

NY Times, Huffington Post exchange barbs

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Huffington Post co-founder Arianna Huffington, seen here in February 2011, exchanged blows on Thursday in a highly public spat. with Bill Keller, executive editor of the New York Times

The gloves are off between a pair of Old and New Media heavyweights. Bill Keller, executive editor of the venerable New York Times, and Arianna Huffington, founder of brash newcomer The Huffington Post, exchanged blows on Thursday in a highly public spat.

Keller threw the first punch in a column for the Times magazine, calling Huffington the "queen of [aggregation](#)" in a dig at her site's practice of frequently linking to news items produced by other media outlets.

Huffington, he wrote, "has discovered that if you take [celebrity gossip](#), adorable kitten videos, posts from unpaid bloggers and news reports from other publications, array them on your website and add a left-wing

soundtrack, millions of people will come."

Aggregation, the Times editor said, too often "amounts to taking words written by other people, packaging them on your own website and harvesting revenue that might otherwise be directed to the originators of the material."

"In Somalia this would be called piracy," he said. "In the mediasphere, it is a respected business model."

Keller went on to recount his appearance on a "Future of Journalism" panel with Huffington.

"I had come prepared with a couple of memorized riffs on media topics, which I duly presented," he said. "Afterward, we sat down for a joint interview with a local reporter.

"A moment later, I heard one of my riffs issuing verbatim from the mouth of Ms Huffington," Keller wrote. "I felt so... aggregated."

Huffington slugged back in a blog post, accusing Keller of unleashing an "exceptionally misinformed attack" on The [Huffington Post](#), which she sold to AOL last month for \$315 million, that is "as lame as it is laughable."

Searching for a motive, Keller, she said, is "perhaps unsettled by the fact that, when combined, The Huffington Post and AOL News have over 70 percent more unique visitors than The [New York Times](#)."

Huffington dismissed the accusation that The Huffington Post thrives on content produced by other news organizations.

"Even before we merged with AOL, HuffPost had 148 full-time editors,

writers and reporters engaged in the serious, old-fashioned work of traditional journalism," she said.

As for the panel incident, Huffington said she was not parroting Keller but was, in fact, repeating statements that she had made repeatedly and as many as three years earlier.

"So who was it, Bill, who was 'aggregating' someone else's ideas?" she asked.

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