

This Issue



ALL KINDS OF VOLCANOES are spewing forth in the new mediascape. Repression, suppression, confession — and controversy — are the heaving geology of a focus on the media by the Truth Commission.

Novel (and novice) owners have cracked the crust of commercial media, moving not only to transform their holdings, but also to expand them. Magazine mania burst out — and bust — in '96, but will erupt again in '97.

The media magma this year will certainly include commercial and community television. The coming commercial radio outlets will need to avoid the fate of Capital Radio, a beacon now gone bang. Bop will be absorbed by the SABC, while Auckland Park itself will struggle to hold its politically independent ground and resist buckling under the financial heat.

Meanwhile, unpredictable vigilante pressures on journalists still bubble and seethe. Threats of Section 205 have been pushed back below the surface — but there's no doubting that they could re-emerge.

Key streams in this fast flowing lava are assessed in contributions by Benny Gool, Monty Cooper, Robin Sewlal, Annelize Visser and Karen Thorne. They measure the velocity

and direction, the depth and dangers involved.

Cutting through the dust and gas of '96, Natal Newspaper cartoonists give a visual chronicle of current times, while Bronwyn Keene-Young gives us a position within the changing face of global censorship.

Less definitive than these two landmarks, but looming most large in this unfamiliar terrain, are the politics of journalism in '97.

Nelson Mandela tried to put the press firmly in its place when he met with SANEF soon after its launch: the transcript published here makes fascinating reading. Mike Tissong submits to the prominent place that SANEF hopes to occupy in the molten months to come. The place of the SA Communications Services (SACS) should be ten feet under, says Chris Vick, who foresees better political ventilation coming out of the Comtask report.

Looking back on at the location of journalism last year, Judy Sandison records how her radio team successfully roped Kwazulu-Natal politicians into a charter for election coverage. Mike Siluma highlights the momentum in arguing that all stakeholders should help draw up a national editorial charter. Editors, especially, should lead the flow, he says.

The role of editors, especially in relation to

fundamental forces pushing for expanded revenue streams, is discussed by former editors Ton Vosloo, Dougall Nisbet-Smith and Neville Stack. Ex-editor, Guy Berger, offers advice to practising editors who fear that cyberspace is even more dangerous than terra infirma.

The challenge entailed in redesigning a petrified paper in a fluid context is the contribution by *Cape Argus* editor, Shaun Johnson. *Daily Dispatch* editor, Gavin Stewart, tells how the change-by-stealth model has sustained increased sales in the rural Eastern Cape.

The responsibilities of today's editors, and of the generation coming up behind them, entail seismic action on that bedrock of the industry: training.

Mathatha Tsedu tackles the need for more mid-career training; Gabu Tugwana comes down on its centrality to transformation. Graeme Addison finds a lot lacking in tertiary training, while Jane Duncan warns that a narrowing track for journalism could come from the National Qualifications Framework.

All told, this is a mediascape with a very volatile surface. But it's also one with a wide and inviting horizon — something that our contributors certainly celebrate. Join them in scrutinising the shape of the media matrix.

New Media 2000 10-12 September 1997

Deliver a paper, give a demo, or imbibe the insight at New Media 2000: a conference about the Internet and the Media in Africa.

New Media 2000 is hosted by the New Media Laboratory, Department of Journalism & Media Studies at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

The event will examine the challenges and possibilities that information technology brings to news organisations and the practice of journalism in Africa.

New Media 2000 brings together global journalists to examine the significance of the Internet for publishing and journalism research in Africa. This unprecedented gathering is expected to be a watershed in helping the continent and its media take a short-cut to the latest developments in the Information Age.

Among the organisations that have already indicated an interest are: ● Times Media Ltd, South Africa; ● Poynter Institute of Media Studies, USA; ● Freedom Forum, USA; ● University of Queensland Journalism department, Australia; ● Unit for Digital Media, Stockholm University, Sweden.

New Media 2000 conference registration fee: R300

The conference will be the culmination of a week of workshoping at the following prior events (details available on request):

- Curriculae for teaching online skills: (conference of South African journalism teachers, 7 - 8 September)
- Pj '97: (2nd annual conference of South African photo-journalists and photojournalism instructors; includes major digital component, 7 - 8 September)
- New Media Workshop: (Hands-on training in digital imaging incl Photoshop, Advanced HTML, Javascript, Search engine usage, Computer-Aided Reporting and Research, 9 Sept.)
- Teletraffic - Rhodes University Computer Science conference (8 - 10 September)

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 9 Registration

WEDNESDAY 10

Session 1:

- A. African media, telecommunications and the information highway.
- B. Online media: the international experience.

Session 2:

- A. Getting wired, and getting content in Africa: who pays, who benefits?
- B. Web design for publishing in Africa.

Session 3: Panel discussion:

- A. Why go online?: Media publishers (print, broadcast and e-zine) speak.
- B. Web design for mass communication: Web designers speak.

Session 4: Demonstrations, surfing.

- Session 5: Opening speech: Minister of Posts, Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Mr Jay Naidoo (to be confirmed)

THURSDAY 11

Session 1:

- A. Broadcast/narrowcast and web publishing.
- B. Search engines & intelligent agents.

Session 2:

- A. Organising online newsrooms.
- B. Ethical, legal and copyright issues in online journalism.

Session 3: Panel discussion:

- A. Using online resources for research: journalists speak.
- B. Writing about the Internet: web columnists speak.

Session 4: Demonstrations, surfing.

Session 5: Keynote speech: Neil Jacobsohn, Electronic Media Manager, TML. (to be confirmed)

FRIDAY 12

Session 1:

- A. Contextual journalism: writing and editing for online readers.
- B. Multi-media online.

Session 2:

- A. Calculators and interactivity: the shape of journalism to come.
- B. Webcasting: what do we know about the audiences?

Session 3: Panel discussion:

- A. Teaching online skills to journalists: mentors/trainers speak.
- B. Interactivity & moderating news/discussion groups: webmasters speak.

Session 4: Demonstrations, surfing.

Session 5: Concluding speech: Adam Clayton Powell III, vice president: technology programs, Freedom Forum. (to be confirmed)

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