

Survey on Press Freedom in Hong Kong

1. Survey methodology

1.1 Survey on Journalists

- Survey method : Self-administered mail questionnaire survey;
- Target respondents : Journalists working in Hong Kong;
- Data collection period : Early January 2007 to 20 January 2007;
- Total questionnaires sent : 1,484;
- Completed questionnaires returned : 506;
- Response rate : 34.1%.

1.2 Survey on the General Public

- Survey method : Telephone survey;
- Target respondents : Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above;
- Data collection period : Nights of 22 January 2007 to 26 January 2007;
- Completed interviews : 734;
- Response rate : 47.1%.

2. Survey Results

2.1 Compared to July 1st 1997, do you think Hong Kong enjoys more press freedom now?

	Journalists		General Public	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	58	11.6	229	31.2
No	293	58.4	201	27.4
Same as on July 1 st 1997	151	30.1	229	31.2
Don't know / Hard to say	--	--	73	9.9
Declined to answer	--	--	2	0.3
Total	502	100.0	734	100.0

- 2.2 Why do you think that Hong Kong enjoys more press freedom now?
[Only those respondents who answered “yes” in paragraph 2.1 were allowed to answer this question.]

Results of the Survey on Journalists:

	Most important		2 nd most important		3 rd most important		4 th most important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
More channels of expression (Internet as an example)	37	63.8	10	21.7	2	8.7	0	0.0
More sources of information	11	19.0	32	69.6	2	8.7	0	0.0
The industry fighting for more freedom	4	6.9	2	4.3	12	52.2	3	33.3
A more relaxed legal environment	3	5.2	2	4.3	3	13.0	5	55.6
Others	3	5.2	0	0.0	4	17.4	1	11.1
Total	58	100.0	46	100.0	23	100.0	9	100.0

Results of the Survey on the General Public

	N	%
More channels of expression (Internet as an example)	27	11.8
A more relaxed legal environment	23	10.0
More sources of information	10	4.4
The industry fighting for more freedom	8	3.5
Others	64	27.9
Don't know / Hard to say	107	46.7
Declined to answer	2	0.9
Total	229*	*

* Respondents were allowed to give more than 1 answer, so the sum of the frequencies and the sum of percentages of the answers may exceed the total number of respondents answering the question and 100%, respectively.

- 2.3 Why do you think that Hong Kong enjoys less press freedom now?
[Only those respondents who answered “no” in paragraph 2.1 were allowed to answer this question.]

Results of the Survey on Journalists:

	Most important		2nd most important		3rd most important		4th most important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self-censorship in the industry	208	72.5	37	18.1	8	8.5	2	4.8
Tighter control over flow of information	38	13.2	89	43.6	27	28.7	10	23.8
Political harassment of media workers	22	7.7	65	31.9	45	47.9	9	21.4
Stringent regulations	12	4.2	9	4.4	13	13.8	20	47.6
Others	7	2.4	4	2.0	1	1.1	1	2.4
Total	287	100.0	204	100.0	94	100.0	42	100.0

Results of the Survey on the General Public

	N	%
Political harassment of media workers	56	27.9
Tighter control over flow of information	28	13.9
Self-censorship in the industry	15	7.5
Stringent regulations	8	4.0
Others	48	23.9
Don't know / Hard to say	63	31.3
Declined to answer	1	0.5
Total	201*	*

* Respondents were allowed to give more than 1 answer, so the sum of the frequencies and the sum of percentages of the answers may exceed the total number of respondents answering the question and 100%, respectively.

- 2.4 Do you believe self-censorship now is more serious than at the time of the Handover or less serious?

	Journalists		General Public	
	N	%	N	%
More serious than July 1 st 1997	286	58.5	317	43.2
Less serious than July 1 st 1997	16	3.3	151	20.6
Same as on July 1 st 1997	72	14.7	132	18.0
Don't know / Hard to tell	115	23.5	132	18.0
Declined to answer	--	--	2	0.3
Total	489	100.0	734	100.0

- 2.5 What are the most serious forms of self-censorship practiced by the media?
[Only those respondents who answered "more serious than July 1st 1997" in paragraph 2.4 were allowed to answer this question.]

Results of the Survey on Journalists:

	Most serious		2 nd most serious		3 rd most serious	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Downplaying issues/information unfavourable to the Central Government	59	20.8	57	21.2	16	7.2
Downplaying issues/information believed to be sensitive for the Central Government	59	20.8	52	19.3	56	25.3
Downplaying issues/information detrimental to media owners or their interests	46	16.2	43	16.0	41	18.6
Downplaying issues/information unfavourable to conglomerates that wield strong influence over advertising	38	13.4	52	19.3	41	18.6
Downplaying information unfavourable to the SAR Government	41	14.4	19	7.1	25	11.3
Slanting news in favour of the Central Government	17	6.0	18	6.7	25	11.3
Slanting news in favour of the SAR Government	19	6.7	26	9.7	16	7.2
Others	1	0.4	2	0.7	1	0.5
Don't know / Hard to tell	4	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	284	100.0	269	100.0	221	100.0

Results of the Survey on the General Public

	N	%
Downplaying issues/information believed to be sensitive for the Central Government	48	15.1
Downplaying issues/information unfavourable to the Central Government	46	14.5
Downplaying information unfavourable to the SAR Government	23	7.3
Slanting news in favour of the Central Government	11	3.5
Downplaying issues/information detrimental to media owners or their interests	11	3.5
Slanting news in favour of the SAR Government	10	3.2
Downplaying issues/information unfavourable to conglomerates that wield strong influence over advertising	8	2.5
Others	43	13.6
Don't know / Hard to tell	155	48.9
Declined to answer	2	0.6
Total	317*	*

* Respondents were allowed to give more than 1 answer, so the sum of the frequencies and the sum of percentages of the answers may exceed the total number of respondents answering the question and 100%, respectively.

- 2.6 Have your colleagues, including your supervisors, practised self-censorship in the past twelve months?
[Only Journalists were required to answer this question.]

	N	%
Yes	195	39.6
No	105	21.3
Don't know / Hard to tell	193	39.1
Total	493	100.0

- 2.7 Have you yourself practised self-censorship in the past twelve months?
[Only Journalists were required to answer this question.]

	N	%
Yes	144	29.5
No	344	70.5
Total	488	100.0

2.8 What, in your view, are the three most serious problems facing the industry?

Results of the Survey on Journalists:

	Most serious		2 nd most serious		3 rd most serious	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Frivolous news	137	27.6	65	13.5	56	12.3
Depressed wages and benefits	82	16.5	81	16.8	76	16.7
Sensationalism	81	16.3	65	13.5	72	15.9
Self-censorship	65	13.1	62	12.9	41	9.0
Lack of experienced media workers due to high turnover	50	10.1	92	19.1	56	12.3
Lower professional quality	31	6.3	41	8.5	54	11.9
Inaccuracy	20	4.0	42	8.7	46	10.1
Lower social esteem	18	3.6	30	6.2	51	11.2
Others	9	1.8	3	0.6	2	0.4
Don't know / Hard to tell	3	.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	496	100.0	481	100.0	454	100.0

Results of the Survey on the General Public:

	N	%
Inaccuracy	150	20.4
Self-censorship	43	5.9
Lower professional quality	38	5.2
Frivolous news	37	5.0
Sensationalism	37	5.0
Lack of experienced media workers due to high turnover	7	1.0
Depressed wages and benefits	5	0.7
Lower social esteem	5	0.7
Others	171	23.3
Don't know / Hard to tell	334	45.5
Declined to answer	1	0.1
Total	734*	*

* Respondents were allowed to give more than 1 answer, so the sum of the frequencies and the sum of percentages of the answers may exceed the total number of respondents answering the question and 100%, respectively.

- 2.9 Compared to the attitude of the government on July 1st 1997, in attending to the needs of the press, is the current government more attentive or less attentive?

	Journalists		General Public	
	N	%	N	%
More attentive	121	24.4	256	34.9
Less attentive	138	27.9	223	30.4
Similar	93	18.8	150	20.4
Don't know / Hard to tell	143	28.9	103	14.0
Declined to answer	--	--	2	0.3
Total	495	100.0	734	100.0

- 2.10 Compared to the attitude of the government on July 1st 1997, does the current government influence the press more, or less?

	Journalists		General Public	
	N	%	N	%
Influences more	231	46.2	394	53.7
Influences less	31	6.2	104	14.2
Similar	109	21.8	155	21.1
Don't know / Hard to tell	129	25.8	79	10.8
Declined to answer	--	--	2	0.3
Total	500	100.0	734	100.0

- 2.11 Compared to the attitude of the government on July 1st 1997, in releasing information to the press, is the current government more open or less open?

	Journalists		General Public	
	N	%	N	%
More open	132	26.3	335	45.6
Less open	152	30.3	179	24.4
Similar	95	19.0	152	20.7
Don't know / Hard to tell	122	24.4	68	9.3
Total	501	100.0	734	100.0

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