ASIA'S MEDIA INNOVATORS VOL.2

BY STEPHEN QUINN AND KIM KIERANS

Konrad
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Stiftung

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Foreword

Commercial publishing companies, as well as non-profit organizations like the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), always appreciate if a publication is "sold out" within a short period of time. This happened to the first "Asia's Media Innovators" by Stephen Quinn. The book, published in 2008 by the KAS Media Programme Asia, exhausted its first print run within a few months without any investment in expensive marketing or advertising. The book found its way to readers just by word-of-mouth communication, especially at our KAS media conferences and workshops all over Asia. The publication also inspired many journalists who attended the Master of Arts in Journalism programme of the Konrad Adenauer Asian Center for Journalism (ACFJ) at Ateneo de Manila University. By chance, and to my very surprise, in 2009 I even met a German academic who enjoyed reading "Asia's Media Innovators" on his flight from Manila to Phnom Penh.

The terrific interest in the paperback and positive responses from various sides encouraged us to think about a new edition. However, it was clear from the beginning that an undertaking like this would mean much more than just switching on the printing press for a second run: innovations emerge frighteningly quickly in Asia. The time that elapsed since 2008 was an "eternity" for regional trends on the Asian media landscape. Therefore, I was more than happy to not only secure Stephen Quinn for a second edition of "Asia's Media Innovators," but for an outright revision of the first version as well.

The major differences between the first and the second editions are their respective "angles", or approach. For the first edition we tried to identify and describe the most important players, both established "old market" newspaper publishers and broadcasting services as well as newer enterprises, from South Korea in the Far East to India in South Asia. All were introducing innovative media products, creative content and new services to their own media markets. To a certain extent, the approach was a more "corporate" one.

Instead, the second edition tries to analyse who, and what, is driving these players and their innovations. What makes them change their content and their ways of distribution? What are the future challenges of Asia's media companies?

With these questions in mind, Stephen this time has drawn a more "consumer-centric" picture of the latest developments in the Asian media landscape. With the invaluable support of Kim Kierans and with an intriguing case study written by Alastair Carthew about an "old-fashioned," but still innovative, website in Phuket, Thailand, Stephen profoundly illustrates that the major force of development and the

main "media innovators" in Asia are, yes: the readers, audiences, consumers and users themselves!

Whereas expensive satellite, broadcast and printing technology until recently very much defined the way on how media content was presented and distributed, be it on paper or "on air", today's media outlets have to compete with sophisticated consumer electronics. A DVD-Player might not be considered a "media device" — yet, a smart phone or a tablet computer with Internet access surely is nothing but this. Accordingly, two of the chapters concentrate on the mobile phone sector as a source of innovation for the media in Asia.

Media content is getting mobile with the latest "G3+" generation of handheld devices with audio-visual content expected to win the race. No wonder traditional newspaper publishers like Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) hustle into Internet-based TV services. When it comes to wireless and broadband access to the Internet, Singapore might be a few years ahead of most other Asian countries. SPH may be considered a true technological innovator, as Stephen describes in another chapter.

For many young people in the more developed Asian countries, the Internet, both at home on their desktop computers, as well as mobile on their notebooks and smart phones, already dominates the daily supply and use of information. Although, on a much lower scale, even a country like Cambodia is catching up with remarkable speed as one chapter points out. The serious changes in consumer behaviour would be less of a challenge if the media companies in the region had to deal only with the new technological devices. Yet they must also have to cope with some very dominant new players, services and non-traditional forms of "journalism".

For Vietnam, Stephen and Kim describe Blogging as an "alternative media." In Australia, which previously was not covered, but found a well-deserved chapter in this edition because of the countries' strong impact on the Asia media landscape, Twitter became an important part of news gathering. Via computer and mobile phone microblogging allows so called "citizen journalists" to provide news and information even from remote areas where regular mainstream media correspondents often are something of a rarity. Stephen and Kim describe the growing importance of the "amateur journalist" towards the daily news business by using the Philippine media group ABS-CBN as an example.

However, the most striking change within the last few years might be the uncontested rise of social networking. MySpace, Orkut, Kaixin, Facebook and Co are flourishing throughout Asia. The Philippines are considered "the social networking capital of the world". According to a recent survey, 90 per cent of Malaysia's youth are on Facebook. The news exchange and vibrant interaction on these social networking platforms strip the mainstream media of their traditional claim as the dominant "gatekeepers" of information. Newspapers and broadcasting services have to either engage with the tech-savvy social networking community or may lose readership and audience. Stephen therefore also highlights the future impact of the social networks on advertising revenue.

The drastic changes described in this edition of "Asia's Media Innovators" are by no means a regional phenomenon. They can also be found in North and South America, Europe and elsewhere around the world. The "Asian twist" of the latest developments could be the extent of the changes, though. Stephen Quinn and Kim Kierans, as well as Alastair Carthew, profoundly illustrate how media in Asia cope with these challenges. The various examples may support media outlets and journalists in less developed and less digitalized Asian countries to diversify the distribution of content and to adjust their workflows accordingly; to engage readers and audiences through the new communication outlets, and, to finally prepare for what seems to be the unavoidable future of journalism and media.

My sincere thanks go to the authors who not only analysed and described the latest developments in the region, but also carried "the spirit of innovation" throughout their work. I therefore hope you will enjoy reading the second edition of "Asia's Media Innovators" as much as I did.

Paul Linnarz
Director Media Programme Asia
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

The uncontested rise of social media in Asia

It is human to feel the need to connect with other people. Traditionally, people have formed tribes and societies, and gathered in towns and cities. Connection used to be mainly via face-to-face meetings. Now, digital technology makes it easier to connect, and those connections can be anywhere in the world via the Internet. In the past half decade, two of the biggest developments in terms of digital connections are social media and social networking.

Social media describes the media that people create when they connect with each other and share content online. Millions of people around the world have made videos and taken still images with their digital cameras and mobile phones, and put them on the web. The best-known examples of social media are YouTube and Flickr. Jawed Karim, Chad Hurley and Steve Chen launched **YouTube** in February 2005. YouTube's first video was called "Me at the Zoo" and shows Jawed Karim at San Diego Zoo. That video was uploaded on 23 April 2005.

In October 2006, Google bought YouTube for US$1.65 billion. Hurley currently serves as chief executive officer, and Chen as chief technology officer. In February 2008, the author interviewed the Google vice president, Douglas Merrill, in San Francisco. Merrill said people were uploading eight hours of video to YouTube every minute of every day, 24 hours a day. A little over two years later, on 17 March 2010, the official YouTube blog announced that 24 hours of video were being put on YouTube every minute. Yes, a day of content appears every minute on YouTube.

Another major player in social media is Flickr. A Vancouver-based company, Ludicorp, launched Flickr in February 2004. The co-founders were husband and wife, Stewart Butterfield and Caterina Fake. Like YouTube, Flickr allows people to store and share still images and video. Yahoo acquired Ludicorp and Flickr in March 2005. By November 2007, members had placed about two billion photographs on Flickr. Two years later the number had surged to more than four billion.

Social networking works on the same sharing principle as social media, as people use digital tools to connect and network with each other. The best known examples in 2010 were Facebook, MySpace, Orkut, LinkedIn and Twitter. The terms social media and social networking are often lumped together, described by the term "Web 2.0".
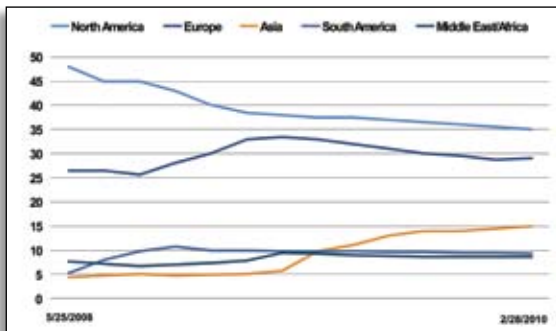
Mark Zuckerberg founded **Facebook** with university roommates and computer science students at Harvard University. Zuckerberg's preparatory school, Phillips

Growth of facebook in million
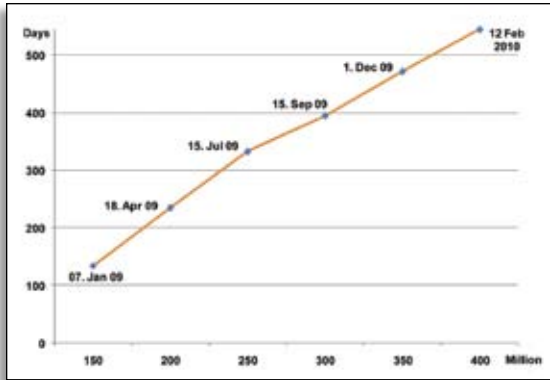
Source: Facebook, 2010

Percentual share of Facebook users

Source: O'Reilly Research, 2010

Exeter Academy, had for decades published a printed handbook of all students and faculty, unofficially called the "face book". Zuckerberg began writing code for the Facebook website in January 2004. Membership was initially restricted to students of Harvard College. Within the first month, more than half the undergraduate population at Harvard was registered on the service. In June 2004, Facebook's headquarters moved to Palo Alto in California's Silicon Valley where it took almost four years to attract the first 100 million members (in 26 August 2008). However, growth has surged since, especially in Asia.

Given the size of its audience, what is Facebook worth? In October 2007, Microsoft announced that it had bought a 1.6 per cent share of Facebook for US$240 million, which gave Facebook an implied value of about US$15 billion. But Microsoft bought preferred stock that carried special rights.

In November 2007, Hong Kong billionaire, Li Ka shing, invested US$60 million. In August 2008, BusinessWeek reported private sales by employees and purchases by venture capital firms. Based on these recent developments, the company's total valuation is somewhere between US$3.75 billion and US$5 billion. In the last months, the growth of Facebook took place especially in Asia. The following gives an overview of the recent development in the worldwide share of Facebook users.

Another major player is **MySpace**. The first version of MySpace launched in August 2003. Initially designed as a data storage facility, it evolved into a social networking site after the "dot-bomb" crunch. In July 2005, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, the parent company of Fox Broadcasting and other global media enterprises, bought MySpace and its parent company for US$580 million. The MySpace component was said to be worth US$327 million. MySpace became the most popular social networking

site in the United States in June 2006. It reached 100 million accounts on 9 August 2006. However, Facebook overtook MySpace in 2008, based on monthly unique visitors, according to measurement company comScore.
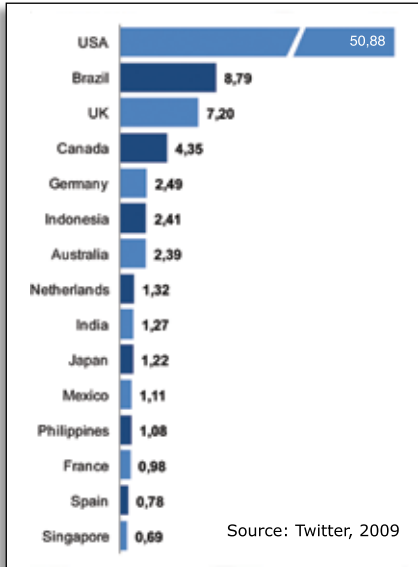
MySpace's revenue model is based around advertising. Through its web site and affiliated advertising networks, MySpace collects data about users. This enhances its ability to use behavioural targeting to select advertising relevant for each visitor. In August 2006, MySpace signed a US$900 million agreement with Google to provide a Google search facility and advertising on MySpace. Projected advertising revenues in 2010 were US$385 million. Most of that (US$360 million) would come from the United States. Facebook and MySpace are America's two social networking leaders.

Google owns the **Orkut** social networking site. It is named after its creator, Google employee, Orkut Büyükkökten. Though less popular in the United States than Facebook and MySpace, Orkut is one of the most visited websites in Brazil and India. As of December 2009, just over half (51 per cent) of Orkut's users were from Brazil, followed by India with 20 per cent. The United States had 17 per cent. In August 2008, Google announced Orkut would be managed and operated in Brazil because of Brazil's large user base. As of February 2010, Orkut had more than 100 million active users worldwide.

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking service. It allows registered users to maintain a list of people they know and trust in business. LinkedIn launched in May 2003. As of March 2010, LinkedIn had more than 60 million registered users in more than 200 countries. About half of the users are in the United States, and another 11 million are in Europe. India was the fastest growing country in 2009, with 3 million users. Australia has just over a million registered users. LinkedIn needed 477 days to get its first million members. But it took only 12 days to move from 49 to 50 million, in October 2009. The average age of a Linked-In member is 41. Members are relatively prosperous, with an average salary of US$110,000. In June 2008, a group of venture capital companies took a 5 per cent stake for US$53 million, making LinkedIn worth about US$1 billion. LinkedIn started making money in March 2006.

Twitter probably received the most publicity of the social networking companies, in 2009. Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Evan Williams co-founded a company called Obvious that spun off to become Twitter. It is a free microblogging service that enables users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are posts of up to 140 characters that appear on a user's profile page. It is called microblogging because of the limited number of characters. People "follow" other Twitter users, and tweets are automatically delivered to those subscribers. Jack Dorsey published the first tweet on 21 March 2006. Despite all the media hype around Twitter in 2009, it still has a tiny market share compared with the other social networking sites described in this chapter. As of March 2010, Facebook had about 59 per cent of the global

Twitter users in million

Country	Users (million)
USA	50,88
Brazil	8,79
UK	7,20
Canada	4,35
Germany	2,49
Indonesia	2,41
Australia	2,39
Netherlands	1,32
India	1,27
Japan	1,22
Mexico	1,11
Philippines	1,08
France	0,98
Spain	0,78
Singapore	0,69

Source: Twitter, 2009

audience and MySpace 30 per cent. Twitter had a mere 1.84 per cent. In January 2010, RJMetrics published a study of Twitter users that showed a high number of inactive accounts. Twitter had 75 million registered users as of December 2009, with the number of registrations growing at 6.2 million a month. The average number of followers was 27. But only 17 per cent of registered Twitter users used the service in December 2009, and another quarter of Twitter users had no followers (another indication of nil activity). Two in five users had not sent any tweets that month, and four in five had sent fewer than 10 tweets.

Robert Moore, president of RJMetrics, noted: "In a lot of cases where there's a really low threshold of work to get an account, companies will see a tremendous number of registrations, particularly when there's a lot of publicity driving not particularly tech-savvy people [to try it]," he said. Moore noted that 17 per cent of 75 million people still meant a large number of active members. Moore also noted that regardless of whether a user was active, they had still provided their contact information to Twitter. "Having all these people's contact and registration information might provide them the outlet to go and woo them back in at some point," Moore said. In a 7 December 2009 article in The Wall Street Journal, advisory firm and market-maker NYPPEX valued Facebook at US$7.6 billion, LinkedIn at US$1.25 billion and Twitter at US$1.13 billion. NYPPEX also estimated Facebook would make US$710 million in 2010, while LinkedIn would earn US$205 million and Twitter a mere US$1.3 million.

Do these companies make money?
Facebook remains a private company, so financial information is not officially released. Revenues for 2007 were about US$150 million. By July 2009, Facebook had earned US$310 million, with 74 per cent coming from local advertisers. By way of comparison, MySpace had earnings of US$550 million (26 per cent from local advertisers), Flickr US$336 million and Twitter about US$288 million. YouTube continued to lose money, though how much was difficult to calculate.

Advertising follows audience
Even though many Web 2.0 companies do not make money, people spend huge amounts of time with them. Eventually advertising follows audiences, so it is likely that

social networks will start to attract increased advertising. Spending on advertising on social networks in the United States in August 2008 was US$49 million. The amount surged to US$108 million a year later, despite the global financial crisis. In the year to September 2009, audiences had tripled the amount of time they spent on the social networks compared with the previous year.
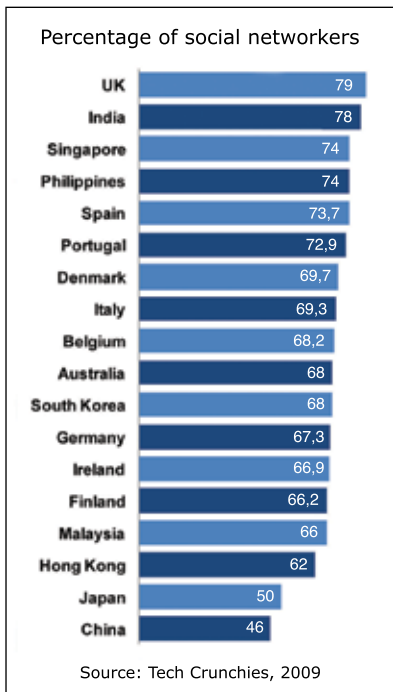
In October 2009, the GigaOm blog reported that Facebook's 300 million users collectively spent more than 8 billion minutes on the site each day. Those minutes work out at almost 15,300 years. On a busy day, 1.2 million photographs are delivered or watched on Facebook every second. Revenues from digital advertising and marketing in the United States are expected to go past print revenues in 2010, according to a new study from Outsell, a consulting and research group. This prediction is based on Outsell's annual survey of more than 1,000 American advertisers and marketers in December 2009. Advertisers and marketers plan to spend a total of US$368 billion in 2010, Outsell found. Of that amount, 32.5 per cent (US$119.6 billion) will go to digital, versus 30.3 per cent (US$111.5 billion) for print.

Comparing revenues is one way to track the rise and fall of individual media. Advertising on the Internet moved past outdoor in 2000, when digital revenues totaled US$8 billion, compared with US$5.24 billion for outdoor advertising. Internet advertising revenues passed radio for the first time in 2008, with US$23.4 billion for the Internet versus US$19.5 billion for radio.

Anyone who uses social networking and social media must go online via a fast Internet connection. Therefore, the number of Web 2.0 users tends to be higher in Europe and the United States compared with Asia because of the more developed networks in those countries. The majority of social net-workers are in Europe. Although the concept emerged in the United States, only 59 per cent of America's online population reported having a social media profile in 2009.

The following section looks at the use of social media and social networks in a range of Asian countries.

In 2009, the global marketing company, OgilvyOne, published a report about online activities in the Asia Pacific region. The report said 456 million people in the Asian region participated in social media that year. This represented 31 per cent, or just under a third,

Percentage of social networkers

UK	79
India	78
Singapore	74
Philippines	74
Spain	73,7
Portugal	72,9
Denmark	69,7
Italy	69,3
Belgium	68,2
Australia	68
South Korea	68
Germany	67,3
Ireland	66,9
Finland	66,2
Malaysia	66
Hong Kong	62
Japan	50
China	46

Source: Tech Crunchies, 2009

of the world's entire online population. The report also said three in four (74 per cent) of the world's 17 trillion SMS messages originated from the Asia-Pacific region that year. The report said online advertising was expected to experience compound growth of 25 percent between 2009 and 2011.

In 2009, the research company Synovate in Hong Kong published its Young Asians 2008 Target Report. The report studied people from Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, China, India, Japan and Vietnam. On an average day people in those countries aged 8-24 spent 6 hours and 10.8 minutes online, that report said. The rest of this chapter looks at the individual nations in the Asian region.

Young Asian's online activities
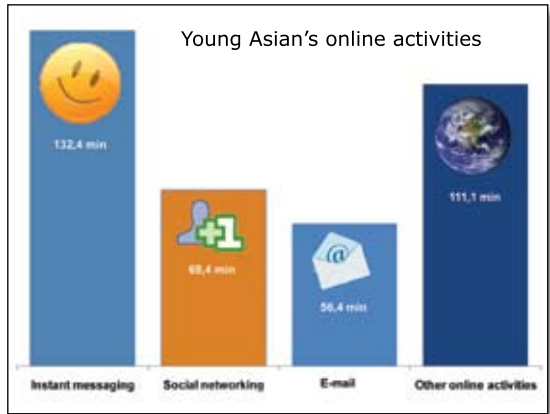
Source: Synovate, 2009

India

Social networking started to flourish in India from late 2004. Orkut has been the market leader since then. Its simple interface was preferred as a networking tool over the American focused MySpace. By December 2009, Indians represented 20 per cent of all Orkut users globally, behind Brazil and the United States. According to reporting agency Alexa, Orkut is the third most popular site in India behind Yahoo and Google. JuxtConsult, an online research company based in New Delhi, estimated 44 per cent of Indians' time online was spent with social networking. Yahoo reaches three in four (74 per cent) of Indians currently online, JuxtConsult said. In 2009, Facebook received a large amount of media attention that gave the site a huge boost in India. It will be interesting to observe whether Facebook overtakes Orkut.

A December 2009 survey showed that social networking was becoming a problem for Indian employers. The survey revealed that some employees were spending so much time on social networking sites that it was starting to affect productivity, India's *Economic Times* reported on 22 December 2009. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham) conducted the survey. It found that office staff on average spent an hour a day on sites like Facebook. The chamber noted: "Close to 12.5 per cent of productivity of human resource in corporate sector is misappropriated each day since a vast majority while away their time accessing social networking sites during office hours." Workers also use Orkut, MySpace and LinkedIn for "romancing," the newspaper said.

The BBC News quoted Assocham secretary general DS Rawat as saying the growing use of social networking was "dangerous for overall productivity" and IT companies

had installed software to "restrict its use". The survey questioned 4,000 employees between the ages of 21 and 60 from Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Surat, Mumbai (Bombay), Pune, Chandigarh, Lucknow and Kanpur. The survey found almost half of office employees accessed Facebook during work time. And two in every five workers built their Orkut or Facebook profile at the office. A large proportion of employees (83 per cent) could see no harm in surfing at work during office hours.

China

Social networking is popular in China. As of February 2010, about 384 million people were online in China, or about 26 per cent of the population, higher than the global average of 20 per cent. Chinese people have historically sought to build connections (guanxi). Digital technologies have produced an explosion in social networking, led by video-sharing and instant messaging sites Youku and QQ. Youku's turnover in 2009 rose five-fold to 200 million yuan (US$29 million) on the previous year. Online revenues in China surged by more than 30 per cent to 74.3 billion yuan (US$10.9 billion) in 2009, research firm iResearch said.

It predicted that online earnings in China, from advertising, games, shopping and other activities, would surge to 112.3 billion yuan in 2010. A report published by Tencent, the owner of social networking site Qzone and instant messenger product QQ, said Qzone had more than 200 million users in 2009, higher than other social

International site rankings for Facebook, Google and Twitter					
Country	Internet users (in million)	Facebook's position	Twitter's pos	Google's pos	Site at #1
China	360	Not in top 500	371	3	baidu.com
United States	228	2	12	1	google.com
Japan	96	30	20	2	yahoo.co.jp
India	81	4	11	1	google.co.in
Brazil	68	16	18	1	google.com.br
Germany	54	3	11	1	google.de
Russia	45	20	40	4	yandex.ru
South Korea	37	5	19	4	naver.com
Iran	32	58	Not in top 500	1	google.com
Indonesia	30	1	12	2	facebook.com
Philippines	24	1	10	3	facebook.com
Vietnam	22	8	192	1	google.com.vn
Worldwide	1.734	2	12	1	google.com

Source: Royal Pingdom, 2010

networking websites in China such as Facebook (175 million) and MySpace. About 150 million Qzone users updated their account at least once a month, the report said. QQ Xiaoyou, a service targeting students in universities and high schools, had more than 20 million registered users and it had only officially launched in January 2009, the report said. Tencent's instant messenger product QQ had more than 50 million users.

Each day about 4 million people upload 60 million photos to Qzone. About 9.5 million new blog entries are posted every day. Tencent's chief technology officer, Xiong Minghua, said Tencent planned to combine applications such as chatting tools, online entertainment and gaming, as well as leisure activities, like QQ Music. Qzone had recently opened platforms for e-commerce applications, such as paipai.com and tenpay.com (these are similar to Paypal). A factor that inhibits Facebook's growth in China is that its name sounds like the Chinese phrase fei si bu ke (非死不可), which translates to "doomed to die" or "bound to die". Transliterations like these represent one of the challenges of doing business in China.

In 2010, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published its Blue Paper 2009 entitled "Analysis and prediction of the situation of Chinese society in 2010". The document said the Internet had become an independent source of news and public opinion, and the Internet, together with cell phones, was the country's most powerful carrier of public opinion. One of the most popular Chinese tweets in late 2009 read: "If Twitter can be blocked, then pigs can climb trees." (Twitter 封得住，母猪会上树). On 11 February 2010, the news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported from Beijing that China's domestic social media sites like Weibo were booming because of their knowledge of the world's largest Internet market, plus the censorship that was stifling foreign rivals like Facebook, Twitter, and the Google owned YouTube.

The government, wary of the power of such networks to mobilise large groups of people, has blocked foreign sites such as Twitter. This has guided Chinese users towards domestic equivalents. "The Chinese government has been deliberately fostering domestic enterprises which are generally much easier to be controlled," said Xiao Qiang, who created *China Digital Times*, a site that monitors web developments in China, based at the University of California at Berkeley. "This is one of the essential components of the Chinese censorship mechanism, which also creates a trade barrier for the world's largest Internet market," Xiao wrote. *China Digital Times* (http://chinadigitaltimes.net) is blocked in China but can be accessed via proxy sites. Microblogging tools like Twitter received much publicity in 2009. Various Chinese equivalents such as Weibo flourished, especially when Twitter and Facebook were cut-off nationwide in June 2009 for the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, and in July 2009 after ethnic unrest in the far western region of Xinjiang. Authorities blamed the spread of the violence in Xinjiang partly on "agitators" who used the web to provoke unrest. In January 2010, Google threatened to abandon its Chinese language search engine and possibly end all operations in the country because

of censorship and cyber attacks it said targeted the email accounts of Chinese rights activists. In the past, only a few highly motivated and powerful people could engage with mass media.

Microblogging sites like Twitter lower the threshold for action. The process of microblogging can be likened to water droplets gathering into a cloud. Once individuals agree on a view and continue to share constantly, people with the same idea gather and form a force. That force can change national policy and even social order. In the future we will see "micro-revolution" through "micro-information". This is why micro-power is so important. China had about 180 million active blogs as of early 2010. Foreign social networking sites like Twitter face deeper problems than censorship, because their sites are not tailored to Chinese users, AFP said.

Even if Facebook and YouTube were not blocked in China, they still could not compete with the popularity of Kaixin (China's Facebook equivalent) and Youku, according to Duan Hongbin, an IT analyst at Anbound Consulting. "It's like Baidu [a search engine] and Google in China — generally Google is better in terms of technology and branding. But most Chinese still prefer Baidu," he said. "It's not because of nationalism — the language barrier is one reason. It is normal for Chinese users to use a Chinese language interface. There are not many web users in China who prefer an English interface."

Hong Kong

Almost three in four of Hong Kong's online population visited a social networking site in December 2009. Per capita, Singapore and Hong Kong have more registered Facebook users (32 per cent and 28 per cent respectively) than in the United States of America (26 per cent). A comScore report published in October 2009 said Yahoo was the most visited web property in Hong Kong for August 2009. "An average Hong Kong Internet user spends more than 25 hours online per month, making it one of the most engaged Internet

Online activities in Hong Kong

Instant Messengers 16%
Entertainment 11%
Social Network 8%
Games 5%
Email 4%
Other 45%
Technology 2%
News 2%
Search 3%
Business 4%

Source: comScore, 2009

markets globally," said Will Hodgman, comScore's executive vice president for the Asia Pacific region. While Hong Kong represents a small Internet market in Asia, its highly engaged and affluent audience makes it especially valuable to advertisers and publishers, Hodgman said. Hong Kong Internet users spent most of their time with
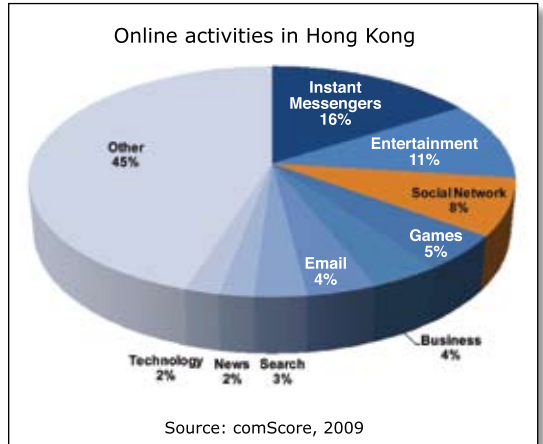
chat, entertainment and social networking in 2009. Social networking sites captured eight per cent of total time, led by Facebook.

In August 2009, for almost 4 million people in Hong Kong aged 15 or older who accessed the Internet from their home or work computers, Yahoo sites were the most popular (3.1 million visitors). Microsoft sites ranked second with 2.6 million visitors, followed by Google sites with 2.5 million visitors. Facebook had 2.1 million visitors.

Singapore

Singapore's Internet users spend more than 50 per cent of their online time on social networking and entertainment websites. In February 2009, more than 2.5 million people in Singapore aged 15 and older accessed the Internet from home or work locations, spending an average of 21 hours per person a month on the Internet. Online communication, entertainment, and social networking topped the list of how users were most likely to spend their time.

"Singapore is one of the most advanced digital markets in the Asia Pacific region and represents a growing opportunity for digital marketers," said Will Hodgman of comScore. "The combination of high broadband penetration, heavy online engagement and the overall tech savvy of Internet users in Singapore make it an ideal market for the adoption of valuable existing and emerging digital technologies, including search, social media and online video."

Google was the most visited Internet property in Singapore with 2 million visitors in February 2009, reaching almost 80 per cent of the online population. Microsoft sites came second with 1.9 million visitors (a 77 per cent reach), while Yahoo sites ranked third with 1.8 million visitors (a 70 per cent reach). Social networking sites also ranked well. Facebook had more than 1 million visitors and ranked as the fourth most visited property in February 2009, while Friendster ranked sixth with 838,000 visitors.

Singapore's strategic response to new media opportunities is encapsulated in the Intelligent Nation 2015 or iN2015 Infocomm masterplan. It is a 10 year plan to transform Singapore into a connected nation and global city, powered by the twin information technologies of an ultra high-speed National Broadband Network and a pervasive wireless broadband network. The aim is to provide many wi-fi hotspots throughout Singapore in public places such as shopping malls, and national deployment of WiMax networks for pervasive indoor and outdoor coverage in key areas such as the central business district.

Citizens tend not to trust traditional media associated with the government. A high proportion of Singaporeans are interested in political blogs, relative to other nations in the area. Some have turned to the blogosphere to voice their disapproval of government policies. A large proportion of young minds participate in this active social networking community. The government can choose to engage with them, or lose them. In April 2009, reporter Serene Luo wrote in *The Straits Times* that social

net-working sites were regulated, "with a light touch". She quoted the acting Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Lui Tuck Yew, as saying it was unlikely that total deregulation would take place "any time soon". The government maintains a list of 100 banned websites, though it has never disclosed what websites are on that list. But *The Straits Times* reported they were mainly pornographic sites, plus a few that projected extremist views on religion.

South Korea

The leading social network sites in South Korea, Cyworld and Nate, had a combined audience of 30 million in a population of 49 million, as of late 2009. Three in five of the country's online audiences are active social networkers. This number is significant because South Korea has one of the highest levels of Internet connections in the world. Both Nate and Cyworld are owned by SK Communications, a subsidiary of one of South Korea's main telecommunications company, SK Telecom. The "Cy" in Cyworld could mean "cyber", but is also a word play on the Korean term for relationship. Members cultivate relationships by forming *ilchon* ("friendships") with each other through a mini home page. These home pages include a photo gallery, video, guest books, friends list, and a personal bulletin board. Users also maintain "mini-rooms". These are small, apartment-like spaces that members decorate and maintain. It's a bit like playing the Sims game. Members conduct commerce through the purchase and sale of "*dotori*" (acorns). One dotori costs 100 won (about 9 US cents). People buy items to decorate their "mini-rooms".

SK is also working with developers to integrate social gaming into the Cyworld platform. Cyworld launched in September 1999. In recent years it has spread into China (seven million members as of early 2010) and Vietnam (450,000), though in 2010 it shut down its operations in Germany, the United States and Japan. Nate, a web portal, acquired Cyworld in 2003, and the two companies collaborate widely. Nate users can use "dotori" (acorns) on the site. Many well-known Koreans use their Cyworld and Nate accounts to publicise their activities. For example, bands detail their upcoming tours. Nate maintains an instant messenger service called NateOn.

Naver is overwhelmingly the most popular search engine in the country, with a market share of more than 70 per cent, compared with Google's two per cent. A group of former Samsung employees launched Naver in June 1999 and expanded into Japan in 2009. It is owned by a company called Next Human Network (NHN). Naver also operates a service for children, called Junior Naver.

The Philippines

Social networking is one of the most popular web-based activities in the country. Filipinos are very active users of a range of social network sites such as Facebook and Multiply. The popularity of social networking in the Philippines can be traced to a key aspect of Filipino culture that can be encapsulated as "friends help friends". For

Filipinos, friends and who they know is often more valuable than money, because of what can be achieved through favouritism, nepotism and social links.

A 2008 report by Universal McCann, entitled Power to the People: Wave3, declared the Philippines the "social networking capital of the world" noting that 83 per cent of Filipinos surveyed were members of a social network. That attitude has spilled over into Filipino cyber-culture. Politicians use social networking for election campaigns and the police use it as a tool in criminal investigations. Filipinos are also the top up-loaders of photographs and viewers of web videos.

Filipinos are also the world leaders in SMS or text messaging via a mobile phone. Social networking has evolved onto the mobile phone ahead of the desktop computer because many more people have mobile phones than Internet connections. Many companies have been developing services based on mobile phones, starting with providing free phone calls between members as well as low-cost text messaging services.

In June 2007, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the apparent demise of Friendster.com, which helped launch the online social networking movement in the United States in 2002. Within two years, services such as MySpace had replaced Friendster in that country. But Friendster never went away, the newspaper said. Its user-base simply shifted to Asia. "Today, more than 70 per cent of Friendster's traffic comes from Southeast Asia." It is the most popular web site in the Philippines, according to site tracker Alexa. Sixty per cent of Filipino users of Multiply are female, and 70 per cent are under the age of 25. Filipino users of Friendster are between the ages 16 to 30, and 55 per cent of them are female.
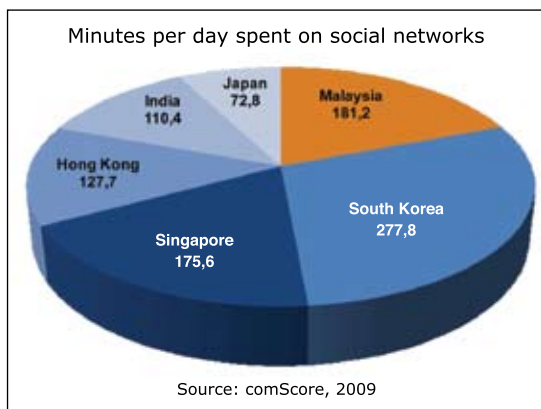
Thailand

As of late 2008, Thailand had 16.1 million Internet users in an adult population of 43.7 million, according to the country's National Electronic and Computer Technology Centre. Adults are defined as 18 years or older. Broadband was available in major cities and towns, but was rare in smaller villages and the countryside.

The majority of Internet users in Thailand still rely on dial-up access. Despite the relatively low level of broadband penetration, more young Thai Internet users access websites than read newspapers in a typical week. Such is the interest in online that the social networking site Hi5 has about two million members in Thailand aged between 15 and 40. Almost two in three of them are aged between 18 and 29. Hi5 developed as a popular social network in the two years to the end of 2009. The total worldwide membership of Hi5 is about 80 million.

Malaysia

Malaysia has about 16 million Internet users in a population of 28 million. An IDC research report said the number of Malaysian Internet users would reach 20.4 million by 2012. The number of Facebook users in Malaysia passed the one million mark in March 2009 and has been growing significantly since. Social networking is popular

among Malaysia's youth. A 2009 survey by YouthSays — the country's largest youth community website with more than 160,000 members — showed that 95 per cent of the 900 respondents had Friendster accounts. Ninety per cent were on Facebook and 38 per cent used Twitter. Results of this survey were presented at the sixth Malaysian Media Congress in July 2009. In terms of time spent on social networks, Malaysia (181.2 minutes per day) ranked second in the Asian region.

Minutes per day spent on social networks

Japan 72,8
Malaysia 181,2
India 110,4
Hong Kong 127,7
South Korea 277,8
Singapore 175,6

Source: comScore, 2009

The social networking penetration rate was 66.6 per cent of the population in December 2008, behind only Singapore (74.3 per cent) and South Korea (68 per cent). Facebook is the top social network in Malaysia, followed by YouTube and Friendster. Twitter is the eighth most popular social network site.

Malaysians seem to prefer global social networks like Facebook, MySpace and Friendster rather than local social networks, partly because of the high levels of English in the country. Where homegrown social networks dominate — for example Mixi in Japan, Cyworld in Korea and QQ in China — it is because of the dominance of the local language. Another factor analysts believe is driving the global social media trend among young people is Malaysia's tough censorship laws. The BBC's web site reports that the government exerts substantial control over the media and imposes restrictions in the name of national security. The government is keen to insulate the largely Muslim population from what it considers harmful foreign influences. News is subject to censorship, and entertainment shows and music videos regularly fall foul of the censors. Scenes featuring swearing and kissing were routinely removed from television programmes and films, the BBC said.

Indonesia
Indonesia's population of approximately 246 million contains about 300 ethnic groups, all with different cultures developed over centuries. Internet penetration was low, as of September 2009, at about 13 per cent of the population. But social networking is accelerating among the youth. The 13-to-25-age group was growing much faster than all other ages, according to Ben Lorica, a San Francisco-based senior analyst in the research group at O'Reilly Media. By contrast, in the United States, the fastest growth rates are now with people 35 and over. Perhaps two per cent of Indonesia's vast population — the fourth largest in the world — is using

Facebook, says Lorica, suggesting plenty of room for growth. Friendster still attracted more people than Facebook in the Philippines, according to Alexa.com, as of late 2009. But Facebook was growing strongly said Lorica, who is originally from the Philippines. For many tech-savvy Indonesians, Facebook is the preferred mode of digital communication.

Chapter 2
Asia's mobile phone innovations

Many of the media innovations in Asia over the past few years have involved new uses for the mobile phone. For example, early in 2010 the Pearson publishing group and phone maker Nokia formed a joint venture to teach English to people in China via the mobile phone. This chapter looks at some of the more interesting mobile phone innovations, and provides data about mobile phone penetration in the Asian region. Examples of other innovations are invited from readers. Please contact the author at sraquinn@gmail.com.

China has more people learning English than any other country in the world. Mobile phones are popular ways to access information in China. As of early 2010, China had at least 730 million mobile subscribers. This was almost double the number of Internet users (384 million as of the end of 2009). It therefore seems natural to combine mobile phones with education.

Pearson owns the world's largest education publishing business, as well as the *Financial Times* and Penguin books. Nokia is the world's leading maker of mobile phone handsets. In the last three months of 2009, Nokia sold almost 18 million mobile phones in China; 36 per cent more than a year earlier. In 2009, Pearson bought a company called Wall Street English for US$145 million, giving it a leading position in China's English-language teaching market. The new joint venture between Pearson and Nokia is called Beijing Mobiledu Technologies. It builds on a service that Nokia launched in 2007, providing content from a variety of publishers.

Angela Long, former head of Mobiledu at Nokia, runs Mobiledu in China. Elizabeth Knup is Pearson's chief representative in China. "We already have 20 million subscribers in China since Mobiledu was launched and we believe that more and more people will study English through mobile phones," she said, adding that the company would increase the content it offered to appeal to different learners. As of early 2010, Mobiledu had about 20 million subscribers and 1.5 million active users each month. Customers access the content through an application preloaded on new Nokia handsets, or by downloading software from the service's web site or Nokia's Ovi store.

The Mobiledu service targets young professionals aged between 20 and 35. Most use the service to improve their career prospects. Mobiledu has encountered a few problems not of its own making. On 30 November 2009, China Mobile implemented a series of measures meant to eliminate offensive or unauthorised content, including pornography, on Chinese-based wireless application protocol (WAP) sites. It was

part of the Chinese government's efforts to "maintain an orderly mobile Internet environment". As a result, China Mobile and other Chinese telecommunications operators suspended billing their customers for all WAP and some mobile gaming services.

This included services that did not contain offensive or unauthorised content, on behalf of third party service providers, such as Mobiledu.

Similar innovations with mobile phones are happening in Bangladesh. More than one million English lessons have been downloaded to mobile phones as part of the BBC's Janala service, the corporation told the World Mobile Conference in Barcelona in February 2010. Janala means "window" in Bangla. Janala offers hundreds of three-minute audio lessons and quizzes — delivered via text message (SMS) — for about seven US cents per lesson. People in Bangladesh dial a special code — 3000 — to get access to a range of classes via their mobile phone. The BBC has also set up a website (www.bbcjanala.com) giving learners free access to content.

Janala launched in November 2009. It is aimed at young people living on less than US$4 a day. Each session costs three taka, or about 4.5 US cents. In the three months to the start of February 2010, people in Bangladesh accessed 1,030,583 Janala lessons. More than two-thirds of people who use the beginners' service returned to it, the BBC said. Overall, 39 per cent of callers returned to Janala. About 50 million people have mobile phones in Bangladesh, from a population of 156 million. Bangladesh has the highest population density in the world, at about 1,229 people per square kilometer.

Sara Chamberlain, the head of interactive for the BBC World Service Trust, said many Bangladeshis were eager to learn English to improve their access to the global economy. The BBC aimed to put English within the reach of millions of non-English speakers, she said. A BBC survey reported that 84 per cent of Bangladeshis considered English essential for securing a good job and educating their children. "We knew demand for English was strong in Bangladesh, but the response to BBC Janala has been nothing short of phenomenal," Chamberlain said. "The growth of mobile is clearly creating an opportunity to provide access to education in a way simply not possible before."

Mobile phones are being used in a range of innovative and useful ways around Asia. In rural India, farmers receive agricultural information such as current local market prices on their phones, which they share with other farmers.

Photo by Dipanker Dutta (via Flickr)

Potential of the mobile phone

Around the world, media companies are starting to see the potential of the mobile phone, especially smart phones. John Herlihy, a Google vice-president for global advertising, believes desktop computers will be "irrelevant" within three years, and will be replaced by smart phones. "Mobile makes the world's information universally accessible. Because there's information and because it will be hard to sift through it all, that's why search will become more and more important. This will create new opportunities for new entrepreneurs to create new business models — ubiquity first, revenue later." It is all part of a transition from big technology to small. People have moved from mainframe computer to desktop, to laptop, and soon to their mobile phone.

In Japan, most research was happening on smart phones and not PCs, Herlihy told an audience at University College Dublin, in early March 2010. A smart phone is effectively an ultra-portable computer that allows its owner to surf the web, receive and send email, and conduct a host of other online activities. As of mid 2009, only one in 10 of the world's 4.2 billion mobile phones were smart phones. In July 2009, Morgan Stanley Research predicted the number of smart phones could represent half the total number of mobile phones within the "next few years". The analysts described the migration to Internet-connected mobile devices as "one of the biggest opportunities in the history of the technology industry".

Google's CEO Eric Schmidt told the 2010 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona that his company was moving to a "mobile first" strategy. "Culturally it is time to figure out a way to say yes to the emergent new services and ideas that will not come from Google, but from those literally millions of companies and programming shops that will be built on this new platform," he said. "What I would suggest to you here, right now, at Mobile World Congress is to understand that the new rule is 'mobile first'; mobile first in everything [...] it's time for us to make mobile first the right answer."

It is interesting and useful here to pause to consider all of the products that were previously sold separately but which have been incorporated into mobile phones. Some examples include still and video cameras, calculators, music players, satellite navigation systems, maps, compasses, and electronic versions of books.

Augmented reality, better known as AR, is one of the latest mobile phone applications that combines many of the capabilities recently added to phones, into a single user application. AR applications use the phone's positioning technology to note a person's location, and the device's compass to check the direction the user is facing. In this way, the device can "guess" what the user is seeing through their camera's viewfinder. The AR software gathers information about points of interest in that line of sight and displays it on top of what the camera sees.

In effect, AR layers digital information onto the physical world. The most common AR software runs on "smartphones" like Apple's iPhone or handsets that use Google's Android operating system. As the name suggests, digital technology augments and improves the reality we see.

For example, AR software adds a variety of explanatory data to an image in the phone's camera. This gives the user a better understanding of what is going on.

In a foreign city, a smartphone could be pointed down a street to see the subway stations in that direction, along with their precise location, and which lines stop at each.

One of the best AR applications is Layar. It can be used on iPhone to find nearby information or people. Data are represented in a 360-degree panorama. Layar can be used, for example, to find, all the people nearby using Twitter, nearby ATMs, locate some good coffee shops, or get details of restaurants in a nearby building. Another iPhone application, Worksnug, provides a panoramic view of all the public wi-fi hotspots around the phone owner. Another iPhone application, called Laptop Cafes, finds all the nearby cafes that have a combination of good coffee and wi-fi, in a range of cities. Google's SkyMap application helps people identify star patterns.

Google has become increasingly involved with mobile phones because it sees the potential power of combining mobile devices with information. It helps that Google manages a huge chunk of the world's information. Guardian journalist, Victor Keegan, elegantly noted that, "if data is the gold dust of the new era, then Google will own the deepest mine." "If, like me, you are willingly immersed in a snowstorm of Google products from GMail to mapping and Google Earth," he wrote in a column on 5 March 2010, "then a phone like the [Google] Nexus One … which has access to everything about me is both a potentially awesome product in its own right and a huge threat to my liberty if Google misuses that information." The disruptive power of the mobile "knows no end," Keegan said.

Meanwhile, journalists and publishers are seeking ways to use augmented reality via mobile phones. Esquire magazine in the United States and Wallpaper in Europe have produced "augmented reality" editions, with Robert Downey Jr coming to life on the cover of the former, and AR text providing videos and animation in the latter publication. Possible options for journalists using AR include "geo-tagging" online newspaper articles, so that an item relates to a particular place. "Geo-tagging" is the process where latitude and longitude (location) are encoded into a photograph or other digital item. When someone visits a site mentioned in a newspaper article, they can learn about events relevant to the location via their smart phone.

Dorien Benkoil writes a technology blog for the Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank, in Florida, United States. Benkoil said Michael Young and a team of technologists at *The New York Times* have been using AR for location-based journalism such as restaurant reviews ("point your phone at the restaurant and get its details and ratings") and real estate ("see how many apartments are available and what floor they're on in a given building"). "I could imagine a TV station using AR to let viewers poke around in a scene or get more information about something they're watching right in the frame," Benkoil said. How about facial recognition software to give information about a source a journalist is talking to?

Newspapers could offer advertisers like restaurants or museums the ability to layer information or offerings to entice people in. "For example, imagine being able to see classified ads in a neighborhood overlain on the locations in which the material is available," Benkoil said.

In San Francisco, the city's transit system has partnered with augmented reality developer, Junaio, to provide an interactive guide to getting around the city. People use information about the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) channel from their iPhone, and point the phone's camera at their surroundings after loading the Junaio application. They receive visual notifications of train stations, arrival times and nearby points of interest. The Junaio application is connected to the transit system computer. It provides information on station locations and updates train schedules constantly. Similar applications are being developed in Asia. For example, people in South Korea use an application called ineedcoffee to find coffee shops. Here is a video about the application.

Privacy issues

Privacy becomes a major issue with mobile phones, because of the ease with which people can locate information about individuals, or use the camera on the phone to capture images without others noticing. Benkoil warns that AR has what he calls a "creepiness" factor in the sense of the potential for invasion of privacy, or locating information secretly. However, the camera on the mobile phone has long been used to intrude upon people's privacy, and this issue must be appreciated. In May 2009, a scandal erupted in the Philippines involving a prominent plastic surgeon, Dr Hayden Kho, and a collection of models and actresses who were his girlfriends. Videos of Kho having sex with his girlfriends were circulated by mobile phone for several months. The case received a huge amount of publicity and involved a wide cast of characters. A Google search in March 2010, using the phrase "Hayden Kho scandal", produced more than 3.5 million hits.
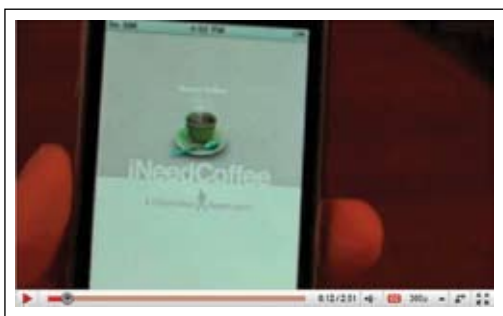
Need for innovation

As more and more people buy smart phones, innovative media houses will need to provide a stream of new applications and opportunities, such as AR, and a range of new possibilities brought about by new technologies. The arrival of the iPad, launched in early April 2010, and similar electronic devices, open the door with new ways for journalists to tell stories. Journalists must embrace these opportunities — otherwise, they risk being left behind in the next phase of the digital revolution. Mobile phone usage in Asia is growing quickly. In the decade to 2007, the percentage of mobile

phone users in the developing world jumped from one per cent to 45 per cent, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Growth is predicted to be significant in the Asia-Pacific region. The research company, Datamonitor, predicted the number of mobile phones in the Asian region would jump from 389 million in 2007 to 890 million by 2012.

In March 2010, *Forbes* magazine published results of a survey of consumer technology use in Asia, the United States and Europe. In Asia, the magazine focused on China, India, Malaysia and Singapore. The survey found that Malaysians led all other countries in their use of social networking sites, including Facebook, with 86 per cent of respondents using online technology services. A higher percentage of Singaporeans owned mobile phones than all other countries. Smart phone use was very high. Why has mobile phone adoption been so rapid in emerging nations? Expansion of the middle class bolstered by more disposable income was one reason, the magazine suggested. Demand for connected wireless devices such as smart phones was also being driven by social networking applications. Respondents in emerging countries used mobile devices to access Internet-enabled applications and services more than they used computers. The magazine noted a wide disparity regarding ownership of web-enabled mobile phones. China ranked first with 59 per cent and Singapore second at 46 per cent. However, the United States was well behind, with only 24 per cent of respondents saying they had a smart phone.

Mobile phone penetration in Asia
This next section provides data about mobile phone use in a range of Asian countries.
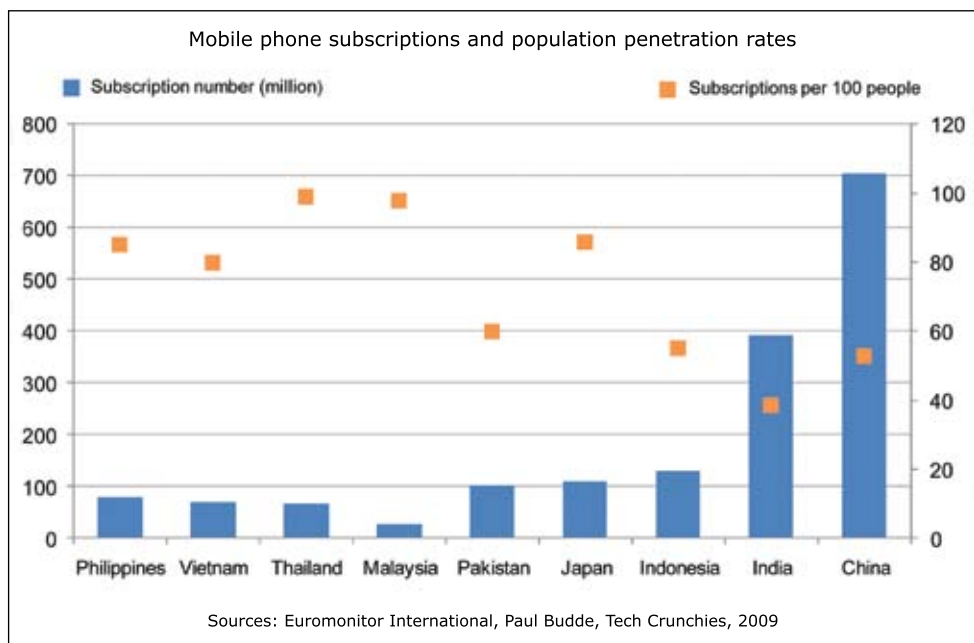
By early 2009, **Vietnam's** mobile phone service providers claimed almost 70 million subscribers, representing a national penetration rate of 80 per cent. More than four in five of those subscribers were pre-paid. In April 2009, the government issued four 3G licences, signalling what will probably be the market's next phase in its development. Mobile phone ownership in Vietnam is much higher in the main cities — 74 per cent of people in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi own a mobile. The numbers are lower in other cities (58 per cent) and rural areas (37 per cent), but still high by regional standards. Vietnamese consumers are resilient and remain positive despite the global economic crisis. Vietnam's consumers were ranked the fourth most confident worldwide, according to an October 2009 global consumer confidence study. Vietnam's mobile phone penetration rate is higher than its larger neighbours, China and India.

Internet access in Vietnam is about the same as in China and higher than in India: 26 per cent of Vietnamese had access to the Internet, which represented about 22.7 million people as of December 2009, according to the Internet World Statistics web site (www.internetworldstats.com). In February 2010, about 384 million people were online in China, or about 26 per cent of the population, according to the Chinese

Academy of Social Sciences. China is making real strides in becoming an advanced telecommunications market. The mobile sector expanded by 18 per cent in 2008 and was expanding at a rate of more than 15 per cent in 2009. By the end of 2007, mobile penetration in China stood at 41.4 per cent of the population. In December 2009, the People's Daily reported that the number of mobile phone users rose by 97.32 million to 739 million in the first 11 months of 2009. This meant one in every two citizens in China had a mobile phone. The number of people who accessed the Internet via their mobile increased by 120 million to reach 233 million, or about 61 per cent.

In **Hong Kong**, growth in the mobile phone arena continues despite a seemingly saturated market. By mid 2009, penetration was at 170 per cent in a population of almost 7 million, putting Hong Kong, Singapore and Macau at the top of the Asian mobile market. Growth in the mobile sector started in 1999 when the market was boosted by the introduction of number portability. The roll-out of 3G services is expected to be a feature of 2010. More than 85 per cent of Hong Kong's households had access to broadband Internet by the end of 2009.

Macau, a Special Administrative Region of China, similar to Hong Kong, has one of the most developed mobile phone markets in the world. By early 2010, the region had more than one million mobile subscribers, representing a penetration rate of more than 190 per cent. Put another way, most people in Macau had two mobile phones.

Mobile phone subscriptions and population penetration rates

Sources: Euromonitor International, Paul Budde, Tech Crunchies, 2009

3G has been available in Macau since 2005. Australian-based telecoms analyst, Paul Budde, said mobile communications and Internet-related services looked like continuing to be among the better performing segments of the industry, boosted by partial liberalisation of Macau's telecom services market. "Macau has been busy adopting the Internet and the administration appears keen to encourage this," Budde said. Broadband Internet, using mainly DSL, has been developing quickly. By 2009, the region had 368,000 Internet subscribers, in a population of 542,200.

In **India**, the number of mobile phone subscribers reached 391.76 million as of 31 March 2009. Most Indians prefer sending text messages (SMS) instead of calling, because it is cheaper. People use texts for a wide range of reasons, including checking their bank balance, paying bills, and checking the status of trains and flights. Data from the Telecoms Regulatory Authority in India (TRAI) in late 2009, showed Indians sent an average of 29 SMS messages a month. If we multiply 29 by the ever-growing number of mobile phone subscribers, we get an idea of the huge number of SMS messages that Indians generate. News via SMS is popular with all age groups. The popularity of other subjects depends on age. Jokes are popular amongst people aged between 18 and 44. Astrology is most popular among the 45 to 54 age group. More than half (57 per cent) of people aged 55 and older, subscribe to information about stocks, finance and business, according to TRAI.

In January 2010, Google announced a two-year agreement with India's cricket authorities to broadcast live, via YouTube, all of the games played in the Indian Premier League (IPL). This is significant because of the size of the audience. Lalit Modi, an IPL spokesman, said the deal changed the world of sports broadcasting. "The Internet has changed the lives of everyone and this will do the same for sport. We are now taking our event truly global for the first time. Google gives us access to 500 million pairs of eyes every single moment of the day. There are a few countries where the feed will be near as live which means there will be a delay of only a few minutes, but most places will be able to see live streaming of the action." Viewers will be able to choose camera positions, and freeze or fast forward footage. They can also access chat rooms and statistics on the IPL's official website. With time, we will see video increasingly available on the mobile phone in India.

The mobile phone market in **Indonesia** continues to expand at about 50 per cent a year, although it has been difficult to get recent data. By March 2007, the total mobile subscriber base had passed 65 million, up from 12 million subscribers in 2002. By March 2007, the country's mobile penetration rate had reached almost 30 per cent, with considerable potential remaining for further growth in this market, telecoms analyst, Paul Budde, wrote on his web site. The mobile subscriber base passed 130 million by January 2009. Indonesia's mobile penetration rate was approaching 55 per cent, Budde said, and "considerable potential for further growth" remained. "The operators have been scrambling to meet the anticipated demand." Budde said market

interest had started to focus on the third generation (3G) services being offered by five operators. "While 3G subscribers comprised only around seven per cent of the national subscriber base, by early 2009, the potential of 3G to boost average revenue per user (ARPU) was not lost on the operators and competition was starting to heat up on the 3G front. Telkomsel is indeed making its presence felt in this market segment, claiming about 72 per cent of the nine million 3G subscribers at end of 2008." Indonesia had about 30 million Internet users by early 2009, representing a penetration of 12 per cent. Broadband Internet access was "virtually non-existent," Budde said, with broadband subscriptions about 15 per cent of the total Internet subscriber base.

By early 2009, almost all of the 27 million people in **Malaysia** had a mobile phone, giving the country the second highest mobile penetration in South East Asia after Singapore. Growth has been phenomenal. In 1998, Malaysia had only 2 million mobile subscribers. Within a decade, the number had jumped to 27 million (almost 100 per cent penetration). Malaysians are keen textters. The telecoms regulator, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, said 73 billion SMS messages were sent in 2008 — that's an average of 2,700 per mobile phone user that year. A feature of 2009 was a significant push into 3G services. Broadband Internet penetration remains low. From a lowly penetration of one per cent at the end of 2004, adoption had risen to about 16 per cent of households by the end of 2008.

Thailand's mobile phone market reached 67.5 million subscribers by late 2009, giving the country almost 100 per cent penetration. The mobile industry saw more than eight consecutive years of strong growth up to 2009. Broadband Internet also grew vigorously in 2008, at an annual rate of about 60 per cent, though demand came from a relatively small base. Data for 2009 were not available. Overall, broadband penetration still remained low, at 3 per cent, in 2009. Thailand had about 6 million Internet subscribers.

Singapore had the highest penetration of mobile phones (131 per cent) in South East Asia. In January 2009, there were 6.3 million subscribers. By early 2009, Singapore had 2.5 million 3G subscribers — a remarkable 40 per cent of the total mobile subscriber base. Singapore's Wireless@SG initiative has established more than 5,000 public wi-fi hotspots around the island. More than 90 per cent of Singapore's households had some form of high-speed broadband Internet by 2009, and this was expected to reach 100 per cent by 2010. The government has initiated a huge project to build the Next Generation National Infocomm Infrastructure (Next Gen NII), an island-wide broadband network, at an estimated cost of US$ 1.2 billion. Singapore is a truly wired nation.

Mobile Phone Penetration in Singapore
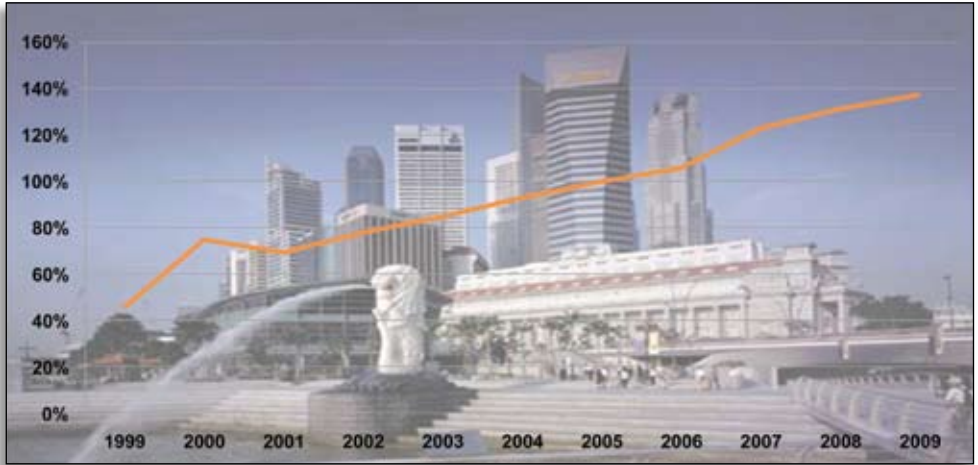
Source: IDA Statistics on Telecom Services, 2009

The capital of **Afghanistan**, Kabul, is one of the few cities in the world to have extensive wireless Internet coverage. It came about because three decades of war ruined most of the city's land-based communications networks. Afghanistan leads the world in the number of faults reported: 25 for every 100 landlines. The Afghan people in Kabul are not the biggest users of the Internet because most cannot afford the service. The BBC's, Najieh Ghulami, went to Afghanistan to look at the role the Internet plays in people's lives. She said, for some the Internet was life changing. Ghulami interviewed Jamshid Sultanzada, an Internet entrepreneur, who started taking evening classes at a skills training centre during the years of Taliban rule. "Students at this centre have to pay a small fee to attend. But the two educational skills taught there are seen by students and staff alike as crucial for a better life: learning English and mastering computers," Ghulami wrote on the BBC's web site. Many Afghanis saw the Internet as a tool for empowering their community, she said. Most recently available data for Afghanistan in 2008, showed 5.4 million mobile phones in a population of 28.3 million (data came from the CIA Factbook), a penetration rate of 22 per cent.

In **Japan**, the telecommunications sector is one of the most active markets in the world. Strong competition was noted among mobile operators in the 3G arena: 3G comprised 95 per cent of the country's mobile market, or about 105 million of the 110 million mobile subscribers (more than 85 per cent of the population). By early 2010, Japan had more than 30 million broadband lines, making it the third largest broadband country in the world after the United States and China. Japan's four main

mobile operators — NTT DoCoMo, KDDI (au), Softbank Mobile and eMobile — plan to invest up to US$10 billion in "3.9G" mobile services, offering end users the prospect of even better and faster options than they have today. The new networks will give performance roughly similar to fibre-optic networks.

South Korea has one of the most vibrant telecommunications markets in the world. More than 90 per cent of South Koreans have at least one mobile phone. As of early 2009, the country had three main mobile operators — SK Telecom with just over 50 per cent of the market, KTF about 30 per cent and LG Telecom almost 20 per cent. South Korea is considered a world leader in 3G technologies and has the world's highest percentage of 3G users. South Korea also has the world's highest number of broadband services per capita. By early 2009, about 90 per cent of households were broadband subscribers. South Korea was an early adopter of triple-play models. A single provider sells access to television, broadband Internet and voice telephony as a package of services. Japan and South Korea rank first and second among OECD nations for broadband speeds. South Korea's average speed is 78Mb/s compared with Japan's average of 90Mb/s.

South Korea's telecommunications industry developed WiBro, or Wireless Broadband Internet. It was devised to overcome the data rate limitation of mobile phones and to add mobility to broadband Internet. WiBro is the South Korean name for the IEEE 802.16e (mobile Wimax) international standard. SK Telecom and KTF (see previous paragraph for details) launched a commercial service in June 2006. WiBro offers an average data speed of 30 to 50 Mb/s per carrier and covers a radius of one to five kilometres. This means people can access the Internet on portable devices like laptops. To put those speeds into perspective: Data speeds of about 18 Mb/s are required for high-definition television, so people can watch high-quality video via the Internet on laptops. Hotspots for public wireless services have a radius of about 50 metres. With WiBro, people can access the Internet while moving at up to 120 km/h (74.5 miles per hour).

By comparison, wireless local area networks offer mobility up to walking speed, and mobile phone technologies provide access up to 250 km/h. On 3 April 2007, KT launched WiBro coverage for all areas of the capital, Seoul, including all subway lines. The author has traveled on many of these lines and the tunnels are often more than a kilometre deep. People in South Korea can subscribe to a package that gives them a WiBro "Egg". It consists of a WiBro modem with a wifi card on it, plus a battery. This effectively provides them with an individual roving wifi hotspot — giving Internet access at any time and any place. The "Egg" offers 50Gb of monthly data usage for about US$20 a month.

Data traffic on mobiles

The Swedish mobile phone manufacturer, Ericsson, has calculated that data traffic on mobile phones exceeded voice traffic for the first time in December 2009. Ericsson

based its findings on measurements from live networks from around the world. It said data traffic globally grew 280 per cent in each of the previous two years, and was forecast to double annually over the next five years. Ericsson's measurements also showed traffic in 3G networks passed 2G-network traffic over the same period. The main reason was the growth of the use of smart phones, and the popularity of social networking sites on mobile devices. Hans Vestberg, Ericsson's president and CEO, described the change as a significant milestone. "About 400 million mobile broadband subscribers generated more data traffic than the voice traffic from all of the 4.6 billion mobile subscribers around the world", Vestberg said. "Our view that the appeal of anywhere, anytime connectivity would drive mobile broadband growth, is confirmed by the real world measurements under taken by Ericsson." Vestberg said social networking via mobile devices and mobile broadband-based PCs accounted for a large percentage of mobile data traffic. For example, more than 200 mobile operators in 60 countries were deploying and promoting Facebook mobile products, with more than 100 million active users.

The Asian region continues to harness innovation in exciting ways, and these will be explored in later chapters.

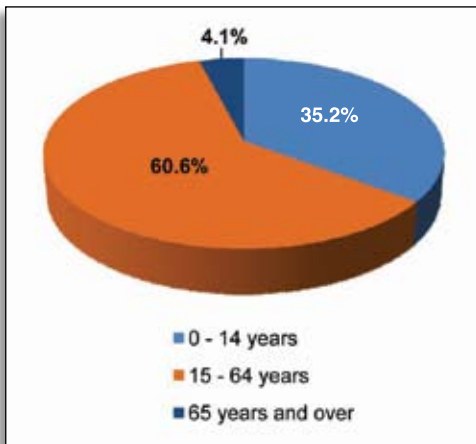| Worldwide Mobile Telecom Rankings			
Rank	Provider	Connections	Markets
1	China Mobile	525,331,266	2
2	Vodafone Group	309,580,257	23
3	Telefonica Group	202,333,430	20
4	America Movil Group	186,544,900	17
5	Bharti Airtel	169,468,523	18
6	China Unicom	147,587,000	1
7	Deutsche Telekom	127,919,986	12
8	Telenor Group	101,367,838	10

Source: Wireless Intelligence, 2010

Citizen-aided news in the Philippines

On 30 June 2010, Benigno Aquino III took his oath as the 15th President of the Philippines. A unique part of the previous election was the spread of new forms of citizen participation in the news-making process that this chapter discusses. Aquino won by a landslide margin of 5.7 million votes in the May election, well ahead of his closest rival Joseph Estrada. The former president secured 9.5 million votes despite being ousted in 2001 and convicted for plunder.

Many media groups in the Philippines have embraced their audiences. Principal among them are the two biggest television networks, ABS-CBN and GMA. Three in every four dollars of total advertising revenue in the Philippines goes to television, and the top two networks share 90 per cent of the income. Maria Ressa is senior vice president for news and current affairs at ABS-CBN, the largest network in the Philippines. "This network reaches every Filipino around the world is our boast," she chuckled during an interview in her office in Quezon City. Ressa took up her position at the start of 2005, after 18 years with CNN — mostly recently as bureau chief in Jakarta.

Audience demographics in the Philippines are reflected in ABS-CBN's structure. Only seven per cent fall in the AB categories (i.e. professional people with money). The bulk of the population falls into the C1, C2, D and E categories. Ressa noted the "huge gulf" between the AB group and the rest of the market. For that reason her network has segmented its output. ABS-CBN targets the C1, C2, D and E categories while ANC, its 24-hour cable English news channel, targets the AB group.

The huge size of its reach gives ABS-CBN the ability to cultivate possibilities with its huge audiences. "We are in a unique position in our country and in the world," Ressa said. In a speech to the Asia Media Summit in Kuala Lumpur in May 2008, Ressa said the world media had moved from the age of information to the "age of empowerment". "We have

Philippines demographics: Age Structure

Source: indexmundi.com, 2010
Population: 97.7 million (2009 est.)

to define it for ourselves as journalists [and] understand technology [and] its effects on what we do — and how all that affects the societies we live in."

From its headquarters in Manila, ABS-CBN runs a network of 19 provincial television stations and six overseas bureaus (two in North America, and one each in the Middle East, Europe, Australia and Japan). They produce a national radio network, bulletins for two free-to-air channels in the native Filipino language, Tagalog; a cable TV channel; and a range of Internet and mobile phone services. The radio service is also broadcast on cable TV: a fixed camera broadcasts presenters in their studios. Another channel, Studio 23, focuses on the youth market.

ABS-CBN has leveraged the reach of all those networks to build audiences, and attract information and content from its audience. "When you have that much market share you have a tremendous ability to shift [public opinion]." Internet penetration in the Philippines is low by world standards, at about 15 per cent in the capital Manila but nationwide only about five per cent. Yet almost everyone has a mobile phone. The Philippines leads the world in the use of SMS, better known as text messaging or texting. Almost half of the population of 88 million is aged under 18. Regardless of age, the nation sends about two million SMS a day.

In 2007, ABS-CBN ventured into this area. It involved audiences with their mobile phones in what Ressa calls the merging of the mass base of traditional media with the grassroots and participatory nature of new media. She conceived and launched the program, Boto Mo, Ipatrol Mo (BMPM), which translates as "patrol your vote". "Patrollers" as they came to be known contribute story tips and information in a range

of ways. ABS-CBN took the traditional power of broadcast media and cable television, combined it with the Internet and mobile phones to create the world's first example of a media company's campaign to get citizens to work together to "patrol" their votes and push for clean elections.

The message was simple, Ressa said: "Get the people to care and take action. If you see something wrong or good, tell us. If you see someone trying to buy votes, snap a picture on your cell phone and send it to us. If you see a town mayor using public vehicles for his campaign, shoot a video with your cell phone and send it to us. If you see violence, tell us about it, and after a verification process, we will put it to air." Ressa said the campaign was about empowerment: "We wanted to send the message that vigilance was important, that it should not become part of the problem but provide the solution — and that if you want a better future, you are not alone."

To build the audience for BMPM, Ressa and her team ran a series of all-day, on-air and multi-platform workshops and registration drives. These included youth activities, summits, concerts, gatherings and workshops. The team also gave more than 50 lectures and talks nationwide. Before each BMPM workshop the network publicised the events and ran stories about them in news bulletins. "People registered to vote in their area and registered to be a Bota Patroller. We had a minimum of 1,000 people [attend the workshops] every month. It was exhilarating. We saw a thirst for hope. They were looking for something to do." At these events, Ressa and three of her senior news managers talked about journalism. "We talked about what we do and why we do what we do." They also discussed ABS-CBN's standards and ethics manual.

"Those workshops were great for getting a sense of where people were and what they wanted." Three-quarters of the population is aged between five and 40 years. "It is an extremely young population." Ressa said journalists were not educators, but given that 90 per cent of the population of the Philippines got their information from television news, it was inevitable that news would have an "advocacy" role. The Western journalist does not get involved, she said. But it was different in the Philippines. "Journalists are always first responders in any disaster. So what do we do?" ABS-CBN set up a public service arm for when disasters strike. "We deploy our public service team and we deploy our journalists at the same time. They go together. I want our team to report but they cannot report if no one is helping in a disaster. We are an activist news organisation and I have embraced it [that concept]."

The other members of the team that ran the workshops were Glenda Gloria, chief operating officer for ABS-CBN's news channel (a former investigative journalist and managing editor of NewsBreak, an investigative magazine); Beth Morrissey, Princeton in Asia Fellow (who worked for the Off the Bus citizen involvement program during the 2008 Obama campaign); Charie Villa, head of online and mobile news; and Arlene Burgos, new media manager for Boto Mo iPatrol Mo.

Ressa described a typical workshop that ran on 3 February 2010. At the workshop, Ressa opened the session by describing Boto Mo iPatrol Mo and its community and

talked about journalism and patrollers' potential role in the May 2010 election. Burgos described what patrollers had done elsewhere, what stories the network was looking for, and how to put a story together. Glenda Gloria talked about the basics of journalism and the importance of ethical journalism. She discussed how technology was changing journalism and its role in citizen journalism. Morrissey described how citizen journalism operated in other countries, and outlined the basics of citizen journalism with a mobile phone: how to take photographs, how to upload them to social network sites and onto the BMPM site. She also talked about staying safe as a citizen journalist. Noted Ressa: "It's nuts and bolts kind of things; how to use your mobile phone for reporting." Charie Villa talked about visual journalism. "She was great at showing people how to use pictures to tell the story," Ressa said. Villa then elaborated on social media and citizen journalism, and discussed what was ahead of BMPM. More information can be found at the campaign's web site, http://bmpm.abs-cbnnews.com.

A song started each workshop. "We wrote a song for the occasion," Ressa said. "We did questions and answers after each session." Ressa said the workshops ran for up to five hours, and the participants stayed throughout. "They stay with us. Though we do feed them," she said with a laugh. "The cell phone is the [newsgathering] tool. It is ubiquitous in the Philippines. Everyone has one. So a big chunk of the workshop is showing people how to use it for newsgathering."

The success in the "patrol" campaign in terms of engaging the audience has been phenomenal. ABS-CBN set up a database to keep track of all the "patrollers". The number of contributors totalled 81,146 as of 7 June 2010. Each day they sent an average of 3,058 text messages, 500 emails and more than 100 voice-mails to the newsroom. These tips have led to a range of stories. BMPM also had 19,127 Twitter followers, and 102,391 Facebook fans. Ressa said the audience was 400 per cent more engaged and almost half of the patrollers were aged 18 to 24, a hopeful sign of future involvement in the political process.

In 2008, the International Association of Business Communications (IABC) gave ABS-CBN its Gold Quill award for the Boto Mo, Ipatrol Mo campaign. The IABC called BMPM an effective campaign that was well executed despite having only a "modest budget". It made "thoughtful use" of strategic partners — "all based on a bold, honourable mission". The 2007 campaign was also successful in terms of revenue: profits from that year's election were almost four times higher than in the 2004 presidential election. In terms of brand awareness, the campaign was "priceless", Ressa said.

The BMPM campaign came about because Ressa is a strategic thinker. She recognised the power of what Malcolm Gladwell refers to as the "tipping point" in his book of the same name. The concept comes from the science of epidemiology, when a virus multiplies below the radar screen and hits the point when it changes the entire system. Malcolm Gladwell wrote: "That moment in an epidemic when a virus reaches critical mass. It's the boiling point." That is the point at which change

happens, often quite quickly. "We took a tipping point approach, step by step by step," Ressa said. "Change is not revolutionary but gradual." Media has converged. In some countries, all forms of news come from one combined newsroom. Audiences have also converged, in the sense that they will go anywhere in search of the content and information they need to live their lives. "Convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and — more importantly — to make connections. We are changing the way we think and interact," Ressa told the Asia Media Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

This "participatory culture" was a stark contrast to the passive way people used to consume media, watch television or listen to the radio with no way of talking back. "Now, rather than saying media producers and consumers occupy separate roles, we are starting to see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules we are all just defining," Ressa told the Kuala Lumpur summit. Ressa cited the book Crowd-Sourcing by James Surowiecki in our Manila interview in June 2010. "Large groups of people are smarter than an elite few, no matter how brilliant — better at solving problems, fostering innovation, coming to wise decisions." Four criteria are required for this process to operate: The first was diversity of opinion — each person should have private information; the second was independence — people's opinions were not determined by the opinion of those around them; the third was decentralization — where people were able to specialise and draw on local knowledge; and the fourth was aggregation — where some mechanism existed for turning private judgments into a collective decision. "The BMPM campaign satisfied those criteria," Ressa said.

"Each of us finds our meaning and creates our interpretations, personal myths and world views from the information we consume – all to try to make sense of our daily lives."

Maria Ressa

The "patroller" campaign also deliberately set out to educate viewers and audiences about freedom of expression and freedom of information. "Public education about journalism is not great [in the Philippines]. We realised we have to talk about these kinds of things and explain them to our viewers."

Ressa admitted it was difficult to measure the impact of the workshops. Audiences would always come to television news because of the quality of the storytelling. Ressa said it took time to get audiences to contribute video because culturally it was not something that Filipinos did, and data charges were expensive. Patrollers sent video to the station's web site, and posted it on YouTube. "We embraced the stuff [technologies] already available to citizens: Gmail, YouTube and Facebook. We used other people's servers," she chuckled.

"Each of us finds our meaning and creates our interpretations, personal myths and world views from the information we consume — all to try to make sense of our daily lives."

Examples of patroller's contribution to news

The Maguindanao Massacre in southern Philippines in November 2009 was the country's worst election-related violence. At least 60 people were killed including 30 journalists. It was premeditated murder and also the deadliest single attack on journalists anywhere in the world.

Here is an example of a tip from a "patroller" at 3:47pm on 23 November 2009, about the massacre: "Maguindanao gubernatorial aspirant Toto Mangudadatu's wife was kidnapped together with two sisters of Mangudadatu and media men as well as legal counsels enroute to Shariff Aguak to file certificate of candidacy for gubernatorial position in behalf of Toto Mangudadatu. The PNP ARMM were immobile because they were under the command/control of the incumbent Maguindanao governor-Ampatuan family. The 6id [infantry division] army have played dumb and blind despite heightened reports that there is a plot against Toto Mangudadatu."

At 3:58pm another text message followed: "we plead that this incident be given attention and that in-depth investigation be given as well as impartial report. The atrocities of Ampatuan family in Maguindanao is a secret public knowledge. All are immobile for their fear of life. These people are playing gods here."

At 8:48pm a "patroller" sent ABS-CBN photographs of corpses at the massacre taken with a mobile phone.

Another major news event was patrollers' coverage of cyclone Ondoy that hit Manila in the evening of 25 September 2010. Coverage started on the Saturday the storm hit.

That evening ABS-CBN started broadcasting video from patrollers, of their homes and communities. "The videos [were] of floating cars and stranded people. People sent video even though they were in danger."

Ressa noted the drive for better quality video on the web in mid 2010, and a move to high definition (HD) images on television, which meant audiences were expecting high quality video. ABS-CBN was preparing for HD, while accepting it was expensive. The quality of video from citizen journalists was often not great, and not as good as what some viewers were used to. "But if the story is good enough, if the video is compelling enough, it does not really matter about the quality of the video. Journalism is evolving and technologies are merging. Probably 75 per cent of what viewers remember is the video," Ressa said. "Television news is more than an intellectual exercise," Ressa said. "More than anything the storytelling requires emotion. Natural sound helps capture that [emotion]."

Major floods in the Philippines — GMA responds

Typhoon Ondoy, which unleashed a months worth of rain in just 12 hours on Manila in September 2009, was a catalyst for GMA's attitude to audience participation in the news. Howie Severino is editor-in-chief of the network's web site, GMAnews.tv. He said GMA's involvement with audiences differed from ABS-CBN's approach.

GMA had set up a citizen involvement site called YouScoop, two years before Severino arrived but it lapsed as the company looked at other innovations. YouScoop was initially a platform where citizen journalists could submit election-related reports. Severino revived the site after he arrived at GMA in June 2009. "We revived YouScoop because it was a necessity, not because we read about any new trends." The necessity became evident during the flooding caused by Ondoy, which trapped many people. "We had to rely on the crowd to give us information about where the worst-hit areas were. It was very difficult to move around." The flooding had stranded many of Severino's journalists and they could not come to work. "Nobody alive could remember rain of that volume. There was a huge demand for information." Landlines were down or overcome with thousands of calls, but people could still communicate by mobile phone.

Severino said traditional media like television or newspaper photojournalists needed to be on location to get visuals. "We saw an opportunity to use the crowd. They had access to information and most of it came through SMS. GMA used its television and radio networks to tell people about its Facebook fan page and encouraged people to submit photographs and stories to that site. Severino's newsroom created stories from the submissions but he decided that this form of reporting was not enough. "We thought of other things we could do to become more interactive."

GMANews.tv has about 35 staff, including 10 reporters and five multimedia editors, plus another 15 copy editors. His staff had been studying how news web sites in other countries used mapping tools like Google Maps and mash-ups. "A lot of people wanted to know what was happening in particular places, and we had information with geo-location. We started plotting information we received on our Facebook fan page, on a Google map." At the same time Severino used his Twitter account (@howieseverino) to call for help from people with skills and knowledge in geography. "A lot of people wanted to volunteer. A lot of people knew people who were affected by the floods. People came here to help us plot information on the Google map." The team inserted information about the condition of roads and bridges, and what was happening in particular communities.

Severino went on television to show audiences how they could use maps and insert their own data on the network's web site. "Google maps are things that only the web can do, that television cannot do." Severino had previously worked for a decade as a television journalist. "This was something we had been thinking about for a long time but was on the backburner. Then this disaster happened and maps were something we could do on the fly. It involved very little planning. It was something we felt needed to be done because our city was in danger."

Twitter became a powerful tool for GMA during the disaster. Severino tweeted about the floods and people started sending him updates via Twitter and Facebook. "I was in the eye of the storm, so to speak: I was managing the data processing and uploading, talking to the public [via Twitter and Facebook], liaising with GMA's

network television. Not everyone has a computer but everyone has television and a cell phone." The disaster also attracted a huge audience from the large expatriate Filipino community and local authorities. Almost 15 million Filipinos live overseas and send money home, so they maintain a keen interest in what happens in the country. (As an aside, these expatriates send home at least US$13,000 million a year. They have become a major target for online advertisers in the Philippines, because print media cannot reach them.)

As GMA's online service harvested information from the audience, Severino became aware of the huge potential of this kind of newsgathering and distribution. "The experience taught us that social media was not just trendy and cool, not just a way to tell people what you had for breakfast. It could be about life and death situations. It was a baptism of fire and we decided in future social media could be used as a vital public service. It also created a lot of traffic for our web site." Details appear later in the chapter.

GMA's coverage of the typhoon also generated a lot of goodwill for the network. "People overseas said 'thank you', you were our lifeline to knowing what was happening in individual communities and areas." Severino and his staff tweeted updates to overseas Filipinos so those people had immediate updates on affected areas of the city.

Severino said he and his staff applied what they learned from typhoon Ondoy, to the May 2010 elections. "It's about crisis information. A flood is a crisis, and if people are experiencing election violence, it's a crisis." GMA used Google maps and YouScoop to categorise problems and successes with the 2010 elections. People were encouraged to send stories and tips via their mobile phones. It was the country's first automated election, and critics were predicting a "train wreck" from the failure

of technology and violence at election booths. GMA adapted Google maps to colour code events on a YouScoop map, and also mapped candidates' travels around the country.

The election generated huge traffic on the network's Facebook fan page and GMANews.tv web site. The latter attracted a record number of page views during the election. On 11 May 2010, the site got 12 million page views, which was three times more than the previous high during the Cory Aquino funeral on 5 August 2009. Severino attributed success to the GMA site having the best election data, boosted by the Google maps.

The network received and distributed news via its Twitter site. It also pioneered a form of social media election reporting called "rapid reports". Reporters sent short reports to the newsroom's online in-box, via SMS texts. Editors checked the copy and posted news in the form of status updates on the network's Facebook fan page and Twitter sites. "It was like Twitter but we wanted to have a form of editorial screening before it appeared, so we can say the news went through a vetting process. Reporters are under a lot of time pressure and [reporting can be] frantic and we did not want to put too much pressure on them to be absolutely accurate all the time. We had editors who checked names and facts, so our audience could be confident the news went through an editing process. Plus, our editors add background material and enhance the content."

GMA continues the traditional newsroom structure of reporters in the field and copy or sub editors in the office. The latter's role is to check the quality and accuracy of the content from the field. The multimedia team adds videos from GMA's television channels. These are edited for brevity and made more appropriate for the web. The multi-media team also finds related videos on other sites, such as YouTube, and links to other useful sites. "As much as possible we aim to turn every news story into a multimedia experience. That's what makes us different." Severino noted that the Philippines has plenty of news, and journalists needed to find innovative ways to deliver that news and tell stories in new ways.

Innovation from smaller news groups

While big media dominated the information landscape in the Philippines, innovation in the 2010 election also came from smaller news organizations. The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) offered diverse probing coverage in its election site (http://i-site.ph/2010elections). Its stories, audio, video and photos were picked up and spread widely through Blogwatch (http://blogwatch.ph), an active opinionated community of bloggers, as well as the Philippine Online Chronicles (www.thepoc.net) which describes itself as "a media network and news aggregator, a platform for alternative viewpoints and a synthesizer of ideas". This site offers an alternative to traditional reporting by using less heard voices such as blogs, student newspapers, and alternative publications.

A small but important player in the 2010 election, was VERA Files — vera means truth in Latin — an online site (http://verafiles.org) published by six well-respected award-winning veteran Filipino journalists: Yvonne Chua, Luz Rimban, Booma Cruz, Chit Estella, Jennifer Santiago and Ellen Tordesillas. These six women act as the board of trustees and among them have 162 years of journalism experience. The site's slogan "Truth is our business", is a breath of fresh air. "We wanted an outlet for stories we felt strongly needed to be written — stories, not just news stories but feature stories, reports," co-founder Yvonne Chua told the Advanced Reporting M.A. class at Konrad Adenauer Asian Center for Journalism (ACFJ) at Ateneo de Manila University in June. "Not necessarily competing with mainstream media but complementing or filling in the gaps of mainstream media."

The original plan to publish a monthly magazine fell through when the recession hit in 2008, but Chua and Rimban (the other co-founder) had an important investigative report planned, so they decided to write the story and syndicate it to mainstream newspapers. Chua said a number carried the story on their front pages. Buoyed by that success, Chua and Rimban built a website "in an afternoon" and VERA Files was launched in March 2008 as a multimedia site with text, photos, slide shows, videos and podcasts.

It remains different from other websites. "We agreed we didn't want the whistles and bells. We would let content drive the site," Chua explained. The site is built like a blog with links to supporting documents, Twitter, Facebook and RSS feeds. But unlike many websites, VERA Files offers no opinion writing or open forum for reader comments. Chua said that was a deliberate decision to keep the focus on content. "We're a reporting centre, a journalism centre that deals with a whole range of stories. We do plain news stories, feature stories, explanatory pieces to investigative reports. What you do not see in VERA Files are opinion pieces. We agreed all our stories should be factual and leave the opinion out." Opinion and reader comments are handled by blogger-trustee Ellen Tordesillas on her blog site (www.ellentordesillas.com).

As part of their mission, the trustees struck a pact to do training and in particular to mentor: "We have mentored journalism students, community journalists, people from NGOs who would like to do journalism. It's the best way to propagate good journalism and it has helped us a lot," Chua said.

VERA Files runs on a shoestring. The co-founders spent (US$21) to register with the Security Exchange Commission. VERA Files sells or syndicates its news stories, features, in-depth and investigative stories to mainstream print and broadcast outlets; the trustees report and write for free. Perhaps that's why five of the six have other jobs as writers, editors or journalism educators.

This allows VERA Files to pay non-trustee writers agreed freelance rates when it sells a story to mainstream media. "More than half of the proceeds from syndication goes to the writers. That's our commitment," Chua said. "We have found that a lot of good investigative in-depth reports can be put together without a lot of money. All

you need is a little creativity, imagination, initiative and hard work and a little money for transportation and photocopying." For the first two years the trustees operated the business out of their homes as "satellite offices", each taking responsibility for administration, collection, billing and the web. In April 2010, they rented a small 12 square meter office in Quezon City to coordinate election coverage.

Vote 2010

The 2010 national elections provided VERA Files with an opportunity to add new voices to election coverage. Chua said the networks and big papers had already partnered with each other — GMA with the Philippine Daily Inquirer and ABS-CBN with the Philippine Star and their online divisions. With funding from the Asia Foundation and the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, VERA Files partnered with 20 civil society groups, including church, environmental and youth groups, along with 10 community newspapers, to provide national coverage of the elections. "We had a network just like a national newsroom, with correspondents from Luzon, Abra, to Tawi-Tawi to Mindanao," Chua says. VERA Files took a different approach to training its NGO citizen journalists compared with ABS-CBN. VERA Files went into communities and held three-day training programs for civil society groups that included news writing, how to take pictures and videos, how to write captions and headlines and how to use online tools to communicate with VERA Files. "We believe in training non-journalists, but we also strongly believe in supervised journalism that has professional and ethical standards," Chua says. VERA Files' message to all the citizen journalists was "you have to be accountable for what you do". The coverage caught the attention of Yahoo Ph! Purple Thumb, and another partnership was formed. "Can you imagine our stories were carried by a news website that had 4 million unique visits during the election period."

On May 9, VERA Files opened a live blog that ran until May 19 to cover breaking events across the country, with people uploading comments, photos and video. "While we were running the incidents, producers were putting together stories as data came in." The solid reporting and innovation of VERA Files is receiving accolades. Trustees Yvonne Chua and Luz Rimban, with contributor Diosa Labiste, received the top award of distinction at the 2009 Jaime V. Ongpin Awards for Excellence in Journalism (JVOAEJ) for their 2008 investigative report "Quedancor swine program another fertilizer scam". Judges said the three-part report was "a substantial contribution to the urgent necessity to understand the link between the country's continuing poverty and corruption, and which manages to hold reader attention while provoking thought as well as outrage".

In June 2010, VERA Files also received the first ever New Media award from the Rotary Club of Manila at its annual journalism awards ceremony. The citation lauded "its

exhaustive investigative reports on the assets and liabilities of government officials, particularly of the President and the First Gentleman, highlighting the people's right to information". The success of Vote 2010 and the awards are evidence to the trustees at VERA Files that they're on the right track. "This time we have reached a wider audience," Chua said. "The formula that we began with that we should be driven by content rather than all those whistles and bells works after all."

Chua said it was difficult to determine how many people were reading their work because a lot of other publications carry their stories. "If you look at the traffic of the site it's not really a good indicator. For example, our stories are carried by Yahoo. Sometimes they link back to us; sometimes they read the whole story there. We used to be nowhere. Now according to alexa.com we are around the million mark," said Chua.

VERA Files adds an important dimension to the media scene and civic discourse in the Philippines. "We're competitive but we also know there's room enough for stories like ours, for everyone. We don't even assume we can replace another news organization similar to ours. We just hope we can complement their work."

Chapter 4
Blogging as an alternative media in Vietnam

Social networking and social media, especially blogs, have blossomed in Vietnam in the past few years. The country has many famous bloggers but some remain anonymous; they fear their opinions will result in jail or reprisal from authorities. A December 2008 edict from the Ministry of Information requires bloggers to restrict their postings to personal content, and bans postings about politics or issues the government considers state secrets, subversive, or threats to national security and social order. All IP (Internet Protocol) addresses in Vietnam are owned and controlled by state-owned Internet Service Providers.

The monitoring of Internet blogs and forums is a big job. By the end of 2009, the Internet penetration rate in Vietnam was 25.7 per cent, according to the Vietnam Internet Network Information Center (VNNIC). That is well above Asia's average of 20 per cent. While Vietnam's Internet penetration is similar to countries like China, the Philippines and Thailand, it has experienced more rapid growth than most other countries in the region.

In 2008, Vietnam (population 88.6 million) had about 20 million Internet users, according to the World Bank's world development indicators. A little over a year later, by the end of 2009, the number of users had jumped to 22.7 million, according to the Internet World Statistics website. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of Vietnamese using the Internet grew by a phenomenal 10,882 per cent. Details can be found at (www.internetworld stats.com/stats3.htm).

Of those 22.7 million Internet users, the "Vietnam NetCitizen Report: Internet Usage and Development in Vietnam" released in March 2010 by Cimigo, an independent marketing research company based in Ho Chi Minh City, found that most users went online from home (75 per cent) and work (25 per cent). Homeowners pay from $13 to $15 dollars a month (250,000-300,000 VND) for a package.

Younger age groups (21 per cent) tend to use Internet cafes, though their popularity is waning as more people have their own computers, and wi-fi is widely available in major cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Prices to go online at Internet cafes in Vietnam have fallen dramatically in the past four years. In early 2006, it cost 10 cents (2000 VND) per minute. By mid 2010 it was 15 cents (3000 VND) for an hour of computer time.

The Cimigo survey of 3,000 Internet users in six Vietnamese cities (conducted in October and November 2009) found that most people went online to get information

or read the news (90 per cent), followed by entertainment such as music, movies and gaming (76 per cent), chatting and email (70 per cent), and forums, blogs and social network sites (40-45 per cent).

Google was the favoured website for search and research activities, followed by Zing (a Vietnamese site) for online entertainment, and Yahoo for email, instant messaging and chatting. About 15-20 per cent of those surveyed went online to read newspapers such as DanTri (http://dantri.com.vn), VnExpress (www.vnexpress.net) and Tuoitre (http://tuoitre.com.vn).

The level of interest in the Internet continues to grow because the vast majority (91 per cent) of those Cimigo surveyed, consider it an important source for news and information. This is despite the fact that many (58 per cent) do not generally trust online information and consider television and newspapers more reliable. Vietnamese are drawn to the Internet for chat, email, blogs and social networks; the survey showed that four in five people believed the Internet helped them connect with friends and new people. The NetCitizens Report can be downloaded at, http://cimigo.vn.

Despite the presence of 174 newspapers and 470 magazines in the country, blogs have made huge inroads in Vietnam. The number exploded in late 2005 with the introduction of Yahoo 360°. "Everyone was using Yahoo Messenger, then Yahoo added the 360° blogging thing to Messenger. That's when it just exploded," explained Joe Ruelle, a Canadian living in Hanoi. Ruelle became a national personality because of the huge audience who followed his quirky blog about life in Hanoi and written in Vietnamese. Joe's blog, as it is called, became a nationally syndicated newspaper column and led to Ruelle hosting entertainment programs on Vietnamese TV.

"It was like the Wild West. There was like the whole Billy the Kid bloggers being bad and naughty and all that stuff. It was kind of seen as a teen phenomenon," Ruelle recalled. "A teen phenomenon with two million people in Vietnam using the same service. And it was all blogs. It wasn't Facebook, it wasn't Twitter, it was all blogs at the same time," Ruelle said.

Yahoo 360° closed in July 2009, but the social networking door had opened to Internet-savvy Vietnamese. Bloggers lost the critical mass available at Yahoo 360° and they scattered, moving to other websites including Multiply, Zing, Wordpress, Yahoo Plus, Facebook and Blogspot.

"Forums and blogs are the most important category and the most influential in terms of social media in Vietnam, rather than Facebook and some of the social networking," said Vu Thi Hai Anh, a public affairs officer at the Embassy of Canada in Hanoi.

The NetCitizen Report (March 2010) found that people younger than 25 are three times more likely to post to online forums and write blogs compared with users over the age of 25. Several reasons can be found for this phenomenon, including a need to express personal opinions, and a desire to speak out about perceived corruption at various levels of government.

Joe Ruelle noted the widespread adoption of the Internet among young people. "Television is just not in the equation," he said. "Newspapers cannot compete with online, and television does not have any shows that capture the imagination of that age group. Teenagers are constantly online with Yahoo messenger, so the online newspapers tend to link to blogs and chat sites."

He said that in Canada if someone hosted a television show and ran a blog aimed at teenagers they would get more attention and fame from the television show. In Vietnam it is the reverse. Teenagers respond to blogs. "I get street cred[ibility] from my blog in Vietnam."

The Vietnam NetCitizens Report also found that the number of people writing blogs dropped from 27 to 20 per cent after 2007, and surmised "the main reason for this might be the closing of Yahoo 360° in 2009, which had been by far the most popular blogging application". It might also have something to do with increased government monitoring and censoring of activities on the Internet.

On 26 May 2010, the Human Rights Watch, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in New York said that the Vietnamese government had launched a sophisticated and sustained two-pronged attack against online dissent. The NGO reported that the government was detaining and intimidating independent Vietnamese bloggers, while also permitting cyber attacks from Vietnam to disable websites critical of the government.

"In the past two months, Vietnamese authorities detained at least seven independent bloggers, subjecting them to extended interrogations and, in some instances, physical abuse. This intensified harassment has coincided with systematic cyber attacks targeting websites operated by some of these bloggers and other activists in Vietnam and abroad."

The NGO said the most damaging attacks deployed 'botnets'. These consist of 'malware' disguised as software to support a Vietnamese-language keyboard that caused crippling denial-of-service attacks against websites. Hackers switched popular software for inputting Vietnamese-characters written by the California-based Vietnamese Professionals Society (VPS), called VPSKeys, with a 'malware' version that took over people's computers, according to McAfee, an Internet security firm. To get users to download the 'malware', given the name 'W32/Vulcanbot' by McAfee, a fake email from VPS was sent to specific recipients informing them about "updated software of VPS" and asking them to download the "new" [fake] version of VPSKeys. Because of the cyber attacks some bloggers moved their blogs to servers outside the country.

Google as well as McAfee confirmed and then condemned the attacks. "The government targets these Internet writers simply because they voice independent opinions, criticise government policies, and expose wrongdoing," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Evidently the government is worried these bloggers will reveal the inside story of government abuse and corruption, and report on incidents and issues it prevents from appearing in the state controlled media."

In a blog entry on 30 March 2010, McAfee's chief technical officer, George Kurtz, wrote: "The rogue keyboard driver ... connected the infected machines to a network of compromised computers. During our investigation into the 'botnet' we found about a dozen command and control systems for the network of hijacked PCs. The command and control servers were predominantly being accessed from IP [Internet Protocol] addresses in Vietnam." Kurtz said he believed that the perpetrators may have had political motivations and may have some allegiance to the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. "This incident underscores that not every attack is motivated by data theft or money."

Neel Mehta from Google's security team wrote in his blog: "This particular 'malware' broadly targeted Vietnamese computer users around the world. The 'malware' infected the computers of potentially tens of thousands of users who downloaded Vietnamese keyboard language software. These infected machines have been used both to spy on their owners as well as participate in distributed denial-of-service attacks against blogs containing messages of political dissent. Specifically, these attacks have tried to squelch opposition to bauxite mining in Vietnam, an important and emotionally charged issue in the country."

A Vietnamese government spokesperson dismissed Google and McAfee's allegations as groundless. But Human Rights Watch said it had evidence that challenged the government's claims. Websites that have been bombarded by hundreds of attacks — including the political commentary website, Thong Luan, and a Catholic website, Dong Chua Cuu The Viet Nam (www.dcctvn.net) — traced some of the attacks to the IP address for Viettel, a state-owned telecommunication company operated by Vietnam's Ministry of Defence.

Vietnamese officials have admitted the government has shut down websites. Human Rights Watch reported that at a national news conference on 5 May 2010, Lieutenant General Vu Hai Trieu, deputy director of the General Department 2 of the Public Security Ministry, told several hundred Vietnamese media representatives that the department had "destroyed 300 bad Internet web pages and individual blogs".

On 10 June 2010, Google policy analyst Dorothy Chou wrote on the Google policy blog: "Internet users in Hanoi will soon find that they can't reach certain sites when browsing the Web at local Internet cafés. A regulation enacted in April requires that all retail Internet locations install a server-side application by 2011. The application will likely allow the Vietnamese government to block access to websites, as well as to track user activities."

"The implementation of an application like this one would choke off access to information for many in Hanoi — given how popular Internet cafés are in Vietnam. If the regulation spreads beyond Hanoi, it will impose these vague and non-transparent restrictions on users all over the country. Together, with the security attacks we detected on Vietnamese human rights activists earlier this year (see our security blog post on 'The chilling effects of malware') and intermittent blockages of Facebook

The Vietnam Express site in May 2010 published the transcript of an interview with Pham Quoc Ban, director of the Hanoi Department of Information and Communications. The story's headline was "Hanoi to control Internet café users." The interview concerned a decision by the Hanoi People's Committee on 26 April 2010, to regulate Internet cafes. Part of the translated transcript is shown below:

Pham Quoc Ban: *Hanoi presently has around 4,000 Internet agents. [...] we will use technology to manage Internet shops. Specifically, competent agencies will install specialized software designed by National University. This software will oversee the activities of users and the owners of Internet shops to know whether or not they are obeying the law.*

Vietnam Express: *It is said that controlling the users at Internet shops will violate their right to privacy. How do you respond?*

Ban: *At present, control of users at Internet shops is very poor. People of less than 18 years old can freely visit websites with bad content. If we continue the loose management of these shops, Vietnam will have corrupted youth infected with bad thoughts. Their personalities will be harmed because they easily see porn and violent materials. Security also worsens because some people become addicted to online games and, to have money for games, they become robbers. This is a pressing matter for society and citizens have asked the People's Council several times to crackdown on this situation. Therefore, controlling the behaviour of users at Internet shops is a popular move.*

The full interview can be found at www.vnexpress.net/GL/Vi-tinh/2010/05/3BA1B8EC/

and other social networks, this regulation is a troubling example of a government threatening free expression online and an open Internet."

The United States State Department has made Internet censorship a key pillar of its foreign policy and now factors the issue into its diplomatic relations with every nation. In every meeting with foreign dignitaries the issue was "on the table," Alec Ross, senior advisor for innovation to Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, told an event hosted by the Media Access Project, a non-profit law firm and advocacy group, in Washington on 11 June 2010.

On 27 April 2010, the Viet Tan advocacy group released a report blaming the Hanoi government for illegal computer attacks. Based on the IP addresses it obtained, Viet Tan said it determined that the attacks originated from Vietnam. The full report can be downloaded at www.viettan.org/en. Viet Tan has launched an Internet Freedom Campaign to support Vietnam's citizen journalists and digital activists.

Detention of Bloggers

Human Rights Watch in New York has documented some of the recent incidents in which bloggers were detained:

On *8 May 2010* provincial authorities terminated the telephone and Internet service at the home of Ha Si Phu, one of Vietnam's best-known dissident bloggers. Ha Si Phu's telephone service was disconnected at the written instructions of the Bureau of Information and Media, based on a police investigation alleging that he had used his telephone lines to transmit "anti-government" information. Since the beginning of 2010, Ha Si Phu's blog and website have been plagued by periodic cyber attacks.

On *1 May 2010* police detained two bloggers, Vu Quoc Tu (also known as Uyen Vu) and Ho Diep (also known as Trang Dem), at Tan Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh City as the couple was boarding a plane to Bangkok for their honeymoon. The police interrogated them for hours and forbade them from travelling abroad, contending the restriction was based on reasons of national security.

On *28 April 2010* Lu Thi Thu Trang, an Internet activist associated with the pro-democracy group Block 8406, was beaten by police officers in front of her 5-year-old son. The police then took her to the police station and detained her for seven hours, interrogating her and repeatedly hitting her on the neck and face.

Another blogger, Ta Phong Tan, was detained at least three times during April and May 2010. On *April 20 2010*, police forced their way into her home in Ho Chi Minh City, took her to the police station for interrogation, and later released her. Ta Phong Tan is a former policewoman who blogs about corruption and injustice in the Vietnamese legal system.

On *3 April 2010* hackers broke into the Internet accounts of the blogger Bui Thanh Hieu (who writes as Nguoi Buon Gio, or "Wind Merchant"). Ho Chi Minh City police also detained and interrogated him for a week in early March and for 10 days in August 2009, after he posted blogs criticising the government's policies toward China, bauxite mining in the Central Highlands, and disputes with Catholics over church properties.

In *January 2010* human rights activists Le Cong Dinh, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and Le Thang Long were convicted on charges of attempting to "overthrow the government" for supporting the formation of an opposition party. They were sentenced to prison terms ranging from five to 16 years. All opposition political groups are banned in Vietnam.

Protests over bauxite mine

Vietnam's largest civil action to date relates to the mining of bauxite — a mineral used to produce aluminium. Vietnam holds the third largest quantity of bauxite resources in the world —between 5.4 and 8.3 billion tons. Most of the bauxite is found in the country's ecologically sensitive Central Highlands.

In January 2009, bauxite mining suddenly became a national issue when General Vo Nguyen Giap, a hero from Vietnam's 1970s war with America, issued the first of three open letters. The general, then aged 98, argued that bauxite mining would ruin the environment, displace indigenous ethnic minorities and, most significantly, threaten national security because of the high numbers of Chinese workers in the strategic Central Highland. The last would provide China with economic leverage, he wrote. General Giap's photograph featured prominently on the bauxite web site. Suspicion of China runs deep in Vietnam because of a long history of conflict. The two countries fought a border war in 1979 and they have ongoing disputes about two archipelagos in the South China Sea — the Spratlys and the Paracels.

In March 2009, leading academics initiated a petition calling on the government to reconsider its bauxite policy, especially its involvement with a Chinese state-owned company not known for its environmental stewardship. The China Aluminum Company (CHALCO) had won the bid for the contract in partnership with the Vietnam National Coal Mineral Industries Group (VINACOMIN). In 2008, small numbers of Vietnamese environmentalists and scientists protested against the development in the absence of an environmental impact study. They were mostly ignored.

Three men who opposed the government's plans to open the bauxite mine founded a website in 2009 named Bauxite Vietnam (http://bauxitevietnam.info) and hosted it on a server in France. The site attracted millions of hits. Faced with this new challenge, Vietnamese authorities sought to shut the site down and intimidate the organisers. The site's manager, Nguyen Hue Chi, said when the site was first blocked in 2009, he played an online cat-and-mouse game with unknown hackers. He moved it to a new web address, but it was hacked again. From the time it opened until it was closed in January 2010, the Bauxite site had more than 20 million hits from readers concerned about the government's mining plans. Vietnamese authorities denied any involvement in the demise of the Bauxite Vietnam web site.

Chi told the news agency, Agence France-Presse, that Bauxite Vietnam founders established the site because Vietnam's state-controlled media had ignored the dispute over the bauxite mine. Chi said he wanted to work with the Communist Party, not replace it. He expressed confidence that the government would gradually ease restrictions on expression. "The right to independent thought and free expression is enshrined in the Vietnamese constitution," Chi said.

Dr Carlyle Thayer is a professor of politics in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, at the Australian Defence Force Academy, in Canberra. In 2009, he published a long article about the mining controversy in the *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*. "The anti-bauxite controversy of 2009 presented a new public challenge

to state authority. For the first time, the competency of the government to decide on large-scale development projects was called into question by a broad national coalition of mainstream elites including environmentalists, scientists, economists, social scientists, and retired officials," he wrote.

On 17 May 2010, an Australian Member of Parliament, Christopher Pyne, wrote to the prime minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Dung, to remind authorities that Vietnam was a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The covenant expects government to respect and uphold the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to freedom of speech. Yet Article 88 of Vietnam's criminal code, which criminalises "propaganda" against the government, contradicted the ICCPR and has been used to arrest and deter peaceful democratic activists. "Vietnam has immense potential in furthering its progress and I believe that this will be achieved only if freedom of expression and political belief are upheld and respected," Pyne wrote.

On 27 August 2009, Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security distributed an official dispatch to prominent Internet providers in Vietnam, ordering them to halt their users' access to eight websites, including Facebook. The dispatch said: "For security reasons and to fight against propagative activities that oppose the Party and the government, Department of Professional Technology — Office of Security Administration — Ministry of Public Security, suggests that the addressed companies to apply technical methods to block thoroughly these following websites."

Vietnam Internet Service Providers (ISPs) followed orders from government authorities and have put up firewalls and intermittently blocked the popular social networking site Facebook since November 2009. On 1 December 2009, the BBC quoted foreign ministry spokeswoman Nguyen Phuong Nga as saying the government was blocking some websites "which were being used to provide information damaging to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam". At the time Facebook had more than one million users in Vietnam, and the number increased after Facebook added a Vietnamese language version. Most Facebookers use the site to communicate with friends and family, and to expand their social networks by sharing photos, Internet links and blogs. Alexa.com lists it as the seventh top site in Vietnam, after Google.vn, Yahoo.com, VnExpress, Zing.vn, Google.com and Dantri.com.vn. See: http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/vn.

Some analysts said Facebook opened up communication between Vietnamese citizens and overseas Vietnamese who fled after the American-Vietnamese war. The government views the latter group with suspicion. China has blocked Facebook since July 2009 and has also shut down Twitter and YouTube. Vietnam's largest Internet service providers said they had been swamped with calls from customers in November 2009, complaining they could not access Facebook.

Some tech-savvy Facebook fans have found ways around the problem by adjusting their web browsers to a different configuration or accessing Facebook through another (proxy) server. The instructions are posted online. It should be noted that using proxy

servers and other 'tools' to circumvent the government's efforts at regulating the Internet is illegal in Vietnam.

Zing Me: "The Vietnamese Way of Social Network Service"

The problems at Yahoo 360°, and more recently with Facebook, opened a window for Vietnamese companies to fill the social network service (SNS) void. VNG Corporation, an online business based in Ho Chi Minh City, started in 2005 with online interactive games such as Swordman Online. It has generated healthy profits and a cabinet full of awards. In 2007, the company added the portal Zing.vn, a door to social networks, music, news and online games. The company's philosophy is splashed on its boardroom wall. VNG's mission is to "Make Internet change Vietnamese lives"; its vision characterized by the number 4114 — "41 million customers in 2014"; and its values include passion, improvement, resourcefulness, responsibility, team work and user focus.

In 2009, two weeks after Yahoo 360° closed, VNG added Zing Me (www.zing.vn), which is often referred to as the Vietnamese version of Facebook. As of June 2010, it had 5.1 million daily visitors, outpacing Facebook's 2.1 million. (Source: Google Ad planner). Cimigo's survey found Zing had the second largest penetration, second to Google, with one in four Internet users in Vietnam using one or more of Zing's various websites between October and November 2009.

"We began with content [gaming] and moved into social media and relationships," explained company vice-president, Vuong Quang Kai, a 30-year old entrepreneur who studied Computer Science at Columbia University in the United States but was lured back home to VNG by the vision of being a leader in online technology.

He said Zing.vn tries to blend the egocentric aspects of VietSpace and MySpace, the relationship aspects of Twitter and Facebook, and the content centric aspects of some of its site and rivals such as Tamtay.vn, Yahoo360PlusVietnam and the newly launched government supported Go.vn. Vuong Quang Kai said Zing targets a young audience rather than trying to compete with well-established online newspapers such as Vn.Express that cater to older audiences. The untapped potential is great. Internal tracking (Dec 2009) found that 65 per cent of users were male and 35 percent female. "Women go to Internet sites for connections. Men prefer content and they like to play games," Vuong Quang Kai explained. The company is working to attract more young women with social networking sites such as Miss Online or Super teen model contests and applications such as "Hot Or Not".

"We want to become the second (or virtual) home of Vietnam's netizens," he said. All Zing's applications are localised or developed for Vietnamese culture because "Vietnamese is the first priority".

The strategy seems to be effective because Zing Me has become the biggest website in the VNG portfolio. The company employs more than 1,200 people. The average age of the employees is 26. Unlike some of its rivals, Zing has a 30 person editorial team based in Hanoi. They generate 70 per cent of the site's news — mostly entertainment and feature stories — and they steer clear of politics. But Zing does have moderators and software filters to deal with offensive or politically incorrect content on the blogs.

Do The Nghia, Strategy Manager, and Vuong Quang Khai, Vice-President, VNG Corporation.

Photo by Kim Kierans

"Two years ago there was no talk about religion or politics allowed on our blogs. Now we're mainstream and we can't avoid people talking about religion or politics," Vuong Quang Kai said.

Challenge for mainstream media

On 19 January 2010, the VietNamNet Bridge web site reported that Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung told the annual conference of the Ministry of Information and Communications that, "Vietnam must build powerful media groups". But the press "should not report information that harms the country's interests," he was quoted as saying.

Nguyen Tan Dung said the ministry needed to work closely with the Central Propaganda and Education Committee to guide the press: "Directing and managing the press and media doesn't mean restriction, but assistance in the development of our revolutionary press in terms of content, form and skills," the PM claimed. Vietnam's more than 17,000 journalists must be "loyal soldiers serving the nation".

"The truth is always the truth, but we must choose the suitable time to tell the truth to ensure the country's interests," he explained. The ministry is promoting a project to establish an Information and Communication University, working with the Central Propaganda and Education Committee to hold training courses for journalists.

The explosion of the Internet has presented challenges for the government-owned and controlled mainstream print and broadcast media. "We have the agenda of the government to consider. That means we have to abide by their agenda," said the managing editor of the Saigon Times, Nguyen Van Thang.

There is also pressure from online citizen newspapers, blogs and forums. For example, Nguyen Van Thang credits the work of online media, Bauxite Vietnam (http://bauxitevietnam.info), with breaking the story about widespread leasing of more than 300,000 hectares of watershed forests to foreign investors. Nguyen Van

Thang said in February 2010 that two retired military officers, Major General Nguyen Trong Vinh and Lieutenant General Dong Si Nguyen, approached the mainstream media with their concerns over the leases and the effects of such extensive logging.

"None of us would print the stories, none of us would publish it. Only after it's published on a website, only then mainstream newspapers interviewed the two generals and after that the government had to stop those contracts. So that is direct impact."

He said this showed that mainstream press in Vietnam was discovering they no longer had the monopoly for producing news. In 2009, Nguyen Van Thang said he suggested that major dailies open up their websites, publish some of the popular bloggers and invite readers to comment freely, but the idea was shot down. "Because there is the dilemma if you are a famous blogger you have your own forum, your own medium, you don't need another news organization. But when you work for a news organization you have to abide by its rules and censor yourself. No blogger would like to do that," he explained.

Nguyen Van Thang said if the media wants to develop it has to move to private ownership, but that is not happening. So within the confines of government control, Nguyen Van Thang wants the Saigon Times to focus more on the grassroots. "They [the government] need to listen to the voice of the people, whether they are faring well, what the people are thinking. We can play that kind of a role. It also coincides with what the government wants us to do."

And the mission of mainstream media in Vietnam depends on the audience. "The English language press [in Vietnam] is more like a tourism brochure. Its role is not to provide news, but to make Vietnam look good. Vietnamese do not necessarily want to be airing their dirty laundry in the English language press to the world. But Vietnamese people definitely want to air things to other Vietnamese in their own language," observed blogger, Joe Ruelle. One could argue that the local language press in Vietnam operates in a tiny sphere of influence, relative to the impact of the English language press, because English is the world language. Ruelle said Vietnamese people demand news and are reading the Vietnamese language press.

"There is a saying in Vietnamese that translates as: 'The King's edict is nothing against the village's will.' It is difficult for the federal government to tell people at the local level what to do. Local people are extremely stubborn and self-reliant. They would not let their local press get away with ignoring stories."

Mainstream press recently was given a window to report more freely in both languages when the elected members of the National Assembly debated the government proposal to spend $56 billion on a high-speed rail link between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In the June 2010 sitting of the National Assembly, a majority of members refused to rubber-stamp the decision from the prime minister's office to proceed with the 1,550-kilometre rail line. Because this story was happening in the National Assembly, the newspapers were allowed to report the debate and the vote

that rejected the proposal. Proceedings were also broadcast widely on television. Observers called this a rare show of independence and maintained that it should not been seen as a repudiation of the ruling Communist Party.

The United Nations and donors like the World Bank have put a lot of energy into the development of the National Assembly, and local governments such as people's councils now mirror the processes. As the National Assembly grows in power it is likely the local people's councils will grow in power. That could help to open up the flow of information. In the meantime, mainstream broadcast and print media remains under the firm control of government and bloggers continue to flout restrictions placed on their freedom of expression and the Internet.

Chapter 5

Singapore's razor-sharp Internet television network

A razor is sharp and has a definite edge. The same can be said for RazorTV, the Internet-based television service that Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) launched in 2008. The Internet Protocol Television (IPTV)-based site combines an informal and chatty style with an emphasis on "hyper-local" topics like crime, public transport, lifestyle and entertainment — topics that relate directly to the audiences' lives. RazorTV is a companion network to the innovative STOMP (Straits Times Online Mobile and Print) that SPH launched in 2006, and is described in the first volume of *Asia's Media Innovators*, published in 2008.

RazorTV is best summarised as a unique convergence of web television and social networking that combines the power of Web 2.0 technologies, to produce new forms of journalism. It launched on an auspicious day: 8 August 2008, or 8-8-08, and has won several awards in its short history.

> RazorTV uses the power and reach of mobile phones and social networking to connect with its audiences. RazorTV's Twitter account had 13,444 followers in June 2010 (www.twitter.com/razortv). And the Facebook fan page had 1,438 friends as of July 2010. RazorTV offered viewers a free iPhone application in March 2009. This allows people to view video on demand from their mobile phone.

Singaporeans are among Asia's biggest Internet users, averaging 10.5 hours a month per person. On 10 June 2009, *The Straits Times* reported that Singapore was the most wired nation on earth, with household broadband penetration hitting 99.9 per cent by December 2009. Because of the high broadband access, Singaporeans are watching more and more video on the web. Around the world, people are ignoring traditional media, such as television, in favour of the Internet to get their daily fix of news, entertainment, music, movies and user-generated content. Traditional television is perceived as having too many constraints — people are confined to fixed schedules and a restricted range of programmes — and many viewers object to interruptions from advertisements. The old paradigm of television has been called "appointment media" because people are forced to set aside time to watch a particular program. As more households receive

high-speed broadband, they tend to migrate to "choice media" where they consume media when it best suits them. Convenience is the new media paradigm.

Felix Soh, SPH's digital media editor, was interviewed in June 2010. He conceived both STOMP and RazorTV and describes the latter as the ideal convergence of the Internet and video. "It's video on demand. It's edgy and sharp coverage of four things: news, current affairs, entertainment and lifestyle. Everybody's life revolves around those four things. Sport comes under news. The style is young and hip, with raw treatment of news, and hyper-local programming that focuses on news that impacts on the person in the street."

RazorTV's niche and focus is hyper-local news in Singapore. "We want to discuss in depth what is happening on the ground in Singapore," Soh said. "The newspapers and television tell people what is happening here and overseas. We give people local news."

RazorTV offers video on demand for people who want control over what they watch, and when. Soh described the free service as an innovative convergence of both the Internet and television platforms, and a first for Singapore. "Our intrepid presenters cut to the heart of the matter to provide a wide variety of content. What you get is an edgy and sharp coverage of current affairs and lifestyle trends. We call it as we see it."

Roberto Coloma, writing for news agency, Agence France-Presse, when RazorTV launched, said SPH aimed at creating a young new audience via the new website, amid flat newspaper circulation growth. "In its first few days of operation after the official launch on August 8, viewer statistics on the site confirmed the audience's desire for lively topics, such as attacks on the elderly by robbers and beach volleyball in a shopping mall," Coloma wrote. SPH was "constantly experimenting" with new platforms and technology, he said, noting that with Singapore's economy slowing down, SPH hoped the new venture would create new revenue streams in the future.

Patrick Daniel, editor-in-chief of SPH's English and Malay newspapers, told the annual conference of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) on 21 June 2010, that his company had invested SGD$150 million (about US$108 million) in online and mobile services, "with the aim of being a leading new-media player". Much progress had been made, he said, but the results would show "only in the medium term". Daniel said SPH faced four major challenges. The first was to be able to engage under 30-year olds. The others were maintaining quality journalism when budgets are being cut; finding the right business model for new media platforms; and building brands and creating brand value. Products like STOMP and RazorTV are designed to attract and retain that young audience, and to create and build a youth brand. Generally, the higher the Internet penetration in a country, the higher the share of advertising spent online. In the United States, online receives about 15 per cent of advertising spend. The highest levels globally are in the Scandinavian nations — between 20 and 25 per cent. But in Singapore, online's share of the advertising

In September 2009, SPH won 11 awards at the 8th IFRA Asian media awards. Eight of them went to the media company's websites, the highest number of awards yet for SPH's portfolio of multimedia platforms. The web site of the Chinese newspaper division's omy.sg won the gold award while RazorTV received the silver for the "Best in Online Media" category. The website of the *Financial Times* took the bronze award. Felix Soh said he was pleased RazorTV had won an award after only one year from its launch. He acknowledged the hard work of his team: "The RazorTV team has succeeded in establishing the video news channel as one that produces compelling, impactful and relevant content. They deserve to be rewarded for their dedication and hard work." Thomas Jacob, the managing director for the Asia-Pacific division of WAN-IFRA, which organises the awards, noted that SPH had always been "in the forefront of adopting technology and innovation" and said SPH had set a high bench-mark for Asian publishers to emulate.

spend is small — under 5 per cent. Print takes by far the biggest share, at just over 50 per cent, Patrick Daniel told AMIC. "How these shares [of the spend] change over time will determine which products thrive and whether online will make a significant dent on print revenues."

In May 2010, SPH reported a 35.8 per cent jump in profits for the second quarter ending February 2010, to SGD$127.5 million (about US$93 million). This was despite a big rise in staff costs — from SGD$14 million to SGD$83.3 million.

RazorTV represents an exciting example of the television channel of the future, and shows what is possible with IPTV and a relatively small budget. It has 35 staff, of which 15 are multimedia reporters and another 15 work as videographers and video editors. Videographers use Panasonic P2 digital video cameras in unusual and creative ways. They do not use tripods, and the video they shoot has an edgy and up-to-date feel.

In April 2010, RazorTV won a bronze award, in the Asia Interactive Awards, for the "Most creative use of mobile media", for its iPhone application. AdAsia and the Asia Digital Marketing Association created the awards to recognise excellence by designers and online professionals, and to help promote the use of new technology in advertising, promotion, brand building and consumer relationships.

Isaac Gerald Netto works as a video editor with RazorTV. Before joining RazorTV he worked with the Discovery Channel. "The style of editing I do is very different from the kind we do on [traditional] television.

It is more personal and down to earth and makes a huge difference in the way we reach our target audience. The style is edgy [and] current. It is

adrenaline-fuelled and action packed. The angles mimic what a human would want to see instead of what people normally see on television news."

Netto said each video editor has his or her own style and preference. "Some of us play with music and sound effects. Others like textures and filters. We employ a faster pace and make sure the video has impact and is what people want to watch. On the web, people can switch to another site at any time, or switch off, so your video has to be up to standard and what people want to watch. We aim to keep our videos fun and interactive." Netto said the site aimed to keep story duration to a sensible level. "If the video is compelling it could run 4.5 to 5 minutes. Nothing more than 5, though."

Reporters use high-performance microphones when interviewing, to get good-quality sound for the videos, and usually the videographers attach lapel microphones to interviewees to ensure consistent sound. The newsroom has 10 edit booths and editors assemble stories on high-end Macintosh computers, using Final Cut Pro. The other five of the 35 staff work as assigning editors and news directors.

Most RazorTV stories involve three people: a reporter, a videographer and a video editor. Sometimes the videographer can also cut pictures so there is no need for a video editor to be involved. RazorTV does not use mobile phones for shooting video (known as mojo) or single-person crews (known as video journalists or VJs). The other main television company, Mediacorp, employs VJs and sometimes does mojo work.

Reporter, Poh Kwan, started with RazorTV when it launched in August 2008. Her role is to produce stories in a range of platforms: videos for the Internet TV channel, articles for the web site, and projects for external clients. Those projects are discussed later in this chapter. Poh Kwan said she likes to leave shooting to professional camera people and focus on the script. But she involves herself in stories by picking the music and choosing special effects. She described the story-making process as "pretty organic". "I'm sure if I wanted to handle a camera my boss would say 'go ahead'."

Poh Kwan described the process of creating a typical story. She and a videographer do street interviews, and then she prepares a piece-to-camera. Sometimes she also does interviews in the studio. Back in the office she will write a script and work with the videographers and video editors to create a story: "We try to experiment with more innovative approaches to programs. The job is multi-faceted." Poh Kwan graduated from the journalism program at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore, where journalism education is traditional, with classes in print and broadcast reporting, but nothing related to her current role. "Most of the instructors at NTU were from the old school. They teach you what to expect if working for a traditional newsroom. Here, we try new things. We experiment with new ways to present a story. Sometimes we do a story in MTV style, with a sound track. Sometimes we [hire] talent to do a re-enactment. There are different ways to make a story stand out, so you don't need to start with the news point, followed by a sound bite and a link [the formula of traditional TV]. We are working in the Internet medium so you

Editors at RazorTV

Photo by Stephen Quinn

can have five clips in a story if the story warrants it. We can interview a lot more people for a story."

Poh Kwan said shooting video was a lot more demanding with this new approach, because the videographers needed to find more angles, and do more interviews. Working without a tripod also meant a need for more physical strength, to move the camera around. "We do a lot of street interviews. Sometimes it can take a couple of hours to get people's comments on a certain issue. Our editors have to think of different ways to make the story more [visually] interesting — which sound tracks to use."

After a rough cut of a story is completed, the reporter emails all staff with a synopsis of the story to keep everyone aware of that story. The video editors cut the final version of the story and this is sent to one of the senior editors for approval, before the story appears on the web. The editors also ensure the story works on a range of Internet browsers.

During the author's visit the newsroom appeared serene: People talked quietly into their mobile phones or tapped stories on laptop computers. Editors cut pictures on a row of high-end Mac computers along one edge of the newsroom. The assigning editors mapped out stories on white boards. The SPH building has an excellent wi-fi system so many staff email their colleagues via wi-fi rather than talk, which partly explains the quiet atmosphere. A large number of pot plants and other greenery make the area seem homely, and even peaceful. Scores of movie posters adorn the newsroom, which gives the impression of being a pleasant place to work. Photographs of the site's star bloggers and writers occupy most of one of the walls near the entrance to the newsroom. SPH provides a canteen on the seventh floor of the building and food is inexpensive and of high quality. The canteen is open long hours to cater for shift workers.

All of the approximately 30 stories a day, on RazorTV, come out of the fourth floor of the Singapore Press Holding building in central Singapore. STOMP.com.sg and Asia One, another SPH online site, are located on the same floor as RazorTV. SPH's flagship newspaper, *The Straits Times*, occupies the first and second floor, and the company's other newspapers are on the third floor. SPH publishes 12 newspapers in four languages: English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. RazorTV's studio looks like a living room in a home, complete with comfortable red sofas. The backdrop that viewers see is an image of a series of high-rise apartments, and the backdrop can be changed to suggest day or night.

All videos that have ever appeared on the site are accessible and searchable via a database. The site's target audience is the 18 to 40 age group. This group

finds video "more compelling" than text, Soh said. "They want video on demand rather than having to make an appointment to watch, as with traditional television." Sliding bars let viewers select a clip within each video category. A drop-down menu provides easy access to RazorTV's news, current affairs, entertainment, lifestyle, sport and specials sections.

RazorTV newsroom and lobby

The site also has a "Specials" box that showcases RazorTV's major programs and mini-series. For example, visitors can find the "Elite Challenge," which follows the gruelling 24-hour recruitment test for the Singapore Civil Defence Force's elite rescue squad, or catch all 50 episodes of "A Starry Night," Singapore's first subway drama series starring Kelly Poon and Robert Fan.

A report by Gwendolyn Ng published in *The Straits Times* of 7 June 2010, showed how

Photos by Stephen Quinn

audiences were turning to the Internet for their diet of entertainment and news. Ms Ng quoted student, Lim Jing Ying, 23, who said that he had stopped watching traditional television five years earlier: "Local television programmes are not to my liking," he said. "Online, I get to choose the quality entertainment I want." Ms Ng also spoke with finance manager, Lee Shi Wei, 26, who said the idea of waiting for plots to unfold on television was "too much to bear". Ms Lee spends up to six hours at a stretch on weekends watching Taiwanese and Korean dramas at her own pace. "It's more exciting to watch many episodes at one go," Ms Lee said.

RazorTV's business model

RazorTV has a range of revenue streams. Like most web sites around the world, it has banner advertisements and in-video commercials. The latter appear at the start of a piece of video and cannot be ignored. RazorTV also operates as a production house that provides national advertising campaigns for companies, and it streams live video of events for a fee. The video advertising market is predicted to be worth about $8 billion globally by 2012, and RazorTV is positioning itself to get a slice of the market.

Early in 2010, Cisco forecast that the amount of worldwide High-Definition Television (HDTV) and Internet video traffic would grow significantly in the next few
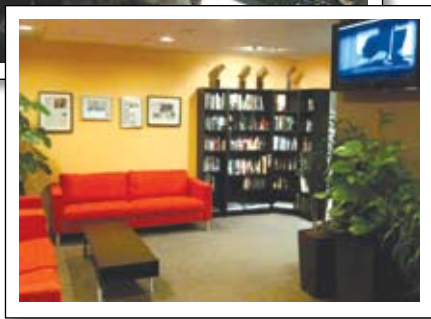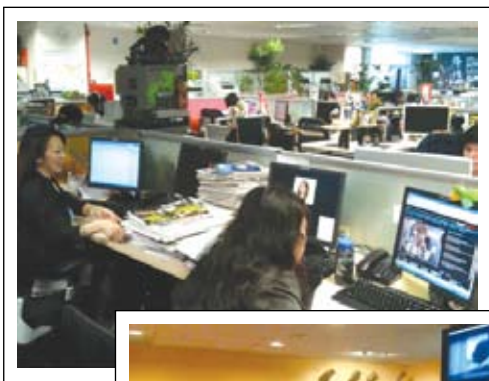
years. By 2014, Internet video, peer-to-peer video and all other video would account for more than 91 per cent of global consumer Internet traffic, Cisco said.

RazorTV also hosts video channels for government agencies and private sector organisations. The Defence Channel was a prototype. In Singapore every male must report for compulsory national service once they reach the age of 18. Soh said this had an impact on lots of people because parents have to wash uniforms, and girlfriends lose contact with their soldier boyfriends, and the soldiers lose touch with friends. "So the Defence Channel is appropriate for our audience," Soh said.

"Point Blank" is an edgy current affairs program. "Singapore Now" is designed to show news as it happens. "Sometimes we beat mainstream media because they have to wait for news on the hour," Soh said. Another new approach is a program called "News Square," which consists of unedited (raw) video. People particularly interested in a topic can watch the entire video, rather than an edited packed. For the opening of the Marina Bay casino in late June 2010 — predicted to bring SGD$1 billion into the economy each year — RazorTV showed eight different video segments, each of about three minutes. "We chop video into manageable chunks. Our content management system allows us to alert audiences of related clips," Soh said.

Another channel, "R.age", is the only hyper-local entertainment channel in Asia. "We do extensive coverage of Asian entertainment. We don't do foreign celebrities, though if Lady Gaga comes to Singapore we'd cover her." Soh said RazorTV focused on niche channels because people came to the web for specific content.

In Malay, the word "mata" means both "eye" and "police". So the popular channel known as "Fashion Mata-Mata" refers to coverage as a form of "fashion police". "We prowl the streets of Singapore to get people to talk about what is trendy and what people wear on the streets. We discovered that people actually get dressed up to go to a market on a Sunday. It's quite popular and uncovers new trends."

Earlier in 2010, RazorTV ran a contest where readers emailed photographs of signs containing broken English, in conjunction with The Speak Good English Movement. In 2000, then Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, launched the movement to get Singaporeans to recognise the importance of speaking Standard English and to encourage them to speak it. Soh said the photography content was a "huge success" and the site had published hundreds of photographs of offending signs.

The "Word of Mouth" channel ventures into Singapore's heartlands to get grassroots comments about issues. "We want to empower people and give them a voice to talk about things. The mainstream media do not cover this sort of thing, but we do. It is very successful." The "Mini word-of-mouth" channel is similar but focuses on the views of young children. The channel entitled "Food in your 'Hood" looks at food in specific neighbourhoods, while "Club Insider" tells people what is hot at Singapore clubs and pubs.

On 16 June 2010, STOMP received more than 20 million page views, a record. Heavy rain had caused floods in the city and STOMPers contributed an average of

more than 100 photographs and videos a day. The site typically receives almost 20 million page views, and has 700,000 unique visitors a month. A unique visitor is based on the IP address of the computer used to access a site, so one unique visitor may in fact represent several, or scores of people if the computer is located in a school or library. Each visitor typically stays about 10 minutes on the site per visit, which is "sticky" compared with a lot of news sites in other parts of the world where people typically stay for under two minutes. "We cover news and issues not covered by the mainstream media," STOMP's editor Chew V'Ming said. The site had never been sued, though he had received lots of threats. "We are very bold in what we do. We highlight provocative issues and talking points. We try to reflect what Singaporean people are thinking. We get complaints from the authorities."

Chew V'Ming said STOMP was the second most popular news site on the web, in Singapore, and the 45th most popular overall, according to Experia data. RazorTV also attracts a large audience, given the relatively small population of Singapore: about 4.6 million. In April 2010, RazorTV received 7.1 million page views and had a unique audience of 1.2 million. The core audience is aged 18 to 40 and they spend an average of 4.5 minutes on the site. The number of videos watched on RazorTV saw a steady increase of 10 per cent every month in the year to June 2010. Analysts believe audiences are turning more and more to the web to control their access to content, suggesting that RazorTV's audience will continue to grown.

Chew V'Ming cited some examples of STOMP stories that had made a difference in 2010. Water consumption is a topical issue in Singapore and RazorTV published a photograph of a man using a fire hose to wash his car on the top floor of a public car park. The authorities enclosed the hose in a box with a key that only fire officers can open, saving a lot of water. RazorTV also published a photo of a woman assaulting a man in a public area. It also published a photograph of an army general's car that was parked illegally, and the officer issued a public apology. Soh pointed out that privacy laws in Singapore were not as restrictive as in other countries, giving the site some room for manoeuvre. But STOMP refrains from publishing graphic photographs, especially of minors. "We receive photographs of kids in school uniform having sex in places like on rooftops but we never publish them."

One of the most powerful programs on RazorTV is "Ground Zero" which showcases citizen journalism once a week. "We take the best stories from STOMP and discuss them. It's a good round-up, a good perspective on the week," Soh said.

A channel called "This is Asia" brings together video packages from other members of the Asia News Network (ANN). ANN is a network of 21 daily English-language newspapers in the region that formed a co-operative to share content in March 1999. As of June 2010, RazorTV was using video from three members: *China Daily*, *The Star in Malaysia*, and *The Brunei Times*. Video from other members will increasingly become available. More details about ANN can be found at www.asianewsnet.net.

RazorTV made an iPhone application available in March 2009, and within four days it was the most popular download in the country. About 700,000 people have an iPhone in Singapore as of mid 2010, and four in five mobile phones sold in the country are smartphones. This means RazorTV's content will increasingly be available on mobile phones.

The future for RazorTV

Soh said he would love to do a reality series if he had more staff. Meanwhile, major developments should be expected as Singapore's broadband networks improve. In June 2010, Pyramid Research, which analyzes the telecommunications business, published a report saying Singapore was expected to be the first country blanketed with a fibre optic infrastructure so fast people could download the contents of a DVD in a few seconds. The government has invested $700 million in the new network, which is expected to boost the growth of online video services like RazorTV.

Nucleus Connect, which will operate the new network, has announced monthly wholesale prices starting at SGD$21 for Internet speeds of 100 megabits a second for residential connections. This is half the monthly cost to consumers, as at July 2010, for broadband access of six megabits a second. By comparison, in Hong Kong, consumers pay about HKD$200 (SGD$36) a month for speeds of one gigabit per second.

Martin Pakendorf, director of international sales for CoreMedia, visited RazorTV and described it on his blog as "brash and engaging", with its live television for the web "enriched by latest social media features for audience interaction". Pakendorf noted that because the bulk of the staff worked on site at the SPH headquarters this allowed for rapid turnaround of ideas and decisions. "The SPH team was also extremely engaged, thus actively shaping the project regularly. In fact, I could literally sense their level of joint ownership when I visited the studio. Everybody exhibited a 'can-do attitude', a key factor which I would attribute to the team leadership on both sides."

Role of government in innovation

It is important to note the role of government in fostering innovation in Singapore. In 2006, Singapore's National Research Foundation allocated SGD$500 million over five years, to 2011, to fund the development of a strategic interactive digital media research program. It established a multi-agency, research & development (R&D) program within the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) to oversee R&D initiatives in the interactive digital media space.

The MDA issued a niche television licence to Singapore Press Holdings on 30 July 2008. The five-year licence meant SPH was the first media company in Singapore to develop a new genre of television focusing on live web studio streaming and real time audience interactivity. The MDA introduced the concept of the niche television licence in 2007 to facilitate the growth of Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) services

in Singapore. The licences offer operators greater flexibility to roll out services for different market segments.

As of mid 2010, eight trial IPTV and video on demand (VOD) services were offering Singaporeans more than 125 television channels. Ms Ling Pek Ling, director of media policy for the MDA, said the authority encouraged traditional media players such as SPH to engage the country's increasingly technology-savvy viewers, with interactive content, through new platforms such as IPTV and participative Web 2.0 technologies.

Singapore's MDA was formed in 2003 with the aim of transforming Singapore into a global media city and positioning it at the forefront of the digital media age. Its web site says MDA spearheads initiatives that promote developments in film, video, television, radio, publishing, music, games, animation, media services and interactive digital media. MDA also helps to "foster a pro-business environment for industry players and increase media choices for consumers". For more information, visit www.mda.gov.sg

The MDA supports innovative research and development via the multi-agency, Interactive Digital Media Research and Development Programme Office (IDMPO), which it hosts. IDMPO awarded SPH a grant for the development of RazorTV. The core technology of Razor TV was developed in partnership with a Singaporean technology company, Ufinity Pte Ltd. Mr Michael Yap, IDMPO's executive director, said the aim was to produce innovation in the country's new media sector, as well as offering new services to local viewers. "We are pleased that SPH has launched a new genre of Internet TV using technology developed by our local company," Yap said.

A combination of government strategy and astute marketplace analysis by Singapore's biggest media company has seen the development of award-winning new media enterprises over the past few years. In the digital arena, Singapore continues as an exciting example of what is possible through innovation in Asia.

Chapter 6
Twittering the news in Australia

The microblogging service, Twitter, has attracted global attention because of its rapid growth. As of August 2010, Twitter had 124 million users worldwide. If it were a country it would be the eight largest in the world by population. Almost two in five of all Twitter users worldwide were from Asia as of August 2010 (37 per cent), well ahead of North America (31 per cent) where Twitter initially flourished. South America was third, with 15 per cent of all users. Of the three countries whose population uses Twitter the most, two are in Asia. It is understandable that the United States should head the list because Twitter was invented there. The United States registered a quarter of all Twitter traffic in July 2010, followed by Japan with 18 per cent and Indonesia with 12 per cent. Asia is experiencing the fastest growth in Twitter adoption.

This chapter will show that disasters and big news stories tend to boost people's use of Twitter, along with major political events such as elections. Australia had a federal election in August 2010, and Twitter was involved in the electoral process in a range of ways. Candidates used it to deliver their message, journalists monitored it to follow breaking news, and political parties delivered their policies via Twitter links to web sites. Malcolm Turnbull, the former leader of the federal opposition in Australia, believes that politicians are in the communication business, which means they need to use every means available to them. "Social media in particular enables politicians to communicate directly with the electorate without being edited or filtered by the traditional news media."

Twitter is important in Australia because more than nine million Australians visit social networking sites a month, in an adult population of about 17 million, as of August 2010. Indeed, Australians are the world's biggest users of social networks and social media. A Nielsen study conducted for the first three months of 2010 showed Australians spent an average of almost eight hours a month with Facebook.

A year earlier, another Nielsen study reported that Australians

Population and registered users, 2010
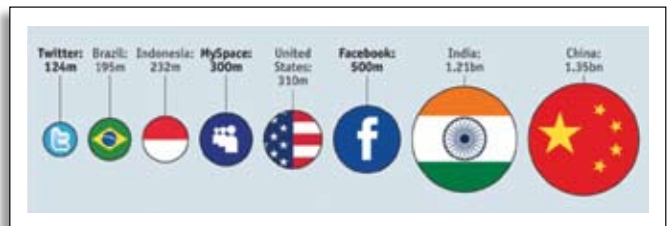
Sources: UN, US Census Brueau, Facebook, Myspace; 2010

spent six hours and 52 minutes a month on social networks. By comparison, the average for people from the United States for the same period was six hours and nine minutes, followed by United Kingdom users with six hours and seven minutes.

The average Australian Internet user devotes almost a full day a month to online activities (23 hours and 58 minutes). Google attracts the biggest audience but Facebook was Australia's favourite online hangout, followed by MySpace and Twitter. More than nine million Australians were registered Facebook users, as of March 2010. About three million Australians logged on daily, Matt Hehman, a vice-president at Facebook, said in an email interview. A typical daily user spends an average of 22 minutes a day on the site. That is more time than most people spend reading a newspaper each day.

How Twitter works

Twitter is called microblogging because people only have a maximum of 140 characters in which to write a blog post, known as a tweet. These tweets are displayed on the author's profile page and are delivered to the author's subscribers, known as followers. Each Twitter user selects a unique name, sometimes known as a 'handle', with the @ symbol at the start. Thus, the Twitter name of the author of this chapter is @sraquinn.

People send and receive tweets via the Twitter website (twitter.com), or through short message service (SMS) texts, or through external applications on computers, or via smart phones like an iPhone or a Blackberry. Tweeting is free from a computer, but costs money via a mobile phone. For that reason, two-thirds of people tweet from their computer.

Founder, Evan Williams, described Twitter as an information network, rather than a social network. "It tells people what they care about as it is happening in the world." Details about its origins can be found in the first chapter of this book. By March 2010, more than 70,000 registered applications had been created for the microblogging platform. An unknown number of people use Twitter via these applications, so the figure of 123 million users mentioned in the opening paragraph is a conservative estimate because it only measures people who use Twitter via the home page (twitter.com).

Co-founder, Biz Stone, told the company's first developer conference in San Francisco on 20 April 2010, that Twitter continued to grow by 300,000 users a day — a rate much higher than analysts' estimates. At the time Twitter had 180 million unique visitors a month, its users sent 55 million new tweets each day, and the company received 600 million search queries every day. In April 2010, the company had 170 employees, up from about 45 in May 2009, Stone said.

User growth has been huge. By the end of 2007, Twitter users had posted about 500,000 tweets per quarter. By the end of 2008, the number had jumped to 100 million tweets per quarter. And by the end of 2009, it was two billion tweets per quarter. In the first three months of 2010, four billion tweets per quarter were posted.

As of mid April 2010, venture capitalists had invested about $155 million in the San Francisco-based company. The most recent cash injection, in October 2009, valued the privately held Twitter at about $1 billion, despite the fact it had no significant revenues. By comparison, in 2009 Google attracted advertising revenue of almost $23 billion. Twitter's search engine processes about 30 million searches a month in the United States, comScore said, compared with Google's 10 billion.

The biggest group of Twitter users is aged 35 or older. By comparison, the demographics of MySpace show the biggest audience is the 14-28 age group, while Facebook tends to be most popular with 24-34 year olds. Many had not used other social sites before joining Twitter. Jeremiah Owyang, an American industry analyst studying social media, noted: "Adults are just catching up to what teens have been doing for years." A mere 11 per cent of Twitter's users are aged 12 to 17, web analyst, comScore, confirmed.

This chapter looks at journalists' use of Twitter in Australia, with a particular focus on the *Geelong Advertiser*, a daily newspaper in Victoria. As of August 2010, it was probably the most Twitter-focused newspaper in Australia. Indeed, the *Geelong Advertiser* is often identified as one of the most innovative dailies in the Asia-Pacific region. The Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association named the *Geelong Advertiser* newspaper of the year in 2008 and 2009, in the 20,000 to 50,000 circulation category, and it is a finalist for the 2010 awards as well.

Twitter and the news

Twitter received significant publicity when gunmen attacked hotels in Mumbai, India, in November 2008. Wikipedia said eyewitnesses sent about 80 tweets every five seconds during the siege that lasted for several days. Twitter users sent out vital information such as emergency phone numbers and the location of hospitals needing blood donations. The American broadcaster, CNN, called 26 November 2008, "the day that social media appeared to come of age".

A major news event early the next year gave Twitter even more publicity. In January 2009, a United States Airways flight ditched in the Hudson River after birds flew into its engines causing them to stall. Several boats and ferries went to help passengers. Janis Krums, a passenger on one of the ferries, took a picture of the downed plane with his mobile phone as passengers were being rescued. He sent it to Twitpic, a part of Twitter that shows photographs (http://twitter.com/jkrums). This is believed to be the first tweet about the aircraft in the Hudson River that contained a photograph. Mainstream news media such as CNN distributed the photograph widely — further enhancing Twitter's reputation as a source of breaking news.

During the next month, bushfires ravaged the state of Victoria in Australia, causing the largest single loss of life in the country's history. The Country Fire Authority used Twitter to send out regular alerts and updates. The event on February 7 became known as the "Black Saturday" bushfires. Australia's then prime minister, Kevin Rudd,

used his Twitter account to spread information about the fires. He asked people to donate money and blood, and suggested where fire victims could seek help. Rudd was deposed as prime minister on 24 June 2010, but remains the undisputed king of Twitter users in Australia, with 944,118 followers (@kruddmp) as of August 2010.

The website of the national broadcaster, the Australian Broad-casting Corporation (ABC), covered the bushfires story in full, with an interactive map, photographs and videos sent by viewers. It also included numerous tweets (@abcnews) giving the location of the worst fires, and the places where people died.

"There's a plane in the Hudson [...] Crazy."

Photo by @jkrums

Journalists from *The Age* newspaper in Victoria tweeted about the fires (@theage). A rival daily paper, the *Herald Sun*, was new to Twitter at the time and did not post many updates. *The Sydney Morning Herald* similarly was not involved with Twitter, though its web site offered a fascinating story about using new technology to find victims of the fires. Caroline Overington, a reporter with *The Australian*, was one of the country's first reporters to provide coverage of the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires on Twitter (@overingtonc).

Research reported in the May 2008 edition of New Scientist magazine, found that blogs and microblogging systems, like Twitter, did a better job of distributing information during emergencies than either traditional news media or government emergency services. During the fires in California in October 2007, for example, people kept their Twitter followers informed of the location of various blazes minute by minute. Relief organisations have also started using Twitter to support rescue efforts. The American Red Cross has started using Twitter (@RedCross) to exchange information about local disasters.

Protests in the aftermath of elections in Iran in June 2009 further accelerated the size of Twitter's audience. It gained about seven million new visitors that month and its website attracted a total of 44.5 million unique visitors worldwide, according to comScore. Technology industry analysts said Twitter was better able to resist the Iranian government's attempts to block access to communications links because users could post updates via a mobile phone's text-messaging service, or SMS.

"Twitter is a unique property because it works easily with SMS," one analyst said. "That gives it a resiliency that isn't shared by other online-only sites such as Facebook,"

he said. To block Twitter, Iran would have either had to shut down text messaging on a one-to-one basis, a tedious and time-intensive process, or shut down text messaging throughout the country. The latter is unlikely because of the inconvenience it would cause for business.

People who use Twitter regularly will be familiar with *hashtags*, used to aggregate comments on a specific topic. Each hashtag is unique. For example, the main hashtag used for the Australian federal election in August 2010 was #ausvotes.

Twitter also featured in the reporting of disasters and protests around the world in 2009 and early 2010, further enhancing twitter's reputation as a place to find breaking news. Some of these events included the July 2009 riots in Urumqi in north-west China, the suicide bombings at the J.W. Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in Jakarta in the same month, the earthquakes in Haiti in January 2010, and the on-going protests in Thailand in 2010.

Twitter as a newsgathering tool

Astute journalists have come to appreciate the potential of Twitter as a newsgathering tool. Paul Nolan is deputy editor at the *Geelong Advertiser* in Victoria, Australia, with special responsibilities for online. In January 2010, he ran a series of training programs for his editorial staff to introduce them to Twitter. The *Geelong Advertiser* is now probably the most Twitter-focused print publication in the southern hemisphere. Nolan said Twitter was a great new tool for newsgathering, describing it as the "cutting edge of up-to-the-minute crowd-sourced journalism". It was also useful for generating conversations between journalists and the people they followed.

Good stories have come from using Twitter. Soon after the initial training, Nolan and reporter Jessica Craven tweeted: "know anything about the woman rushed to Geelong hospital after being bitten by a croc?" This tweet generated a flurry of activity and led to emails that produced a most usual story. Crocodile attacks are very rare in Victoria. "This story was well away from any news agenda created by public relations staff," Nolan said. "This was an unusual story that we would probably not have got without Twitter."

Nolan encourages *Geelong Advertiser* reporters to follow a simple process: Create an account and find people to follow. Then generate followers through intelligent use of tweets. Upload photographs and provide links to good *Advertiser* stories using the URL-shortening service that Twitter tools offer. "The key is to begin a conversation with our many audiences," Nolan said.

Former Advertiser editor, Peter Judd, started tweeting about major news stories at the newspaper's web site. Each morning from early 2009, he issued four or five tweets, each with a link to a major story on the paper's web site. Initially, the process only occurred in the mornings. Now, stories are tweeted during the working day, and the newspaper's Twitter account has generated a sizeable following. As of August 2010, @geelongaddy had about 850 followers.

Research has shown the power of tweets to send audiences to web sites. Jacob Harris, a reporter with *The New York Times*, told the "Chirp" conference — Twitter's first developers' conference in San Francisco in April 2010 — that someone tweeted a link to a New York Times story once every four seconds. Analysts estimate that Twitter generates about 10 per cent of the traffic to the newspaper's web site — about two million unique page views a month.

In January 2010, a Geelong woman tweeted live updates as she gave birth to her first child — believed to be one of the more unusual uses of Twitter. Amanda Williams described the birth of her baby daughter, starting from when she was induced at St John of God Hospital on 20 January. "Almost 200 followers read about mucus plugs, contractions, catheters and an epidural until there were complications and she was taken into theatre for a C-section," wrote reporter, Jessica Craven.

Amanda Williams maintained a humorous commentary, warning her Twitter followers she would be talking of "unmentionables". By mid morning on 21 April, Amanda Williams wrote: "Water broken two hours ago. Disgusting, now having intense contractions. Oh f--- it hurts!" At 11.20am she posted "I'm not sure what getting kicked in the balls feels like but this is gotta be worse right?" Soon after she tweeted: "Time for the epidural'' and then ''Epidural working a treat. Time for a rest while the drugs do their work.'' But after her 1.26pm post the tweets stopped. She had been taken to an operating theatre.

Mrs Williams was back microblogging after her caesarean surgery, and posted a photo of her baby. "Baby and I are doing very well! I didn't feel a thing and we got to meet our baby finally! She breastfed well and weighs 3.07kg," Mrs Williams wrote just after 4.30pm.

Recommended Twitter tools

Paul Nolan recommends a series of applications that link to Twitter that are useful for reporting. More are discussed at the end of this chapter. "I use Twitterfall to search what is happening now," he said (http://twitterfall.com) "and to monitor trending topics." Copy editors at the newspaper use Twitter to seek ideas for headlines from reporters and the general public.

For example, one editor tweeted: "I'm writing a headline for page 3 story about Geelong's push to lure [the cyclist] Lance Armstrong. Any suggestions?" A reader with the Twitter handle @brett_smith replied: "How about Geelong wants Lance-a-lot"?

One reporter tweeted that she was on her way to the nearby suburb of Lara after reports of a three-car accident on the highway near the suburb. At the scene she tweeted: "Two dead, one injured; road blocked Melbourne bound" before uploading photographs via Twitpic. The story attracted a large audience as it developed during the day.

Nolan said journalism could become even more exciting as reporters started using Twitter in new ways. "Imagine a political party shut away voting on who will be their next leader. A journalist with good contacts inside the room could get a scoop when

the contact direct messages the reporter with the result of the vote." A direct message in Twitter is like a one-to-one email message that no one else can see. "Something like this could change the face of reporting in Australia," Nolan said.

Nolan's words were prophetic. Twitter emerged as a major player in federal politics in December 2009 and June 2010. In December 2009, federal opposition MPs voted to choose a new leader and elected Tony Abbott, who went on to contest the federal election in August 2010. Academic, Julie Posetti, later wrote about how political journalists in the capital "shared the news with their Twitter followers before they filed it to their employers, signalling a fundamental shift in practice".

Twitter was even more involved in the reporting of the deposing of prime minister Kevin Rudd, on 24 June 2010. His deputy, Julia Gillard, and a group of supporters convinced Rudd to step down as leader, arguing that the ruling Labor party had "lost its way". News of the coup spread quickly on Twitter before even radio could report events. Gillard, as prime minister, called a federal election on 17 July 2010.

Tweeting court reports

On 6 October 2009, two journalists at the Federal Court in Sydney, Australia, pioneered a new method of court reporting — by tweets. Technology journalists, Andrew Colley from *The Australian* and Liam Tung from the website ZDNet Australia, started using the microblogging site to publish running reports of a landmark copyright case being heard before the judge, Justice Dennis Cowdroy. The story was big news in Hollywood because of the likely impact on the movie business. Colley started his blow-by-blow coverage on October 6, the first day of the trial, and Tung started the next day. This was the first example of court reporting, via Twitter, in Australia. The reporters published tweets using their personal Twitter feeds. They identified themselves as journalists and named their media organisations. Both used laptop computers because mobile phones and recording devices are prohibited in court.

The judge, Justice Cowdroy, soon became aware of what was happening but opted not to stop them. "On the basis that Twittering does not distract or interfere with the conduct of my court, I personally have no objection to its use," he told *The Australian*. "I believe that the public has a legitimate right to be fully informed of proceedings, particularly proceedings such as cases which have attracted considerable public interest. Twittering can serve to inform the public in a more speedy and comprehensive manner than may be possible through traditional media coverage."

Blogger Stilgherrian commented on the tweeting of the court case in a post on 14 October 2009: "I've live-tweeted quite a few events now," he said, "and it's hard work. The process of trying to understand what's happening and distilling it into pithy comments and getting them out there — especially if it's within Twitter's 140-character limit — is one hell of a cognitive load. The 'fair and accurate' of courtroom reporting would be an added burden."

On 19 October 2010, Sally Jackson reported in *The Australian* that the Federal Court decided it would allow individual judges to decide whether to let cases be covered from within their courtrooms on new platforms such as Twitter. It must be remembered that while reporters are twittering, people outside the court are interacting with them by commenting on posts and offering different points of view and opinions. The whole process is visible to anyone in, or outside, the court with a mobile phone or a laptop with Internet access.

Stuart Kennedy, editor of *The Australian*'s IT section, said the newspaper had decided to discontinue live tweeting from the courtroom, pending a wider analysis of the potential risks and benefits of using the microblogging platform to cover such stories. "We're looking at all of the legal issues around tweeting from a courtroom and on a production level, looking at how we can maximise our reporters' efforts in terms of making use of those tweets on our website," Kennedy said. Meanwhile, ZDNet's Tung continued to cover the story via Twitter, and ZDNet published his tweets on its website.

Kennedy said it was "very difficult" to maintain a fair and accurate account of proceedings in 140 character bursts. "It's also fair to say that due to the fact that tweets are going through unfiltered, it doesn't give our legal team a chance to look over them and provide advice on any coverage, which may be contentious legally."

Media companies and Twitter policy
This section introduces the key issue of media companies and their policies regarding social media. In September 2009, journalists at *The Australian* Financial Review, Australia's national financial daily, were asked to sign an ethics policy in which they could be disciplined for taking part in political debates on social media sites and blogs.

Australian author and blogger, Margaret Simons, said the prohibition on using social networking and blogs for anything other than personal purposes was controversial, given that many journalists were increasingly using Twitter and Facebook to promote and take part in debate about their stories. "Journalists are only allowed to use Facebook, Twitter, blogs, wikis, forums and 'other websites that invite community participation in a strictly personal capacity'," Simons wrote about the newspaper's policy.

"Social networking is going to become one of the main ways in which people discover media content online in the future. It is also going to become vital to journalists, particularly freelancers, in building reputations and followers, as the institutional media declines. Very soon now, a journalist without an active social network will be next to invisible. On the other hand, reporters are kidding themselves if they think they cannot, or should not, be held to account for what they do and say on Twitter and the like," Simons wrote in her blog, The Content Makers.

The *Geelong Advertiser* has also been using a live-blogging software tool called CoverItLive since early 2009. Tweets from reporters in the field are now embedded

in the CoverItLive blog site, along with photographs. Some of the reporters who have embraced Twitter have developed large groups of followers by focusing on a specialist subject. Junior reporter, Sophie Smith, writes about cycling for the newspaper and has a large following for her regular tweets (@SophieSmith86).

Dangers of fake tweets

One of the fears many journalists express when discussing Twitter, is the possibility of breaking news based on a fake tweet. How can we know a tweet is legitimate? That is the role of the next section of this chapter. Meanwhile, it is informative to look at the wide range of fake Twitter accounts used during the Australian federal election.

The @JuliaGillardPR account was one of a handful of fake sites pretending to represent the prime minister, Julia Gillard. The site used an official-looking photograph taken from the prime minister's real Twitter site (@JuliaGillard) and a link to the prime minister's official web site in the capital, Canberra. So did another fake site, Gillie_THE_PM. This site's biography on Twitter showed it was a fake site: "Marxist member of the Aussie ALP, now PM of Wales & Australia. Kevin is leaving soon to join the UN. Wireless Washing Machine Freak. Good question, yes I'm sexy." In mid 2010, Twitter introduced a process of verifying real accounts, signified by a blue tick on the site, and reporters should look for that blue tick when checking Twitter accounts.

Tony Abbott, the leader of the opposition, attracted several Twitter parodies including "The Mad Monk" (@PhoneyTony) whose bio said: "not to be mistaken for 'phoney_tony,' future leader of the free world. Mega Catholic. Beach Bunny." The @phoney_tony account had a bio that described him as "Leader of the Opposition for Opposition's sake. Member for the Gospel Truth (except in the heat of the moment)." Another fake account (@tonyabbottmp) looked very real but the biography "Federal Member for Warringah. Shadow Minister for everything Holy" gave it away.

Many of the descriptions in the biographies above contained references that only people who follow Australian federal politics would understand, such as the fact the prime minister was born in Wales, or the fact the leader of the opposition espoused strong Catholic views and had been shown on television on the beach in a brief swimming costume.

When a journalist encounters a tweet that would make news, they should go to the Twitter page and read related tweets around the tweet they found. Often people have posted a follow-up tweet, or have written something before the breaking news tweet, which contains useful information. This could provide extra context for a story. More importantly, it can help to verify that person is who they say they are. Journalists should also read the biography (known as the "bio") on the user's page, and read any links to home pages or blogs. Journalists should also send a direct message to that person and ask for their phone number to contact them. This is probably the quickest way to check the identity of a Twitter user. A direct message in Twitter is like an email that only that person can read. It does not appear in the Twitter stream.

Read as much as you can of a contributor's Twitter stream. Check the kinds of people they interact with. This will provide more background on them. Google their Twitter name because sometimes people use a Twitter handle as their user name on other sites. Type the phrase in quote marks into Google's search bar: "site:twitter.com intext:bio * [search term]". Make sure to leave spaces on either side of the asterisk, and choose a relevant search term.

Locate the person's LinkedIn site or their Facebook page, or any other sites that will provide information about who they are. Be sceptical. The more information people offer and the more open they are, the more likely they are legitimate. The reverse applies as well.

With breaking news, check for similar tweets. If someone says they heard an explosion in a city, what are other people in that city tweeting about? If a range of diverse people are tweeting about an event all at the same time, and they don't appear related from looking at their accounts, something important might be happening. Remember that many journalists reported silly errors about the Mumbai hotel attacks in November 2008, because they re-tweeted information from people who had Indian-sounding names. But many of those people were not in or near Mumbai, and could not have been eye-witnesses.

Social media and media houses

Newspapers need to consider their social media strategies as a matter of urgency, given the way that audiences are migrating to social networking and social media sites, because eventually advertising follows audiences. In Australia, the number of organisations using social media almost doubled in the past two years, according to the inaugural Nielsen-Community Engine 2010 social media business benchmarking study. About 70 per cent of all Australian businesses intended to conduct some form of social media activity in 2010, compared with only 40 per cent in 2008.

These organisations have recognised that they risk failing to connect with a significant online constituency if they do not incorporate social media in their marketing. The study found that many businesses were actively moving a large part of their marketing budgets out of traditional media into social

From which media did you re-allocate budget to fund social media?
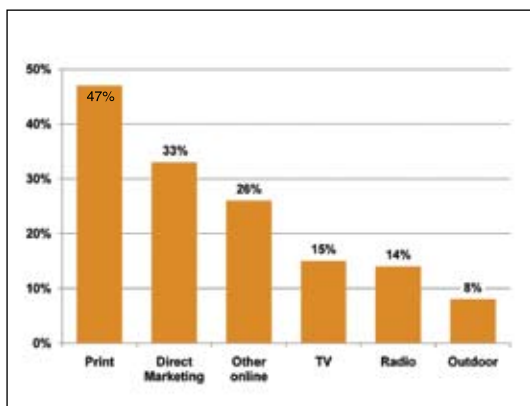
Source: Nielsen-Community Engine, 2010

media. The greatest budget shifts came from print media (47 per cent) and direct marketing (33 per cent).

Piers Hogarth-Scott, managing director of Community Engine, said the study was the first in-depth look at the way Australian organisations were engaging with social media. The results have "substantial implications" for business. "This study reveals that corporate Australia has not just woken up to social media, but has seized on it as a vitally important addition to their marketing and business toolbox," Hogarth-Scott said.

The survey found that more than half of large businesses had allocated funds away from traditional media to fund social media. For example, in March 2010, budget airline Jetstar announced its decision to re-deploy 40 per cent of its marketing budget into social media, and away from traditional forms of advertising.

According to the study, 50 per cent of businesses agreed they risked losing touch with their customers if they did not employ social media. The figure was even higher (62 per cent) for big businesses. About 26.5 per cent of Australian businesses had a Facebook presence in early 2010, with 17 per cent on Twitter, 10 per cent on YouTube and five per cent on MySpace.

Melanie Ingrey, research director of Nielsen's online division, noted substantial growth in the number of consumers engaging with companies, via social media, in the past year — up from 23 per cent in 2008 to 38 per cent in 2009. "Australian organisations cannot afford to overlook social media as a highly effective means of engaging with their customers and stakeholders," she said. More than half (54 per cent) of organisations said they already had a formal social media strategy in place, or were developing one in 2010.

Resources about Twitter

Here is a list of useful Twitter-related tools and videos for journalists. Most have no commercial connection with Twitter, but were started by journalists interested in the potential of Twitter for reporting.

Twitter Journalism (www.twitterjournalism.com) is a collaborative blog focusing on Twitter's impact on journalism. It provides related resources and analysis. Craig Kanalley (@ckanal) started the blog in June 2009. He was the founder and editor of **Breaking Tweets** (www.breaking-tweets.com) which launched in January 2009.

Media Twitter (http://media.twitter.com) describes itself as tools to help people to use Twitter to "transform media, entertainment and journalism".

The **Mashable** (http://mashable.com) blog has produced a series of guidebooks about digital tools.

The guidebook about Twitter is impressive in its depth and breadth of information.

Social Media Today has a useful post (www.socialmediatodaycom/SMC/189327) that describes 50 ways to search for information with Twitter.

Tweetscan (http://tweetscan.com) is like a search tool for tweets. Insert words that interest you, such as earthquake, riot or protest and see who is twittering about these things.

weetGrid (http://tweetgrid.com) is similar to Tweetscan. Here is a video about how to use TweetGrid: www.youtube.com/watch?v =WsvQh2tRlsI.

Twittervision (http://twittervision.com) is a mesmorising map of the world in which tweets appear from the continent of origin.

Twitscoop (http://www.twitscoop.com) offers a useful way to see what the blogosphere is saying. Results are displayed in a tag cloud. Pierre Stanislas, one of the developers in Paris, said Twitscoop crawls in excess of 20,000 tweets an hour.

Picfog (http://picfog.com) shows a stream of photographs uploaded to Twitter. It is possible to choose images from a specific area or city via the site's database. Some of the content is risqué.

Watch this YouTube video **"Twitter in plain English"**, by the talented Lee LeFever, to learn more about Twitter.

Some final words

Elisabeth Murdoch, CEO of the Shine television production company and the daughter of media baron, Rupert Murdoch, believes social media is the key to media's economic future. "Audiences expect more and they want to be involved more," she told the January 2010 Annual Conference of the National Association of Television program executives in Las Vegas. "If you engage them [audiences], I believe they will pay more. This change is the answer to our economic problems. Social networking is nothing less than Web 3.0.

"Social networks are the interactive dimension of storytelling. We now need to evolve with our audience. To resist this would be like resisting technicolor," Broadcasting & Cable magazine reported her as saying.

Cambodia — a land of opportunity

When it comes to hopping onto the information highway, Cambodia is working hard to catch up to other ASEAN countries. China dominates the region with about 50 per cent of Internet users. But since 2000, other Asian countries have experienced phenomenal growth. For example, June 2010 data from the Internet World Statistics website show that between 2000 and 2010, Internet use in neighboring Vietnam grew by 12,034.5 per cent to 24.2 million people. Growth even in Myanmar outpaced Cambodia, with Internet use leaping by 10,900 per cent to 110,000 people.

In Cambodia, the percentage of Internet users in the past 10 years increased by 1,200 per cent to some 78,000 people, or 0.5 per cent of the population.

Social and political events in the last half of the 20th century made early ventures into the information technology (IT) sector impossible. Between 1970 and 1998 the country faced social and civil upheaval: invasive United States bombing during the American-Vietnam War, internal conflict culminating in the Khmer Rouge genocide (1975-79), occupation by Vietnam (1979-1989) and civil war (which ended in 1998). Events and political instability shattered Khmer civil society. The infrastructure, education system and economy were in shambles leaving widespread and ongoing poverty and illiteracy, especially in rural areas of the country.

The signing of the agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict, in Paris in 1991, the arrival of the United Nations Transition Authority Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992 and first national elections in 1993, heralded the beginning of the country's reconstruction and redevelopment. The international community has been generous in supplying expertise and financial aid to the Cambodian government for its efforts towards peace, security, rebuilding institutions and establishing a stable economic environment.

Internet usage and population statistics for Cambodia

Year	Users	Population	Penetration
2000	6,000	12,573,580	0.05 %
2007	44,000	15,507,538	0.3 %
2009	74,000	14,494,293	0.5 %
2010	78,000	14,753,320	0.5 %

Sources: www.internetworldstats.com, 2010

But the devastation of the earlier years remains profound. The Asia Development Bank Factsheet (as of 31 December 2009) estimates that in 2007, one quarter of the population was living on less than US$1.25 a day and since the 2008 global financial crisis that situation has not improved. Supporting evidence can be found in numerous reports, including a UNESCO report (2010) on education strategy for Cambodia: "the poverty rate still remains high and the growing gap between the rich and the poor — especially the gap between urban and rural areas — remains a challenge."

Redevelopment of telecommunications

With so many pressing needs and limited funds, leaders in the early 1990s had to make some hard choices when it came to telecommunications. In 1992, the country had "only a little over 4,000 fixed lines" — about 80 per cent of them in Phnom Penh (ITU Toolkit). "Cambodia opted to develop mobile communication technology to address the telecommunication needs of its rural people; it became the first country in the world to have more mobile telephones than fixed telephones," noted a 2004 report prepared for the Trade and Investment division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/2336). The result is that mobile technology dominates and is affecting the expansion of Internet services in Cambodia. "In fact, Internet take up remains disturbingly low, one of the lowest penetrations in the region," wrote technology consultants, Budde Communication, in its Cambodia forecast. The report noted that by March 2009, there were 4.3 million mobile subscribers or 29 per cent of the population, whereas the number of fixed-lines remained relatively static.

In another report, Budde Communication noted that since more people own mobile phones than computers, there are huge opportunities for mobile data services to by-pass the infrastructure and offer access to the Internet.

"The MPTC (Ministry of Posts and Teleco-mmunications of Cambodia) decided in 2000 that it was time to open up the communications market in Cambodia and since then have licensed several major Mobile, VoIP and ISP operators, to achieve competitive rates for the Cambodian people," Minister H.E. So Kuhn told people gathered for the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day in Phnom Penh on 17 May 2010.

In 2009, the government released a revised draft of the Law on Telecommunications that would regulate the sector and set rules for issues such as pricing, interconnectivity and infrastructure sharing. But it has yet to take steps to enact the law. It's a bit like the American wild west. "Unregulated and overcrowded" is how Charlie Lancaster described the situation in an article written for the Southeast Asia Globe, 15 March 2010. With a population of just 14 million, Cambodia has nine mobile providers, four fixed-line operators, and more than 30 Internet (ISP) services. By comparison, "Vietnam with a population of 80 million, has fewer than 10 ISPs and Hong Kong, a major Internet hub, has only a handful," Lancaster wrote.

Vigorous competition among mobile companies in Cambodia, along with the availability of inexpensive second hand phones, has made mobile communication accessible throughout the country. Mobile operators offer low call prices, value added services and are aggressively expanding their network coverage (see chart below). Pre-paid mobile services in Phnom Penh in June 2010 were US$5 a month, or less due to various promotions. Many of these services included mobile Internet and multimedia messaging services (MMS), which are affordable alternatives to expensive home computers and fixed Internet service. In June 2010 a new low end Nokia mobile phone cost US$25.

A December 2009 report prepared for the United Kingdom Trade and Investment arm of the British government, estimates that the number of subscribers in Cambodia's mobile phone market will grow at an annual rate of 50 per cent.

"Thanks to low prices, mobile phones have become indispensible in Cambodia, preferred over traditional communications including landlines and the postal service. With poor transport infrastructure and a shortage of electricity coverage, mobile phones are the most convenient appliance, offering a range of services including radio, music, videos, and even Internet access," wrote Sopheap Chak, a technology blogger, graduate student of peace studies at the International University of Japan and manager of Cambodian Youth Network for Change, in UPI Asia Online, April 23 2010.

The growth of mobile technology is understandable given the paucity of fixed-lines. In 2008, the World Bank found that few people owned personal computers (0.4 per 100 people) and even fewer had fixed Internet (0.1 per 100 people). In the provinces, Internet service tends to be slow and unreliable. High Internet connection costs of about US$40 a month are a deterrent. Instead, on-the-go urban dwellers such as young entrepreneur, Anna Nov, the general manager of Ang Khmer Group, a translation, interpreting, advertising and public relations company in Phnom Penh, juggles various mobile phones and service plans.

At dinner in Phnom Penh in June 2010, when asked about mobile service in Cambodia, Ms. Nov opened her purse and set six mobile phones on the table. "Two others are charging at home," she explained. Each phone, she said, has a purpose. One is to receive calls from

Cambodia — key telecom parameters

Category	2009	2010 (estimated)
Fixed-line services		
Total number of subscribers:	54,200	60,000
Annual growth	26 %	11 %
Penetration (population)	0.4 %	0.5 %
Penetration (household)	1.5 %	1.5 %
Internet services		
Total number of subscribers:	34,000	45,000
Annual growth	112 %	32 %
Penetration (population)	0.15 %	0.20 %
Penetration (household)	0.8 %	0.10 %
Mobile services		
Total number of subscribers:	5.3 million	6.5 million
Annual growth	40 %	16 %
Penetration (population)	37 %	44 %

Source: Budde Communication, 2010

clients. The other is to make calls to her employees and freelancers. Another phone is to call clients. There's a phone dedicated for family and one for her friends. She is actively involved in social networking and frequently posts comments, photos and interesting links to Facebook and other sites. Ms. Nov takes advantage of the discounts and promotions offered by the nine competing mobile phone providers, for services such as free text messaging, rebates and accessing mobile wireless broadband. She says the competition is so fierce and some deals are so good that she doesn't pay for the service on some of her phones.

Entrepreneur Anna Nov has eight mobile phone accounts

Photo by Kim Kierans

Urban dwellers are well served with landlines, low cost Internet, 3G, MMS (multimedia message service), mobile Internet and in Phnom Penh — an extensive wi-fi network. More than 80 per cent of the population who live in rural areas have little or no access to computers or the Internet and look for connectivity through mobile phones.

"The major factors influencing access to the Internet (in rural areas) are availability of electricity, cost of equipment, and cost of connection. The rural people rely heavily on radio and television for information," wrote Pan Sorasak and Chriv Kosona in Digital Review of Asia Pacific in 2009. "In rural areas, 90 per cent of the population does not have access to generated electricity and power is supplied by 12-volt rechargeable batteries." The author noted that while Internet charges at private shops in Phnom Penh can be as low as 25 cents per hour, hourly rates at Internet shops in other areas of the country can range from US$1-$4.

MPTC Minister, H.E. So Kuhn, said in May 2010, "It is expected that by 2016, 100 per cent of the communes will have basic and dedicated ICT services" and he pointed to the successful e-program for rural empowerment and community health and the e-program for education. Many of those messages will be delivered over mobile phones.

Pollitical parties and NGOs recognise the importance of mobile SMS text messaging in difficult-to-reach areas of the country, and used the technology during the 2007 Commune Council elections and 2008 National Elections. "Political parties use SMS text messaging, the cheapest and most effective way of widely spreading their message, for political campaigns. Also civil organizations that monitor elections use SMS to communicate among themselves," wrote Sopheap Chak in UPI Asia Online, April 23, 2010.

Mobile operators

As of September 2010, nine mobile operators offered coverage to 14 million people:

MobiTel was established in 1997. It is the country's largest telecommunication company with a customer base of 2.17 million in March 2009 (around half of the market). MobiTel operates 3.5G technology in the capital and EDGE technology nationwide, and has service covering over 85 per cent of all cities, towns and villages.

Hello Axiata Co Ltd (HACL) formerly Telekom Malaysia International (Cambodia) Company Limited (TMIC) Hello Axiata (renamed in March 2010) received a 35-year concession in 1996 to provide services on the GSM 900/1800 frequency band. Hello has network coverage across the country (all cities and provinces) and along the main trunk roads, covering 86 per cent of the populated area. Hello deploys GSM, GPRS and EDGE technology. Figures released by the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in June 2010 put Hello Axiata in fourth place, with 491,146 subscribers.

Mfone Co. Ltd., also known as Camshin, has been in Cambodia since 1993. In the beginning, the company provided only fixed phone wireless local loop (WLL) technology and subsequently introduced GSM 1800, 900 and WCDMA 2100 services. Mfone is said to be the third largest telecommunications company with more than one million subscribers and network coverage across the country.

Cambodia Advance Communications Ltd (CADCOMMS)

CADCOMMS or qb is one of the newest entrants in the telecommunications sector. It received a licence in 2006 and launched its services in March 2008. qb is using a technology platform called 3G technology with HSDPA, or 3.5G, which gives subscribers access to the Internet, including online TV. It has expanded coverage beyond Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, Takmao and Battambang towns.

Viettel (Cambodia) Pte. Ltd., or more commonly known as Metfone, a subsidiary of Vietnam-based Viettel, launched its services in October 2008 in all 24 provinces in Cambodia. Despite being one of the newest market entrants, Metfone has aggressively expanded its network coverage. It is also the first company to launch all Internet ADSL, IP Lease Line, VoIP, Mobile and Wireless Fixed Phone services. Viettel is currently ranked the second largest operator in the country, behind MobiTel, by the number of subscribers (2.5 million).

Latelz Co., Ltd (Smart Mobile) launched its full-scale services in early 2009. It is aggressive in its marketing strategy, offering competitive pricing, service packages and promotions. The company has also signed a deal with one local bank to allow "Top Up" through ATMs, and an arrangement with another company, Wing, to provide the country's first mobile phone payment services. All these services are relatively new in Cambodia.

Excell launched its business in July 2008. It was the country's first operator, providing a new standard of mobile telecommunications CDMA 2000 1x EV-DO. However, the company only has network coverage in Kandal province with 40,000 subscribers. It has plans to expand its network in Takeo and Siem Reap provinces.

Beeline, a subsidiary of Russia based VimpelCom, entered the market in 2009 with aggressive promotions and marketing campaigns. Its network covered 21 provinces as of August 2010. At its first anniversary celebration in May 2010, the company said it has 370,000 active subscribers. Beeline has signed a contract to build a GSM network in Cambodia over the next five years, with China's Huawei Technologies

Applifone Company Ltd. (Star-Cell)
Star-Cell, a subsidiary of Cyprus-based, Timeturns Holdings, launched its services on October 2007. It is a fast growing company and has network coverage in 11 provinces, or about 37 per cent of Cambodia's total population. Star-Cell recently teamed up with Ericsson to introduce solar-powered base stations with satellite transmission to Cambodia. (Sources: Home pages of mobile providers; Cambodia Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications; and UK Trade & Investment report, Telecommunications Cambodia, December 2009)

She recounted how the National Election Commission, with support from the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), banned texting on the last day of the 2007 campaign to "prevent parties from using text messaging to mobilize rallies, thereby ensuring a quiet environment for voters." In the 2008 campaign, she credited SMS messaging partly for the CPP election victory.

"This is because a nationalistic movement coincided with the election campaign, due to a border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple. This generated political approval of the government, which publicly denounced any invasion of Cambodian territory. Mobile phone text messages circulated saying, 'Khmers love Khmer and should boycott anything Thai or with Thai writing on it.'"

Peou Chivoin, a media theory lecturer whose research specialty is the Internet and social capital, attributed the popularity of mobile phones to the fact that Cambodians prefer "interpersonal" relationships and most people have at least two mobile phones.

Blogging — a slow trend

That could explain why Cambodians have not embraced blogging en masse, with the same fervour as neighbouring Asian countries. "It's a matter of investment of time," Peou Chivoin explained. "There's also the problem with language and thinking about what to write." "Furthermore," he said, "the open source Khmer — Khmer Unicode — has many problems." What he has observed is that many young people start blogs and then quit, leaving a small but fiercely dedicated group of young men and women to provide thoughtful commentary on issues facing the country.

Interestingly, most of the influential bloggers write in English, not Khmer. The following list is in no way complete but provides an entrée into the blogging world of Cambodia.

Tharum Bun has the distinction of being the first blogger in Cambodia. His first post was on in 2004. The 28-year-old writes for Asian Correspondent, and is a contributing author to Global Voices, (an international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media from around the world — http://global-voicesonline.org). He is also a journalism fellow at *The Phnom Penh Post* through a Sasakawa Peace Foundation scholarship.

Kounila Keo (http://blueladyblog.com) is a freelance writer for UNICEF Cambodia, writer and editor at large at *LIFT* Magazine, *The Phnom Penh Post* and AFP journalist. She blogs about politics, environment, human rights, social issues and press freedom.

Details are Sketchy (DAS) (http://detailsaresketchy.wordpress.com) has been blogging anonymously since June 2006. DAS told Tharum Bun in an interview (September 3, 2010) that she or he started blogging "to

"From a perspective of a Cambodian, Cambodia's democracy is still young with restricted freedom of expression and media control; I do feel that blog is one of the most exciting and innovative technological tools to exercise the right to expression as well as other fundamental rights. We can share news, express our opinions, communicate with other fellow bloggers for any campaign purposes through blog. It's a great tool in use even in a situation that other means of communications are restricted," said Ms. Sopheap Chak, blogger and human rights activist.

Source: http://globalvoicesonline.org/2008/06/26/cambodia-riding-the-wave-of-change/

provoke some informed debate." The full interview with DAS can be found at (http://asiancorrespondent.com)

Sopheap Chak started blogging in 2007 (http://sopheapfocus.com). The 25-year-old is a frequent contributor to Global Voices where she writes about technology, human rights, gender and other issues. She's a graduate student in peace studies at the International University of Japan and manager of Cambodian Youth Network for Change.

K I Media, an aggregator site, is "dedicated to publishing sensitive information about Cambodia". (http://ki-media.blogspot.com).

Diana Saw, a Singaporean living in Siem Reap, provides a forum for people in that part of the country (http://cambodiacalling.blogspot.com).

The blogging community has a small but strong female presence. As researcher, Lyda Chea, noted in a paper "Empowering Women Psychologically in Cambodia through Blogging," presented at the 19th annual conference of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre in Singapore, 21-23 June 2010, the presence of women in the blogosphere of Cambodia is breaking down the stereotype of the Internet as a "male dominated" space. "It is then very intriguing to see how Cambodian women, whose voices are culturally and traditionally suppressed, have made use of blogging."

Ms. Chea is a senior undergraduate in Media Management at the Department of Media and Communication (DMC), and in English Language Teaching at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Her research interests are in issues pertaining to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and education, as well as gender and development.

For her research, she interviewed 15 female bloggers and analysed the content of their blogs. She supplemented her research with an online survey of 71 Cambodian bloggers. Her online survey revealed that women represent about one third of bloggers (26 respondents) and 80 per cent blog in English. They are young, with 80 per cent aged between 20-29 and 15.4 per cent younger than 20. The majority (65 per cent) live in Cambodia while the rest work or study abroad. "Most noticeable, however, is the high educational level among the bloggers. Half of them are graduate or postgraduate students and 38.5 per cent are students at undergraduate or below bachelor's level. The remaining 11.5 per cent are high school students," her paper noted.

Ms. Chea found that the blogs broke down into two types: the personal journal blog where women wrote about things that interested them such as music, books and fashion, and the journalistic "gatekeeper" blog about social and political issues. Her research found that the personal journal blogs generated more comments and created a greater sense of community among women, than the 'journalistic gatekeeper' blogs, which generated higher numbers of site visits.

"This is because people reading posts in the 'journalistic gatekeeper' blogs mainly want to get information, not necessarily to comment. However, the blogs receive a

lot of attention from the media because the owners write articles and give critical reflection on either political or social issues of the country, which the media can consider as their topics. Therefore, in the media the female bloggers who run the 'journalistic gatekeeper' blogs are popularly known."

Unlike Vietnam and China, Cambodia's 'journalistic gatekeeper' blogs have escaped censorship, probably because the Internet has yet to achieve the status of a "mass medium." But that could be changing. In February 2009, Prime Minister Hun Sen closed online gambling operations to "make social reform, strengthen public order, and improve social morality". In early 2010, the government said its company Telecom Cambodia would set up a state-run exchange point in its fight against online pornography, theft and cyber crime. Bloggers are naturally concerned because Telecom Cambodia would also have powers to block access to individual websites.

After 10 years of publication, first in print and then on the web, The Mirror, run by the tireless volunteer efforts of Norbert Klein, transformed itself on 1 September 2010 into a news and information blog (http://www.cambodiamirror.org). The site will no longer publish translations of articles and headlines from the Khmer press into English, due to funding issues. However, Norbert Klein will continue to operate the website. He writes: "The goal remains the same: to regularly provide an overview of major dynamics in Cambodian society, and by doing so to facilitate dialogue between different opinions and positions. The Mirror will continue to reflect a wide variety of sources of information, including some from outside of the country, with links to background information. There will be references to events and issues and observations as they come up."

Innovative media

With such low Internet penetration in Cambodia, it appears mainstream media feel no urgency to hop on the web. Only a few of the 100 or so Khmer language newspapers, including Koh Santepheap, (http://kohsantepheapdaily.com.kh) have a web presence where they post stories and photographs from their print publications. There is no forum for comments on their sites. Surprisingly, the English language, Cambodia Daily's website (http://www.camnet.com.kh/cambodia.daily), is dated and the most current stories were features from July 2010.

It's a mixed bag when it comes to broadcasters' presence on the Internet. Cambodia Television Network (CTN) (http://www.ctn.com.kh) is the most progressive. On the site you can find up to date video and news reports. Others have let their websites get out of date. As of 5 September 2010, news on TVK, the state broadcaster, was dated 17 June 2010 while TV9 has information from 21 January 2010. The website of Phnom Penh Municipal TV offers a schedule of programming.

However, innovation is coming from foreign entrepreneurs who see the untapped potential for publishing in Cambodia.

Case study 1: Southeast Asia Globe — regional success

When one thinks of headquarters for a glossy and high-end magazine, Singapore and Hong Kong come to mind. The Southeast Asia Globe breaks the stereotype. Each month, a staff of 12 — including four editorial people — produces the 100-page magazine out of its office not far from the Independence Monument in Phnom Penh. The 16,000 print run is distributed to business leaders and expatriates and sold for US$4 an issue at news stands and selected hotels in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Each issue focuses on the people and issues that affect business and lifestyles of Southeast Asia.

The target audience is entrepreneurs and business people. "We try to go into business and the economy. It's not the biggest group of people, but it's probably the most relevant group for us in terms of advertisements," explained co-founder and managing editor, Arne Deepen, a tall thin boyish-looking man with wavy honey-brown hair that falls past his ears. Our interview took place at the magazine office on June 19, a public holiday to commemorate the birthday of The Queen Mother Norodom Monineath Sihanouk. Deepen moved to Cambodia from Germany in 2006, after working in the magazine business for five years, in layout, graphics and as a photo editor. He was lured to Cambodia by a former magazine colleague from Germany, Tassilo Brinzer, who had the idea to start a magazine.

"It's (Cambodia) not a bad place to start a magazine, it's a lot cheaper here," Deepen said. "You can set up your business, grow slowly, solidly and then go to other countries." The *Southeast Asia Globe* moved into Thailand in the fall of 2009 and for five months printed a Thailand edition of the magazine as well as one for Cambodia. In March, Brinzer, the Globe's editor-in-chief, announced the Thailand bureau would remain intact but the magazine would return to a single print edition for the region.

"We have found that readers and advertisers are more interested in the region than in a single market such as Thailand, where the political situation is often cited as a reason for lower marketing investment, and Cambodia, which alone is considered too small a market for a large regional investment," Brinzer told *The Bangkok Bugle* on 2 February 2010. With 80 per cent of its revenue coming from advertisements, that is an important consideration.

Instead, in March 2010, the magazine launched a regional multimedia e-magazine. "It is designed for the new generation of e-readers such as the iPad and others. We are the first publication in Southeast Asia doing this, and certainly we're the first to include video features in a similar-to-print digital magazine within Asia." It can be found at www.sea-globe.com. The website features a new story from that month's magazine every couple of days. Subscribers get the full online edition of the magazine.

"I think in Cambodia at the moment, we have hit our threshold," Deepen said. The magazine had been approached to open a bureau in Vietnam, Singapore and even China, but none of those options was on the horizon, Deepen said. The company has branched out into marketing and held special events three times a day during the World Cup in June. They hosted a food festival and organised the two-day Oktoberfest in Phnom Penh.

Case Study 2: *The Phnom Penh Post* — building local capacity

Anyone familiar with the history of veteran newspaper businessman, Ross Dunkley, knew that when he signed the deal on 22 December 2007 to buy *The Phnom Penh Post*, there would be changes.

Dunkley, a straight-shooting Australian with energy to burn, has spent more than 19 years kicking around Asia and there's nothing he loves more than a good challenge. He's taken on more than most. He was the first foreign investor into Hanoi in 1991. He started the Vietnam Investment Review, an English language weekly, added a Vietnamese edition and created Vietnam Air's in-flight magazine. He sold the business in 1994 to Kerry Packer, Australia's richest man and stayed on as managing editor, leaving in 1997 just as the Asian financial crisis hit.

After taking time off to tend the children while his wife worked, he set his sights on Burma (Myanmar), making monthly trips there throughout 1999 and 2000. When the military junta opened the door, Dunkley slipped through the crack and has the distinction of being the first and last foreign media partner to operate in the country. Myanmar Consolidated Media (MCM) of which Dunkley is the CEO and editor-in-chief, is the largest private media company with some 350 staff (60 editorial). They work on two national papers in Burmese (circulation 70,000) and English (circulation 10,000). MCM also puts out four other publications: a youth magazine, a sports paper, and a crime and a wheels tabloid. It also has a website, Times Online. All operate under censorship. Dunkley estimates that 20 per cent of the stories his reporters write for the Myanmar Times English and Burmese editions, don't get published, but that doesn't stop them from going after the stories and trying to get them past the censors. His daily papers are a throw back to the heyday of publishing in North American and Europe, putting out 100 page papers with up to 16 pages of classified ads. An eight-person local board runs the company and has decision-making authority.

After working with controlling regimes in Vietnam and Myanmar, Dunkley seized the opportunity to expand into Cambodia. Along with Bill Clough, an Australian miner and oil and gas entrepreneur, he signed the deal on 22 December 2007 to buy *The Phnom Penh Post* from its founder, American, Michael Hayes. Now Dunkley divides his life between Yangon, Myanmar (Burma) and Phnom Penh.

"In 2009 I made 108 flights between Myanmar and Cambodia. This year so far (as of mid June 2010), 68 trips. I tell people my office is the smoking lounge of Cambodia International Airport."

We arrived at the Post Media headquarters, located in the Phnom Penh Building, a stone's throw from the National Assembly, on a Friday public holiday in mid-June. The office was unusually quiet because the paper appears Monday to Friday, which means staff work Sunday through Thursday. Dunkley sits in a cluttered office within shouting distance of the newsroom. "This is the boardroom," he jokes, gesturing at the piles of newspapers, empty coffee cups, and ash trays overflowing with cigarette butts. He stirs his coffee with a red pen. His suit jacket is strewn across an armchair. He wears a businessman's white shirt with the sleeves rolled up and a sedate blue tie. Dunkley is a hands-on working executive. Often during the interview he darts out to answer the buzzer to let someone in the door.

He put that energy first into taking the *The Phnom Penh Post* from fortnightly publication to daily, in August 2008, and in September 2009 he started a Khmer daily newspaper. Editors of the Khmer edition make their own decisions on local content and international news. Dunkley estimates that 40 per cent of the content is the same as the English edition, along with sports and business. "Two dailies in two and a half years is a lot of hard work." He also supervised the creation of a new weekly sports magazine and *Lift!*, a bilingual weekly aimed at youth, inserted in Wednesday papers and also distributed (15,000 copies) to universities. *The Phnom Penh Post* has a vibrant up-to-date web presence with stories, slide shows and blogs, despite the country's abysmal bandwidth and speed.

Salaries are higher than any local print outlets. New reporters start on $200 a month and top Khmer and foreign reporters and editors earn $1,000 a month. Dunkley says he doesn't make distinctions between his Khmer and foreign staff when it comes to salaries. He commissioned a typographer living in Cambodia to design new fonts and saved 30 per cent space. Dunkley believes it's the first example in Asia of a newspaper using fonts designed by a local.

Since 2003, Dunkley and his partner have invested $5 million in Post Media. The rewards, Dunkley says, will come from increases in circulation and advertisement revenue. "We're patient, but we are not philanthropists and we must get our money back." Rewards have also come in the form of international recognition for the Post's quality of journalism. In 2009, *The Phnom Penh Post* picked up two awards from the Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA), for excellence in its human rights reporting and news photography. In 2009, it received IRFA Asia Media award for best cross media editorial.

The vision of Post Media as stated in the company's media kit for 2009-10 is, "to build Cambodia's first fully integrated modern media group". Dunkley sees the way to do that is to build local capacity — through more Khmer reporters and editors in charge of Khmer papers, and through his internal scholarships for Khmer staff.

Also, by getting the Khmer daily to focus on local life style, business and international sports, "stop chasing the competition", and to focus on small medium enterprises, because "Cambodia is a business story and an NGO story." Post Media sees potential in printing advertising and promotional fliers for business on its four high web presses. And part of integration might include an expansion into television. "CTN (Cambodia Television Network) will swallow me up if I don't."

With his holdings in Myanmar and Cambodia, Dunkley is also toying with the idea of becoming a regional media group, but he says expansion would not include Thailand because of its unstable political climate and 30 per cent foreign ownership rules. Post Media is 100 per cent foreign-owned but Dunkley would like to have a local partner because he believes he is "holding the paper in custody for Khmer moms and dads", because foreigners live in a "parallel universe" and have no idea of what's really happening.

The Phnom Penh Post publishes 8,000 copies a day and each copy has five readers (a total of 40,000). The Khmer edition publishes 10,000 copies a day and each copy is estimated to have four readers (a total of 40,000). "Newspapers are not dying in Asia the way they are in the United States and Western Europe. Here they are on fire."

Chapter 8
Phuket website continues journalism's noblest traditions

by Alastair Carthew

The Phuketwan website in Thailand's major tourist destination, Phuket, brings old-fashioned, fearless and opinionated journalism to the Internet, in a region where such things are generally lacking. Testimony to Phuketwan's credibility is the number of Thai and international news sites and organisations that frequently quote it as a reliable source of information on Phuket. For example, Phuketwan broke the story about the Thai army's disgraceful treatment of Rohingya boat people in January 2009 that prompted an award-winning CNN documentary.

Phuketwan's founder is Australian journalist, Alan Morison. He has a staff of one Thai journalist, Ms Chutima Sidasathian. The website embodies two journalistic imperatives: curiosity and perseverance. Most Phuket websites focus exclusively on hospitality, property and aviation. Phuketwan — with its mix of hard news, comment, tourism, property news, entertainment, biting "push back" on controversial issues by the editor, and jobs news — is a hybrid in the Phuket market and a beacon of light for unflinching journalism in the Internet era. The site takes on entrenched interests in Phuket — even criticising travel information icon, *Trip Advisor*, and receiving a drubbing in the blogosphere for its trouble.

"Sweet" every day
Phuketwan means "sweet Phuket every day". In Thai wan means "day" and waan means sweet. Phuketwan's record for investigative journalism is a clear legacy of owner Alan Morison's own journalist background and Ms Chutima's exceptional investigative and reporting skills amongst the Thai population. Morison is not quite John Pilger, the controversial Australian journalist famous for taking on the establishment, in his intensity but then he doesn't have the comfort of big organisations and budgets behind him to "rip the scab" off atrocities and injustices around the world. But Morison is definitely of like mind with Pilger. Phuket is tailor-made for a hard news website like Phuketwan, awash as it is with stories of crime, muggings, rip offs, scams, horrendous and too frequent motorbike accidents, sexual assaults, murders, tourist drownings and corruption. Sometimes, it would seem, Phuketwan has trouble finding something "sweet" to write about on Phuket.

In its "About Us" section, the Phuketwan website says: "We are not here to constantly praise the island's virtues or to cover the kind of crimes that happen

everywhere around the world. We just aim to provide an accurate account in words and photographs, of Phuket and its people, including both smiles and warts." In this respect, Phuketwan differs markedly from virtually every other island publication, apart from the *Phuket Gazette*, the main weekly newspaper, whose website www. phuketgazette.net carries many of the same daily stories, but with less trenchant opinion and comment.

Phuket's Internet landscape

As Thailand's "Pearl of the Andaman", Phuket attracts many websites promoting the island's attractions. Major sites include *AsiaWeb, Phuket.com, go Phuket, Phuket Thailand, Phuket Hotel Reservations, Phuket, Phuket Maps and Domesticflights Thailand* (aviation). But they generally only promote beaches, islands, what to do, what to see, nightlife, hotels, shopping, dining, maps, getting around, tips, excursions and weather. Large hotel groups like Laguna Resorts & Hotels, Marriott, Meridien and Hilton and more independent hotels like Cape Sienna, Indochine and a raft of smaller and lesser-known brands, all have their own individual websites promoting the island. Phuket has five types of Internet access: dial-up 56Kb, ADSL broadband, leased lines, general packet radio service (GPRS) and satellite broadband. GPRS is a standard for wireless communications and runs at speeds up to 115 Kbps. Dial-up is freely available via a pre-paid kit from any 7-Eleven, bookshops or computer shop. Internet service providers also offer monthly services, and these are common in condominiums and villas. ADSL broadband connection speeds vary from 128Kbps to 2Mbps downstream.

Internet connection speed on Phuket is a source of constant frustration and complaint from visitors accustomed to much faster speeds, and locals trying to run businesses. For example, a 1Mbps ADSL connection that costs Baht 1000 with one Internet service provider (ISP) might be the same speed or slower than a 256Kbps connection that costs about the same. Leased lines are more viable for businesses because they are not shared and they offer a guaranteed bandwidth.

All the main mobile operators provide GPRS, which is an efficient use of limited bandwidth and is particularly suited for sending and receiving small bursts of data such as email and web browsing, as well as large volumes of data. Satellite broadband is an option for areas without phone lines, which still exist on Phuket. Finally, wireless is available at hundreds of wi-fi cafes around Phuket. A speed test by live-access. com found that speeds across Phuket varied greatly, from 7.92 Mbitps download in Patong on an ADSL 10Mbps True system to 1.07 Mbitps at Koh Kaew through a

Maxnet Premier 4Mb provider. The Phuket cyberspace is alive with complaints about the Internet service. For tourists from places like South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, the United Kingdom and many European countries, the Internet in Phuket is a continuous round of slow speeds and indifferent service.

Phuketwan arrives

It was against this type of Internet background that Phuketwan was launched in January 2008. Alan Morison describes how he came to Phuket in 2002 from CNN in Hong Kong as chief subeditor on the *Phuket Gazette*, which was in the process of going from fortnightly to weekly. After two years, he started a small publishing business, Big Island Media, which did editorial work for the in-house magazine at Phuket's largest destination resort, Laguna Phuket. In early 2005, Morison was approached by three expatriates to become the founding editor of a second local newspaper — the fortnightly *Phuket Post*. Both the *Phuket Post* and the *Phuket Gazette* run competing websites, particularly the *Phuket Gazette*, which has the newspaper's resources plus a substantial shareholding by the Bangkok-based The Nation, from which to draw.

Morison's time at the *Phuket Post* was relatively short, despite Big Island Media providing news for the *Phuket Post* website for a period. Finally, as Morison describes it: "Recognising the importance of the Internet and fast news delivered by Big Island Media we opted to go it alone and

Firstly, a typical bunch of "Most Popular" Phuketwan headlines would read like these from 13 September 2010:

"Phuket Crackdown on Bars in Patong"

"Phuket Balcony Plunge Tourist is Named"

"Shock Phuket Figures show 'Non-Legal' Tourism" The most commented headlines on the same day read:

"Phuket Open Until 5am? Debate Lights Up Inequality"

"Burmese Accuse Thai Officials of People Trafficking"

Then there are more exciting *News of the World*-type headlines that a resort island seems to attract because of the hugely diverse types of people who visit the island. On 18 August 2010: "Phuket Kickbox Killing," "British Tourist Found Dead in Phuket Room" and this memorable one: "Phuket Ladyboy Kills 'Punchy' Italian Tourist." The stories behind these headlines are collected and processed by Morison and Ms Chutima (nicknamed "Oi"), whom Morison says has the Thai "reporting nouse" that makes her universally well regarded and responsible for the "really hard work of interviewing Thai subjects about sometimes awkward topics".

launched Phuketwan on January 1, 2008. He describes the website's modus operandi as targeting "anyone with an interest in going beyond the make-believe world of travel brochures and property-puffery to find out what's really happening on the island, in the surrounding region and in Thailand". It is a noble and pure journalistic approach reflecting the traditional antipathy toward those who have gone "to the dark side," as traditional journalists describe those in public relations. But Alan Morison has a point. Phuket is not blessed with many experienced public relations practitioners — most either work for hotels or charities with a tendency toward hyperbole on behalf of their clients or organisations.

Phuketwan stands alone among Phuket websites as the only website without newspaper back up, producing a daily diet of hard news and opinion. And it is done with three staff, two reporters including Alan Morison, and a sales and marketing person. How do they do it?

Morison admits that Phuketwan has to prove itself as a business (it has not yet made a profit) but he regards it as a pioneer for the quality and consistency of its journalism. To underline this, Phuketwan can point to a very specific scoop that, perhaps more than anything else, established its credentials as a seriously professional news website. The scoop was the "inhumane pushbacks", as described by Morison, of the Thai military in abandoning Rohingya boatpeople to a potential watery grave in January 2009.

The Rohingya "scoop"

The story of Phuketwan's world scoop about the disgraceful treatment of boatloads of the displaced Rohingya people being turned back to their native Burma by the Thai military, epitomizes the approach of Alan Morison and Ms Chutima towards what they perceive as the wrongs in Thai society. It's a long story, but in summary it goes like this: Ms Chutima discovered through her Thai contacts that the Rohingya refugees escaping Burma in boats who would normally be housed at Ranong on Thailand's southern coast, were no longer going there. Previously, Phuketwan had noticed large numbers of Rohingya were turning up along the Andaman coast, and asked to be able to accompany the Navy to see the boat people. The Navy refused, but gave them photographs of refugees being apprehended and laid out on the beach "like sardines".

Phuketwan published the story and photographs, but nothing happened. They were not on Google at the time but knew it was a dynamic story. Said Morison: "I have never been so frustrated in all my life." Undaunted, they went to Ranong to pursue the story and, by a stroke of luck seeing a public notice in a small local newspaper, discovered that a policy change had occurred which meant the Rohingya were to be housed on a small island called Red San (Sai Dang in Thai) off the Thailand coast. Despite attempts to persuade locals to take them there, they did not make it. But by chance, a tourist had photographed the transfer of refugees accompanied by army personnel on to Red San. These photographs were also published, but had no impact — "only Khun Oi and myself read it", said Morison with an ironic grin.

So to get traction on the story Morison contacted former colleagues on the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong. The newspaper quickly realised the importance of the story and used their correspondents in Indonesia and India to follow up. "The tourist pictures were incredible. People in bikinis in the foreground and refugees lined up like sardines in the background," said Morison. "The cat was out of the bag."

The frontpage lead in the *South China Morning Post* elevated the story and gave it global impact. Eventually, the Thai media caught up with the story and asked questions

Burmese Muslim men arrested and taken to Surin Island, Dec. 2008

Photo by Thai Royal Navy

of the government, which received scathing criticism for its handling of the policy, which was, effectively, to tow the boatloads of refugees out to sea and set them adrift. Two boats were found in Indonesia and the Indian-administered Andaman Islands, 400 nautical miles north of Phuket. Nobody knows how many people died, but the *South China Morning Post* put the figure in the hundreds.

Eventually, Dan Rivers, a CNN correspondent in Bangkok, picked up on the story which went viral globally with the exposure. Rivers and others on the Internet have given Phuketwan due credit for breaking the second biggest news story in Thailand in 2009, behind the Red Shirts uprising. From there, other organisations such as the BBC and the Southeast Asia office of *Al Jazeera*, picked upon the story. As a writer on, thaicrisis.word-press.com, said of the coverage: "Let's praise the western media, independent media (Phuketwan) but also from Indonesia, the *South China Morning Post* and even *Al Jazeera*."

Exposing such a scandal involving the Thai military — and also Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva who came under intense pressure to investigate — carries some risk to life and limb in Thailand, so Phuketwan's role was particularly noteworthy. Another major event covered by Phuketwan was the Red Shirts uprising in Bangkok in April-May, 2010. The website used a former reporter living in Bangkok to file stories for it, and also extensively used live local television coverage in the Thai language, to update events as they happened.

Alan Morison and Chutima Sidasathian

At 62, Alan Morison seems to be thoroughly enjoying the freedom of rising at 5am, seven days a week, to scan news websites to put on his very own website. It's tough, and it doesn't make him any money to speak of, but he and his real-life and professional partner, lawyer, former waitress, teacher and now one of the best Thai journalists around, Chutima "Oi" Sidasathian, relish the challenge of breaking hard

news quickly, accurately and without fear or favour. She calls him "the boss". He, in turn, is obviously in awe of her ability to sniff out a story, to maintain vital contacts with a diverse range of people on Phuket and to do the journalistic 'leg-work' required to stay ahead of the competition — in this case, mainly the *Phuket Gazette* website.

Morison describes himself as an "old fashioned" journalist: "the word is what matters." But he does himself a disservice. He was in fact, a bit of a "new age man" back in 1993 when he first discovered the power and the energy that a new fangled invention on the scene — the Internet — could do for news gathering as a journalist on *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne in his native Australia. He started as a cadet in 1966, on the now defunct Melbourne Herald and over the years worked at the Daily Express in London, helped to start the *Sunday Herald* back in Melbourne, worked in Hong Kong for CNN and finally landed in Phuket in 2002, where he became managing editor of the *Phuket Post*, which he remains a shareholder in today.

Stints in one or two other organisations, including the *Phuket Gazette*, followed before starting Phuketwan in April 2008. Ms Chutima never formally trained as a journalist, but armed with a law degree has proved herself as a rarity amongst Thai journalists for her tenacious pursuit of facts. As a rule, Thai journalism is timid and, with a few exceptions amongst Bangkok newspapers such as The Nation and Matichon, rarely take on authority. The *Phuket Gazette*, the main competitor, is more aggressive these days and does break some good stories — which Alan Morison takes some credit for (although not everyone on Phuket would agree with this assessment). Despite having just two reporters, with a third now being tested, Phuketwan has won a Hong Kong human rights award for investigative journalism and the Hong Kong "Scoop of the Year" award — both for the Rohingya story.

A typical day

A typical Phuketwan day starts with Morison surfing the overnight news stories of relevance to Phuket, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and reducing these to around 20 items that can be posted on the site. Ms Chutima kicks in a little later with calls to contacts and surfs the Thai language websites. Good, credible stories vary from day to day, from 2-3 to none. Stories are also sourced by people contacting Phuketwan — usually through Ms Chutima directly. Morison says Phuketwan did not "set out to compete with the *Phuket Gazette*. We drifted into competition because we realised we had a capacity to be pretty fast. Because Phuket is such an active place we found ourselves covering the hard news as well."

Morison and Ms Chutima are realistic about their ability to keep the current business model going, given it is so utterly reliant on both of them working as a team. They hope a "workable model" will emerge in time. Phuketwan claims to have around 3000 page views a day (a figure disputed by others as far too high, but quite possible with regular visitors from outside the island), with a target of at least 5000. Morison said the 3000 visits per day is derived from August 2010 statistics that showed they

had 65,000 "unique visitors" who made 109,000 visits and looked at 515,000 pages — an average of 3000 visits.

Morison lays claim to improving the standard of English language journalism amongst Thai journalists on Phuket, and with giving the *Phuket Gazette*, which is in its 18th year, some stiffer competition for hard news online. Phuketwan does not have newspaper or radio resources behind it. Their bread and butter is "life and death stories that have the greatest impact: murders, drownings, plane crashes, dive boat sinkings. We cover the good, the sad and the bad."

Living on the edge

You would think that with its crusading spirit in a country like Thailand where violence, threats against journalists, and even death, are not uncommon, that Phuketwan would have been sued and threatened with closure. So far, it has not happened. Morison and Ms Chutima are proud of their editorial policy of "playing the ball, not the man". In other words, by "showing respect for people from all walks of life" Phuketwan has steered a steady path through any controversy. Says Morison: "They can see where we are coming from. So far we have not had a run in with anyone, including the Thai army." Perhaps emboldened by the Thai army's lack of action against them on the Rohingya case, Phuketwan has ploughed ahead. The policy is not to attack individuals, but an organisation or its policies. They do pull back on some stories.

Morison also attributes the personal relationship he and Ms Chutima have for Phuketwan's success: "We are not activists in any sense but we do have an ability to identify what is right and what is wrong." It also helped, Morison said, living on Phuket where the diversity of life presents daily opportunities to write interesting stories. "I wake every day wondering what to do today. Phuket is a paradise for journalists. Every day there is something quite remarkable." Morison tells the extraordinary story of Phuketwan reporting on the mass circumcision of 30 Thai boys in full public view and receiving outraged feedback from around the world for covering something that is not at all unusual on Phuket.

In some ways, Phuketwan does get attacked. Morison's decision to take his prerogative as the editor to hit back at criticism or unfair and unjustified comments on the Phuketwan site, in response to stories, is a rarity in today's journalism. But hit back he does, taking a few hits himself in the process. It does not matter. The issue is that free debate is to be encouraged and this is one way of doing it. "Telling the whole story doesn't please everyone so we get some interesting feedback. We've also had advice from time to time from people in uniform. This is usually friendly and well meaning. Overwhelmingly, the feedback about the site has been positive."

Partnerships and competition

Partnerships with other media organisations are essential for Phuketwan, to enable it to gather news from credible sources. As Morison says regarding their own reporting:

"We correct our own inaccuracies." Phuketwan is used as a source of Phuket news by major international organisations such as the BBC, CNN, Sky News, *Al Jazeera* and Fox News in the United States. The *South China Morning Post*, Australian newspapers, and CNNgo.com also commission articles.

But what makes Phuketwan and Alan Morison different from the mainstream, is his willingness to get involved on the Internet in many different ways. For example, a chat on thaivisa.com/forum where he took issue with a comment by "happyaussie" when he/she said: "In my opinion Thailand is in danger of losing its sparkle if it's not careful. Corruption and violence are running rife; developers are building wildly and without controls and I notice the beautiful nature of Thai people becoming tainted." Morison shot back noticing "the beautiful nature of Thai people being tainted". He responded: "That's a fair-sized generalisation. What do you mean?" This prompted a lengthy apology and explanation from "happyaussie."

Such engagement by an editor to individuals is generally rare in Thailand cyberspace. Phuketwan was the first news site on Phuket to introduce comments on the end of articles. The point of difference is that the editor fires back, often in a feisty manner. As Morison comments: "The expat racism and paranoia that flourishes on some chat sites is actively discouraged and put down by Phuketwan." But it is not always 'beer and skittles' for Morison as his brush with Tripadvisor, the large online travel portal, showed.

Taking on TripAdvisor

For travellers who use the Internet, TripAdvisor is the giant of travel feedback portals. It is important to a major tourist destination like Phuket. In August 2010, Morison decided to take issue with the site. The problem arose when a "highly suspicious topic" on tripadvisor.com was removed and the thread closed down. Morison said the posting involved "shonky revenge-seekers". Phuketwan then reproduced the story and printed the original post to TripAdvisor in full on its website. In doing so Phuketwan concluded: "TripAdvisor has become a favourite research source for many tourists, and deservedly so. Honest feedback is of great value to other travellers. But the site's operators failed a basic test of fairness by neglecting to question the accuracy of this post."This comment unleashed a torrent of criticism of Phuketwan and support for TripAdvisor.

A selection of comments tells the story, both for and against the Phuketwan article:

"PW did over cook the story a tad, probably a slow news day."

"The author should trust that the majority of TA users are intelligent enough to see through these paper thin yarns and dodgy hotel reviews."

"Trip advisor and destination experts do a fantastic job and intelligent traveler reviews and tips are so helpful."

"I thought it was good that Phuketwan investigated it. I don't understand what the problem is."

"I think Phuketwan did everyone a favour by finding out a lot more information about what seems to have gone on."

And so it went on in this vein, for and against Phuketwan's stance. Says Morison: "The sad thing is TripAdvisor takes no responsibility for the accuracy of its content. It's like a sloshing bucket into which people tip (clean) spring-stream water and sewage. Journalists, though, have to check the facts."

Local stories

Phuket's diverse range of visitors and expatriates make it a cosmopolitan melting pot, which in turn is a gold mine for local news. Consider that the island attracts models, movie stars, British royalty and extremely rich people from around the globe, on one hand, and on the other, numerous German, Scandinavian and Russian charter flights. Thousands of Australians visit during the "low" season and tend to stay at three or four star hotels and frequent the Patong nightlife. The island is seeing increasing numbers of Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern tourists and interesting news is bound to happen. Phuket even boasts five billionaires, who either have investments on the island or are frequent visitors.

The island generates interesting news stories. Take the case of the Australian mother of four, Annice Smoel, who faced being thrown in jail after a drunken night out when she left a popular bar with a large bar mat, then abused the police when they arrived. It was a cause célèbre, with even the Australian prime minister getting involved. Local residents thought Mrs Smoel was very foolish and deserved a jail sentence. Then there was the case of a British Muay Thai (Thai boxing) exponent who fled the country after allegedly killing a United States Marine in a fight. He was eventually found in England. Phuketwan covers these stories, but its approach can often be differentiated by Phuketwan's attention to what Morison calls "broader themes and trends that are sometimes overlooked". They try to avoid promotions but still review restaurants (paid by themselves) at every opportunity, although they are starting a resort review where they will accept free accommodation. Morison points out that they declare their interest openly.

Thailand also means being aware of cultural and language differences. "We try to explain issues to both Thai readers and to the broad expat community. We try to encourage the Thai media to take a greater interest in the point of view of tourists and expat residents, with mixed success." What about cultivating sources? "We try to cultivate sources among the administrators and decision-makers and local police, as well as officials at hospitals and the airport. Mostly they understand that Phuketwan is going to tell it straight and respect us for that."

New media/trends

Alan Morison's description of himself as an "old-fashioned journalist" is both apt and a little misleading. An early adopter of the Internet, he now uses its power through words and photographs to tell the story. Phuketwan can carry up to 60 photographs with one story, either downloaded or taken by Morison or Ms Chutima. They describe themselves as photojournalists. This means building a large bank of useable photographs. New media like RSS, Twitter and Facebook are all in the mix, although the lack of staff means labour intensive distri-bution channels like Facebook are not utilised as much as they would like. Morison does see Twitter as a definite major player in the future, if it is not already, in newsgathering. Because speed is an underlying theme of the Phuketwan business model, new media are recognised as being a necessary part of the business, although they are not exploited as much as they would like. Of the Phuket website community, Morison says it is "reasonably wired" but that Thais are slow online adapters, although their uptake of cell phone technology has somewhat overtaken the personal computer and laptop. "We will remain in a 'wait and see' situation for as long as we can sustain our own interest," says Morison, of where Phuketwan may go in future. So what does Phuketwan (still essentially a website with some small value-added new social media that is somewhat neglected through lack of time and resources) need to do to keep its edge? "Multiply. If there were four of us we would double our output and probably double our audiences." Phuketwan has published a code of ethics based on Australian standards. Thailand has a comprehensive journalistic code of ethics but, unfortunately, it is often ignored. Says Morison: "Ignoring our commercial self-interest remains the toughest call." He admits he has "more failures than successes" in training Thai journalists.

Comments

A website like Phuketwan is not without controversy. A number of people spoken to for this article refused to comment on Phuketwan, reflecting the smallness of the business community but also criticism of Phuketwan and Alan Morison. Speaking strictly without attribution, a number of Phuket residents criticised what they saw as unnecessary ruffling of feathers in the community. Some predicted Phuketwan would fold because the two staff members would run out of both energy and money. They, themselves, do not deny this.

Here are some on-the-record comments from local people familiar with the website:

Bill Barnett, c9 Hotelworks, property consultant and commentator: "Phuketwan is an interesting case study as it shows a shift to a pure Internet news site, no hard copy, online media, updates on the fly. It demonstrates the wider shift happening globally to print media, and the public's need for instant gratification. Some view it as tabloid, others as hard news. In the end, it's the new media [...] two journalists running a high profile news site. The playing field has changed and this is just the beginning."

Simon Hand, media consultant, Phuket Post: "From what I see, Morison uses the Wan as a tool to keep on top of the local scene, so that he can dig out juicy stories for international media outlets. It's a very clever formula: the headlines that read "Local website breaks international stories" could as easily read "International stories make local website". And he's making a good show of it, from what I can tell. Morison's a consummate journalist, and he's called some great stories — the one about the treatment of the Rohingyas is, literally, award-winning. It's definitely the kind of journalism Phuket needs. Unfortunately, crusading journalism is a little hard to pull off in Phuket — you're a court case away from financial ruin, even if you win; advertising can mysteriously dry up if you 'piss off' the wrong people and there can also be a few health issues involved. He needed to bring in some international help for the Rohingyas story and I heard that a great many threats were made against him and his reporter, Chutima Sidasathian, when they first started digging around. Wan isn't just Alan Morison. A lot of its success comes from Khun Chutima's work as its chief reporter. She is one of the best Thai reporters I have ever met, and should definitely be working for a serious national or regional daily. Once she joined the Wan, it really came to life."

Alasdair Forbes, former editor, *Phuket Gazette*: "Morison's a dedicated journalist with a nose for good stories. He regularly beats the conventional (i.e. print) press, not just in terms of immediacy but also in terms of getting to a story first and getting it in greater depth. He scored a world scoop with his story on the plight of the Rohingya "boat people" fleeing from Myanmar and ending up in the none-too-tender clutches of the Thai military. As a result of his stories, the Thai government had to sit up and take notice — and do something positive for these refugees. Alan's very serious about what he does, about getting stories right. He also cares passionately about the rights of the little guy, the underdog."

Ian Young, former international editor, South China Morning Post: "I have worked extensively with Alan via my former position as international editor of the South China Morning Post. What he and Khun Chutima have done with Phuketwan is pretty remarkable, and shows how effective a locally-focused web-based news product can be. Instead of website bells and whistles, they are focused on old-fashioned journalism, delivered in a new way. They really do punch above their weight. I don't think Alan would be offended if I described Phuketwan as a shoestring operation. At the same time, Alan is a realist when it comes to the limitations of Phuketwan and its presence. That was why he decided to share the Rohingya scoop with the South China Morning Post, an established media brand in a major world city, with a big regional reputation. The work they did for us, and the material they provided, was put on the world stage as a result.

Alan Morison, and his partner Ms Chutima Sidasathian, like to think they have influenced, in their own small way, the shape of Phuket as a society. Their overriding mission is to "inform and explain". Morison repeatedly praises Ms Chutima's

contribution to Phuketwan, and this is endorsed by others on the island who have dealt with her. The pair use speed as their adrenalin fix but also as a key driver of the business model. They seek to inform quickly after something happens. The site's long-term future depends very much on the two individuals maintaining the gruelling work schedule to try to build a strong financial base to hire more people. It is a brave and admirable experiment in an environment not conducive to critical journalism. Alan Morison — crusader, "new age" early Internet adopter, old fashioned journalist, controversial, a bit grumpy at times (according to former colleagues and those who have dealt with him) but fearless — has the last say: "My view is that the kind of questions we continue to ask are in the best interests of Thailand. Others in Thailand seem to be not so sure. Many intelligent people, especially those in the expat community, also prefer a Phuket where questions are not asked. That's sad for them, and even sadder for Phuket."

Chapter 9
Digital innovations in Malaysia

Decisions made almost two decades ago, are showing significant returns in Malaysia as the country focuses on developing digital technologies and innovations. In 1996, then Prime Minister Mahathir established the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) along the highway between the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and the international airport to the south of the city. The MSC offered companies attractive tax breaks and excellent facilities such as high speed Internet and proximity to the airport. In return, Malaysia aimed to attract knowledge-based international companies to help develop domestic markets. Cyberjaya, a planned city with a science park as its core, forms a key part of the MSC. This city aspires to be seen as Malaysia's Silicon Valley. Cyberjaya officially opened in May 1997.

That year, the MSC had fewer than 300 IT (Information Technology) companies. Thirteen years later the number had grown to almost 2,600. More than 63,000 knowledge-based jobs have been created, and almost RM820 million (US$264 million) spent on research and development as of October 2010. The MSC had generated revenues of more than RM13 billion (US$4.19 billion) as of the same date, and Malaysia's ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) exports totalled more than RM5 billion (US$ 1.61 billion) a year in 2009.

Building iPad applications for the world

Woodwing Asia Pacific, a subsidiary of the Dutch parent company, Woodwing Software, is one of the key international companies based in Cyberjaya. The parent company was founded in May 2000 and the Asia-Pacific subsidiary in 2006. Remco Koster is the managing director and looks after a range of countries in the region, from Indonesia and Australia in the south, to China and Japan in the north. Koster believes the arrival of the iPad offers publishers fresh opportunities to attract audiences. But publishers must incorporate the most compelling aspects of the iPad to attract audiences. Otherwise, publishers risk doing what they did online when they shovelled content from the newspaper without understanding that online requires a new form of journalism. "It's the same with the iPad. The device needs a new way of thinking," Koster said.

Publishers must not ignore the potential of the iPad. An iPad application must not simply transfer pdf content from online. It must embrace all of the aspects that have made the iPad such a success: excellent still images, crisp text, compelling audio and video, and elegant design that is easy to navigate. To do this well requires talent and imagination, and a new approach to digital storytelling.

The unique selling points of the iPad are the potential to display rich text and magnificent images, interactivity and the power of multimedia for new forms of storytelling. "The aim of any iPad application is to allow audiences to enjoy the content, and it must be easy and intuitive for people to find and enjoy that content," Koster said. He believes that quality "got lost in the web era" and the iPad gives publishers the chance to focus on quality again. People are more willing to pay for iPad applications than for online content, he said, provided the applications give "convenience, quality and a nice environment".

Convenience refers to ease of use, and intuitive navigation that shows off the content in the simplest but most elegant way. The environment of an iPad application must be attractive in the sense that it appeals to audience aesthetics. Images and video must be of the highest quality, text must be crisp and easy to read, and an orderly design is of paramount importance. "Quality is that undefinable concept that audiences will pay for," Koster said. It is also important to appreciate the power of appropriate text fonts. "Good type is so important on an iPad application." Koster described the iPad as an "accelerator of major change" for digital publishing. It might also accelerate the demise of ink on paper.

We need to pause here to discuss the economics of print newspaper production. In June 2009, a senior analyst from Moody's research company in New York, John Puchalla, said the American newspaper industry spent too much of each dollar on printing and distribution, and too little on what sells newspapers: the content. Puchalla estimated 70 cents of each dollar was spent on paper, printing, distribution and corporate functions. Only 14 cents was spent on editorial content. The other 16 cents went to pay for advertising and marketing. Puchalla described the cost structure of the American newspaper industry as "distorted". *The New York Times*, for example, spent US$650 million in 2009 on printing and distribution, but less than a third of that amount — US$200 million — on content. The company paid US$65 million that year for newsprint.

Many Asian newspapers have the same "distorted" cost ratios. Devices like the iPad could help publishers reduce printing and distribution costs, and allow more to be spent on content. For example, newspapers could give loyal readers — people who have subscribed for more than two years — an iPad or similar device in recognition of that loyalty. The device would be a status symbol and readers could keep the device while they continued to subscribe.

But iPad content must involve more than transferring portable document files (pdfs) from the newspaper. Too many iPad applications offered by major publishing companies, simply copy or emulate existing or previous media. Newspapers' iPad applications look like their online sites, which in turn look like newspaper front pages. Where is the imagination or the innovation? Too many newspaper applications offer poor-quality multimedia. It reminds one of the early years of television news when news presenters read news agency copy on air.

Remco Koster uses the analogy of potatoes to make various forms of food. If publishers provide content for iPad applications and other tablet platforms using pdf, they are trying to make mashed potato out of French fries instead of returning to the original potato. "Too many news companies think that taking the pdf from the web site and pushing it into an iPad application is being creative. But it is still French fries [pdf]. It cannot be anything else." Koster believes it is important to study successful iPad applications to discover what works, and also to learn from failed applications.

Woodwing has created a range of videos about its applications on its YouTube site. Sales of the iPad have been extraordinary. In the first three months after the device became available in 2010, Apple sold 3.27 million. A leading American market research company, iSuppli, expects Apple to sell about 100 million iPads over the next three years, if Apple can keep up with demand. Why do iPad owners love their devices? Portability and elegance top the list. Next is the ease of wi-fi connectivity and the capacity to read e-books and other digital documents, plus the versatility that the wide variety of applications offer in terms of performing tasks that save time and make life easy. Consumers love finding new ways to interact with their iPad. We would argue that smartphones like the iPhone have already taught a generation of users how swiping and other multi-touch gestures work, and they have grown to appreciate the simplicity and ease of use of these phones. The iPad has simply continued this theme of ease of use.

In September 2010, Stephen Baker, vice-president for industry analysis for the NPD Group, released details of research into how people used their iPads. Baker found that early adopters were using their iPads for more than 18 hours a week, and for almost a third of them that time was increasing. "Clearly early adopters love their iPads and are finding increased opportunities to use them." Interestingly, a fifth of users' time with the iPad was spent in bed, only slightly less than the 25 per cent of time people spent with their iPad on a stationary surface. It was obvious, Baker wrote, "that the iPad form factor makes people feel warm and cuddly".

In a Zogby International survey published in October 2010, three in four respondents said devices like the iPad made them more productive. And 80 of the top 100 companies in the Fortune 500 were testing and evaluating the iPad, according to Apple. Writing applications has become a profitable industry. As of October 2010, about 225,000 applications were available for the iPhone, via iTunes, with another 100,000 available for Google's Android phones. It is relatively easy to re-write iPhone applications for tablet devices like the iPad.

In *The Facts About Australian Newspapers Report*, published in October 2010, by Newspaper Works, CEO, Tony Hale said, 331,000 newspaper-related applications were downloaded on iPhones and iPads in Australia in the five months to the end of June 2010. Newspaper Works is the marketing arm of Australia's newspaper publishers. These applications included a range of subjects, from finding jobs, houses and restaurant reviews, to sites that focus on individual sports as well as news.

Woodwing has been probably the most successful company worldwide in the development of iPad applications for publishers. It has launched a new iPad application every month since April 2010, when it released the first iPad application for *TIME* magazine. As of October 2010, WoodWing had launched more than 50 applications and published more than 350 digital publications for the iPad worldwide. Newspapers in the Asian region for which Woodwing has created an iPad application, include The Star (Malaysia); *Kompas* (Indonesia); the Mainichi Newspaper Company (Japan), and the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong). Details of European, American and United Kingdom media companies that have developed iPad applications, in partnership with Woodwing, can be found at the company's web site: www.woodwing.com

Remco Koster demonstrating the Woodwing application for Time Magazine

Photo by Kim Kierans

Woodwing's history and technology

Founded in 2000, WoodWing is a privately-owned company with 85 employees and offices in Europe, United States of America, Latin America and Asia-Pacific. It was the first company to commit to the Adobe InDesign and InCopy platform, and later developed the award-winning Smart range of productivity tools and efficiency-enhancing plug-ins. The company shifted focus from productivity tools to publishing systems, and in 2007, Deloitte described WoodWing as one of the fastest-growing technology companies in the Netherlands. It serves hundreds of customers through a professional network of more than 70 partners, active in more than 75 countries.

WoodWing developed its Digital Magazine, Tools for iPad, early in 2010, to release them with the launch of Apple's iPad on 3 April 2010. These tools allow publishers to create a digital magazine and distribute it via an interactive Reader application, simplifying the creative process. Creating a digital magazine or app for the iPad is done in almost the same way as making one for print, which means publishers are already familiar with the process. WoodWing's Enterprise content management system is the foundation of the suite, providing tools for storage and workflow control. Adobe

InDesign is used to create the digital content. Content Station allows a designer to set the page order and export content, which is then placed in a branded iPad reader application. Content Station, WoodWing's content management application, allows users to create Dossiers containing the InDesign layouts and all material for a digital magazine. Images, video, and audio are uploaded via Content Station and stored in the Enterprise system. Users can create stories in Content Station using the built-in editor, InCopy.

Dossiers are folders that contain the content for a single story. Once the Dossiers are created, Content Station has a special "digital magazine" view that allows users to arrange the Dossiers via drag-and-drop. This creates a page order for the digital magazine. The branded iPad application functions as a reader for the content generated by Content Station. Users have the choice of using either a stand-alone application that contains all content for a single issue, or a distribution application that connects to a content delivery server. In the latter case, content is pulled from the web in the same way that a browser pulls content. The distribution application allows publishers to show multiple issues in a store format and allows end-users to buy individual issues that are downloaded directly into the application.

Newspapers, magazines, books or corporate clients, each have their own rules and demands, "but all our solutions share the same core technology underneath: Enterprise, a versatile publishing system," Koster said. Enterprise allows for cross-media content management. It supports all kinds of publications and editions, encompasses any printed or digital media, and handles images, text, audio, video and graphics.

By using WoodWing's Digital Magazine Tools, editors in a newsroom decide which stories from the print edition will be published on the iPad. The application can also provide readers with content created especially for the iPad. For example, a dedicated layout team could create the digital edition, while the photo editor collects extra images that will appear only in the iPad application. Readers can also be offered options such as Sudoku or crossword puzzles, and a range of interactive options that will build and hold audiences.

To accommodate the huge interest in publishing on the iPad, WoodWing offers hands-on workshops for publishers around the world. The two-day workshop is held at a WoodWing or a partner office. Target attendees are designers familiar with magazine creation in InDesign. Details can be found at, www.woodwing.com.

Launch of rivals to the iPad

The iPad's success saw the launch of several rivals in 2010. Samsung, Hewlett-Packard, Cisco, RIM, Dell, Lenovo, Asus, Acer, Google, CSL, Toshiba and Microsoft were all selling or planning their own tablet platforms as of October 2010. Here is a list of some of the contenders.

RIM BlackBerry PlayBook: Details revealed September 2010. It has a 7-inch screen and dual facing camera and is expected to be available early 2011. It runs BlackBerry software and will be able to connect with a nearby BlackBerry phone, acting as a bigger screen for it. The price has not been announced.

Dell Streak: A 5-inch tablet with full mobile phone functions was released in October 2010. It runs Google's Android software and costs about US$650.

Cisco Cius: Another 7-inch tablet designed for business use, scheduled to launch early 2011. Price has not been announced, but Cisco said it aimed to keep it under US$1000.

CSL Droid Spice MI700: Runs Google's Android software, costs about US$400 and has full mobile phone functions plus Bluetooth and wi-fi.

Samsung GALAXY Tab: A 7-inch tablet was scheduled to be released by the end of 2010. It will run Google's Android software. Prices have not been announced.

Late in 2010, WoodWing extended its Digital Magazine Tools to support these new and upcoming tablet devices. Samsung and WoodWing worked together to bring digital publications to Samsung's GALAXY Tab, a new-generation Android tablet. Examples went on display at WoodWing's booth at the IFRA Expo, the world's biggest publishing convention, in Hamburg, Germany in October 2010. Erik Schut, president of WoodWing Software, said Samsung's GALAXY Tab was the "first step into a multi-device tablet publishing world" for WoodWing.

Koster said WoodWing believed in openness: "Open standard components, open source, an open XML foundation and an open architecture enable tight integration with third party products and a wide variety of content sources." WoodWing also helps publishers connect with social media, which in turn enables almost any publication to reach almost any community. "Our large customer base, across the full spectrum from small to large publishers, is proof that WoodWing delivers the best solutions for the best price."

WoodWing software for making iPad applications offers a reader-friendly interface. In portrait mode, applications focus more on the text, while in landscape mode applications offer all multimedia features such as images, interactive graphics, audio and video. Scrollable text columns enable readers to capture comprehensive information, even in landscape mode. Erik Schut, president of WoodWing Software, said his company's iPad publishing options were ideal "even for the demanding workflows in the newspaper field" and were the best tools for creation of daily iPad publications.

Advertising and the iPad

The potential for advertising on the iPad has scarcely been touched. The interactive nature of the device and the potential to offer layers of information, suggests that advertisers will grow to love the iPad as a way to market their products. And consumers appear happy for that to happen. Research published in September 2010, suggested that iPad owners were more open and responsive to advertising, than mobile users of

other devices — even iPhone owners. The study, by AdAge, showed that iPad users were more likely to buy products after being introduced to advertisements. Three in five respondents — all users of the iPad, iPhone and all other connected devices — said they were "OK with advertising" if it meant they received content for free.

The magic word for making effective advertisements for the iPad is interactivity. Almost half of iPad owners said they were more likely to click on advertisements that included multimedia, compared with a quarter of iPhone subscribers and 27 per cent of owners of other connected devices. And iPad users also said they would buy a product via their mobile device because of an advertisement. The iPad will attract Generation Y users because of their desire for interactivity, mobility and connection to others.

JV Rufino is vice-president for mobile and publishing with the Inquirer Company in the Philippines, publisher of the prestigious daily, the Philippines Daily Inquirer. He said his company was excited about tablet devices because they combined interactivity with an audience willing to be more engrossed with content. "On the web, people are constantly distracted, and they are information grazers: a tweet here; a link there; the first few paragraphs of an article. When people pick up tablets they appear to be more willing to invest time in a content experience. That more closely approximates the print experience, without giving up the interactivity offered by digital devices. It's good for journalists who want topics that don't lend themselves to a 140-character tweet or blurb, and it's good for advertisers.

Rufino said he could see the interactive aspects of tablets reaching a "framework of conventions", as had happened on the desktop web. And ultimately, tablets could become as thin and flexible as paper, and perhaps as cheap to produce.

iPad applications for e-reading

One area with huge potential for development is electronic books (e-books) on the iPad, especially for children. According to a study released in October 2010, in the United States, the amount of time children spend reading books for enjoyment decreases as they use mobile phones and other mobile technologies. But e-books might bring them back to literature. The study, by educational and media company Scholastic and Harrison Group, found parents were concerned that greater access to technology would limit children's time spent reading or with the family. About 40 per cent of parents in the study believed that time spent online, or on mobile devices, would reduce time with books or engaging in physical activities. A third were concerned that technology would lead to less time spent with family.

But the study found that technology could encourage children to read. Of the children polled in the study, 57 per cent said they would be interested in reading an e-book. And about a third of children said they would read more books for pleasure if e-books were more available to them. To appreciate the future of books, see the Toy Story iPad application from Disney Digital. It is truly magical. The iPad's colours are

vivid and attractive. This puts the iPad well ahead of any device that only has a black and white screen.

Malaysia Vision 2020

Malaysia is well positioned to take full advantage of new technology such as iPad and the supporting software applications. Statistics show that in 2010, almost 17 million people were online — about 65 per cent of the population, according to the Internet World Statistics web site. The impetus for this rapid development of the telecommunications sector, including the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Project, was laid out in the Sixth Malaysia Plan's Vision 2020, introduced by former Prime Minister Mahathir in 1991. Its goal was to see Malaysia ranked as a fully developed country by the year 2020, and the plan recognized telecommunications as an essential component of development.

As a result, Malaysia has one of the more advanced telecommunications networks in the developing world, according to a study released in May 2010 by Budde Communications, an Australian-based telecommunications research and consultancy company. The study documents the country's booming mobile market with a penetration rate of 106 per cent. According to the study, at the start of 2010 more than 30 million people were mobile subscribers, the second highest number in South East Asia after Singapore. The major push has been into 3G services by providers Telekom Malaysia and Maxis. The result is that one in every five mobile users subscribes to 3G services. In November 2010, the country leapt into a new converged fourth-generation (4G) voice and broadband network for the country, under the auspices of international communication companies, Carat Malaysia and YTL Communications Sdn Bhd.

The phenomenal growth of mobile and early adoption of SMS messaging could be due to the slow growth of traditional Internet in Malaysia. Budde estimates than in 2009, about 100 billion SMS texts were sent on mobile phones. High-speed broadband access started to gain momentum only in 2008. In that year, the government awarded the contract to develop a National Broadband Network (NBN), to Telekom Malaysia, the main service provider. It is building a fibre-based open system and as Budde reports, the first stage of the high-speed broadband project was launched in early 2010 offering access speeds of 10Mb/s.

The growing use of the web, either on mobile phones or computers, is taking a bite out of daily mainstream newspaper circulation. When the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) released figures for daily newspapers in September 2010, the results looked similar to that experienced by newspapers in Europe and North America. *The Malaysian Insider* story on ABC circulation figures reported that between 2005 and 2009, *The Star* had dropped 7.4 per cent from 310,000 to 287,000 readers, while circulation at the *New Straits Times* went down by 20 per cent, *Utusan* Malaysia by 21 per cent and *Bertia Harian* by 24 per cent. The ABC figures also showed more Malaysians were turning to tabloid-style scandal sheets such as *Harian Metro*, *China Press* and *Kosmo*.

The reason, according to the authors of the September 2010 article in *The Malaysian Insider,* was: "A combination of changing tastes and competition from the Internet have contributed to the decline. Many corporate readers have switched to going online and reduced the number of subscriptions for their offices. The general public also appeared bored with political drama and suspect that mainstream media is controlled by the government and tends to filter the news."

Readers are turning to what they regard as more independent sources of news — free newspapers such as *The Sun* and Internet publications such as *Malaysiakini.com*, *The Malaysian Insider* and *Free Malaysia* Today. And as tele-communications improve, more people will be turning to their mobile phones or laptops to get the news they want, when they want, as one manager of an international transportation company told the *The Malay Insider.* "Getting updates via the mobile phone is so fast," he said in the article, published 10 September 2010. "People prefer to get business and political news from the Internet but buy tabloids to read gossip to pass the time." The declining popularity of government-licensed newspapers in favour of a free uncensored Internet has Malaysian government officials concerned.

Internet not so free

Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor Bill included a commitment not to censor information on the Internet. The government made the "no censorship" policy part of the Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998, as a way to attract investors. The policy also opened the door to a public dialogue not readily available in major newspapers and broadcasters — many of which are government-controlled or closely linked with political parties. Apart from occasional raids and bans, online publications have been mostly free to publish diverse views and opinions. As the Internet becomes more readily available to citizens, authorities are trying to figure out ways to monitor and catch those who overstep the 1998 guidelines, or who violate other laws connected to cyberspace and free speech, including the Sedition Act 1948, the Computer Crimes Act 1997 or the Personal Data Protection Act 2010.

The Press Freedom wall in the office of Malaysiakini

Photo by Kim Kierans

In August 2010, the government agency, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), announced it had hired KPMG, an international consulting company, to conduct what it calls a study on positive and safe use of the Internet. MCMC's communications officer told the Malay Mail on 28 September

2010 that the study involving police, Internet regulators, the information ministry and attorney general's chambers, aimed "to protect the public against websites that have contravened local laws and regulations, including those that concern online fraud activities, also phishing, obscene materials and identity thefts." The term "phishing" refers to fake online communications designed to trick people into giving personal information such as account log-ins. Authorities are also concerned about material online that incites racial or religious tensions. Indications are that the government is looking for ways to monitor undesirable blogs as well as the websites of alternative and mainstream media, and may be enlisting the help of Internet service providers (ISPs). *The Malaysian Insider* reported fears among publishers and bloggers that the government could be considering an Internet filter to block "undesirable websites", similar to China's aborted "Green Dam" software.

In the meantime, MCMC continues to investigate complaints of Internet abuse. Malaysia's information and communication culture minister, Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim, told the business magazine, *MIS Asia*, that MCMC has formed a special team, which included police, to investigate complaints online about possible threats to national security and unity. He said MCMC has received more than 500 complaints of Internet abuse and has looked at 503 websites, including Facebook and Twitter, for offences that would violate the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act — in particular section 233, which prohibits the online publishing of material which is "obscene, indecent, false, menacing or offensive in character with malicious intent". Of those complaints, 13 cases have been forwarded to the Attorney General's chambers, Dr Rais Yatim told Bernama, the national news agency, on 18 September 2010. "We have taken action, are taking action and will take action against the offenders," he explained. "But we need to be very cautious as the cyber world is very complicated." Internet publishers and bloggers see the KPMG study, and the Internet investigation team, as further steps by government to control new media and freedom of speech. The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) in Malaysia said this action was evidence of authorities setting out "no-go areas" and "instilling self-censorship" in the blogging community.

Malaysiakini

Malaysia's first and best-known online newspaper, Malaysiakini.com, has been fighting authorities since it went online in November 1999. It has 40 editorial staff working on Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English publications. Alexa.com reports that Malaysiakini.com gets 4.5 million monthly visits. Its CEO, Premesh Chandran, says the online paper had grown 20 to 30 per cent each year and 90 per cent of its funding comes from subscriptions and advertisements on its English website. A banner advertisement at the top of a page costs about 3,000 Malaysian ringgit (about US$968).

"We feel that our job is to be an independent news organisation, to report what's happening in society, provide differing news points and analysis," Chandran explained in an interview on June 2010.

Malaysiakini has trained about 200 citizen journalists around the country, who are equipped with Flip video cameras. They file reports on local issues such as: a playground where the swings are not working, a road not completed, violations by logging companies, and the effects of a washed-out bridge on school children. Videos can be seen at http://cj.my.

The online publication has its own video production unit, www.malaysiakini.tv. Editors push stories to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. As an integrated digital company, Malaysiakini has developed applications for iPhone and iPad users.

Chandran said people turned to Malaysiakini and other online newspapers because "by and large nearly all mainstream media is owned by individuals or companies, which are related to the ruling coalition. I don't think anybody can be seen to be independent. Because of the annual licensing regime newspapers can easily lose their licences." And Chandran says newspapers have been suspended, and closed down by authorities.

Malaysiakini and other online publications have greater freedom because of the law that says the Internet cannot be censored. Chandran said this allows online publications like Malaysiakini to do regular coverage of both sides and not shy away from stories concerning corruption, neglect by government, human rights, people dying in custody and issues like that. Newspapers, he said tend to shy away from stories "whenever there's a political cost. Even economic costs when the price of petrol goes up, they don't want to cover that."

The only sensitive point for the online publication is its coverage of religion. Chandran makes the distinction between religious discussion — apostasy, conversion, custody issues — and religious conflict. He said Malaysiakini encourages discussion of issues but is careful when dealing with conflict. "If there is a religious clash, we make sure we get the facts right," Chandran explained. "When churches get burned or a pig's head gets thrown in a mosque, these are acts of violence, these are acts of agitation. They are meant to agitate. So do you play up and provoke? No you don't." He said the role of the media is not to pit religious groups against each other because "it is an isolated act. We should just find the criminals and prosecute them."

Despite the law that says the Internet cannot be censored, over the past 11 years Chandran has experienced police raids where office computers were seized; and he and others at the online paper have spent time in jail.

Premesh Chandran with computers seized in the 2003 raid on Malaysiakini offices

Photo by Kim Kierans

In late 2010, Chandran was fighting against a ban by authorities concerning the publication of the book of cartoons by Malaysiakini's cartoonist, Zunar, whose real name is Zulkiflee S.M. Anwarul Haque. The cartoons in *1 Funny Malaysia* have already been published online and Chandran argues they are in the public domain. "What if it's on [an] iPad? That's allowed, but the physical book is not allowed," he said with a laugh. "We have this duality in law. If it is printed they can ban it, if it's published online they can't do anything about it."

Chandran said it is important that people should not see news just as news. "It's fighting for justice. It's part of the political process. If you're part of the process it's [journalism], is not a financial bottom line," Chandran said. "Democracy really cannot function without journalism. People should see it as a public good like how we have health services, how we have education services."

Chapter 10
A mobile phone future for India and China

The mobile phone is predicted to be one of the main platforms for innovation in Asia in coming years, especially in China and India. These two countries have by far the largest concentration of mobile phones in the world. People embrace mobile phones for a range of reasons. Mobiles cost much less than computers, require relatively simple infrastructure, and even less technological knowledge. Because of the low cost of labour, mobile phones in developing countries are much cheaper and easier to repair than computers.

People with limited literacy can use them. They are portable and permit a range of easy communications including text messaging. In most countries in Asia, a mobile phone costs less than US$25, and connection costs are low, e.g. in India calls cost less than one US cent a minute. As is discussed later in the chapter, inexpensive smart phones such as Huawei IDEOS become available for less than US$100. A smart phone has the computing capacity of a desktop machine but also functions as a mobile phone. The combined populations of India and China represent two out of every five people in the world. This final chapter describes media innovation in those populous nations.

Mobile phone innovations in India

By 2014, India will have the most mobile phones of any nation. That year India's population is expected to hit 1.26 billion, and be using 1.01 billion mobile phones. This represents a "tele-density" of 80 per cent. In other words, four out of every five Indians will have access to a mobile device by 2014. India reached 600 million mobile connections by late 2010, second only to China. Neighbouring nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were also powering ahead in terms of connections: Pakistan had 59 per cent penetration, Bangladesh 31 per cent and Sri Lanka 51 per cent. As this chapter will show, the mobile device is empowering millions of people by giving them access to information, content and services in convenient ways.

The mBillionth awards for South Asia announced in 2010 were the first of their kind in the region, to recognise innovations in the mobile areas of journalism and media. The name mBillionth refers to the project's milestone of 1,000 million mobile phone users in the area within the next half decade. The total is a distinct possibility, given the pace of mobile phone growth: somewhere between 7 million and 20 million

new subscribers connect each month in the region, depending on which source is used.

The mBillionth awards were intended to become annual from 2010 to recognise South Asia's leading mobile content platforms. Mobile would become the main platform of digital content and citizen service delivery, noted R. Chandrashekhar, secretary of India's Department of Information Technology in July 2010.

Mobile phones penetration		
Country	number of mobiles (in million)	% population covered
Sri Lanka	16.27	81.4
Pakistan	97.58	59.6
India	600	46.4
China	840	60.3
Bhutan	0.327	47.8
Afghanistan	12.9	35.1
Bangladesh	52.43	34.2
Nepal	5.77	23.2

Sources: Analysys International and techcrunchies.com, 2010

He is probably better known as the father of e-governance in India. Chandrashekhar's department endorsed the awards announced on 23 July 2010. Osama Manzar, curator of the mBillionth awards and founding director of India's Digital Empowerment Foundation, (http://defindia.net), said mobile devices would impact on all businesses. "Entrepreneurs from all sectors, community leaders from all regions and government officials from all departments are curious to know how they can leverage the mobility platform to cause transformational impact … and influence."

The award's partners included Mint newspaper (discussed in the first volume of *Asia's Media Innovators*), and companies like, OnMobile, IMImobile, One97 and the umbrella organisation, Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI). Subho Ray, president of IMAI, said the region was in the midst of a "mobile revolution" that was expanding radically in terms of grassroots reach, mass impact and market size. Arvind Rao, chairman and CEO of OnMobile, said mobile consumers from both rural and urban India were eager to explore new territories that would satisfy their needs for entertainment and information. "From banking to healthcare, music and television to gaming, a variety of services can be offered over the mobile, enabled by the advent of affordable high-speed connectivity," he said.

Vishwanath Alluri, chairman and CEO of IMI Mobile, said 70 per cent of India's population live in rural areas, and 56 per cent of the country's income comes from villages. The next growth area for mobile services was definitely rural India, which was triple the size of the urban market. Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder and managing director of One97 Communications, said mobile phones were changing the way people were living their day-to-day lives. "The challenge is to transform telecom networks into an empowering media by delivering meaningful content and services to all regions and communities."

Details of the mBillionth nominations showed the range of innovation in the region. In the education and learning category, Indian software company, Willager, developed its 'Ability' tool that converts typed text into a sign-language animation sequence to help differently-abled people comprehend messages. The software translates text into both one-handed sign language, used in the United States, and two-handed sign language, common in India and the UK. A product called 'Dakia', from India's One97 Communication, aims to empower rural communities with social and financial information. Sri Lanka's Dialog Telekom was nominated for a service called 'Tradenet' that allows communities at the bottom of the social pyramid, to trade products and services via mobile phone. Mahabir Pun, a Nepali teacher, has been using wireless technologies to offer services like video conferencing for tele-medicine to remote areas. In 2007, Mahabir Pun was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award, considered by many to be the equivalent of a Nobel Prize for Asia.

India's Comviva Technologies received a nomination in the business and commerce category for its 'mobiquity mMoney' software that permits mobile phone banking for managing all aspects of the remittance cycle. A vast number of Indians remit money home from overseas — increasingly via their mobile phone. Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Bangladesh was nominated for its paperless student admission system. In the entertainment category, India's OnMobile's 'm-Search' provides software that searches for music across a range of voice, SMS and Internet channels. And in the news and journalism category, 'See 'n' Report' from Pakistan received a nomination for its software that lets citizen journalists send photographs and videos from their mobile phones.

Mobile phone innovations

CGnet Swara is an innovative mobile phone system launched in 2007 by a Knight International Journalism Fellow, Shubhranshu Choudhary. The system allows India's 80 million Adivasi tribal community, in the state of Chhattisgarh, to tell their own stories via mobile phone and foster discussion about issues that the people consider important in their state. Adivasi is the local dialect of Hindi, and "swara" is the local word for "voice". Choudhary pioneered the project in partnership with UNICEF, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Microsoft Research India.

Initially, citizen journalists were trained to produce audio reports with mobile phones and their stories shared on the CGnet Swara network, a phone-message system where community information and news is posted after being vetted by professional journalists. Choudhary intended CGnet Swara to be a voice for the tribal communities of Chhattisgarh. MIT's Latif Alam and Microsoft Research India's Bill Thies, developed a new transmission system that bypasses the Internet. Instead, it uses mobile phone software that transmits audio reports using technology that normally delivers text messages. The reports are produced in local languages spoken by Adivasi tribes, such as Kudukh and Gondi. India bans all radio news except on the government station; hence the need for another transmission process.

This project allows people who previously had no access to news, due to language or literacy barriers, to receive independent audio news for the first time. Microsoft's Thies noted that services for accessing information over the phone were not new. But this system was one of the first that allowed callers to contribute their own content to the network, he said. Gondi is on UNESCO's list of most-endangered languages. "Though Gondi is spoken by 2.7 million people, according to an Indian census, this is the first news outlet in the Gondi language in any form," Choudhary wrote on the Knight International Journalism Fellows' web site. He plans to expand the training to four other states in the Dandakaranya region where Adivasi speakers live. Anyone with a mobile phone can listen to the reports. Users simply respond to voice prompts, so they do not have to be literate to access the reports. They are made public to CGnet Swara network members and anyone else interested in tribal community news. Choudhary said the strong oral story telling tradition among the Adivasi people, combined with the wide use of mobile phones in the region, made CGnet Swara a great news-sharing platform for the community.

The initiative received national coverage in a major newspaper, The Hindu, and won praise from independent reporters. Veteran journalist, Sudhir Pattnaik, said the network would revolutionise journalism at the grassroots level. Pattnaik is editor of the Samdrist news magazine and chairman of Independent Media, a group of filmmakers, writers and journalists, who develop alternative media initiatives in the eastern state of Orissa. A video about CGnet Swara's award can be found at YouTube.

Another successful Indian innovation is Gaon Ki Awaaz, a phone-based news service broadcast every morning and evening to the residents of Rampur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh. It was the country's first mobile news service for rural India. "Gaon ki awaaz" means village voice in Hindi. The spread of mobile telephony across rural India gave the project its infrastructure. Gaon Ki Awaaz began in December 2009 with bulletins sent to about 20 villagers. Within six months its subscriber base had grown to about 250.

The news service was the brainchild of Sunil Saxena, dean of the International Media Institute of India, based in Noida, on the outskirts New Delhi. "The motivation was to create a rural news and information service that could take the news and information to communities that cannot read newspapers because they are illiterate or [they cannot] watch news on television because of lack of electricity," Saxena said. "We wanted to create a platform for the villagers to share their knowledge, obtain information, or even report about social abuses and human rights violations."

Saxena said with more penetration of mobile phones and technology in rural areas, the need for information was also growing. The bulletins are compiled in Avadhi, the Hindi dialect in the area. Typical news includes information about village fairs, weddings, births and deaths, and thefts. Bulletins also provide details on health camps, local schools, sports coaching classes, and government directives on employment, healthcare and farm prices. Mint newspaper in New Delhi wrote a story about Gaon Ki Awaaz, describing how reporters Divyakar Pratap Singh and Priya Gupta travelled around the village to collect and record news with a mobile phone. Stories were sent to an editor using the phone's MMS capacity. Editor, Satyendra Pratap, sends the stories to Saxena in Nodia via MMS, who converts them into digital WAV files. These files are then emailed as attachments to Netxcell, an information technology company in Hyderabad that uses an application called Mobile Internet Platform, or MIP, to broadcast the bulletins as voice calls to subscribers.

The service was available for free until the end of May 2010. However, from June, Netxcell started charging a fee of 10 rupees a month (US 23 cents). On the first day of the subscription drive, 42 of the 45 villagers approached paid the subscription fee. "It is a great step forward for Gaon Ki Awaaz or Village Voice," said Satyendra Pratap, editor of the service. "It shows that the villagers want news about themselves, and in their [own] language."

See 'n' Report

See 'n' Report is a citizen journalism service where users submit photos, videos and text forms of news as it happens, via SMS, MMS, or email. See 'n' Report won a mBillionth journalism award in July 2010. The name comes from a contraction of "seen and reported". The service enables people to take photos and videos with their mobile phones when they witness breaking news. See 'n' Report was designed both as a platform for augmenting main stories at online newspapers with multimedia content, plus a way to publish breaking news before it becomes headlines in mainstream media. Its Pakistani designers provide the software, which is cloud-based, and open-source technology, to other media organisations to help them launch their own citizen journalism initiatives.

See 'n' Report licenses the software to other companies and this helps generate income. The monthly licence fee model for adopters is the company's main source of revenue. See 'n' Report was designed in such a way that it could be easily adapted and customised by other users. Several news and media sites in Asia have purchased the platform. Adopters customise the software and the editorial control systems. See 'n' Report's approach is to publish all content as it arrives and rely on the audience, a form of crowd sourcing or social censorship, to refine and edit the content. Other sites prefer to have more traditional editors in place to review content. The software is customisable to allow for a range of editorial processes and approaches.

Sharjeel Qureshi was a founder of the See 'n' Report service. He told the PBS IdeaLab site, published in the United States: "A citizen reporter captures an event

on a mobile phone and sends the content to See 'n' Report. There is no manual intervention at this stage. The content is automatically published on the See 'n' Report website to better ensure real-time reports which augment larger ongoing events."

The See 'n' Report platform is intelligent enough to detect submitted text and suggest related content and news stories. People can also post anonymously and they are not required to create complete profiles. If several citizen reporters submitted reports from the same event on their mobiles, such as the widespread floods in Pakistan in 2010, the system establishes a single thread from the incoming reports. Qureshi described it as a version of LinkedIn for freelance journalists. LinkedIn is a social networking site similar to Facebook, but its main audience is professional people aged 40 or older.

See 'n' Report has been integrated into social network sites. When stories are published on the web, they are automatically posted on See 'n' Report's Twitter and Facebook accounts. If a citizen journalist links their personal social media accounts to See 'n' Report, their reports will also be automatically posted to those locations.

Qureshi said he and his team started working on See 'n' Report in 2007. At the time there was heavy government-imposed censorship on media organisations in the region and the Internet, was the only free medium. Mobile phones grew in number in Pakistan and he and his colleagues "thought it would be a great idea to empower people to report news right from the cell phone and broadcast to the world in real-time". The site launched in April 2008, in the wake of Pakistan's Long March. This was the name for the social unrest that followed the sacking of the country's judiciary. See 'n' Report enabled citizens at home to witness the historical moment. Many major international news organisations, such as the BBC and the alternative blogging forum Global Voices, picked up See 'n' Report's material.

In October 2007, Reuters launched Reuters Market Light (RML), a pioneering service that provides crucial, local and customised information to Indian farmers via the mobile phone. RML won an award in the enterprise category at the mBillionth awards in July 2010. It launched initially in the western state of Maharashtra and a year later expanded to the state of Punjab. Examples of RML's information included spot crop prices, advisories for selected crops, commodity news and other information relevant to the farming community. Since its launch, more than 200,000 farmers in 15,000 villages across 10 states in India have subscribed to RML. Its accurate and timely information has the potential to reduce crop wastage, which across India runs into billions of dollars a year. Almost two-thirds of India's population depend on agriculture for a living. Because only 40 per cent of farmland is irrigated and markets are often a long way from farms, farmers are vulnerable to shifts in commodity prices or weather conditions. "The real question for farmers is how to market their produce, and such services [as RML] will surely help them in taking appropriate decisions," farm minister, Sharad Pawar, said at the service's launch in Pune in Maharashtra. In 2010, RML was recognised by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and

the British Government as one of the six initiatives that had the potential to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

New media developments in China

As well as having the potential to improve India's rural societies, the mobile phone has also become a key component of media change in China. More than 60 per cent of China's population of 1.34 billion owned a mobile phone as of September 2010, compared with less than 10 per cent at the start of the decade. The "tele-density" in Beijing and Shanghai was more than 90 per cent, according to estimates by BDA China, a British research firm based in Beijing. China's three mobile phone operators combined had 814 million subscribers by the end of July 2010, giving China the largest number of mobile phone subscriptions in the world. The country also has the largest number of Internet connections (420 million as of June 2010) and predicted to jump to 469 million by the end of 2010.

Of the people living in China's major cities, almost a third replaced their mobile phones regularly, noted Thomas Crampton, Asia-Pacific director of the global social media team for Ogilvy Public Relations. "A few minutes on the streets of Beijing or Shanghai confirms the affection Chinese consumers have for the latest mobile phone, but it is interesting to see research supporting the observation," Crampton wrote on his blog thomascrampton.com, in September 2010. A June 2009 report about Chinese consumers, by Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, noted that 28 per cent of all mobile phone owners replaced their phone if they considered them outdated. And the figure jumped to 32 per cent in the major cities.

The Chinese are the world's most enthusiastic Internet users, a study of global online habits has revealed. TNS, the market research company owned by British marketing giant WPP, interviewed almost 50,000 people in 46 countries for its "Digital Life" study. Details can be found at http://discoverdigitallife.com. The Chinese were also among the most receptive to brands and advertisers communicating with them via social networking sites, suggesting substantial opportunities for online marketers in Asia. The survey showed that emerging markets were overtaking Western Europe and North America in use of social networks, and noted sharp regional differences in behaviour patterns. TNS ranked global online populations through the time spent using the Internet and people's attitudes to technology. People in Latin America, the Middle East and China spent more time with social networks than they did with email, the survey said, and mobile phone access drove their Internet use. Those same populations were more likely to post blogs, photographs or videos online, and they valued Internet access more highly than people in more developed markets.

China had the world's largest number of mobile phone subscribers as of October 2010, and China Mobile continued as the world's biggest mobile phone carrier in terms of number of customers. In September 2010, China Mobile announced plans to start an Internet search engine in 2011 to challenge Baidu, the country's main search engine. In the decade to 2010, China Mobile's revenues jumped almost sevenfold and

its market valuation bettered those of western industry giants, AT&T and Vodafone Group. China Mobile chairman, Wang Jianzhou, told the World Economic Forum in Tianjin in September 2010 that the company planned to use its dominant position in the mobile phone market to expand into the Internet search engine market. China Mobile gets about 70 per cent of its revenue from voice, and growth was flat by late 2010, suggesting the motivation for the move into mobile data services that are needed when people surf the Internet from their mobile phone.

French news agency, AFP, reported on 12 October 2010 that Chinese e-commerce giant, Alibaba Group, had also launched a search engine, presumably to capitalise on Google's shrinking market share in China. John Spelich, a company spokesman, said in an email to AFP that the engine, called Etao, was being tested before being officially launched by Taobao. Microsoft's Bing technology would power the search engine. Taobao, which Alibaba Group owns, is China's largest online consumer e-commerce site. Google's share of China's online market fell to 24.2 per cent in the three months to June 2010, from 30.9 per cent in the first quarter, research firm Analysys International reported. Meanwhile, Baidu increased its dominance, with its market share rising to 70 per cent in the second quarter of 2010, from 64 per cent in the first three months of the year, Analysys said.

In August 2010, China Mobile's parent corporation reached agreement with China's official Xinhua news agency to partner in Internet search. The partnership will lead to the creation of a venture that should begin providing Internet search services from 2011, Wang said. The new search engine will be available for personal computers and mobile phones. China Mobile would not exclude the search engine of market leader Baidu from phones on its network, he said. Baidu led the mobile-Internet search market with a 34.3 per cent share, the South China Morning Post reported on 14 September 2010, citing research company Analysys International.

Internet video in China

Internet-delivered video has become very popular in China. Tudou, founded by Gary Wang, and YouKu, established by Victor Koo, are the giants in China. A beta version of YouKu — which means "excellent and cool" — began in June 2006, and the website was formally launched in December that year. The company initially focused on user-generated content but shifted focus to professionally produced videos licensed from more than 1,500 content partners. By January 2010, Youku.com was ranked as the leading Chinese Internet video provider, according to Internet metrics company, CR-Nielsen. That month, Youku and competitor Tudou announced the creation of a video exchange network, whereby Youku and Tudou would cross-license professionally produced video content. In 2009, Youku recorded revenues of 200 million RMB ($US30 million).

Tudou went live on 15 April 2005 and within two and a half years was serving more than 55 million videos a day. Because the average Tudou video is longer than

the average YouTube video, the total number of minutes it streams each day is significantly larger — about 15 billion minutes for Tudou against 3 billion for YouTube. Youku is said to be more popular among older males in northern China and Tudou is more popular among women. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, and in 2010 China's state-run media started investing heavily into creating online video content. Thomas Crampton, Asia-Pacific director of the global social media team for Ogilvy Public Relations, reported that government agencies had set aside 120 billion RMB (about $US 18 million) to develop online content.

Social media in China

Asia presents a huge commercial opportunity for online advertising because of the large number of people connected via social media. China alone had 221 million bloggers in September 2010, said social media guru, Thomas Crampton. Asia was the "most exciting part of the world for what's going on in social media," Crampton said, noting that Asians were jumping on the social media bandwagon at a faster rate than the rest of the world. Facebook launched an Asian sales office in Singapore in September 2010, to be better placed to sell advertising to companies aiming for the region's consumers. Blake Chandlee, Facebook's commercial director for regions outside North America and Western Europe, described the Asian market as "very, very big". "It's an enormous opportunity for us." Crampton said the growing number of Asians connected to the Internet was a key driver behind the region's social media craze.

Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are theoretically not available in China but tech-savvy people know how to get access. The Facebakers site (www. facebakers.com) showed Indonesia was second behind the United States in the number of monthly active Facebook subscribers, though its 28 million members was well behind the United States' 140.5 million in October 2010. It is difficult to establish exact numbers because Facebook declines to provide regional or country breakdowns. But the Facebakers site does offer relatively objective data. As of October 2010, Facebook had more than 550 million users worldwide, and according to Facebakers Asia contributed almost a fifth of the total users at 108 million. By mid-2010, Asians also provided the most "global tweets" on the microblogging platform, Twitter, according to data from Internet research company, Semiocast. "Twitter users in Asia, mainly located in Japan, Indonesia and South Korea, account for 37 per cent of tweets," said Semiocast on 22 June 2010, after it studied 2.9 million tweets over a period of 24 hours.

A research firm, Nielsen, said in July 2010 that while the United States pioneered much of the early Web 2.0 and social media innovation, Asia was "shaping — and in some cases leading — the new social media landscape". The report added that Asia's social media adoption had leapt past Western adoption rates. As of early 2010, for example, China's 221 million bloggers were more than twice the number in the

United States. Data from research firm, Forrester, showed Chinese, South Korean and Japanese created video, music and text content for social media at a much higher rate than Americans did in 2009. And despite China's ban on Facebook and Twitter, the nation still had the largest number of social media users of any country thanks to locally developed substitutes, Crampton said. "What has happened as a result [of the banning of Twitter and Facebook] is that domestic players have arrived, and these domestic players are the rough equivalents of what is happening internationally," he said. For example, the Chinese video-sharing website YouKu and social networking site Qzone were "one hundred per cent replacements" for foreign sites such as YouTube and Facebook, Crampton said.

On 16 September 2010, the Chinese portal, Sina.com, published its first white paper about the Chinese micro-blog market. The white paper predicted that by the end of 2010, China would have more than 65 million registered active microblogging accounts, and by 2011 the number would be more than 100 million. Sina's micro-blog service is the top micro-blog site in China by any range of measurements, including brand recognition and frequency of use. As the name suggests, microblogging is blogging with a limited number of characters. For example, Twitter permits a maximum of 140 characters.

Chinese people are increasingly updating micro-blogs with their mobile phones because the process is simple, fast and easy. The Sina white paper said almost two in five people (37 per cent) logged onto their Sina micro-blogs via Internet-enabled mobile phones. People start sending and updating content from 10am each day and peak usage tends to be in the evening about 8pm. Sina's statistics showed that 57 per cent of all Sina micro-bloggers were male, but amongst its most active users the genders were reversed, with 65 per cent of females being the most active. More about Sina can be found at http://english.sina.com.

China's mobile Internet users are overwhelmingly male, at 89 per cent of the total. However, research from Analysys in October 2010, showed that the number of women browsing on their phones has jumped from 5 per cent in 2009 to almost 11 per cent in 2010. This change in gender demographics will probably produce a range of new web sites and new kinds of female-focused phones. This is inevitable given that China is the world's largest mobile phone market.

Rise in smart phone numbers

One of the big developments we can expect in the near future is a rise in the number of smart phones. A smart phone functions as a mobile phone but has the capacity of a desktop computer plus a range of extras such as a camera, smart software and the ability to surf the Internet. Smart phones are expected to account for 37 per cent of the global mobile phone market by 2014, and mobile Internet access is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 39 per cent in the years to 2014.

Parallel with smart phone adoption, is the growing adoption of newer smart phone operating systems from Apple and Android. Not surprisingly, older operating systems

like Symbian and Windows Mobile have become less popular in terms of market share, though they still have the largest numbers. In July 2010, Comscore published their results from a global study of the market share of smart phone operating systems. Apple and Google were the clear winners. The chart below shows the change in market share in percentage points between July 2009 and July 2010.

Smart phone adoption in the five biggest European economies — the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain and Italy — grew 41 per cent in the year to September 2010, to 60.8 million subscribers. Prior to 2009, Nokia sold more than two out of every three smart phones worldwide. They used the Symbian operating system. But by mid-2010, the number had dropped to one in every two. The chart above shows Symbian's market share dropped almost 15 per cent in a year. Apple's iPhone has been the challenger among smart phones since its launch in 2007. A range of new phones has become available since 2010 and many use the Android operating system provided free by Google.

As people in emerging economies demand web access from their mobile phones, the challenge for manufacturers is to offer more functions without increasing the cost too much. Many manufacturers hope the free Android operating system will help make smart phones with touch-screens available for under US$100. In September 2010, HTC, a Taiwanese company, launched two new models of the Desire, the HD and the Z — the former is a high-end device designed as an alternative to the iPhone 4. The HD costs about US$150.

The Chinese technology firm Huawei sells competitively priced smart phones running Google's Android operating system. Many of those phones are sold in Africa. For example, the Huawei IDEOS is the cheapest smart phone in the Kenyan market and sells for 8,000 shillings (US$99). The IDEOS is a touch-screen phone that comes with Bluetooth connectivity, GPS, a 3.2-megapixel camera, up to 16Gb of storage and it can be transformed into a 3G wi-fi hotspot that connects up to eight devices. It is expected to increase the penetration of Internet use among the estimated 20 million mobile phone consumers in Kenya. "The IDEOS is an affordable option, designed to lower barriers to entry and facilitate easy mobile Internet access," said Kevin Tao, the CEO of Huawei Device. "Ownership of the smart phone is one of the key means of getting people into the 'golden age of mobile broadband',"

Market share of smart phone operating systems
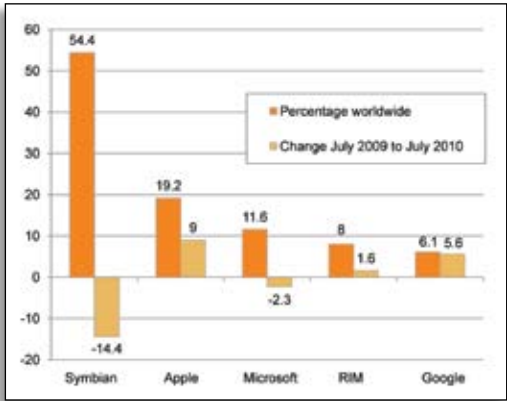
Source: Comscore, 2010

he said. China and India, the world's most populous nations, continue to develop their Internet and mobile phone infrastructures. Given the size of their populations, improved education levels and the increasing numbers of high-quality graduates, it is inevitable that the innovation coming from these countries will have a major impact on the world in the next decade.

About the authors

Dr Stephen Quinn

Stephen Quinn is head of the division of international communication at the University of Nottingham's Ningbo campus in China. An Australian, he was a journalist for two decades with some of the world's premier news organisations before he became a university academic in 1996. Between 1975 and 1995 Dr Quinn worked for regional newspapers in Australia; the Bangkok Post; the UK Press Association, BBC-TV, Independent Television News and The Guardian in London; the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Sydney; and daily newspapers in New Zealand as well as Television New Zealand. In 2002 and 2003 Dr Quinn was a producer with the Middle East Broadcasting Centre while running a research centre in Dubai, to re-acquaint himself with new television production technologies. Dr Quinn has been a university professor in Australia, the UAE and the United States.

This is Dr Quinn's 15th book. He has also published dozens of book chapters and refereed journal articles, and thousands of media articles since 1997. His previous book, which appeared in March 2010, was Funding journalism in the digital age: Business models, strategies, issues and trends. Dr Quinn's book on reporting with the mobile phone, Mojo: Mobile Journalism in the Asian Region, appeared in December 2009. The first volume of Asia's Media Innovators appeared in 2008. In 2007 with Dr Stephen Lamble Dr Quinn co-wrote Online Newsgathering: Research and Reporting for Journalism. Three books on convergence appeared in 2005-06. Chapters of the second volume of Asia's Media Innovators also appeared online as the book was being written at www.kas.de/medien-asien/en

In the decade to 2010 Dr Quinn presented more than 160 papers and seminars in 28 countries. More than a third were by invitation. Dr Quinn maintains industry links by contributing to newspapers, consulting for media companies and running training courses. As of late 2010 he had run more than 100 courses in nine countries. He is a consultant for Innovation International, which publishes the annual report on Innovations in Newspapers for the World Association of Newspapers, and a member of the international committee of the Online News Association.

Kim Kierans

Kim Kierans is a Professor and former Director of the School of Journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, Canada. She is currently serving a five-year term as university Vice-President and is responsible for academic, research and operations. She is responsible for international student exchanges at the university. Kierans also finds time to teach, which remains her passion; this year she taught journalism research methods and foundations of journalism. Other courses taught over the years include broadcast writing and reporting and radio documentary. Her research areas include community media and concentration of media ownership.

She trains internationally and was part of a team that worked with journalists in Cambodia between 2001 and 2003 to build reporting capacity for the 2003 national elections. Kierans has been an adjunct faculty member in the Konrad Adenauer Asian Centre for Journalism MA journalism program, at Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines since 2004. She has developed and taught courses such as Advanced Reporting, Writing for Broadcast, Broadcast Issues, and Radio: A Tool for Democratic Discourse. She supervises MA student projects.

Kierans started as a print reporter/photographer in Canada in 1975 working at community and then small daily newspapers. In 1977 she began her more than 20 year career with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the country's national public broadcaster where she worked in mostly in radio as a producer, reporter, news editor and news announcer. She worked with local, regional and national programs such as Sunday Morning and Media File. She continues to produce radio documentaries broadcast nationally on programs such as The Current and Ideas.

She was co-editor and contributor to "The New Journalist", which was released in May 2010. She is a member of AMIC, Canadian Communications Association, Radio-Television News Directors Association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Canadian Association of Journalists and Canadian Journalists for Free Expression.

Kierans holds a BA (Hons) from King's/Dalhousie Universities and a MA from Saint Mary's University.

Alastair Carthew

Alastair has more than 40 years experience as a newspaper and broadcasting journalist, public relations executive and senior manager in New Zealand, Australia, Britain, South Africa and Thailand. He is a specialist in public relations, writing, media training, crisis management and event management. He also specializes in advising on environmental matters.

From 2001-2007 Alastair managed the Star Alliance airline office in Bangkok, Thailand, responsible for media relations, public relations, event management, corporate affairs and management of the office. He now manages Star Alliance's global corporate social responsibility programme, Biosphere Connections. Since 2008 Alastair has lived and worked from his home in Phuket as a writer, broadcaster and public relations adviser. His clients are: Star Alliance, Thai Airways, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Thana Burin PR, Objective Communications, Laguna Resorts & Hotels, Laguna Holiday Club, Lee Marine Yacht Brokerage.

Alastair writes a monthly column on aviation for the Phuket Gazette; is a sports analyst/commentator on radio 91.5 FM, Phuket; a columnist for Windows Magazine, Phuket and contributes to Property Report magazine. Alastair co-edits the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Asia Media Directory and has done two website updates in 2009 and 2010. He has organized two seminars for Konrad Adenauer Foundation on the strategic importance of water and political communication.

In New Zealand Alastair worked in several senior journalism and public relations roles. He was chief Parliamentary reporter of Television New Zealand; Managing Director, Consultus Public Relations; Corporate Affairs Manager for Air New Zealand, Public Affairs Manager for Television New Zealand and Public Affairs Manager for Wellington City Council.

As an experienced journalist, Alastair has undertaken considerable newspaper/magazine/website writing including for the following publications: New Zealand correspondent for Newsweek and the Christian Science Monitor, the Sydney Sun Herald, the Western Farmer And Grazier; South Pacific News Service (NZL Parliamentary Press Gallery) editorials for major New Zealand newspapers; Asia Pacific Times (Germany) and The Nation (Thailand).

Asia's Media Innovator's Vol. 2.0 is a new volume of studies of innovation at media companies in the Asian region. The success of these companies shows the dynamism in the region, and reflects its potential for success. This second edition of the 2008 *Asia's Media Innovators* is more than an offspring: It's covering the innovative companies, from South Korea in the Far East to India in South Asia, and at the same analysing who and what is driving these players and their innovations.

The book is divided into 10 chapters covering a range of new media innovations in various countries in the region. Each chapter covers forms of media, including online sites, newspapers and broadcast outlets, plus new online and mobile phone ventures. The book also suggests possible future areas of research and development.

Asia's development is linked with the region's media. Asia's media will continue to play an important role in reporting the development, and being the testing arena for a wide range of important innovations.

The authors of this book, *Stephen Quinn* and *Kim Kierans*, are well known experts on the fields of communication, media and journalism. Stephen Quinn is head of the division of international communication at the University of Nottingham's Ningbo campus in China. An Australian, he was a journalist for two decades with some of the world's premier news organisations before he became a university academic in 1996. Kim Kierans is a Professor and former Director of the School of Journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax, Canada. She is currently serving a five-year term as university Vice-President and is responsible for academic, research and operations.