

## The Leveson Inquiry - changing the face of the UK media landscape for the better?

Thursday 1 December, 2011

The daily updates of celebrities and Politicians, who have taken the stand as part of the Leveson Inquiry, are everywhere with minute-by-minute accounts and findings being released in real-time. At the end of this withdrawn process, however, who will the real winners be, questions public relations agency, Punch Communications.

Understandably the phone hacking scandal has had a devastating impact on peoples lives, predominantly on those who have been part of criminal investigations that have been muddied by the hacking, including innocent bystanders such as the parents of Milly Dowler and the McCanns. But as we enter the second week of questioning, the inquiry appears to be taking on a more sensational charade, explains Georgina Dunkley, account director at the online PR consultancy.

The breach of anyones human rights is totally unacceptable and the Leveson Inquiry comes as a welcome relief to ensure that from the ashes, some positive changes surrounding regulation of the media are made. However, for some celebrities, the inquiry appears to be another publicity stunt and a wider opportunity to fight back against the red tops, an outcome I consider to be in bad taste for celebrities who happily make an income from being in the public eye.

My concern now is what lasting impact the inquiry will have on the media landscape? Over the past few years we have watched the devastating effect the recession has had on the media with many job losses and paper closures; will the Leveson Inquiry now discourage investigative journalism and in turn, switch readers off?

Since the establishment of the first newspaper in the 17th century, entertaining readers with sensationalised news has been part of the media agenda, expertly summed up by the famous get me a murder a day quote that Lord Northcliffe founder of the Daily Mail uttered back in 1896. In those 115 years very little has changed in terms of what is deemed a scoop.

Some of the findings of the inquiry, although unspeakable and disgusting, beg the question - why did the media go to such great lengths to get the scoop over their competitors and is this due to the pushiness of a newspaper tyrant or the meeting of a consumer need? Either way it is an interesting debate and will shape the way news is gathered and reported from now on.

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