amcb

asian media and communication bulletin

Key ADB project for AMIC

AMIC has been commissioned by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to publish and launch a significant report, entitles the "Asian Water Development Outlook (AWDO) 2007", on key water and sanitation issues in Asia.
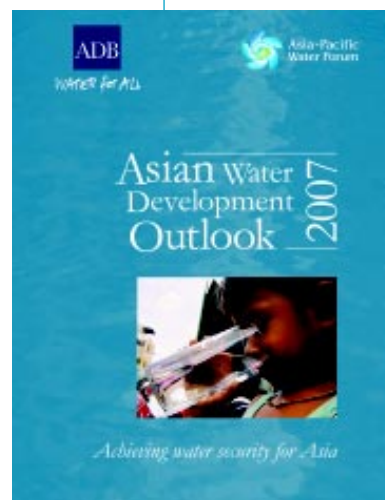
AMIC is responsible for the development and implementation of the media strategy for both the AWDO, and the first Asia Pacific Water Summit (APWS), which will take place from 3–4 December 2007 in Beppu, Japan. In addition to providing media coverage about the Report and the event, AMIC's media strategy also entails increasing new media coverage of key water and sanitation issues dealt with in the Report.

Key messages of the AWDO will be presented to delegates comprising water and sanitation experts, policymakers, and representatives from the ADB, and media personnel at a forum in Singapore on 29 November 2007 prior to the APWS. The Forum includes a panel discussion to highlight the significance of the AWDO and to obtain insights as well as reactions on the key messages presented earlier.

Rather than an alarmist environmental message, the AWDO produced by a team of international renowned water experts takes an analytical approach towards looking at the current situation in the region in the water sector and its impact on development, and draws parallels between energy security and water security.

"It is likely that if there will be a water crisis in the future, it will not come because of actual physical scarcity of water, as many predict at present, but because of continuing neglect of proper

Third World Media Forum Update

Hundreds of international leaders, policy makers, academics, journalists and broadcast practitioners from around the world will converge at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia, for the Third World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF3) from 11–12 December 2007.

They will examine the fundamental changes taking place in the global information society, and discuss how these will affect the role of the electronic media as well as the dissemination of knowledge, economic and business practices, political engagement and other aspects of society.

The Forum comprises eight plenary sessions spread over two days and a pre-WEMF event presenting a report on the Gobal Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) Workshop. The Initiative aims to leverage on the power of the broadcast media to raise awareness and hopefully mobilise society on the AIDS pandemic in Asia.

Leading speakers at the inaugural session include Veronica Pedrosa, News anchor, Aljazeera English and Genichi Hashimoto, President, ABU and NHK-Japan. Dr Indrajit Banerjee, AMIC's Secretary General, will chair the opening plenary session, "The new challenges in broadcasting: technology, content, regulation".

The highlight of the Forum is the launch of a major initiative to help preserve the world's audiovisual archives. The inter-organisational group on Archives at Risk (IAR), set up at WEMF2, leads the way by introducing a website

Key ADB project for AMIC
(Continued from Page 1)

Prof Asit Biswas, the winner of the 2006 Stockholm International Water Prize and the lead author of the AWDO report.

wastewater management practices. Continuation of the present trend, will make available water sources increasingly contaminated, and will make provision of clean water more and more expensive", warns Prof Asit Biswas, the winner of the 2006 Stockholm International Water Prize and the lead author of the AWDO report.

Warning against falling into the bandwagon trap – which would hinder development – AWDO argues for water infrastructure development projects that would be geared towards poverty reduction, employment generation and raising the living standards of the people across the board.

AWDO makes the point quite strongly that what Asia and the Pacific are facing is not a water crisis but a water management problem. Thus it makes a clarion call for better water management practices across the region.

While climatic change will add an "uncertainty in water planning", the AWDO argues that its impact will vary across the region and the water profession may not be able to handle it with any degree of confidence in the near future. Thus, what

is needed is a whole new mindset, which will require substantial attention and additional investments in capacity building.

For the first time, an 'Index of Drinking Water Adequacy' (IDWA) for Asia, is proposed in the AWDO. "Inspired by the widely known Human Development Index, the IDWA is a useful to trigger policy as it comprises five parameters that give a much better picture of the relationship between clean water and poverty, than the access-only indicators popularly quoted in the Millennium Development Goal debate", says Mr K E Seetharam, lead water specialist and task manager for AWDO at ADB.

AWDO provides a valuable forward looking outlook for the water sector in the region, with key messages for the media, civil society and governments. The AWDO quotes many good practices that are featured in the accompanying CD-ROM and argues that the water problems of Asia are solvable—with leadership and commitment.

Third World Media Forum Update
(Continued from Page 1)

to showcase key archives from all over the world. UNESCO estimates that as much as 80 per cent of the world's audiovisual materials is at risk of irreversible decay within the next ten years. It will be a chance to see the site and hear from the IAR members about the prospects for the future.

The session focussing on the safety of journalists will discuss how to build on the UN resolution while opening the perspective to broader dangers such as the risks run by investigative journalists in peace time, and by backroom news staff constantly handling news material of violent nature.

The session of the second day of the Forum will discuss on bridging the "accessibility" divide

The WEMF3 will be held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia from 10 to 11 December 2007.

covers not only the less developed regions, but it looks into the accessibility for the handicapped and the elderly, and the content creators.

The other two sessions will focuss on the explosion and fracturing of public sphere, and the links between politics and media

The closing session will discuss the outcomes of the Forum and what it is hoped that the stakeholders will be able to achieve between the end of 2007 and the convening of WEMF4 in Latin America in 2009.

Confirmed speakers to date include Song Jong Moon, Managing Director, KBS-Korea, Richard Porter, Head of News, BBC World; Jean Reveillon, Director-General, European Broadcasting Union; Cesar Gerbasi, President, OTI; Edwin van Huis, President, FIAT/IFTA; Seema B Nair, Projec Leader, UNESCO India; Lieven Vermaele, Technical Director, EBU; and Lucy Hooberman, Innovation Executive, BBC Future Media & Technology.

WEMF3 follows the first and second World Electronic Media Forums, which were held in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005 respectively, in conjunction with the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

It is a World Broadcasting Unions event and WEMF3 is being organised in Asia by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and AMIC.

For more information, please visit AMIC's website at www.amic.org.sg or the WEMF3 website at www.wemfmedia.org

AMIC's Lifetime Achievement Award 2007

Professor Eddie CY Kuo, AMIC's Chairman d'Honneur, was honoured with AMIC's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Gala Dinner held in conjunction with the 16th AMIC Annual Conference and World Journalism Education Congress in Singapore. The Award is given only to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the Asian media and communication field.

Professor Eddie Kuo was the Founding Dean of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI) and was instrumental in nurturing WKWSCI to be a leading media and mass communication education institution in Asia.

He is the founding editor of the *Asian Journal of Comunication (AJC)* and has also served on the editorial advisory boards of several leading academic publications. He has served as the Chairman of AMIC from 2002 to 2004. His citation includes initiating new projects such as the establishment of the Asian Communication Resource Centre located at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information Building.

Last year, Prof John Lent, Temple University, was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 15th AMIC Annual Conference held in Penang. His citation included his pioneering effort in setting up the School of Mass Communication at the Universiti Sains Malaysia and his expertise on Asian popular culture.

Professor Eddie Kuo received AMIC's Lifetime Achievement Award from Dean Ang Peng Hwa, AMIC's Chairman at the Gala Dinner held on 25 June 2007.

Communicating women's issues in a multicultural society

Women constitute more than half the population in many Asian countries. As we step into the 21st century, we find that reporting of women's issues tend to be under-represented and that many issues are ignored, downplayed or distorted. Furthermore, many issues are not openly discussed because of the erstwhile "sensitivities" surrounding the position of women in the context of multi-cultural societies, such as that which prevails in Malaysia. A third factor that impinges upon the position of women is the growing urban-rural divide, resulting in the lack of attention being given to the plight of rural women.

The principal questions posed here are: What is the role of media in communicating women's issues in a multi-cultural society? Can the empowering technologies that are proliferating rapidly in the new media environment help to champion the cause of women?

Associated questions are:

• What is the present situation with regard to the portrayal of Asian/Malaysian women in the media?

• What are some of the "best practices" with regard to communicating women's issues in developed countries, and how can we learn from these experiences?

• What are the mechanisms for reconciling differing women's interests in different cultural contexts, and how can consensus be achieved?

• What national strategies can be designed and implemented in order to intensify and strengthen communication about women's issues?

These were the questions addressed by experts on women and communication at a one-day "Seminar on Communication Women's Issues in a Multicultural Society" held at Crystal Crown Hotel, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia on 30th July 2007.

While the focus on the discussions was on the situation in Malaysia, there were also references to how developed nations have dealt with women's issues. Speakers explained the "best practices" approach adopted in countries that have been successful in tackling the issues mentioned above.

Mr William Polk, Special Counsel to the Lt. Governor of North Carolina, USA, spoke on the American experience in communicating women's issues, while Asst Prof Dr Kavita Karan of Wee Kim Wee School of Communication, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, gave an overview of "Asian Women in Communication." COO of Mediaplus Consultants, Dr. Sankaran Ramanathan spoke on the importance of multicultural discourse in approaching women's issues in Asia.

In her closing remarks, Datuk Dr. Sharifah Zarah welcomed any further initiatives to enhance communication about women's issues. In addition to attracting academics, lawyers, media practitioners and those concerned with women's issues, the Seminar provided a unique opportunity for students of law, mass communication, sociology and liberal studies to interact with academics and media experts and learn from them.

The principal sponsor of the Seminar was the Department of Women's Development, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia. AMIC was the regional associate of the Seminar. *Sankaran Ramanathan*

De-colonizing journalism curricula

"Journalism curricula in non-western and developing countries requires a different approach to content and delivery, and that there is a need to decolonise journalism curricula and practices from the prevailing western models", said Evangelia Papoutsaki in her presentation at the 16th AMIC Annual Conference held in Singapore.

Journalism education is seen from a society/region's specific knowledge and information needs. Attention is placed on external factors such as the importance placed on western values, education and journalism practices and the value of research in journalism curricula as a pedagogical and epistemological tool.

She identifies three main issues: (1) dominance of Western values and knowledge on non-western educational systems; (2)) Western influence on journalism/communication curricula and practices in non-western and developing countries; and (3) insufficient locally produced research on journalism/ communication curricula and practices and lack of confidence in abilities to deviate from the dominant paradigm.

Attempts to offer ready made prescriptive models for journalism curricula are still persistent though, such as the UNESCO's initiated model curricula, despite evidence that they do not always work. There is a need, the author argues, to move away from generic models and allow new approaches to be explored within local contexts and older ones such development journalism to be re-examined and given space to grow afresh.

The intellectual undernourishment of journalism education and research is tied to the wider problems in the academic culture of developing countries.

The methodology of teaching that will be most effective is one where educators use data on the demand-side, that is, allowing information needs, once identified, to become the catalyst for creative production, harnessing the inherent capacities and collective wisdom of communities, rather than simply transferring the received wisdom of foreign donor agencies and consultants, reinforced by media technocrats.

She asks how we can facilitate the emergence of new understandings of journalistic principles that move away from the dominant principles contained in normative media theory, ethics and practice. She argues that for journalism curricula to embrace local perspectives it would entail an academic shift towards local achievements, needs, ways of acquiring knowledge as well as a 'decolonizing of the mind' that comes with questioning of the existing Western journalistic world view. However there are a number of issues that need to be addressed first, such as how concepts of freedom of expression, objectivity, news values, newsworthiness can be reinterpreted locally; and how these interpretations can be implemented to form the foundation of locally-conceptualised media and journalistic practices.

"What is being advocated is a refocus of present journalism research conceptualization and educational practices in order to give greater consideration to the *chineseness* or *Indianess* or *arabicness*/*islamicness* or *pacificness*, etc of social phenomena and human behaviour as expressed in journalism practices."

A new approach to undergraduate journalism education

Undergraduate journalism programmes should postpone the teaching of the techniques of journalism, including reporting and newswriting until they have laid the foundations on whose strength the development of present and future techniques depends. This argument was raised by Michael Cobden in his paper , "A New Approach to Undergraduate Journalism Education" presented at the 16th AMIC Annual Conference.

Courses in reporting and newswriting should not be seen, the way they are now, as foundational, but rather to be taught on the foundations of: (1) critical thinking; (2) research methodology; (3) narrative, descriptive and explanatory writing; (4) an adequate fund of general knowledge; and (5) a deep and active understanding of the relation of journalism to democracy.

Developing such intellectual capacities equip the journalists the ability to assimilate unfamiliar situations quickly and to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information, together with an understanding of the principles and practices of research. The paper specifies that the foundation courses should be taught in a practical way, and students from the start of the programme should be encouraged and helped to do extra-curricular campus, community and freelance journalism.

Many journalism schools have wrestled with whether to offer a journalism course to first year students or to let them select journalism in their second or third year (or in graduate school), when they have had some experience of university and the adult world. The present reality is that most journalism programmes are offered at the undergraduate level, and the number of undergraduate programmes in most countries is growing as universities compete for enrollment.

His paper outlines an undergraduate programme that it argues would do better than conventional programmes in preparing students to "hit the ground running" in their first jobs.

"Journalism is an intellectually demanding pursuit. It requires a highly developed ability to assimilate unfamiliar situations quickly and to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information."

Convergence, Citizen Journalism & Social Change: Building Capacity
University of Queensland, Brisbane, 26–28 March, 2008

CALL FOR PAPERS

The era of the digital has led to the problematisation of a number of issues once taken for granted: for example, understandings of the nature, practices and objectives of journalism. While traditional journalism remains a significant institution in the Asia-Pacific region, new forms of journalism—from blogs to online news services —have begun to offer audiences new sources for news and new opportunities for self-expression.

This raises questions about what is journalism in the context of an era in which traditional notions and practices of journalism are continually challenged/matched/complemented by an explosion of digital practices, insurrections and resistances both within and outside mainstream media organisations. It also questions what it means to be a citizen in a digital era characterised by trans-national multiple flows of images, people, resources, in which our sense of place and time is being radically restructured by rapid technological innovations and consequent cultural and social dislocations.

As well as providing the space to interrogate theory, this theme offers us an opportunity to interrogate the practices and pedagogies of the analogue and digital eras which inform our ways of thinking and doing - for example teaching and research into journalism and communication practice and their relation to social change, as well as broader media policy and practice. While there is, for instance, evidence of the changes that are directly and indirectly impacting on the scope and practice of journalism as a result of a variety of public/citizen communication practices, we are less sure of the sustainability of such practices, and of the relationship these practices have to mainstream journalism and media policy. In this context of change, it makes sense to explore the capacities required for the next generation of media, communication and journalism students, and the pedagogies that are needed to nurture citizen journalism and other forms of community media.

This conference will be structured around the exploration of three distinct but related streams — theory, practice and capacities.

Theory
- Problematising Journalism Education in the Context of Convergence
- Citizen Journalism & Social Change
- Revisiting Resistance in an Era of the Digital
- Rethinking Media Politics, Democracy, and Social Movement Communication in the Digital Age.
- Theorising power in an era of the Digital

Practice
- Media Education, New Media & Citizenship
- Community Radio, New Media and Social Change
- Indymedia as the Practice of Citizenship
- E-governance, the Right to Information and Citizenship
- Media Industries and Citizen Journalism

Capacities
- Building Capacities for Citizen Journalists: Case Studies from the Asia-Pacific Region
- Indigenous: Capacity Building for Substantive Citizenship
- Journalism for Smart States: Creating Capacities in the Asia-Pacific Region
- Media Making Change: Building Capacities in Civil Society
- Capacity Building and the Role of Inter-governmental Agencies

The conference is sponsored by Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and the School of Journalism & Communication, University of Queensland, Journalism, Media & Communication, Queensland University of Technology.

Submitting Abstracts & Full Papers
Send abstracts of no more than 500 words to:
Dr Shuang Liu, sjcamic2008@uq.edu.au

16th AMIC Annual Conference CD

The 16th AMIC Annual Conference was held concurrently with the first World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) in Singapore from 25–28 June 2007. A Conference CD containing a collection of papers presented at both events is now available from AMIC. The price includes handling and postage by airmail.

AMIC members: **US$35 / SG$50**
Non-AMIC members: **US$50 / SG$75**
For your order, please contact:
angie@amic.org.sg

Basics of war front reporting remains unchanged
—award winning and former CNN correspondent, Peter Arnett

"The media landscape has changed greatly in the technical aspect of things. But in terms of the basics, getting out with the troops and getting out to find out the truth, their missions, trying to determine if the strategies are worth while, that has not changed", said Professor Peter Arnett, a respectable war correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner. He was interviewed by Dr Indrajit Banerjee, AMIC Secretary-General at the 16th AMIC Annual Conference held in Singapore.

"There is still a major requirement for the media to help the public understand the wars their own countries are fighting", he said.

He discussed his views on the changing media landscape, the challenges faced by journalists, advice for young journalists and some of his experiences being a veteran war correspondent.

In terms of covering conflict and crisis, Professor Peter Arnett advised young journalists to be careful. "In the wars I covered, I had enormous resources behind me including the Associated Press and the CNN. Even though I took risks, the material I covered was broadcast to the widest audience. A lot of journalists who are dying today are from smaller publications," he said.

Professor Peter Arnett added, "Many die in circumstances where governments do not protect journalists. To speak out in societies where they aren't protected in the West or the developed world is a dangerous business and they are risking their lives."
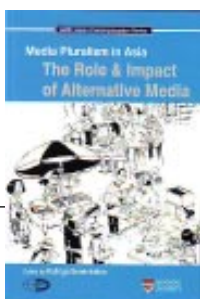
Being a war veteran correspondent who has seen 20 wars for 45 years, it was hard for Professor Peter Arnett, who is now with the Shantou University, China, to pick out the most dramatic account of his career. But one he felt that was a dramatic journalistic moment in his life was in Baghdad in January 1991, where even when all other reporters had left including his colleagues, he chose to stay. "I was alone in the Al Rashid hotel with a satellite telephone. With the permission of the Iraqi's government to report on a war that the whole world was interested in because the whole world had signed on to the UN demand that Saddam leave Kuwait. He had refused. The coalition went to war with him, and there were major air strikes on Baghdad, the capital. I was the only reporter in the city, but one of the few reporters in the world who could report live on television. So just walking around Baghdad and reporting knowing that I was the only voice and eventually the only picture because we have got live technology and very quickly. The only picture that come out of a major war, it was a reporter's fantasy come true."

Peter Arnett's coverage during the Kuwait invasion mesmerized the audience at the Gala Dinner held in conjunction with the 16th AMIC Annual Conference and the World Journalism Education Congress held on 25th June 2007.

His press coverage for 45 years took him to 20 wars.

Media Pluralism in Asia
The Role and Impact of Alternative Media
edited by Kalinga Seneviratne

This book is the result of a research project covering eight countries in South and South East Asia examining the role and impact of alternative media. The definition of alternative media depends very much on the political, social, cultural and economic environment you live in. Thus, this book gives the reader an idea of the diversity of alternative media sources available across Asia, which is very much a result of the different media regulatory regimes in the countries we have included in this study.

While Bangladesh has had alternative media, in the form of community theatre and other artistic expressions for a long time, yet, community radio is slow to take off, because the regulations still do not allow it. Meanwhile in Indonesia and Thailand, community radio has taken off rapidly, with regulators struggling to come up with a formula to help regulate the sector while not shutting it down. In the Philippine community radio has existed legally for many years and is thriving, thus, there may be lessons others can learn from this experience. In Malaysia, where legislation tightly controls the establishment of media outlets, there are yet, some interesting examples of how alternative media could be effectively operated via the Internet. Sri Lanka, offers an interesting model where elements of community broadcasting could exist within a public service broadcaster.

Price: SG$30/US$20 (Others) excluding postage charges. For your order/enquiry, contact angie@amic.org.sg

Robotic age poses ethical dilemma

An ethical code to prevent humans abusing robots, and vice versa, is being drawn up by South Korea. The Robot Ethics Charter will cover standards for users and manufacturers and will be released later in 2007.

The South Korean government has identified robotics as a key economic driver and is pumping millions of dollars into research. "The government plans to set ethical guidelines concerning the roles and functions of robots as robots are expected to develop strong intelligence in the near future", the ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy said.

South Korea is one of the world's most hi-tech societies. Citizens enjoy some of the highest speed broadband connections in the world and have access to advanced mobile technology long before it hits western markets. The government is also well known for its commitment to future technology.

A recent government report forecast that robots would routinely carry out surgery by 2018. The Ministry of Information and Communication has also predicted that every South Korean household will have a robot by between 2015 and 2020.

In part, this is a response to the country's aging society and also an acknowledgement that the pace of development in robotics is accelerating. The new charter is an attempt to set ground rules for this future.

"Imagine if some people treat androids as if the machines were their wives", Park Hye-Young of the Ministry's robot team told the AFP news agency. "Others may get addicted to interacting with them just as many Internet users get hooked to the cyberworld."

The new guidelines could reflect the three laws of robotics put forward by author Isaac Asimov in his short story *Runaround* in 1942. Key considerations would include ensuring human control over robots, protecting data acquired by robots and preventing illegal use.

Other bodies are also thinking about the robotic future. Last year a UK government study predicted that in the next 50 years robots could demand the same rights as human beings. The European Robotics Research Network is also drawing up a set of guidelines on the use of robots.

This ethical roadmap has been assembled by researchers who believe that robotics will soon come under the same scrutiny as disciplines such as nuclear physics and bioengineering.

A draft of the proposals said: "In the 21st Century humanity will coexist with the first alien intelligence we have ever come into contact with—robots. "It will be an event rich in ethical, social and economic problems."   *news.bbc.co.uk*

Asian game developers join hands for slice of global pie

Asia-Pacific's online gaming market has shown phenomenal growth over the past couple of years and is expected to hit US$7.5 billion next year, up from a humble US$630 million in 2003.

These figures were revealed at the inaugural Games Convention Asia 2007 (GCA), which also saw the formation of an international alliance between countries in the region as they bid for a slice of the global video game pie, estimated to be worth US$55.6 billion by next year.

Ten national game associations from the region signed a Memorandum of Intent, aiming at promoting greater regional collaboration between game-related businesses and pave the way for them to expand beyond their domestic strongholds.

The Australian Games Developers Association, Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association and Japan Online Games Association are among the groups that are supporting this pan-Asian effort.

The convention also enables developers from countries like Vietnam and the Philippines to catch up with their more established counterparts in the industry, like Japan and South Korea.

"The Philippines has a young game industry and we need to build up our reputation and let publishers know we offer development services as well as products", said Mr Gabby Dizon, president and CEO of Flipside Games.

One developer hoping to catch the publishers' eyes is Mr Nobuhiro Fujii, the President of Pixelstream Corporation from the Philippines. "It is hard to find publishers for games. But this conference gives us a chance to showcase some of our products", he said.

Mr Addison Kang, Chief Executive Officer of Cherry Credits, said in an interview: "The event is to address the development needs and opportunities in the growing digital gaming industry in Asia. I see it as the bench-mark for the next level of gaming excitement, development and evolvement". He also added that one can perceive gaming as a full-force penetration across all demographical sectors and regions and now there are games for anyone, regardless of age, gender or educational level.

Business Times and Today (Singapore)

Business influentials pick web over TV for trusted news

An annual study of regional business stakeholders shows that web-based media has overtaken television as a first source of trusted news and information about business. Web-based media now trails only newspapers in the study.

The Asia-Pacific Edelman study was released on 24 September 2007, and part of global public relations firm Edelman's Annual Asia Pacific Stakeholder Study conducted by Harris Interactive Inc, examines the opinions of 1050 business stakeholders in Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Australia.

"The web is no longer an alternative to mainstream media, it is the mainstream media", said Alan VanderMolen, Edelman's Asia-Pacific President. "The key point for business is not that the web is a source of information, it is that web-based media are a source of dialogue with business influentials. Business needs to view itself as enablers of conversations about products, services and issues instead of viewing itself as communicators of a specific message."

Further underscoring the strength and influence of the web, respondents in the survey said they would turn to a company's website more often than any other source of information when gathering information about that company. Following the company's website, respondents said they would talk to friends that work at the company, use newspapers, turn to business blogs and, finally, look to local broadcast media.

"We believe the massive shift in media selection

> "... the massive shift in media selection — to web-based news sources, to a company's own website and to employees of the company — underscores a broader trend in democratization of media and information ..."

— to web-based news sources, to a company's own website and to employees of the company — underscores a broader trend in democratization of media and information, Mr VanderMolen added. "In today's world, consumers of news and information are increasingly skeptical and discerning; not to mention, they want to talk back to the source of information not just consume it."

While business stakeholders are moving toward more interactive sources and channels of information, they are also increasingly changing what drives their views of companies. Two characteristics of reputation moved significantly in this year's study: Management/Leadership Strength and Ethics/Integrity. Management/Leadership Strength is now the top reputation driver for business operating in Asia Pacific, overtaking brand and product quality. Complementary to that, the biggest increase in any reputation driver during the past twelve months is Ethics/Integrity.

"We believe both of these factors reflect the increased access to information about business that is driven by the web", Mr VanderMolen said. "We are seeing a near insatiable thirst for information about who leads companies and how those companies conduct their businesses." Also increasing considerably is the intensity in all drivers of "good and responsible behavior". Three of those drivers, in particular, are becoming more important: open communication with employees, transparency and concerned/active about community welfare.

www.edelman.com.au

Mobile homepages sprouting up in S Korea

Korean youngsters are now building homepages on their cell phones in addition to their Internet based ones, capitalizing on the nation's state-of-the-art mobile phone infrastructure.

Uniwis, the Seoul-based provider of solutions for cell phone-based homepage, or "phone-pages", said that the number of phone-page users is on the increase.

"We have upside of 10,000 subscribers to our phone-page services and most of them are active users", said a Uniwis official, who declined to be named.

"The number of phone-page lovers is likely to rocket thanks to the wireless environment that supports fast data transmission and the mobile Internet", he said.

Up to 42 million of the country's overall 49 million population carry cell phones that mostly

have access to wireless Internet services.

Users of the mobile-friendly version of Web pages are capable of decorating their personalized phone-pages with their favourite images and text.

"The most outstanding advantage of phone-pages is that people can use them any place any time, which is impossible with homepages on the Web", the Uniwis official said.

People are however still reluctant to use mobile Internet services due to their high costs on handsets. Yet, Uniwis officials said if wireless subscribers sign up for the fixed-rate data plan, they will have unlimited use of phone-page services.

Furthermore, the advent of the next-generation wideband code division multiple access (W-CDMA) will bring to life lightning-fast data services, a must for the successful take-off of the phone-page.

The Korea Times

Wikipedia accessible on cell phones in S Korea

The Korean-language content of Wikipedia, a much-visited online encyclopedia, has been accessible on cellular phones since August 2007 for more than 22 million handset users.

SK Telecom, the nation's biggest wireless operator, that its customers can look up anything on Wikipedia via its mobile Internet services. "Tens of thousands of pieces of information stored in the database will be available to people on the road from Wikipedia's Korean version", SK Telecom official Yang Yoon-seon said. "We will begin with text-only files but images will be added in the near future. Plus, we are thinking of connecting to the English-edition too", said Yang.

The content will be updated every week for the time being but the indexing interval will be monitored on a daily basis when the services take off in a full-fledged manner. Included in other envisioned applications is enabling people to edit the data with cell phones.

Those who want to use the handset-based Wikipedia services need to log on to the wireless Internet that charges users in accordance with delivered data packets, typically around 100 to 150 won (fifteen US cents) a minute. When they sign up for a flat-rate scheme for data, the offerings will not generate additional costs.

Wikipedia the Web-enabled encyclopedia that can be written or edited by anybody, authorized by a screening group, without restriction, has emerged as a serious competitor of the time-honored Encyclopedia Britannica. It is interesting for SK Telecom to bring Wikipedia to cell phones because the Seoul-headquartered company did the same with the Encyclopedia Britannica in April.

"Today, we deal with thousands of daily queries for Britannica and will check those for Wikipedia. We think the comparison will reveal interesting results", Yang said.

The rivalry between Britannica, first published around 1770, and Wikipedia, which came out in 2001 with the take-up of the Internet across the world, seems improbable.

In particular, concerns have arisen that Wikipedia entries might not be reliable since unpaid amateur writers can make errors or unscrupulous contributors may intentionally mess things up. In late 2005, however, the prestigious scientific journal, *Nature*, confirmed the credibility of Wikipedia by finding that the site comes just as close to Britannica in terms of accuracy in science entries.

Among sections covering a broad swath of the scientific spectrum in the two encyclopedias, *Nature* reviewers conducted a side-by-side comparison and detected just four serious errors from each source.   *The Korea Times*

Chinese virtual cops remind surfers on illegal content

Police in China's capital said they will start patrolling the Web using animated beat officers that pop up on a user's browser and walk, bike or drive across the screen warning them to stay away from illegal Internet content.

Starting Sept 1, the cartoon alerts will appear every half an hour on thirteen of China's top portals, including Sohu and Sina, and by the end of the year will appear on all websites registered with Beijing servers, the Beijing Public Security Ministry said in a statement.

China stringently polices the Internet for material and content that the ruling Communist Party finds politically or morally threatening.

Despite the controls, nudity, profanity, illegal gambling and pirated music, books and films have proliferated on Chinese Internet servers.

The animated police appeared designed to startle Web surfers and remind them that the authorities closely monitor Web activity. However, the statement did not say whether there were plans to boost monitoring further.

The male and female cartoon officers, designed for the ministry by Sohu, will offer a text warning to surfers to abide by the law and tips on Internet security as they move across the screen in a virtual car, motorcycle or on foot, it said. If Internet users need police help they can click on the cartoon images and will be redirected to the authority's website, it said.

"We will continue to promote new images of the virtual police and update our Internet security tips in an effort to make the image of the virtual police more user friendly and more in tune with how Web surfers use the Internet", it said.

China has the world's second largest population of Internet users, with 137 million people online, and is on track to surpass the United States as the largest online population in two years.

The government routinely blocks surfers from accessing overseas sites and closes down domestic websites deemed obscene or subversive.

AP

Wikiversity: another valuable Net resources

The online collaboration that has made Wikipedia one of the most used sources of information on the Internet is also being used to build a school and offer classes across the online world, and the project is taking off.

Coordinators of Wikiversity, one of the major projects of the Wikimedia Foundation Inc., said the project is picking up speed, and expect it to really get going within the next two or three years. Wikiversity is a free learning community, and aims to provide free educational materials and courses online. The most popular course currently on offer is on film making, said Cormac Lawler, a collaborative coordinator at Wikiversity.

The purpose of Wikiversity is to take learning a step further, by not only providing information, but also trying out different educational theories. "It's an experiment to see what actually works said Lawler.

The user community and project coordinators decide the direction of Wikiversity. Anyone can offer courses, and anyone can take them. One drawback so far has been that some teachers start courses, then disappear, abandoning students, said Lawler. But as Wikiversity grows, the group expects to find ways to alleviate such issues.

Collaboration with other Internet learning projects also appears to be an issue. A number of universities offer course work and more over the Internet, but they don't necessarily conform to the Wikiversity view of the world.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's MIT OpenCourseWare project, for example, offers over 1000 free courses as well as course work for anyone who wants to use them, with the understanding that no degree will come with their completion, nor will participation bring learners in touch with MIT faculty. MIT's free course initiative, however, is not free enough for Wikiversity.

MIT uses the Creative Commons licence, which asks users to attribute course materials, share alike any work made using the materials, and not use the materials for profit. Wikiversity, by contrast, uses the GNU Free Documentation Licence which allows content users to freely copy and redistribute materials, with or without modification, for profit or not. It does preserve the right of the author and publisher to receive credit for their work and to not be responsible for any modifications to the original, but it is different enough from the Creative Commons licence to ensure Wikiversity and MIT OpenCourseWare won't work together.

Tutorials such as those listed above may also not be used in Wikiversity courses, depending on their stance on copyrights.

In any case, Wikiversity is growing. Lawler said that more features will be added over time, and that increased funding would really give the project a lift-off.

www.networksasia.net

Mobile information service to help Indian farmers

Reuters has launched a mobile information service Reuters Market Light (RML) for Indian farmers. RML offers Indian farmers up-to-date local and customised commodity pricing information, news and weather updates.

RML also helps farmers to enhance their crop yields and improve their productivity over a very wide range of produce including onion, cotton, soybean, pulses, pomegranates and oranges. An official press release stated that Reuters will be soon developing RML to a full mobile news, information and price facilitator.

Reuters is planning to launch RML on a full commercial basis. RML will now introduce a small customer charge of Rs 60 per month. RML will also now be rolled out across other rural areas in India, extending its offering beyond Maharashtra State.

Reuters Chief Executive Tom Glocer said, "The pilot programme was an unequivocal success and now, rolling out Reuters Market Light across India will signal a very important milestone in its adoption as a standard for the Indian agricultural industry".

RML M D Amit Mehra said, "The farming community in India is one of the largest in the world, but despite its size it remains a relatively opaque market in which to operate. The rural and often remote nature of the community makes it incredibly difficult for farmers, especially those with small holdings, to get even the most basic information."

"EML provides crucial, local and customised agricultural information for Indian farmers via mobile phones, including crop prices, weather updates and other agric-related news. The aim is to facilitate greater transparency in the Indian agricultural markets allowing individual farmers to increase their productivity and maximise their revenue", Mehra added.

www.indiantelevision.com

Understand and accept the new realities, print media told

Newspaper and magazine publishers must wake up to the fact that advertisers are now more selective and employing a wider array of channels in getting their message across, one major cosmetics advertiser told participants at the Asia Pacific Publishing Convention.

Cosmetic makers, for example, are today engaging their customers more and more directly through boutiques, said David Ennes, the Asean General Manager for luxury products of L'Oreal.

"We have so many ways to speak to our customers. Publications are just one option. In the past, it was more through retail channels. Now, for some brands, it is exclusively via boutiques", he told the two-day conference held in Kuala Lumpur on 1 August 2007.

On top of that, he said that in France where the cosmestics company is headquartered, pro-jections show a decline in newspaper and magazine advertising, while tele-vision has been able to maintain its share.

"More and more, we're talking directly to our customers. We need less of the intervention of intermediaries", said Ennes.

That was one of the observations made at the inaugural conference organised for the print, online and mobile media in Asia with the theme "Integrate publishing with digital technology profitably: Understand the new realities of consumers, delivery channels, content development, advertiser value, and research."

Commenting on Ennes' observation, Cyril Pereira, convention co-chair and principal consultant of Telesis Consulting Ltd, said: "That's quite a quite depressing story considering all the effort that we (publishers) have put in, but it's an important wake-up point".

However, not at all is lost for publishers. "There is something special about the paper. The reassuring thing is that advertising spending is going up. And for cosmetics, magazines remain an anchor media. We can't live without you", said Ennes.

Enterprise (Malaysian Reserve)

The highlight of the Asia Pacific Publishing Convention is the inaugural Asian Publishing Management Awards that recognizes and promotes best publishing practices in Asia.

Slow-burn strategy works for Singapore free tabloid

Advertisers and corporate bigwigs liked what they saw of the new-look Singapore free tabloid, *Weekend Today* following its trade launch on 18 July 2007.

"Introducing the paper after its initial appearance gave advertisers a clearer picture of whether there is a fit between the paper and products, hence it is less risky for advertisers to invest their advertising dollar", said Mr Mike Amour, chief executive officer, Asia Pacific, Grey Group.

"The disadvantage to this approach would be the loss of opportunity to hype up the suspense of the launch of the new edition", added Mr Amour.

MediaCorp editorial director PN Balji's experience with *The New Paper*'s 1988 launch taught him that a media blitz prior to a newspaper's introduction was not the way to go.

"The main reason for the slow-burn approach is that when you hype up a product before its launch, expectations from readers and advertisers will be much higher", said Mr Balji. "In the end, people will be disappointed if the product does not live up to that hype."

Media experts say that the approach served the newspaper's interests well. "Launching to business partners two weeks into having the new look *Weekend Today* on the stands puts MediaCorp Press in a great position to give real-time feedback on how readers have reacted to the new look", said Mr Michael Drury, director, Edelman Public Relations.

It was decided a revamp was needed to pique interest in the weekend edition. Distinct "Xtra" features have been embedded within the news pages.

Said Mr Balji: "These pieces are clearly marked with an X to distinguish them from the normal news". The weekend edition has a more vibrant layout and is tailored to suit a leisurely read with bigger sports, food and fashion sections.

These complement the newspaper's trademark sharp news reporting and though-provoking commentaries, said Mr Balji.

Today (Singapore)

The Standard to be Hong Kong's first free English daily

In an age of proliferating free news on the Internet, *The Standard*, a 58-year-old English-language daily newspaper in Hong Kong, took a gamble that underscores the challenges facing print publications everywhere. It joined the growing ranks of the free newspaper.

The decision to drop the cover price of 6 Hong Kong dollars, or 75 US cents, says more about the relentless impact of the Internet on traditional media than it does about turning adversity into opportunity. The growth of the Internet has been one of the drivers of a world trend to the start up free papers, particularly in Europe.

While the Internet has eroded readership and advertising revenues for newspapers in markets worldwide, few publications have as badly or suddenly fallen victim to the Web than *The Standard*. It is one of the few examples of a paid newspaper anywhere in the world that has decided to test free distribution.

Analysts and former editors said the business-focused newspaper relied for at least 90 percent of its advertising revenue on a single source: a requirement of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange that listed companies publish financial results and other notices in at least one Chinese-language and one English-language daily newspaper.

The Exchange is now offering companies the less expensive alternative of posting notices on the Internet. Since June, companies have only been obliged to publish a short newspaper notice, alerting readers to the posting of a more extensive notice on the Web. At the end of the year, the requirement for any print notification will end.

That has left *The Standard,* a subsidiary of Sing Tao News, one of the largest Chinese-language publishers here, scrambling for alternative ad revenue. The business logic is that a free paper will mean higher circulation and higher circulation will mean more advertisers.

The other English daily, *The South China Morning Post* is one of the most profitable newspapers in the world based on revenue per reader. Both groups of the two leading English dailies still turn a steady profit despite the increasing challenge from online media.

Hong Kong is also one of the most competitive and experimental newspaper markets in the world. By some estimates, there are as many as 50 daily and weekly publications, most of them Chinese, distributing millions of paid and free copies in a city of just seven million people.

Free newspapers are not a new phenomenon here. In the past five years, three Chinese-language free papers—*Metro, AM730* and *Headline Daily* — were launched on the local market.

IHT

Indon press law fails to protect public

The 1999 Press Law enacted a year after the national political reform movement fails to protect the public from the negative impacts of published information, said Luthfi Hakim, a member of the Indonesian Lawyers' Association.

Luthfi said the Press Law should not only protect journalists and those in the media, but also common people, particularly those who are the subject of news reports.

"There can be false accusations or defemation in published information. And those potential human rights violations are only covered in three paragraphs in Article 18 of the law, which in reality protects the media more than the people", he said during a seminar, "Press in the Reform Era: between expectation and reality".

"And sometimes people don't know who they should report to when their human rights are violated", said Luthfi.

The first paragraph of Article 18 of the 1999 law says anyone who intentionally hampers the search, collection or spread of information through censorship or the forced closure of publications is subject to a maximum prison sentence of two years or a fine of Rp 500 million (US$53,000).

The second paragraph says media companies that publish information that might violate religious norms or the principle of presumption of innocence, and that fail to give people the right to respond can be fined a maximum of Rp 500 million.

Luthfi said just like the law on medical doctos did not cover malpractice, the Press Law also did not touch on malpractice by the press.

Chairman of the Indonesian Journalists Association, Tarman Azam, however, said the law was not a good one for journalists.

"The law only provide advantages for the media companies, rather than the journalists", Tarman said. He said the law failed to regulate the welfare of journalists. He cited the low salaries of Indonesian journalists, with many being paid below regional minimum wages, and the lack of firm professional standards.

"There have been a lot of cases of fake journalists claiming to be real journalists, showing press cards from media companies that in reality do not exist. They use those fake press cards to benefit themselves, which ruins the image of the Indonesian media in general", he said.

The Jakarta Post

Financial Times allows more free online access

The Financial Times, preparing for a fierce battle with *The Wall Street Journal* over business readers and online advertising revenue, will give casual readers free access to its Web site, according to executives at *The Financial Times*.

The Web site of the London-based business newspaper, which currently charges for much of its content online, as of mid-October will allow users to get up to 30 articles a month for free, said John Ridding, chief executive of the newspaper. Anyone who wants to view more online material will have to subscribe to the site.

The shift, part of what Mr Ridding described as a broad overhaul of FT.com that will be phased in over several months, comes as other newspapers are rethinking their efforts to charge users for online content. A surge in online ad spending over the last three years has persuaded many publishers that it is better to increase their Internet audience, in an effort to appeal to advertisers, than to try to squeeze meager revenue from online subscriptions.

The *New York Times* has dropped a two-year-old programme under which users had to pay for access to the work of *New York Times* columnists and its archives.

Ien Cheng, publisher of FT.com, said the paper had decided against a completely free Web site because it felt that loyal readers, many of whom work in the financial markets or hold high-paying management jobs, would be willing to pay for regular access. Meanwhile, by removing the restrictions for less frequent users, the site can benefit from increased inbound links from blogs, search engines and other drivers of Internet traffic, he said. "To get caught between all this 'free' or 'paid' is too simplistic", Mr. Cheng said. "We see this as a third way."

The *Financial Times*, which started selling subscriptions to its Web site in 2002 and also publishes a Chinese version that is called FTChinese.com, was already working on the revamp when News Corporation made its $5 billion bid for Dow Jones, Ridding said.

By restricting Web users, sites that charge for access may be undermining their ability to sell advertising, analysts have said. Online advertising, virtually nonexistent when *The Wall Street Journal's* subscription model was set up in 1996, has soared in recent years.

The revamped subscription model for FT.com is part of a broader overhaul of the Web site that will include a visual makeover next year, Mr. Ridding and Mr. Cheng said.

Mr. Cheng said ad revenue at FT.com was up about 40 per cent in recent months, compared with a year earlier. Unique visitors, a standard measure of Web traffic, are up about 70 per cent year on year, to about 6.5 million unique users a month, he said. The site gets about 30 per cent of its audience from Britain, 40 per cent from the United States and 30 per cent from Europe and Asia.

Mr. Ridding said the higher price is consistent with *The Financial Times*'s strategy of trying to appeal to high-end readers rather than a mass-market consumer audience.

www.iht.com

Malaysian tabloid performs well despite editorial changes

Malaysia's biggest-selling English newspaper, *The Star,* continues to dominate the media market, despite a decidely softer editorial line and news of an editorial shake-up.

The *Star's* evolution from underdog into blue-chip best-seller with an English language market share of 70 per cent has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Barely 20 years ago it trailed its larger rival *The New Straits Times* (NST) by a wide margin, though its robust editorial style kept winning it admirers among Malaysia's liberal set.

The paper that emerged after the ban was more docile, but the public sympathy it received immediately drew it a larger audience.

Canny marketing, with an emphasis on classified ads and sale promotions, beefed up its balance sheet, and *The Star* was on its way to being listed.

Today with more than a million readers, it outsells *NST* three to one, with *NST* having even tried to copy its layout style by going tabloid.

Malaysia now has three English-newspapers—the third being *The Sun,* distributed free by Nexnews which also publishes *The Edge,* a weekly business newspaper that is efficiently profitable.

But while NST and especially *The Sun* have evolved editorial styles that are reasonably independent, *The Star* has preferred to follow rather than lead, eschewing controversial stories and taking a generally safe path.

Steven Tan, 58, *The Star's* long-standing chief executive and the person generally credited with the company's solid balance sheet, announced a widely expected editorial shake-up on 7 September.

It is reported that Wong Chun Wai, 46, the paper's deputy editor, will be slated to take over from the chief executive.

The Business Times (Singapore)

Private sector and goverment urge to cooperate over transition to digital radio

As traditional radio moves into an age of convergence into digital radio, it is important that commercial and governments work together to make the transition successful, said Joan Warner, Commercial Radio Australia, at a broadcast conference held in Singapore

Although radio has a weekly reach of 95 per cent of Australians, it is important to transit to digital radio to retain listeners, as well as to target niche audiences in the digital age. Australian commercial radio is one of the few media sectors given a positive forecast by a recent Price Waterhouse media report, radio broadcastors are viewing digital radio as an opportunity to go for ten or twelve per cent of the total advertising pie.

Contrary to the recent trend that youngsters do not listen to the radio, Ms Warner shared the results of a survey conducted that young people are listening to more radio and are more tied in with radio after having mp3 technology as they have to get news of new songs release from radio.

With the benefits of digital radio like near CD-quality sound, imaging, scrolling text and more interactivity, this would greatly enhance the consumer offering and open up more opportunities for advertisers. Ms Warner said that the potential of digital radio lies in the pull-strategy for marketers to attract consumers to actively ask for products from retailers.

She also highlighted the fact that the government was unwilling to share the radio spectrum and suggested several ways in which the government could support commercial broadcasters in developing digital radio. This includes a commitment to the future of radio and willingness to work with the industry to develop policy and regulation. They should allow access to the radio spectrum and freedom of radio offering, as well as implement legislations and regulations to support the move to digital broadcasting. It would be helpful to give financial assistance for smaller or regional broadcasters.

On the other hand, broadcasters should also clearly indicate their commitment to digital radio and actively market it to listeners and give advice on technology and spectrum needs that is best for their needs. They should be prepared to work closely with regulators to develop a regulatory model and allow a timeframe for the transition to be completed.

Both commercial broadcasters and governments should show a commitment to make digital radio a success for the overall development of the radio industry.

Indonesian ministry and telecom authority resolve long standing feud

The newly-formed Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) has agreed to resolve a long-standing conflict with the Communication and Information ministry over a licencing issue.

KPI chairman Sasa Djuaras Sendjaja said the two sides agreed to end their feud after learning the conflict had left hundreds of broadcasting companies unable to obtain licences.

"We have had a break-through in resolving the dispute, and hundreds of new television stations are now standing in line waiting to obtain licences", Sasa said at a press conference after a meeting with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Yudhoyono met with newly-elected members of the KPI and the Press Council, who presented their proposed agendas for the next three years in office.

The KPI and the ministry have been at loggerheads over different interpretations of the Broadcasting Law and confusion over who should control broadcasting in the country.

The dispute led the KPI to file a judicial review with the Supreme Court in June 2005 over three government regulations issued by the ministry to implement the Broadcasting Law, which the KPI claims restricted its authority.

The three regulations granted the ministry more power to govern broadcasting activities, including the issuance and extension of licences.

This, the Ministry said, it due to the implementation of the Broadcasting Law, which has given control to the "state".

The House of Representatives, which drafted and passed the law, has voiced its support for the KPI. Yudhoyono voiced concern over the state of the country's television programming, which relies heavily on violence, sex, gossip and mysticism.

"In response to the President's grievance, we aim to implement a system by which we can reward those TV stations that are striving to promote decency, morality and the elimination of violence toward women", Sasa said.

Sasa hopes an end to the long-standing feud between KPI and the ministry will lead to more effective power over wayward TV stations.

The Jakarta Post

Standards up, but media freedom down, say Asian editors

While welcoming the modernization that has come as a result of globalization and competition, editors from Asian countries are apprehensive about the freedoms they enjoy in an era where a few conglomerates and media magnates are trying to take over the entire media space. The editors who were taking part in the two-day 8th Asian-European Editors' Forum meet also wondered if the standards had improved with a larger number of newspapers virtually turning into tabloids.

In a presentation on "Globalization and its impact for Asian Media," Cyril Pereira who is Principal of the Telesis Consulting Ltd in Hong Kong said fears that the media—both print and electronic—could face serious problems to their Asian culture and identity as a result of globalization had proved baseless.

Quality standards of both newspapers and television channels had improved and presenters knew they had to be at their best if they had to compete with TV channels beaming from overseas. Global satellite and cable access had prompted an upgrading of Asian programming and presentation skills. Scripts, formats, talent hunts, and dramas were adapting the successful formulae of Western broadcasters. He said the Asian broadcast industry had been re-energized in content, technical skills, revenue growth, and best practices.

In the print media, there was greater advertising money than ever before and there was more co-branding of specialist products. There was more business reporting than ever before, and Asian press was better able to buttress editorial integrity by allowing quality global media into the field.

But he agreed that the result of globalization had led to the entry of twenty to twenty five global giants who appeared to be controlling the entire media in the region. Convergence had also made cross-media acquisitions simpler. This had also led to a reduction in local and regional content and the interests appeared to be only economic and not social.

Cyril said that the public service broadcasters had to play a greater role in keeping local and regional interests alive. "There is a role for countries to invest in media systems and protect and do what the private sector which is profit-driven will not do." There was need for media policies that were not purely market-driven.

Statesman Editor and Managing Director Ravindra Kumar did not agree with the hypotheses that there had been improvement in standards, noting that there was greater tabloidization. He said the Asian News Network (ANN)* had been formed some years earlier to check this trend.

*The ANN is an alliance of twelve Asian newspapers and its total daily circulation is more than 12 million copies and its combined readership is 50 million.

www.indiantelevision.com

India soon becoming world's media powerhouse

India is rapidly becoming one of the world's media powerhouses, making leaders of the global entertainment business attending MIPCOM audiovisual trade show at Cannes, France, sit up and take notice.

"The media companies in India have readied themselves, they are now powerful and I think that they are ready to take on the world", said Paul Johnson, television director for the show's organiser Reed MIDEM.

This year's MIPCOM gave a special focus to the Indian media industry. When South Korea was MIPCOM's country of honour a few years ago, the exposure propelled the country from "more or less oblivion on the international audiovisual market to becoming a very strong top ten country", Johnson noted.

"We think that India will be one of the top three entertainment countries in the world in the coming years", he emphasised. The country's promising future is helped, like China, by its huge and extremely youthful population. With 54 per cent of the country's 1.1- billion people aged under 25, India is one of the world's largest markets for TV.

A total of 71 million homes already have television, and 61 per cent of them have pay TV. At the weeklong show, India showed how it is leveraging its rich film culture to create exciting new content for the emerging IPTV (Internet Protocol TV), web and mobile TV platforms both inside and outside the country.

"Until now the world has an image of India as a country bathed in music and dance", said Anurradha Prasad, BAG Films & Media Ltd. "But we're growing into a digital democracy", she stressed, noting that with 350 TV channels and growing, the Indian TV market is exploding. "It is also a misconception to regard India nowadays merely as a low-cost producer." Several leading Indian media companies have announced that they will set up offices in America to help promote their animation and films there and in the international market.

www.economictimes.indiatimes.com

Mobile phone the real mass medium: study

The mobile phone is no longer an add-on medium for advertisers to engage users. It has in fact turned into a mass medium. That's one of key inferences made in the Lodestar Universal research study "Mobility Research: Understanding the connected generation" for portable devices in India.

The study quotes statistics pegging the Indian mobile market at approximately 200 million users, which is higher than the viewer base of a conventional mass medium like a TV channel—about 140 million.

"In fact, telecom players Reliance and Airtel together are with as many subscribers as a Star Plus viewer base", stated Lodestar Universal COO Nandini Dias, announcing the results of the study. The study sampled 10,000 respondents worldwide in the age-group of 16–54 of mobile and Internet users. The research was conducted across 21 global markets, via Intuition, Universal McCann's online research tool. While India still has some catching up to do in terms of growth in services consumed through mobile-phones, the younger segment of the population is driving growth.

"Moreover, mobile can today be an alternative to out-of-home (OOH) media. People carry the mobile phone with them wherever they go, and especially in India, which has one of the highest travel-times in the world. That's about one in three people spending an average of 90 minutes traveling, everyday", said Dias.

Interestingly, the study pointed out that the media convergence is not being driven by affluent markets. "Contrary to popular opinion, users in US and Japan are not yearning for convergence. It is in fact being driven by financial necessity. Convergence, therefore is already happening in India", the study says. Another feature of the study is the transition of the mobile phone from a mere voice device to a data device.

While currently entertainment based content is most preferred on these devices, in the coming days there will be increase in the demand for info-based content like travel directions, product info and M-commerce. Users are more open to relevant customized content, for example advertisements on public transport that send info to mobile phones.

The study further points out that emerging markets including India are most open to advertising on portable devices. Moreover, according to the study, portable devices make the "Connected generation" feel empowered and allows the devices to become an extension of them. As an example, the study states that over 50 per cent of its sample size voted for competitions on TV.

Indiantelevision.com

Al Jazeera seeking to change its image

Al Jazeera seems unable to shake off the "controversial" tag that has dogged its Arabic news service, though it has try hard to do. It is still known in some quarters as a channel that shows beheadings and streams videos of Osama bin Laden praising the Al-Qaeda.

Mr Nigel Parsons, managing director for the Doha-based broadcaster's English language service, Al Jazeera English, refutes the allegations in an interview published in *The Straits Times.*

"Firstly, Al Jazeera has never shown a beheading nor would it. That was just a lie pushed around by the neo-conservatives in Washington", he said.

"It was initially hailed as a kind of flagbearer for democracy and freedom of speech by the US administration. They only changed their mind when Al Jazeera was showing the ugly side of war in Afghanistan and Iraq."

"Secondly, every channel in the world has shown Osama bin Ladenk not just Al Jazeera."

The Arab world's answer to BBC and CNN has made inroads in both sides of the Middle East divide. Besides the Arab countries, the company has also managed to gain entry into a majority of Israeli households.

Al Jazeera Eglish upstaged BBC World in December last year when it was substituted for the British broadcaster by Israel's satellite provider Yes TV.

Unlike the foreign media which have often been accused of bias by both Israelis and Palestinians, Al Jazeera English has not experienced any problems in this regard.

"Israel would be the first to say that we are very balanced. "The Israelis know very well as a channel we have a lot of sympathy for the occupied Palestinian people, but having said that, we also give the Israelis right of reply on any story", said Mr Parsons.

Even before the launch of the English-language channel, Al Jazeera already had a good track record for balanced reporting: its Arabic service has been serving Israeli audiences for several years.

Al Jazeera English, which also has broadcast centres in Washington, London and Kuala Lumpur, its looking to increase its presence in Britain, the US, and the Far East.

The Straits Times

Mobile TV ads get thumbs down

Advertisements on mobile internet and TV services are "irritating" for consumers, according to new research.

Branded content and opt-in Bluetooth downloads are better ways to reach the millions of people worldwide using portable gadgets such as phones, music players and games devices, the study by media agency Universal McCann suggests.

Tom Smith, Universal McCann's research manager said the research showed that the traditional rules of advertising apply. "People like something that provides a benefit such as access to content, things like sponsorship, branded content, giving stuff away like Coca-Cola gave away songs on iTunes", Smith said.

"People always complain about things that are interruptive—it still works in traditional media but in this environment consumers have so much choice where they source content from and if it detracts from the experience they will go elsewhere."

The survey, which covered 9,500 people with a mobile phone and an Internet connection in twenty one countries from the UK to Mexico, suggests the marketing opportunity to reach gadget users is bigger than ever.

Two out of three respondents owned a portable music or media player, 45 per cent had a laptop, while 28 per cent used a portable gaming machine.

Consumers were most likely to pay for music, movies and games, and least likely to pay for user-generated content and podcasts. -

This was only slightly higher than the global average of 20 per cent, with the greatest usage from consumers in countries such as Russia and China where the traditional media is tightly controlled.

Consumers in the developing world were the most receptive to advertising, particularly Mexico, China and Thailand, while the US, France and the UK were the least receptive markets.

On a mobile phone, the best forms of advertising were opt-in Bluetooth formats that provide information or vouchers direct to the mobile, popular with 72 per cent of the global sample, and sponsored search results. Adverts on mobile Internet pages and TV adverts on mobiles were rejected by 61 per cent of respondents.

For podcasts and videocasts, sponsorship was the most valued form of advertising, followed by brand recommendations from presenters.
Adverts at the beginning of the clip were acceptable but interruptive ads in the middle of a video or audio clip were not.

www.mediaguardian.uk.com

Branding crucial but content is still king

Branding may be important, but content is still king. This is the common theme underpinning the messages emanating from the Global Brand Forum held in Singapore.

From Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan to managing director of upstart Middle Eastern news channel Al Jazeera, Nigel Parsons, came the reiteration that branding cannot be all about just show and no go.

Mr Lee gave examples from Singapore's growth to show how it has created a brand of its own. He likened the challenges facing Singapore's leaders in the early days to that of a start-up entrepreneur. "Our experience in building the Singapore brand has been an honest, ground-up and inside-out process guided by a vision to make Singapore work; we enjoy a Singapore brand that many others in the developing world hope to replicate", he said.

And speaking from the perspective of a start-up, Mr Parsons illustrated how Al Jazeera, by setting out at the start to gain the trust of its viewers by showing them the truth "no matter what", has led to some 40 to 50 million people in the region tuning in to the channel every day to get their news.

He went on to give examples from the channel's development to show how in the course of reporting the news in the Middle East from an alternative perspective from the mainstream media and giving a more balanced point of view, it drew flak from both the Americans and Al Qaeda. "We seemed to be upsetting everybody, which probably meant as journalists, we were on the right track", Mr Parsons said.

Reinforcing the point that content is key were speakers at a panel discussion on the new media.

While not discounting its importance, CNBC Asia-Pacific managing director Jeremy Pink said that it is equally important to make sure content is proprietary, appropriate, compelling and interesting.

Chief executive of Malaysian media group media Prima also highlighted the importance of good content, with the added element of it being edgy in reaching out to the youth that forms a large part of its audience. "It is less important which channel it goes through", he added.

The Business Times

Measuring an Internet audience a poser

Internet's growth as an entertainment medium is bringing with it a dilemma that the worlds of television, radio and print have long grappled with: can an audience be measured?

The question may apear surprising, not least because one of the benefits of online advertising against more traditional forms is that it is measurable.

Advertisers know whether advertisements are clicked on—it is much harder to find out if a magazine reader has glanced at a particular page.

Yet in spite of the Web's ability to provide detailed information about people's online activities, many of the commonly used audience measurement statistics such as page view data from Nielsen NetRatings and ComScore are based on panels of Internet users and are, therefore, subject to estimation errors.

In addition, changes in the way the Internet is used due to the growth of audio and video, as well as technology that allows Web pages to be automatically updated, mean page views are regarded as a less relevant measure of a site's audience.

Instead, there is growing focus on finding out how much time people spend on sites, and other measures of "engagement".

Recently, Nielsen NetRatings has introduced new measures of time spent, and ComScore has plans to enhance its measures this year.

"There is an irony in that the most measurable medium is causing the most controversy right now in terms of how it should be measured", said Mr David Card, analyst at Jupiter Research.

"If it is not clear what your audience is, it is difficult for programmers to decide what content to develop and what to invest in."

Already, advertisers and media groups are pressing the providers of Internet audience metrics to be more transparent about their methods, and both Nielsen and ComScore have agreed to independent auditing of their numbers.

The shift in Web practices will lead to a period of uncertainty because advertising prices are often determined by page views and similar metrics.

There are also questions about how well statistics reflect audience sizes in different regions.

Mr Richard de Silva of a venture-capital firm anticipates six to twelve months' uncertainty before the new measures are accepted. "Anything that affects advertisers affects revenues, and we will have to spend quite a lot of time understanding what the new metrics really mean", he said.

Financial Times

Word-of-mouth the most powerful selling tool

Despite an ever-expanding array of advertising platforms, consumers around the world still place the highest level of trust in other people's opinions, according to a global Nielsen survey of 26,486 Internet users in 47 markets.

Nielsen surveyed consumers on their attitudes toward 13 types of advertising – from conventional newspaper and television ads to branded websites and consumer-generated content.

Recommendations from consumers remain "the most trusted sources of information when consumers decide which products and services to buy", said David McCallum, the global managing director for Nielsen's Customized Research Services. The survey yet again highlights the importance of responsive, high-quality customer service, he added.

"And even though new media technologies are playing a role in 'globalizing' society, many purchasing decisions are still based on firmly held national and cultural attitudes", McCallum said.

Among the findings of the Nielsen survey:

• Though new platforms like the Internet are beginning to catch up with older media in terms of ad revenues, traditional advertising channels continue to retain the global public's trust, at least for now.

• Ads in newspapers rank second (after recommendations) among all media categories, at 63 per cent overall, while television, magazines and radio each ranked above 50 per cent.

• On the other hand, online consumer-generated media and branded websites were trusted by more than half of all consumers.

• Search engine and banner advertising, along with text ads on mobile phones, each scored at the bottom of the list with less than 35 per cent of total respondents.

• Filipinos and Brazilians (67 per cent) are the most trusting overall of all forms of advertising.

• Although consumer recommendations are the most credible form of advertising among 78 per cent of the study's respondents, Nielsen research found significant national and regional differences.

• Word of mouth generates considerable levels of trust across much of Asia Pacific. Six of the top ten markets that rely most on "recommendations from consumers" are in this region, including Hong Kong (93 per cent), Taiwan (91 per cent) and Indonesia (89 per cent).

www.marketingcharts.com

True colors of nation branding

"Nation branding is not simply coming up with a cute logo and tag line", states Thomas Cromwell in his article "Why Nation Branding Is Important For Tourism." Whether based on individual national objectives of trade, investment, and travel/tourism, or vying for specific organization memberships such as inclusion in the EU, positioning a country's brand is more important than ever for the largest to the smallest of countries. In the last five years, Poland, Croatia, South Africa, Australia, and India are just a few examples of countries that have launched branding campaigns via the web, print, and television.

While the notion of nation branding is relatively new compared to the history of nations, the practice has always existed through public policies and economic development. In 1998, a British marketing consultant named Simon Anholt wrote an article arguing that places and nations can be equated as brands and was surprised by both the outrage and interest he received from academics and government officials alike at the notion of a nation brand.

But, Anholt points out, like branding for the commercial sector, branding nations is a mixed bag with often mixed results. "The problem is there's no widely accepted theory of branding ... about what it is and what it hopes to achieve. The consequence is that there are a lot of countries who are confused ... and have a lot of different ideas of what branding is all about.

Anholt points out that a number of countries have spent quite large sums to create an expensive corporate identity with ad time on television channels such as CNN to essentially create a tourism campaign, when really what the countries were hoping for was much broader than just creating tourism awareness.

Lia Proedrou, founder and head of BrandExcel, a branding agency based in Athens, Greece, whose clients include the Greek Organization of Exports, points to some of the reasons why.

"The big problem with branding countries, in my opinion, is that there are many different organizations that operate within these countries." Instead of developing one entire brand for the country that can host everything, some of these organizations are doing their own thing
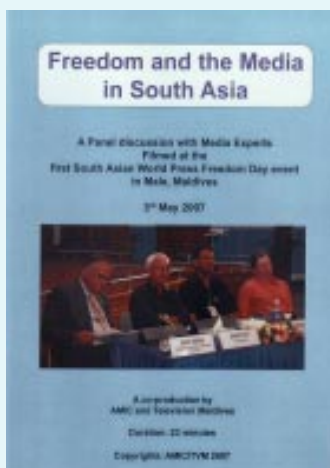
Proedrou cites India and Australia as good examples of countries that are branding nearly everything they do under one umbrella successfully.

Anholt's Nation Brands Index, an analytical ranking of the world's nation brands, ranks the UK as number one on its list based on consumer perceptions from 35 countries of the "cultural, political, commercial and human assets, investment potential, and tourist appeal of each nation."

While corporations are well known for taking strengths and weaknesses and essentially putting the sole focus on the strengths, Thomas Cromwell and other nation branding experts point out that positioning a country brand is about positioning the country in the best way possible given its strengths and weaknesses.

Every nation has its own unique strengths and weaknesses, but this is especially evident when a country's image and reputation are that of war ravaged, famine and poverty stricken, or otherwise corrupt and chaotic. Even if these factors are no longer actively at play, the stigma associated with the country obviously affects tourism, foreign aid, and investment.

www.brandchannel.com

Freedom and the Media in South Asia

The 23-minute video documentary was filmed during the first South Asian World Press Freedom Day seminar in Male, Maldives in May 2007.

It was moderated by AMIC's Secretary-General Dr Indrajit Banerjee, and the panel includes Javed Jabbar, a former Information Minister of Pakistan and founder of the South Asian Media Association; the well-known Indian investigative journalist Aniruddha Bahal of Tehelka.com fame; the publisher of the *Himal* magazine in Nepal, Kunda Dixit, who played a prominent role in the recent Nepalese version of people's power; and Andrew Whitehead, who has covered South Asia for the BBC World Service for over a decade.

Available from AMIC at US$20 or SG$30 excluding postage charges. For order/enquiry, contact angie@amic.org.sg

Exploited child labour in advertising

The use of newborns, toddlers or yound children in ad comes under scrutiny in a paper published in www.danindia.com. Several laws such as the Factories Act 1948 and Child Labour Act 1986, India, bans children below fourteen from working in factories, mines or hazardous industries. Article 39 of the country's constitution requires that "the tender age of children is not abused" and that no one is "forced by economic necessity ot enter vocations unsuited to their age or strength.

Interestingly, the advertising industry is not covered by the said Act, and it is one of the largest service industries in the country. While there has been much debate on women being used as "commodities" in advertisements and various women groups justifiably protest against that, but the same groups are totally silent on using infants/toddlers/babies/children in advertising.

The products for which newborns/toddlers/babies/children have been extensively used by the advertising industry on television are amazingly diverse and include inter alia fast moving consumer goods, building materials, electrical appliances, travel services, financial services and other services.

Normally child labour issues are regarding 5–14-year-olds, but in this industry, even newborn and babies/toddlers are used with an élan.

There are two inter-related issues. One is using child labour to promote products. The second is luring young children to buy/demand these products. These two are interrelated—unless children are used, the persuasion may not work with those children who are watching it.

But, what is the psychological impact on the children who have to act after several rounds of rehearsal and retakes, and even not-so-gentle tweaking and beatings from their parents and others? Another issue is the complete loss of innocence at a very young age, being exposed to the vagaries of the money-spinner "professional" world where the language and culture and ethos all pertain to adults. The glitz associated with this industry has made people oblivious to the use of child labour.

There are regulations both in Europe and EU pertaining to advertisements aimed at children and also for using them. The self-regulation code of children's advertising prepared by the industries group of Europe suggests that the advertisement should not exploit the inexperience or credulity of children. It also clearly states that the advertisements should not undermine the authority or the responsibility of parents. It should not include any direct appeal to children to persuade their parents or other adults to buy advertised products for them.

In the case of USA—the Children's Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureau was established as early as 1974 by the National Advertising Review Council to promote responsible children's advertising and to respond to public concerns.

However, the existing laws in India do not prohibit using children in acting in advertisements since it is not covered either under the 1948 Factories Act or in Child Labour [Prohibition and Regulation] Act 1986.

www.dnaindia.com