

SPOTLIGHT

By **DARA WANG** in Hong Kong
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China Daily Asia Pacific completed on Dec 14 a unique group livestream project covering eight Asian metropolises in four time zones.

"Choking Congestions", a four-and-a-half-hour program, involving 20 reporter-producers and eight traffic experts, was carried live on Facebook.

The livestream projects had attracted more than 49,000 views by the end of Dec 14.

The project was the most ambitious video collaboration project so far among members of the Asia News Network, involving seven ANN news agencies.

The China Daily Asia Pacific team successfully experimented with the live cast on Facebook between its studio in Hong Kong and heavily congested traffic sites in seven cities: Beijing, Manila, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok, Jakarta, Dhaka and New Delhi.

The focus was on the morning rush hours, between 7 am and 9 am, in the respective locales. The seven reporters followed their carefully mapped routes to show viewers real-time traffic, livestreamed via their smartphones. Each was joined by a local reporter from an ANN member, a traffic expert, and residents harried amid local traffic issues. Together they provided information and shared personal anecdotes with the online audience.

In the studio, anchors and producers turned to traffic and urbanization expert Yap Kioe Sheng, a traffic consultant who has held a post as a United Nations official in Asia and Africa over the past 35 years. Yap provided the audience with insightful analysis of traffic issues of each city, identifying causes and possible solutions.

It was the first time he had been invited to participate as a livestream guest on Facebook. He said it's something "you have to do once in your life".

Netizens were actively engaged in the live comments and discussions. Hundreds of viewers shared their own most horrendous traffic jam experiences and the most unforgettable things they did while stuck on the road.

When reporter Andrea Deng in Jakarta asked one driver what annoyed him most during the congestion, he answered, "People do not obey the traffic rules or follow the traffic signs." Netizens' "likes" spiked on the livestream screen, indicating their agreement with the remark.

The project coordinator, also managing multimedia producer at China Daily, Claudia Hinterseer, said the project completed by young journalists showed China Daily is "open to experiment and cutting-edge technology".

The team spent six weeks prepar-

ing for the livestream, from pitching the project to final production. The objective, said Hinterseer, was to provide useful information in an informal way via Facebook live.

Livestreaming is quite new for journalism. It is a brilliant way to deliver news instantly and draw major attention online, Hinterseer said. "However, most lives done on social media platforms are just 'being-there'. They don't have things well organized." Our reporters mapped their routes in the busiest areas of the cities and showed traffic nightmares with a human touch by inviting residents to share their stories, she said.

While well planned, our livestream is different from TV station ones, she said. Reporters made their presentations in a very casual manner, giving the livestream a sense of vitality. They held a selfie stick with their smartphones, the Honor V10 smartphone, and carried on the streaming while walking along roads, sitting in cars and taking buses.

The project also made a technical breakthrough, transmitting live signals in combination and switching among eight cities. Signal delay was controlled to less than one minute. Peter Lin, senior multimedia producer at China Daily Asia Pacific, who was in charge of technical support for this project, said the presentation relied on two software programs to ensure the livestream went smoothly.

Lin said reporters did the livestream through an application on the Honor V10. The studio picked up their signals using an IP-based computer software. After inputting the IPs of reporters' smartphones, the producer is able to monitor the internet connections and video quality, switching from camera to camera for the livestream videos on Facebook.

Aside from this livestream, the reporters will produce episodes for a new show, Asia Featured. The coverage will extend into new areas beyond traffic congestion throughout a five-day stay in each of the seven cities. Multitasking and doing things efficiently has become a part of the everyday training of China Daily reporters.

This livestream project is the fifth China Daily Red Letter Project, a project which aims to innovate reportage and push the boundaries of journalism with new media technologies. For future plans, Hinterseer said one project under consideration is to use augmented reality or other new technologies to report on species protection topics in a dynamic way.

China Daily is a founding member of ANN. Six other members of ANN, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Viet Nam News, the Nation, the Jakarta Post, the Daily Star and the Statesman participated in the livestream project.

Live in traffic

Reporters got to grips with gridlock in seven Asian cities, experiencing traffic black spots and talking to commuters and experts for our Facebook livestream. China Daily Asia Pacific reports.

CAR AND TAXI 93.7%

Beijing has quickened its pace in providing a better public transport experience. Owning 30,000 buses, Beijing has pledged to operate the biggest bus crew in the world which, hopefully, will be 100-percent new energy-powered in the near future.

Xi Lefu, editor-in-chief of ChinaRTA.com

BUS2.5%
VAN1.9%
TRUCK0.7%
OTHER1.2%

MOTORCYCLE 64.2%

On Thursday morning, I set off from Gurugram to Delhi's Chandni Chowk, with Anjana Raghav from the Statesman, to cover the causes and impacts of traffic congestion. The commute took about two-and-a-half hours. Statistics from the Transport Department of Delhi in May showed that the total number of vehicles registered had passed 10 million.

Smog not only increases accident risk due to low visibility but also increases health risk.

Anurita Roychowdhury, executive director for research and advocacy at the Centre for Science and Environment

What frustrates me the most is that drivers never stay in lane. I hope the traffic will be reduced as I want to spend more time with my family.

Dileep Yadav, 21 years as a driver

(PRIVATE) CAR30.3%
RICKSHAW2.9%
BUS0.3%
OTHER2.3%

MOTORCYCLE 41%

My trip to Dhaka redefines my understanding of "bad traffic" after sitting in a car which has been motionless for almost three hours among the gridlock along the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. The congestion in Dhaka is paralyzed yet frenetic. It has always been a long snarl of cars, buses, rickshaws and handcarts. While people keep getting on and off the vehicles, the motorcycles are taking every chance — and space — to go forward. Some cars even drive brutally on the pavements just to avoid the cars.

Yet the traffic problem goes beyond that which is visual. The exhaust fumes irritate my nostrils and traffic noise pummels my eardrums. The Dhakaites are so obsessed with car horns, which start honking at seven in the morning and don't end till midnight every day.

People here don't follow the rules. This is why the traffic here is a mess, a catastrophe.

Sheikh Rezwana Tasnim Simi, a freelance writer and voice actor living in Dhaka, who spends around three hours commuting across the city every day

(PRIVATE) CAR23%
BUS9%
TRUCK8%
TAXI4%
JEEP3%
RICKSHAW1%
OTHER11%

CHINA DAILY ASIA PACIFIC

HONG KONG

D J CLARK and TIMO CHU
China Daily Asia

You can see the videos of the two-part stream on China Daily's Facebook page
www.facebook.com/chinadaily

49,000 views
1,499 likes
324 comments
126 shares

(PRIVATE) CAR 76%

The next five years are crucial for Metro Manila, and Filipinos need to be patient as the government tries to increase the capacity and efficiency of the public transport system. There is a need to be better disciplined on the road and also consider carpooling as a serious option.

Jovic Yee, reporter from the Philippine Daily Inquirer

MOTORCYCLE18%
BUS3%
TRUCK2%
JEEPNEY1%
OTHERLESS THAN 1%

MOTORCYCLE 74%

Before I came to Jakarta, I totally didn't expect that the traffic could be as bad as it is here. I was maybe stuck really, really badly a few times in my life in Shenzhen during public holidays, but imagine having something like that on a daily basis.

The traffic here in Jakarta really drains your energy and time. There is a famous saying here, *tua di jalan*, which means "getting old on the road", and there is some truth to it.

For 20 years, my mom has spent time on the road — she would go to work at 5:30 in the morning and come back at 9:30 in the evening. Twenty years later, now I'm 25 years old and I'm still doing the same.

Agnes Anya, reporter from the Jakarta Post and a co-host

(PRIVATE) CAR20%
TRUCK4%
BUS2%
OTHERLESS THAN 1%

MOTORCYCLE 85%

The city authority hasn't invested enough compared to the increased growth rate of Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC); that's why services like buses are not good enough — bus connectivity between places is not that convenient.

Thus, HCMC needs to invest more on public transportation like bus services/metro lines to improve the networks. In the meantime, measures should be made to reduce the amount of motorbikes on the street.

In Vietnam, especially in Ho Chi Minh City, most people grow up with motorbikes. Because all the houses or shops are located in small alleys, people's lives just circle around those alleys, which cars or buses can hardly get into. After the war, everything was built; that's why people put more emphasis on motorbikes because it's more convenient.

Hoang Lien Son, journalist at Vietnam News Agency

BICYCLE8.2%
BUS2.1%
(PRIVATE) CAR1.1%
OTHER3.6%

(PRIVATE) CAR 59%

Thailand's capital Bangkok ranks as the worst in Asia for traffic congestion and second in the world after Mexico City. Vehicles are exceeding the capacity that the city's roads can accommodate. As of July, the total number of vehicles registered in Bangkok was 9,590,147, with 59 percent private cars and only 0.5 percent buses. People's bad driving habits only further fuel the commotion and congestion. There is a crying need for smart urban planning and more stringent enforcement of traffic laws.

Green World is focused on encouraging people to be more open about reducing the use of private cars and turning to use alternative means of transport, including bicycles.

Sira Leepipatnavit, Green World Foundation

Traffic roadblocks were previously set up only after the morning rush hours (6 am to 9 am), which means a new policy (from the new Bangkok police chief) against setting them up is yielding no effects on the traffic condition.

Kraiyoung Palawephat, second lieutenant, Thong Lor Police Station

MOTORCYCLE37%
TRUCK1.4%
TAXI1%
BUS0.5%
TUK TUK0.1%
OTHER1%