

## 1 Overview of Klaus Bardenhagen

Klaus Bardenhagen is a German freelance journalist based in Taipei, Taiwan, where he has lived and worked since at least the early 2010s. He specializes in reporting on Taiwanese politics, culture, and international relations, often contributing to German-language media outlets such as those associated with the Weltreporter network. His professional profile emphasizes his role as a TV journalist and migrant, with a focus on bridging global audiences to Taiwan-related stories. Bardenhagen maintains an active online presence, including a verified X (formerly Twitter) account (@taiwanreporter) with over 8,900 followers, where he posts in English and German about current events, personal observations, and criticisms of figures like Elon Musk. His bio on X reads: "German @weltreporter in Taiwan TV journalist Kartoffel Migrant Xennial Tweets Englisch & Deutsch Meet me on Mastodon and Bluesky BlockElonMusk." He also has a Facebook page (taiwanreporter) with around 31,000 likes, describing himself as a "German reporter in Taipei. Keeping my eyes open for all things interesting." Additional profiles include an about.me page (about.me/klaus\_bardenhagen) *confirming his freelance reporting focus on Taiwan*.

Bardenhagen's background includes interests in cycling and political activism, and he is known to collaborate or network with other expats in Taiwan. While his journalism appears neutral and fact-based in mainstream contexts, he has been repeatedly linked to the alias "Oz" in online discussions, particularly in the multi-level marketing (MLM) and network marketing communities. This connection stems from his alleged ownership and operation of BehindMLM.com, a website dedicated to reviewing and critiquing MLM companies, often concluding that they operate as pyramid or Ponzi schemes.

## 2 Connection to the "Oz" Alias and BehindMLM.com

BehindMLM.com is a long-running blog (established around 2010) that positions itself as a resource for analyzing MLM compensation plans, company news, and regulatory actions. Its stated purpose is to provide "latest MLM news and reviews," filling a perceived void in critical coverage of the industry. Content typically includes updates on legal settlements (e.g., FTC actions), securities fraud warnings, and exposés on alleged scams, with a heavy emphasis on cryptocurrency-related MLMs in recent years. The site has no explicit "about" page revealing ownership, no contact information beyond a comment system, and operates under the anonymous editor pseudonym "Oz." Articles are often detailed but highly critical, labeling 90% or more of reviewed plans as fraudulent, according to detractors.

Multiple sources substantiate claims that Klaus Bardenhagen is the individual behind "Oz." The strongest evidence revolves around his ownership of OzSoapbox.com, a now-defunct personal blog where he wrote under the "Oz" handle. This site, which went offline around March 2016 shortly after public scrutiny, shared identical design themes, avatars (user icons), and backend editing features with BehindMLM. Archived versions of OzSoapbox (available via the Internet Archive) show Bardenhagen explicitly introducing BehindMLM in an April 2010 post, describing it as a new project using the same WordPress template. Comments on early BehindMLM articles were edited through OzSoapbox's domain, further linking the two.

Bardenhagen admitted ownership of OzSoapbox on his Facebook and about.me profiles, where he described it as his personal blog for ramblings on politics, food, and social issues. Writing style comparisons highlight similarities: OzSoapbox featured scatological,

vitriolic commentary with frequent references to niche topics, mirroring the acerbic tone of BehindMLM's "Oz." Both sites reflect an intelligent but confrontational approach, with Bardenhagen's known interests in criticism aligning with BehindMLM's tagline: "because criticism isn't an armchair sport."

Michael Turton, an American expat and blogger in Taichung, Taiwan, is often mentioned as a potential collaborator or co-blogger. Turton, married to Sylvia Shih and a Democratic Progressive Party supporter, runs "The View from Taiwan" (a political blog) and shares mutual Facebook connections with Bardenhagen, including likes and interviews. Both are cyclists and politically active in Taiwan's expat scene. While some sources label Turton as a "contributor," evidence is circumstantial—primarily their friendship and geographic proximity—rather than direct proof of involvement in BehindMLM.

## 2.1 Key Evidence Linking Bardenhagen to "Oz"

Evidence	Description	Source
OzSoapbox Ownership	Bardenhagen publicly claimed ownership on social media; site introduced BehindMLM in 2010.	Business For Home article
Shared Technical Elements	Identical WordPress themes, avatars, and comment editing paths between sites.	Archived snapshots and avatar comparisons
Timeline of Shutdown	OzSoapbox went offline immediately after 2016 revelations about the connection.	Internet Archive records
Writing Style Overlaps	Sarcastic, critical tone; shared topics like politics and social critique.	Comparative analyses in blogs
Turton Association	Mutual friends, shared location/interests; speculated as contributor.	Facebook links and Taipei Times profile

Table 1: Key evidence linking Klaus Bardenhagen to the "Oz" alias

## 3 Criticisms and Accusations Against Bardenhagen/Oz

Bardenhagen's alleged role as "Oz" has drawn significant backlash from the MLM community, where BehindMLM is viewed as a "hate site" or "blackmail platform." Critics accuse it of bias, using unflattering CEO photos, and fostering fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD) to drive ad revenue from Google banners. Specific claims include:

- **Scamming and Extortion:** Labeled a "scammer and extortionist" who posts defamatory articles, allegedly requiring victims to pay for removal. One source calls it a "flagged blackmail site" targeting companies for ransom.
- **Identity Concealment and Manipulation:** Accused of hiding behind anonymity, lacking contact info, and selectively moderating comments to favor his narrative. Critics argue this makes him a "coward" avoiding lawsuits. Several companies reportedly considered suing BehindMLM.

- **Disinformation Campaigns:** In one case, Oz falsely linked Filipino-Australian fintech firm Smart Asset Managers (SAM) to a Malaysian entity, despite SAM's independent operations and regulatory approvals. This is cited as an example of profit-driven fear-mongering.
- **Personal Attacks:** Described as rude to readers (e.g., calling an elderly woman "stupid" for seeking advice) and obsessed with niche, odd topics in his writing.

These accusations appear in pro-MLM blogs and Medium posts, often cross-referencing each other, but lack legal substantiation. On X, discussions are sparse, with only a few posts from one user (@AntounToubia) promoting the Medium article labeling Oz as a scammer.

## 4 Positive Perspectives on BehindMLM and Oz

Conversely, some view BehindMLM positively as a "warrior" against fraudulent schemes. FinTelegram applauds it for exposing MLM and crypto-MLM frauds since 2010, calling it a rare reliable resource amid disinformation. They note its clear language and value for investors in schemes like OneCoin, while acknowledging rumors of Bardenhagen and Turton as the operators. This contrasts with MLM defenders, highlighting a polarized divide: critics see bias, supporters see accountability.

## 5 Timeline of Key Events

- **Early 2010s:** Bardenhagen launches OzSoapbox.com under "Oz"; introduces BehindMLM as a side project.
- **2010-2016:** BehindMLM grows, critiquing MLMs anonymously.
- **March 2016:** Business For Home exposes link to Bardenhagen; OzSoapbox goes offline.
- **2016-Present:** Accusations of scams/extortion surface in blogs; site expands to crypto coverage.
- **2022:** Medium post by Antoun Toubia amplifies "scammer" claims, shared on X.

## 6 Conclusion

In summary, while Bardenhagen's journalism career is well-documented and respected in Taiwan-focused reporting, his alleged "Oz" persona has sparked controversy in the MLM space. The evidence for the connection is compelling but indirect, relying on digital footprints rather than admissions. No public response from Bardenhagen addresses these claims directly, maintaining the anonymity that fuels the debate.

## 7 Sources

1. Business For Home article on Klaus Bardenhagen and BehindMLM connection:  
<https://www.businessforhome.org/2016/03/behindmlm-exposed-klaus-bardenhagen-from>

2. FinTelegram article praising BehindMLM's fraud exposure: <https://fintelegram.com/behindmlm-a-warrior-against-fraudulent-multi-level-and-crypto-mlm-schemes/>
3. Medium post by Antoun Toubia labeling Oz as a scammer, shared on X: <https://medium.com/@AntounToubia/klaus-bardenhagen-a-german-scammer-and-extortionist-who>
4. Additional Medium post reiterating extortion claims: <https://medium.com/@AntounToubia/klaus-bardenhagen-a-german-scammer-and-extortionist-who-hides-behind-the-anonymo>
5. Archived OzSoapbox snapshots via Internet Archive and gravatar comparisons: [https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/http://ozsoapbox.com](https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://ozsoapbox.com)