

The politics of making and watching news

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(Phys.org)—In a world-first, a team of University of Queensland researchers has developed a laboratory aimed at unpacking and understanding the political implications of news television programs.

How we relate to major [events](#) depends significantly on how they are reported and given meaning in the context of television news programs.

By shaping public opinion, TV news also contributes to how events in world affairs are addressed by [political elites](#).

The MediaLab will assist in understanding these implications by recording and storing up to twelve 24-hour TV news channels parallel in real time for up to three months continuously. News channels from Russia, China, Japan, India, Qatar, Iran, Germany, France, UK, USA, New Zealand and Australia will be recorded.

According to researcher Dr Martin Weber the technology will allow the team to engage in comparative studies of news reporting during major international crisis events.

"Our understanding of world affairs continues to be shaped significantly by televised news. MediaLab will enable us to investigate the ways in which news on events of global significance is produced, consumed and processed," Dr Weber said.

"Anyone who has ever watched more than one 24-hour news channel as a particular event unfolds will have noticed that while the broadcasts

have much in common, they often also display significant differences," he said.

"The same images, still or moving, may receive very different interpretations. Particular pools of experts are drawn in to provide commentary or analysis; the significance of particular occurrences during a crisis cycle is sometimes interpreted vastly differently; and some images and stories, having briefly been reported, disappear swiftly off the agenda."

With the use of this unique facility, the differences in the coverage and interpretation of global crises can be analysed in detail. From humanitarian emergencies and [natural disasters](#), 'the Global War on Terror' and the Arab Spring, to large-scale environmental events, the MediaLab allows for unprecedented research into the politics of the global television [news](#) landscape.

Over the next three years, the MediaLab will be used to comprehensively monitor reporting on major conflicts and emergencies.

Provided by University of Queensland

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