

Newspapers tackle the big issues in Bogotá

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA: Newspapers in much of the world are facing dual challenges from digital development and from pressures on freedom of the press. In many places, the issues are intertwined.



Latin American publishers and editors gathered in Bogotá, Colombia this week to discuss pressing business development issues → the opportunities presented by publishing on new platforms like the iPad, the best ways to develop multiplatform content, and how to attract and keep audiences in a fragmenting media environment.

Delegates at the America Latina conference, organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), heard much about the opportunities for growth in the region, and about the business strategies for the future. However, they also heard how censorship, physical attacks and murders, economic pressure and other measures afflict the independent press and limit its development.

"We have to take into account what journalists on the street are going through in any discussions on the future of journalism," said Rocio Gallegos, a reporter with *El Diario de Juarez*, a Mexican newspaper that had two reporters killed by drug traffickers since 2008.

Sixty-four journalists have been killed in Mexico since 2000 and there have been untold cases of aggression, armed threats, vandalism and kidnappings. Over 90 percent of the cases have not been solved and the attackers are still at large.

The problems in other countries are more subtle → governments rewarding media that support their positions but punishing opposition with spurious lawsuits, economic pressure and other measures. Media in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela must deal with vague laws that potentially can be used to silence the press, the delegates were told.

"Governments send a message to all media when they punish one of them," said Eleonora Rabinovich, director of the Freedom of Expression Programme for the Association for Civil Rights in Argentina.

More than 180 publishers and editors from 19 countries attended the two-day conference, which ended on Thursday. In addition to the session on freedom of expression, the conference covered a wide array of business and editorial issues including: social media, mobile devices, trends in advertising and production, successful cross-media publishing, young readers and more.

Summaries of all conference presentations can be found at
tinyurl.com/4r57vx2

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>