

Trench leaving *Dispatch* to head up Media24 investigations unit

 By Herman Manson: @marklives

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Andrew Trench, editor of the [Daily Dispatch](#), has resigned from the paper after being headhunted by Media24 to head up its investigative unit from 1 September 2010. He is tasked with getting the unit, which was set up last year, off the ground. Respected journalist Jacques Pauw, who led the unit at its launch, will focus on investigative stories rather than the management of the unit.



Andrew Trench, outgoing editor of the Daily Dispatch.

Trench successfully led the *Daily Dispatch* to win numerous journalism awards since he was appointed editor in December 2008.

Broke the news unconventionally

Trench announced his resignation to staff on Friday afternoon 23 July and broke the news to his readers, a little unconventionally for a newspaper editor, via a [blog post](#) and on [Twitter](#).

According to Trench, setting up any new initiative poses certain challenges, not least getting journalists to work across newspaper titles within the Media24 stable, but he remains a firm believer in the concept of investigative reporting and in the unit he will now lead.

The renewed interest from newspaper owners in investigative journalism (the *Mail & Guardian* launched its own [investigations unit](#) in April) can be attributed to the financial bottom line, says Trench, as newspapers try to regain the initiative and quality differentiation from online players.

Commoditisation of news

With the commoditisation of news, papers are trying to recreate value in their products through investigative reporting. It's an investment to avoid newspapers becoming irrelevant by (hopefully) stemming steady circulation declines and, ultimately, ad revenue.

Of course, Media24 is also investing in the unit as the newspaper market prepares for the entry of a new daily, [The New Age](#), which is set to launch in mid-September.

While Trench believes that investigative journalism could play an exciting role in the online news space, his focus will remain on print for the time being. He believes with time the unit's investigative reporting will include online components as well.

Protection of Information Bill

Trench expresses the hope that the [Protection of Information Bill](#) will be changed substantially before it gets voted on in Parliament and believes if it's not, it's bound to be found unconstitutional. In this view, he joins pretty much every other editor and journalist in the country, who views the proposed bill as the greatest threat to media freedom since the end of apartheid.

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The inaugural Vodacom Social Media Journalist of the Year in 2011, Herman Manson (@marklives) is a business journalist and media commentator who edits industry news site www.marklives.com. His writing has appeared in newspapers and magazines locally and abroad, including Bizcommunity.com. He also co-founded *Brand* magazine.

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