Submission Guidelines for *Savage Minds*

Please read through the following before submitting your article to *Savage Minds* which will make the writing and editing process easier.

Submission and Editing Process

- Before submitting your piece to your editor, please check your work within your own word processor's spellcheck and also through Grammarly. *Make sure to set the "language preference" to British English.* Much of Grammarly is wrong, but it will see errors that you will not see. If you are getting many errors in Grammarly, then you likely need to re-edit your piece again before sending it and then re-check it with Grammarly.

- Put your **surname** on your document with a word or three from your title/subject. Editors work on many documents and it will be hard to find. Send your documents in doc, docx or rtf format.

- Take care to go through the edits and sign off all track changes—check all edits from the right-hand margin and notes on the left—such that when you send the document back all edits on the right-hand margin are resolved.

- Proofread your work several times before sending in the first draft. If you are new to this, then go for a run after your write before proofreading. It's always a good idea to let a piece sit a few hours before proofreading as you won't see what you need to see.

Author Information and Engagement

- You will be sent a link for setting up your author information. Please put your real full name (first and last), a brief bio and a proper picture of yourself.

- Feel free to interact with readers' comments and respond to their questions.

- If you discover errors in your piece after publication, contact your editor immediately.

Style Guide

- All submissions should be single-spaced, in a 12 point font that is easy to read (eg. Times, Helvetica) with the document saved as either .rtf or .doc with your name and the first two or three words of the title as the filename.

- Use British spelling but US-style punctuation where "double quotation marks" are used and for a quote within a quote, use double quotes around the entire citation and single quotes around the quotation within. See here.

- Quotation marks go outside commas and full-stops (eg. "...finally." "in the book," etc) but not within your sentence structure for semi-colons and colons.

- Quotes under 4 lines in length are placed within the paragraph; anything more than 4 lines is set up as a separate bock quote prefaced by a colon (unless the context of your quote requires different punctuation).

- Dates are noted with the day, then month, then year (ex. 22 May 2021) with no commas between.

- No more two spaces after punctuation. It's one space only, always.

- When citing a quotation where the reference is unclear, replace the reference in brackets so as to maintain clarity, such as here where the pronoun would be replaced by a noun: "The president say that [the prime minister] resigned yesterday."

- Use clear, accessible language. Readers are not impressed with academic jargon unless it fits. If you use a term like "ontological," it must be clear that you know what this means and then convey it to the reader. Otherwise, readers will quickly understand that you are trying to bullshit them and they will stop reading. If you can say it more clearly and in fewer complex, longish sentences, then do it.

- Hyperlink your sources and try to limit links to as few words as possible since the bright colours of the links can cause eye problems for readers. There will be exceptions to this obviously. For instance, if you want to refer to a book like *Orientalism*, that's an easy link, but an extremely long book title might be best places under the author's name or if you write, "In their study on reptilian migration…" this would work best since the title is 18 words. But as a rule keep links to one word (eg. avoid including articles and modifiers: "In the groundbreaking study…."

- When you reference media, be fair and avoid anything extremist (eg. far-right publications or those that claim that hugging trees will cure COVID). Try to balance your sources if you must cover a scandal on one side of the political aisle and feel free to note that you are giving balance to your sources and clarify why you must use a source from the right or the left if it might be critiqued: "Although Fox News has a long history of hyperbole on this subject, further investigation reveals that the papers leaked to X journalist corroborate that the Biden computer story is factually correct."

- No bibliographies please. All references to facts, papers, books, interviews, etc. go within hyperlinks to the name, book or event. If there is no electronic link to your source material, refer to the title, author and parenthetically the city, publisher and year. For instance, "In Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* (1377)" (where there is no publisher) and "In her autobiography, *Here Lies the Heart* (New York: Reynal & Co, 1960), Mercedes de Acosta…" In reality, you will find most references online given the many PDFs afloat with out of print works like this book. If you have any questions, speak with your editor. Link only to the words and not spaces or punctuation: McDonaldization and book.

- It is fine to link to online sellers of books, but please try to avoid Amazon. They don't need more business, local/smaller businesses do.

- For all acronyms that you employ in your piece, upon first mentioning it, you must spell out it in full parenthetically. "NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)…"

- The first time you mention any person, use their full name after which you refer to that person with their surname only. If you have two people with the same last name in one article, you must then use their first and last name throughout the piece.

- Do not use what is currently called "preferred pronouns." *Savage Minds* is fact-based. For people who embrace identity politics, write, "Simmons, a man who identifies himself as transgender." There is no need to put that he identifies as a woman since this in itself leads to the sustained fiction that changing sex is possible. There is not scientific evidence for this. Put in anther way, would you write the following: "I spoke with Smith who is a Capricorn ascendent with a moon in the 8th house"? Of course, you would not. So please stick to facts around all aspects of your story.

Content and Sourcing

- Allow the facts to guide your story.

- Investigative stories carry a heavy social responsibility and various legal risks. You must be sure your reporting is thorough, accurate and comprehensive. And because such reports are likely to take time, then take your time. Fact-check everything and fact-check many times if necessary sourcing your facts with more than one witness or document when possible.

- Don't take for granted that because major media runs a story that it must be true. The *Variety* and *Associated Press* false reporting around the Netflix walkout and protests is one of many cases of fake news that has gone repeated by other media. Media on both the right and left are guilty of this so take nothing for granted. Fact-check everything!

- For journalistic pieces, sources are vital and you need to include information you have uncovered, documenting it with first-person confirmation and direct quotes from interviews you conduct for your article. If you wish to cite the *New York Times*, that is fine, but you must fact-check the information yourself. There are some exceptions to this such as a leak when files are only in the hands of one newspaper only. Then you must be clear that the *NYT* reported this.

- Always represent all sides to stories where social, scientific or political discord is the story. Try to get quotes from the "other side" in public debates if those voices are not represented, try to have balance in your articles where one side is unrepresented. In many cases, groups tend to use social media to get their points across which is fair and you may link to this.

- When covering any story, do not be the mouthpiece for any organisation. Investigative journalism is not collation of what has already been published. It is not simply rewriting reports issued by civil society organisations, government bodies or research centres as the recent Stonewall fiasco has evidence where the British government has unwittingly parroted hokum as science from this lobby group.

- Investigative journalism is not scandal journalism. Not everything that people want to hide is worth following up. Nor are scoops or exclusives necessarily investigative journalism. Knowing that a former official drinks alcohol in the privacy of his own home is not in the public interest so long as it has had no effect on his work. Knowing that the same official used public money to bankroll this habit, however, is.

- Be fair in your representation around issues of public debate and avoid hyperbole.

- If you link to social media, however, please screen cap your reference and record the original link *always* as it is very likely if your article hinges upon social media evidence, that the evidence will be removed. You may choose to post your evidence online in one of many free services that will host your JPG, or just tweet record the evidence in the public view on social media.

- If you cite any organisation, public or private, always try to ensure that what they are telling is what they told the public last year, etc. [Internet Archive](#) is your friend and use it persistently to ensure that organisations are not changing their tune or that a newspaper has not doctored its story as recent cases demonstrate.

- **Never cover stories involving your friends, family or business partners.** If you have a lead or are a source for something you know about anyone in your personal or

professional life, please pass this onto your editor who will assign the story to an impartial journalist.

- People lie. If you were to do a story on your best friend or mother *even though we would never run such a piece,* you must still provide fact-checked information. Not all encounters are recorded or written, but if a source tells you that company policy states x or that her director wrote her an email to say y, then you must have access to the original evidence. Avoid using screen shots as anything can be doctored.

- If you reach out to a key individual or organisation and they do not respond to you, state this in your article to demonstrate that you attempted to include their voice.

- Don't *bottom feed* your stories. The blogger era grew a generation of journalists who are untrained in sourcing original stories, hence when X event occurs there are "journalists" who are piggybacking the work of one journalist who broke the story. Please don't do this. If you are covering a story that was broken by Z journalist, don't rewrite their story! If you have something to add to their story, then begin your piece with an acknowledgement of the journalist who cracked the story and then add to their coverage with your angle. For instance, "Not only has the UCU not backed up its professors under attack from the transgender lobby as Julian Vigo reports, but the UCU has collaborated with a series of transgender lobby groups…" If your story rests on a repetition of another journalist's work, it will be outright rejected.

- If you use any published material for your article, cite it! While *Savage Minds* is not an academic journal, it abides by the same rules of citation and intellectual property. For any doubts, please read this guide for responsible referencing.

- Refer to Al-Jazeera's *Investigative Journalism Handbook*!

Scientific Method in Reporting

- We all start our research with a hypothesis. *But any hypothesis is not and should never be an end in itself.* It is simply a means of getting to the truth.

- In investigative journalism, a hypothesis is a proposed explanation that assesses a problem or issue in order to establish the truth of what happened by making connections between the facts—even if those facts are not yet entirely verified. It provides provisional answers on how an **event** might be connected to an **actor** (a perpetrator) and its **victim** and how big the **problem** might be. These are the basic elements of a hypothesis.

- Despite the centrality of the hypothesis to the investigative process, it can always be amended if new evidence and facts require. A good journalist should always be open to evidence that contradicts their hypothesis and work just as hard to disprove the hypothesis as to prove it—that is, they should make just as much effort to find evidence contradicting it as they do to find evidence supporting it.

- Hypotheses are important because:
    1. They make it easier to collect data, gather and organise new facts and evidence, and analyse it.
    2. They help us keep control of the investigation and manage it effectively.
    3. They help test the easiest and best methodology for establishing a hypothesis.

4.They help us to focus and be precise and to establish the boundaries and goals of the investigation.

5.They help us to more closely understand the issue that we are researching.

6.They help us to come up with solutions in the event that problems arise.

7.They are the cornerstone of a fully integrated investigation.

8.They help us to market the idea to others.

9.They help us to set budgets and keep a tighter hold on time and resources.

10.They help us to establish the sources of the investigation.

- A hypothesis has the following characteristics:

  1.It can be tested.

  2. It is based on established and documented facts as well as uncorroborated information (assumptions).

  3.It is concise.

  4.It is coherent and based on facts that the journalist is looking to gather as well as information they already have.

- Source everything you write. Sources can be: human, paper or electronic materials, reports, leaked documents and private emails. If you have any doubts, ask your sources to send evidence in a drop-box and ensure they do not hide email source information. Here are some examples of acceptable sources:

  ◊ Final court judgements can be used as proof against anyone with regard to their content and the facts of the case. Non-final judgements and investigation files are not proof because they may include confessions extracted by force, but they can be used as supporting evidence.

  ◊ Emails can be used as evidence against their sender, so long as they cannot prove that someone else sent the email.

  ◊ Documents produced by organisations or natural persons that have not been ratified or signed can also be cited as supporting evidence, i.e. supporting a case already substantiated with other forms of proof.

  ◊ Documents produced and ratified by organisations or companies and issued by a competent employee. These can be used as proof against their originating organisations, so long as they are not proven to be forgeries. Documents of this kind include budgets, decisions taken by the board of directors, other administrative decisions, payrolls, etc.

  ◊Documents produced and ratified by natural persons (i.e. signed, stamped or fingerprinted by them). These can be used as proof against their originator, so long as they are not proven to be forgeries, but cannot serve as proof against others. Documents of this kind include personal letters, wills and diaries. Government emails, so long as they are not proven to be forged, can always be used as proof.

- You should only promise not to mention a source's name with the agreement of your editor or editor-in-chief.

- Anonymous sources should only be used for a clear and justifiable reason and we will not run pieces based solely on one anonymous account. If this is the case you need to have two or more other named sources to support X story.