

# Don't dismiss online content too readily



By KWAN JIN YAO

WITH regard to Mr David Lim's article, "Take online material with a pinch of salt" (*my paper*, Jan 5), the writer has genuine cause for concern.

With the proliferation of the Internet and the ease of accessibility of online content, information can be distorted or misinterpreted easily. He is especially critical of online platforms that let users remain **anonymous** or use pseudonyms, lamenting the lack of accountability of such content.

However, anonymity does not necessarily equate to inaccurate content; pseudonyms could be used for genuine identity-related concerns.

For any information generated, it is the message over the messenger.

The **onus** is on readers to determine if a piece of writing should be taken seriously, as credibility can be evaluated using elements like readers' comments.

However, the line is crossed when bloggers resort to vitriol and their articles degenerate into unconstructive diatribes that have the potential to be derogatory or inflammatory.

The bottom line is that people should not be too quick to generalise about anonymous bloggers, but instead judge the material for what it is really worth.

Pseudonyms can help creative expression, allowing writers to be less **inhibited** in their writing styles.

In the Singaporean context, there are other reasons why writers might want to mask their real identities. They might be in the civil service, which has its guidelines and regulations for online political writing.

Another reason is that a writer's family and friends may be conservative in thinking, potentially limiting the writer's freedom of expression.

Political websites serve as alternative news sources which are convenient and accessible. More importantly, they provide varying perspectives. Such online platforms can facilitate constructive discourse and discussion, and allow the general population to air their sentiments.

At the end of the day, credible online clout will empower writers to **synergise** online and offline efforts, developing greater advocacy and activism in the real world, such as airing concerns at the Speakers' Corner.

Dismissing such content too readily might blind Singaporeans to a source of potentially valuable insights, like policy recommendations and constructive criticism.

◆ *The writer is a full-time national serviceman who blogs about current affairs at <http://guanyinmiao.wordpress.com>*

## HELPDESK 我的字典

**Anonymous:** 匿名的 nì míng de

**Onus:** 责任 zé rèn

**Inhibited:** 拘谨的 jū jǐn de

**Synergise:** 协同加强 xié tóng jiā qiáng

# Staff on probation need protection as well

THE Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has good guidelines to protect salaried workers, but staff on probation might not know their rights and get exploited by employers.

My friend was employed at a childcare centre last year and performed well during his three-month stint there.

Throughout the probationary period, he did not get any counselling on "poor performance", and was even informed of his class for the new year.

But, in the middle of last month, he was informed that his employment would be terminated.

There was no reason given for the termination, and he was made to sign a letter stating that the termination was immediate.

As a result, he lost one month's salary in lieu of notice, which he should have received as specified in his original employment contract.

He sought MOM's advice and was told that the ministry was unable to assist be-

cause he had signed the termination letter.

In view of the many new workers entering the workforce every year, MOM should look into how staff on probation can be protected.

Perhaps mandatory guidelines could be attached to employment contracts to prevent employees from being "short-changed".

MR DAVID SOH POH HUAT

## WRITE TO US AT MY PAPER.

E-mail your opinions to [myp@sph.com.sg](mailto:myp@sph.com.sg)

Please include your full name, address and a telephone contact number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length.

Nothing  
perks you  
up like  
tech &  
gadgets?

Get connected  
with **my paper**  
Technology Pages.  
In English daily &  
Chinese every  
Monday

**my paper** 我報