



**The Society of Publishers in Asia
SOPA Annual Awards for Editorial Excellence**

WHY YOU SHOULD ENTER





[Click the above image to see SOPA 2020 Awards Highlight](#)

Each year since 1999, the Society of Publishers in Asia has recognized great journalism in the Asia-Pacific region by bestowing awards in a range of categories from photography to reporting on women's issues to covering the environment.

Winners have come from publications big and small, long-established and newly founded, international and regional, and in both English and Chinese.

Widely recognized as the Pulitzer Prizes of Asia, the SOPA Awards set a high benchmark for journalism in the region – and celebrate those who produce it, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. The annual awards also foster freedom of expression in Asia-Pacific by publicly rewarding those who practice it.

► By the numbers

The total number of annual entries hovered above 700 in recent years, even with shrinking editorial budgets and media suppression. For example, the 2020 awards attracted more than 750 entries from 139 news organizations vying in 17 categories.

Chinese-language entries have held steady at more than 40% of total submissions.

For the past decade, the SOPA Awards have been administered by the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre, now known as HKU Journalism, which recruits volunteer judges – former or current journalists and academics – from many countries to weigh the annual entries.

► Share the spotlight

SOPA's distinguished reputation in media circles has drawn a roster of prestigious speakers from politics and the press to the annual awards presentations. Among them in recent years: Ma Ying-jeou, former president of Taiwan; Chris Patten, Hong Kong's last colonial governor; Christiane Amanpour, CNN's chief international anchor; and Maria Ressa, chief executive of Philippine social news network Rappler and a high-profile proponent of freedom of the press.

The annual cocktail and gala dinner has provided a networking opportunity to mix with other media movers and shakers, spot trends, swap ideas and raise profiles.

► What's in it for my brand?

For publishers, winning SOPA Awards creates a virtuous commercial circle. For a start, it's a chance to gain bragging rights in various categories (think investigative reporting, business coverage or opinion writing). And it's a promotional window to market editorial strengths with flurries of tweets and press releases once the winners are announced. The SOPA stamp of approval from industry peers — with the credibility that comes with it — reassures a publication's advertisers and subscribers and can entice new ones. More subscribers willing to pay for “award-winning” journalism enables more investment in newsrooms, luring even more readers.

SOPA does the quality control of our content. That's very important for a young publication like Frontier. It supports not only editorial but also commercial success. Winning SOPA Awards carries a lot of weight when we point things out to both government and private sectors which are the areas that need to be improved.

Sonny Swe,
Chief Executive, Frontier Myanmar

We would like to see how our stories are rated outside of our local market. Winning the award is a broader recognition of our product quality and innovation and a broader recognition of Chinese news professionals.

Yin-chuen Wu, President of Taiwan's
CommonWealth Magazine

Calling ourselves 'award-winning' gives a positive effect to our brand and reputation and undoubtedly motivates our colleagues to brush up on their skills and stories to win. By competing, we can position where we are. If we get the prize, that means our colleagues and our publication are doing great. If not, we take notice that we need to make more efforts to catch up with our competitors.

Shigesaburo Okumura,
Editor in Chief, Nikkei Asia



▶ What's in it for my newsroom?

For journalists, getting SOPA's imprimatur for being one of three finalists shortlisted in a given category or going on to win an Award for Excellence or an Honorable Mention, is very public validation of their work.

And there's a halo effect. Taking home a prize instills a sense of pride in the publication among their colleagues, boosts morale to be part of an "award-winning" newsroom and encourages everyone to go harder after those hard-to-get stories.

Being lauded by SOPA also makes journalists believe they are part of something bigger.

Out in the field, "we are in a difficult situation," and being recognized by a SOPA Award makes journalists "feel like they are not alone."

May Titthara,
2013 Journalist of the Year,
Phnom Penh Post, Cambodia

It's always a tremendous boost to staff and freelance journalists to be among the finalists. Winning a SOPA Award can enhance a career and a resume, with many recipients going on to be chosen for media fellowships or grants for further reporting. A SOPA Award is a real credit to any media organization.

Belinda Goldsmith,
Editor-in-Chief,
Thomson Reuters Foundation, London

The recognition we got from SOPA in 2016 came at a critical time, when Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak was calling us liars, and the Malaysian government was attempting to cover up a major scandal. SOPA plays an important role in supporting independent journalism in Asia, whether of big or small publications, and may it long continue to do so.

Tom Wright,
2016 Journalist of the Year,
The Wall Street Journal, co-author of the international best seller, "Billion Dollar Whale," which tells the inside story of Malaysian financier Jho Low and the 1MDB scandal





The SOPA 2019 Awards

Platinum Sponsors
Google
News Initiative
facebook

Silver Sponsor

Z A

NewsWire F



The takeaway

The SOPA Awards have served as recognition of the region's most outstanding journalists and publishers while supporting and defending a free press in Asia.

Each year more than 90 SOPA Awards for Excellence and Honorable Mention are up for grabs.

Digital and print publications are welcome to compete as a Global or Regional/Local entry in English or in Chinese-language in the following categories:
<https://sopawards.com/awards/award-categories/>

Brands are judged by the company they keep, and every year SOPA Awards draw hundreds of entries from top-class successful media brands doing business in Asia. Don't miss the chance to enhance your reputation for quality journalism that attracts influential readers and a broader base of advertisers.

**To get started, visit
www.sopawards.com and
check out our submission
rules and FAQ.**

**Please contact
mail@sopasia.com or
sopa@hku.hk with any
entry-related questions.**