A website that publishes false information, conspiracy theories, and articles that advance an undisclosed agenda opposing the Chinese government and favoring the Trump administration.

Ownership and Financing

TheBl.com does not clearly disclose its ownership. The website's Terms of Service page identifies a company called "Beauty of Life Inc., also known as The BL." The CEO of that company, Trung Vu, previously served as the CEO of the Vietnamese edition of The Epoch Times, an international newspaper founded by Chinese-American practitioners of the Falun Gong, a spiritual practice that has been banned in China.

The U.S. fact-checking site Snopes reported on other connections between The BL and The Epoch Times in October 2019, reporting that one of the directors named in The BL's parent company's registration, John Nania, had also served as editor-in-chief of The Epoch Times' English edition from 2004 to 2015. At least 10 of approximately 30 editorial staffers listed on TheBl.com have previously worked for The Epoch Times, including The BL's political editor and its editor-in-chief.

A BL staff member who declined to be identified told NewsGuard in November 2018 that Epoch Media Group does not own TheBL.com, but declined to identify its owner.

The site runs advertising.

Content

TheBl.com states on its About Us page that the mission of The BL, which stands for The Beauty of Life, is "preserving the world's most beautiful aspects of life, with a focus on fundamental moral standards and the values of the authentic cultures of all humanity." The site also states that it aims "to improve mankind's moralities through our exceptional articles."

Articles typically focus on U.S. politics and culture, along with science-related content. Sections include U.S., World, Politics, Culture, and Business. Typical articles have run under headlines such as "US says China hacking increasing ahead of Trump-Xi meeting," "The Surprising Story of the First Thanksgiving," and "German lady travels 55 countries to find truth of life."

The website publishes seven different editions of the website in English, Chinese, Spanish, Malay, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Portuguese.

Credibility

The BL's articles are typically based on reporting by other news outlets, including Fox News, Reuters, The New York Times, and several local newspapers and television stations. Articles also frequently embed Facebook and Twitter posts by celebrities, politicians, and members of the public.

The website regularly publishes debunked conspiracy theories, paranormal claims, and hoaxes.

For example, in January 2020, The BL published an article titled "CDC urges Americans to just say 'No' if friend offers them coronavirus, WHO says global risk of Wuhan virus is 'high.'" The article reported that a medical officer from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warned during a press conference that young people were purposefully spreading the disease because it is "cool." According to the site, the CDC official said that "While it may seem cool to be seen around the park or the mall with a runny nose and hacking cough, there are very real negative side effects to experimenting with this virus." The article went on to report warnings about the virus from the World Health Organization (WHO).

While the portion of the article that quoted WHO's warnings was accurate, and came from an NBC News report, the CDC official's comments were fabricated by The Onion, a satire site. TheBl.com's article, however, presented the CDC official's made-up statements as news.

In September 2019, TheBl.com published an article titled "Fire did not destroy World Trade Center Building 7 on Sept. 11, scientific study reveals." The article reported on a study conducted by "the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) in association with Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth," which determined that fire had not caused the collapse of 7 World Trade Center during the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. Building 7 has been a frequent focus for conspiracy theorists who believe that the collapse of the building, which was not hit by one of the two hijacked jetliners, can be attributed to other causes.

The study cited by The BL was funded by Architects & Engineers for 9/11 Truth, a group that has promoted a theory that the collapse was the result of a controlled demolition. The notion of a "controlled demolition" was directly refuted by, among other investigations, the exhaustive 2008 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) World Trade Center Investigation, which determined that the
building was "brought down primarily by uncontrolled fires" and did so in a "progressive collapse."

The article also asserts that there is evidence that points to "a possible complicity of some elements of the government in the attack," and cites details such as the fact that then-President George W. Bush's brother Marvin worked with a company that provided security for the World Trade Center. While Marvin Bush served on the board of directors of a company then known as Securacom, which had the trade center as its client, Bush left the company a year before the 9/11 attacks. The 9/11 Commission and all federal investigations have also clearly identified the perpetrators of the attack as Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaeda terror network.

In June 2013, The BL published "The Bermuda Triangle - A portal to another dimension." The article reported that the Bermuda Triangle, a large area of the Atlantic Ocean popularly associated with the disappearance of airplanes and ships, "could be nothing less than a portal to another dimension." The article supported its theory by stating that "Many physicists believe that there are numerous universes as well as multiple dimensions" and that "the (Bermuda) portals could be a step toward another dimension." The article did not cite any specific scientists who supported this position.

There is no evidence that vessels are more likely to disappear in the Bermuda Triangle than any other large patch of sea. The UK's Daily Telegraph newspaper reported in December 2013 that, when insurance market Lloyd's of London investigated losses in the Bermuda Triangle, "they found no evidence to suggest that they were higher than in any other area of ocean. The United States Coast Guard concurred: it said that losses over the years have been negligible when compared to the number of vessels and airplanes that regularly traverse the area."

Because TheBL.com publishes false and unverified content, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false content, fails to gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid the use of deceptive headlines.

The BL features a dedicated Opinion section for opinion articles, as well as an "In Great Minds" section for essays. However, the site does not articulate an overall political point of view, and its coverage consistently includes unlabeled opinion that is critical of the Chinese Communist Party's agenda, and also favorable to U.S. President Trump, who has taken a critical view of China.

For example, a February 2020 article in the World News section, "Communist Party officials lie to the world to cover up real number of deaths from coronavirus," stated that "The Chinese Communist Party has been deliberately lying to the world about the number of deaths due to the coronavirus. Not surprising, given their history of coverups."

A December 2019 World News article, "Chinese Communist Party instructs religious leaders to rewrite the Bible and the Quran to suit party ideals," stated that "China is about to set a dangerous precedent. They plan to change the word of God, twisting words and meanings to suit their communist ideals."

Coverage of President Trump is regularly supportive. A November 2019 article that appeared in the Politics section was headlined, "When Obama looks bad, not President Trump, news suddenly becomes not worth reporting." A November 2018 video, called "Who are you going to vote for?" argued that voting for Republicans in the November 2018 midterms would mean economic growth, while suggesting that voting for Democrats would lead to riots.

Because TheBL.com publishes unlabeled opinion, often from an undisclosed perspective that is critical of the Chinese government and supportive of President Trump, NewsGuard has determined that TheBL.com fails to handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

The site has a "BL Corrections Policy and Practice" page, which states that "Our relevant staff are all made aware upon hire that errors should not be corrected in the copy without noting a correction at the same time because to do otherwise could lead to confusion, allegations of trying to sweep problems under the rug, and a reduction in trust between the BL and our audience."

Despite this policy, NewsGuard could not find corrections to TheBL.com stories, although the website posts corrections from outside providers, such as The Associated Press.

The BL's editor-in-chief, Orynia McCabe, exchanged emails with NewsGuard in February 2020, but did not respond to NewsGuard's questions on the site's publication of false content, failure to issue corrections, and its mixing of news and opinion. The website also did not respond to NewsGuard's inquiries in 2018.

**Transparency**

The site does not disclose its ownership.

Articles on TheBL.com typically name their authors and link to an author page, which features the author's other articles, some biographical information, and contact details. An Our staff page names the website's top editors and other staff, and links to their author pages.

Advertising is distinguishable from editorial content.

The BL's editor-in-chief, Orynia McCabe, exchanged emails with NewsGuard in February 2020, but did not respond to NewsGuard's questions on the site's failure to disclose ownership. The website also did not respond to NewsGuard's inquiries in 2018.
TheBL.com was founded in March 2016, according to its About Us page. Beauties of Life was incorporated in June 2016.

Corrections: An earlier version of this label misstated the number of languages in which the site is available. The correct number is seven.

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on Feb. 17, 2020, and its rating has changed to reflect NewsGuard’s determination that TheBL.com now meets NewsGuard’s standards for revealing who is in charge and for providing information about content creators, but does not meet its standard for avoiding deceptive headlines. This Nutrition Label was updated in 2019 to reflect NewsGuard’s determination that the website clearly labels advertising.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard:  Click Here

Sources

Ownership and Financing
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