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Just as the American troops were building up their forces against Iraq in early 2003, a new and deadly virus was slowly beginning to make its rounds in Asia and beyond. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) had some media coverage before the Iraq war. But this was soon overwhelmed by the news on the war. Reportage on the SARS virus only became prime news after the focus on the war had subsided.

Since September 11, international news coverage in Asia has largely focused on the US war led on terrorism and Iraq. There were many voices of protests against the war. Some of it was shown over television. Others dominated websites and chatrooms. These show the power of the media and those who control it to set the agenda for world politics and democracy. This issue on New Media and Journalism in Asia: Freedom of Expression, Censorship and Ethics brings together research articles and commentaries on the implications of new technology and contemporary journalism on democracy.

Terence Lee looks at how the Internet has impacted politics in Singapore and how the state very quickly has taken measures to control the new medium. In Hong Kong, Alana Maurushat looks at the implication of the territory’s new anti-terrorism ordinance on issues of privacy and free expression while Judith Clarke ponders on the state of press freedom five years since the handover of Hong Kong to China.

Kasun Ubayasiri shows how the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka were able to bypass state media censorship by going onto the Web. Jonathan Woodier, takes a regional perspective and examines the state of the media in post-September 11 scenario, while Jurgen Rudolph and Lim Thou Tin argue that the Internet has the dual potential of generating income as well as facilitating democracy.

In journalism often times ethics are overlooked. We are reminded how these are transmitted to young journalists in the Singapore Straits Times by Beate Josephi while Hao Xiaoming looks at the difference in values among mainstream and tabloid journalists.

The Internet’s function as a public relations tool is explored comparatively by Joy Chia in Australia, and Shirley Sun, TY Lau and Rebecca Kuo in Taiwan.

We also get an insight into how journalism training and education are delivered in China and the South Pacific. Arnold Zeittin shares his teaching experience in Guangzhou while David Robie records the case of online campus journalism in the South Pacific.

Finally, Frank Morgan shares his philosophy on the humanities and its contributions to professional media education.

- James Gomez
Guest Editor