

Thesise / Theses 2001

Name

Subject

Riglyne vir omgewingsjoernaliste

Engela M Botes

It is calculated that the biosphere is worth between \$16 and \$54 trillion. The environment, however, is constantly under threat of proposed development that focuses on recreational, industrial, commercial and residential developments.

The environment is an unobtrusive subject. Members of the public can seldom gain firsthand experience about those activities and actions that influence the environment. Therefore, the public relies heavily on the media to inform them of the general state of the environment. This thesis aims to provide guidelines to journalists who work in the field of environmental reporting. Various models of the communication of science, according to which environmental journalists present their work, are discussed. Sustainable journalism is presented as a solution in the debate between objective and subjective reporting. Environmental journalists have diverse sources to tap in search of credible articles. Attention is given to the specific relationship between the media, scientists and lobby groups. Attention is also given to the process of interviewing sources. Certain issues and activities generate more media attention than others. This is discussed with reference to news subjects, agenda setting and the framing of messages. Attention is given to the issues that make a subject newsworthy, ie risk journalism, local input, human interest, conflict and visual impact.

The King Commission Live: An examination of the legal and ethical considerations involved in broadcasts of judicial proceedings

Robert C Brand

The controversy around the broadcasting of court proceedings has reigned in the United States since the 1950s, reaching a peak with the trial of O.J. Simpson, widely interpreted as an example of the destructive force of a 'media circus' on the administration of justice. In many other US courtrooms, however, television and radio journalists do their work unobtrusively, professionally and to the benefit of their viewers and listeners.

The King Commission of Inquiry into allegations of match-fixing in cricket gave South Africa its first experience of television and radio coverage of judicial proceedings, and laid the basis for a more liberal approach to electronic coverage of courts. The Constitution protects freedom of expression, including freedom to receive and impart information. This has been interpreted by the High Court as conferring on radio journalists the freedom to record and broadcast the King Commission's proceedings. It is argued that the High Court's reasoning could be applied with equal force to television, and to coverage of courts. It is suggested a trial period of electronic coverage of courts, under clear guidelines for journalists and legal practitioners, may provide greater clarity on the desirability of allowing electronic coverage of courts on a permanent basis.

**Marie E
Esterhuysen**

Die rol wat kommunikasie in die sukses van 'n maatskappy speel

The communication of the financial services group Sanlam was investigated to determine whether good communication plays a role in a company's successes. Communication in the company is fairly complex because Sanlam consists of various businesses that operate independently. Communication in Sanlam is nevertheless important, and the holding company as well as the businesses realise this.

There are a number of ways in which communication takes place with the various target groups inside and outside the company. Internal communication is regarded as important and internal newsletters, e-mail, television broadcasts and the Intranet are some of the tools used to inform staff. External communication includes, among other things, communication with shareholders and institutional investors, policy holders, the government and the general public.

From the study it is clear that Sanlam's communication plays a role in the company's success. There is definitely the feeling that communication is important and that an effort should be made to ensure it is used to the company's advantage.

Covering the GMO issue - an overview for South African science reporters

Carolyn Frost

The aim and function of this paper is to provide a balanced account of how the media, international and South African, have dealt with the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). A selection of interviews, presentations, articles, transcripts and published reports forms the background of this interpretation, and offers insight into the history of the technology, the major role players, the legislation required and implemented, the question of environmental accountability, and the power of the media's influence. It addresses aspects of the causal relationship between the media and public understanding, and the subsequent power of the consumer as manifested by the perception of risk. The central theme of genetic engineering conjures up a variety of meanings and applications, and the plethora of available information is evaluated in an attempt to develop informed understanding for reporters covering the many dimensions of this development within the area of science and technology.

Telling the story of the century - how are journalists coping with reporting on HIV/Aids in South Africa?

**Michelle R
Galloway**

This work presents a bird's eye view of the current state of South African journalism on the HIV/Aids epidemic. Through case studies, examples and in depth interviews with experts from science, clinical, health education, communications and journalism backgrounds, it outlines what South African newspaper journalists are currently doing in reporting on HIV/Aids and emphasises the importance of their role in assisting in combatting this epidemic. It goes on to suggest some potential ideal roles which the newspaper press in South Africa could play in improving the level of knowledge available on this epidemic, encouraging preventive actions by individuals, and reinforcing other initiatives through the provision of accurate, well-explained information.

The urgency and tragedy of this epidemic in the African context calls for a heightened degree of sensitivity and responsibility from all sectors. Newspapers, specifically, as a far-reaching information source, can play a vital role in assisting in the fight against this epidemic but this will require commitment (of time and money), thorough understanding of all the complexities of the issue (including all the scientific and political debates surrounding it) and the impact it has on individuals and communities, a true recognition of the importance of easily accessible, understandable information, and understanding of the importance of the press in putting and keeping HIV/Aids on the

agenda.

Numbers Count: the importance of numeracy for journalists

Amelia Genis

Few news subjects can be comprehensively covered in the media without numbers being used. Indeed, most reports are essentially 'number stories', or could be improved through the judicious use of numbers. Despite this there are frequent complaints about poor levels of numeracy among journalists.

Although numbers are fundamental to virtually everything they write, the most superficial review of South African newspapers indicates that most encounters between journalists and numbers of any sort are uncomfortable, to say the least. Reporters shy away from using numbers, and frequently resort to vague comments such as 'many', 'more', 'worse' or 'better'. When reports do include numbers, they often don't make sense, largely because journalists are unable to do simple calculations and have little understanding of concepts such as the size of the world's population, a hectare, or a square kilometre. They frequently use numbers to lend weight to their facts without having the numerical skills to question whether the figures are correct.

Numeracy is not the ability to solve complicated mathematical problems or remember and use a mass of complicated axioms and formulas; it's a practical life skill. For journalists it is the ability to understand the numbers they encounter in everyday life - percentages, exchange rates, very large and small amounts - and the ability to ask intelligent questions about these numbers before presenting them to the public. This thesis is not a compendium of all the mathematical formulas a journalist could ever need. It is a catalogue of the errors that are frequently made, particularly in newspapers, and suggestions to improve number usage. It will hopefully also serve to make journalists aware of the potential of numbers to improve and increase accuracy.

This thesis emphasises the importance of basic numeracy for all journalists, primarily by discussing the basic numerical skills without which they cannot do their job properly, but also by noting the concerns of experienced journalists, mathematicians, statisticians and educators about innumeracy in the media. Although the contents of this thesis also apply to magazine, radio and television journalists, it is primarily aimed at their counterparts at South Africa's daily and weekly newspapers.

MRC scientists and the media: Attitudes to and experiences of reporting their findings to the public

**Leverne
Gething**

Scientists seem to have an 'international corporate culture' of mistrusting the media. Attitudes of South African scientists to the media and their experiences of reporting findings to the public and media have not been documented. The South African Medical Council (MRC) is a statutory research body with an excellent research record - but awareness of the MRC among the South African public is almost non-existent. The MRC needs to publicise and increase knowledge of its goals and research findings by promoting scientists' engagement with the public and other stakeholders.

A postal survey was carried out among MRC scientists to obtain a 'baseline' indication of attitudes regarding communication to the public and media. Results would inform development and implementation of strategies to fast-track a turnaround in culture at the MRC towards promotion of science communication. A questionnaire with prompted responses was sent to 253 MRC scientists. One hundred were returned (39.5%), representing an impressive assemblage of the MRC's research leaders.

It is clear from the findings that the scientists generally want to communicate and see the potential benefits. For the MRC to become a communicating organisation it must spell out to its scientists the importance and value placed on their communication activities. Science communication and development of links with the community and media should be seen as part and parcel of scientific

research, and given due recognition and support. Policies must be agreed and communicated with the scientists about recognising, encouraging and rewarding such efforts. The MRC also needs a clear media strategy giving guidelines on specific situations, as well as on the Ingelfinger rule.

Suid-Afrikaanse motorpublikasies in die nuwe millenium

Hans F Heese

This study deals with the history and development of motoring publications in South Africa since the start of the twentieth century. An important aspect of the study is the examination of the profitability of specialist motoring publications that are in direct competition with motoring sections in newspapers, radio and television. The ability of the motoring media to draw advertisements - especially from care manufacturers - is also scrutinised.

In this study the problems encountered by journalists seeking information or feed-back from certain car manufacturers, are highlighted. The study also covers new technical developments such as the Internet and the numerous new motoring websites and closes with case studies of two new ventures; one which was successful, another which failed.

**Bernard
Hoffman**

The making of a community newspaper website: <http://www.helderberg.com>

Helderberg.com started out as a virtual village, with its roots firmly entrenched in the community newspaper from which it developed - the DistrictMail. It quickly evolved into a full blown community newspaper website with its own business model, earning its own way. Dotcoms are based on a virtual business model not seen up and till now, trying to replace 'bricks and mortar' with 'clicks and mortar', making it difficult for investors to evaluate its worth.

The DistrictMail community newspaper has been the heartbeat of the Helderberg, reflecting the news and views of the people of the area for almost seventy-five years. Helderberg.com adds value and completes the circle. The success of companies depends on profitability. Bringing old and new media together, helderberg.com is the first community newspaper website to carry its own advertisers, and the first to break even and even make profit in the notoriously difficult dotcom internet area.

This paper examines how a community newspaper website is made - dissecting the internal and external makings, and shows helderberg.com is based on a structure and business model that has economic sustainability on which similar sized community newspapers can launch or build their own online enterprise.

**Elizabeth N
Lubinga**

A comparative study of the factors effecting the growth/development of the rural community newspaper the *Zoutpansberger* and *Mirror*, Northern Province

The print media, especially newspapers, play an important role in providing information in any society. In the rural communities of South Africa, information available to the people is scanty. Growth of a newspaper is necessary if a newspaper is to fulfil its duties. The Zoutpansberger and Mirror are two of the few local newspapers that circulate in die Far North Region of the Northern Province. The Zoutpansberger, which started in 1985, has experienced negative growth in the various departments of the newspaper, while the Mirror has experienced slow growth. Several factors have been responsible for this. Therefore, there was a need to examine and compare the factors that have affected the growth/development of the newspapers over ten years.

The aims and objectives of the study are to examine and compare the factors that affect the growth

and development of the Zoutpansberger and Mirror, give suggestions to facilitate future growth and the best ways of utilising the available resources. A literature survey was carried out to get perspectives of other researchers. Data was collected after conducting personal interviews. The findings reveal that economic, social, cultural and geographical factors affect the growth of the newspaper. A few recommendations have been given to highlight ways in which the paper can make full use of the available resources.

Mlamli C
Maqoko

Media relations management within a changing environment with specific reference to the University of the North

This study is focused on the representation of the University of the North in the national media during the period 1994-1999. A preliminary survey of newspaper reports indicated that during the post 1994 elections period the University has been getting negative coverage from the national media, especially the Mail&Guardian. This period was also characterized by the intensification of transformation processes and other challenges within tertiary institutions.

The aim of this study was to investigate how the national print media portrayed the university during the period 1994-1999 and to find out what role the Media Directorate of the division Development and Public Relations has played in the whole process. Both internal and external factors which had an impact on the representation of the university were also explored. This study is important in the sense that media relations is regarded as a strategic management tool whose purpose is to create mutual understanding between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders - more especially during the period when organisations are facing both internal and external changes. Communication is therefore seen as a central tool which is facilitating the transformation process. Seen against the tendency of the media to concentrate on conflict and events as major news stories - a conflict of interests then emerges.

This study shows that the University of the North has been negatively portrayed in the media and that the absence of a Media Relations Officer, Media Relations Policy and the tendency of the media to focus on conflict as a news value contributed to the negative image of the university. It is hoped that the study will contribute towards the formulation of a media relations policy at the university, the assessment of the pace of the whole transformation process and will highlight the major challenges facing public relations departments (and specifically the media sections) of historically black institutions in the current political dispensation.

Shepherd A
Mati

Brick walls or brick columns? Management responses to the challenge of sustainability in community radio with special reference to Bush Radio and Radio Zibonele

Community radio stations in South Africa are faced with a huge challenge to become sustainable in the process of serving their communities. The issue of sustainability itself is complex and shaped by a range of conditionalities. These include community participation, funding, regulatory, and licensing factors, staff and management expertise, and the strategic planning and management capacity of a station. Often the communities themselves are materially poor and unable to contribute in monetary terms to the radio station. However, these same communities are a source of wealth when it comes to experience, ideas, human power and time. A major challenge is for station management to develop organisational strategies that facilitate full utilisation of this community resource in the progress of sustaining their stations.

The focus of this study is on two stations - Bush Radio and Radio Zibonele - and how their management is responding to the challenge of sustainability. This work describes their sustainability strategies and explores whether they constitute a brick column or a brick wall. This conclusion suggests that while both radio stations demonstrate varying degrees of community participation, clear internal systems of monitoring and control of resources, they differ in some fundamental aspects of strategy.

The basic assumption of this study is that while the challenge of sustainability constitutes an objective reality facing community radio stations in South Africa today, the subjective responses developed by station

management to deal with this challenge can and often do make a difference.

Wayne Muller **Die joernalis as openbare skakelbeampte: 'n Ondersoek na die teorieë en praktyk van openbare skakelwese en die interaksie daarvan met die joernalistiek**

Except for employing their journalistic skills in traditional positions at newspapers and magazines, journalists today also have a choice of a variety of interesting communications careers. A journalist may choose to be, among others, a copywriter at an advertising agency, a translator, a presenter on television or radio, a publisher, as well as a public relations officer (PRO). Public relations is a professional career, and practitioners have long been trained as specialists in their field.

Despite this, experienced journalists are still top candidates for positions as PRO's at a variety of organisations. However, because public relations has become considerably specialised and professional over the past 20 years, journalists should acquire extra, "specialised" skills to practise public relations. Their journalistic skills, however, form a basis for a career in public relations. For a journalist to become a successful PRO, he should acquire and apply the skills discussed, as well as be prepared to experience the adjustments that distinguish public relations from journalism. The purpose of this mini-thesis is to discuss these skills, and ultimately prepare journalists for a career in public relations.

Trusha A. Naidoo **The implications of the personalisation of the media www.ubuntu.co.za for democracy**

This body of work is a post modern analysis of how the shift from mass to me media influences the role and structure of the media. Was McLuhan right, is the medium increasingly the message? Or is the post-modern media a totally different animal, a manifestation of popular culture and marketing rather than the socially responsible institution responsible for safeguarding democracy that it was envisioned to be by the American founding fathers?

The underlying theme is the convergence of media and marketing and the resulting conglomeration and technological dependency forced on the reader and the writer. Who are the new mediators and how do they manage the media? In die mediatrix, the readers become media managers and the writers become surfers. The analysis begins with an examination of the contrast between real and virtual communities and how the media bridges the information gap. How does reporting in virtuality reflect reality? The body of the study has three parts, the shift from mass to me media, the alternative media spheres it has engendered and the controlling forces behind this transition. Throughout the study, mass media and me media are contrasted. The study ends with a look at the impact of technology and popular culture on the South African media and how the media will click through the future. Will the deeply entrenched communal values of ubuntu stave of the individualisation cocooning brings? That is, will the I before we focus of personalised media nurture the South African democracy or will it foster mediocracy?

**Carine
Stemmet**

Gehaltebeheer op webinligting

The internet connects millions of computers and people from all over the world with each other. A few clicks with a mouse are usually enough to gain access to the computers of almost any university in the world. But it is not only professors and researchers with years of experience who publish on the Internet. Anyone can publish anything for any reason without editing or verification of the content.

The Web is a valuable source of the information needed by science journalists to confirm facts or stories or to gain background information on a subject - if they know that the information is reliable. This assignment identifies and discusses criteria to help establish the credibility of a web site.

The World Wide Web is the most talked-about and best-known part of the Internet, and the criteria discussed on this web site are applicable to the World Wide Web alone. Anyone can publish on the web. Is there a set of rules that can be applied to a website to measure its credibility? What are these rules?

The criteria discussed in this assignment are only guidelines. Some criteria are more important than others. The situation will determine the relevance of each of the criteria. The origin of the information, the purpose thereof and the logic used are usually the most important criteria. The most important rule, however, is the use of common sense. Examine more than one source and compare them with one another. An intelligent decision regarding the credibility of the information can only be made when all (or most) sides of a matter have been determined.