

The Fight Goes on for Global Media Freedom

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Abstract

The reporting of news has never been a simple or easy exercise. But as traditional print media continues to see its revenues fall, and online media companies seek new commercially-driven ways to deliver profit, how are these financial pressures affecting news reporting? With increasing reliance on key sources of advertising income, is the news we consume influenced not only by what is “fit to print”, but what needs to be left out or tailored to keep profits flowing? Are news journalists under greater pressure to self-censor or alter their work to keep not only their editors happy, but advertising/commercial managers happy?

A research project at openDemocracy - called openMedia - is investigating these new economic pressures across Europe. A pan-European survey, which protects the identity of responding journalists, is aiming to take a snapshot of how such pressures are affecting newsrooms. With editorial freedom critical to the functioning of democracy, are we missing the danger signals of how financial pressures are shaping what gets reported? And with trust a key element in the critical relationship between news providers and consumers, what happens when trust begins to fray at the edges?

Short Biography

James Cusick is political correspondent of *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*. As an experienced member of the lobby, he has previously worked at The Sunday Times and the BBC. His career as a journalist has been split between print and television, including senior positions as producer with Sir David Frost and at BBC Newsnight. He is also an award-winning golf and travel writer, working for over a decade as the UK contributing editor for one of the USA's leading golf magazines. He broadcasts regularly for the BBC and CNN. He lives in London.