All of these levels of responsibility influence how communicators weigh their actions and make their decisions. Societal expectations, organizational and professional routines and norms, and individual standards are going to play a role in each decision you are faced with making. As long as you have a systematic method for evaluating each situation and for applying your professional standards, you should be able to make your information decisions in an ethical and defensible manner.

The information strategy provides you with the skills to ensure that you don’t have to resort to inappropriate, unethical, or illegal means to gather information. If one method of gathering information seems inappropriate, your skill with a well-developed information strategy means you can use another, more appropriate, method to find what you need. Being a highly skilled information gatherer in an information-overloaded society brings credibility to you and to your organization.

Further, using an explicit information strategy helps you explain your standards to others. When the public, colleagues, or supervisors challenge the information on which you base a message, you can present an ordered, rational account of your information search and selection process. Using the standards and methods available in the information strategy allows others to evaluate your skill and expertise as a communications professional.