

Written Representation 109

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Dear sir/madam,

Like fighting any social ills, I think we can combat fake news by cutting down on the demand. If nobody believes in fake news and they fail to have any influence, I believe they will die away eventually.

One effective way to do that is to provide a credible alternative.

In Singapore, the mainstream media are mostly doing a good job of being professional and trustworthy. However, I believe most people feel that this is true only insofar as the news is not negative to the government or the country.

For many years, the role of the local media is to contribute to 'nation building', which resulted in it being a propaganda mechanism. While that has helped maintain order throughout the developing years, moving forward this model will be increasingly unsustainable.

People are more educated now, information flows with the speed of light. Any attempt to control the news may just end up with people turning to the alternative fake news.

Therefore the local press should be given a freer hand in their reports. Journalism plays a critical part in informing the society, and there are many talented people who are dedicated to that ideal. But many of them left the industry after being disillusioned by how tightly controlled it is.

The government can also do its part by being less heavy handed, more forthcoming with its mistakes, and involve the citizens more on its decisions. That can only make the government more credible, rather than the 'All Is Good' message that we constantly receive now. I believe the society is more matured now and they can handle that. People will also be more willing to contribute to the country's development if they feel engaged, rather than being dictated to.

I welcome such open canvassing of feedback. A collaborative world benefits everybody. I only hope that our feedback can be taken seriously and acted upon if possible, and not just ended up being a paper exercise that bolsters somebody's KPI. Thank you.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Siew Yaw Hoong