


BBC online gets newsy

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The redesigned [BBC news website](#) is looking good and works well. It has a much more newsy feel with a clearer profile for the top stories. The Zimbabwe elections give it a model developing story to test the new format and it seems to respond smartly. 

On the front page there is good use of pictures and a clear top line. Click through on Zimbabwe and you get lots of different analysis and background data. You can view video and audio and there are excellent links to an interesting range of Zim bloggers and ample opportunity to interact. I couldn't spot any new functions but this is more about the look than gimmicks. So no evidence of any advance on the [networked](#) journalism front at the BBC, but that will happen behind the scenes anyway.

Overall the front page is much lighter and brighter, but if you want a decent read then the stories are written long where it is needed. We'll see how it goes with time but it feels stylistically up to date, modern and accessible without losing authority or sophistication.

Not everyone likes it, there are apparently all sorts of technical issues that have got certain [experts](#) up in arms. Here's the BBC's [response](#) to the criticisms.

 It's interesting to compare it with some newspapers online offerings. [The Guardian](#), for example, has much less resource than the BBC although it does have the excellent insight of [Simon Tisdall](#) and the keen eye of correspondent Chris McGreal. But it still offers a wide range of text, audio, stills, blogs, analysis, history and background as well as the usual perky interactivity of [Comment Is Free](#). (Although I am disappointed that they couldn't find a pro-Mugabe pundit to blog – that would have got things going).

Zimbabwe is also a massive story for the [Telegraph](#) which has campaigned harder than most against Mugabe. Oddly, their website is leading on Diana which feels a bit Express-like and also a little dated. Zim is the breaking story tonight so I am surprised that they aren't topping on that. There is a bit of video and some background but it is not all-singing and dancing in the way that the BBC and the Guardian have made so much of the fact that they are online and live.

But overall, it is clear when you look at a story like Zimbabwe that these websites are all now competitive and providing a rich and converging diet of multi-platform media.

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