

Bahrain: The media war

In the year since the uprising, Bahrain's government has scaled up its information control apparatus.

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If the 2011 uprising in Bahrain was difficult to cover, the first anniversary, which was marked on February 14, was near impossible to report on. Over the last year, the Bahraini government has been scaling up its information control apparatus and media access to the country is rigorously monitored and managed by the government and its team of Western PR advisors.

Many journalists who applied to enter the country for the one-year anniversary were refused by Bahraini officials who said they could not handle the volume of visa applications they received. The government did, however, grant entry to a select few foreign news outlets.

The German news weekly *Der Spiegel* was among them and on the eve of the anniversary, the magazine ran an exclusive interview with Bahrain's king, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa. Within the country, the king's media presence was much more visible, with state TV running hours of footage of the royal family celebrating the 11-year-old Bahraini National Reform Charter - a programme that initiated political change in the country, but which opponents say does not go anywhere near far enough.

Our *News Divide* this week focuses on the Bahraini uprising one year on and the media battle that continues to rage in the island country.

Media news hits in our *News Bytes* section this week include: the storm brewing within Rupert Murdoch's top-selling British tabloid *The Sun*; an editorial mess up at BBC World News and the on-air apology that followed; Saudi blogger Hamza Kashgari tweeted an imaginary conversation with the Prophet Muhammad and now faces the death penalty; and the Chinese government says it is giving a boost to home-grown TV programming, but Chinese TV audiences

may not be too thrilled.

'Social media' conjures up thoughts of instant internet communication, global chatter over the web, computers, mobiles, tweets, posts etc. But there is a communication form that predates these modern tools - political street art. Street art can be dated back to ancient Egypt and throughout history it has been employed by those with a political point to make.

From the outset of the Arab uprisings, people from Egypt to Libya have been enjoying their newfound freedom of expression, taking to the walls to say what they want to say. In this week's feature, *Listening Post's* Meenakshi Ravi looks at a communication form that is for the people, by the people.

If you have ever had one of those moments where your phone rings at the same time your doorbell and your inbox is overflowing while tweets are coming in thick and fast, you will understand the idea behind our [Internet Video of the Week](#). Information overload is what inspired Chris Crutchfield to make *Digitals*, a film about how we live in an era where everyone is overloading everyone else. We hope you enjoy the show.



Listening Post can be seen each week at the following times GMT: Saturday: 0830, 1930; Sunday: 1430; Monday: 0430.

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