

Media use in malaysia essay

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



1. Introduction (History of Malaysia, Important information of Malaysia)

information-baseIntroductionThe Federation of Malaysia, first formed in 1963, previously consisted of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah.

Before 1963, these territories were under British rule. The Japanese invasion from 1942 – 1945 during World War II ended British domination in Malaysia.

Malaysia has a total area of 329, 750 sq km, with a total population of 26, 160256 people.

The Malay language (Bahasa Melayu) is the official language of Malaysia.

Being a country with diverse ethnics and races, other languages used include English, Chinese dialects (Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien etc.), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi and Thai.

(Table of ethnic groups/races to be inserted)Malaysia is strategically located at a seaborne trade route and has earned itself a name as a global trading hub. It is rich in natural resources like tin, rubber, palm oil and liquified natural gas. Since the 1970's, it also became one of the leading South East Asian countries in terms of manufacturing goods like textiles, electronic goods and rubber products. By 1990, Malaysia was considered a Newly-industrialized Country (NIC). In the 1980s, Dr.

Mohamad Mahathir, prime minister of Malaysia, instituted economic reforms with the goal of transforming Malaysia into one of Asia's " Asian Tigers".

Although that did not materialize, Malaysia's enormous economic growth from the 1980s to 2003 was largely contributed by its leader. Mahathir stepped down in 2003 and was replaced by Abdullah Badawi, who aimed to reduce government corruption. Malaysia owes its successful historical

economic record to a few factors. Geographically, it lies close to global trade routes, allowing international influence and trade economy. Governments have also aimed at managing the economy while maintaining inter-ethnic peace and stability. However, Malaysia may be too dependent on its manufacturing of a limited range of products. It faces fierce competition from lower-wage Asian countries like China and India.

2. History of media information-base
Malaysia's media faced a long history of change and development since the British Colonialism in the 1800s. Different forms of mass media were brought into Malaysia throughout the course of its history. Early Stages – British Colonialism
British Colonialism of Malaysia, from 17 March 1824 to 1 January 1942, brought about the first form of mass media in Malaysia – newspapers.

(Timetoast, 2011). All newspapers were published in the Straits Settlement states – Singapore, Malacca and Penang. The first newspaper was named Prince of Wales Island Gazette (PWIG). Its first publication was 1 March 1806.

The newspaper targeted mainly the colonialists and expatriates instead of the locals. The PWIG was published for 21 years, closing down in 1827. A few other newspapers, both English and non-English ones were published around the same period.

However, none of them managed to survive long term. Two main reasons for the lack of newspapers in the 1800s were the poor economic status of the local Malay community and the lack of formal education. The two crucial

factors in newspaper publishing were missing, and thus, it was almost impossible to develop a market.

(Mustafa K Anuar, 2007). Nevertheless, the first Malay weekly newspaper, *Jawi Peranakan*, was published in 1876. A few other Malay publications such as *Utusan Melayu* and *Lembaga Melayu*, emerged as well. They focused on issues regarding the Malay community, in turn provided “ intellectual, political and religious leadership in the Malay community”. (Mustafa K Anuar, 2007). Mandarin newspapers, *Shen Won Kie Min Sing Pao* and *Xi Min Ri Bao*, were published in Sarawak at the same time period.

However, many newspaper publications were outlawed during the Japanese Occupation. After the Japanese Occupation in 1942, newspaper publications such as *Usatan melayu* and *The Straits Times* made a comeback. New publications like the *Suara Rakyat* emerged. Struggle for Independence and Media Freedom
The local state of affairs between 1950s and 1960s marked a very crucial turning point in Malaysia’s independence and media freedom. Hostility and tension between the different races were high and outbreaks of social riots were common.

In the 1950s, the British began losing support from the locals due to increasing communist influence and Malay boycott. Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya, was granted Independence from the British colonial rule in 1957. The British imposed Malaya Union eventually gave way to the Federation of Malaysia in 1957, allowing Malaysia to be self-governed. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) was a part of the Working Committee on drawing up the new constitution. (Martin R., 1976).

In 1961, a massive outrage broke out among its journalists when a representative from UMNO was appointed the Director of Operations in Utusan Melayu. Thomas & Niam (2004) noted that the 93 day protest was led by former editor-in-chief, Said Zahari, opposing the takeover by UMNO. The reporters were enraged as “ the new appointee was given specific instructions to make Utusan Melayu support the ruling coalition.” Utusan Melayu also stopped publishing for a day However, the protest ended with UMNO buying over a significant percentage of shares, “ enabling the party to have full allocative control over the newspaper”.

(p. 252). Said Zahari (2011) stated that “ press freedom died with 1961 Utusan strike” as the current law and systems do not allow journalists to educate the public regarding matters of press freedom. (as cited in Uppercase, 2011). The 1961 Utusan Strike is the only occasion in Malaysia whereby journalists have openly protested against political party control to protect the freedom of its press. Subsequently, other political parties also began to buy over other media organizations. Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) currently has “ a 58% stake in Star Publications, while publishes Malaysia’s top selling daily the Star”, while the National Indian Congress controlling a substantial amount of the Tamil press, often uses it to spotlight its president, Samy Vellu.

(p. 252). Ownership of media has shifted from press workers to political parties in the event of the 1961 Utusan Strike.

Following the 1961 Utusan Strike, the 1969, May 13 ethnic riots heartened the government to induce even tighter control over the media. According to

Lim M. K. (2007), “ inflammatory speeches made by various parties (opposition and incumbent alike) and also the victory procession made by the opposition parties” sparked off the riots. A state of emergency was declared in the country and the publication of all newspapers was suspended. The ban was lifted two days after, on the condition that newspapers practice self-censorship regarding the riots. The 1969 ethnic riots marked a defining moment in the media policy of Malaysia. Amendments and new laws were set into place, exerting control over expressions of opinions, especially in the media landscape.

Self censorship among the press in Malaysia was also first established back then. Media Development in the 1970sThe National Economic Policy (NEP) was implemented in 1970, shortly after the 1969 ethnic riots. According to Mohamed Rais bin Saniman (2008), the objective of the NEP was to promote “ equity and balance among Malaysia’s social and ethnic groups in their participation in the development of the country and in the sharing of the benefits from modernization and economic growth”.

Following the NEP, then Prime Minister, Mahathir, administrated the Privatization Policy in the 1980s. The Privatization Policy allowed new newspaper and magazine publications and television and radio stations to enter the media industry. According to Radio Televisyen Malaysia (2012), radio was introduced into Malaysia in 1921. However, it was not widely used or developed until an outbreak of social riots in1948. Radio in Malaysia is state owned. It began round the clock broadcasting in 1969 under the ownership of the Ministry of Information. Today, there are six national radio

channels in Malaysia, broadcasting in Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil, as well as local dialects such as Kadazan, Murut and Bidayuh to cater to East Malaysians in Sabah and Sarawak.

(Radio Televisyen Malaysia [RTM], 2012). Television was introduced into Malaysia in 1963. Its first two television channels, TV1 and TV2 are owned by RTM. The two state-run channels were used by the government to promote “ dominant ideology and policies of the ruling elite”. (Juliana Abdul Wahab, 2006, p. 3). Malaysia’s first commercial station TV3 began broadcasting in 1984 after the implementation of the Privatization Policy. Two other networks were introduced in the 1990s.

However, they were unable to hold out in the long run. Private broadcasting channel, Metro Vision, was established on 1st July 1995. It had to cease operations in 2000 due to financial issues. Malaysia’s first subscription based television network Mega TV was also established in 1995. It provided channels such as CNN, Discovery and ESPN.

The network faced difficulties due to “ unattractive package offered” and “ poor transmission”. (p. 3). Eventually, it ceased operations in 2001 due to plunging subscription rates and financial issues. The next few private commercial television networks to be introduced into Malaysia are ntv 7, Channel 9, Mitv and FineTV, in 1998, 2003, mid 2005 and late 2005 respectively.

According to Juliana Abdul Wahab (2006), the objective of ntv7 is to “promote nation building and to close the gap between West and East Malaysians”. (p. 4).

Yet the television network broadcasts “only 20% of local programs” with the rest being imported shows. Channel 9 targets mainly the younger generation. Mitv offers similar broadcasts and channels as ASTRO. FineTV operates on an interactive-subscription basis.

It “offers 18 basic channels offers 18 channels and uses ‘on demand concept’ that requires the audience to order the kind of television programme they would like to watch at their convenience”. (p. 5). With the introduction of FineTV, the monopoly of paid television under ASTRO has been broken, providing competition in the market. 3. Current situation of media communication, culture (up-to-date)Due to its dramatic economic development, Malaysia has been regarded as one of the New Asia Tigers, together with Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand. Nevertheless, Malaysia’s economic development, institutional reform and respect for fundamental rights seem to not necessarily go hand in hand. According to Reporters without Borders, Malaysia was ranked 141 out of 178 countries in the Press Freedom Index 2010.

Similar to many of other Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia’s press enjoys little to no pressfreedom because of its strict laws and regulations. There are four essential legislation that govern the publishing of news. The most prominent one is the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA), enacted in 1948. In 1984, the government made several key amendments that

increased the state's stranglehold on newspaper companies. The act aimed to control the publishing and the usage of printing presses in Malaysia. All media organizations are required to renew their licenses every year as granted by the Home Ministry. Failure to do so will result in the organizations being disallowed from operating.

The act has led to plenty of criticism that claims “ the legislation is restricting political discourse, oppressing political opponents and manipulating the news delivered to readers.” (The Borneo Post, 2011). Traditional mass media in general has been associated with linguistic and political agendas.

The political parties and significant entrepreneurs own the major newspapers in Malaysia. The Utusan Melayu Group controls three Malay dailies and has close relations with Prime Minister Mahathir's party. Besides that, the Star is established by the Malaysian Chinese Association that affiliates with the ruling party.

The investment arm of Mahathir's party, the Fleet Investment Group, has dominated interest in TV 3 and the New Straits Times . Along then came new media, in which the Internet was considered as ‘ infotainment,’ where information could come in the form of entertainment. Additionally, the Internet was introduced to Malaysia in the 1990s and the number of users escalated from less than 100, 000 in 1996 to 200, 000 in 1997, and by 1998, it rose to about 470, 000 (Wilson et.

al, 2003). Internet access grew from 64% in 1999 to 148% in 2000

(Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2002). In 2006,

there were 3.7 million dial-up Internet subscribers and 490,500 broadband subscribers (Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia, 2006). Major mainstream broadsheet and newspapers have been investing in online editions in order to create their corporate presence in printed journalism as well as to attract more scales of Netizens, especially a young generation of enthusiastic information technology (IT)-skilled Malaysians (Wilson et. al, 2003) For example, the News Strait Times Press, the largest print media in Malaysia, develop the leading online newspaper portals.

Nowadays, its websites attract 3,350,000 visitors every month. Over the years, e-journalism in Malaysia has emancipated individuals who particularly sought after alternative views and ideas from various platforms in their media diet. Journalism in Malaysia is more ethical as compared to those in China (Wilson et. al, 2003).

Moreover, some of the advantages to e-journalism are, for instance, receiving first-hand information or breaking news faster than local newspapers. E-journalism also enhances individuals' critical assessment of news provision. Through reading e-media journalism, one can evaluate content interactively with others online, such as giving comments and testing against people's opinions. Malaysia has one of the most well-structured and state-of-the-art mass media systems in Southeast Asia.

There are 51 newspapers, three magazine chains, six radio networks, two television channels and an educational television system functioning in Malaysia (Lent, n. d.). Of all the newspapers, there were 25 Chinese, 12 English, six Malay, six Tamil and two Punjabi newspapers in 1974 (Lent, n.

d.). However, in 2010, except Tamil, each major language has almost equal number of newspapers in the market. Malay led the way with 15, English with 11, Chinese not far away with 10, and finally Tamil with 4.

(Toh T, 2011) Among all, Chinese papers were the most common, with circulation rate as high as 800, 000, followed closely by the English papers, which had approximately 500, 000 circulation rate. The Malay and Tamil newspapers were 300, 000 and 100, 000 in circulation respectively. Although the rise of online social media seems to result in a nosedive in readership, the print industry in Malaysia has seen better days. According to the research published by Nielsen Media Index in February of 2011, the readership by most of English newspapers had increased from 2009 to 2010. Among all, readership of The Star had been trending upwards with an approximate increase of 100, 000. The most commonly-seen Chinese newspaper publications were Shin Min Daily News, Nanyang Siang Pau, and Sin Chew Jit Poh. Both were reported increasing average nett daily sales since 2005.

(Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2010) With 63 % of market domination, the New Strait Times Press (Malaysia) is the leading print Malay media. Its two newspapers: Berita Harian and Harian Metro share the largest concentration of bahasa Malaysia readers, and 60, 000 copies are sold every day. 4 ISSUES1) Ownership concentration (jinfang)Government Control through OwnershipThe Privatization Policy in the 1980s allowed many business owners to step into the media industry, becoming media owners, allowing them to set public agendas. However, a closer look at the backgrounds of

the owners revealed a certain level of government involvement. Many media owners have tight personal relationships with highly-influential politicians. TV3 was the first privately-owned television station. According to Gomez (1999), Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Bhd (STMB) was awarded the license despite high competition. Its shareholders consist of the Fleet Group which is UMNO's holding company and Maika Holdings which is controlled by the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC).

(p. 91). Such government infiltrations into the media are not unusual. Subsequent private networks, Metro Vision and Mega TV were found to be closely related to political parties as well, especially those in the ruling government.

(Juliana Abdul Wahab, 2006, p. 5). Other than involvement in the television networks, government control through ownership can also be seen in the radio stations. Star Publication (M) Berhad, which is owned by Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), owns the Chinese newspaper, The Star and several radio stations such as Red FM, 988 and SuriaFM.

(thenumerologyofour, 2010). With such control over the different forms of media, government agenda can be easily set and alternative opinions can be efficiently blocked out. Newspapers remain tightly controlled by the political parties and their investment companies.

Although diversity in the presses is said to be a form of press freedom, the laws set in place prevented any publication of negative news regarding the ruling government. Other than that, “ four out of the five daily Chinese

newspapers in the country” are owned by the same person, Tiong Hiew King. (Lim. M. K., 2007, p.

15). This is a worrying trend as when ownership is too concentrated, there is almost no competition and opinions become saturated. Thus, despite privatization and surface press freedom, the media in Malaysia remains monopolized by the government. 2) Self-censorship of journalists (nat, xab)- due to sensitive issues-press freedom! Some of the common trends observed in all newspaper publications were that, investigative reporting was deliberately avoided, news bearing the opposition parties in the political sphere were disregarded, and incumbents and their campaigning were featured regularly. According to a Bahasa Malaysia newspaper editor (Lent, n. d.

), “ the papers here are not pro or anti-government, but supporters of government.” (p. 667). Also, it has been a practice among the editors in Malaysia to be tactful when reporting on news, which pertained to race and religion. Newspapers in Malaysia are generally supporters of the government, not pro- or anti-government. The editors from the Chinese newspapers are not altogether submissive and they also tend to challenge the authority.

As such, individuals who seek alternative opinions will turn to these Chinese newspapers to keep up with their stand and opinions in pluralistic Malaysia. Chinese newspapers in Malaysia also feel that they have a responsibility in informing international readers, such as from those from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Hence, these Chinese newspapers accentuate news information, which

is the exact opposite wish of the Malaysian government. However, with the incessant pressure from the government, these Chinese newspapers are starting to make space in their columns to feature writings by its citizens, or non-Chinese writers (Lent, n. d.).

Additionally, the Tamil-language newspapers in Malaysia are beginning to find it difficult to maintain their role in the Indian culture. It has been found that many are just copying and pasting speeches, reports and press releases from the government in Malaysia since it is more cost-effective and harmless. However, this will then lead to groupthink, where creativity is discouraged and there will be plenty of similar views everywhere. Instances in which the media ensures censorship is restrained are, the editor of Straits Echo keeping a close watch and regulating the letters from the forum section, so as to ensure differing voices will not be at each other's throats, and the editor of Straits Times being extremely sensitive when touching on religion news so as to avoid offending any religion, particularly Islamic. Another peculiar characteristic observed was, no pork or alcohol are to be advertised in the print media, as a respect to the Islam religion. 3) New Media and its effects (kiby)The explosive growth of Internet in last decade was faster than the development of other communication mediums.

According to International Telecommunication Union, Malaysia's Internet users occupied 15% of the population in 2000, while 65. 7% of the nation's population gained access to Internet in 2009. (ITU, 2000/2009) The remarkable growth has been possible largely due to the open processes that supported the development of Internet technologies and administration of

Internet resources. Nowadays, in Malaysia, one can use Internet with the method of broadband, cable, wi-fi, wi-Max, wireless, hotpots and dial-up access. As a new media, the Internet has been more and more used by government bodies, business, organizations and individuals.

As for the Internet user base, it was characteristic by its youthfulness. The Household usage of Internet survey 2005 done by Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission showed that 42.3% of Internet users in private households were below 25 years old. (MCMC, 2005) Internet blogs, online news, social networking sites, podcast, and even short messaging system are all new media. They provide citizens with an immediate, informative, interactive platform for discussion and debate. In 2011, social networking accounted for one third of all time spent online in the country, ranked the top of online activity.

(COMSCORE, 2011) Essentially, three main reasons underlay the fast growth of the Internet. First, in order to promote the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), the government has pledged not to censor the internet. And to its credit, the government decided to keep its words. Secondly, there had been a rise of political consciousness among the public. A growing number of people are keen in democracy, human rights and good governance. Finally, the creditability of traditional media declined due to press self-censorship. Therefore, more and more Malaysia view Internet as an alternative source of information and opinion expression.

The new media enable Netizens to become a journalist more or less.

Nowadays, online blogging provide alternative voices that differentiate from

the old media. For instance, many blogs and online news sites such as Malaysiakini. com and the Malaysian Insider are popular of informing the public on what the traditional media shadowed. Credibility of blog content is important to online journalists, and credible bloggers have large followings as people find them believable. Online blogs can wield power and influence; as such, new media is weakening the grip of government-owned platforms. The impact of new media was noticed by the Malaysian government which lost two thirds majority in Parliament during the 2008 general elections. The government relied on the mainstream media which it was controlled to give information to the electorate while the opposition used new media that was faster, cheaper and reached a bigger audience.

4. Discussion of your finding/ conclusion / future, trends Malaysia has...

.. since its British colony
1page each:-1) Diversity of both old and new media for government to reach out to both rural and urban areas (kiby) - traditional media is not dying
Traditional media play an important role in informing and educating the public in Malaysia.

TV, radio and newspapers bring the outside world into people's homes. The broadcast times of programs set the routine of life within households. As such, traditional media have served as a companion and a major source of information for Malaysians. We foresee that the traditional media will keep developing in the years to come. Firstly, the coverage of printed and telecommunication media will continue expanding from urban area to rural area in Malaysia. On one hand, the economic development in rural area can bring about media circulation. For example, people in undeveloped area will

be able to afford newspaper and televisions at home. On the other hand, with a higher education level in the future, more and more people can read newspaper and magazines.

Secondly, in urban area, traditional media will still be pervasive. Although different voices might not be available on traditional media, citizens in different professions need to gain official and authoritative information from the old media. In future, traditional media and new media will collaborate for success. Online radio and television have the potential to become alternatives to on-air broadcasting. Online media, nevertheless, might have difficulty differentiating themselves from competitors. Given this, media websites can brand with established news agencies to provide credible information to online visitors.

Additionally, both old and new media should strive to meet the needs of the citizens. Measures such as asking for and responding to feedback can be taken by old media, and they can also utilize the Internet to interact with people in order to gain more audience. As such, traditional and new media can share success to enhance the relationship with their people. Future of Malaysia's Media: Battle for Press Freedom Convergence of radio, TV and newspaper makes press freedom in the public media tougher as they are all under the same company and controls. However, with the emergence of the Internet, an alternative opinion is starting to form. As of December 2011, there are " 17, 723, 000 internet users in Malaysia (representing 61.

7% of the population)". (European travel Commission, 2012.). Thus, freedom of press may gradually increase due to the increasing usage of the Internet.

Although current Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, stresses that “ the current government of Malaysia will not intend to censor the Internet”. (Iliciece, 2011) Also, talks of implementing Internet filters are currently on-going.

(Koswanage & Cheah, 2009). If the Internet filters were to be implemented, the fight for press freedom will come to an end, as the government will own the Internet as well. As of the current situation, a dual discourse universe might happen if Internet does not get censored. Differing point of views on the internet and in the public news may lead to a dual discourse universe which is similar to China. The disparity between the news available on the Internet and the official press might widen. The official media may suffer from public distrust, while stricter and more extreme laws may be set in place in an attempt to control the Internet. 3) Political campaigns move towards new media to reach out to youths (xab) Lastly, among the predictions and suggestions of improving Malaysia’s political system, it is suggested that more political campaigns involving the social media platform could be used as a way to reach out to the youths in Malaysia.

It is known that the social media can be contagious and convenient. It is also widely accessible and fast moving. Therefore, the political parties in Malaysia should hop onto the bandwagon and follow the tried and tested winning formula of reaching out to the citizens in a more personalized touch. It is indeed a winning formula as seen vividly from the many different case scenarios in various countries. For instance, in the United States, Barack Obama fervidly used the various social media platforms throughout his presidential campaigning back in 2008.

Also, in another instance, it is a trend to see the government officials in Singapore, both the incumbents and opposition parties starting to actively use social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to connect with its fellow citizens, as distinctively observed in its 2011's General Election. Additionally, Malaysia could also take India as a role model in terms of its political strategies. For instance, in India, political audio and videotapes are distributed to its rural areas as a way to wholly engage its citizens. In India, strategies that are more interpersonal in nature are also applied to its rural area citizens, such as doing grassroots activities and door-to-door campaigning. Political parties in Malaysia could follow suit, instead of merely keeping a close watch of its local journalists in preventing reporting sensitive issues on race and/or religion. 6 Conclusion (2 pages) (NAT)nat, i edit a bit conclusions. hope it's in right track -kibWhile Malaysia has kept up with the rest of the world in technology and a economy, a truly free press does not exist in the Southeast Asian country. The government still views the traditional media as means for promoting the ruling party.

It is believed the press should not be sensational but should be a watchdog for society. Journalists in Malaysia have to contend with many obstacles, including various press laws, publications acts and libel suits. It seems that little change can be expected in the years to come so long as the government associates gains with a press controlled by the authorities.