
From: [REDACTED]
To: Craig Silverman
Sent: 8/8/2014 12:48:11 PM
Subject: Re: A question about Austrian media

Hi Craig,

Don't want to associated with that "agency ", but was happy to help.

Thank you for understanding.

[REDACTED]

Am 08.08.2014 um 18:39 schrieb "Craig Silverman " <silvermancraig@gmail.com

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm getting ready to publish a story that has evidence that the Austrian Times and its affiliated agencies (CEN and EuroPics) inserted fabricated material into a story. It also appears that they may have stolen the associated images with that story from its original source, Pravda in Russia.

I put some additional detail in below. I hope to publish within the next hour or so. The woman I spoke with who answered the phone at CEN/Austrian Times has stopped responding to me after initially saying she would call their "Russian bureau "to get answers for me. She told me Leidig is on vacation in Romania for two weeks. He and the rest of them are not answering emails anymore.

So, the reason I'm getting back in touch is I was wondering if you would be willing to let me quote you on the record about your company's experience with the Austrian Times? This is what you had written:

[REDACTED] ... So, from an editorial trustworthiness it's like any blog out there. Zero. "

I realize that was sent as an email between us. But I'd love to be able to include a quote from you about your experience with them re: copyright issues, as it appears they stole the Pravda images. So perhaps I can quote what you wrote, or you could send me something else I can publish?

Craig

INFO:

It starts with this story from Pravda dated July 31 about a bear attack:
<http://www.kp.ru/daily/26263.4/3141355/>

Then on August 5 that story became this:
http://austriantimes.at/news/Around_the_World/2014-08-05/51543/Justin_Bieber_Helps_Defend_Russian_Fisherman_From_Bear

Suddenly, it included a Justin Bieber ringtone that is not in the Pravda story, as far as I can understand from Google Translate. The story and the images have spread far and wide in the media, for example:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2716479/Fisherman-saved-bear-attack-Justin-Bieber-ringtone-went-mauled-scared-bear-away.html>
<http://nypost.com/2014/08/05/justin-bieber-saves-man-from-bear-attack/>

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/world/2014/08/05/justin-bieber-ringtone-scares-bear-saves-russian-fisherman-->

In these stories the Pravda images are credited to EuroPics and/or CEN. That is the same company that owns the Austrian Times... so it looks like they inserted the Bieber info and took the images.

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 8:56 AM, Craig Silverman <silvermancraig@gmail.com wrote:

Ah, that makes sense. He is listed as the domain owner for both the Times and for the news agency. (And the company that build both websites.)

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 8:51 AM, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wrote:

No. Until recently (and probably still) the british citizen I referred to is named Mike Leidig. This is his (probably self-written) Wikipedia page: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Leidig

It's absolutely not typical for austrian journalists to have such detailed (and praising) wikipedia entries.

Am 06.08.2014 um 14:48 schrieb Craig Silverman <silvermancraig@gmail.com

By the way, is David Rogers the man you were referring to at the Times?

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 8:42 AM, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wrote:

You are welcome. And yes, please let me know where the story is heading.

Happy I could be of help.

Best regards,

Am 06.08.2014 um 14:36 schrieb Craig Silverman <silvermancraig@gmail.com

Thank you, [REDACTED] This is helpful. It appears as though the Times and its sister company, the Central European News agency, took a Pravda story and added some made up details to it. I'm just trying to track everything own to confirm this, but it appears to be the case. If you like, I'll let you know what I end up writing.

Best regards,

Craig

On Wed, Aug 6, 2014 at 3:20 AM, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Craig,

thanks for your message.

Austrian Times is - [REDACTED] - a oneman show, a brit living in Vienna who wants to make his newspaper. So, from an editorial trustworthiness it's like any blog out there. Zero.

However their approach has been to make Austrian news available in english. But, obviously, they changed their „reporting“ to a more click-bait-style. They still seem to have cooperations with trusted media, like the oldest newspaper in Austria, state-owned „Wiener Zeitung“, and there their new Viral-Nova-Content makes absolutely no sense. (Justin Bieber/Bear/Polio/One Legged Doctor)...

I don't know where they get their stories from, but it seems their somewhere from the internet (or from click bait sites, a viralnova-clone called www.Heftig.co has been skyrocketing on social media in Germany earlier this year (they just translated viral-nova-stuff).

The Imprint of Austrian Times lead to a „newshub“-company in the U.K.. So it might be that the initial Austrian-Times-Owner/Founder called Mike Ledig could have sold it. If you want me to dig deeper let me know.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]



Am 05.08.2014 um 23:10 schrieb Craig Silverman <silvermancraig@gmail.com

Hello [REDACTED]

Thanks again for your time yesterday. I'm coming to you now with an unrelated question. I was wondering if you're familiar with this website in Austria: <http://austriantimes.at/index.php>? I ask because in my work for Poynter I track media accuracy and it appears as though that website is the source of what seems to be a very questionable report that has spread to other media outlets.

I'm not familiar with their work, so I hope you don't mind me asking for your assessment of it. For example, would they take a real story and embellish it with false facts to make it more likely to spread?

I appreciate any insight you can offer.

Best regards,
Craig

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Craig Silverman

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