

## Noted

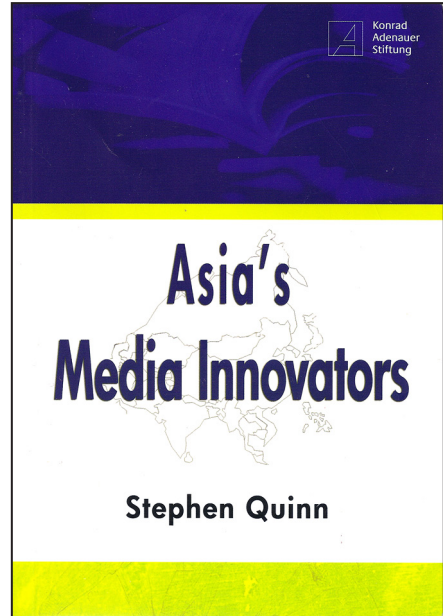
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# Innovative pathways open doors across Asia

**Asia's Media Innovators**, by Stephen Quinn /co-author Werner vom Busch. Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2008, 170 pp. ISBN: 978-981-05-9770-2

QUINN provides an interesting account of media convergence and innovative forms of journalism in Asia, using nine case studies from major media companies in this region including the Star Group in Malaysia, the *China Daily* online, and the *Hindustan Times* Group in India. This book is not an account of corporate convergence, nor a discussion of technological convergence but rather a study of innovative ways of doing journalism in the Asia region.

Convergence presents many challenges not only for publishers but also for journalists. Both groups



need to find new ways to produce news for different platforms without compromising the needs of their audiences, and while maintaining ethical business practices. In Quinn's words, 'in essence they need to find ways to blend the twin aims of telling the truth and making money' (pp. 22). His book presents examples of media organisations in the Asia region that have embraced the virtuous circle that sees good content attracting audiences which in its turn attracts advertisers which means media make money and are able to recruit more competent news producers.

Quinn used a PEST analysis to assess media companies in terms

of political, economic, social and technological factors that influence convergence and innovation. He identifies a number of conditions that need to be present in order to foster innovation, including physical and human infrastructure with emphasis on high levels of journalism education and professionalism; with links to education/training and ICT; good broadband infrastructure; freedom of expression; and liberalising laws that allow media growth.

Korea is given as a good example of ICT becoming part of mainstream education and thus building the capacity of both journalists and audiences to use new technologies. Hong Kong is used to illustrate the benefits of a liberal market environment and a good technological infrastructure: PCCW, the region's biggest telecoms company, has merged all its media assets under one platform.

But one of the biggest developments in the region's media is the growth of audience-generated content (a good example is *Stomp*, the Singapore *Straight Times* online mobile and print site with audience-generated content, attracting 300,000 unique visitors a month). Asia's fast-growing mobile phone market has the potential of turning societies into a huge newsgathering force. Many media groups have also developed

innovative in-house technologies for delivering breaking news. The Inquirer.net in the Philippines for instance has the most innovative website in the region through its use of multi-media. Reporters file breaking news as text messages with their blackberry mobile phones into Inquirer.net's own content management system which distributes news alerts for mobile phones. Meanwhile traditional print newspaper business is booming in India and China. Some Indian newspapers like the *Hindustan Times* are hotbeds of innovation, embracing integration with new technologies: 'The future is bright for Asian media companies that embrace technology and innovation, in a region whose future is promising if a little unclear' (p.167).

### **The case for crisis communication**

***The Handbook of Crisis Communication***, edited by W. Timothy Coombs and Sherry J. Holladay. London, Blackwell Publishing, 2010, 737pp. ISBN 978-1-4051-9441-9

**T**HIS HANDBOOK presents a timely contribution to the growing body of literature on crisis communication. Premised on the belief that the study of crisis communication deserves recognition as a discipline distinct from public relations