



NEXT STEP HD

Prior to joining **Press TV** as a newsroom producer in 2006, **Hamid Reza Emadi** worked as a journalist for several Iranian newspapers, online media and TV channels. In his present role as Newsroom Director, based in the Tehran headquarters of Iran's first international news network broadcasting in English 24/7, he is instrumental in shaping the channel's output. What does a typical day's programming look like?

2 4 full world news bulletins, 24 news in brief bulletins, a 30 minute programme, *News Analysis*, that features analysts from across the world discussing the most important topic of the day, plus documentaries and other live and recorded programmes.

How do you source programmes?

Here in Tehran we have around 600 staff and in addition Press TV has around 100 correspondents in 80 countries. Our bureaux are in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Syria, Britain, Spain, Turkey, Germany, Australia and Egypt. At the same time, we use other sources such as news wires and internet. And we commission a lot of programmes from independents. Many award-winning filmmakers and documentary-makers are currently working with Press TV.

Which platforms are you on?

Press TV is now available on several platforms, including DTH Cable and Satellite, DTT, Internet, IPTV and Mobile TV. Smart TV and Set up box applications like Rokou will be added shortly.

Who are your audiences?

The people who watch Press TV range from the ordinary man-in-

the-street to politicians and officials who would like to get first-hand information about Iranians and how they look at world affairs.

What are you doing online?

Press TV is largely present in social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Google+, video sharing websites such as Dailymotion and Blinkx, Internet TV platforms such as Livestation and Zattoo, IPTV like Free in France, Mnet in Germany, Clix and Zon in Portugal, and VOD. On Press TV's website we offer Watchlive and Podcast.

What about mobile?

Press TV offers free download for Apple, Android, Symbian and Windows mobile applications, and the channel can also be watched live on mobile. We have a specific website for mobile phones, and are launching a new one for touch-screen devices.

Do you offer a catch-up service?

We have a robotic archives system for Press TV's local use, and we upload programmes on video-sharing websites for viewers who would like to watch them later. Viewers can also watch some of our previous programmes on the Press TV website.

Do you use citizen journalism?

We have Press TV UReport on the

channel's website that people can use to upload their videos and still images. We broadcast a lot of these pictures during our extensive coverage of the Arab uprisings in 2011.

How is your editorial agenda different from other international broadcasters – for example if we look at coverage of uprisings in the Middle East?

Well, Press TV has tried through its correspondents to report on the reality on the ground. As we have correspondents reporting from a given hot spot, talking to people there and getting reactions from both people and politicians, Press TV has been able to give a clear picture of the situation in countries where uprisings have taken place. Press TV's main priority has been 'what people's demands are' irrespective of the channel's political thinking, and that's where we make a difference.

Where does the funding for Press TV come from?

We receive money from the government. However, we do not get instructions as to how to do the job. We are a semi-autonomous region in a vast country! We also make some money through commercials. Editorially, we are just as independent as the BBC when it comes to issues such as Iran, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

What is the relationship between Press TV and IRIB?

The relationship between Press TV and IRIB is limited to some administrative and technical matters. Press TV is located in a different part of the city and its staffers are not supervised by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

In October 2011, the UK's Daily Telegraph newspaper called Press TV an 'Iranian propaganda channel'. How do you react to this?

Well, I think it is simply not right to accuse a news channel, which is covering what other media outlets do not like to cover, of being a

propaganda machine. First we have to define propaganda. If it means what the mainstream media does not approve of, then a lot of independent journalists, filmmakers, thinkers, philosophers and very lately media outlets fall into that category. Press TV is trying to tell the truth as it stands, while many other media outlets are seeking to transform it into what would benefit them or their group, which is exactly what propaganda means by definition.

How is the media landscape changing in Iran?

Iran's media landscape in my opinion is one of dynamism and constant evolution. Online media have mushroomed in recent years and TV channels are increasing in number. We have a new Spanish language TV which started broadcasting in December. Now that Hispan TV is on air, Iran has three 24/7 international news channels, namely Press TV, Al-Alam (Arabic) and Hispan TV.

While Iran has been moving fast toward digitalizing all of its media systems, it still has a long way to go. However, given the rapidly-growing developments in the region, the demand for new media players has gone up drastically in the country. More people are turning to the Internet and satellite TV channels for the latest on global developments. That has certainly had an impact on the supply chain with authorities thinking of creating more diverse ways of disseminating information to a news-thirsty population.

What type of content are audiences looking for?

Iranians are normally after political news - sometimes if there is a hot economic topic it too will get a political dimension by the end of the day. The country's general cultural mentality does not sit well with entertainment news. To a large number of people, it really is of no great value to hear about a famous actor's marriage or retirement.

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What relationship does Press TV have with other international broadcasters?

There is cooperation with RT at this point for the exchange of pictures, live and recorded, as per a bilateral agreement. We can have similar cooperation with other channels as well.

In Iran at present the viewing of some foreign international channels is restricted. Do you see that changing?

Well, I do not think any government in the world can successfully restrict the flow of information because that goes against human nature. Although Iran has banned satellite receivers for home use, people can watch those channels online as the Internet is widely accessible.

What are the main challenges for international broadcasters today?

I think the global developments, particularly the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, have created a challenge for the mainstream media as they have always defended the regimes that have now fallen, and opportunities for alternative media which have always opposed those regimes.

What's your personal media use?

I tend to get most of the news via my mobile phone which is connected to the Internet both at home, at work and on the street. I also watch almost all 24/7 news channels that broadcast in English on a daily basis. As a former print media journalist, I do not see any point in buying a newspaper any more!

Looking ahead, what are your priorities?

As a relatively young news channel, we are working hard to increase our viewership through diversifying our news bulletins and programmes. Our efforts in the coming months will be focused on becoming an HD news channel.

Hamid Reza Emadi, thank you.

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