

# Clarity on the launch of the Online Publishers Association

Russel Yeo, chairman of the OPA, responds to an article by Taryn Hood of the OMOA, "[Concern and confusion over the OPA and OMOA's future roles](#)", saying that there is very little concern and no confusion amongst their members.

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The article carried on Bizcommunity by Taryn Hood contains a wide range of factual errors, and unsupportable emotional claims. I do not believe that any purpose will be served by entering into that level of debate, but I do believe that some facts need to be clearly stated. There is very little concern, and no confusion amongst our membership.

The launch of an organisation like the Online Publishers Association has been under discussion for some time, long pre-dating any of the events discussed. It is undoubtedly true that the challenge by Media24 of ABC-e figures has spurred us to action, but it is by no means the reason for the launch of this organisation. That action has had the support of key online publishers from the beginning, and in no way represents the interests of one group.

We feel that the need for such an organisation is clear. Any new medium must represent itself to its customers if it hopes to win its fair share of advertising spend. In the case of online media this is doubly so. The collapse of the dot-com bubble is probably unprecedented in media history. Claims about how the Internet would revolutionise the world were hype of the worst possible kind. Unfortunately, we are now seeing an over-correction, where all claims about the medium are met with scepticism.

We believe that the South African Internet is a viable and accountable medium to reach an important niche of our society. Many decision makers use the information provided online by our members as their first port of call. It is up to us to take that message to the market in a credible, ethical way, and that makes the OPA a necessity. We accept that the needs of the many other types of Internet business, like e-commerce sites, mail services and list brokers, are different to our own. They may require their own association, just as the Print Media Association does not represent direct marketers.

The OPA is committed to working constructively with all representative groups, including SAARF and ABC-e, toward common goals.

Our membership today includes Ananzi, BDFM, e-Media24, iafrica.com, iol, ITWeb, Johnnic Publishing, Mail & Guardian Online, Moneymax, Moneyweb, MSN SA, M-Web, Ramsey Son & Parker, SuperSport and World Online. We would welcome all online publishers to join us.

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