

Thesise / Theses 2002

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E-commerce in South Africa: an overview

E-commerce developed as a direct result of the Internet and it has impacted the way South African businesses conduct its operations and consumers receive their information. It is impossible to qualify the e-commerce phenomenon locally - this research study aims to cover most of the important areas impacted by e-commerce in South Africa.

There are some barriers slowing down the development of e-commerce in this country. The goal of this study is to determine if the local market is ready to accept e-commerce technologies that are widely used in global markets. This research study examines the history of the Internet in South Africa and also raises the question whether the market was affected by the global dot com crash (also known as the dot bomb crash) experienced in 2000. The study also aims to identify the barriers hindering effective e-commerce in South Africa.

It further highlights the importance of other areas of online commerce, such as mobile commerce (m-commerce), to bring the power of technology to consumers and collaboration commerce (c-commerce), to streamline business operations. Lastly, the study aims to explore the South African government's initiatives to effectively formulate a policy for e-commerce to protect the consumer's rights.

Lisa Jeanne Delange

Reality Blurred? The ethical challenges and responsibilities presented by reality television.

Reality television combines various genres of entertainment to produce material that has in recent years gripped the attention of audiences across the globe. Reality shows often lay the lives of normal people bare to all and, thus, the question arises as to whether it is ethical for the media to subject participants to the scrutiny of the audience in this way.

Reality television has highlighted the ethical challenges and responsibilities presented to media practitioners in the modern media industry where competition may adversely affect ethical choices. In this assignment the function of journalists and their ethical position is touched on, while the medium of television, its entertainment value and the effect of commercialism on the media industry is examined. Various international and South African reality television productions are considered in an attempt to discover how current media practitioners deal with ethical challenges, and weigh up financial gain against upholding the moral values of society. The role media practitioners as moral agents and the effect that the material they disseminate may have on audiences are furthermore discussed by using case studies.

The future of reality television, particularly after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA, is speculated and it is determined that it appears that reality-based programming will be a feature of television on the short term. Media practitioners need to realize their place in society and make ethical decisions that encourage artistic values and uplift society. Reality television presents a number of challenges in this regard and has the potential to continue to raise ethical issues in the future.

**'n Mediabestuursondersoek na die samestelling en vergelykbaarheid van
die Suid-Afrikaanse argitektuurtydskrifte, *South African Architect* en
*Architect and Builder***

Frieda E le Roux

At the end of the previous century the magazine market has established itself as a highly specialized field with publications focussing on increasingly smaller and specialised niche groups. The South African market is a good reflection of this with a wide variety of magazines available, each with its own unique readers. However, it appears as if architectural reporting fills a very small part of this market. Taking a look at the important role architecture - the built environment - plays in daily life, the question occurs why such an integral part of the human experience and field of reference is getting so little coverage.

Across the world the history of architectural reporting goes back for more than a century and, especially in the developed world it seems to be going from strength to strength. Research into architectural reporting in South Africa shows that the tradition also goes back for nearly one hundred years. Still it has never featured very highly on the content pages of magazines and newspapers. In a country faced with the kind of building and development problems such as those in South Africa, one would expect architecture to be discussed more openly and often.

At this stage South Africa has only two magazines which exclusively focus on architecture. These magazines are not to be found in stores, however. Do they have a responsibility in informing the general public regarding matters surrounding architecture? This study looks at the mentioned magazines and why they operate like they do.

Racism, criticism or inept reporting?

**Racism in the media, the relationship between the state and the press and
the standard of journalism in South Africa.**

Linda Martindale

The furor around racism in the media was brought to the surface in 1999 when the Black Lawyers Association and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa appealed to the South African Human Rights Commission to investigate the South African media. This request was based on the presumption that the South African media was rife with racism and urgently required attention. The subsequent enquiry was the source of much controversy and accusation. Almost three years since the enquiry's inception, the issue of racism in the South African media has not disappeared despite decreasing media coverage in recent months.

When the SAHRC launched the enquiry into racism, prominent media leaders including key editors and newspaper representatives were summoned to appear before the controversial Commission. Some media leaders felt the Commission was a direct attack on the freedom of the Press. Others felt the enquiry was long overdue or slammed it as an all-time flop. Furthermore, pure and simple criticism of the government is still perceived as racism when it is the Press fulfilling its role as the 'watchdog of democracy'.

This assignment is a broad overview of the enquiry into racism in the media and the concerns around this issue as well as the response to it. It takes a closer look at the role of the media and the relationship between the media and the state. In particular, it focuses on how criticism of the government can be misread as racism, as well as investigating how the standard of journalism impacts on the way in which the media serve the public. The question as to whether it is racism, healthy criticism misconstrued as racism or simply inept reporting, is explored. Although an expansive topic by nature, this paper provides an overview of the key issues pertaining to media ethics as it pertains to racism in the South African media.

Waldimar Pelser

September 11, 2001: framing the attacks in America's press

The attacks on New York and Washington on September 11 2001 constituted a singular media event. On the front pages of America's newspapers and in its pre-eminent news magazines unfolded, in the immediate wake of the blitz, a portrayal that uncontroversially legitimised claims to American innocence, formented moral certitude through parallels with previous wars and anticipated retaliation that would soon engulf Afghanistan.

Showing first, that accounts of reality are always social constructions, the "framing" of September 11 in America's press will be evaluated with reference to 122 newspaper front pages, most from September 12, some from the day of the attacks, and two American news magazines. The emergence of a discourse of war will be considered, as well as the perpetuation within and without of the press of dominant views on America's role in the conflict. The extent to which this "popular frame" selectively excluded inconvenient truths is illustrated in critiques of John Pilger and Noam Chomsky, and an assessment of the politics defining "terror".

The analysis is placed within the normative framework of orthodox journalism ethics, particularly the values of impartiality and objectivity, concluding that, in democracy, a responsible media better serves the public interest through sustained criticism than compliant patriotism.

Novela Zazini **The impact of diversity in reporting on the editorial independence of small-scale regional community newspapers in the Eastern Cape**

Journalism in South Africa has to be looked at in its historical context. South Africa was a country characterised by disparities. The same can be said about the media. Mainstream media concentrated on the privileged few and projected their views. On the other hand small regional community media aimed at marginalized communities provided "a voice for the voiceless". These small newspapers focused on the disadvantaged, rural and semi-literate communities. As a result of the history of this country, mainstream media neglected the marginalized communities.

A need arose for redressing that imbalance and diversifying reporting. Small community newspapers were the means to achieve that. Unfortunately these newspapers failed to attract advertisers for various reasons. Most small community newspapers died because of economic factors. This brings about a need for funding of these newspapers. Are funders prepared to pump money without interfering with editorial independence of newspapers?

This assignment sets out to analyse the conflict between the necessity for diversity in reporting (accommodating the previously neglected) and journalistic independence (related to the need for funding). For the purposes of the assignment, the focus will be on small regional community newspapers in the Eastern Cape, the Border/Kei-area in particular. The purpose of this assignment is firstly to ascertain whether moves to diversify media/reporting are taking place - an ethical concern. Secondly to establish whether those who fund these newspapers interfere with their content. It can be concluded that a solution that regards diversity in reporting and editorial independence as ethical principles is necessary (deontological model). That same solution would have to provide consequences that benefit the greatest number of people (utilitarian approach). Such a solution would in essence ensure the survival and sustainability of small regional newspapers and their editorial independence.