

WINTER 2014 VOL. 68 NO. 1

# Nieman Reports

TO PROMOTE AND ELEVATE THE STANDARDS OF JOURNALISM



## Censored 被审查

The government blocked social media searches for this instant noodle brand  
How journalists and bloggers are working around China's resurgent censorship

政府禁止在社交媒体上搜索一个方便面的品牌  
新闻记者和博客作者如何绕过中国不断加强的审查制度

2014年版权归哈佛本科生院院长和研究员所有  
版权所有

Published by



## Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard

One Francis Ave.  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
由哈佛大学尼曼新闻基金会出版  
弗朗西斯道一号  
剑桥市, 马萨诸塞州 02138 (邮编)

**Adapted from the Winter 2014 issue of Nieman Reports**

**适用于2014年冬季期尼曼报告**

Publisher  
Ann Marie Lipinski

出版人  
安妮·利平斯基

Editor  
James Geary

编辑  
詹姆士·盖瑞

Senior Editor  
Jan Gardner

高级编辑  
简·加德纳

Researcher/Reporter  
Jonathan Seitz

研究员/记者  
乔纳森·塞茨

Translators  
Lian Nijia  
Jia Yuanyuan

翻译

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard educates leaders in journalism and elevates the standards of the profession through special programs that convene scholars and experts in all fields. More than 1,400 accomplished and promising journalists from 92 countries have been awarded Nieman Fellowships since 1938. In addition to the Nieman Watchdog Project, which aims to examine and invigorate journalism in its fundamental role of serving the public interest, the foundation's other initiatives include Nieman Reports, a quarterly print and online magazine that explores contemporary challenges and opportunities in journalism; Nieman Journalism Lab, a website that reports on the future of news, innovation and best practices in the digital media age; and Nieman Storyboard, a website that showcases exceptional narrative journalism and explores the future of nonfiction storytelling.

哈佛尼曼新闻基金会通过集结各领域内专家学者的各种特殊项目，致力于培育新闻界的领袖，并提高业界标准。自从1938年以来，尼曼学者奖学金项目共授予了来自92个国家、超过1400名卓有成就和富有前途的新闻记者。除了尼曼监察项目（主要

目标是调查并鼓舞新闻业服务于大众利益这一基本职责），该基金会的其他项目还包括尼曼报告（一个印刷出版和网上发布并行的季刊，其宗旨是发掘当代新闻业的挑战和机遇），尼曼新闻实验室（一个报道数字媒体时代的新闻前景、创新及最佳实践方法的网站），以及尼曼脚本（一个展示杰出叙事性新闻和发掘非虚构故事前景的网站）。

**English**

# Command and Control

## *The state of journalism in China, 25 years after Tiananmen*

**By Paul Mooney**

On the afternoon of December 24, popular Chinese author Hao Qun, writing under the pen name Murong Xuecun, blogged that the average lifespan of a microblog account in China is now just about 10 hours. Exactly 26 minutes and 17 seconds later, censors had already wiped the posting from the Internet.

The speed with which posts are deleted is just one indicator of the Chinese government's ability to muzzle freedom of expression, a trend that has sharply worsened in the year since President Xi Jinping came to power in November 2012. Xi took office at a time when people were becoming dissatisfied with the state of society and hopeful for political reform. Instead, the opposite has happened, with crackdowns on Chinese and foreign journalists becoming more frequent and online censorship increasing. People need to be on guard against "Western anti-China forces," Xi warned in a speech in August, that "constantly strive in vain to use the Internet to overwhelm China." "The new administration thinks the Internet is especially a threat to the regime," says Michael Anti, a Chinese journalist and blogger. "That's the reason they've cracked down more than ever before."

Journalists at Southern Weekly, one of China's most daring newspapers, went on strike in 2013 after state censors spiked a New Year's editorial calling for China to respect constitutional rights, replacing it with platitudes about the Communist Party's unique role in "the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." In December, some two dozen journalists from The New York Times and Bloomberg News waited anxiously to see if their journalist visas would be renewed while their news organizations scrambled to draw up contingency plans to cover China from Taiwan and Hong Kong. The journalist cards needed to obtain visas came in the final days of the year, but the message was clear: China is willing to deal harshly with any foreign reporters who cross it.

The Communist Party has long striven to control freedom of speech in China. Hundreds of thousands of websites from around the world are blocked inside China. Major social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, and LinkedIn, cannot be accessed, and advanced software is used to search and destroy "sensitive" words on the Internet. "The authorities rely on secret security police to threaten individual citizens, to unceasingly harass and arrest citizens who express their freedom of expression through microblogs," says Hu Jia, a prominent rights activist in Beijing, "and to create fear among bloggers and netizens to make everyone feel insecure and to self-censor and remain silent."

The domestic media, more easily controlled, have fared even worse. Domestic journalists who step over the invisible line of what's permissible face possible punishment, being fired or even arrested. Frequent orders are issued telling news organizations what they can and can't publish, a system that has been dubbed "Directives from the Ministry of Truth." Although the international media can't be censored, foreign journalists face various forms of government intimidation, harassment, surveillance, a barrage of malware attacks that are believed to be the work of government agents, restrictions on their reporting, and in recent years visa intimidation aimed at encouraging self-censorship. The situation worsened considerably in 2013, as the new government tightened its grip.

Murong Xuecun, who had more than 8.5 million followers before his accounts were deleted, talks of his growing frustration, constantly having to wait long periods to see items appear online or then suddenly seeing them disappear. He is also afraid, though this has not stopped him from being outspoken or from writing a blog for The New York Times's Chinese-language website. "I have no work unit, my parents have already passed away, and I have no children, and these are the biggest concerns that dissidents have when they express their opinions," he says. "Relatively speaking, I have far fewer fears."

More and more people are joining the so-called Reincarnation Party—bloggers who bounce back with new microblog accounts after existing ones are shut down. In some cases, a microblogger may have reincarnated himself hundreds of times in order to stay active on the Internet. "This has come to

symbolize people's resistance and struggle against censors," says Yaxue Cao, a Washington-based China watcher and founder and editor of ChinaChange.org.

Others have not been as lucky. Charles Xue, whose blogger name was Xue Manzi, was an outspoken critic of the government on his microblog, which had 12 million followers. His blogging came to an end when Xue was arrested after allegedly being caught with a prostitute. Xue was soon paraded in front of national television audiences—despite not yet having gone to trial—to make a public confession in which he admitted he'd been irresponsible in his postings, a detail that had nothing to do with the alleged prostitution charges. The appearance of the now humble-looking Xue, wearing handcuffs and prison clothes, was taken as a warning to the Internet community.

In September, Beijing announced new measures to prevent the spread of what it called irresponsible rumors, including a three-year prison sentence if false posts were visited by 5,000 Internet users or reposted more than 500 times. Within weeks, dozens of Chinese were being investigated under the new rules, including a 16-year-old middle school student who was detained in Tianshui, Gansu province, for allegedly spreading rumors that the local police had failed to properly investigate a death.

The scare tactics are working. Murong Xuecun ticks off a long list of the names of prominent Chinese whose blogs have been shut down or who have been arrested, all in recent months. With such news spreading quickly he says that "even the dumbest person will reach the following conclusion: the situation is tense now, it's better to shut up." By the end of 2013, China's Big Vs—influential verified microblog users, some of whom have millions of followers—had for the most part disappeared from the Internet as a result of this pressure.

Chang Ping, former chief commentator and news director of Southern Weekly, a newspaper in Guangzhou, says that the domestic media is under tremendous pressure, explaining that until recently, newspapers that dared to report truthfully pulled in more advertising, and so were willing to take greater risks. "Now there's no economic support but more pressure," he says. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported in December that 32 Chinese journalists—which includes online commentators as well as mainstream journalists—were in prison, placing China No. 3 on the list of the worst nations for journalists in which to work.

Some of the country's most prominent journalists and writers have now silenced themselves, and some have even left the country. China once had a blossoming corps of investigative journalists who did groundbreaking stories, but many of them gave up their profession under pressure, with some leaving journalism to turn to other careers. Also worrisome, in August, China's Propaganda Department ordered all journalists at state-run media—some 300,000 reporters and editors—to attend Marxism classes. While there has been a similar program since 2003, the new requirement appears to be more rigorous, and is an example of the government's determination to firmly control journalists at a time when social media is exploding.

Meanwhile foreign journalists continue to face surveillance, harassment, intimidation, restrictions of their movements, and, in extreme cases, physical danger. In surveys conducted by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China, 94 percent of respondents in 2011 felt conditions had worsened over the previous year; in 2013 that number dropped to 70 percent.

Journalists with The New York Times and Bloomberg News who had applied for visas to work in China have been waiting more than a year for visas to move to China to work. The delays were seen as retaliation for New York Times reporter David Barboza's Pulitzer Prize-winning report on the wealth obtained by the family of former Premier Wen Jiabao and Bloomberg's investigation into the wealth of the relatives of President Xi Jinping. The New York Times website is blocked in China, as is Bloomberg's, whose terminal sales in the country have fallen due to cancellations by government agencies.

On November 8, Journalists' Day in China, I was informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had rejected my application for a journalist visa to take up a position in Beijing with Reuters, ending an eight-month wait for a visa and an 18-year career as an accredited journalist in China. I was the second journalist in two years to be refused a visa. Al Jazeera reporter Melissa Chan was expelled from China in 2012, also believed due to her reporting on human rights.

The Ministry gave no reason for my rejection, but during a 90-minute interview at the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco, I was questioned repeatedly about my views on human rights, the Dalai

Lama and Tibet, and rights lawyers. At the end of the interview, the counselor officer said to me, "If we give you a visa to return to China, we hope your reporting will be more objective." The experience made me realize that the visa refusal was the result of my reporting on sensitive issues.

That same week, The New York Times reported that Matthew Winkler, editor in chief of Bloomberg News, killed an investigative article about connections between one of China's richest men and a senior Party official for fear of angering the government, which was already delaying the approval of visas for the news organization's journalists wishing to come to China. Winkler denied the report, saying the story needed further work and was still under consideration. Michael Forsythe, the lead writer of the article, was fired a week later on suspicion of having leaked the news to the Times. Chang Ping says the lesson to the foreign media is clear: "Either you cooperate with them, or you get out of China."

"I think the current huff in China's leadership over visas for The New York Times and Bloomberg is happening to a large extent because the wall between foreign and domestic news coverage has begun to fall," says David Bandurski, editor of the China Media Project at the University of Hong Kong. In today's networked world of Facebook, Twitter, Sina Weibo, and WeChat, the distinctions between foreign and domestic news coverage are becoming blurred. "Translated versions of foreign news can be consumed domestically almost instantaneously," he says. "The best solutions, from the standpoint of the Chinese leadership, may be the most old-fashioned ones: Cut the news off at its source, by making it impossible for foreign journalists to get close."

Wen Yunchao, a Chinese activist who uses the name Bei Feng on the Internet and a former citizen journalist who now lives in New York, says that President Xi and his predecessor Hu Jintao have two different views of the Internet. "Hu saw the Internet as just a tool, and so advocated using it for the Party's purposes," says Wen. "Xi directly understands that the Internet and totalitarianism are incompatible, and a big disaster for the Party and the nation, and so he wants to control and clean up the Internet."

Hu says further that Communist Party officials fear that China will experience a movement similar to the Arab Spring: "They worry that every single individual or mass incident could become the fluttering of a butterfly wing that could give rise to a windstorm. They're afraid that the action of one citizen could be like that of the peddler in Tunisia who self-immolated."

The country is facing an increasing number of protests by abused migrant workers, disgruntled factory workers, farmers who have lost their land, and even unhappy urban residents. Tibetan areas have seen some 127 people set fire to themselves to protest abusive Chinese policies in the region, and there has been an increase in the incidence of violence in Xinjiang, a Muslim area in far northwest China.

"Xi Jinping and Co. feel a pressure that they don't know how to handle," says Perry Link, an expert on China at the University of California, Riverside. "On the surface, China is 'rising,' getting stronger economically, militarily, and diplomatically, but internally it's getting more hard to handle, because complaints and demands from below are increasing and are better organized than before."

Citizen journalists using computers, mobile phones, inexpensive cameras, and video recorders are venturing into places the mainstream media fears to go. This new technology has eased the job of both foreign and local journalists, who now have many new sources of information, learning about stories from websites, microblogs and blogs. And sources can be reached more easily via e-mail, mobile phones, Skype, QQ instant messaging, and other modern tools.

According to Chinese journalist Anti, Xi is very confident about his power and doesn't care about negative publicity. "He's not even concerned about the reaction of Western countries," he says. "These countries don't react and so Xi is more confident about using his power. My conclusion is that the crackdown comes from confidence and not from fears."

For Bandurski of the China Media Project, the fundamental problem is that China continues to consider information control as "an imperative in maintaining stability, when in fact information has become a more crucial part than ever before of the solution to the myriad problems facing China." He points to the problems of local corruption, land grabs, property demolition, abuse of power, and perversion of justice. "When the media, even those that aren't local, can't report on these cases, and when they are scrubbed from social media, this creates an enormous undercurrent of pressure," says Bandurski.

Chinese are also now getting information from a number of so-called citizen journalists who are able to report on news that the mainstream media has been unable to cover. A documentary released in 2012, titled “High Tech, Low Life,” introduced the work of the blogger Zhang Shihe, better known as Tiger Temple. In the video, Tiger Temple pedals his rickety bicycle, loaded with digital cameras, video recorders, and other high-tech equipment, from his home in Beijing and travels across China giving voiceless rural citizens a way to reach the outside world. He is saddened that during the space of just a few days between the end of April and the beginning of May his nine blog accounts were all shut down, including the longest-lasting one, which he worked on for 10 years, the one he and describes simply as “my pride.” He says he posted writing, photographs, video and even drawings on his microblog, unceasingly recording what was happening across the country.

The government may find it difficult to deal with the growing army of Chinese who don’t seem inclined to retreat. Murong Xuecun, for one, is optimistic. “I’m brimming with confidence for the future of the Internet as new technologies and new software are unceasingly emerging in large numbers, while the technology used by the Party to control and monitor the Internet will always lag slightly behind,” he says. “Furthermore, this regime established on a foundation of lies and violence will inevitably weaken, and even if there’s just a tiny bit of space, the peoples’ voices will be heard, making even more people wise. And more wiser people is the greatest threat to the Communist Party.”

The strong determination of Chinese citizens to overturn the controls imposed by the government can best be seen in the words that Murong Xuecun posted in the final week of December—sentences that lasted just a little more than 26 minutes before being deleted: “I will bounce back each time because my brothers have created dozens of new accounts for me. If these are not enough, we can create dozens more, and hundreds more. Let’s turn this into a battlefield, and fight it out. You point your gun at me and I stick out my chest. Let us brazenly attack each other. You abuse your power in the darkness, and you don’t stop for a single day. And I too will not give up for a single day, until one of us is dead.”

*Paul Mooney is an American freelance journalist who reported on Asia for 28 years, the last 18 from Beijing. In 2013 he was denied a visa to report in China*



# Eluding the “Ministry of Truth”

**By Anne Henochowicz**

Internet censorship in China is not simply matter of blocking foreign websites and deleting anything deemed harmful, nor is the state the only actor. The government delegates censorship to private websites, which face punishment, including closure, if they do not comply. On social media platforms like Sina Weibo, the Twitter-like site where about 100 million posts appear daily, censors block keywords to keep people from discussing politically sensitive topics. Chinese Internet users skirt censorship by using a variety of innovative strategies.

## **1: Use a word that shares a character with a censored word**

One target of censors over the past two years has been Zhou Yongkang, once China’s security chief and general manager of the China National Petroleum Corporation, a state-owned enterprise. After the detention of Communist Party leader Bo Xilai in March 2012, it was rumored that Zhou and Bo were plotting a coup. He has been under investigation since September 2013 on corruption charges. Netizens get around the ban on mentioning his name by referring to him as Kang Shifu (“Master Kang”) an instant noodle brand that shares a character with Zhou Yongkang.

## **2. When the new term is banned, substitute a word close to it in meaning**

When censors caught on and any mention online of “Kang Shifu” (“Master Kang”) was banned, references to Zhou Yongkang morphed into the generic term for instant noodles: fangbiànmiàn. Some keywords are unblocked after the issue to which they relate has quieted down. “Master Kang” is now searchable on Weibo.

## **3: Substitute a character that sounds the same but has a different meaning**

Chinese characters that look nothing like each other can nonetheless sound the same. By changing one character, Zhou Yongkang becomes Zhou Yongkang, or “Rice Porridge” Yongkang.

## **4: Use a nickname**

This technique is particularly common for political figures. One nickname for Wang Lijun is “head nurse”, a term that puns on “deputy mayor” in Chinese. Wang was the deputy mayor and police chief of Chongqing under Bo Xilai. “Frisbee Hu,” a nickname for Hu Xijin, chief editor of the state-run Global Times, arose from a joke that he retrieves whatever the government throws at him.

*SOURCE: CHINA DIGITAL TIMES*

# Control Information, Control Souls

*Yu Gao, deputy managing editor of Caixin Media and affiliate of 2013 Nieman Fellow Jin Deng, on how Chinese media censorship works*

**By Yu Gao**

The idea of tight control—of guns as well as pens—has always been considered by the Communist Party as the most important way to maintain its rule. In China, either the party or the state must own every media outlet. At the core of China's media censorship regime is the Central Propaganda Department (CPD) of the Chinese Communist Party. The CPD has two functions: to control information and to control souls. By controlling information, the party can drive individuals away from independent thinking and turn them into tools of the party. However, it's becoming harder and harder to control information and individual thinking so the censorship and propaganda regime has to grow faster and faster.

The CPD is an internal division of the Communist Party of China. There are propaganda departments across the country at every level of the party-state hierarchy, from the central and provincial all the way down to the municipal and county. Propaganda department heads are all top political leaders. For example, the head of the propaganda department in Shanghai is one of 13 members of the Standing Committee in Shanghai, the city's top leadership. To keep some kind of press independence, courage and willingness to compromise are not enough. You need delicate political skills to make friends with influential officials to ensure support when your news organization is threatened.

Censorship typically takes three forms: pre-publication directives, self-censorship, and post-publication punishment. The propaganda department can issue directives at regular meetings held before any reporting begins or by phone if big news breaks. Self-censorship is done by editorial teams themselves. Over the past few years, as censors came to believe that market-oriented media were getting out of control, they asked the party or state owners to put official censors into newsrooms to redact or kill stories before publication. Some publications have to inform the propaganda department of all the important stories they plan to run; almost all the breaking news or sensitive stories are canceled.

Punishment after publication is the nuclear option. It increasingly originates not from the censors but from the subjects of news articles: government departments, state-owned enterprises, etc. Punishments vary. Non-institutional media (outlets permitted to generate revenue through circulation and advertisements, though still party- or state-owned) can be shut down, while institutional media can have their chief editors removed.

These are the best of times for Chinese journalists since big news stories pop up almost every day. But these are also the worst times for us due to the heavy hand of censorship. We feel deeply frustrated to watch some of the biggest stories in China reported only by foreign media like The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. In January of 1999, Southern Weekly, one of the most outspoken publications, ran a famous New Year editorial calling on the Chinese media to give power to the weak and hope to the hopeless. Fourteen years later, this is still our mission.

*Yu Gao is deputy managing editor of Caixin Media*

# The Secret Life of Keywords

## *Online and database searches as a reporting tool*

**By Qian Gang**

I became a journalist in 1979. Back in those days, two basic skills were required of any journalist: reporting and writing. Three decades later, in an era of dramatic technological changes, these basic skills alone are no longer sufficient. Journalists now require a third basic skill: They must learn how to mine important facts and trends from the mountains of information all around them.

It was 1991 before I used a computer for the first time. We called this “giving up the pen,” which simply meant you exchanged your pen for a keyboard and mouse. It was around that time too that I heard about an ambitious project to carry out computerized analysis on the “Dream of the Red Chamber,” a work of classical Chinese literature. The idea was to arrive at different speech patterns among various characters in the novel by mapping the frequency of different types of utterances.

Ten years later, in 2001, I was serving as the deputy managing editor of Southern Weekly, a relatively young commercial newspaper that had carved out a reputation as a more freewheeling publication. That year, unfortunately, a number of our reports fell afoul of Communist Party censors. After I was removed as editor, I accepted an invitation for a fellowship at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, just over the border. It was in Hong Kong that I stumbled across complete historical archives on disc of the Party’s official People’s Daily and the People’s Liberation Army Daily. I was quickly obsessed. I used the archives to hone my search skills, analyzing coverage in these two papers before and during the Cultural Revolution. The result was a full-length paper called, “The Emergence and Transformation of Red Political Terms.”

This experience was entirely new. In the past, relying purely on manual analysis, it had been virtually impossible to accurately determine how phrases like “Mao Zedong Thought” or “dictatorship of the proletariat”—terms that had had a deep impact on the course of the Cultural Revolution—had been used over time. Now, computer technology made it possible to enter a simple keyword and arrive at these results almost instantly. All at once, the numbers hidden within a sea of language revealed themselves.

In 2003, I moved to the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong, where we established the China Media Project, a special research initiative for the systematic study of Chinese media. The SARS epidemic struck soon after, testing a new generation of media that had emerged in China since the middle of the 1990s—commercial newspapers and magazines seeking market success and professional relevance even under stringent propaganda controls. In the early stages, as the epidemic was taking hold, there were reports in China’s media. But bans on coverage soon followed, and at a time when public health information was most critical, Chinese media were woefully silent. That year, we pioneered the use of news databases such as WiseNews to provide the most accurate picture possible of the pattern of reporting (and silence) in China’s media during the epidemic.

Analysis of this kind is no longer a purely academic pursuit. It can help provide essential context and background for coverage of all sorts, in China and beyond. After a massive mudslide in China’s Gansu province in 2010, which claimed more than 1,400 lives, veteran investigative reporter Wang Keqin hurried to the scene for what would eventually be the most thorough report on the disaster and its underlying causes. At the University of Hong Kong, meanwhile, I was digging through my databases to provide background support. News reports and journal articles in the months and years leading up to the disaster offered a clear picture of the extreme damage caused to the area by careless development; a number of experts had even issued their own warnings.

Fished out of the shadows, old news coverage in China’s media can provide clues to the family connections of government officials as reporters investigate their financial dealings. Even past propaganda can cast revealing light on breaking news stories. After a high-speed rail crash outside the city of Wenzhou in July 2011 claimed at least 40 lives, we uncovered and translated People’s Daily coverage from the previous December in which the paper valorized train conductors who were being

forced to master technologically complex high-speed trains in just 10 days against the best judgment of their German trainer, who insisted they needed at least two months.

One method that can provide valuable insight, particularly given China's closed and secretive political culture, is the analysis of keyword frequencies over time. Since 2006, I have been applying keyword analysis to the issue of political reform as it has run hot and cold—or more accurately, cold and colder—in domestic Chinese media. Given the rarefied official vocabulary used by the Chinese Communist Party, this type of analysis can prove quite effective in spotting political trends.

The history of news coverage, and the lives of keywords, can reveal a great deal to journalists who take the time to master the art of online and database searches. In August 2013, for example, our research center was the first to spot, and to plot, the appearance in official Party media of “public opinion struggle,” a term redolent of China's Cultural Revolution era and pointing to a clear hardening of the Party's stance toward domestic media and information control—and even, as the later standoff over visas for Bloomberg and New York Times journalists showed, toward international media doing tougher reporting in China.

Language has a life cycle. Changes to the language in which various issues are framed can help us spot emerging trends, give essential context to on-the-ground reporting, and enliven the reports we eventually write.

The tools that help us make sense of the language all around us, to discover the truths within, are constantly changing. That, of course, presents new challenges to journalists and journalism educators. But we must recognize a fundamental change in what is required of our profession. Good journalists today must still be capable reporters and decent writers. But they must also be capable searchers, able to uncover the secrets hiding right under our noses.

*Qian Gang, former deputy managing editor of Southern Weekly, is co-director of the China Media Project at the University of Hong Kong*

# Technology, Transparency and Traditional Media

*How Weibo and WeChat are breaking the information monopoly*

**By Luo Changping**

As the profitability of traditional Chinese media plummets, journalists are increasingly beginning to transform themselves, with the acceptance of bribes for writing positive stories becoming more and more common among news outlets. Social media have displaced print and broadcast to dominate the Chinese news industry. Weibo, China's version of Twitter, and micromessaging service WeChat have brought a degree of freedom of speech and freedom of association, emphatically replacing the stringently regulated traditional media and becoming the main battleground of social discourse.

Sociologist Max Weber defined power as the ability to compel obedience, even against the wills of others. Some may suggest that power is the same as brute force, but this is incorrect; a ruler can achieve complete dominion without violence, simply by controlling the flow of information. The Chinese government's monopoly on power can be represented by four objects: a gun, money, handcuffs and a pen. The gun and handcuffs show domination by force, while the pen and cash symbolize the rule of information. At times, all four elements may work in combination. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) may still be in firm possession of the gun, handcuffs and money, but the Chinese people themselves are increasingly wielding the pen.

Information about the murder of British businessman Neil Heywood—for which Gu Kailai, wife of former Politburo member Bo Xilai, was convicted, while Bo himself remains under investigation for corruption—emanated entirely from sources other than traditional media. This was an important turning point. As the case of Bo Xilai shows, the gathering, dissemination, collation and analysis of news now takes place through processes completely different from those of traditional media, repeatedly breaching existing limitations on free speech in the process. In a desert of information, it is essential to gather information and professional knowledge through the Internet, piecing together a picture of each sensitive incident like a mosaic.

Thanks to this news mosaic, the CCP will find it impossible to proceed with its repressive reforms. Controlling information will not be easy either. Yet many officials simply have no understanding of what transparency entails and even less comprehension of how the times are changing. To prove this point, I used Weibo to denounce Liu Tienan, the deputy chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission and head of the energy board, for corruption, using concrete action to warn Party officials that a new era has arrived.

My hometown in the south of China is a mountain village so remote that the Japanese never reached it during World War II, and neither do Party newspapers and newsletters. But after I denounced Liu Tienan, more than 10 people in my village registered for Weibo and WeChat accounts. This is the might of technology.

Nonetheless, those in power have not given up their dreams of controlling information. Instead, they have initiated the work of “cleansing” the Internet, attacking influential Weibo personalities, and arresting journalists. While this does have the effect of restricting and punishing the distribution of false information, it replaces the regular channels of the rule of law with administrative supervision. In fact, Weibo and WeChat themselves possess the tools to police their own content. The CCP's reform plans both encourage innovation and restrict thought, thus creating a paradox. Lacking a free marketplace of ideas, China does not have the ability to renew itself or ensure long-term competitiveness. The prerequisite to creating such a marketplace is to smash the monopoly of information held by the state.

*Luo Changping, a former deputy editor of Caijing Magazine in Beijing, won Transparency International's Integrity Award in 2013*

# Under Pressure

## *China's market-oriented media face a precarious future*

**By Hu Yong**

Two-thousand-and-three was a milestone year for investigative journalism in China. Some media organizations had been transformed from Communist Party propaganda tools into market-oriented news outlets. The Party line had weakened while market influences strengthened, leaving many journalists with an expectation of a new wave of semi-independent journalism.

There had just been a change of leadership, with Hu Jintao taking over as president. In response to the SARS pandemic, the central government launched new laws and new accountability systems, igniting hopes for responsible and transparent governance. Market-oriented news outlets like the weekly magazine *Caijing* and the daily newspaper *Southern Metropolis News* expanded coverage.

In April of 2003, *Southern Metropolis News* published a story about Sun Zhigang, 27, a graphic designer who was picked up by police during a random identity check and died in custody, after being attacked by staff and inmates. The story caused a national outcry, the first mass protest in China's budding online space. The detention and repatriation regulation, under which Sun had been held, was abolished, and a decade of rights advocacy began. The market-oriented media and new private online ventures opened up an alternative space where people could express their opinions outside official discourse.

Ten years later, with Xi Jinping now president, those advances are being reversed. In December, Chinese authorities charged free speech activists who protested outside the Southern Media Group's offices with public order offenses. The media group—which owns *Southern Weekly*, one of the most liberal newspapers in China—has been criticized for allegedly providing evidence to the police that the protests were interfering with their operations. The claim, which many believe is false, seems designed to tarnish the paper's moral image.

The press is under political as well as economic pressure. The experience of Chen Yongzhou is a case in point. A respected journalist working for *Guangdong's New Express*, Chen was arrested in October after he had reported alleged corruption at a state-owned construction equipment company. As the *New Express* and other media outlets were showing solidarity with Chen, he confessed on TV that he had been bribed to report false information. Though some feared Chen had been tortured into making a confession, he and the *New Express* went from being victims to being loathed across China.

For market-oriented media, cost cutting and declining advertising revenues have contributed to a lack of newsroom protection and a drop in professionalism and ethical standards. Economic interests are pushing aside the public interest. Now, just as a decade ago, market-oriented media face a turning point, this time for the worse. Communist Party outlets will continue to receive financial support from the Party itself.

Private online media are boldly exploring new applications, new platforms, and new services to meet the needs of a new generation of consumers. But the space market-oriented media have traditionally occupied is being squeezed by government censorship on the one hand and declining economic viability on the other. The golden age is over. The next decade, if there is one, will be precarious.

*Hu Yong is an associate professor at Peking University's School of Journalism and Communication. He has worked for China Daily and China Central Television.*

# Follow the Money

*Investigative reporting principles that apply in the U.S. apply in China, too*

**By David Barboza**

In the fall of 2011, while researching a story on China's business elites for *The New York Times*, I made a startling find: a set of corporate documents that linked the relatives of then Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to more than \$2.7 billion in assets. The records, obtained during a government document search, showed that some of the prime minister's closest relatives, including his brother, son and daughter, had over the past decade acquired major stakes in scores of companies—diamond and telecom ventures, property and construction concerns, and one of the country's biggest financial services companies, Ping An Insurance.

How, I asked myself, could such sensitive and potentially explosive information turn up in Chinese public records?

The answer, I have since concluded, was simple. China's rapid economic growth has given rise to a phenomenal shareholding boom and a public records system that is far more advanced and transparent than I had imagined. Journalists working in China can now get detailed records on the finances of the country's biggest state-run entities and access to the names of investors in tens of thousands of public and private companies. They can peer into one of the country's darkest secrets: how the families of the nation's political elite accumulate wealth.

Publishing such information, of course, remains a challenge. The Chinese media are largely barred from reporting on the families of the Communist Party's top leaders. And in 2012, after Bloomberg News and *The New York Times* published a series of articles on the enormous wealth of China's ruling elite, the Chinese government blocked the websites of each news organization and tightened its surveillance of foreign journalists in China.

And yet, it's likely that in the next decade much more will be written about the hidden wealth of Chinese leaders. China is rapidly integrating into the global economy, with Western investors taking stakes in Chinese startups and Chinese companies acquiring assets overseas. As China becomes more international, it will be more difficult to hide large stakes in public and private companies. In other words, there's no easy way to turn back the clock on investigative reporting involving Chinese businesses.

I have often been asked how I discovered the corporate records linking the family of the former prime minister to billions of dollars in assets. I often ask myself something else: What took me so long to do so?

I have two theories. First, many Western journalists, including me, were concerned about the risks involved in investigating China's top leaders. There was always the threat of losing one's journalism visa. Second, there were doubts about whether public records and shareholder lists even existed.

The records did prove complex. Although I began collecting records in late 2011, it took more than a year to make sense of much of what I discovered because the Wen family and their business partners had set up a network of shell companies and investment vehicles, many of which constantly changed their names and moved locations.

What I found, though, is that the same principles that apply to reporting in the U.S. also apply in China. Investigative reporting has always been about being patient and determined; knowing how to slowly put the pieces of a puzzle together, just like good detective work.

After my articles were published in 2012, conspiracy theories emerged in China, with some Hong Kong newspapers claiming that I had received a box of documents from the prime minister's enemies. It was much simpler than that. I requested documents and followed the money. In the end, I called some of the prime minister's relatives. And to my surprise, they didn't hang up.

*David Barboza, Shanghai bureau chief for The New York Times, received the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for his investigation into corruption in China*

# Commerce and Corruption

*Notes toward an independent, commercially viable news organization*

**By Hu Shuli**

Technology development has been reshaping the media industry worldwide. In developed countries like the United States, traditional media companies felt the shock brought on by new technology several years ago. The global financial crisis made their survival even more difficult, but it also forced traditional media in those countries to adapt to—even embrace—change.

The situation in China is different. A couple of years ago, while traditional media outlets in developed countries were suffering through their transitions, many in China's newspaper industry remained quite optimistic about the business outlook, believing that traditional media would remain dominant in the public sphere and continue to grow for at least the next five to six years.

However, changes have come much faster than expected. In the face of the rapid growth of Internet access, the market for traditional media has quickly eroded. Most of China's media outlets are now struggling both internally, from inefficient management, and externally, from regulatory controls. In recent years, commercial interests have also affected the industry tremendously; weak self-discipline has facilitated media corruption.

This corruption is seen in the unforgivable practice of “rent-seeking”—taking bribes to fabricate stories. The problem is, in China's peculiar political and media environment, where some media companies are government-linked, excessive interference and an absence of supervision coexist, making it easier for people to succumb to temptation, be it commercial or political. Thus, some media firms smear companies that refuse to place ads with them, while others are happy to sell themselves as public relations tools. Such practices are no secret within the industry; some even brag about them.

China's media industry is not given adequate room for independent thinking, and there is no true competition to ensure that bad seeds are weeded out. To thrive, journalists need not only to exercise self-discipline; they need the rule of law and adequate protection. There is no freedom of speech without freedom of the press, and no social justice without the rule of law. Both play a key role in a society in transition.

Some of our peers are exploring paths for transition. It is too early to say which approach is best, but some principles should be shared by all media companies seeking new growth momentum.

A key criterion to measure the success of media in transition is whether it can sustain commercial growth while benefiting society. Compared to other enterprises, which make commercial interests the top consideration, media organizations should care more about their responsibility to social and public interests.

Traditional media should realize the challenges ahead. Companies should be prepared to face declining demand for print publications, sales and distribution, and adjust their personnel structure accordingly. The transition of mass media into the digital age will lead to significant changes in advertising. Ads in newspapers and magazines will see a dramatic decline, but at the same time the rise of Internet-based news portals will provide more diverse platforms and formats for advertising.

Like many of our peers, Caixin Media has been exploring the Internet arena. Over the past four years, we have seen our Internet business grow stronger and account for a larger portion of the company's total revenue. Although it is still smaller than that from Caixin's print publications, its growth rate has outperformed our traditional businesses. We are hoping to see Internet business become the major revenue source in the future. To achieve this goal, we must take innovative steps to develop new product formats to meet the needs of readers.

However, no matter how the media changes, professional journalism will always be the most important pursuit of reporters and editors. But systemic innovation in media companies will be needed to support development. In other words, media outlets should be run as modern companies.

China's traditional media companies are more like government entities than corporations. Bureaucracy usually interferes with editorial decision-making. Therefore, establishing a modern



business structure and enhancing corporate governance will be key issues for media leaders to tackle. They will also help determine the success of the media's transition. But it is not necessary for all media outlets to transform into corporations. Some still will be controlled by the Communist Party and the government to act as propaganda agencies. Those organizations have access to government subsidies and should explore operating as nonprofit organizations. But the rest of the industry needs to adapt to the changing environment to survive.

Like elsewhere, the media environment in China is rapidly changing. But Chinese journalists also have to deal with the pressure that comes from operating in a political environment where government oversight and censorship are strict. Perhaps because of this, it is doubly important that Chinese journalists try to improve and protect the credibility of the media, for public trust is its most valuable asset and best defense.

One factor hindering the growth of the country's media industry is the inadequate protection of intellectual property rights (IPR). There has long been a lack of IPR protection in China, which is rooted in lax law enforcement and lack of awareness from both industry participants and the public. The rapid growth of the Internet and online news portals has made IPR protection increasingly urgent. However, historical factors make the issue quite difficult to address. For instance, some media organizations have signed long-term contracts with news websites that allow the latter to use their content cheaply or even for free. Now, as competition intensifies, the failure to protect the right to original content has caused headaches for those media organizations.

Therefore, it is time for China's media to form a consensus to strengthen IPR protection. Meanwhile, the government should make efforts to provide effective legal protection for original news content.

Of course, in-depth analysis and feature stories will remain valuable. The capacity to provide such content will help media outlets win readers. But doing such stories is usually time-consuming and costly. This is another reason IPR protection is important.

Clearly, the demand for professional news reporting is still rising in China, and high-quality content will remain the core competitiveness of media organizations. Better company structures and digital know-how will be required to meet these challenges.

*Hu Shuli is editor in chief of Caixin Media Co. In 2007, she received the Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism*

# Moral Hazard

*Are the linguistic tricks Chinese journalists use to express their opinions just another form of self-censorship?*

**By Yang Xiao**

In China, May has 35 days. All mention of June 4th, the day in 1989 on which the Tiananmen Square massacre took place, is forbidden. So Chinese journalists and bloggers get around the ban online by talking about what happened on May 35th.

Twenty-five years after Tiananmen, the practice highlights two aspects of China's liberal media: the familiar story of oppression and the increasingly popular tactic of circumventing censorship through the venerable Chinese tradition of *chunqiu bifa*, expressing critical opinions in subtle linguistic ways. In early 2013, for example, when journalists at the liberal Southern Weekly went on strike to protest government censorship of their New Year's editorial, other publications supported them via *chunqiu bifa*. One story in the Beijing News lifestyle section extolled the author's love of "southern porridge." In Chinese, the word for "porridge" is *zhou*, a homophone of the first character in the "Weekend" part of Southern Weekend's name. Readers knew the author's fondness for southern porridge was really a fondness for the beleaguered newspaper.

When I worked at the state-run Xinhua News Agency from 2004 to 2008, I became fairly adept at *chunqiu bifa*. I used puns, metaphors and homophones—any kind of linguistic trick I could think of—to express my approval or disapproval. Later on, at Southern People Weekly, one of China's most influential national newsmagazines (part of the Southern Media Group that also includes Southern Weekly and another liberal paper, Southern Metropolitan Daily), I wrote a lot of sensitive features that relied on my *chunqiu bifa* skills.

At first, I enjoyed the cat-and-mouse game with censors. I thought, "There will always be someone who can read between the lines." But now, I worry that this kind of expression will create in me a vicious circle of complacency, in which I know my efforts to speak freely will be fruitless but can console myself with at least having tried. I fear that, in China's increasingly complicated and ambiguous media environment, *chunqiu bifa* may be changing from a means of dissent into a tool of inadvertent self-censorship that may ultimately deprive us of the ability to face the truth.

A decade ago, people believed freedom and democracy would grow gradually in China. Now, we're not so sure. Last July, Xu Zhiyong, one of the independent lawyers who won local elective office a decade ago, was arrested for being a leader of the "new citizens movement," which promotes transparency in government. Xu's detention is an example of how progress toward more freedom is being reversed.

That reversal began in 2008. Riots in Tibet and the protests that accompanied the Olympic torch's tour of the world created waves of nationalism in China. Then came the Sichuan earthquake, in which more than 80,000 people died. Chinese media exposed the corrupt local government officials responsible for the shoddy buildings. But they were quickly muted, and the most outspoken liberal newspapers were punished. At the Southern Media Group, propaganda officials moved into our offices to ensure "safety in production." The Beijing Olympics boosted patriotism, and the regime became less and less tolerant of dissent.

All this left little room for the Chinese liberal media, one prominent casualty of which has been investigative journalism. According to estimates by some of those working in the field, there are currently fewer than 80 investigative journalists in China. The emphasis is on lifestyle stories rather than hard news, gossip rather than muckraking, flattery rather than analysis—and of course, *chunqiu bifa*. The list of banned or sensitive words continues to grow, and now includes "universal values," "constitutional democracy," and "checks and balances." We console ourselves with dark humor about our revenge on the censors. Press restrictions may last forever, we joke, but newspapers will certainly die.

Even worse than the renewed restrictions is the change in the social and cultural environment, as evidenced by the rise of the 50-Cent Party, people hired by the government to post favorable

comments on the Internet about the Communist Party and its policies. The 50-Cent Party existed before 2008, but it was only after 2008 that it became an important factor in shaping public opinion.

Last July, after a man detonated a homemade bomb he had strapped to himself at Beijing Airport, Southern Metropolitan Daily published an exclusive story about the bomber, who claimed he was left paralyzed by local law enforcement officers eight years ago and had been fighting unsuccessfully for compensation. Rumors quickly appeared on Weibo, alleging collusion between the bomber and Southern Metropolitan Daily to “pressure and embarrass the government.” The false claims were retweeted widely and, unfortunately, accepted as fact by many. The 50-Cent Party is no longer just a group manipulated by the regime, but one of the lenses through which many Chinese see and understand the world.

In “The Velvet Prison: Artists Under State Socialism,” Miklos Haraszti wrote of Hungary in the 1970s: “If I still speak of censorship, what I refer to is not merely certain bureaucratic procedures but the whole context of culture, not just state intervention but all the circumstances that conspire to destroy the basis of autonomous or authentic artistic activity ... not only ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ restrictions but also the secret psychological sources that sustain the state’s reach even in the last cell of culture.” China’s liberal media are in the same bind.

As restrictions—and anxieties—grow, I have more doubts about the tactics I’ve used in the past to get my meaning across. Using *chunqiu bifa* now feels like scratching my itchy foot from outside my boot. Plus, as social media increasingly insulate people from information with which they disagree, journalists’ subtle linguistic tricks are too superficial for the well-informed and too sophisticated for those who just don’t care.

Next time, before using *chunqiu bifa*, maybe we should ask ourselves: Is this the best way to express myself? Am I doing enough? Am I pushing the line rather than just flirting with it? Speaking truth to power is the media’s reason for being, nowhere more so than in China.

*Yang Xiao, a 2014 Nieman Fellow, is Beijing correspondent and a chief writer for Southern People Weekly. He previously worked for Xinhua News Agency*

# Up Close and Personal

## *China as journalist's dream and statistician's nightmare*

**By Evan Osnos**

In 1948, the Harvard Sinologist John King Fairbank wrote, “China is a journalist’s dream and a statistician’s nightmare.” It was, he explained, a place “with more human drama and fewer verifiable facts per square mile than anywhere else in the world.” Sixty-five years later, much of Fairbank’s description rings true, even as we find ourselves drawn even more urgently by the need to make sense of China’s metamorphosis, its contradictions, and the growing role that it plays in our lives around the world.

When I studied Mandarin, in Beijing, for the first time in 1996, the Chinese economy was smaller than that of Italy. The countryside felt near: Most nights, I ate in a Muslim neighborhood, where tin-roof restaurants kept jittery sheep tied out front. The animals vanished in the kitchens, one by one, at dinnertime.

By 2013, China had the world’s largest Internet population—a raucous, questioning, but still censored realm—the largest number of new billionaires and new skyscrapers, and an economy second only in scale to the United States. China’s rise has created vast wealth and power—but also corruption, a new awareness of inequality, and a growing demand in China and abroad for an understanding of who has profited and at what cost.

For journalists, China’s rise presents a set of puzzles that we cannot escape. The first is practical: As journalists in China, foreign or domestic, how do we navigate the obstructions erected by the Communist Party, and then limit the consequences to those who dare to speak? This is the most obvious challenge, but also, perhaps, the most familiar, and the tools we use are those which serve correspondents in any country: persistence and ingenuity, sure, but, more important, the journalist’s version of the Hippocratic Oath—the determination to do no harm to sources in a nation that regards their voices as a threat.

The more novel problem is one of proportions: In a nation of such profound contrasts—between new freedoms and old forms of repression, between extraordinary fortunes and persistent poverty—how many words should we dedicate to the fact that China has never been more prosperous—and how many words should we spend on the fact that it is the only country in the world with a Nobel Peace Prize winner in prison? (That’s Liu Xiaobo.)

Lastly, and perhaps most difficult, the puzzle of covering China is one of access: What is a reporter and a news organization to do in a country that is increasingly denying access to journalists who publish work that the government finds threatening? Over the past two or three years, the Chinese government’s view of the foreign press has changed in two important ways: In 2011, the Arab Spring unnerved the Chinese leadership more than any event in a generation with the demonstration of how information and organization could undermine authoritarian governments that appeared to be stable. At the time, Chinese authorities publicly criticized foreign correspondents, whom they blamed for covering Chinese activists who were inspired by events in the Middle East.

In 2012, with China’s new wealth soaring, foreign news organizations ratcheted up their scrutiny of China’s politicians—and their personal fortunes—to a level of forensic detail that we have rarely, if ever, seen in foreign correspondence. Reporters documented how the families of China’s then-premier Wen Jiabao and its incoming president, Xi Jinping, had assembled enormous fortunes while their relatives were in office.

In retaliation, the government blocked the websites of The New York Times and Bloomberg News, which had led the new wave of investigations. Authorities also barred Chinese banks and other institutions from adding contracts for new Bloomberg terminals, and it blocked news organizations from adding new staff or replacing existing correspondents in China. The purpose was to pressure the business operations of news organizations that were already imperiled by the pressures of the Web. (That approach was also applied to The Washington Post and Reuters.)

Historically, journalists anticipated that they might be denied access to China if they covered hot

button issues like human rights. (That rarely stopped them.) But, now, reporters and their employers are punished for exposing the private wealth of senior Party leaders. And that reflects a fundamental shift in the role that foreign correspondents play in China. We are no longer bringing home news to an American audience from a faraway land. China is a rising superpower, and an audience of readers. It is so present in our economic and political lives around the world that it has forced journalists to step up the quality of their work. Whether we like it or not, foreign correspondents are now active participants in the domestic conversation about the distribution of power and resources in the world's greatest economic boom. Even when a story in the Times is blocked by the censors, it finds its way to readers in China.

This is a new iteration of an old responsibility: As foreign correspondents, we have always faced the task of recording the memory that people in other countries are not permitted, by circumstance or by force, to record themselves. In the past, that has often meant documenting war and dissent. But in China today it also means documenting the world's most rapid accumulation of assets, and the sorting of winners and losers—a process that will have consequences for generations to come.

We are reporting on not only a country, but also a contest over the values that China will project as a new power in the world. It is an ongoing, unfinished debate about the definition of truth, accountability and power. It is a privilege and a responsibility to take the measure of this moment. Fairbank was right. It is a hell of a story.

*Evan Osnos, a staff writer at The New Yorker, adapted this essay from his Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lecture delivered on Nov. 14, 2013 at the Nieman Foundation*

中文

# 命令和控制

在天安门事件发生25年后，中国的新闻业究竟面临怎样的现状？

撰文 慕亦仁

2013年12月24日下午，以慕容雪村为笔名的热门中国作家郝群在微博中写道：在中国，一个微博账户的平均寿命仅为10个小时左右。26分钟17秒之后，审查者就从网络上抹去了这篇博文。

2013年，中国最为大胆的报纸《南方周末》旗下的记者们举行了罢工，其原因是政府审查人员将一篇呼吁中国尊重宪法权利的新年社论，替换成了歌颂共产党在“中华民族复兴”进程中起到了独特作用的陈词滥调。12月份，约二十几位来自《纽约时报》和彭博新闻社的记者一直在焦急地等待着更换新的记者签证，与此同时他们所供职的新闻机构也在纷纷制定应急计划，准备从台湾或香港进行报道。记者在年底的最后几天必须要获得签证，但当局所传达的信息非常明确：对于那些敢于公开对抗的外媒记者，中国政府乐于展示严苛的处理手段。

中共多年来一直致力于控制中国的自由言论，他们屏蔽了成千上万的国外网站。诸如Facebook、推特、维基百科和LinkedIn这样的重要社交网站在中国都无法登陆，一些技术先进的软件被用于搜索和消灭网络上的“敏感”词。“当局依靠秘密警察来威胁公民，无休止地骚扰和逮捕那些通过微博来呼吁言论自由的公民，”北京杰出的权利活动家胡佳说，“并在博客写手和网民之间制造恐惧，让每个人都感觉不安，迫使他们进行自我审查并保持沉默。”

由于更易于控制，中国国内媒体的境遇甚至更为糟糕。那些胆敢越过不可见容许界线的国内记者可能会面临各种惩罚，譬如遭到罚款或甚至被逮捕。当局经常会颁布各种命令，告知新闻机构哪些内容能发表，哪些内容不能发表，这一系统通常被称之为“来自真理部的指令”。尽管政府无法对国际媒体进行审查，但外国记者们却面临着各种形式的恐吓、骚扰和监视，一连串的恶意软件攻击被认为是政府特工在限制外媒报道方面作出的贡献，近几年出现的签证胁迫就是旨在鼓励外媒进行自我审查。随着新一届政府加强了控制，2013年的形势变得非常严峻。

在账户被删除之前，慕容雪村微博的粉丝数量已经超过了850万。他在言谈中表现出了明显的失望之情，他经常发现有些账户会突然出现网络上，然后再突然消失掉。慕容雪村也会感到害怕，尽管这种恐惧心理并不会阻止他直言不讳或为《纽约时报》中文网撰文。“我不在单位上班，我的父母亲都已经去世，我没有孩子，而这些通常都是持异议者在表达政见时最大的后顾之忧，”他说。“相较而言，我就没有这些担心。”

有越来越多的人加入到所谓的转世党——即用户在原来的微博被关闭以后开了新微博。有些微博用户为了继续在网络上保持活跃，甚至转世了数百次。“这种行为本身就象征着人们对于审查者的抵抗和斗争，”身处华盛顿的中国观察员曹雅雪说，她同时也是中国变革网（ChinaChange.org）的创始人和编辑。

但其他人就没有这么幸运了。以薛蛮子作为网名的薛必群是一位直言不讳的政府批评者，他的微博拥有1200万的粉丝。但在涉嫌嫖娼被抓以后，他的微博生涯宣告终结。虽然法院还未对其进行审判，但被抓捕的薛蛮子很快就出现在全国电视观众的面前，在电视上他公开忏悔并承认在微博中发表了不负责任的言论，而这些都与警方宣称的嫖娼行为完全无关。电视中表情谦恭的薛蛮子身穿囚衣，手戴手铐，他的这幅形象就相当于是对整个网络社区的警告。

2013年9月，北京当局出台了一系列新措施以防止其所谓的不负责任谣言的四处传播，具体规定包括：如果虚假消息被5000名以上的网民浏览或转发次数超过500次，消息发布人就可被判处三年徒刑。在此后的几周内，陆续有几十人因为上述新规而遭到调查，其中就包括甘肃天水一名16岁的中学生，他因为涉嫌散布本地警察对一例死亡案件调查不到位的谣言而被拘留。

恐吓策略正在发挥作用。在上述博文中，慕容雪村列出了一个长名单，上面全是近几个月来博客被关闭或被逮捕的知名博主。他表示，随着这股风潮很快散播开来，“即便是最蠢的人也能得出如下结论：目前的形势正在变得紧张起来，闭嘴是最稳妥不过的办法了。”到2013年年底，因为这种压力使然，网络大V——即具备一定影响力微博粉丝上百万且身份获得认证的微博用户——几乎消失大半。

前《南方周末》首席评论家兼新闻部主任长平表示，国内媒体正在承受着巨大的压力，原

本那些敢于写真实报道的报纸通常也能吸引到更多的广告，因此媒体也愿意冒更大的风险。“但现在不仅经济支持没了，压力也变得更大了，”他说。保护记者委员会（Committee to Protect Journalists）在12月份报告说，目前有32名中国记者——包括网络评论员和主流媒体记者——被关在监狱中，在记者工作环境最恶劣的国家榜单上，中国排第三。

现如今，一些中国最知名的记者和作家都开始沉默起来，有些人甚至离开祖国。中国曾经涌现出一批才华横溢的调查记者，他们撰写过一些具有开创性的报道，但在压力之下，很多人都放弃了自己的专业，转向了其他职业。2013年8月，中宣部要求国有媒体的所有新闻工作者——记者和编辑加起来约30万人——都要参加马克思主义学习班。尽管2003年也出现过一次类似的活动，但这次的新要求似乎更为严格，它就是政府决意在社交媒体爆炸时代牢牢控制新闻工作者的最好例证。

与此同时，外媒记者依然面临着被监视、骚扰和恐吓，他们的活动也受到限制，在某些极端情况下，他们甚至有生命危险。中国外媒记者俱乐部（Foreign Correspondents Club）通过调查发现，在2011年，94%的被调查记者感觉环境较上一年有所恶化，到了2013年这一数字降至70%。

那些申请中国工作签证的《纽约时报》和彭博新闻社记者等签证已经等了一年多。这种拖延明显是为了报复《纽约时报》记者大卫·巴尔博扎（David Barboza）关于前国家总理温家宝家人敛财的普利策获奖报道以及彭博新闻对于现任国家主席习近平亲戚财富的调查。《纽约时报》和彭博新闻的网站都已经被封杀，由于政府机构的订单取消，后者在中国的终端销售业务也出现了暴跌。

2013年11月8日正值中国的记者节，就在这一天，我接到通知说，中国外交部已经拒绝了我在北京为路透社工作的记者签证申请，这标志着8个月的等待以及我作为特派记者在中国工作18年的职业生涯一起走到了尽头。在这两年中，我是第二个申请被拒的记者。第一个申请被拒的半岛电视台记者陈嘉韵在2012年被驱逐出中国，其原因很可能也是因为她在中国人权方面的报道。

对于申请被拒中国外交部没有作出任何说明，但在旧金山中国领事馆的90分钟面谈过程中，面试官反复拷问我对于人权、达赖喇嘛、西藏和维权律师问题的观点。在面谈结束时，这位领事馆官员对我说，“如果我们发签证给你让你回中国工作，我们希望你的报道能更加客观一些。”这段经历让我意识到，签证被拒的原因在于我对敏感问题的报道。

就在同一个星期，《纽约时报》对彭博新闻主编马修·温克乐（Matthew Winkler）因为担心激怒中国政府而毙掉一篇敏感调查文章的经过进行了报道，这篇文章介绍了一位中国首富与一位共产党高级官员之间的关系，事实上，类似的报道文章已经导致意欲前往中国的彭博新闻记者的签证批准被一拖再拖。温克乐否认了《纽约时报》的报道，他表示上述调查文章需要进行进一步修改，其刊登与否也未有定论。但仅一周以后，文章的主要作者迈克尔·福赛思（Michael Forsythe）就因为涉嫌向《纽约时报》泄露新闻机密而遭到解雇。对此，长平感叹说，外媒得到的教训实在是太深刻了，“要么合作，要么被驱逐出中国。”

“我认为，中国领导层之所以现在将火气发在《纽约时报》和彭博社记者的签证问题上，其原因在很大程度上要归咎于国内外新闻报道之间所横亘的阻隔开始消弭，”香港大学中国传媒研究计划（China Media Project）的主任大卫·班杜尔斯基（David Bandurski）说。在当下由Facebook、推特、新浪微博和微信所主宰的网络化世界中，国内外新闻报道之间的区别正在变得模糊。“中国国内的民众几乎可以同步阅读到被翻译成中文的外媒新闻，”他说。“从当局的角度来看，最好的解决方案也许是最老式的办法：即不让外媒记者进入国内，从而在源头切断新闻。”

现居住在纽约网名为北风的中国活动家兼前公民记者温云超表示，国家主席习近平和前任主席胡锦涛对于互联网持有两种不同的态度。“胡将互联网视为工具，因此他提倡利用网络来达成党的目的，”他说。“而习则直接将互联网和极权政治视为是两种不兼容的体系，他认为这种不兼容会导致中国共产党和中华民族出现大灾难，所以他希望控制和净化网络。”

温云超认为中共官员害怕中国将经历一次类似于阿拉伯之春的运动：“他们担心每一次个体或群体事件会从蝴蝶翅膀的扇动演变成疾风暴雨。他们害怕某一位公民的行为就如同突尼斯小贩的自焚那样变得不可收拾。”

中国正在面临着越来越多的抗议活动，这些抗议来自于不甘受辱的农民工、心怀不满的工厂工人、失去土地的农民乃至生活不幸福的城市居民。在西藏地区，目前已经有127人为了抗议残暴的地区政策而自焚，西北偏远且穆斯林聚集的新疆地区也出现了越来越多的暴力事件。

“习近平及其同僚感受到了压力，因为他们不知道该如何去应对，”加州大学河畔分校的中



国专家佩里·林克 (Perry Link) 说。“从表面上来看，经济、军事和外交愈发强大的中国正在‘崛起’，但在其内部，形式正变得越来越严峻，底层人民的抱怨和要求不仅越来越多，也出现了前所未有的组织性。”

在电脑、手机、廉价照相机和摄影机的帮助下，公民记者敢于深入那些主流媒体不敢去的地区。这些新技术让外媒和本土记者的工作变得更加方便，他们掌握了很多新的信息来源，并通过网站、微博和博客来了解情况。利用电子邮件、手机、即时聊天软件或其他现代工具，他们能够更便利地从源头获取信息。

中国记者安替认为，习近平对自己的权力非常自信，他并不关心负面评论。“他甚至不关心西方国家的反应，”他说。“再加上这些国家也没什么反应，因此他开始更为自信地运用手中的权力。我认为镇压正是来自于这种自信，而非是恐惧。”

在班杜尔斯基看来，根本性的问题在于当局依然把信息控制视为是“一种维持稳定的必要手段，但事实上要想解决中国所面临的种种难题，信息已经成为前所未有的关键所在。”他口中的难题指的是地方腐败、土地强占、房屋拆除、权利滥用和正义扭曲等现象。“即便是事发地之外的媒体也不能对这些案例进行报道，随着相关信息从社交媒体上被删除，压力开始如同巨大的暗流一般涌动，”班杜尔斯基说。

一些所谓的公民记者能够报道那些主流媒体无法报道的新闻，他们也是中国民众获取信息的源头之一。2012年，一部名为《高科技低生活》(High Tech, Low Life) 的纪录片上映，它介绍了以老虎庙作为网名的博客作家张世和的一些工作。在片中，张世和骑着快要散架的自行车，带着数码相机、摄影机和其他高科技装备，从位于北京的家中出发四处游历采访，让那些缄默的村民们为外界所知。但今年4月底至5月初的短短几天时间里，张世和的九个博客账户全部遭到注销，其中包括使用时间最长的一个，这个被他形容为“吾之骄傲”的账户他已经经营了10年之久，此番遭遇让他感到黯然神伤。张诗河表示，自己还要在微博中发文章，上传照片、视频乃至绘图，以此来不间断地记录全国各地所发生的一切。

不愿妥协的中国人似乎越来越多，政府也许会觉得这种局面很难应对。对此慕容雪村感到颇为乐观。“我对互联网的未来充满了信心，新技术和新软件正在不间断地大量出现，而共产党用来控制和监视网络的技术却总是稍稍滞后，”他说。“而且，建立在谎言和暴力基础之上的这一政权不可避免地会衰弱，即便是一丁点的自由空间，人们也要挣扎着发出声音，聪明的人会越来越多，这对于共产党来说是最大的威胁。”

从慕容雪村在今年12月最后一个礼拜所发表的一篇博文中，我们可以再清楚不过地感受到中国人民推翻政府所强加控制的强烈决心，虽然这篇文章在存活了26分钟之后就被删除了。他在文中这样写道：“每一次我都将会重整旗鼓卷土重来，因为我的兄弟们已经为我创建了几十个新账户。如果这些还不够，我们还能再创建几十个甚至几百个。让我们把网络当成战场来奋力抗争。你躲在黑暗中肆意地滥用权力，一天也不会停止。而我永远也不会屈服，除非你从我们的尸体上踏过去。”

慕亦仁 (Paul Mooney) 是一位美国自由撰稿记者，他写了28年的亚洲报道，最近18年来他一直居住在北京。2013年，他的记者签证申请被中国政府拒绝

# 躲避“真理部”

撰文 安妮·汉诺乔维斯

中国的网络审查不仅仅指的是屏蔽外国网站，删除任何“有害”信息，国家也不仅仅是唯一的执行者。政府对私营网站实行审查制度，如果这些网站不顺从的话，就有可能面临包括关闭在内的各种惩罚。在一些社交网站如新浪微博（类似推特的网站）上，每天会贴出大约一亿条信息。审查员通过屏蔽关键词的方法不让民众讨论敏感的政治话题。中国网民则创造了各种新式方法绕开审查制度。

## 1：使用与被审查词组中一个字相通的词语

过去两年中，其中一个被审查的词组是周永康。周曾经担任中国公安系统的最高领导，之前担任国有的石油天然气总公司的总经理。2012年3月，在共产党领导人薄熙来被拘留之后，有传言称周与薄共谋政变。2013年9月，周永康以腐败罪的指控被调查。中国网民为了绕开审查的禁令，以“康师傅”来代称周永康的名字。康师傅是一家方便面的品牌，这个词组的第一个字与周永康名字中的第三个字相同。

## 2：当新词组被禁之后，会出现一个类似新词组意思的替代词

当审查员注意到“康师傅”这个新词组后，这个词在网上就被禁止了。此后，周永康被一个更泛指的词“方便面”所代替。不过，某些关键词在事件冷落之后，会被解禁。“康师傅”目前在微博上是可以搜索的一个词组。

## 3：发音相似但意义不同的替代词

中国的某些字发音相同，但意义迥然相异。通过更换一个字，周永康变成了“粥永康”。

## 4：使用绰号

这个技巧在指代政治人物时尤其普遍。王立军的一个绰号是“护士长”，这是“副市长”的双关语。王曾经担任薄熙来手下的重庆副市长。“飞盘胡”是《环球时报》总编辑胡锡进的绰号。这个绰号起源于一个笑话，即胡对政府丢给他的难题概不拒绝。

来源：中国数字时代

# 控制信息，控制灵魂

高昱（财新传媒编委）和 邓瑾（2013年度尼曼学者）谈中国的媒体审查制度是如何进行的

撰文 高昱著

加强对枪支和笔杆子的严密控制一直被中国共产党视为维护统治的最重要的一条途径。在中国，党和国家要控制所有的媒体机构。中国媒体审查制度的核心是共产党的中宣部。中宣部有两个职能：控制信息和控制灵魂。通过控制信息，党可以剥夺个人的独立思考能力，让他们变成党的工具。但是，对信息和个人思想的控制越来越难，所以，审查制度和宣传机器也更加变本加厉。

中宣部是中国共产党内部的一个分支。在全国各级官僚机构中——从中央到各省份再到各地级市和县——都有宣传部。宣传部的领导都是重要的政治领袖。例如，上海市宣传部部长是上海13位市委常委之一，而市委常委是上海市最高的领导层。为了保持某种程度的出版自由，仅靠勇气和妥协的意愿是不够的。你需要有很强的政治技巧来和一些有影响的官员保持朋友关系，以此来确保当你的媒体机构受到威胁时能够受到保护。

审查制度一般有三种形式：出版前的指示，自我审查，以及出版后的惩罚。宣传部可以在报道之前举办的例行会议上发布指示，也可以在突发新闻时以电话的形式发出指示。自我审查是由编辑部本身执行的。在过去几年里，中宣部的审查官员认为他们正在失去对商业媒体的控制。他们就请示党或政府的主要领导向这些媒体派遣官方的审查员。（这些人有权）在出版前让媒体单位重新编写报道或者干脆砍掉某篇报道。一些新闻机构需要向中宣部汇报他们将要发布的重大新闻。很多突发新闻或者敏感新闻几乎都被禁止了。

出版后的惩罚是最严厉的审查方式。这类惩罚不再取决于审查员而是取决于媒体机构的单位性质，如政府部门以及国家所属的媒体机构等。惩罚也因为单位性质的不同而不同。非体制内的媒体机构（被允许通过发行和广告来赢利、但仍属于国家所属的媒体）有可能被关闭，而那些体制内的媒体有可能被撤除主编。

对于中国的新闻记者来说，现今这个时代是最好的黄金时期。因为重大新闻几乎每天都会出现。然而，由于审查的无处不在，这也是我们最糟糕的一个时期。我们对某些重大新闻仅能被国外的媒体如《华尔街日报》和《纽约时报》报道而感到非常沮丧。1999年1月，中国最直言不讳的一家媒体——《南方周末》的编辑部向媒体界同行发布了一个新年献词，号召大家给予弱势群体权利，给予那些失去希望的人希望。14年后，这仍旧是我们的使命。

高昱是财新传媒编委

# 关键词的秘密

## 以在线与数据库搜索作为报道手段

撰文 钱钢

我在1979年成为记者。那个年代，记者需要两大本领：采访和写作。好记者，都是善于采访又精于写作的高手。如今，增加了第三套本领：搜索。

我是1991年开始使用电脑的，那时我们把这叫做“换笔”——手中的钢笔，换成了键盘和鼠标。也就在那时，听说有人在尝试用电脑分析整本中国古典名著《红楼梦》，分析某个词语的出现频率，分析某个主人公的语言风格。

2001年，我担任常务副主编已四年的《南方周末》报，因发表得罪官员的调查报告而惹祸。被解职后，我到香港中文大学访问。在大学研究服务中心见到人民日报和解放军报光盘，勾起了兴趣。我学习电脑搜索，分析文革前和文革中的人民日报和解放军报，写出论文《红色政治词语的勃兴和流变》。

这是从未有过的体验：过去，靠人力一页页翻阅旧报，绝不可能准确统计出“毛泽东思想”、“无产阶级专政”、“灵魂深处爆发革命”等词语历年传播频率的起伏，现在，在电脑上设定搜索条件，输入关键词，击键！隐藏在文字海洋里的数据，瞬间跳到你的眼前。从创刊至今近60年的解放军报全部版面、所有图文数据，如今放在一个手掌可握的小小包中。

2003年，应香港大学新闻及传媒研究中心总监陈婉莹教授的邀请，我到港大从事中国传媒研究。刚到香港，就遇到SARS。中国媒体曾在短暂时间内对SARS进行过大量报道，但很快就被宣传部压制。在公众需要公共卫生信息的紧要关头，中国媒体集体噤声。我们使用“慧科搜索”数据库搜索数百种中国内地报纸，画出了SARS报道大起大落的准确轨迹图。

几乎是同样的一幅图，5年后再次出现。这次是汶川地震中校舍倒塌的报道。又是先大量报道，后突然被禁。

我们努力发展这种新闻研究的新方法。没有电脑，没有互联网，不可能有这种信息搜索方法。在电脑和网络上俯拾即是“词频”，原来是和水位、体温、股价一样可监控、可分析的宝贵数据。这是传媒大数据时代带给我们的一座富矿。

我用这种方法参与突发事件报道。2010年甘肃省舟曲发生泥石流。著名调查记者王克勤赶赴一线，调查灾祸成因。我在港大做他的后援，利用学术数据库，检索出大量舟曲泥石流发生前有关水土保持的文献，证明在灾前有许多专家发出过警告，但政府防范不力。

我用这种方法分析中国政治。从2006年开始，我一直追踪中国媒体上的“政治体制改革”一语，以及十多个相关的关键词。2007年中共17大前后，我在《亚洲周刊》发表3篇文章，用我的检索分析数据判断，表示对中国政改不可过分乐观。2012年中共18大前后，我在《纽约时报》中文网发表12篇文章，对中国的政治走向进行了分析，认为政改的温度比5年前更低了。2013年，我在《联合早报》中文网发表多篇“语象”报告，追踪“七不讲”、“宪政争议”、“舆论斗争”等“语言的战争”。

词语有生命。通过政治词语的出生、发育、萎缩、消亡和不同政治词语构成的色谱变化，政治家的施政轨迹被勾勒，不容易一眼看出的政治趋势，显露出来。

拜科技所赐，新闻工作者发现事实、求证事实、表达事实的方式正发生革命。网络搜索的功能与日俱增，我们的检索分析方法也日渐成熟。今天一名好记者，不但要善采、善写，还必须善搜。采、搜、写，是网络时代新闻记者的三套看家本领。

钱钢，《南方周末》前常务副主编，香港大学中国传媒计划主任

# 科技、透明度与传统媒体

## 微博和微信是如何打破信息垄断的

撰文 罗昌平/文

对中国日益壮大的中产阶级与政商精英而言，他们的生活无法逃避两大系统：一是中共组织系统，二是腾讯网络产品，如微信、QQ。最近，前者向后者做出了一个让步——因为中共十八届三中全会的改革方案在微信中大肆传播，官方被迫提前四天公布全文。

传统媒体的赢利能力遽然下降，从业者集体转型渐入高峰，新闻寻租现象也层出不穷。由报刊广电一统传媒江湖的日子不再复返，社交网媒已在颠覆中国新闻业。从某种程度上讲，微博带来了言论自由，微信提供了结社自由，强势代替受到严格控制的传统媒体，成为舆论主战场。

社会学家马克斯·韦伯这样定义权力：在违反你的意志时，仍然让你服从。有人问，权力不就是暴力吗？不对，统治者完全可以不用暴力就让人服从，那就是控制信息。中国的权力垄断可概括为“四子”：枪杆子、钱袋子、手铐子、笔杆子。其中枪杆子与手铐子是暴力垄断，笔杆子与钱袋子属于信息垄断，但四者有时存在叠加。

2012年重庆王立军、薄熙来事件发生时，信息发布完全无涉传统媒体，我感觉到了这个伟大的拐点，撰文原创了一个概念“穹顶效应”——以薄王事件为例，信息采集、传播、聚合、论证等已完全不同于传统的新闻模式，并在不断突破既有的言论限度。在信息荒漠中，支撑言论穹顶的要件，不再是专业媒体，而聚合海量的线索和专业的智慧，在互联网上合成某个敏感事件的碎片拼图。

“穹顶效应”之下，封闭改革不可能进行，信息垄断也很难实现。但很多官员还是没有理解透明的含义，更没有感知时代的转变，于是，我决定微博实名举报国家发改委副主任、国家能源局局长刘铁男，用行动警示他们，一个新的时代来了。

举个例子，我的老家在中国南方一个偏远山村，那里日本鬼子没有进去，党报党刊没有进去，但我举报刘铁男之后，村里有超过十人开通了微博微信。这是技术赋权。

不过，执政者并无放弃信息垄断的意愿，他们发动了“净网”工程，打击大V，抓捕记者，这涉及对虚假信息的发布、裁定和惩罚，但它以行政管制代替法治渠道，相当于在湖底铺设防渗膜，毁掉了湖水的自净能力。其实，微博微信本身具备言论对冲机能。

中共的改革方案既鼓励创新，又限制思想，这构成矛盾。由于缺乏自由的思想市场，导致中国无创新无持续竞争力，建立这个思想市场的前提是打破官方对信息的垄断。

罗昌平，北京《财经》杂志前副主编，他获得了透明国际2013年度清廉奖

# 压力之下的中国市场化媒体

## 中国的市场化媒体面临着不确定的未来

撰文 胡泳

对于中国的调查新闻业而言，2003年是里程碑式的一年。在这一年中，一些媒体组织由中国共产党的宣传工具转变成为了市场导向的新闻机构。随着市场影响力的不断增强，政党路线得以弱化，这使得很多记者开始期望半独立新闻业新浪潮的涌现。

当时中共刚刚经历了领导层的更迭，胡锦涛当选为国家主席。为了应对非典疫情，中央政府又颁布了一系列的新法律和问责制，此举激起了民众对于政府尽责和透明治理国家的期待。一些市场化的新闻媒体如《财经》杂志和《南方都市报》亦扩大了发行范围。

2003年4月，《南方都市报》刊登了一篇报道，揭露了27岁的平面设计师孙志刚在随机性的身份稽查中被警察逮捕，继而遭到收容站工作人员和被收容者殴打并死在收容站的可怕经历。这篇文章引发了一场全民抗议，并在当时尚处于萌芽状态的中文网络世界首次激起了大规模的疾呼之声。随后，导致孙志刚蒙难的收容遣送制度得以废除，一场为期十年的权利倡导拉开了帷幕。与此同时，市场化媒体和新型的私营网络公司则开辟了一块替代性的话语空间，让人们能够表达一些游离于官方话语之外的意见。

十年之后，随着习近平接任胡锦涛的位置成为国家主席，这些进程却正在发生着逆转。2013年12月，当局以扰乱公共秩序罪起诉了年初在南方报业集团大楼外抗议的自由言论人士。因涉嫌向警方提供关于抗议活动扰乱日常工作的不利证据，拥有《南方周末》这份中国最具自由主义色彩报纸的该传媒集团也遭到了抨击。很多人认为南方报业集团的证言并非事实，它似乎就是要让《南方周末》一向树立的道德形象为之而蒙羞。

媒体所遭受的压力不光来自政治，还有经济方面的因素。陈永洲事件就是一个典型的例证。陈永洲是一名供职于广东《新快报》的记者，2013年10月，他因报道一家国有建筑装备公司涉嫌腐败而被警方抓捕。事发以后，《新快报》和其他媒体同行都对陈永洲展开了声援，但其本人却在电视上对自己收受贿赂提供失实报道的行为供认不讳。尽管有些人担心陈永洲是被屈打成招，但他和《新快报》却从原本的受害者转而成为被众人所厌恶的对象。

成本削减和广告收入下滑不仅导致新闻编辑缺乏保护，也让从业者的职业道德操守遭遇滑坡，这都是市场化媒体所必须面对的事实。由此招致的恶果便是经济利益开始凌驾于公众利益之上。和十年前一样，现在的市场化媒体亦面临着转折，而且这一次局面甚至更为凶险。相比之下，党媒还将一如既往地得到来自党内的财政支持。

为了满足新一代消费群体的需求，私营网络媒体正在大胆地探索各种新颖的应用、平台和服务。但相较之下，市场化媒体传统上所占据的生存空间，却遭到了政府审查和经营持续不振的双重挤压。黄金时代宣告终结，下一个十年——如果还有下一个十年的话——依然扑朔迷离。

胡泳是北京大学新闻与传播学院副教授，他也为《中国日报》和中国中央电视台工作

# 追踪钱的线索

适用于美国的调查报道原则也适用于中国

撰文 张大卫

2011秋，我为《纽约时报》调查中国商界精英的故事时，震惊地发现：有一组公司文件牵涉到当时中国总理温家宝的亲属，价值超过27亿美元。该记录是我通过政府档案搜索获得，它显示这位总理最亲近的一些亲属，包括他的兄弟和子女，在过去十多年来获得了二十余家公司的主要股份——包括珠宝、电信、地产和建筑等行业，还有平安保险，中国最大的金融服务机构之一。

然而，我反问自己，这样敏感和有潜在爆炸力的新闻能在中国的公开记录里出现吗？

自那时起，我得出的结论很简单：中国快速发展的经济催生了现象性的股份制经济繁荣，以及一个远比我想象更加先进和透明的公开记录机制。在中国工作的新闻记者现在可以获得该国最大的国有企业的金融记录，接触到成千上万上市公司与非上市公司的投资者名字。他们能够窥视到这个国家最黑暗的秘密之一：国家的政治精英家庭是如何聚敛财富的。

公布此类信息，目前当然仍是挑战。中国媒体大部分被禁止报道共产党顶层领导人的家庭。2012年彭博新闻社和《纽约时报》发布了一系列报道中国统治精英巨大财富的文章，中国政府封锁了每个新闻机构的网址，并且收紧了它对驻华外国记者的监管。

不过，可能在未来十年，会有更加多的中国领导人隐藏财富的报道。中国在迅速地融入全球经济，西方投资者在中国的新兴企业持有股份，中国企业则获取海外资产。随着中国变得更加国际化，隐瞒上市公司与非上市公司的大量股份越来越困难。换句话说，时钟不再容易倒拨，涉及中国企业的调查性报道也不再容易封锁。

人们经常问询我是如何发现牵涉到前总理家族数十亿美元资产的公司记录的。而我则经常自问，为什么我花了那么长时间才做到这件事？

我有两个理论。首先，很多西方记者，包括我在内，会顾虑调查中国顶层领导者涉及的风险，失去记者签证的威胁一直存在。其次，我们也会疑惑，是否存在公开记录与持股者的名单。

这种记录真的十分复杂，尽管我从2011年末就开始收集记录，但花了一年多时间我才搞清楚自己大部分发现的意义：因为温的家族和他们的企业合作者建立了一个空壳公司与投资工具的网络，它们中的许多机构经常性地更换名字和搬迁地址。

我的发现是，适用于美国的报道也适用于中国。调查性报道一直以来需要耐心和果断，慢慢拼拢拼图的零片就像杰出的侦探工作。

2012年我的文章发表后，阴谋论在中国浮现，一些香港的报纸还宣称我从这位总理的政敌那里收到一盒文件。事实可没有那么复杂。我索取到文件，然后追踪钱的线索，最后我拨打了一些总理亲属的电话。出乎我意外，他们没有挂断。

张大卫 (David Barboza)，《纽约时报》上海分社站长，凭借他对中国腐败的调查获得2013年普利策国际报道奖

# 商业与腐败：中国传媒业经历转型

## 关于商业化独立新闻机构的洞见

撰文 胡舒立

技术发展一直在重塑世界各地的传媒业。甚至在美国这样的发达国家，传统媒体企业亦感受到了近几年新技术所带来的冲击。虽然全球金融危机令生存变得更加艰难，但同时它也迫使这些国家的传统媒体去适应乃至主动拥抱这种变化。

中国的现状则完全不同。几年前，当发达国家的传统媒体还在经历转型阵痛时，中国的很多报业机构对于未来的商业前景依然相当乐观，他们坚信，传统媒体不仅在公共领域依然会占据主导地位，而且至少在未来五六年中还会持续发展。

但变化来得比预想的要快得多。面对网民数量的急速增长，传统媒体市场遭到了快速侵蚀。现如今，中国的绝大多数传媒机构都在内忧外患的双重夹击中苦苦挣扎——内忧是指低效管理，外患是指监管控制。近几年来，商业利益也极大地影响了传媒业；薄弱的行业自律性助长了媒体腐败。

这种腐败通常与不可饶恕的“寻租”行为——即收受贿赂并捏造报道联系在一起。但问题在于，在中国这种特殊的政治和媒体环境中，某些媒体公司不仅具有政府背景，被政府过多干预，而且缺少监管，这使得一些从业人员更难以抵制来自商业或政治上的诱惑。因此，有些媒体会恶意诽谤那些拒绝与其进行广告合作的公司，还有些媒体乐于将自己当成公关工具来推销。这些行为并非行业内部机密；有些人甚至以此为荣。

中国的传媒业缺少足够的独立思考空间，也没有真正的竞争机制来确保优胜劣汰。要想行业蓬勃发展，记者们需要的不止是严于律己，还有健全的法治和充分的保护。没有新闻自由就没有言论自由，没有法治就没有社会公正。这两条规律在一个处于转型期的社会中都发挥着关键作用。

我们的一些同行正在探索转型之路。虽然现在讨论最佳方案为时尚早，但对于所有寻求新增增长势头的传媒公司来说，有些原则是可以共享的。

衡量媒体转型成功与否的关键标准在于，它是否能够在维持商业增长的同时还能造福于社会。相比将商业利益放在首要位置的其他类型企业，传媒组织应该更多地关注社会责任和公共利益。

传统媒体必须对未来的挑战有所认识。媒体公司必须准备好面对印刷物出版和分销需求的下滑，并对人事结构进行相应的调整。大众媒体转型进入数字时代将会引领广告业发生深刻的变化。报纸和杂志广告将显著减少，但同时新闻门户网站的崛起又会提供更为多样化的广告平台和广告形式。

与很多同行一样，财新传媒一直在努力开拓互联网世界。在过去的四年中，我们亲眼见证了我们的互联网业务愈发兴盛并在公司总收入中占据了较大份额。尽管相比纸质出版业务，网络业务的营收依然较低，但它的增长速率已经超过了我们的传统业务。在未来，我们希望看到网络业务能够成为主要的收益来源。要达成这一目标，我们必须创造性地开发出新颖的产品形式，以满足读者们的需求。

但不管媒体业如何改变，新闻的专业性一直是记者和编辑们最重要的追求目标。不过，为了维系发展，我们也需要对传媒公司进行系统创新。换句话说，我们要像经营现代企业一样去经营媒体业。

中国的传统媒体公司更像是政府实体，而非是现代企业。官僚主义经常会干涉编辑的决策。因此，建立现代化的商业架构并强化企业管理将是传媒业领导们要应对的关键问题。它们也将有助于媒体的成功转型。但对于所有的媒体机构进行公司制改造并无必要。有些充当宣传工具的媒体还将会受到党和政府的控制。这些组织可享受政府补贴，他们应当以非营利性机构的方式来经营。除此之外的其他机构则必须适应不断变化的环境，以求得生存。

同其他国家一样，中国的媒体环境也在经历着快速变迁。此外，由于政府的监督和审查很严格，中国的记者们还必须得面对来自于政治环境的压力。可能正因如此，记者们试图改善和保护媒体信誉的举动才变得更加重要，因为公信力既是媒体最宝贵的财富，也是其最好的防御手段。

对知识产权的保护不够是阻碍中国传媒业发展的因素之一。在中国，知识产权缺乏保护的



历史由来已久，其根源在于执法不严以及缺少行业参与者和公众的关注。网络和新闻门户网站的飞速发展使得知识产权保护愈发迫切。但某些历史原因的存在导致这一问题解决起来颇为棘手。举例来说，有些传媒机构与新闻网站签订了长期合同，他们允许后者廉价乃至免费转载其内容。但现在随着竞争的加剧，原创内容的权益无法受到保护的局面又让上述传媒机构头痛不已。

因此，对于中国的传媒业来说，现在就强化知识产权保护达成共识显得正当其时。除此之外，政府也应当努力为原创的新闻内容提供有效的法律保护。

当然，深度剖析和专题报道依然有其存在的价值。提供这些阅读内容的能力将有助于媒体机构赢得读者。但撰写这些报道通常即费时又成本高昂，这也是知识产权保护之所以重要的另一个原因所在。在中国，人们对专业新闻报道的需求显然在不断增长，高品质的内容一直是媒体机构的核心竞争力所在。为了迎接这些挑战，我们必须设置更好的公司架构和掌握更多的数字化专业技能。

*胡舒立是财新传媒的主编。2007年，她获得了刘易斯·莱昂斯新闻责任与正义奖*

# 道义风险

中国记者用来表达他们意见的语言戏法是另一种形式的自我审查吗？

撰文 杨潇

在中国，5月有35天。谈论6月4日——1989年天安门事件的发生日——是被禁止的。所以，中国的记者和博客作者通过谈论5月35日发生的事情来绕开网上的禁令。

天安门事件过去25年后，媒体实践凸显了中国新闻自由的两个方面：依然熟悉的压制故事，以及使用中国传统的春秋笔法越发纯熟地绕开审查的战术。比如在2013年初，自由派《南方周末》的记者罢工抗议政府对他们新年社论的审查，其他出版机构通过春秋笔法声援他们。《新京报》生活版的一则故事表达了作者对“南方粥”的喜爱。中文里“粥”与“周”谐音，读者自可领悟作者对南方粥的喜爱其实是对陷于困境的《南方周末》的喜爱。

2004年至2008年，我在国营的新华社工作时，练就了娴熟的春秋笔法。我使用双关语、隐喻、谐音词——一切语言戏法——来表达我的赞同或反对。之后在《南方人物周刊》，中国最有影响力的全国性新闻杂志之一（隶属南方报业集团，集团旗下还有《南方周末》和《南方都市报》），我凭借自己的春秋笔法写作了一些敏感的特写报道。

起初我享受这种与审查者玩老鼠躲猫的游戏，我认为“总有人能读出我字里行间的意义”。但到了现在，我担忧这种表达方式会让我陷入自鸣得意的恶性循环，明知自由发言的努力颗粒无收，但却自我安慰至少做过些尝试。我害怕，在中国日益复杂和暧昧的媒体环境中，春秋笔法可能从异议的一种方式，异化为不经意的自我审查，最终剥夺我们面对真相的能力。

十年前，人们相信自由和民主会逐渐在中国发展。现在，我们不敢如此肯定。去年7月，许志永——一位独立律师，十年前的地方人大代表——因为担任“新公民运动”的领袖而被捕，而这个运动旨在增加政府的透明度。许志永被拘留的例子表明争取更多自由的进程是如何倒退的。

这种倒退开始于2008年。西藏骚乱以及伴随奥运火炬世界环游的抗议，激起了中国的民族主义浪潮。之后又发生了四川地震，超过80,000人死亡，中国媒体揭露当地腐败的政府官员该为劣质的建筑负责。但是他们很快被噤声，最敢言的自由派媒体受到惩罚。宣传官员搬入媒体办公室，确保“安全生产”。北京奥运提升了爱国主义，体制也越来越不能容忍异议。

所有这些给自由派媒体留的空间越来越少，调查性新闻是受到明显的重创领域之一。根据行内人士估计，目前中国真正的调查性记者不到80位。许多媒体的关注重点是生活方式而非重大新闻，是八卦而非挖粪，是谄媚而非分析——当然，还有春秋笔法。敏感词的名单不断增长，现在还包括了“普世价值”、“宪政民主”和“三权分立”。我们用报复审查者的黑色幽默来自我安慰，开玩笑说，报禁还没有结束，报纸就要先死掉了。

比起强化的限制，更糟糕的是社会和文化环境的变化，五毛党的兴起就是一个证明。这些政府雇佣的人在互联网上发布各种支持共产党和它政策的评论。在2008年前五毛党就已存在，但是只有到了2008年后它才成为塑造公共意见的一个重要因素。

去年七月，一个男子在北京机场引爆了捆绑在他自己身上的自制炸弹，《南方都市报》刊发引爆炸弹者身世的独家报道。该男子宣称8年前被地方执法官员殴打致残，他多次要求赔偿却没有结果。微博上很快出现了谣言，称引爆炸弹者和《南方都市报》串通“向政府施压，让政府难堪”。这类不实之词被广泛转发，不幸地是，不少人还真的相信。五毛党不再只是政府操纵的一个群体，它已经成了一些人看待与理解世界的一面滤镜。

米克洛什·哈拉兹蒂（Miklos Haraszti）在《天鹅绒监狱：国家社会主义之下的艺术家》中观察1970年代的匈牙利，“如果我谈到审查制度，我指的不仅仅是某种官僚程序，而是整个文化的语境，不仅仅是国家干预，而是所有的环境合谋起来摧毁自发或者真正的艺术活动的基础……不仅是‘合法’与‘非法’的限制，还是隐秘的心理根源，这种根源支持着国家审查穷究文化的每个细胞。”中国的自由派媒体处境类似。

随着限制——以及焦虑的增长，我越来越多地怀疑过去我用来传达看法的战术，越来越觉得春秋笔法不过是隔靴搔痒。此外，随着新媒体逐渐把人们同他们反对的信息隔绝开来，新闻记者巧妙的语言戏法对消息灵通的人来说太肤浅，对不关注的人来说又太复杂。

在下一次使用春秋笔法前，也许我们应该自问：这是最好的表达方式吗？我做的足够吗？我是在推动边界，还只是在玩擦边球的游戏？对权力说真话是媒体存在的理由，中国更应如

此。

杨潇，2014年尼曼奖学金获得者，《南方人物周刊》主笔、驻京记者。之前他为新华社工作

# 聚焦今日中国

## 中国既是记者的天堂，也是统计学家的炼狱

撰文 欧逸文

哈佛大学的汉学家费正清（John King Fairbank）在1948年曾这样写道，“中国既是记者的天堂，也是统计学家的炼狱。”对此他解释，“与世界上其他任何地方相比，这里每平方公里的土地上演着更多人间戏剧，但可辨认的事实真相却不多。”六十五年之后的今天，中国正在经历着蜕变和矛盾，它对世界各地人们的生活起到了越来越重要的作用，就在我们愈发急切地想了解这一切的涵义所在时，费正清的大部分描述都已悄然应验。

1996年我第一次来北京学习中文时，中国的经济规模比当时的意大利还要小。农村仿佛就近在咫尺：大多数时候的晚餐我都是在附近的一家回民餐厅里解决的，这家铁皮屋顶餐馆经常会把瑟瑟发抖的羊栓在屋前。到了晚饭时间，这些可怜的动物就会一只只地消失在厨房里。

到了2013年，中国已经拥有了世界上最多的网民——他们活跃在喧闹、充满质疑之声却仍存在审查的虚拟空间中，中国也拥有了世界上最多的亿万富翁和摩天大楼，而它的经济规模位居世界第二，仅次于美国。中国的崛起既创造了巨大的财富和权力，同时也带来了腐败、对不平等问题的新认识，以及国内外民众的迫切呼声：谁是既得利益者，谁又在为他们买单？

对于新闻工作者而言，中国的崛起凸显了一系列无法回避的谜题。第一个疑问来自实践层面：不论外国记者还是本土记者，身在中国，我们该如何游走于共产党所设置的各种阻碍，并减小对那些敢于发声者的伤害呢？这是最明显或许也是记者们最为熟悉的挑战之一，但我们可仰仗的工具亦适用于其他任何国家的记者们：即毅力和创造力，以及更为重要的新闻工作者心目中的希波克拉底誓言（Hippocratic Oath）——在一个视异议为威胁的国度中，我们决意不做任何伤害消息源的事情。

更为新奇的问题在于均衡性：新式的自由和旧式的压制，惊人的财富和持续的贫困，面对这样一个对比强烈的特殊国家，作为记者，我们需要诉诸多少文字才能描绘出前所未有的繁荣中国，我们又需要堆砌多少辞藻才能刻画出一个在世界上绝无仅有的让诺贝尔和平奖获得者（刘晓波）深陷牢狱的国家呢？

最后一个或许也是最难解答的中国式谜题来自于接触：记者发表了一些让政府感觉受到威胁的文章，于是后者便不断排斥前者，在这样一个国家，新闻工作者和新闻机构该如何行事呢？在过去两三年中，中国政府对待外国媒体的态度经历了两次重大的转折：2011年，阿拉伯之春展示了信息和组织对于那些看似稳固的专制政府所产生的巨大破坏力，它使得中国领导层感到了前所未有的不安。与此同时，由于外国记者报道了一些受中东事件激励的中国活动人士，因此政府当局对这些新闻从业者进行了公开批判和谴责。

到了2012年，随着中国国家财富的飙升，外国的新闻媒体逐渐开始细致地审视中国领导人及其个人财富，而通常外媒极少作这样的细致打量。当时有记者发表了时任总理的温家宝以及现任国家主席习近平其家人如何通过职务之便积累巨额财富的报道。作为报复，政府屏蔽了纽约时报和彭博新闻社的网站，但此举反倒激发了新一波的调查热潮。当局还禁止中国的各大银行和其他金融机构再增加新的彭博终端设备，并拒绝外媒招聘新人或替换在中国的记者。他们这样做的目的是为了压制这些新闻媒体在网络压力下业已受到侵害的商业运作，华盛顿邮报和路透社同样未能幸免。

从历史角度看，如果外国记者们报道人权之类的敏感问题，当局可能会拒绝让他们进入中国，对于这一点，我们已经有所预计（这种做法也很少能阻止我们）。但现在，这些记者和他们的雇主却因为揭露中国高层领导的私人财富而遭到惩罚。这反映了外媒在中国所扮演的角色发生了根本性的转变。我们不再只是从遥远的国度将新闻传递给美国读者——中国不仅是一个正在崛起的超级大国，也是一个拥有无数读者的大国。它活生生地存在于世界经济和政治生活中，这种存在迫使外媒记者们必须想方设法提升报道质量。无论喜欢与否，身为外媒记者的我们现如今都已成为中国国内对话的积极参与者，我们热切地讨论着这个世界最伟大经济繁荣体中的资源和权力分配问题。即便当纽约时报上的报道被审查者屏蔽时，我们也能找到将文字传递给中国读者的途径。

这是旧责任的新重复：作为外媒记者，我们始终面对着记录记忆的工作，这些记忆一般是

他国国民在环境或强权逼迫下不允许自我记录的内容。在过去，这份工作通常意味着记录战争和异议。但在当下的中国，它也意味着记录世界上最快速的资产积累，以及成功者和失败者的各归其位——这一进程将会影响到今后的几代中国人。

我们报道的不止是一个国家，也是一出围绕着中国有意成为世界新势力的价值观之争。这是一场关于真理、责任和权力定义的无休止辩论。能着眼于当下让我们既荣幸又感到职责重大。费正清说得没错。这真是一个可怕的故事。

欧逸文 (Evan Osnos) 是《纽约客》记者，本文是他根据自己2013年11月14日在尼曼基金会 (Nieman Foundation) 为纪念小乔伊·阿历克斯·莫里斯 (Joe Alex Morris Jr.) 而发表的演讲改编而成