

Veteran online journo takes on newspaper giants with The News

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The journalist who created tabloid-style online journalism is spearheading a news site that is set to challenge the dominance of the national and international press by taking them on at their own game, without the print and distribution overheads.

Mike Magee will launch The News (www.instantnews.net) today, a site that will deliver breaking global news in a characteristically punchy and controversial style.

The site will have its news hub in India, where editorial operations will be headed by Subhash Rai. He joined Magee after successfully starting and then running AOL's Indian news portal. Rai's team will include full-time staff and freelancers from around the world.

Magee launched The Register (www.theregister.co.uk), then the INQUIRER (www.theinquirer.net), selling the latter to VNU Business Publications two years ago. In March last year, Magee oversaw the launch of the IT Examiner in Bangalore (www.itexaminer.com).

Magee said: "At a time when multinational and national newspaper groups are cutting staff, closing offices and facing the overhead of print production, distribution costs and declining readership, we feel we've a good chance of taking on the giants by concentrating on sound journalism and challenging the state of journalism now."

He continued: "A recent article on forbes.com told a stark truth. Print advertising, the piece said, is evaporating, meaning that in the UK, at least, Northcliffe Media and Trinity are still tied to classified ad revenues and can't scale their operations to take advantage of the low-cost model in the online world."

In June 2006, Magee's INQUIRER broke the story of a Dell notebook bursting into flames in Japan, a story that was picked up all over the world by broadcast and print outlets. Steve Hamm, from Business Week, covering the story in an article called The Battery Recall: A win for the Web, said at the time: "It has long been said that the Internet spreads information like a prairie fire. In this case, the Web helped snuff one out...This story showed just how potent his [Mike Magee's] brand of cybermedia can be."

(http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/aug2006/tc20060830_642667.htm?chan=top+news_top+news+index_tech)

Rai said: "Journalism divorced of traditional journalistic values is there for all to see. Online journalism of The News variety will bring a breath of fresh air."

"Journalists these days are frightened little rabbits told to print or pixellate press releases and taught not to challenge power and vested interests," said Magee. "We will prove that journalism is not dead and that readers want strong journalism and not wishy-washy pap dictated to them by multiple vested interests." He added: "We don't follow the news, we make The News."

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