

Traditional media must uphold ethics

I REFER to the letter "MH370: Looking for sensationalism" (NST, April 2)

The author was right to point out foreign media bias in the repeated reporting of the histrionics of family members in Beijing and leaving out the calm composed manner of relatives and friends in Kuala Lumpur. This is one of many ways of sensationalising news, i.e. highlighting emotions.

This type of "yellow journalism" appeals to a wide audience, but often the results are less than pleasing.

Such practices can be traced back to the 1900s in the United States.

To increase circulation and profit, newspaper giants *The New York World* and *The New York Journal* published sensationalised stories with large colourful headlines, lavish pictures, fake interviews and narrative packed with emotion.

This can be associated with today's tabloid reporting, although not all.

Locally, there are tabloids that play on emotions but not as outright as their Western counterpart.

If the news media is analysed based on types, we can see that, generally, all over the world, tabloid news is more apparent in electronic media rather than print.

Television, for example, airs various advertisements that contain different levels of tabloid elements, and they also air programmes that contain direct or indirect forms of tabloid news. On the other hand, print media maintains its seriousness, unless they claim to be a tabloid newspaper.

It is not wrong for the media to insert some elements of sensationalism but media ethics must be upheld.

If traditional media practitioners are unethical, how can we expect the new media, or netizens, to act responsibly?

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