use of the 'Code'.

The 'Code', although within the environs of websites protected by Copyright, cannot be covered by any Copyright. The 'Code' belongs to all individuals, groups and/or organizations who desire to abide by the spirit and content of the 'Code' for the betterment of the International Awards Community.²

Signed:

Rhonda M. Serong

(Co-author of the Declaration of Ethics)



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Footnotes:

¹Nothing modern and creative is in the public domain anymore unless the owner explicitly puts it in the public domain. Explicitly, as in you have a note from the author/owner saying, "I grant this to the public domain." Those exact words or words very much like them.

²An assumption that the poster had the right to post the item in the first place. If the poster didn't, then all the copies are pirated, and no implied license or theoretical reduction of the copyright can take place.

³Public domain case law ([legal proceedings](#)) reads in part "granting something to the public domain is a complete abandonment of all rights.

However the factual documentation of the COE supports that the document was not placed in the public domain by the author until August 15, 2008.

Therefore the [Creative Commons License](#) applies, to wit: Creative Commons licenses are non-revocable. This means that you cannot stop someone, who has obtained your work under a Creative Commons license, from using the work according to that license. You can stop distributing your work under a Creative Commons license at any time you wish; but this will not withdraw any copies of your work that already exist under a Creative Commons license from circulation, be they verbatim copies, copies included in collective works and/or adaptations of your work.

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