

World News Publishing Focus: Interview with Arianna Huffington

PARIS, FRANCE / DARMSTADT, GERMANY: Love it or hate it, there is no doubt the Huffington Post has become an international force in the media world. Arianna Huffington merits the cover interview in the latest issue of World News Publishing Focus, which also includes a preview of the upcoming World Newspaper Congress, World Editors Forum and World Advertising Forum in Bangkok.



Since its launch in 2005, the Huffington Post has had an enormous impact on 21st century news media and how they engage their audiences. International versions of the news and blog site have been launched in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Spain and Italy, with others in the pipeline, including German, Brazilian and Japanese editions. The Huffington Live video network was launched last August.

The formula for success is deceptively simple.

"From the beginning, the whole point of the Huffington Post was to take the sort of conversations found at water coolers and around the dinner tables - about politics and art and books and food - and open them up and bring them online," Huffington said in the May/June edition of World News Publishing Focus, the bi-monthly magazine published by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).

"Our success has to do with our ability to do that, and to tell the most important - and the most entertaining - stories of the day," she said.

Time to redefine success

Huffington says it is time to redefine success.

"We need a third metric, beyond money and power, that places value on well-being, wisdom and our ability to make a difference in the world," she said.

Though the trend for online news sites has been toward paid content, Huffington said the Huffington Post is dedicated to remaining free. But without paid content, other business models including sponsorship and native advertising are increasingly important.

"Sponsorships have already been very important to us, making possible several of our verticals committed to making the world better, including Global Motherhood (sponsored by Johnson & Johnson), Good News (Capella University), TED-Weekends (Chevy Volt), and Impact X (Cisco)," she said.

Despite the massive changes occurring in news media, Huffington said she is optimistic about the future of newspapers.

Obituaries for newspapers 'premature'

"I believe that the obituaries for newspapers are premature," she said. "Many newspapers are belatedly but successfully adapting to the new news environment (like the New York Times). And it's my feeling that, as long as they keep adapting, there will be a market for newspapers. There is something in our collective DNA that makes us want to sip our coffee, turn page, look up from a story, say, 'Can you believe this?', and pass the paper to the person across the table."

"The future of news is a hybrid future, as traditional outlets adopt the tools of digital journalists - including speed, transparency and engagement - and new media adopt the best practices of traditional journalism, including fact-checking, fairness and accuracy. And the line between old media and new, between digital and print, will be increasingly blurry."

Other highlights of the May/June issue include:

- **BANGKOK PREVIEW:** Glimpses into what's coming up 2-5 June at the world's premier publishing event, with the focus on bold growth targets, premium content, new leadership skills, driving change in the newsroom, and using data to boost engagement and revenue. More on the 65th World Newspaper Congress, 20th World Editors Forum and the 23rd World Advertising Forum can be found at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/bangkok2013>.
- **SPONSORED CONTENT:** As publishers seek new revenue sources, the "advertorial" concept moves online; prime practitioner BuzzFeed's approach is examined, and guidelines are provided.
- **COST SAVINGS:** Scaling back over dimensioned installations can save printing houses plenty in energy costs. A German technical manager discusses details.
- **GLOBAL ACTION ON SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS:** The United Nations "Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity" aims to contribute to a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers.

As signatories to the Plan, WAN-IFRA spoke with Guy Berger, Director of the Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development at UNESCO, the UN agency with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the initiative, about a specific role for the global news publishing industry.

A summary of articles can be found at <http://www.wan-ifra.org/node/77306>.

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