

News in australia and the global south



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What makes the news: An insider on Australia and Lebanon Australia and Lebanon both work under a parliamentary democratic form of government which is ruled by a Prime Minister while freedom is exercised by the people (Wikipedia). Press freedom is one, by which mediemen in both countries take the opportunity to freely express their opinions, criticize and make attacks on issues facing them.

Like many other news sites on the internet, The Australian and The Lebanese Daily Star for the past years have served as watchdogs in their respective countries. Both have a wide scope on almost all fields such as politics, business and economy, entertainment and other social issues.

The mentioned news sites have a slight difference with their target audiences. The Australian is more of international in scope (having correspondents from all over the globe) while The Lebanese Daily Star caters to Lebanon and the Middle East. Most of the stories of The Australian cover worldly issues while the other seems to focus more on the local news. One thing recognizable about the news content of Lebanese Daily is that they see to it that their international stories always have an effect or a connection with Lebanon or the rest of the Middle East countries.

At one point, Wikipedia describes The Australian as very influential not because of the number of people who read it but because it is the business class and political elite who make up its market. The Australian's workforce consists of columnists with distinctive background. These include a political journalist, an aboriginal lawyer (with a cause to see the welfare of the Aboriginal Australians or indigenous residents of the country), an activist and some conservative writers. But as to their sources, The Australian would often just quote newspapers though first hand information is better. Also

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noticeable is that The Australian focuses on the media or gives importance on reports about their colleagues compared to The Lebanese Daily Star. They even have a news commentary portion wherein they are open to all sorts of negative remarks even about the paper's own newsmakers. In a commentary to the newspaper dated February 3 of 2002, Martin Lehmann says that their journalists are biased on the presence of Afghani illegal immigrants in Australia. He writes, " The paper has flooded us with stories of deprivation and images of " asylum seekers" glumly staring out through barbed-wired compounds the politically correct, left-leaning, trendy, bleeding heart journalists of The Australian are way out of touch with the majority of Australians. Every survey reveals the government action on illegal immigrants commands to 80 to 90 percent support of the people. Talk-back calls and letters to editors of papers such as The West Australian show similar support levels. But the leftie collective at The Australian must be carefully picking the letters to publish because their letters run at about 80 percent against the government."

The reporters of the Lebanese Daily Star on the other hand historically has shown how determined they were by being the voice of the nation no matter how many times they were hindered by the civil war. This is what freedom of the press is all about. At first its objective was to update the expatriates working in the oil industry but gradually expanded to serve the rest of the Middle East. However recently, because of Lebanon's Hizbullah that caused the conflict with Israel, news coverage was restrained, not to mention that the lives of the press were endangered.

All in all, it is inevitable for politics and other external factors to go in the way with media. Some abuse press freedom forgetting that it must be

equipped with responsibilities. Still, these news sites did not fail in keeping the public informed. But in as much as the news writers are expected to observe objective and fair stories all the time, it is also important that readers do not just take in whatever information they get and be responsible interpreters of the headlines.

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