

# Retouching Reality

## Directions

Read the following news article. Then discuss the questions that follow, explaining your answers in the spaces provided. (Note: “Reuters” is the name of an international news agency.)

### Reuters Fires Photographer After Alteration

In 2006, Reuters was forced to fire a photographer, remove images from circulation and change policy after finding that a photo of an Israeli air raid on Beirut had been manipulated.

Bloggers were the first to notice that the clouds in an image taken by Adnan Hajj, a Lebanese photographer, had been darkened.

Soon after, Reuters issued an apology and said it withdrew from its database all of the images taken by Hajj. “There is no graver breach of Reuters standards for our photographers than the deliberate manipulation of an image,” Tom Szlukovenyi, Reuters global picture editor, said at the time. “Reuters has zero tolerance for any doctoring of pictures, and constantly reminds its photographers, both staff and freelance, of this strict, unalterable policy.”

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**The New York Times** **Technology**

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### Ease of Alteration Creates Woes for Picture Editors



Photographs by Adnan Hajj/Reuters

An authentic photo, left, of smoke from burning buildings in Beirut suburbs during Israeli air raid and photographer's manipulated version, right.

**Article:**

Heussner, Kai Mae. “11 Photo-Editing Flubs: Digitally Altered Photo Disasters.” ABCNews.com, Oct. 8, 2009. Web. <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/AheadoftheCurve/11-photo-editing-flubs-digitally-altered-photo-disasters/story?id=8780937>.

**Photo:**

Aspan, Maria. “The Ease of Alteration Creates Woes for Picture Editors.” *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 2006. Web. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/14/technology/14photoshop.html>.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why did Reuters apologize for this digitally manipulated photo? Why was it so controversial?
2. Do you think that it's unethical for news articles to use digitally edited photos? Why or why not?
3. Who were the first people to notice this photo mishap? What role does the Internet play in allowing us to expose and regulate digitally manipulated images?

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### Microsoft Ad Changes Man's Race

In August, the blogosphere went wild over an image in a Microsoft Corp. ad that had been edited to change a man's race from black to white.

In a photo featured on the company's U.S. Web site, three colleagues – one white, one black and one Asian – sit around a conference room table. But in the same photo on the company's Polish site, the face of the black man had been replaced with the face of a white man.

The gaffe sparked quite the discussion online, as bloggers and commenters wondered if the change was racially motivated, the result of poor judgment or both. Some people suspected that the computer technology giant changed the Polish image so that it matched the country's own racial composition.

It even inspired the popular tech blog TechCrunch to launch a contest to see who can manipulate the funniest head onto the Microsoft ad.

“So get Photoshop fired up and make your funniest (and yet not in any way offensive) version of the Polish Microsoft head replacement. No rules. Replace all the heads you want to. Add costumes and

props. Add text bubbles,” it said on its site. The winner gets a Bing (Microsoft's search engine) T-shirt in the mail.

Ultimately, the affair elicited an apology from Microsoft, which said in a statement, “We are looking into the details of this situation. We apologize and have replaced the image with the original photograph.”

#### Article and Photo:

Heussner, Kai Mae. “11 Photo-Editing Flubs: Digitally Altered Photo Disasters.” ABCNews.com, Oct. 8, 2009. Web.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/AheadoftheCurve/11-photo-editing-flubs-digitally-altered-photo-disasters/story?id=8780937>.



