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Chinese Media Censorship and Western Media Reporting of China in the Year of the Beijing Olympics

Yuezhi Zhao, Simon Fraser University, Canada.

Chinese media censorship was one of the most salient stories in the Western media in their coverage leading up to the Beijing Olympics in August 2008. There is no question about the pervasive and repressive nature of China's media censorship regime. However, it is important to address the question of who benefits from Chinese censorship and who are the real targets.

The *New York Times* wrote in a March 30, 2003, editorial, "If a free, uncensored press ever arrives in the Arab world, many Americans will be shocked by what it says." The same can also be said about the Chinese media. In my opinion, Western human rights crusaders and foreign media reporters should move beyond a simplistic "people versus the party" assumption. In fact, Chinese censorship has been a necessary instrument for the party to sustain its pro business and pro-Western "reform and openness" program in the past 30 years. The censorship regime has suppressed the voices of Chinese workers who oppose the sale of state-owned enterprises to domestic and foreign investors; of Chinese workers working in sweatshop conditions to produce profits for foreign investors and cheap consumer goods for Western consumers; and of China's old revolutionaries and newly emerging Maoists who accuse the party of "capitalist restoration" and subordination to Western imperialism.

It is also worthwhile remembering that although the Democracy Wall movement in 1978 played an instrumental role in helping Deng Xiaoping's rise to power, the subsequent suppression of press freedom became a precondition for the

economic reforms in the next three decades. In 1980, after Deng Xiaoping came to power, he ordered the removal of the "four great freedoms" (entrenched in the Chinese Constitution in 1975) - that is, the right of the people to "speak out freely, air views freely, hold great debates, and write big-character posters" - from the Chinese Constitution.

While not defending China's censorship regime, I do think it is important for the Western media to move beyond a moralistic and anticommunist condemnation of Chinese media censorship. The West needs to reconcile its own dominant political and economic strata's business and commercial interests in China and the promotion of democracy and press freedom in China.

This leads to my second point, that is, although the Western media are proud of their own press freedom, for Chinese audiences the Western media are part of the Western political economic system, and more bluntly, agents of Western cultural superiority and even domination. The Chinese audience, especially young students and liberal intellectuals, are keenly aware of, and critical of, domestic media censorship. They not only appreciate and admire Western media freedom, but also tend to idealize Western media freedom and their self-proclaimed principles of objectivity and fairness. So when they found out that the Western media are bluntly biased in their reporting, or are even racist, their disillusionment is quite real. I think Western media reports of the protests in Tibet and the disruptions of the Olympic torch relays in early 2008 have already contributed to

a Chinese disenchantment with the Western media. This does not help the Western media to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese public.

Concerning Western media, and their own internal logics, it is fair to say that there is a growing fear and anxiety on the part of the West over the rise of the Rest, especially China. Within this context, Western media's coverage of China and the Beijing Olympics has served as an occasion for the West to come to terms with the changing geopolitics of global power relations, including the rise of China. In the context of a protracted war in Iraq, an unprecedented triple crisis in global financial, oil and food markets, not to mention persistent US concerns over China's huge foreign currency reserve, its trade surplus vis-à-vis the US, as well as its high-saving rates, it seems that China-bashing had become the most distracting spectator sport of all in the months leading up to the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

In fact, there are profound contradictions in the West's relationship with China and Western media embody these contradictions in their coverage of China. On the one hand, Western investments were attracted by the Chinese market precisely because it offers cheap labor and low environmental standards secured by a repressive political environment; on the other hand, human rights groups insist on the priority of political freedom and civil liberties in China. Of course, most Western media outlets are big business themselves, and their reporting of China is influenced by their own commercial interests and market-driven journalistic orientations.

The issue has become more complicated in the contemporary era of intensified globalization. Increases in the number of Chinese

students in Western universities, the growth of Chinese communities inside Western nations, intensified interaction between domestic and overseas Chinese populations through the Internet and other means of instant global communication, have meant that the Western media can no longer display racist biases against the Chinese without provoking protests. The Western media will be subjected to more critical scrutiny by the global Chinese audience for their coverage of China. As Western media set out to condemn Chinese media censorship, an increasingly vocal global Chinese audience expects the Western media to exercise their own freedom with responsibility and uphold their self-proclaimed principle of fairness in their representation of China and the Chinese population.

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The online games business on the Chinese market

Laichi Chen, China Media Centre, University of Westminster, London.

According to Porter's Diamond theories (1990), domestic demand is an important variable that helps produce the service, gaining competitive competence and developing the industry within a nation. The rapidly growing Chinese market has been a main factor in the development of the online games industry. In 2004 the global provider of market intelligence IDC included China's *Shanda*, *The9* and *Netease* on its list of top ten leading Asian online games service providers. The Chinese online games industry has had to develop quickly to meet the demand of Chinese users. According to official Chinese statistics, the revenue of the Chinese online games industry reached US\$ 1.04 billion dollars (€0,69 billion) in 2006 and the output value of Chinese-produced games increased by 73.5% between 2005 and 2006 (tech.sina.com.cn). Moreover, the Chinese PC online games market increased by 13.7% between 2006 and 2007, a bigger market even than Korea which is probably the largest in the world. Furthermore, China is of global market significance with projected revenues of US \$1.3 billion (€0.87 billion) by 2009 (Xinhua News Agency, 2007; Commercial Time, Apr 2007).

The Chinese online games industry was started by operators such as *Shanda* and *The9*. In 1999 *Shanda* released its first Massively Multiplayer Role-Playing Game (MMORPG), *Legend of Mir*, which enjoyed a resounding success on the domestic market, and the industry has been booming since then. Chinese game firms now have the capability of developing and operating their own game titles.

2004 marked the turning point in the growth of the online games industry in China when the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) adopted measures to monitor and regulate the publication of online games. To obtain general distribution units for publications, imported publications are closely examined for at least 6 months before they are approved. But the same limitation is not applied to locally produced publications. GAPP also set up the China National Online Game Publication Project in 2004. The aim of this project was to promote local games development through government subsidies to game developers. The project provided an estimated RMB300 million (€30 million) to 16 Chinese game companies until 2008 (Economic Examiner, 2005). Since the new policies were enforced Korean games have gradually lost their market share on mainland China (they used to account for 80% of the total market).

In 2006 the total number of Chinese self-produced games reached 218, a 13.5% increase over the previous year. 13,908 people were employed in digital game development. Besides that, Chengdu and Jang-Zhe were the fastest-growing game industry areas, with a 45% increase. Chengdu has become one of the favorite areas for game firms to set up their R&D centers and Jang-Zhe outsources work not only to local games and comic firms but also to foreign firms. It is worth noting that in 2007 the Chinese self-produced games market reached RMB\$ 6.8 billion (€605 million), accounting for 65.1% of the market share. Local game firms, such as Perfect World and Shanghai Giant, are able to de-

velop game titles that appeal more to Chinese users than Korean-produced games. China's online game industry is acknowledged to be one of the fastest-growing in the world (iResearch, 2007).

Besides its domestic market, Chinese self-produced game products have also been exported to other Asian countries. Chinese online games have not only entered Korea's market, but have now surpassed their Korean rivals by sweeping Vietnam's market. According to Cao and Downing (2008), the online games center in Asia has possibly become a 'Twin Towers': Korea and China. Although China has emerged as a competitor on the East Asian online games market (Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan), these game products are only circulated within the Greater Chinese market (China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) and accepted in the Chinese diaspora communities in other Asian countries, while Korean-produced games are easily adopted not only by Asian gamers, but also by the Western ones, especially their medieval epic games and cute games.

Why do Chinese-produced games find it hard to cross the geo-linguistic border, even on the intra-Asian market? Further examination of the best selling Chinese game titles on the Chinese market show that most originate from Chinese wuxia stories and historical novels. The Chinese game firms developed these contents based on market considerations. These Chinese-produced games have been designed around Chinese tastes and user habits. Chinese game titles are different from Western and Korean games in the following ways:

1) homogenous contents: the mass of Chinese gamers have a preference for particular content, providing a huge market for the

game industry. Further analysis of the top ten selling online game titles on the Chinese market in 2006 shows that almost half are based on Chinese topics or Wuxia stories. Wuxia games, which are combined with deep-rooted martial arts traditions and wuxia back-story, are reformulated by game developers to fulfill the fantasies of young Chinese males. China is now the largest market to produce, circulate and consume these specific games;

2) simpler contents: more detailed analysis of the games available on the Chinese market shows that Chinese game developers have always tried to provide simpler concepts to reach low-end users, their core mass market in second or third tier cities, such as inner cities or rural towns, rather than the wealthier metropolitan areas. This is a very different approach from the Korean and the US game industries, that provide brand new content with each game title and version;

3) cloning contents: Chinese developers have the capacity to develop other types of games such as *The Legend of Mir 2* and *Perfect World*, two popular game titles on the Chinese market since 2005. *Perfect World* has been exported to other countries, including not only Korea and Japan but also Brazil and Russia. Although this game is based on an ancient Chinese story, the world of Pangu, leveraging a rich and diverse oriental setting, the rules of the game are based on a Western mythic format. The three major tribes, including humans, winged elves and werebeasts, are thought to follow the design of *War Worldcart*. *The Legend of Mir 2*, developed by Shanda, originates from the *Legend of Mir*, a successful Korean-produced game based on a medieval story. Although the quality of Chinese games has improved as regards technological skill and aesthetic design, the contents lack originality and creativity.

The Chinese online games industry seems to be a competitor on the Asian market when we consider the growth of its market. However, the composition and quality of domestic demand must be taken into account when further examining the competitiveness of an industry in a nation. The Chinese game industry has been shaped by Chinese gamers who prefer Chinese topics. The features of Chinese games are very different from Korean games which can be accepted not only by Asian gamers but also by Western ones. Korea has an ability to develop diversified-forms of contents while Chinese games only appeal to players with Chinese cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A further conclusion that can be drawn is that Chinese game developers have a competitive advantage only on the greater Chinese stage.

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Shanghai Broadcasts Free-to-Air Digital TV Channels

Shanghai residents were able to watch the Beijing Games on China Central TV's free-to-air High Definition channel (CCTV-HDTV). The city started broadcasting CCTV-HDTV, plus six standard definition digital channels, from the Orient Pearl Tower on July 1. Shanghai residents equipped with a set-top box or a television set with a built-in digital receiver will be able to receive the new digital broadcasts free of charge. They include CCTV-1, Shanghai TV's news channel and fashion channel, Dragon TV's entertainment and arts channel, and Shanghai Education TV, in addition to CCTV-HDTV.

CCTV launched the trial HDTV service in Beijing on January 1, with plans to dedicate the channel to the Olympics from August 1. When the service was launched, CCTV Vice Director He Zongjiu said it would be available in major cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin, Shenzhen, Qingdao, Shenyang and Qinhuangdao before the Games.
Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

Bertelsmann Closes China Book Club

German media giant Bertelsmann announced that it stopped operating the Shanghai Bertelsmann Culture Ltd book club runs in China on July 3. The announcement comes less than two weeks after Bertelsmann announced it would close 36 book stores operated by the 21st Century Book Chain Company in 18 Chinese cities by the end of July. In a statement the company said the decision to close the book club

is based on a change in its business strategy. It said rapid changes in the book retail market have had a negative impact on the profitability of the book club and book stores.

Analysts say that the rising popularity of online bookstores may have caused the book club and book store businesses to become unsustainable.

"We see the two businesses failing to maintain their fast development and size in the long term within a rapidly changing market", Bertelsmann said in the statement. "But we will continue to focus on other fast developing businesses in China, one of the three most important markets that will drive Bertelsmann's global business".

Bertelsmann plans to channel the funds that were invested in the book club and chain stores into other projects on mainland China, such as Avarto's media service business operated by Avarto and Gruner+Jahr's magazine publishing business. Bertelsmann also founded the Asian Investment Fund in January 2008 with an initial investment of RMB682 million (€63 million) to tap the new media sector.

The Bertelsmann Group launched the book club on the mainland after it founded Shanghai Bertelsmann Culture Limited in 1995. The club had 1.8 million members when it stopped accepting orders on July 8. Members will be able to check how much money is left in their accounts via the website or call center until December 25. The company reassured its members that it will work hard to return their money by post.

Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

Variety and Entertainment Shows Top Radio Broadcasts in 2007

Variety and entertainment shows accounted for the bulk of the radio broadcasts in 2007 according to a report published in the China Radio, Film & TV magazine two months ago. Programs focusing on special subjects such as health and lifestyle ranked second, while news and current affairs programs ranked third.

Table 1: China Radio, Film and TV is published by the State Administration of Radio, Film and TV

Program Genre	Total Broadcast Time (Millions of Hours)	% of Total Radio Broadcasts
News and Current Affairs	2.229	19.77%
Special subjects (such as health and lifestyle)	2.536	22.50%
Variety and Entertainment	3.265	28.96%
Radio Drama	0.487	4.32%
Advertisements	1.032	9.16%
Others	1.724	15.29%
Total	11.272	100.00%

Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

China Gains 253 Million Netizens In June

China has officially overtaken the United States as the country with a most Internet users in the world. It had 253 million netizens in June according to a new report from the state-owned China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC).

The number of Chinese people online has increased by 56% year-on-year according to the CNNIC's semihalf-year report on China's Internet development. The number of people online grew by 91 million compared to June 2007 and 43 million compared to December.

Around 214 million people in China use broadband connections to access the Internet.¹ Around 73 million people also accessed the Internet via mobile phone handsets, although all of these people also used broadband or dial-up connections to go online.

What did Chinese netizens do online? According to the report, 84% of them accessed Internet music applications, 81.5% read the news and 77.2% used instant messaging services. The number of people using instant messaging services decreased markedly from 81.4% in December 2007 to 77.2% in June 2008. This drop was accompanied by a significant increase in email service usage, which was up 62.6% from 56.5%.

Just under half (42.3%) of all netizens owned a blog or personal space in June 2008, but less than two-thirds of these people had updated their blogs or personal spaces within the last six months. Online shopping services have also increased rapidly in popularity, accompanied by an increase in online banking usage.

Breaking down the demographics of the web in China, the report found that 39% of all netizens have been educated to college level or higher. The online gender gap is also closing as female netizens accounted for 46.4% of the online population in June.

Despite the sheer numbers of people online in China, the report found that only 19.1% of the population has access to the Internet. This is relatively low compared to the global average of 21.1%. The commercial value of the Internet market in China also remains much lower than the commercial value of the Internet market in the United States.

Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

¹ If we consider an average of three broadband connection users per broadband subscription for a total of 71.6 million households we obtain a total population of broadband users of 214 million. See 'China No. 1 in terms of Broadband Subscribers'.

China No. 1 In Terms of Broadband Subscribers

China surpassed the United States as the country with the most fixed broadband subscribers at the end of the first quarter of 2008 according to a new report from international telecoms consulting firm Dittberner Associates.

The number of broadband subscribers in China increased 20% to 71.6 million households in the first quarter of 2008. In contrast, the number of broadband subscribers in America grew by 12% to 70.2 million households in the same period. The number of broadband subscribers worldwide grew by 5% to 355 million households.

Despite the impressive growth, broadband penetration rates in China are still quite low at less than 10% of the total population. The speed of the broadband connections in China also lags behind the rest of the world. The average broadband download speed in China is less than 1Mbps, compared to 93Mbps in Japan, 44Mbps in France and 43Mbps in South Korea, according to a report the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published last year.

Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

Chinese Internet To Be Worth RMB137.5 Billion (€12.9 billion) by 2011

The Internet market in China is expected to be worth around RMB137.5 billion (€12.9 billion) with around 600 million households online by 2011, according to the latest report from Analysis International. Growth is expected to slow down to around 30% per annum in the near future. Furthermore, Analysis International predicts that the Internet will become more integrated and comprehensive as the market develops and as the number of companies offering instant communication services,

search engines, online shops and related services grows.

Mobile wireless networks are also poised to realize a number of technical innovations that will satisfy the growing demands of bro-business networks after the 3G network is rolled out in China.

Mergers and acquisitions within China's Internet market have continued to surge in 2008, creating a number of dominant players within the sub-sectors of the Internet. Target acquisitions include vertical portals, online advertising platforms, web 2.0 applications, video-sharing sites and other companies that provide value-added services.

Source: CMM Intelligence - July 2008.

The 15th Beijing International Book Fair Held in Tianjin

The 15th Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF) took place in Tianjin from September 1 to September 4, 2008, hosting more than 1,300 foreign publishers and 500 mainland publishers. Besides the traditional books section, other characteristic sections such as digital publishing, copyright Centre and plans for promoting Chinese books were presented. Indeed, copyright trade and cooperation talks represented the main objective of BIBF. By the time the fair wrapped up on September 4, copyright licensing deals had been signed for around 5,000 titles.

In August 1980 China and US signed the first agreement of cooperation in the publishing field for the translation and publication of the 'Concise British Encyclopedia'. Over the years, the copyright trade balance for China has changed from a 'one way' to 'dual way' model, reaching a 4:1 share from a 15:1 proportion until last year. In 2005, 2006 and 2007, copyright exports accounted for 1,434, 2,050 and 2,007 titles re-

spectively, achieving a substantial balance between copyright imports and exports in the last year. The reasons are mainly due to China's growing economy and status on the international political and cultural stage and a growing interest of the international community in China's culture and language, as well as the Chinese authorities' internationalization policy ('going global' policy) adopted in 2004 to encourage the export of publications in Chinese.

The Beijing International Book Fair is the premier venue for selling rights to this large market. The Chinese market is growing at a staggering rate with English language titles to the fore. Indeed, the government demands that all Chinese children learn English at an early age.

Sources: www.chinaculture.org; Renminwang (People's Daily Online) - September 5, 2008.

In the first half of 2008 Advertising Investments in China amount to RMB244.9 billion (€24.49 billion)

According to the latest report by Nielsen, in the first half of 2008 advertising investments reach RMB 244.9 billion (€24.49 billion), 17% up on the same period of the previous year.

Ad investments by the 28 sponsors of the Olympic Games amount to RMB11.8 billion (€1.18 billion). The leader is China Mobile, with ad investments amounting to RMB2.062 billion (€206 million), followed by Inner Mongolia Yili Industrial Group Co., Ltd - a flagship enterprise in China's dairy industry - and McDonald's, with ad investments amounting to RMB1.257 billion (€125 million) and RMB840 million (€84 million) respectively. KFC - an international US-based chicken restaurant chain -, although not an official Olympic sponsor, shows a steady growth of ad expenditure in the first half

of 2008, amounting to RMB2.048 billion (€205 million). The report shows that ad investments on TV have grown steadily: the leading media for ad investments, TV takes an 83% market share, for a total amount of RMB204 billion (€20.4 billion). Ad investments in the print media (newspapers and magazines) grew by 14%.

The top three genres with highest ad investments are medicines for RMB36 billion (€3.6 billion), hospital and insurance products for RMB 16.5 billion (€1.65 billion) and cosmetics for RMB12.6 billion (€1.26 billion).

Source: *Jinghua shibao (Beijing Times)* - August 25 2008.

In 5-10 years the animation industry in China will be 1% of GDP

According to a study of Morgan Stanley, an international leading research firm, the animation industry in China will reach 1% of the GDP in 5-10 years, from the current 0.5% and 0.07% in 2004. The animation industry in China has great potential to develop for several reasons: there are 300 million children aged under 14, most of them are only children and are considered by their families as 'little emperors' and 'little princesses', therefore their purchasing power cannot be underestimated. However, there are also limits to the development of the animation industry such as the effective purchasing power of consumers: the Morgan Stanley report says that at present Walt Disney alone accounts for 10% of the total annual sales, Chinese children's average expenses amount to RMB5 (€0.50) per month, accounting for 7/8% of food and clothing consumption. In addition, the lack of the domestic intellectual property protection is not conducive of the growth of images such as Mickey Mouse.

In order to sustain the domestic cartoon industry, a SARFT (State

Administration of Film, Radio and Television) regulation established that as of May 2008 foreign cartoons are banned between 5 pm and 9 pm every day. At the same time, domestic cartoons must be over 70% of the total transmission hours per day.

Thanks to governmental regulatory support, in the past five years the Chinese cartoon industry grew by over 70% per year.

Source: *Diyi caijing (The First)* - August 27, 2008

Beijing dailies to raise prices

The Beijing Times (*Jinghua shibao*), one of the leading Beijing-based dailies, is going to double its cover price from RMB0.5 (€0.05) to RMB1 (€0.1) from September 22. Another four Beijing newspapers plan to raise their prices by RMB0.5 (€0.05), following the lead of print media in Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu and Wuhan. A number of print publications have upped cover prices by 50 to 100% this year.

"Skyrocketing newsprint costs are the major reason for the price jump," said Li Zhaoxiang, head of strategic planning at Beijing Youth Daily, one of the five papers that will raise their prices. Newsprint cost RMB6,100 (€0.61) per ton on August 1, up 26% over January and its highest price in five years. "The price hike may affect some of our readers, but its impact will be limited," Li said, adding that the price rise is unlikely to drive away the newspaper's target readers. Asking newspapers to keep the same price for years is unreasonable, Li said, given that the cost of other goods continues to rise.

Newsprint costs account for 60 to 70% of newspapers' overall expenditure. Higher newsprint prices and fewer ads are squeezing newspaper groups' cash flow. Costs will rise by RMB100 million (€10 million) this year for the Shenzhen

Press Group and Shanghai-based Jiefang Daily Group, for instance, on higher newsprint prices, according to a report by China News and Print Newspaper.

Wang Jun, general manager of the Beijing Daily Group's distribution arm, said the newspaper will try to improve quality after it raises the cover price. Some print media outlets won't raise their cover prices just yet. Instead, they're trying to bring in more advertisers to offset the higher newsprint costs.

Source: *China Daily* - September 12 2008.

China's Box Office and the Academy Awards

China's box office revenue in the first half of 2008 hit a record high, surpassing more than RMB1.6 billion (about €160 million), according to figures released by the Chinese Film Bureau in Beijing. Revenue was 45% higher than in the same period in 2007, the film bureau said. Domestic movies accounted for more than RMB900 million (€90 million) of total revenue in the first six months of 2008, or 50% more than in the same period last year.

Tong Gang, head of the film bureau, told reporters that box office revenue is expected to set a new record in the second half of 2008 with the debuts of several domestic films such as *Painted Skin* and *Mei Lanfang*.

At a forum held at the 17th Hundred Flowers Film Festival, known as China's Academy Awards, Geng Xilin from the China Film Group Corporation confirmed that John Woo's *Red Cliff (Chi Bi)* has made RMB360 million (€36 million) so far, nearly 100 million more than Zhang Yimou's *Curse of the Golden Flower (Mancheng Jindai Huangjinjia)*. Woo is the only Chinese director whose film has earned more than RMB300 million (€30 million) on the domes-

tic market. Yin Hong, professor at Tsinghua University and acclaimed scholar of the film industry, says that Chinese blockbusters have contributed greatly toward promoting Chinese cinema throughout the world.

The festival has set a new criterion for candidate films this year: only those with box office earnings of more than RMB5 million (€0.5 million) and broadcast on television to more than 30 million persons can compete for the awards. The films also have to pass a selection by about 100 cinema managers, whose prime consideration would be box office performance.

The festival's tradition of using amateurs judges continues: more than 2 million online and paper votes were received from movie lovers, a 134% increase over 2007.

Sources: *China Daily, Beijing Review - July/September, 2008.*

Box Office Rankings for Imported Films (August 27-31, 2008)

Ranking	1	2	3
Screening days	10	31	31
Film name	<i>Sparrow</i>	<i>Shi Quan Jiu Mei</i>	<i>Kung Fu Pop</i>
Audience Numbers	350,000	59,068	49,068
Weekly Box Office Takings (mln)	RMB9 (€0.9)	RMB4.5 (€0.45)	RMB4.2 (€0.42)
Accumulated Box Office Takings (mln)	RMB13 (€1.3)	RMB42 (€4.2)	RMB14 (€0.14)
Distribution Company	<i>Beijing Dadi Century</i>	<i>Polybona</i>	<i>CFG</i>

Source: *China Film Group (CFG) - August 2008.*

Waiting for 08-08-08



New media build up the new Olympic relay systems

For Beijing 2008 the International Olympic Committee for the first time authorized Internet, mobile phone and other new media to relay together with broadcasting media.

According to "The research report of the consumer behavior of Chinese Netizens during Beijing 2008" published by the China Network Information Centre (CNNIC), 28% of Chinese netizens focused on the Olympic Games. Over 50% of them stated that what they enjoyed most of all was not watching but interacting; this made them not simple viewers but active participants in different ways. Xinhuanet, People's Daily Online, CCTV Online, Sina, Sohu, NetEase (www.163.com) played a significant role during the Games. According to the daily report published by CNNIC on the webcasting of the Olympic Games, CCTV Online, as the official Beijing 2008 web portal and mobile platform, ranked top for the visiting time: for instance on August 19, the visiting time reached 1022 seconds, whereas the other 8 Olympic relay sites accounted from 687.4 seconds to 38.7 seconds.

Source: *CNNIC - August 2008*

Fans watch Olympics online

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) said that over 120 million video streams of the Beijing Olympic Games were downloaded from its members' Web sites and from the EBU aggregated live video portal.

This amounted to an online audience of over 18 million through live and on-demand broadband. It was also a major rise from the Winter Olympics in Turin in 2006 when the EBU and its members delivered 23 million video streams.

The EBU, which includes such broadcasters as BBC, ZDF, ARD, ITV, TF1 and Canal +, said its broadcasting infrastructure for Beijing was more than twice the size of that for the 2004 Athens Olympics.

EBU members made some 15,000 hours of live content available online, with over 9,000 hours of live content available over 43 different live channels. The average visiting time on the EBU video portal was 30 minutes per viewer, with each viewer watching an average of five different live streams each visit.

Source: EBU - August 2008

96% Chinese watched the Beijing 2008 closing ceremony

According to the data collected by AC Nielsen in 38 countries worldwide, 2 billion people watched the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games. Asia has most viewers, 50%, followed by 30% in Europe and 24% in North America, of which 65 million are US viewers.

On the last day of the Olympic Games, CSM Media research data show that 400 million people throughout the world watched the matches of that day, while 658 million people watched the closing ceremony on TV, reaching a share of 37%, the highest of the day. In

China, the Beijing Olympics closing ceremony attracted nearly 96% of Chinese to their televisions, making it "likely to be the most widely watched Games in Olympic history," according to International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge.

Over the past 16 days, images of a transformed Beijing were beamed primetime in the U.S., the world's second-largest television market, by NBC, which paid \$894 million (€ 606.7 million) for the exclusive U.S. broadcasting rights, from which it says it has collected more than \$1 billion (€ 678 million) in advertising revenue.

CCTV paid \$17 million (€11.5 million) for exclusive broadcasting rights in China against an estimated \$394 million (€ 267 million) in Olympic advertising revenues, according to GroupM, a media buyer that tracks television advertising revenue in China.

The Beijing Olympics set the stage for the future of sportscasting in China, with dedicated sports channel CCTV-5, led by CEO Jiang Heping, gearing up to realize a deal announced in July for a 20-year exclusive media partnership with New York-based sports marketing giant IMG Worldwide.

Sources: AC Nielsen, CSM Media Research - August 2008

EVENTS, CONFERENCES and BOOKS ABOUT CHINA

China Media Observatory, Lugano.

■ **Create in China Conference** London, UK, October 22.

Organized by MediaGuardian, the UK Guardian's specialist section dedicated to in-depth coverage of Britain's leading creative industries, and IPCN, an independent company positioned to guide, advise and transact for media, production and sports-related companies, this one-day forum aims at providing real insight and practical knowledge into UK-China media business relations. For more information, visit:

<http://www.mediaguardian.co.uk/createinchina>

■ **First Medialeader Summit Forum: New Media, New Communications** Beijing, China, October 24.

Sponsored by Medialeader - a web portal targeted at media operators, IT Times Weekly and IT Xinwen - an IT-focused magazine and portal respectively - the Forum will be addressed to nearly 100 domestic editors-in-chief of traditional media as well as high ranking directors of 500 leading international and domestic media firms, 4A advertising agencies and relative operators. The theme of the Forum is "New Media, New Communications" with the following subsessions: "Corporate Social Responsibility and Communications Under the New Situation", "Analysis of the Market Environment in 2008", "The development and role of media under the new media environment", "Cases of successful stories in corporate communication under the new media environment". The objective is to stimulate discussions, opinion exchanges among media specialists and with corporations. The language of the conference is Chinese. For more information, visit:

<http://www.medialeader.com.cn/Special/chuanbo>

New & Notable Books

Guangdian lanpishu. 2008nian zhongguo guangbo dianying dian-shi fazhan baogao [Blue Book of China's Radio, Film and Television. Report on Development of China's Radio, Film and Television 2008], Beijing, Xinhua Publishing House (China), 2008.

The *Blue Book of China's Radio, Film and Television 2008* is edited and published every year by the research team of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), the regulatory authority of the broadcasting industry and audiovisual sector in China. The first part is dedicated to the policies adopted, the technological development and the administration of this industry in the past year. In the second part a section with theme research on specific industry trends and case studies about single Chinese media organizations are provided. Compared to the previous edition, the 2008 Blue Book is enriched by a separate final section showing figures and data such as audience and ad revenues at an aggregate level.

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