

Different voice, same language

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2006-11-15

[Aljazeera](#) International launches today as the English version of the famous Arab news station based in Qatar. Indeed, it refers to itself on the website as “Aljazeera English”, which, when you think about it, is weird. When Aljazeera’s Chief Investigative Correspondent Yosri Fouda gave a [POLIS](#) lecture last month he wished his sister channel well and was confident it would be a big hit. But he also wished that the resources being ploughed into the English version were going to his Arabic original, which celebrates ten years of broadcasting this month, too. Another voice in the world is a thing to be welcomed – especially as Aljazeera English claims it will give a perspective from the developing world and the Arab and Muslim worlds that is not heard in mainstream Western media.

And yet, I know from my own experience of losing many colleagues, that the new channel will be heavily staffed by journalists drawn precisely from that Western mainstream media. I look forward to hearing from them how it goes and just how different it is.

Aljazeera was originally the creation of former BBC Arab Service journalists so the fact that so many British hacks are involved in the latest Aljazeera enterprise is part of a tradition, but with the broadcasts in English will it be able to keep its distinctive voice?

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