

Tabloid content essay



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“ The success of News Ltd is based on tabloid content” 1. Introduction News has always been a matter of commerce, and it has always entertained as well as informed (Barkin 2003, p. 64).

News Ltd, undeniably, has focused on tabloid content in order to derive an enormous benefit from it. To rise fame, broadly speaking, News Ltd has exploited the interest of the target audiences, crucially by appealing to their human side. This is to say that the success of News Corporations is mainly contributed by tabloid contents. 2. What is tabloid? Traditionally, as Barkin (2003, p. 1) defined, tabloid referred to the size of a page in a newspaper, its papers had smaller pages and often contained sensational contents.

However, there is another aspect that worth mentioning when we use this term. Tabloid primarily covers “ soft news” which arouses the curiosity and appeal to human sides (Turner 2006, p. 10). Frequently, they are amusing or enjoyable stories, like gossips or personal stories.

There is no denying that news will be more appealing if it contains stories or events that concern hot issues or famous figures. According to Caldwell (1995, p. 24), the term “ tabloid” describes two tendencies. The first is about stories with vivid and impressive images attached to them.

Secondly, sensational topics are the foci of attention. 3. Audiences’ tendencies Bernstein (cited in Grabe et al 2003, p. 387) stated that the media trend is towards the creation of a “ sleazoid info-tainment culture”.

There is no doubt about this remark. As a matter of fact, the audiences of the media require not only serious news; take politics, education, economics

for examples, but also arousing contents. It has been observed by Bird (1997, p. 16) that everyone likes scandalous stories.

They have the power of keeping people in front of the televisions and enabling the readers to buy newspaper. Tabloid content opens up discussions and exists in the public relatively long time because it gets readers involved in the stories by engaging them to make comments and discuss in daily conversations. As a rule, the stronger impressions that news leaves on the readers or viewers, the longer it will be in existence in their mind. It is true that tabloids arouse sensational news and public affairs. A research was conducted 3 years ago, the authors formulated some hypotheses about tabloid and news contents and readers' reactions.

This experiment has come up with the results that " tabloid production has several interesting effects on information processing" (Grape et all 2003, p. 407). A study called " The journalism of Outrageousness", in addition, that was made in 1996 by Matthew C. Ehrlich (cited in Barkin 2003, p. 67-68) pointed out four recurrent central themes in tabloid contents.

They are sensationalism, innocent victims, irony and sarcasm, sentimentality. What is more, Bird (cited in Barkin 2003, p. 69) had carried out another study of tabloid readers. She found that readers of supermarket tabloids were " fairly well-educated and interested in the world around them".

Catching the psychology of the audiences with these elements, therefore, tabloids become the crucial parts of the media. 4. Tabloids and Ethics

Another angle that causes many arguments is that to grip the audience,

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tabloids usually infringe upon the privacy of some particular persons; for example: there are pictures that appear in tabloids with sex appeal. Archard (1998, p.

82) argues that this is definitely impermissible. In Lyall's view, in addition, tabloid is something that deals with "uncultured populism", irresponsible gossip and sexual photographs of celebrities. Interestingly, however, most of celebrities agree to pay to have their private lives disclosed for the purpose of promoting their fame. Notwithstanding, gossip also has some merits. Thanks to its content of whom and what, a particular community is formed to unite those who want to induct into that group. Regard to Hartley's idea (cited in Turner 2003, p.

93), he views the media in both sides: pleasure and pedagogy, crucially at entertainment since media citizens can participate in public debate.

Generally, it is not completely good conclusion that public interest does invade the private life of famous persons because there are still moral values that it does evaluate (Archard 1998, p. 90). 5. Examples from Murdoch In Chenoweth's view (2001, p.

58), Rupert Murdoch "is a powerfully ordinary figure" and is "the archetypal modern media mogul" (Chenoweth 2001, p. iii). Undeniably, this person's News Corporation is one of the largest communications conglomerates in the world. His News empire holds companies in America, Britain and Australia... Time magazine used to rate him as the fourth most powerful person in the United States, behind the President, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank, and Bill Gates at Microsoft.

In Australia, Telstra- a government-owned telephone, paid for a \$ 3 billion fibre-optic cable rollout for Foxtel, a joint-venture cable service with Murdoch (Chenoweth 2001, pp. 19-120). Significantly, also, Murdoch is infamous for the tabloid contents in his newspapers; one of them is his Page 3 topless girl, which could be found in The Sun. As causing a big controversy, this page was about to be closed. However, this page is strongly advocated by the members of BBC forum. This is to say that people read newspapers not only for information but also for the satisfaction of human interest (Sunday Business 2003, p.

1). What is more, Murdoch's power did influence on political side through the media. To support the British Conservative Party on the election day in 1992, for example, a picture of Labour leader Neil Kinnock's head squeezed into a light bulb had been shown on page one of The Sun newspaper with a very interesting headline, " If Kinnock wins today, will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights. " When Major won the victory for the Conservative Party that year, as a result, The Sun crowded, " It was the Sun wot won it" (Chenoweth 2001, p. 202). Besides, there is another instance.

Lyall (2004) reported a case that The Guardian- a London newspaper- was about to change its format into tabloid in order to increase the sales. The Times of London- owned by Rupert Murdoch- and The Independent has gone tabloids and this brings back a dramatical benefit. 6. Conclusion To sum up, tabloid contents, there is no doubt that, has a great power to hold the attention of the public. Therefore, if the news corporations know how to exploit the interest of human side through the gossip or scandals, etc..., a

real and considerable benefit will come soon. This is an important point to bear in mind when dealing with the success of News Limited.

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