



Malaysian Media Guide 2009



**Malaysian Media Guide 2009****Table of Contents**

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1. Overview

Malaysia's mainstream media are state controlled through indirect ownership of media conglomerates and closely adhere to the government line. Some mainstream outlets, especially Chinese newspapers, raise contentious issues such as the treatment of the country's predominant Malay and minority Chinese and Indian communities.

Newspapers are the preferred choice for political news, but TV and radio have nearly twice the audience, with about 90-percent reach, compared to 50 percent for newspapers. Internet use is increasing, and alternative news portals and blogs provide an important venue for dissent and criticism despite government defamation suits against bloggers and the use of the Internal Security Act.

Most Islamic media are of a religious nature, free of political comment. Islamic materials that diverge from this baseline generally appear to have originated in Indonesia.

2. Mainstream Media Typically Owned by Government-Affiliated Individuals, Groups

Despite the growing popularity of online media, mainstream media remain the predominant source of information for most Malaysians. Mainstream media can be classified as media sanctioned by the government, typically in the form of being granted a license to publish or air content to a mass audience on a daily basis.

- Malaysia's mainstream media consist of wide ranging sources in the form of TV channels, newspapers, and radio stations which serve the multiple ethnic groups of Malaysia -- the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities.
- The linguistic diversity in Malaysia's mainstream media is reflected in the range of newspapers available -- four English-language dailies, four Malay-language dailies, six Chinese-language dailies, and two Tamil-language newspapers. TV programming offers a similarly diverse mix.
- Despite the surface diversity, Malaysia's mainstream media are consolidated in the hands of a small number of privately owned conglomerates with close links to the political establishment -- interlinking ties that result in a mainstream media which closely toes the government's line. Mainstream media outlets typically feature similar leading stories on a particular day.
- Certain opposition-linked publications like *Harakah* -- the official newspaper of the opposition Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) -- are not considered mainstream media as they are not published regularly and always at risk of having their licenses canceled. Mainstream media do not face such uncertainty because they are typically either linked politically or through business interests to the government.

2.1. Ethnic Audience Influences Mainstream Media

Although mainstream media in Malaysia closely track with the government line, criticism -- often limited to statements attributed to opposition figures -- does surface in mainstream media. The level of criticism tends to vary according to the ethnic segmentation of the media.

- Malay newspapers are the most pro-government and critical of the opposition. Opposition criticism is presented within the context of a rebuttal or outright rejection by a government official in the very same report. Malay newspapers are also known to champion the rights of ethnic Malays and strongly defend the affirmative action policy -- the controversial New Economic Policy (NEP) -- which gives special economic, social and educational privileges to Malays.
- English-language newspapers similarly adhere to the government line but attempt to be more inclusive by airing views of all ethnic groups. This may be because English-language dailies can be widely read by members of all groups in the country. Views of opposition members are aired in English-language newspapers but are often limited to certain selective statements which typically soften criticism of the government.
- Chinese-language newspapers are the most critical of the government. Much criticism focuses on the dissatisfaction of the ethnic Chinese community toward government policies. Despite that general stance, Chinese-language newspapers are part of the mainstream media as they are licensed and published daily for a mass audience.
- Tamil-language dailies, with smaller circulation, serve the Indian ethnic group and focus more on highlighting community issues.

2.2. State-Linked Conglomerates Dominate Mainstream Media

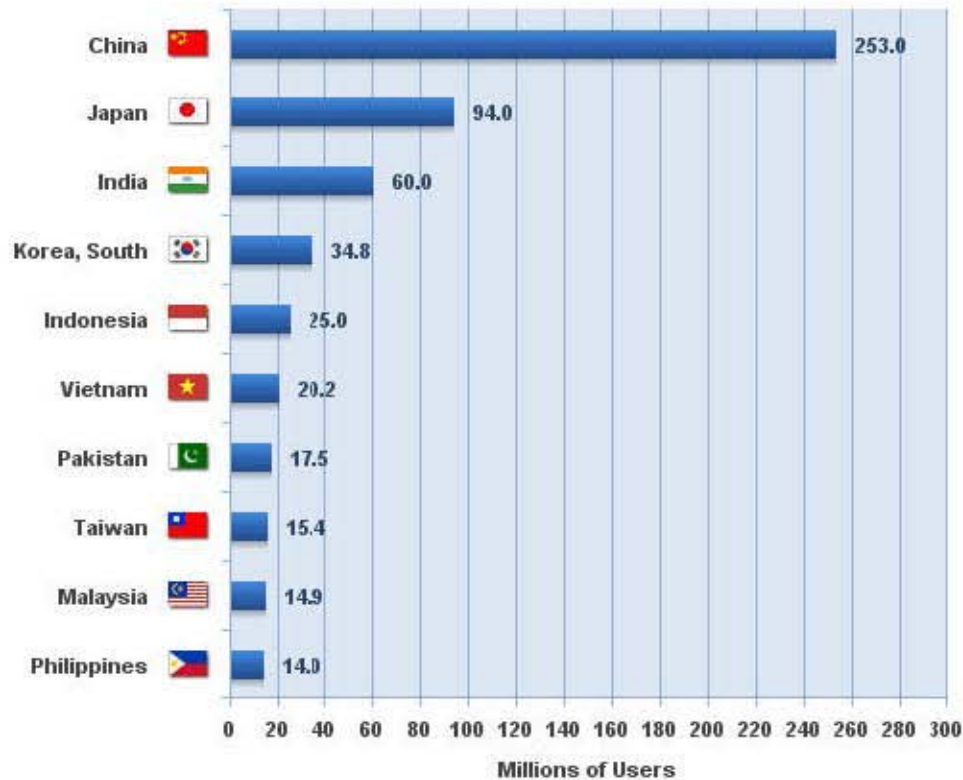
Mainstream media are indirectly under the government's influence through conglomerates linked to ruling political parties. National news agency Bernama and state-owned Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) -- which operate various radio stations and TV stations TV 1 and TV 2 -- are the mainstream media under the government's direct control.

- **Media Prima:** The nation's largest media conglomerate owns all four non-governmental free-to-air stations. On the publishing side, it owns NSTP group, which publishes the English-language newspaper *The New Straits Times*, and the leading Malay-language tabloid *Harian Metro* and the *Berita Harian* newspaper. Additionally, it owns popular radio stations Fly FM and Hot FM, which are entertainment oriented. The government retains an indirect influence over the media conglomerate via share ownership through the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) -- Malaysia's national social security organization. EPF owns 21.64 percent of Media Prima, making it the largest single ordinary shareholder.
- **Utusan Melayu:** The publishing group owns the Malay-language newspaper *Utusan Malaysia* and tabloid *Kosmo!*. The group is known to have strong ties with the ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO).

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- **Hueren Holdings:** This is the investment arm of the government coalition Malaysia Chinese Association (MCA) party, which owns the highest circulation English-language tabloid *The Star*.
- **Tiong Hiew King** - Known as Malaysia's timber tycoon, Tiong Hiew King bought controlling stakes in two Chinese-language newspapers, the highest circulation *Sin Chew Daily* and *Nanyang Siang Pau*.

Asia Top Ten Internet Countries



The graph above shows Malaysia as among the top-ten Asian Internet users as of 2008 (Internet World Stats, 3 December 2008). A per-capita ranking would result in a higher spot on the list for Malaysia.

3. Online Outlets Provide News, Dissent

As part of an effort to attract investors to its information and communication technology (ICT) industry, the government under Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed in 1995 agreed not to censor the Internet. Despite that agreement, various indirect means have been applied to curb online dissent.

The formal no-censorship assurance policy helped shape the Internet as relatively safe ground for airing dissenting views against authorities in the form of alternative news sites and blogs.

- Online news site *Malaysiakini* was the predominant source of alternative news and dissenting views prior to the exponential increase of blogs which began in 2006. In

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April 2007, *Malaysiakini* claimed to have a daily readership of 100,000 visitors. These figures can double if there are events of great interest such as elections or an important political announcement. To accommodate increased traffic, *Malaysiakini* often offers a text-only version of its site.

- Political bloggers, such as Raja Petra Kamaruddin of *Malaysia Today* and Jeff Ooi of *Screenshots*, play a dominant role with controversial postings, highlighting for example Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak's alleged involvement in the murder of a Mongolian woman. She is alleged to have had a sexual relationship with Najib and an associate of his, and to have helped the associate broker a submarine purchase agreement. No exact figure for *Malaysia Today's* readership has been observed.
- Despite Raja Petra's detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) from 13 September to 7 November 2008, his blog continued to be updated with postings of graft allegations against the administration.
- Former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed joined the online blogging community in May 2008 with his blog *CheDet*. To date, visitors to Mahathir's blog have exceeded 9 million -- making his blog the most popular in Malaysia.

3.1. Legal Means Used To Pressure Media

Various regulations are in place to curb dissenting views. Such regulations are generally written broadly and are open to interpretation so that they can be applied to curb online dissent, along with statements deemed inappropriate which are published in dailies or other media.

- **Sedition Act:** This is a broadly written law prohibiting the discussion of issues termed seditious; often revolving around discussions which promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different ethnic groups or classes. The act is often used to charge and stop individuals from openly questioning the privileges received by Bumiputra's (indigenous ethnic Malays) under the NEP.
- **Official Secrets Act:** This is a law which prohibits the distribution of information classified as secret. Bloggers or online news outlets have faced threats of being charged under this regulation for exposing information as proof of a given state official's wrongdoing. The act is often seen as a tool to prevent documents implicating state officials involved in corruption from being published.
- **Defamation Suits:** These are an indirect legal means used by state-linked media outlets to counter leading blogs carrying dissenting views against the government. The defamation suit by state-linked *The News Straits Times* daily against two leading bloggers -- Jeff Ooi of *Screenshots* and Ahiruddin Attan of *Rocky's Bru* -- was criticized by the Malaysian blogging community and press freedom advocates as an attempt to curb and intimidate expression of views online.

- Printing Presses, Publication Act:** The act governs the mainstream publications by issuing licenses only to publishing organizations and printers that adhere to the state's regulations. It has proven effective in curbing the production of dissenting publications. An organization without a publication permit is unlikely to find a printer willing to print its material, as printers are often unwilling to handle any material that goes against the regulations for fear of losing their printing license and means of income.

The government's attempt to curb dissenting views through both direct and indirect means resulted in a decline in Malaysia's press freedom index tallied by Reporters Without Borders. The 2008 index indicated a drop for the third consecutive year.

Press Freedom Ranking	2006	2007	2008
Malaysia	92	124	132

Key Ethnic, Media Indicators

Population: 27.45 Million	Households: 5.96 Million
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Ethnic Composition
Bumiputras: (65.8 %) Comprised of 13 million Malays and 2.8 million other indigenous ethnic groups
Chinese: (25.4 %) 6.1 million
Indians: (7.5 %) 1.8 million
Others: (1.3 %) 300,000

Mobile Phone Penetration Rate	4th Quarter 2006	4th Quarter 2007
	72.3%	85.1%

Overall Internet Penetration Rate	59% (1st Quarter 2008)
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Percentage of Households With Access to TV	95.2% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2004)
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Percentage of Households With Access to Video/VDC/DVD	77.4% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2004)
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Data Source: Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, unless noted otherwise

4. TV Under Government, State-Linked Conglomerate Control

There are six terrestrial TV stations in the country. Government-owned Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) operates TV 1 and TV 2, while TV 3, NTV 7, TV 8, and TV 9 are private stations owned by Malaysia's largest media conglomerate, Media Prima, which is 21.64 percent owned by the government's Employees Provident Fund.

Additionally, a top executive of Media Prima, Kamarulzaman Zainal, served as Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's press secretary for 10 years prior to being appointed to his position at the media conglomerate. The ownership and control structure of TV stations in Malaysia have resulted in an environment where news reporting and programming on TV channels bow to state policies.

- Apart from the free-to-air TV channels, Malaysians have access to satellite programs via ASTRO. The operator offers a variety of thematic packages -- including news and public affairs, and entertainment via Measat 1 -- to subscribers with DTH dishes.
- Radio stations maintain a high reach in Malaysia but are mainly focused on entertainment programming.

4.1. Profiles of TV Stations

Radio Televisyen Malaysia's (RTM) TV 1 and TV 2

Radio Televisyen Malaysia, commonly known as RTM, is the state-owned TV and radio network. It operates two TV channels -- TV 1 and TV 2.

- Starting 1 January 2009, both TV 1 and TV 2 restructured their programming -- which mainly changed the programming of newscasts -- resulting in TV 1 solely airing news broadcast in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil along with political, educational, religious, and entertainment shows in Malay. TV 2 in contrast focuses heavily on entertainment programs in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil.
- The restructuring can be viewed as an attempt to break away from the traditional format of programming based on racial segmentation, where TV 1 was solely dedicated to newscasts in Malay.

Radio Televisyen Malaysia's (RTM) TV 1

The new programming for TV 1 has resulted in the channel being heavily news oriented in line with the channel's slogan of "Information Channel."

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TV 1's logo which carries the slogan "Information Channel"

- TV 1's news programs are most frequent in the evening, starting at 1930 hours local time (1130 GMT), and features six newscasts in four separate languages back-to-back.
- The programming for TV 1's newscasts in the evening are as follows:

1930 hours [1130 GMT] National News in Tamil

2000 hours [1200 GMT] National News in Chinese

2030 hours [1230 GMT] Regional Newscast in Malay

2100 hours [1300 GMT] National News in Malay

2300 hours [1500 GMT] International News in Malay

2330 hours [1530 GMT] Business News in English

0000 hours [1600 GMT] National News in English



Video still shows announcer from TV 1's nightly Nasional@1 newscast aired at 9 PM local time [1300 GMT].

- News is produced in-house by RTM journalists. TV 1 also relies on foreign news agencies and TV networks for foreign news. Western news outlets, such as AFP, Reuters, BBC, and CNN, are among them.
 - News broadcasts are tightly scripted. Live interviews are carried, but only those aligned with the government are known to be given airtime.
 - Reports concerning Middle East conflicts typically lean toward the Palestinians, an expected tilt given Malaysia's stance against Israel.
- Selamat Pagi Malaysia (Good Morning Malaysia) is a popular breakfast program featuring interviews with ministers, government officials, MPs, politicians, academics, and religious and community leaders. Topics of discussion cover a wide range of issues -- political, economic, social, educational, or religious -- and routinely adhere to the government's line.
 - In an apparent attempt to project a more liberal and open image, TV 1 has aired live debates of parliamentary sessions for 30 minutes daily starting May 2008.

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Additionally, a show featuring discussions with leading bloggers called "Blog" has been aired weekly.

- Despite these attempts, the government's firm grip over media control is still evident. Discussions with bloggers often revolve around trivial matters and avoid controversial issues discussed on blogs. Live telecast of debates meanwhile only lasts 30 minutes and most of the hard-hitting debates are often broadcast later in the day.

Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) TV 2



TV 2's logo which carries the slogan "World of Joy"

TV 2 broadcasts in English, Chinese, and Tamil, in addition to Malay. It is popular with Malaysia's ethnic Chinese and Indians. Its programs are mostly entertainment oriented.

Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad's TV 3



TV3

TV 3 carries programs in Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil. TV 3 carries mainly entertainment programs. Based on a 2008 AC Nielsen survey, TV 3's main nightly news bulletin which airs from 2000 to 2100 [1200 to 1300 GMT] in Malay is the highest-rated newscast in the nation.



Video still shows announcers from TV 3's Buletin Utama, Malaysia's highest rated newscast aired at 8 PM local time [1200 GMT].

- TV 3 has its own news crew. Like TV 1 and TV 2, TV 3 also relies on foreign news agencies and TV networks for foreign news. Though a private station, TV 3 exercises self-censorship on political, racial, and religious matters.
- TV 3's main evening newscast Buletin Utama focuses not only on political news but also offers detailed reports on business, economic, and sports news. In contrast, TV 3 carries a more comprehensive newscast compared to TV 1 and TV 2.
- Similar to TV 1 and TV 2, news broadcasts are scripted and then announcer-read. Live interviews are carried but only those aligned with the government are known to be given airtime.

- Foreign news reports concerning Palestine-Israel conflicts are observed to be somewhat more sympathetic to the Palestinians.

NTV 7



NTV 7

NTV 7, which prides itself as Malaysia's "amazing feel good channel," carries mostly entertainment programs in English and Malay to promote "a happier and more enlightened Malaysia." The station says it believes strongly in the provision of wholesome entertainment, good family and community values, good corporate citizenship, and the promotion of national integration.

TV 9



TV 9

TV 9 targets young semi-urban and rural Malays who associate themselves with traditional Malay values, an important subgroup of the largest and fastest-growing consumer segment in Malaysia.

- TV9 offers current affairs and entertainment programming with a potential reach of 7 million viewers in Peninsular Malaysia.
- TV9 also launched its primetime news program known as Berita TV9, concentrating more on daily issues in non-urban areas, especially stories of human triumph over challenges (poverty, disability) of people living on the East Coast and in central Peninsular Malaysia.

Metro Vision TV 8



TV 8

The station offers entertainment programs, with emphasis on local productions. Broadcasting in Chinese and English, the station targets young, urban adults between the ages of 15 and 35, who make up about 40 percent of the population. It targets mainly Chinese viewers.

ASTRO Cable Network



(www.astro.com.my)

ASTRO offers 100 channels carrying a wide range of local and international content such as news, entertainment, and documentaries. According to the Cable & Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia (CASBAA), ASTRO has seen its pay-TV penetration rate hit 36 percent.

- Major news networks such as CNN and BBC are aired on ASTRO. A unique component of ASTRO is Al Jazeera English news channel, which has a bureau based in Kuala Lumpur.

- It is noted that while stations such as TV 1, TV 2, and TV3 refrained from reporting on sensitive issues which carry negative implications for the government, Al Jazeera closely followed and reported on such issues.
- An example would be the coverage of the 10 November 2007 Bersih rally organized by the opposition calling for free and fair elections. While other mainstream media carried limited reporting on the development of the protest, Al Jazeera carried footage of authorities dispersing protestors with tear gas; images from Al Jazeera also reflected the large attendance of protestors.
- Despite the sensitivity of the issue and authorities' tendency to omit such reporting from mainstream media, Al Jazeera was not barred from airing the reports on the ASTRO network. It is noted that Al Jazeera has managed to "push the envelope" further when reporting on controversial issues concerning Malaysia, compared to other networks.

5. Mainstream Press

5.1. Bernama



(www.bernama.com)

The national news agency Bernama is closely monitored and controlled by Malaysia's Ministry of Information and the Prime Minister's Office. Bernama serves as the official channel for government bodies to disseminate news and information.

- Bernama provides reports in both English and Malay. Many of Bernama's reports are republished and carried by other mainstream media. On average, each mainstream newspaper typically republishes three to four stories from Bernama each day. Political news reports are typically pro-government, however there is also limited coverage of statements and activities of opposition figures.
- With a network of journalists covering all 13 states in Malaysia and a presence in Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok, and London, Bernama provides timely reports on both domestic and regional issues. As a state agency, it has access to top government officials and provides detailed reporting on official visits abroad. It is common for a Bernama reporter to be part of a high-ranking delegation visiting abroad.

5.2. Newspapers: Popular Source for Political Information

Although newspaper reach into the population is just 54 percent compared to 94 percent for TV (2008 AC Nielsen Media Index Survey), newspapers appear to be increasingly popular as a leading source of information on political issues.

- A survey by leading pollster Merdeka Center following the March 2008 general election revealed that newspapers were the main source for information related to the

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election. Fifty-five percent of respondents cited newspapers as their main source of information, followed by TV at 36 percent and online sources at 3.8 percent.

- Malay-language newspapers have the highest total circulation at 1,977,325, followed by English-language papers at 1,472,660 and Chinese-language papers at 1,127,339.

5.3. Malay-Language Newspapers

Mainstream Malay-language newspapers not only adhere to the government line but also the line of the ruling Malay party UMNO. This is evident in the newspapers' strong support for the Malay cause and adherence to the government's stance on key issues.

- Although *Harian Metro* has the highest circulation, it is predominantly focused on entertainment and social news. *Utusan Malaysia* and *Berita Harian* tend to focus on political developments.

Utusan Malaysia



(www.utusan.com.my)

Owner/Publisher: *Utusan Melayu* (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.,
Kuala Lumpur

Group editor in chief: Mohamed Khalid

Circulation: 197,033

Utusan Malaysia is the second-leading Malay newspaper and has a strong pro-government editorial policy. UMNO is closely linked to *Utusan Malaysia* via ownership of publisher Utusan Melayu.



Front page of
Utusan Malaysia
newspaper.

- UMNO's influence upon of *Utusan Malaysia* is evident in the daily's adherence to promoting UMNO's policy of championing the cause of Malays. Articles and reports by *Utusan Malaysia* have been known to strongly defend the NEP and constitutional rights of Malays.
- Opposition figures such as Anwar Ibrahim have accused *Utusan Malaysia* of selectively carrying favorable reports on the government by muting the opposition's criticism.
- *Utusan Malaysia* is also currently facing a lawsuit brought by opposition DAP (Democratic Action Party) Member of Parliament Teresa Kok for publishing a fictional story depicting the assassination of a female ethnic Chinese MP for allegedly challenging the rights of Malays. The description of the character in the story had an uncanny resemblance to Kok and was interpreted as a threat and attempt to raise negative racial sentiments of Malays against Kok.

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- Prior to the lawsuit and publication of the story, *Utusan Malaysia* reported that Kok had ordered a mosque to lower the volume of their prayer calls in her constituency. Both Teresa and the mosque cleric denied the allegations. Kok was subsequently detained under the Internal Security Act for "causing disunity." However, no actions are known to have been taken against the daily.
- On the international news front, *Utusan Malaysia* carried in-depth reporting on Thailand's southern insurgency. Reports often contained quotes from Thai officials who cited names and details of Malays allegedly involved in the unrest.

Berita Harian



(www.bharian.com.my)

Owner: The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd.

Publisher: Berita Harian Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

Group editor in chief: Hishamuddin Aun

Circulation: 192,917

Berita Harian is the third-leading Malay newspaper and is part of the NSTP group.



Front page of *Berita Harian* newspaper

- Although it is generally supportive of the government, its rhetoric in support of promoting the rights of Malays is not as strong as *Utusan Malaysia*.
- *Berita Harian* has good coverage of local and community news which is divided into various regions of the country.

Harian Metro



Harian Metro (www.hmetro.com.my)

Owner: The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd.

Publisher: Berita Harian Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

Executive editor: Abdul Ghafar Ismail

Circulation: 286,315

- *Harian Metro* is the leading Malay-language newspaper and predominantly focuses on social and entertainment news. It is part of the NSTP group which also publishes the English-language daily *The New Straits Times* and Malay-language daily *Berita Harian* which is more politically oriented.

5.4. English-Language Newspapers

English-language newspapers cater to a variety of ethnic groups given that English is widely used in Malaysia. This appears to be the primary reason for their comparatively wide circulation, second only to Malay-language newspapers.

The Star



(www.thestar.com.my)

Publisher: Star Publications (M) Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

Group chief editor: Wong Chun Wai

Circulation: 309,181

The Star, including its Sunday edition *Sunday Star*, is currently the highest-circulation English-language newspaper in Malaysia. Its publisher Star Publishing is listed on the Malaysian bourse. Forty percent of the company is owned by Huaren Holdings -- investment arm of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), a key component party of the government's ruling coalition Barisan Nasional.



Front page of The Star.

- Reporting style, articles, and columns often reflect the political stance of MCA. Reports by *The Star* are also known to carry criticism against members of ruling coalition partner UMNO on sensitive matters concerning ethnicity. Despite that criticism, *The Star* remains defensive of government policies.
- *The Star's* stance is reflective of its role in voicing issues raised by the MCA which represents the ethnic Chinese community while fending off criticism from the opposition -- a critical role for the MCA as part of the ruling coalition. The circumstance is the result of the unique multiethnic composition of Malaysia and the powersharing agreement among the ruling parties.
- *The Star* carries in-depth and up-to-date reporting on domestic and political news. Political reporter Joceline Tan publishes regular articles discussing the latest political developments in the country.

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The New Straits Times

nstonline

www.nst.com.my

Owner: The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd.

Publisher: The New Straits Times Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

Group editor in chief: Hishamuddin Aun

Circulation: 139,763

The New Straits Times has the second highest circulation figures for an English-language daily, following *The Star*. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) through media conglomerate Media Prima owns a controlling stake in New Straits Times Press (NSTP). Reporting in the daily closely conforms to the government line.



Front page of *The New Straits Times*

- Editorials and commentaries clearly reflect support for the ruling front Barisan Nasional coalition government. Activities and statements by opposition figures gain coverage, but critical comments are often omitted in reports.
- *The New Straits Times* is often criticized by bloggers for being a public relations mouthpiece for Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi and his close associates. In what seems to be a move to retaliate against these accusations, landmark defamation suits have been filed against bloggers Jeff Ooi of *Screenshots* and Ahiruddin Attan of *Rocky's Bru*.

The Sun



(www.sun2surf.com)

Publisher/Owner: Nexnews Bhd, company owned by tycoon Vincent Tan of the Berjaya Group

Group editor in chief: Chong Cheng Hai

Circulation: 275,000

The Sun is the only newspaper distributed for free. It is available at 2,700 strategic locations throughout central Kuala Lumpur and nearby urban areas, and 275,000 copies are published Monday through Friday.

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Front page of The Sun

- Reports by *The Sun* are considered the most forward leaning with regards to criticism toward government agencies. Apart from carrying the most detailed reporting concerning controversial and sensitive issues, *The Sun's* reporting team of Terrence Fernandez and R. Nadeswaran has written hard-hitting exposes against government agencies. One example is a report on the alleged corruption behind the purchase of land for the Port Klang Free Zone which implicated the former transportation minister.
- In January 2008, *The Sun* and leading financial newspaper *The Edge*, both owned by Nexnews, were bought out by business tycoon Vincent Tan who helms the Berjaya Corporation. Tan and Berjaya have both been known to have strong ties with the government, especially during the Mahathir administration.

- Despite a noticeable decline in rhetoric of criticism -- and hard-hitting exposes involving corrupt government agencies -- against the administration after the takeover by Tan, *The Sun* still maintains a lead over its peers when it comes to reporting in-depth on controversial and sensitive issues which are often overlooked by other mainstream media.

The Edge



Circulation: 25,259

Publisher/Owner: Nexnews Bhd, company owned by tycoon Vincent Tan of the Berjaya Group

Group editor in chief: Ho Kay Tat

The Edge is considered the leading business daily with in-depth reporting on business and economic matters. Business investment news is updated regularly throughout the day.



Front page of The Edge

- Although *The Edge's* main focus is on the financial side, it does regularly carry reports on current political issues. News reports concerning government spending and budgeting are also covered in detail.
- In January 2008, *The Edge* and its sister publication *The Sun*, both owned by Nexnews, were bought out by business tycoon Vincent Tan.

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Daily Express

Daily Express

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF EAST MALAYSIA

Established since 1963

(www.dailyexpress.com.my)

Owner: Yeh & Sons Holdings Sdn. Bhd.

Publisher: Sabah Publishing House Sdn. Bhd., Kuching

Circulation: 30,123

Daily Express is the leading English-language daily in Sabah -- with sections for articles in Malay, Kadazan (language of the indigenous Kadazans in Sabah) -- and carries in-depth reporting on issues and concerns involving the influence of illegal immigrants in the state. Additionally, it gives much coverage to reports concerning "Project IC" -- an alleged project of the federal government aimed at granting citizenship to illegal immigrants in return for votes for the ruling party UMNO.

- Reporting and the editorial stance of *Daily Express* indicates that it is critical of the government and does not necessarily track with the official line when voicing the complaints of Sabahans about their alleged feelings of neglect by the federal government.

New Sabah Times



(www.newsabahtimes.com.my)

Owner/Publisher: Inna Kinabalu Sdn. Bhd., Kota Kinabalu

Chief Editor: Ch'ng Boon Heng

Circulation: 23,235

New Sabah Times is predominantly in English but does have a local news section in Malay. It is the second-largest daily in Sabah. News and reports focus mainly on events and happenings in Sabah state. Although not critical toward the federal government, many reports focus on the issues of illegal immigrants -- namely the granting of citizenship -- in Sabah.

- *New Sabah Times*'s stance of not being critical toward the government may be attributed to the fact that Musa Aman, the Sabah chief minister and UMNO party chief for the state, owns an interest in Inna Kinabalu, the publisher of *New Sabah Times*.

The Borneo Post



The Borneo Post

Owner: KTS News Sdn Bhd

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

Publisher: Borneo Post Sdn. Bhd

Managing Director: Henry Lau

Circulation: 61,148 (Sarawak Edition); 21,146 (Sabah Edition)

The Borneo Post has two separate editions -- one for the state of Sarawak and the other for Sabah. Reports focus on local issues while reports on national issues are attributed to the national news agency Bernama.

- The Sarawak edition of the *Borneo Post* is the leading English-language daily in Sarawak while the Sabah edition is the third-largest in its home state.

6. Chinese Press Under Business Tycoon's Near-Monopolistic Control

The Chinese-language press in Malaysia is known to be more open in airing criticism against the government and raising the concerns of the Chinese community -- namely over issues concerning ethnicity and religion -- in contrast to other language dailies.

- Publishers of Chinese-language dailies are aware that criticism against the government is unlikely to be picked up by the government, as most of the criticism is known and circulated within the Chinese community.
- Given that Malaysia's civil servants are predominantly ethnic Malays, it is more difficult for the government to closely monitor the Chinese press -- thus the apparent, relative willingness to criticize the authorities, given that the possibility of being reprimanded for such action is relatively low.
- Total daily circulation of the Chinese-language newspapers is higher than the English- and Malay-language papers, as both morning and evening editions of Chinese newspapers are published daily.

Despite the relative free-wheeling nature of the Chinese press, media freedom activists have raised concern over the independence of the Chinese press as four leading titles are under the ownership of business tycoon Tiong Hiew King. Tiong also controls the Hong Kong-based daily *Ming Pao* and the weekly *Yazhou Zhoukan*. Tiong Hiew King is a timber tycoon from Sarawak, who has close links with the MCA.

- Tiong acquired the most widely read *Sin Chiew Daily* in 1988. In 1992, he added *Guangming Daily* to his Chinese press holdings.
- Tiong further expanded his interest in the Chinese press by gaining control of public-listed Nanyang Press Holding which publishes oldest daily *Nanyang Siang Pau* and sister publication *China Press* in 2007.
- The acquisitions of various dailies have resulted in Tiong controlling four of the major Chinese-language dailies in Malaysia. *Oriental Daily News* and *Kwong Wah Yit Poh* are the only two remaining major dailies not under Tiong's ownership.

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6.1. Chinese Newspapers

Sin Chew Jit Poh

馬華多名新人上陣

(www.sinchew-i.com)

Title in Mandarin: *Xing Zhou Ribao*

Publisher: Sin Chew Media Corporation Berhad

Executive Director: Rita Sim Sai Hoon

Circulation: 357,163

Sin Chew Jit Poh has the highest-circulation and readership among the Malaysian Chinese press. A widely read daily, *Sin Chew Jit Poh* provides a broad coverage of domestic political, economic, and international issues.

- Despite ties with the MCA, a *Sin Chew Jit Poh* reporter was arrested under the ISA in September 2008 for reporting on a controversial statement by a Malay politician characterizing the Chinese community as "squatters" in Malaysia. The report was reproduced in other language dailies and caused a political controversy. Authorities claim that the reporter's detention -- which was less than 24 hours -- was for "her own security."

Guang Ming Daily

光明日報

(www.guangming.com.my)

Owner/Publisher: Sin Chew Media Corporation Behad

Editor in chief: Poon Chau Huay

Circulation: 127, 454

Guang Ming Daily (*Guang Ming Ribao* in Mandarin) is a sister newspaper of *Sin Chew Jit Poh*. Published in Penang, *Guang Ming Daily* emphasizes domestic, international, sports, and entertainment news.

Nanyang Siang Pau

馬華增5國12州席

(www.nanyang.com.my)

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

Title in Mandarin: *Nanyang Shangbao*

Owner: Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd.

Publisher: Nanyang Siang Pau Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

Editor in chief: Choong Tien Siong

Circulation: 114,049

Nanyang Siang Pau is one of Malaysia's oldest Chinese-language newspapers. Prior to being acquired by Tiong in 2007, it was owned by the MCA through its investment arm Huaren Holdings

China Press



China Press

Title in Mandarin: *Zhongguo Bao*

Owner: Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd.

Publisher: The China Press Berhad, Kuala Lumpur

Editor in chief: Teoh Yang Khoon

Circulation: 231,539

China Press, along with *Nanyang Siang Pau*, came under the control of the Malaysian Chinese Association in 2001, but is now part of Tiong's Chinese press empire since 2007. *China Press* carries general domestic and political news.

Oriental Daily News



(www.orientaldaily.com)

Owner: Datuk Lau Hui Kang

Publisher: Penerbitan Cerdas Maju Sdn. Bhd., Kuala Lumpur

Editor in chief: Phua You Lai

Circulation: 102,802

Oriental Daily News emerged as a result of the dissatisfaction of various local Chinese groups over the MCA's takeover of *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *China Press* in 2001. However, this new independent Chinese-language daily published only one issue, on 29 September 2001, before the Ministry of Home Affairs suspended its publication permit without explanation.

- The suspension was lifted in early December 2001. Observers linked the suspension to political pressure. According to press reports, many journalists had left the Nanyang

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Siang Pau group to join the newspaper. The daily finally resumed its publication on 1 January 2003. Since then, *Oriental Daily News* has emerged as one of the strongest voices of criticism against the government

Kwong Wah Yit Poh



(www.kwongwah.com.my)

Title in Mandarin: *Guang Hua Ribao*

Owner/Publisher: Kwong Wah Yit Poh Sdn. Bhd., Penang

Circulation: 71,350

Kwong Wah Yit Poh prides itself on being the oldest surviving Chinese-language newspaper in Malaysia. Established in Penang in 1910, *Kwong Wah Yit Poh* focuses on news from northern peninsular Malaysia. Reports tend to focus on communal issues of the Chinese community.

- Along with *Oriental Daily News*, *Kwong Wah Jit Poh* is among the few remaining Chinese-language papers not under Tiong's control. In June 2007, *Kwong Wah Jit Poh* announced plans to spread its wings to central and south of Peninsular Malaysia to challenge Tiong's near-monopoly of the Chinese press. As part of the plan, *Kwong Wah Jit Poh* launched a new office in the capital, Kuala Lumpur. General Manager Lee Hin Chin told reporters that the daily is here to start a new trend of "independent news reporting."

6.2. Tamil-Language Newspapers

Tamil-language newspapers have a comparatively small circulation and focus on community issues. The newspapers are owned by opposing figures and at times appear to serve as the mouthpieces for the owners to air criticism and attacks against one another.

Malaysian Nanban



Malaysia Nanban (www.nanban.com.my)

This OSC product is based exclusively on the content and behavior of selected media and has not been coordinated with other US Government components.

Owner: *Penerbit Sahabat (M) Bhd.*

Circulation: 60,000, unverified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC)

Malaysia Nanban is the largest Tamil-language daily in Malaysia. It claims to have a circulation of 60,000. Published by a company controlled by the ruling component party Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) -- and closely toeing the line of Party President Sammy Vellu -- the daily carries reports on activities of the country's main ethnic Indian party.

Makkal Ossai

Owner: *Makkal Osai Sdn Bhd.*

Group General Manager: S. M. Periasamy

Circulation: 55,000, unverified by the ABC

Makkal Ossai is owned by former MIC Deputy President S. (Sinniah) Subraniam. It claims to have a circulation of 55,000. Apart from reporting issues concerning the Indian community, *Makkal Ossai* has emerged as a platform for Subraniam -- who failed to retain his post in the MIC -- to air attacks against incumbent MIC president Sammy Vellu. Attacks against Sammy predominantly revolve around reporting alleged mismanagement of the party and its investment division.

7. Opposition Newspapers

Newspapers published by the opposition exist, but are only allowed to publish twice weekly. Such newspapers are available at privately owned bookstores in most cities in Malaysia, although they are meant for opposition party members only. Major bookstores, such as those in major shopping malls, do not carry non-mainstream newspapers.

Harakah



Harakah

Harakah is the official newspaper of the opposition PAS party. Initially it was only permitted to publish bi-monthly, however, following the opposition's strong performance in the March 2008 general elections, *Harakah* received permission to publish twice weekly in April 2008.

- *Harakah* carries similar rhetoric and contents -- critical of the government and promoting Islamic values -- to the online media outlet *Harakahdaily.net*, which is also owned by PAS. Circulation of *Harakah* is hard to verify, as it is not audited by

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Malaysia's Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) which monitors mainstream press circulation figures.

Suara Keadilan



Suara Keadilan

Like *Harakah*, *Suara Keadilan* -- the official newspaper of the People's Justice Party (PKR) lead by Anwar Ibrahim -- was only allowed to publish bi-monthly prior to the 8 March 2008 polls. However, in April 2008 it was granted permission to publish twice weekly.

- No clear circulation figures have been noted, but *Suara Keadilan* is widely available at private bookstores and small stalls in Malaysia. It is not available in major bookstores or shopping malls.
- Contents of *Suara Keadilan* differs from *Harakah* as it reflects the party's platform of multi-ethnic cooperation and targets people from various ethnic backgrounds, as opposed to one particular ethnic group like *Harakah*.

7. Radio Stations

RTM operates 32 local and nationwide stations. Additionally, there are several private radio networks based mainly in Kuala Lumpur. Radio stations in Malaysia focus mainly on entertainment while news broadcasts closely align with the government's stance on issues. A radio station run by the Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM) broadcasts religious programs for women, children, and teenagers, as well as programs on current affairs.

- According to a 2008 AC Nielsen survey, entertainment-centric radio stations ERA and Hot FM are the two leading radio stations.

8. Alternative Media

Audience share numbers for the alternative media are not known to be available. However, data from a Merdeka Poll survey -- based on 1024 respondents above 21 years of age, from a diverse sociogeographic mix -- in March 2008 after the general election, indicated that 6.4 percent of respondents turned to the Internet for news concerning the elections.

The poll showed that 70 percent of respondents said the mainstream media slant the news to support the government's position. Only 9 percent of respondents said Internet sources slant reports to support the government.

With the growing influence of blogs which carry critical comments against the government, various state media control apparatus have been applied to curb online dissent. Instances where the government took action include the following:

- Raja Petra Kamaruddin of *Malaysia Today* was detained under the ISA for writing an article considered an insult to Islam. As of February 2009, Raja Petra also faced a defamation suit by Najib Razak's wife for alleging that she and Najib were involved in the murder of a Mongolian woman.
- On 14 July 2007, the Officials Secrets Act (OSA) under the internal security law was used to detain blogger and PKR webmaster Nathaniel Tan for questioning. The report stated that the arrest was linked to the posting of a doctored photo showing Deputy Prime Minister Najib having dinner in Paris with one of the defendants in the high-profile Mongolian model murder case.

Malaysia's alternative media exist predominantly online in the forms of blogs or online news sites. Such sources can be divided into two main categories:

- News centric: The individual or group operating the website aims to provide readers with alternative news -- information that does not contain the mainstream media perception which tends to favor the government and mutes criticism.
- Politically affiliated: The individual or group operating the website has political links to a particular party -- generally the opposition parties. Such websites are generally in the form of an official website of a particular party or a blog of a leading figure from the party.
- The opposition PAS is at the forefront of utilizing the Internet to disseminate information. Currently it has at least three affiliated websites, including an online web TV service.
- In the second quarter of 2008, politicians aligned to the government followed in the footsteps of opposition peers by creating blogs to express their views. Despite the new trend, blogs associated with opposition figures still outnumber those of government-linked officials.

8.1. Online News Sites, Blogs Emerge as Influential News Sources

Leading blogs and online news sites often publish information carrying criticism and negative implications toward the government. Coverage of opposition parties are more widely available from these sources, compared to the mainstream media which are closely linked to the ruling government.

Such information is then typically picked up by the mainstream press in the form of either an official denial of the allegations or a comment downplaying the significance of the allegations from the blog reports or alternative news sites.

Blogs and online news sites are generally distinguished from each other as follows:

- Online news sites are generally more structured and represent a news organization with a dedicated staff.
- Blogs are usually operated by an individual who openly reveals his/her identity and contact information. This helps contribute to the credibility of information posted by leading bloggers; additionally a number of leading bloggers are veteran journalists who used to work for mainstream dailies.

3.2. Online News Sites Offer Alternative Views

Online news sites have emerged as the leading source of alternative views which are independent of political influence or pressure. Two leading sites are *Malaysiakini* and *The Malaysian Insider*.

Malaysiakini

malaysiakini
news and views that matter

(www.malaysiakini.com)

Malaysiakini was established in 1999 and predominantly offers reports, analysis, commentaries, and breaking news highlights on the latest political developments.

- Access by subscription is approximately US\$50 per year. User names and passwords for *Malaysiakini* can be shared without restrictions. This allows for subscribers to share access to *Malaysiakini* with an unlimited number of friends. *Malaysiakini* states that its subscription-based readership is at 100,000 visitors daily; however, given the ease in sharing access to *Malaysiakini*, readership is likely higher.
- *Malaysiakini* also offers free access to coverage of important events such as the national elections.
- Although coverage is predominantly in English, *Malaysiakini* also offers Malay-, Chinese- and Tamil-language sections to cater to the various ethnic groups. Reports which are not in English often focus more on specific issues of the targeted community. For example, the Malay-language section would carry reports on the feud between personalities in a state Islamic organization which would not appear in English. Similarly Chinese- and Tamil-language editions may focus on the grouses of the various communities.
- Recognizing the influence and reach of *Malaysiakini*, prominent politicians from both the opposition and government camps have given exclusive interviews to *Malaysiakini*. Among them are former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, and Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar.
- Apart from featuring reports and transcripts based on the interviews, *Malaysiakini* also posts a full-length video of the interview on its dedicated video site at malaysiakini.tv

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and *YouTube*. Videos with images related to reports featured on *Malaysiakini* are also featured on the cited sites.

The Malaysian Insider



(www.themalaysianinsider.com)

The Malaysian Insider was launched briefly before the March 2008 general elections. Articles are predominantly in English, but those written in Malay are also available.

- *The Malaysian Insider* is the brainchild of veteran journalist Png Hong Kwang and Sreedhar Subramaniam, former chief operating officer of ntv7 -- a free TV channel owned by media conglomerate Media Prima which is linked to the government.
- *The Malaysian Insider* offers a variety of news ranging from sports to business, but coverage of domestic political news is the primary focus. News updates are regular and rivals that of *Malaysiakini*. Reports often cite sources close to leading political figures and are referred to as "insiders."
- Speculation over the individual or group behind the creation of *The Malaysian Insider* continues, including the rumor that its backers are a politically well-connected public relations company officer and a former chief editor of a mainstream newspaper. That speculation includes the view that government-linked entities are seeking to establish an online presence. Founder Subramaniam has refused to comment on those rumors when confronted by reporters (*The Star*, 15 May 2008).
- Reporting patterns have shown that *The Malaysian Insider* has taken the approach of highlighting current political situation trends regardless of whether the report, commentary, or analysis indicates that the government is in an unfavorable or weakened political position. Additionally, opposition figures are given an equal share of coverage compared to mainstream media.
- Despite seemingly adopting a stance similar to that of *Malaysiakini*, *The Malaysian Insider's* rhetoric is less critical of the government.

8.3. Blogs Carry Critical Political Views, Allegations of Wrongdoing

Malaysia Today



(www.malaysia-today.org)

Malaysia Today, founded by Raja Petra Kamaruddin in August 2004, has established itself as one of the leading sources of alternative online news with a self-proclaimed readership of 1.5 million visitors daily.

- Articles and postings on *Malaysia Today* are sensationalistic in nature, often discussing the behind-the-scenes stories of Malaysia's political landscape. Although the sensationalistic writing style of Raja Petra has earned *Malaysia Today* a vast following, it has also brought with it significant legal troubles.
- Sensationalistic articles are often accompanied by scanned copies of documents -- ranging from copies of contracts to sworn written testimonies by whistle-blowers -- to add to the credibility of criticism and allegations. The authenticities of the documents have yet to be independently verified in all cases.
- Despite Raja Petra's ISA detention in September and November 2008, *Malaysia Today* was updated regularly. Postings during Raja Petra's detention were attributed to his wife Marina and various contributors to the site. An expose -- which was unattributed and posted in Raja Petra's absence -- concerning the overpriced purchase of military helicopters resulted in the cancellation of the purchase and an investigation ordered by Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi.
- Apart from sedition charges -- for insulting Islam and potentially disrupting racial harmony, which brought about the ISA detention -- Raja Petra also faces defamation charges in connection with Rosmah Mansor, wife of Deputy Prime Minister Najib, for articles relating to the Mongolian woman's murder.

Rocky's Bru

ROCKY'S BRU

(www.rockybru.blogspot.com)

Rocky's Bru, authored by Ahiruddin Attan, is one of the leading blogs in Malaysia, with a readership of 9,980 visitors per day. Postings are often in the form of commentaries regarding the latest social, political, and economic developments.

- Comments are direct, to the point, and often view how various mainstream and alternative media portray a particular story. Ahiruddin's experience as a journalist and editor of mainstream newspaper *The Malay Mail* contributes greatly to his insights into explaining the media's perspective on a particular issue.
- Links to mainstream media news and other alternative news sites are often cited to provide background and understanding of a current topic being discussed.
- Ahiruddin is currently protem president of the National Alliance of Bloggers and is well connected to Malaysia's blog community. He often features writings and commentaries by other lesser-known bloggers even though they may have opposing views.
- Although known to be critical of the performance of Abdullah's administration, Ahiruddin also criticizes and questions the actions of opposition parties.

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- As of March 2009, Ahiruddin and fellow blogger Jeff Ooi who authors *Screenshots* are engaged in a defamation suite brought about by mainstream media group New Straits Times Press (NSTP) in January 2007.

9. Opposition Parties Use Websites, Blogs

State control over mainstream media has resulted in opposition parties lacking access to traditional mass media outlets required to disseminate their news and policies. To counter such limitations, opposition parties -- namely PKR and PAS -- have used the Internet and created official websites, news websites, leader's blogs, and web TV.



Masthead of PAS's web from www.tvpas.com

- Despite slight improvements in coverage received from mainstream media following the 8 March general elections, mainstream media remains pro-government when it comes to reporting on political issues.
- To counter the government's grip over mainstream media, opposition parties have turned to the Internet to voice their agenda and to criticize the government.
- Opposition parties DAP, PKR, and PAS all use the Internet to express their views and political ideology.
- Opposition parties have distinct official websites which carry basic information regarding each party. Apart from official websites, key figures from the parties have also established personal blogs to air their thoughts on the latest political developments.
- Apart from publishing text statements on websites, opposition parties have used the Internet to host video clips of leaders' activities or statements online via *YouTube* or a specially dedicated Web TV site such as www.tvpas.com. The site also carries news reports from PAS's perspective.

9.1. PAS Leads in Utilization of Online Resources for Dissemination of Information

HarakahDaily.net

HarakahDaily.Net
INFO ALTERNATIF RAKA
(www.harakahdaily.net)

HarakahDaily.net is PAS's primary online news outlet among the various party-affiliated websites it operates. The site is an online channel for disseminating news and information since the party's official newspaper *Harakah* is only permitted to publish twice weekly under government regulations.

- Articles and news reports are updated daily and are routinely critical of the government's leadership and policies. Apart from criticism against the government, *HarakahDaily.net* heavily highlights the activities and statements of PAS leaders. Reports and commentaries on *HarakahDaily.net* are more current and aimed at reaching the technologically inclined -- namely the younger urban Malay population.
- Views of opposition coalition party -- under the Pakatan Rakyat opposition alliance with leaders such as Anwar Ibrahim from the PKR party -- are often featured. However, views of leaders from ethnic Chinese party DAP, which is also a partner, receive limited coverage. This could reflect the polarized stance between PAS and DAP on issues of race and religion.

Parti Islam SeMalaysia



(www.parti-pas.org)

Parti Islam SeMalaysia, PAS's official website, carries information regarding the party's leadership and contact details of the party office in each state. Apart from the basic information regarding the party's policy and structure, the website also carries the party official statements regarding various issues.

- Reports from PAS's official website focus more on the activities of members who are part of the state legislative assembly and Parliament. A section is dedicated to highlighting the activities and statement made by PAS representatives in Parliament. In contrast, reports available on *HarakahDaily.net* touch on a larger variety of issues.

TVPAS

TVPAS, launched on 20 September 2006, reflects the effort by PAS to fully use online resources in disseminating news and information. *TVPAS* offers audiences the opportunity to view videos from PAS in several forms. Such videos typically carry criticism against the government and are not available on mainstream media.

- Short 3- to 4-minute clips of video formatted like a brief news report on a particular topic, but from the PAS perspective
- Video clip of PAS leaders delivering a speech at a party event
- Recorded debates from Parliament featuring elected PAS representatives
- Recording of a forum discussing various issues featuring prominent PAS members or other prominent opposition figures

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HarapanBaruUntukMalaysia



Anwaribrahimblog.com uses the same masthead as the PKR party's official website.

HarapanBaruUntukMalaysia is opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim's personal blog, which features his schedule and appointments. This site serves as Anwar's primary site for posting official statements and announcements. Links to the latest video reports of Anwar are also featured and highlights Anwar's appearances in the international media. Additional links to Anwar's account on social networking websites such as *Facebook*, *Myspace*, and *Friendster* are available.

Lim Kit Siang for Malaysia



(blog.limkitsiang.com)

Lim Kit Siang for Malaysia is maintained by veteran DAP leader Lim Kit Siang, who is considered one of the first opposition leaders to maintain a blog. Lim's blog is updated daily with comments mainly focusing on political, social, and economic issues.

- When Parliament is in session, videos of Lim debating against other members are featured on the site. It is noted that although state-run TV 1 airs the parliamentary debates, it is only programmed for half an hour. Parliamentary proceedings may exceed eight hours and footage of the opposition's criticism against the government is not aired on mainstream TV.

Screenshots



(www.jeffooi.com)

Screenshots author Jeff Ooi gained popularity as Malaysia's leading blogger prior to being elected to Parliament in March 2008 as a member of the opposition DAP. Blog postings by Ooi often focus on criticism of the government over issues concerning transparency, accountability, and media freedom.

- Ooi's criticism of the authorities is often backed by independent data from media reports which help enhance the credibility of his postings.
- In January 2007, a landmark defamation suit against Ooi and fellow blogger Ahiruddin Attan of *Rocky's Bru* by *The New Straits Times* was filed. Ooi joined DAP in July 2007 and subsequently won a parliamentary seat in the March 2008 polls.

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President PAS



(presiden.pas.org.my)

President PAS, the personal blog of PAS President Hadi Awang, offers the latest press statements, reports, and biographical information on PAS's president. The blog also maintains an archive of photos, videos, and previous statements by Hadi.

Web Log Husam Musa 08



(cetusan-hati.blogspot.com)

Web Log Husam Musa 08, which is updated weekly, is the blog for PAS Vice President Husam Musa. It receives an average of 200 visitors daily. Comments primarily focus on the latest political developments and are critical of the government. The blog carries an archive of photos, videos of parliamentary debates, and previous comments by Husam.

CheDet



(www.chedet.com)

CheDet was launched by former Prime Minister Mahathir in May 2008 as a personal blog. The blog carries his comments on the latest political developments. It has served as a primary medium for Mahathir to air his criticism against members from both the ruling party and the opposition. As of November 2008 -- only six months after its launch -- visitors to his blogs exceeded 6 million, making it the most visited blog in the country.

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- In contrast, *Rocky's Bru*, another leading blog, required four years to attract 6 million visitors. *Che Det's* popularity may be attributed to Mahathir's outspoken criticism against Abdullah's administration and his perceived continuing influence in Malaysia's political scene after he left office in 2003.

1Malaysia



(www.1malaysia.com.my)

1Malaysia, launched in September 2008, was characterized by Malaysia's media as Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak's personal blog. Much of the information posted on the blog focuses on reports of Najib's latest activities. Najib's biographical information, archived speeches, images, and videos are available on this site.

- Blog postings attributed to Najib focus mainly on political issues similar to comments aired in the mainstream media. The launch of *1Malaysia* can be viewed as the government's attempt to establish a presence among the alternative media to counter the role played by the opposition parties.

Cetusan Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo



(www.drkhir.com)

Cetusan Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo is a blog by former Selangor State Chief Minister Khir Toyo from UMNO, who lost his post after the opposition alliance gained administrative control over Selangor in the March 2008 general elections. Statements by Khir typically defend the continued application of the NEP.

- Writings also champion the rights of Malays and are critical of the opposition alliance. Criticism against his successor, PKR's Khalid Ibrahim, predominantly revolves around the party's alleged failure to protect the rights of Malays.

10. Islamic Media

Media pertaining to the teachings of Islam are widely available and typically sanctioned by the government.

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Islamic publications such as *Al Islam* focus mainly on the teachings of Islam and conform to state policy. On mainstream TV -- namely RTM's TV 1 -- religious programs are commonly aired late at night, between 0100 and 0200 [1700-1800 GMT].

Materials that do not meet the state's criteria are often confiscated by the religious authorities.

- Despite the authorities' firm monitoring and control of material that dissents from government-sanctioned moderate Islam, extremist material with links to Indonesia is known to be available.

10.1. Indonesian Jihadist Material Available at Selected Locations

Indonesian Jihadist publications have been observed to be available in selected areas -- namely mosques and make-shift stores present during Friday prayers -- in Kuala Lumpur.

10.2. Fajar Ilmu Baru Enterprise

Jihadist publications imported from Indonesia are available at Fajar Ilmu Baru Enterprise. The store is located on the second floor of the Wisma Yakin Building, near Masjid India, the well-known mosque in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from jihadist publications, there are some Islamic books in English and Malay.



Front cover of an Indonesian jihadist book titled *39 Ways to Help Mujahidin*

- An example of Indonesian jihadist material is: *39 Ways to Help Mujahidin*. It was published by an Indonesian jihadist publishing house, Media Islamika.
- *Islam Kok Dilawan (Islam is Attacked)*, a jihadist book, tells the history of Islam under the invasion of different colonial forces. The book's preface was written by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the spiritual leader of the terror group Jemaah Islamiyah.
- Contact details: Fajar Ilmu Baru Enterprise A2, Tkt 2, Wisma Yakin, Jln Masjid India, 50100 Kuala Lumpur; phone: +603-26937360; fax: +603-26981742; e-mail: fib_enterprise@yahoo.com; website: fajarilmubaru.com.my

10.3. Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia Website Promotes Pro-Caliphate Ideology

Hizbut Tahrir Malaysia (HTM), the Malaysian branch of the international radical pan-Islamic movement Hizbut Tahrir, uses a website -- *Mykhilafah.com* -- to promote a pro-caliphate ideology.

- Writings on the website are attributed to HTM and openly criticize the government on various domestic political and economic issues.

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- Additionally, the website carries several commentaries faulting the government for its handling of oil price hikes and HTM's efforts to gather "1 million" signatures protesting that handling. The commentaries routinely argue that the solution to most political problems in Malaysia is a caliphate.

[SEAVAP]