

July 20, 2008

Mainichi Daily News to start over again

Report on developments and apology

The Mainichi Newspapers Co., Ltd. continued to post extremely inappropriate articles in the WaiWai column of the Mainichi Daily News (MDN), its English Web site. We have reported the results of an in-house investigation into the case on Pages 22 and 23 of the July 20 morning edition of the Mainichi Shimbun.

We continued to post articles that contained incorrect information about Japan and indecent sexual content. These articles, many of which were not checked, should not have been dispatched to Japan or the world. We apologize deeply for causing many people trouble and for betraying the public's trust in the Mainichi Shimbun.

The Mainichi Newspapers took punitive measures on July 20 against Managing Director Yoshiyuki Watanabe, who previously served as general manager of the Multimedia Division, and another senior official, to hold them responsible as supervisors, in addition to those who were earlier punished.

We will take the following measures to prevent a recurrence of the problems pointed out to us through the criticism and opinions received from many readers, through our in-house investigation, and as indicated by the Open Newspaper Committee of experts:

On Aug. 1, we will reorganize the MDN Editorial Department, and on Sept. 1, under a new chief editor, the MDN will be transformed into a more news-oriented site. We will translate Mainichi Shimbun editorials and commentaries by prominent figures, such as "Jidai-no-Kaze" (Sign of the Times), and post them on the site in an effort to deepen the understanding of Japan among readers overseas.

At the same time, we will set up an advisory group to the MDN comprised of Megumi Nishikawa, an expert senior writer, and other staff writers specializing in international news coverage. The group will check the MDN's editorial plans and the content of articles in the MDN.

We are determined to try our utmost to regain the public trust that we have lost as a result of this incident and rehabilitate the English site into one that can dispatch information about Japan to the world in an appropriate manner.

The Mainichi Newspapers Co., Ltd.

The Mainichi Shimbun pledges to learn from its serious errors

Strengthening the checking system to prevent a recurrence

It was impermissible as a news organization that the Mainichi Newspapers Co., Ltd. continuously posted inappropriate articles in the WaiWai column of the Mainichi Daily News (MDN), its English site.

The articles had inappropriate content that should not have been dispatched in Japan or to the world, such as incorrect information about Japan and indecent sexual topics. We apologize deeply for making many people feel uncomfortable, damaging many people's reputations, causing great trouble and at the same time, betraying the public's trust in the Mainichi Shimbun. We are deeply sorry.

An in-house investigation has indicated that many articles in the column in question were barely checked before being posted, and that the seriousness of the problem went undetected even within the company. We neglected repeated warnings from those outside the company. These are serious errors and are extremely regrettable. In accordance with internal regulations, those involved in the matter have been severely punished.

In an effort to maintain and improve the quality of the printed edition of its newspaper, the Mainichi Newspapers has an article review division, and has also set up an Open Newspaper Committee, a third-party panel comprised of experts. Nevertheless, we failed to notice the problems that occurred on the English site. Our quality-control system was insufficient. We also failed to clearly define the role of our English site, which dispatches news to the world.

We have worked out measures to prevent a recurrence while keeping in mind the results of our in-house investigation

and opinions from many readers.

We have decided to reform the MDN in order to rehabilitate it into a site that can dispatch information to the world that can help people properly understand Japan.

We will appoint a female employee as the new chief editor, based on our realization that the lack of a woman's point of view, in addition to the lack of a checking system, helped to create a situation in which inappropriate articles continued to be published in the column. An advisory group will be set up to give appropriate advice on the content of articles.

We have already shut down the WaiWai column, but if we find outside Web sites that have copied and posted past WaiWai articles, we will explain the situation and ask the site operators to correct or delete them.

We received valuable opinions from members of the Open Newspaper Committee, who were asked for the first time for their views on the English site. We will ask them to keep a close eye on Mainichi Web sites including the MDN. We will also boost the system to properly respond to opinions from those outside the company.

The WaiWai problem has called into question whether the Mainichi Newspapers has clearly defined the role of its English site. We are determined to try our utmost to regain the public trust that we have lost as a result of this problem.

The Mainichi Newspapers Co., Ltd.

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[Image of Japanese newspaper \(Page 1\) showing results of the investigation \[PDF/1.7MB\]](#)

[Image of Japanese newspaper \(Feature Page 1\) showing results of the investigation \[PDF/966KB\]](#)

[Image of Japanese newspaper \(Feature Page 2\) showing results of the investigation \[PDF/696KB\]](#)

[Mainichi to announce results of investigation into inappropriate articles in WaiWai column \(July 7, 2008\)](#)

[Punitive measures over Mainichi Daily News WaiWai column announced \(June 28, 2008\)](#)

[Apology to readers for WaiWai column \(June 25, 2008\)](#)