

Monthly newsletter: March 2017



Message from Keith

Greetings,

Well, it's official now. The White House has formally declared the press to be “the enemy of the people”.

Okay, to be fair, President Trump and his top aides were referring specifically to the US press, and the Washington press corps in particular. And the media in question was labelled the enemy of the American people, not the entire population of the planet. But the presidential diatribe against the press does have global implications, including here in Asia. That was the topic of pieces I wrote over these last few weeks for [Nikkei Asian Review](#) and [Nieman Reports](#).

My point in those pieces was that the US government, under Republican and Democratic administrations, has consistently defended press freedom around the world. I questioned whether the Trump administration, which has deemed reporters as “the enemy” and “the opposition” will continue in that tradition.

But there's another side to this story of the Trump administration's ongoing war with the news media. This has become a golden age for the press, and particularly for those mainstream legacy publications which just a few months ago were fearing for their futures.

The stories about senior Trump officials meeting with Russian contacts have been broken by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. During last year's heated presidential campaign, the *Post* broke the story about how Trump had exaggerated the amount of his charitable giving, and about his now-infamous, salacious remarks about women recorded during the taping of a segment of the TV show "Access Hollywood". The *Times* broke the story of how Trump likely avoided paying any taxes for a decade using a complex legal loophole.

Just when many were lamenting that traditional reporting was dead, the much maligned "mainstream media" has been giving us scoop after scoop, holding this new administration in Washington to account—and reaping the benefit in new readers. And the proof is in the numbers.

Newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and tronc (formerly Tribune Publishing), all of which have been suffering for years from declining readers, saw an increase in paid print and digital subscriptions since the November US election. CNN, regularly derided by Trump as "fake news", saw its ratings climb in February more than 50 per cent year-on-year among the coveted 25-to-54-year old age group. MSNBC, another cable news network, saw its ratings in that same demographic jump 30 per cent.

The Washington Post even announced it would be hiring dozens of new journalists in 2017 after its publisher said the venerable DC paper (where I worked for 33 years) is now "profitable and growing".

There's a lesson for all of us, including here at the JMSC. Solid, in-depth reporting is still needed—now more than ever—and great journalism will attract readers and viewers. That's why I believe it's important to concentrate on the basics: rigorous, fact-based storytelling, deeply sourced reporting and stories that tackle tough questions in a fair and unbiased way.

There are lots of new and innovative ways to tell stories—with data, using digital platforms like Instagram and Facebook, using 360-degree cameras and virtual reality.

But at the end of the day, it's all about the journalism, and having a real story to tell.

This is an exciting time to be in journalism, including here in Asia. The challenges remain, and the old business model is still in the throes of disruption. But there are amazing stories out there to tell.

On a final note, we in the JMSC family were saddened to learn of the passing in February of our friend and colleague Alan Knight, who died in Sydney after a brief battle with cancer. Alan was a Visiting Professor here and an External Examiner who helped build the JMSC in its early days. Our condolences go out to his family and his many friends.

Keith

Keith Richburg
JMSC Director

Highlights last month

Learning about the unique area of wine journalism and how it differs from lifestyle reporting

There may be few other areas of journalism which involve quite as many fun wine and food events, but wine journalism requires a specialist subject knowledge and an authoritative writing style, students—and some staff—learnt in a recent seminar at the JMSC. Read more [here](#).



Students experiment with innovative storytelling through digital projects

Traditional Chinese characters shown through interactive graphics. A walk through Hong Kong's recent history using scannable barcodes. And bots publishing stories and



replying to reader messages on Facebook. These were just a few of the ways that MJ students experimented with new forms of digital storytelling last semester. Read more [here](#).

Head of News at Storyful visits the JMSC

Mandy Jenkins, Head of News at Storyful based in New York, visited the JMSC on 8 February to meet with Lecturer Anne Kruger and find out about how she teaches news literacy, in particular the work she does with fake news analysis. Mandy [took a tour of the facilities at Eliot Hall and met with students](#) taking a news literacy lesson.



Film screenings and discussions with Ruby Yang

There were two free film screenings and discussions with Ruby Yang at HKU in February: 2007 Oscar-winning documentary *The Blood of Yingzhou District* on 14 February, and Yang's latest film *In Search of Perfect Consonance* [on 21 February](#).



***My Voice, My Life* Charity Film Gala**

Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired held a Charity Film Gala featuring Ruby Yang's documentary *My Voice, My Life* in Hong Kong on Saturday 18 February. The 2014 film chronicles the trials and tribulations of a group of underprivileged middle school students, including four students from Ebenezer School, as they undergo vigorous training to produce



a musical on stage. More photos [here](#).

New DAH networking series with UNU-CS kicks off

Digital Asia Hub kicked off a networking series with The United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS), a new research institute at the intersections of ICT and international development. The first event was held at Eliot Hall on 23 February and featured The Pervasive Technology Project. Read more [here](#).

The Pervasive Technologies project is a 3 year old research collaboration between the Centre for Internet and Society in India and Beijing Normal University Institute for Internet Policy & Law (IPL) in China. The project seeks to understand the hardware, software and content of sub-100\$ mobile phones from the perspective of copyright, patent, intermediary liability and competition law. This project is supported by the International Development Research Centre, A public corporation created by the Canadian government to help communities in the developing world find solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the global south. The Indian team working on the project will be making the following presentations during the event: Music going mobile: Business models and copyright management in India by Amba Kak and Maggie Huang; Intellectual property in mobile application development in India by Anubha Sinha; Patent landscaping in the Indian mobile device market place - Rohini Lakshane; and Competition law and standard essential patents (SEPs) by Vidushi Mardia.

SUNIL ABRAHAM
Executive Director, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

AMBA KAK
Lawyer, and former Google Policy Fellow, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

ANUBHA SINHA
Programme Officer, Pervasive Technologies Project, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

MAGGIE HUANG
Consultant, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

ROHINI LAKSHANE
Programme Officer, Pervasive Technologies Project, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

VIDUSHI MARDIA
Programme Officer, Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore

Organised by:
DIGITAL ASIA
UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
Computing and Society

HKU named top international university in Asia

The University of Hong Kong was ranked as the top international university in Asia and third in the world by *Times Higher Education*. Read more [here](#).



香港大學

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Get to know CEDARS-CoPE

The Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS)

Counselling and Person Enrichment

(CoPE) Section produced [this video](#) for U-Vision.

They offer individual counselling, Person

Enrichment Workshops (on confidence building,

how to study smart and resilience enhancement

this year) and work with Special Educational

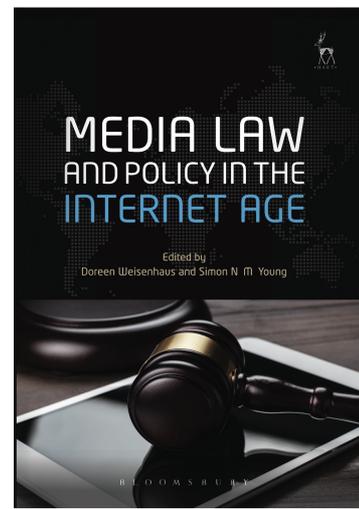
Needs students.



Articles, publications and presentations

Media Law and Policy in the Internet Age published

The latest book from Associate Professor Doreen Weisenhaus, *Media Law and Policy in the Internet Age*, was published on 23 February. The book features essays by Weisenhaus, Director of the JMSC's Media Law Project, and co-author Simon Young of HKU's Faculty of Law, along with other leading experts from around the world. Read more [here](#).



Flynn resignation adds to chaos in Trump White House

Keith Richburg looks at how upheaval in Washington may complicate detente with Russia for the US and Japan in [this piece](#) for Nikkei Asian Review. The JMSC director also wrote this piece for NAR earlier in the month: ['Abduction' threatens Hong Kong role as financial haven](#)

NIKKEI
ASIAN REVIEW

Will the Trump White House Defend Press Freedom Abroad?

Former *Washington Post* foreign correspondent and bureau chief Keith Richburg [writes about](#) how Trump's treatment of the press as the enemy has long been the default position of autocratic regimes around the world for *Nieman Reports*, published by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

NR

What Is VX Nerve Agent? A Deadly Weapon, Rarely Seen

Gerry Doyle, Honorary Lecturer and Deputy business editor for Asia at *The New York Times*, [provides answers](#) to some of the key questions around the nerve agent recently used to kill the half brother of North Korea's leader in Malaysia.

The New York Times

Bandurski in Berlin

The China Media Project's David Bandurski spoke at a discussion titled "[Anti-Western nationalism on the rise? Ideological struggles for](#)

[China's future](#)" organised by the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) in Berlin on Wednesday 22 February.



Democracy won't be the winner in Hong Kong election

Honorary Lecturer Vivienne Chow wrote [this article](#) about Hong Kong's upcoming chief executive elections for *The Interpreter*, published by Australian international policy think tank, the Lowy Institute.



Theater-Goers in China Continue to Embrace Movies From Hong Kong

The mainland has a long way to go before it catches up with its neighbour's freewheeling film culture, [writes Vivienne Chow](#) for *Variety*.



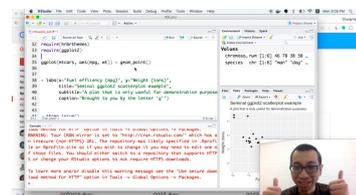
Stuck in the Middle

China Media Project articles last month included [this piece](#) by media analyst Qiao Mu on how—in what should be a golden era of reporting—there is very little Chinese media can talk about outside of finance, entertainment and titillating international stories. In [Peace and Prosperity in the People's Daily](#), CMP editor David Bandurski took a look at the first print edition of the *People's Daily* back after the Lunar New Year holiday.



Hong Kong R User Group Presents: This week in rstats

PhD candidate Chan Chung Hong has been uploading more episodes of the weekly video podcast on the latest developments in the R programming language [here](#).



BJ and MJ stories published by Reporting Health & Medicine

Health and medicine reports written by a variety of BJ and MJ students this semester are being published on the Reporting Health & Medicine website. Visit the site [here](#) and follow the team on Twitter [here](#) for daily updates.

A Hongkonger's observations at America's Women's March

Natalie Lung, third year Journalism and Computer Science student, wrote [this report](#) from the US where she is on exchange at the University of Missouri.

Photo Gallery: The Lunar New Year in Guangzhou

BJ student Elizabeth Utley published this [photo gallery](#) with captions taken over the New Year period in Guangzhou.

Economic Outlook 2017

After the series of articles [reviewing major events in the ten largest Asia-Pacific economies in 2016](#), current MJ students and editor George Russell (MJ 2016) now look forward to this year with [these individual outlooks for the region in 2017](#).

City Animals

A [short film](#) by MJ students Wan Huang, Xiaoxi Wu and Maria Cristhin Kuiper looking at the similarities and differences between the "creatures of Hong Kong" and how they come together at the city's Zoological and Botanical Gardens.

24 hours in Heijing: Exploring Yunnan's hidden valley

Current MJ Jonas Kelsch [reports on an adventure](#) in and around the ancient town of Heijing in China for GoKunming.

HEALTH RISK COMMUNICATION



asia sentinel
Winner of 2014 SOPA Awards for Excellence in Explanatory Journalism



Alumni highlights

Transgender model Anjali Lama makes history at India's Lakmé Fashion Week

Medhavi Arora, Journalism and International Relations 2016 graduate, received her first byline for CNN Style with [this story](#) co-written by Zahra Jamshed.



How to Track a Triad

Justin Heifetz (MJ 2011) reports on [how Hong Kong's notorious triads are still surviving with new illicit trades](#) for VICE's Motherboard.



Ecuador election dispatches

Carla Gonzalez (MJ 2015) covered the general elections and plebiscite in Ecuador for teleSUR English and posted regular updates on her Twitter feed [here](#).



Journalists talking journalism weekly podcast

Olivia Rosenman (MJ 2013) hosts [this weekly podcast](#) with a rotating panel of the biggest names in Australian journalism to discuss how the media covered the news.



A Drone Tour of China's Rusting Shipyards

Lukas Messmer (MJ 2015) takes an apocalyptic look at China's shipyards from above in [this drone video](#) for *The Wall Street Journal*.



China Turns to Precision Medicine in Fight Against Cancer

Natasha Khan (MJ 2011) reports on how the push is part of a broader effort to dominate biotech globally in [this health and business story](#) for Bloomberg.



Angelina Jolie's Khmer Rouge drama to premiere in Cambodia

Erin Hale (MJ 2014) reported on Angelina Jolie's new film and visit to Cambodia in [this article](#) for the international newswire of the German Press Agency, dpa International.



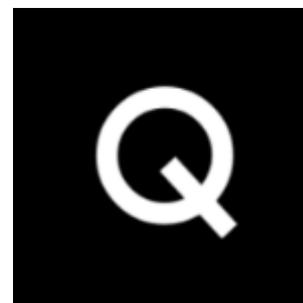
In pictures: a potted history of Causeway Bay, ever-changing heart of Hong Kong

Christopher DeWolf (MJ 2009) reported on the history of one of Hong Kong's busiest shopping districts with [this photo story](#) for the *South China Morning Post*.



Middle-class Chinese are risking jail to recoup billions lost in a “zero-risk” government-backed investment scheme

[This report](#) by Zheping Huang (MJ 2015) for Quartz about Fanya Metal Exchange investors in an endless cat-and-mouse game with the police, two years after their accounts were frozen, was [retweeted over 450 times on Twitter](#).



Coming up this month

Seminar: Like Art ! 呢Like ? :

《藝評 101》

Vivienne Chow will be conducting [this seminar](#) (in Chinese) focusing on how to write about art and explore new forms of art criticism and culture reporting on social media, on 11 March at HKU Space.



FleishmanHillard internship programme briefing

Communications agency
FleishmanHillard will be holding an internship programme briefing session on Monday 13 March,



Lecture Theatre 1, Meng Wah
Complex, 4-5.20 p.m.

***In Search of Perfect
Consonance in the US***

Ruby Yang's latest documentary will
be shown at CAAMFest in San
Francisco on 16 March. Read more
[here](#).

