

Whitewashing the news?

 By [Angelo Coppola: @angelo2711](#)

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I was excited when I woke up on Tuesday morning, 30 August 2011. Julius Malema was to have his hearing at Luthuli House and a small group of people had arrived near the ANC head office to start their overnight vigil. Then my day deteriorated. I was disappointed that I had to rely on the social networks to stay in touch with the action just 10km from my home.

Disappointed because, while I follow many of the journalists that were there, the free-to-air television channel (e.tv) was broadcasting what it normally does - soap operas and marginal sports events.

We don't have to discuss why the SABC chose not to broadcast the happenings around Luthuli House. It is, after all, the government's mouthpiece and generally does as instructed. If truth be told, the entire news team was probably on the president's state visit to Norway.

But why did e.tv choose not to flight anything around Malema's hearing and the public disorder?

Now, before you accuse me of being ill-informed, I know that there was live coverage on the eNews channel, which is parked on the black set-top box that only the well-oiled portion of the population can afford - known as the M-Net/DStv bouquet.

I guess what I'm asking is why that same footage couldn't be flighted on the 'brother' channel nationally, at the same time, or slightly delayed? Is there some licence agreement that e.tv signed that keeps its 24-hour news only available to those with disposable income? Or could it be that commercial considerations - read advertiser support - determine the channel's programming?

Whatever the reason, the fact is that the ANC managed the messaging perfectly. National television coverage is non-existent.

Finally, I believe that the social networks - read Twitter - are great for conversation, but I wonder why the head of news at e.tv didn't bother to respond to numerous requests for clarity on its licence conditions and why it wasn't airing the action on its free-to-air channel?

For more:

- Bizcommunity: [Doth media maketh Malema?](#) by Chris Moerdyk
- Google News Search: [ANCYL Luthuli House media](#)
- Twitter Search: [ANCYL malema](#)

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