The Drudge Report website is extremely complex and always changing. Because of this, it is hard to keep track of along the lines of the Code of Ethics. After viewing the Code of Ethics by The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, there were nine key points which stood out the most. These key points of journalism are as follows: 1) There can be no gifts, favors or free give-a-ways. 2) Truth. 3) What is publicized needs to be thorough and accurate. 4) Journalists need to learn and report the facts. 5) That which is publicized needs to be of intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness. 6) Free of bias. 7) That publicized can be discussed, questioned and challenged. 8) Right to privacy. 9) Free of obligation to any interest. The Drudge Report violates each of these key points, to be explained in greater detail. The Drudge Report therefore does not follow the Code of Ethics closely or completely.

Key point one goes into detail in the Code of Ethics by the following, “Gifts, favors, free travel, special treatment or privileges can compromise the integrity of journalists and their employers. Nothing of value should be accepted” (Practice of Public Relations 144). On the Drudge Report, this is violated through a link to The New York Observer. When taken to the main page, there are links which advertise gifts and special treatment. One example is a link for Morrell Wine. Before even taken to the next page, it states that you get 10% off your first order. When reading further into the new page, one can see that they are trying to give a gift in order to get customers. This is not only violated here, but throughout many other links on the website which try to get people to sign up by offering gifts and free items.
The second key point, truth, is stated in the Code of Ethics under “Accuracy and Objectivity” as “truth is our ultimate goal” (Practice of Public Relations 144). This is violated on the Drudge Report in a link to Mirror.co.uk. The head article is titled “Everyone has got a bi side. We act on it.” Immediately the truth is not upheld. The author is quickly coming to the conclusion that “everyone” is bisexual. “Everyone” is a lot of people and it would be very hard to survey the entire world. The title is misleading and dishonest to the readers. When reading further into the article it states, “A third of Britain’s female night clubbers say they are bisexual” (mirror.co.uk). Again, one can not be certain that this is the truth. To survey every female member in every Britain club of every night would be near to impossible. When stating their findings, the author should be more specific of who was surveyed, where they were surveyed, and when the survey took place. This would bring up more facts leading to the truth.

Key point three is stated in the Code of Ethics, “There is no excuse for inaccuracies or lack of thoroughness” (Practice of Public Relations 144). There are many articles on the Drudge Report which are very brief. This would be fine if in being brief, the article was also to the point. However, there articles are not only brief but lack the information needed to give a thorough look on the topic being reported. One example of this lack of thoroughness is on a link to news from Yahoo. The article titled “Lynne Cheney Jokes about Kerry’s Tan” is less than half a page long. It sounds as if the writer was looking to fill space with random opinions rather than finding all of the facts and going into detail about them. The entire article talked about was about John Kerry having a dark appearance and looking orange. The article did not even report when this occurred or why this occurred. Not only was it lacking details but it was also very biased which was another key point. The brief article did not give any information to support the other side of the story. This article seemed purely for entertainment purposes and to put down John Kerry.
Key point four is that journalists need to learn and report the facts. This goes along somewhat with key point three of needing to be thorough and accurate. There is another article, however, which demonstrates mostly the lack of point four. The article titled “Kids Visit Margaritaville” is found on a link to the Website called “The Smoking Gun.” Stated in this brief, one paragraph, incomplete article are the words “For some reason.” Just using those very words shows lack of facts. The journalist should have done more research to find out this reason rather than making it very general and unspecified. It continues the sentence by saying “For some reason, the leftover hooch was placed in a school refrigerator.” The overall article talks about how some elementary aged school children were served alcohol accidentally during lunch, mistaken as limeade. The reason of the children being served alcohol is a very important fact which was left out.

Key point five is included in the Code of Ethics in the sentence stating, “WE BELIEVE those responsibilities carry obligations that require journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy and fairness” (Practice of Public Relations 144). A link from the Drudge Report to an article on Yahoo definitely does not show fairness. The article titled “Paris’ Not So Simple Life” mentions Paris Hilton’s television show only briefly before ripping her image to pieces. The only quotes they included in the article from Paris went along only with the television show. She may not have even been aware that the final outcome of the article was portraying her negatively. The article ends by talking about her pornographic film and a line that states “For those who really need their fix of the ubiquitous Hilton, her first sexcapade is now available on DVD at various porn purveyors. Just as for ‘One Night in Paris’.” The entire article did not give a fair look on the topic by getting her opinions on the video or being unbiased.
This brings us to the next point, six, which is stated in the Code of Ethics, “News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue” (Practice of Public Relations). Each of the articles previously discussed has included some form of opinion or bias and has therefore gone against this point. However, an article through the link to “The Courier-Mail” demonstrates this point the best. The article is titled “Man-shaped pillow for solo sleeper” and discusses a new kind of pillow from Japan which is shaped like a man with arms and a torso for a woman to sleep on. The entire article is like an advertisement for this new pillow. The only quotes from people included in the article are pro-pillow. The article shows to be completely biased except for the one fact of stating the price which could be either a negative or positive aspect depending on the reader’s value of the pillow. Without telling the reader to straight out buy the pillow, that is what the article says.

The seventh point, stated, “It carries with it the freedom and the responsibility to discuss, question and challenge actions and utterances of our government and of our public and private institutions” is clearly violated along with some of the other violations. When clicking on the link to “Media Life” the viewer is brought to a cover page which lists many other links to articles. Each of these again gives the reader a biased look at the story before even reading the entire article. The reader is therefore put in a position which limits the discussion and questioning of these articles because of the opinion already formed by the title. Some of these titles are “Big media needs a big look,” “Wife Swap, great fun stuff with a point,” and “How UPN got its groove back.” In the first article the reader is unable to question whether or not media does need a big look. In the second, the reader is unable to question that this show is actually great. In the third, the reader is unable to question UPN. Here, the reader can not
discuss, question or challenge before even getting to the actual articles. These opinions are formed just from the titles.

Key point eight, “The news media must guard against invading a person’s right to privacy” (Practice of Public Relations 144), is somewhat followed yet was not with a specific article in “The New York Observer”. This was the second article from “The New York Observer” which did not follow one of the key points. “The Ballerina Who Bent” was completely inappropriate and a great violation to the dancer’s privacy. Seeing the title of this article, one could probably believe it would be about dancing or the ballerina getting hurt. When reading further into the article, it is shown that it has near to nothing to do with dance and is only a discussion of sex. The article gets extremely graphic with quotes such as “butt sex,” “her tract about her tract” and “hard knocks of life” each implied in a dirty notion. The ballerina was never quoted about these experiences explained nor was it noted in any way that she asked or allowed for these words to be published about her. Though a link to the privacy rights is shown on most of the articles, this did not have any such link or mention of privacy.

The last point, states that journalists should be free of obligation to any interest. While this was not one of the major violations, it was still noticed as not being followed completely. Again in “Media Life” there was an article which violated this point titled “Follow the Money.” It is portrayed as if the journalists are somehow connected with the newsletter they seem to advertise. The article starts off with many questions then continues to briefly explain the benefits of receiving the newsletter. It ends with the price and by saying “That’s just a few dollars a week.” It is shown as an article yet has none of the qualities an article normally has such as who, what, were, when, and why. It seems as if it should appear as an advertisement in a magazine. The reader has reason to doubt if the writer is somehow connected with this newsletter.
Overall, accuracy and objectivity seems to be violated mostly in the Drudge Report. The examples stated previously explain how these violations were acted against with some of the key points in the Code of Ethics. There are many more articles and countless violations throughout the entire website. One main issue noticed is pop-up ads. Every time the viewer clicks on a link for a new article, a new pop-up arrives. They are in violation with the Code of Ethics because the majority of them were for contests, credit cards or freebies. Though these are not in individual articles, they do come through the website of the Drudge Report and therefore are believed to be in violation. If no violation is wanted, pop-ups should be omitted completely. Another violation is with links having nothing come up when clicked on, specifically wash.com and UK tabloids. If there is nothing to report, the page should be taken away otherwise it is seen as inaccurate and not thorough. With the amount of information on the Drudge Report, it is very hard to report all of the violations. Those mentioned were examples that represent the Drudge Report as a whole as being in violation of the Code of Ethics in many different points.