

South China Morning Post – Occupy Central coverage

Submission for INMA 2015 - Best idea to encourage print readership or engagement

South China Morning Post's
OCCUPY CENTRAL
coverage

Background

Hong Kong, a former British colony situated on the Southern coast of China, is administered through its mini-constitution, the Basic Law, under a one-country-two-systems rule. According to article 45, China will grant Hong Kong citizens the right to vote for their Chief Executive in 2017, with shortlisted candidates selected by a nominating committee.

In anticipation of the Central Government of China's proposed legal framework on how Chief Executive candidates would be selected by this committee, the *South China Morning Post* had commenced its own consultation with political and thought leaders in the city on plausible outcomes. We had planned to cover and market the developments as we would our usual editorial packages.





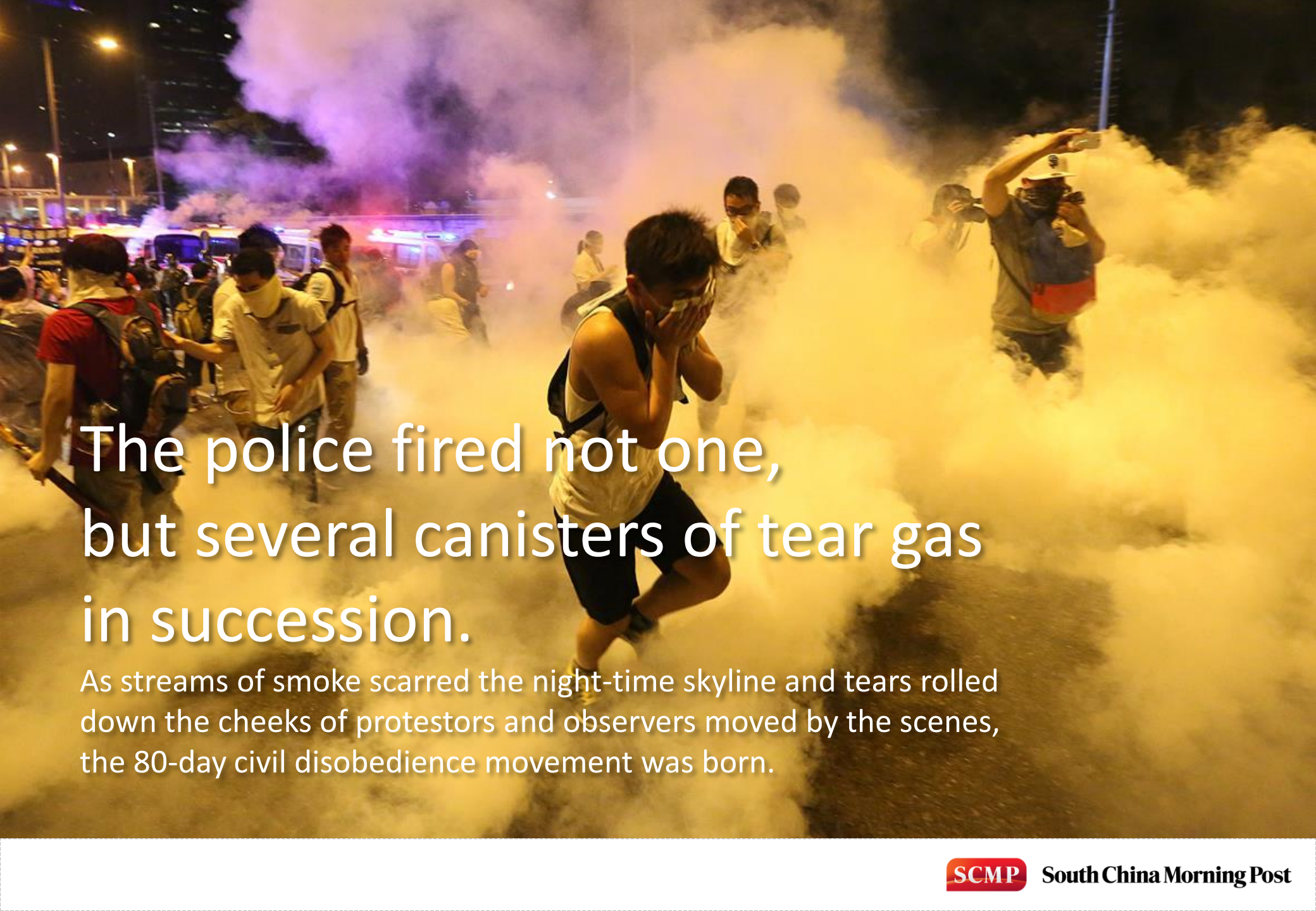
The events of the night
of September 28th
changed those plans.

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- With passion and purpose, student activists claimed the most traffic-heavy road that leads to our central business district. Their protests became more vociferous and crowds grew more agitated when police clad in riot gear approached steadily. As the emotions of the crowds escalated and confrontation appeared inevitable, the police fired not one, but several canisters of tear gas in succession at students and citizens who vented their frustrations about what they perceive as a potentially restrictive pool of lame duck candidates.



The police fired not one,
but several canisters of tear gas
in succession.

As streams of smoke scarred the night-time skyline and tears rolled down the cheeks of protestors and observers moved by the scenes, the 80-day civil disobedience movement was born.



At this crucial moment, the *South China Morning Post* became the world's eyes on the streets as history unfolded.

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Objectives

As an independent voice of reason and representation, we believed it was not our role to incite or sensationalise, but to present the truth and the intellectual options available for achieving universal suffrage, with clarity.

Being Hong Kong's largest English-language newspaper and its *de facto* voice to the world, we wanted, immediately, to build a campaign to broadcast to the world Hong Kong's fundamental struggle for the right to cast our own vote.

Objectives

Without a budget or reasonable lead-time, we set out with only 1 goal in mind:

BREAK DOWN the wall between Editorial and Marketing to join hands at Hong Kong's Eleventh Hour and *orchestrate a truly integrated content marketing campaign* to create maximum awareness of the *South China Morning Post's* brand in the Western world.

Results

The Occupy Central content marketing campaign significantly raised awareness of the *South China Morning Post's* brand to a Western audience across several platforms.

Our three-pronged strategy was to:

Induce, Engage and Activate

Results

Induce: Increase pageviews by lifting the paywall on Occupy Central news, and amplifying all Occupy Central content through layered and packaged “topics pages” to encourage Deep-Dive and Discovery consumption.

Unique users during the initial 3-week period (28-Sept to 17-Oct) spiked 45% above average, with pageview consumption increasing by 110%.

Over 550 stories were published and repackaged, generating over 11.5 million pageviews, averaging 20,000+ pageviews per article.

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Averaging
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Results

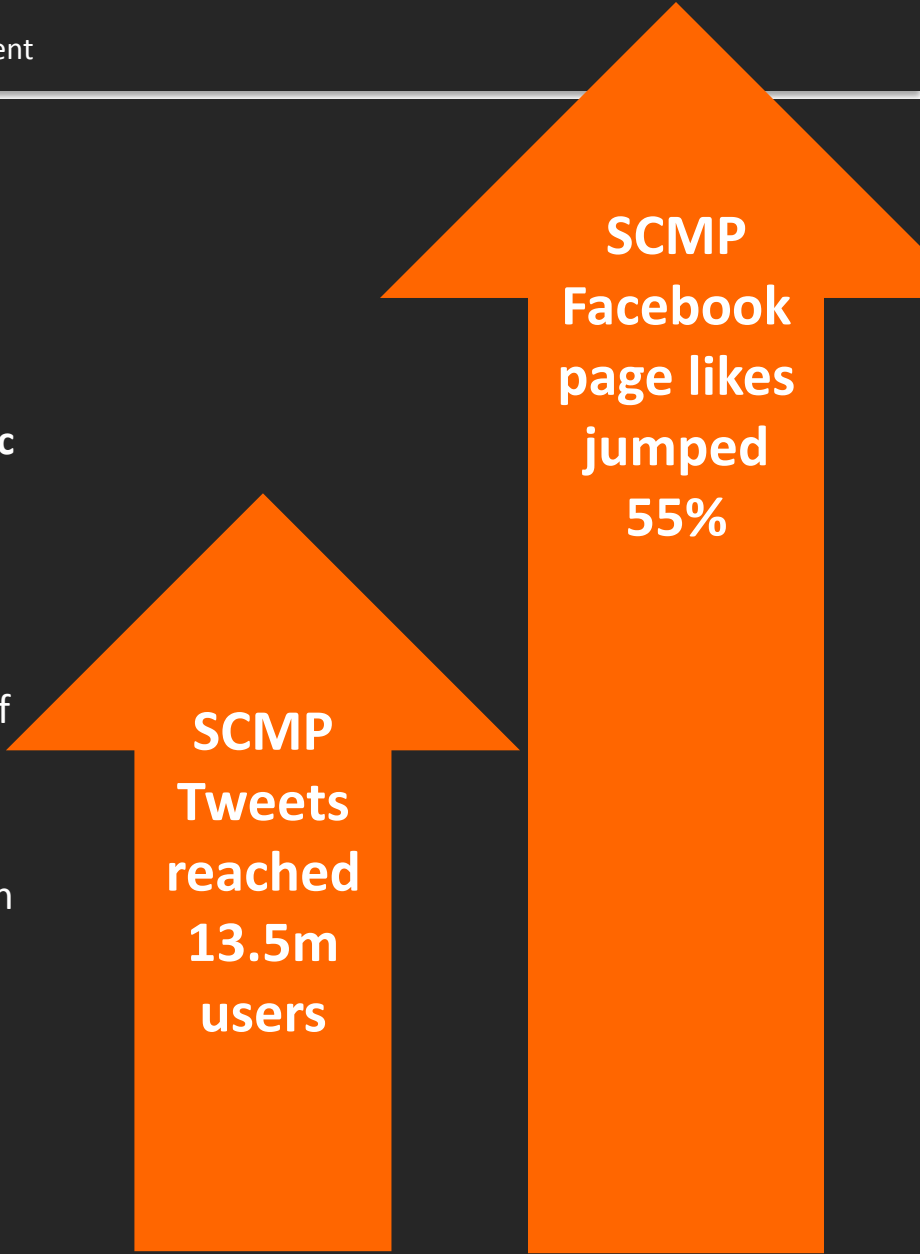
Engage: Ramp up social media activity by converging public opinion of both camps on our platform.

A 24-hour live online blog with matching social media coverage on Facebook and Twitter drove massive traction.

SCMP Facebook recorded an unprecedented 55% increase of page likes from 105,000 (on 26 Sep, pre-Occupy Central) to over 163,000 on 26 October.

In the same period, SCMP's Tweets reached over 13.5 million users and generated 42,600 retweets.

From 24 Sep to 29 Oct, the no. of SCMP's Twitter followers jumped 35%.



SCMP
Tweets
reached
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users

SCMP
Facebook
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jumped
55%

Results

Activate: Capture the social zeitgeist through serialised eBooks.

Following on-site display campaigns, content amplification and social media marketing, we further diversified the campaign through a 2-part eBook on Occupy Central encapsulating summarised reports, backstories, pictorials and video links. This was promoted on-site and via social media to sustain traction and build fixation among the new audience.

Performance of this eBook series completely outstripped all in-house benchmarks by 530%, with more new unique users engaging with the brand than before and giving SCMP.com a much larger base.

Performance
benchmarks

up

530%

Editorial content scoop

South China Morning Post devoted unprecedented manpower of its 240-strong editorial team to coverage Occupy Central.

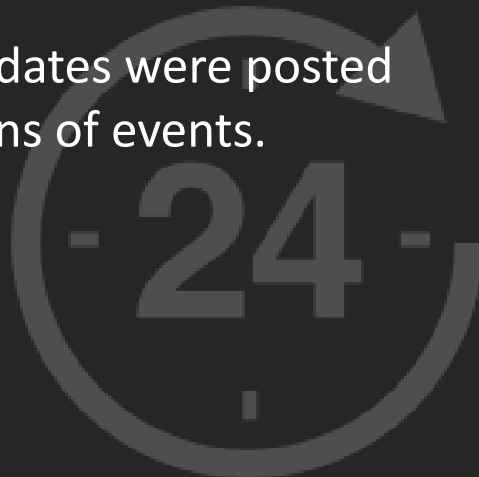
Highlights:

- 24-hour Live Updates on scmp.com
- SCMP standalone stories
- SCMP Occupy Central debate series
- SCMP.TV interviews with key movement personalities & on-the-street coverage



SCMP 24-hour LIVE updates

- SCMP developed 24-hour live updates which became must-read for the readers.
- Frequently and timed updates were posted up tracking the latest turns of events.



The screenshot shows the SCMP website's 'OCCUPY CENTRAL' live update page. The main headline reads 'OCCUPY CENTRAL - THE FIRST 12 HOURS: Full report as events unfolded' by Tony Cheung, Ernest Kao, Samuel Chan, and Chris Lau. The page includes a large image of the protest and a list of updates with timestamps. The right sidebar features social media links, a 'Most Popular' section, and a 'We recommend' section.

OCCUPY CENTRAL

OCCUPY CENTRAL - THE FIRST 12 HOURS:
Full report as events unfolded

Tony Cheung, Ernest Kao, Samuel Chan, Chris Lau

SHARE

2,844

RELATED TOPICS

Occupy Central

RELATED ARTICLES

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Ex-actress Lana Wong Ha-wai mulls district council poll run against Occupy opponent

6.02pm: Just before 6pm police fired tear gas has been fired into Harcourt Road, scattering protesters.

Police have fired three volleys of the gas, but the wind has blown the smoke plume back towards the police line.

6.50pm: Police have warned that they will "use a higher degree of force" if crowds do not calm down.

A statement read: "Police urge the protesters gathering in Admiralty and Central at present, to express their views in a restrained manner and stop changing the police cordon line immediately. They should leave peacefully and orderly. Otherwise Police will use a higher level of force in order to restore public order and safeguard public safety."

About 80 bus routes have been diverted around the troubled areas. The routes include three airport services routes - A11, A112 and E11 - and a number of express routes to and from southern and eastern districts.

5.38pm: An estimated 2,000 people have gathered on the pavement outside the Lippo Centre and blocked Queensway - another main artery between Wan Chai and Central, stranding buses.

Protester CY Ng 46, said he had come from the Bank of America building in Central with about 300 people. He said a crowd attempted to go on Cotton Tree Drive, but spilled onto Queensway when intercepted by police.

5.29pm: Next Media boss Jimmy Lai and senior counsel Martin Lee have left the protest zone via the Lung Wui Road exit. The pair said they wanted to check out other protest groups out there, and would not be returning to the Tamar zone tonight.

Most Popular

- 1 Investor visas scrapped, constitution tops agenda in Hong Kong leader's speech
- 2 Child executioner: Gruesome Islamic State video appears to show boy shooting prisoners
- 3 Kidnapper of Li Ka-shing's son rang tycoon to ask where he should invest HK\$1 billion ransom
- 4 Half of Chinese food plants fail inspections
- 5 Children of Hong Kong emigrants eyed to fill city's talent gap

We recommend

NEWS

Hong Kong sees lowest temperatures of the winter as mercury drops 25...

NEWS

Chinese fans fuming after Hong Kong funnyman leaves political satire...

NEWS

Masaru Takagi, leader of Chinese Dragons gang, arrested

NEWS

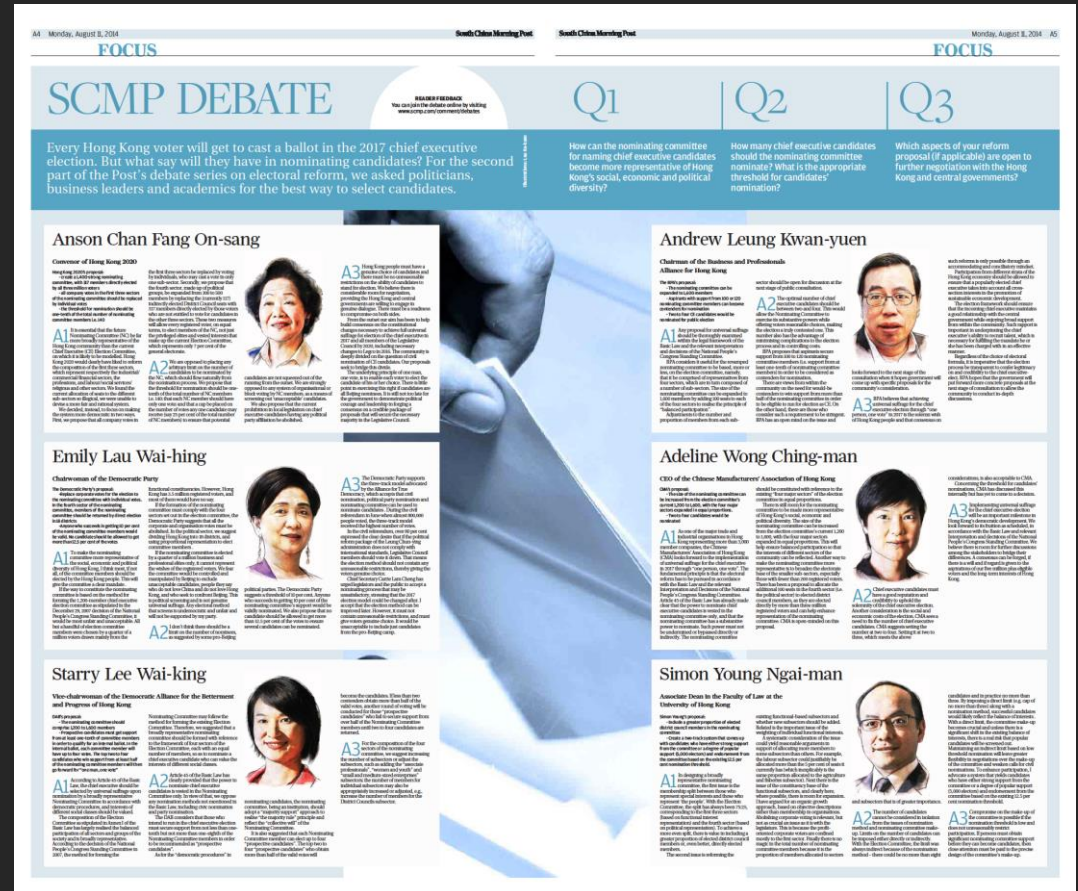
Indian brothers repeatedly raped Japanese tourist over three weeks

BUSINESS

Bank of America fired HK banker to avoid paying bonus, judge rules

Occupy Central debate series

- Two debates series were developed for both print and scmp.com that created a platform for lawmakers, academics and stakeholders to share opinion on key Occupy Central issues.
- The series, among other things, reinforced SCMP as the voice of reasons and the independent voice of China. Coverage that balances opinion from both for and against camps.



SCMP.tv videos

In addition to supplementing videos to print or online stories, SCMP video team also developed a number of videos that examined specific Occupy Central topics such as police brutality, use of tear gas as well as in-depth interviews with key players such as student movement leader Joshua Wong (one of Time magazine's "25 Most Influential Teens of 2014").



SCMP cartoonist

SCMP's satirical cartoonist, Harry Harrison, kept his eye on Occupy Central with his own blend of wit and irony in these cheeky daily sketches.



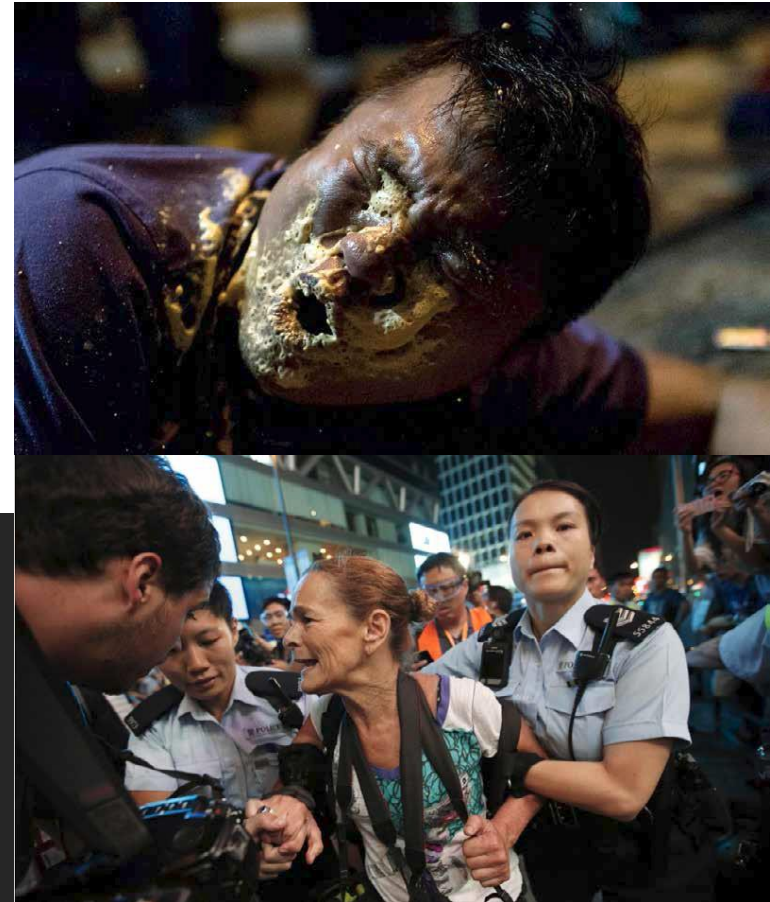
Content marketing strategy

With such in-demand content building up at SCMP, this pool of news stories is well-timed ammunition for a content marketing drive to expand SCMP's targeted client base.

An aggressive content marketing plan was launched to heighten awareness of the coverage in association with the SCMP brand.

Highlights:

- Occupy Central ebooks
- Social media – facebook, twitter
- Biweekly e-newsletter
- Online ads
- Blogs



Content marketing Occupy Central eBooks

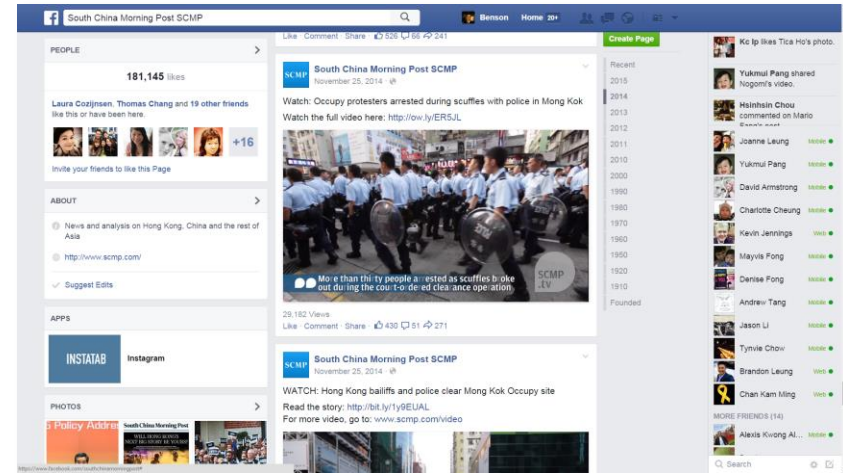
Titled *How The Umbrella Movement Unfolded*, the two books chronicle the Occupy Central stories starting from 16 Jan 2013, the day that the civil disobedience movement was given a name (Occupy Central) and a voice (Mr. Benny Tai Yiu-ting).

Free download for existing subscribers and new registrants.



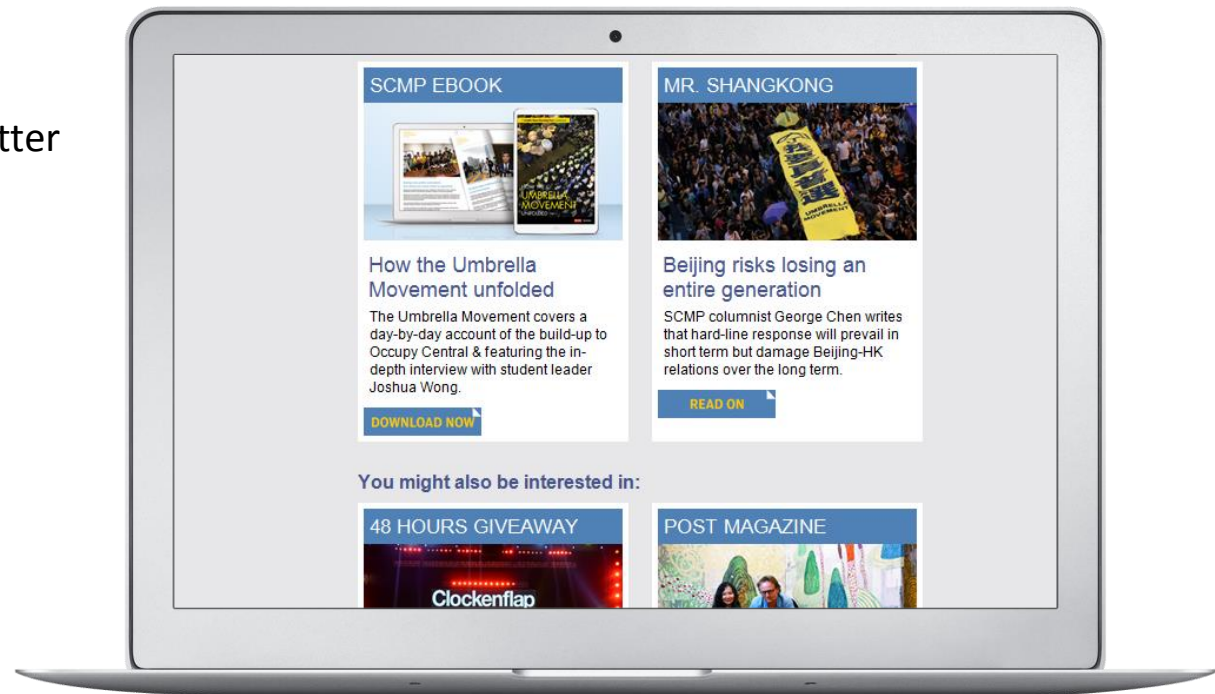
Content marketing Social media

A concerted effort was made that played up key Occupy Central stories on social media platforms, drawing hundreds of instant likes, shares and comments.



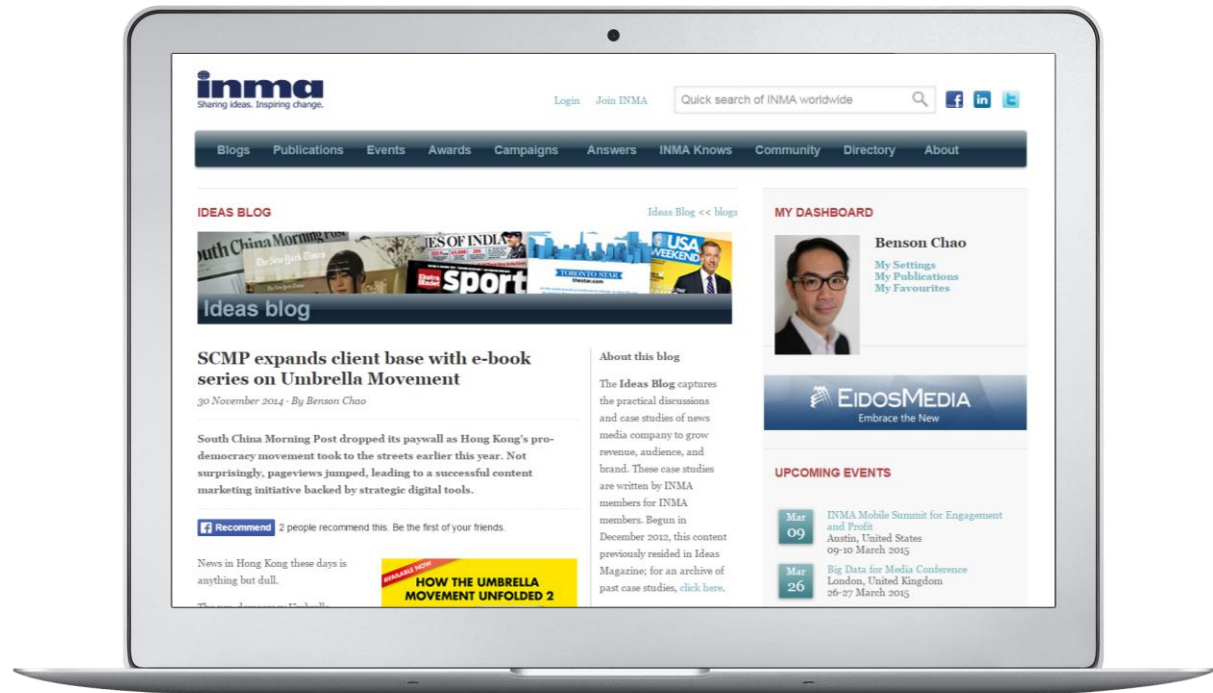
Content marketing Biweekly e-newsletter

Curated Occupy Central stories are highlighted in SCMP's biweekly e-newsletter and further drawing subscribers and registered users to scmp.com.



Content marketing Blogs

Thoughts on SCMP's Occupy Central were shared on INMA Idea Blogs.



Online promotion

An assortment of online ads were created and rotated prominently at scmp.com, iOS & Android platforms. Some examples are:



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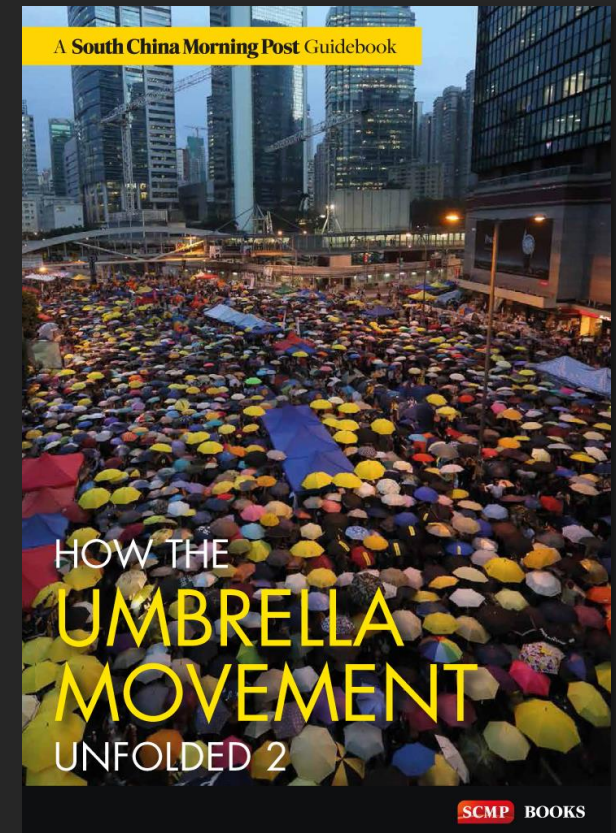


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eBook

A 2-part eBook “How the Umbrella Movement unfolded” was developed and promoted across our platforms.



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HOW THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT UNFOLDED

« FEATURING »
In-depth interview with
Joshua Wong

“Fast-paced, comprehensive, unbiased”

Download this FREE eBook now!

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Make every day matter

HOW THE UMBRELLA MOVEMENT UNFOLDED

A day-by-day account of the buildup to Occupy Central



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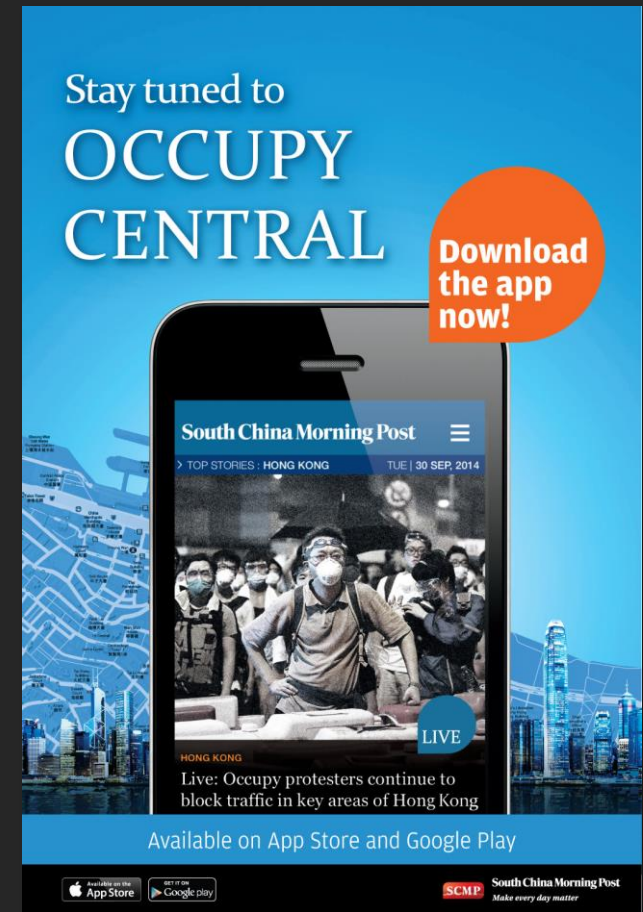
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SCMP mobile app

We also employed print and digital channels to drive readers to download our SCMP app.



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