

Submission from Webprint (Adenium Limited). Newspaper printer.

News in Ireland is quickly beginning to follow the US model as does many other phenomenon. It is clear that this is a dangerous progression for democracy which showed its fragility with the recent US Presidential Election.

The importance of a healthy media environment is not disputed by your commission so the changes in structure suggested below shall hopefully be welcomed.

- **Print.** Whilst this channel is clearly declining it still has major resonance among the older community in Ireland. Local, regional and national titles continue to offer reporting in this format alongside their digital offerings. However, unlike in most jurisdictions we charge VAT on the sale of newspapers. This should be reduced to a zero rate before there is no more VAT to collect from this sector.
- **Advertising.** In order for the media sector in general to survive and continue to use quality journalism, advertising needs to work to support such endeavours. However, the big players (Google, Facebook, etc) have hoovered up so much of that revenue from traditional media that their existence is now in danger. These organisations have plagiarised news content and repurposed it for themselves. They should pay for this content.
- **RTE.** Whilst our national broadcaster provides a good service in many respects it competes directly with the struggling commercial media in areas such as advertising and news. It also has the advantage of being subsidized through licence fees. Their news website should be discontinued as so many competing sites are trying to introduce paywalls in order to survive. So using tax payer's money to compete against commercial organisations is not what RTE should be about. It should be about providing services of value that are not commercially justifiable using the licence fees. Advertising should be excluded from their source of income akin to the BBC. The remit of RTE should be to efficiently carry appropriate programming such as educational, news, cultural, etc that are not commercially viable but important to an informed diverse democracy. This can then be justifiably subsidized by taxpayers.

Ends

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