



Centre for International  
Communications Research

**Papers in International and Global Communication**

**No. 01/06**

ISSN 1752-1793

May 2006

**News Agency Dominance  
in International News on the Internet**

Chris Paterson

## Introduction

This paper examines the intersection of news agency political economy and cyberspace information exchange between 2001 and 2006 in an effort to determine if online news has corrected - or replicated - the inequities and limitations of the international journalism provided by "traditional media." This is an attempt to explore longstanding concerns about news flow and the possibility of cultural imperialism within the new media context, but it is an attempt necessarily limited by the difficulty of describing a rapidly changing phenomenon. Despite such limitations, this research finds an online news environment with little real information diversity - a situation sharply at odds with a decade and a half of fervour for the democratising potential of new media.<sup>1</sup>

This project combines research into the recent history of the Internet news industry with a longitudinal content analysis designed to measure the extent of source concentration and how it has changed during the period in question. This period has seen the emergence of the news aggregation industry and with it a somewhat disguised reliance on a surprisingly limited set of news organisations, even as that industry offers news consumers the illusion of information diversity and an endless range of perspectives.

The popularity of internet news has steadily climbed since it became commonplace a decade ago, and by some indicators, seems now to have levelled off. For simplicity, I refer to US data here, although the trends described in this paper are international. By 2000, 23% of Americans reported online news was their main news source, a figure which had increased ten percentage points in two years.<sup>2</sup> By 2004, about 42% of Americans reported they "have at some time gotten news online" (Pew, 2005). Other surveys put the number as high as 60% of US adults. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project<sup>3</sup>, "50 million Americans turn to the internet for news on a typical day." The Pew researchers argued, "News organizations have made news sites more attractive and rich with content in recent years." This paper counters that analyses of this sort are falling for a conjurer's trick - being duped by more brand labels on the same very limited news content.

Surveys show a continuing loss of audience by television and print, but at a slower rate than at any time in the preceding decade (State of the News Media, 2005). Determining precisely what online news audiences read is not straightforward. Ratings services determine time spent with the websites of leading companies, but generally do not report how much of that time was spent

---

<sup>1</sup> I am not the first to call such hype into question. For a review of many early critiques, see Aufderheide (1998).

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Centre For The People and The Press "Internet News: More Log On, Tune Out" (June 11, 2001) <people-press.org>

<sup>3</sup> This was based on a telephone survey of 3000 US adults.

specifically with the news pages of those companies.<sup>4</sup> The Project for Excellence in Journalism (State of the News Media, 2005) explained online news exposure in this way:

Consider ... the millions of people who every day look at MSN.com, AOL.com, Yahoo.com - those three portal homepages alone - and see news headlines. The users may not be going online to read news, but they get it. Using news as a feature to draw and keep users has long been a key element of portal strategy ...

This project specifically examines the period from 2001 to 2006, not because it is the “post-9/11” era which many have pointed to as an era of significant change (Allan and Zelizer, 2002), but because it is a distinct period of maturation in the online news industry as represented by key milestones. These include the dramatic economic shakeout in the industry which occurred in 2001 as a result of the burst “dot com bubble” - a short period which saw hundreds of online journalists made redundant and the (more or less) current shape of the industry emerge; the clear formulation of new media strategies by the leading news agencies, which have significantly shaped the current online news environment; and the beginnings of new models for online news distribution which have challenged and, in some cases, reinforced previously identifiable trends in news flow. Google News is especially significant in regard to the final point.

This period has seen the widespread adoption of broadband, and studies have linked this with substantially increased online news use (State of the News Media, 2005; Pew, 2005). It is also a period which has seen several of the major news websites, such as MSNBC and the New York Times, move from being loss leaders, “willing to lose \$200-300 million yearly,” and sustained by massive subsidy (McChesney, 2000) to profit makers. Conveniently, examination of this period permits the author to incorporate qualitative analysis comparing online content at its beginning and end.

At the outset of a book chapter describing the 2001 analysis from this project (Paterson, 2005), I asked if media convergence and the migration of news consumers to the Internet democratise information flow - as conventional wisdom suggests - or simply disguise a steady reduction in information diversity. Here I seek to approach the problem more definitively. The hypothesis of reduction of information diversity saw preliminary support from my 1999 and 2001 data, and other academic and industry reports. And so I pose the following hypothesis for testing through longitudinal analysis:

---

<sup>4</sup> While I continue to look, I have not yet encountered more precise data of this kind and suspect that it could only be obtained through a large scale survey of the online news audience which is beyond the means of the current project. This and other limitations restrict the precision of this study, but I believe the general trends I identify are well supported by the evidence currently available.

In the last five years, international news flow on the Internet has increased in apparent diversity of original reporting but decreased or remained static in actual diversity of original reporting.

An early objective of this research was to test the thesis of Sarker, Butler, and Steinfield (1995) who questioned early predictions regarding internet commerce that intermediary information processors would fade from view given the opportunity in cyberspace for producers to reach consumers directly - the process of "disintermediation." They reasonably suggested that "cybermediaries" were taking on the intermediary role. The early findings of the present research, based on analysis of internet news content in 1999 and 2001, indicated that this was mostly true in the international news arena, with a few news portals emerging as the dominant news cybermediaries, and original content producers accepting a less public role. Those studies showed that even the most prominent content producers for news online, like Time Warner (*CNN Interactive*) or Microsoft/General Electric (*MSNBC*), were, in regard to international news, mostly playing a cybermediary role – conveying with little editing or original journalism the news stories written by wire services.

A crucial development of the past five years is that the online news sector is now more evenly split between the cybermediaries of e-journalism<sup>5</sup> (Paterson, 1999), and fully disintermediated producers of original content distributing content directly to news consumers - in accordance with those earliest predictions about internet commerce.

That is one layer of a more complex cake. Another is the remarkable phenomenon of a now mature news aggregation industry, containing news sites such as *Yahoo*, *Altavista*, *Google* and *Excite*, where a few original producers of content provide the lion's share of the international news for those aggregators, despite the audacious pretence of source diversity which each promotes. Most of the online news audience spends most of their time with a small number of websites, mostly in the guise of news aggregators, and this study confirms that those sites mostly relay news from the same few sources.

While there had been little detailed analysis of these trends, comment and concern about them has become increasingly apparent among industry commentators. In a recent example, Matt Welch of the Online Journalism Review complained, "... as two or three wire services emerge as dominant content providers to news organizations that don't want to spend money on bureaus

---

<sup>5</sup> The term has been variously defined since, but at the outset of this project seven years ago I referred to "e-journalism" as a transactional relationship between news producers and news consumers, which takes place through electronic networks. It need not be a monetary transaction; any provision of news on the Internet by a journalist who profits in some way by doing so, can be categorized as such a transaction. Such relationships of information exchange form a subset of electronic commerce (e-commerce). Paterson, 1999.

and travel, Internet readers are cheated out of different, more lively versions of events“ (Welch, 2002).

By 2001, it was apparent that the dominant online news providers were taking two main forms. The first were on-line media consisting mostly of the portal sites of major conglomerates, all relaying mostly news agency content to audiences. A portal is a website designed to serve as a web user’s home page and primary contact point with the internet. It is intended to make audience eyes “stick” to the advertising sold by the portal’s owner.

*Yahoo* was the first to develop a strategic relationship with the Reuters news agency in the mid-1990s to facilitate such sites, and their model was widely copied. The second type of provider were content-producing on-line media, which tended to combine original content (written by the company’s own journalists or commissioned for the company) with news agency content. That category included traditional media like the *BBC* or the *New York Times*, along with news companies which began on the web (*Nando Times* or *Out There News* are well known examples<sup>6</sup>).

By the end of the period in question, the term “news aggregator” had come into wide use, although it is deceptive. The aggregators may be portals or search engines which have developed mechanisms for retrieving, selecting, ranking, and linking to a massive amount of news posted to other parts of cyberspace. Some, like *Google News*, began this way, while others, like *Yahoo*, evolved from being mostly an online outlet of the wire services to an aggregator of news from what appear to be thousands of news outlets. The question of appearance is crucial, though, for this research demonstrates that despite such apparent choice international news still comes from few sources – the international news agencies.

## **News agencies**

My earlier research on news agencies, focusing on the Associated Press (AP)<sup>7</sup> and Reuters, supplemented the work of Boyd-Barrett (1980, 1998) and others, describing how increasing concentration of control over the global wholesale news system made the major news agencies more influential than they had ever been.<sup>8</sup> That is mostly the result of major television networks

---

<sup>6</sup> See Paterson, 2004, for more on *Out There News*.

<sup>7</sup> And the predecessor of Associated Press Television News, Worldwide Television News (WTN), which was taken over by AP in 1997.

<sup>8</sup> See Paterson 1998, 1996; Boyd-Barrett 1998. Analysis of news agencies remains sparse, and the wire service production process poorly understood. To date, there is only limited large-scale ethnographic research on news agencies, although its focus is only the television side of these institutions (Paterson, 1996). There have been several smaller ethnographic projects and

of the wealthiest nations curtailing their own reporting since the 1980s, and relying more on agencies as a result; that, in turn, was mostly the result of the determination of new corporate owners like Disney and General Electric that news divisions should pay their own way.<sup>9</sup>

Because new agencies must please all news editors, everywhere, they must work harder than their client journalists to create the appearance of objectivity and neutrality. In so doing, they manufacture a bland and homogeneous, but still ideologically distinctive, view of the world; stories challenging the ideological positions of the dominant political players on the world scene (in agency eyes, the US and UK) receive little attention.<sup>10</sup>

The news agency role is crucial for additional reasons. News agencies set the agenda for what international stories other media choose to carry through the choice of stories they distribute to clients and the amount of visuals provided (moving for TV, still for newspapers and magazines, and both for webcasters), and in the case of agency-provided TV pictures, the nature and amount of accompanying audio and textual information.<sup>11</sup> Global and regional news agencies are crucial due to their agenda-setting influence on other media, but have grown even more crucial as they increasingly bypass intermediary processors of news in cyberspace enabling them to directly reach - for the first time - a large portion of the mass news audience.

News agencies are often accused of producing a bland and predictable news product, devoid of colour and enterprise reporting and dependent on official sources and definitions of news. But in the realms they know best, like conflict zones and developing regions of the world, the news agencies frequently break stories other major media miss. Despite this, news agency research has demonstrated a highly constrained, homogenous content dictated by the ideological, structural, and cultural nature of these organisations (Paterson 1996; Cohen, et al, 1996; Hjarvard, 1995; Wallis & Baran, 1990).

---

important works on agencies employing other methodologies (Hjarvard, 1995b; Read, 1992; Boyd-Barrett and Thussu, 1992; Fenby, 1986; Boyd-Barrett, 1980). Portions of this section are drawn from Paterson, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Disney's lack of interest in news also helped to consolidate the agency sector, when they sold Worldwide Television News - the video agency with the longest history - to its new rival, Associated Press Television, in 1997 - leaving just AP and Reuters in the business of large scale multimedia international news delivery.

<sup>10</sup> For a more thorough analysis of news agency content, see Paterson, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> In television, broadcasters write their stories around the video these organizations offer, and if they are not offered video images, they will not report, or will minimize, an international story. Various studies of television newsrooms have shown that the availability of visual images is an important factor in determining whether a foreign news story is carried (Cohen et al., 1996; Helland, 1995; Rodriguez, 1996; Molina, 1990; Schlesinger, 1987).

## Online news distribution

The portals, aggregators, and search engines which are the leading online news providers have substantially merged into the same thing. In the last five years portals have transformed into aggregators in an effort to make the apparently enormous amount of news on the internet easily available to their audience – while keeping their audience at their sites.

There are two key distinctions. One is between sites that produce original content and those that don't, although Yahoo especially is blurring that distinction; and the other is between those with human control over news selection and those pioneering automated selection, of which *Google News* is the leader. *Google News* was created in 2002 amid great hype about its “automated editing,” but the service provides a range of news on multiple topics just at the more established online services did; it just provides far more of it. *Google News* explains itself this way<sup>12</sup>:

Our headlines are selected by computer algorithms, based on factors including how often and on what sites a story appears online. This is very much in the tradition of Google web search, which relies heavily on the collective judgment of online publishers to determine which sites offer the most valuable and relevant information. Similarly, Google News relies on the editorial judgment of online news organisations to determine which stories are most deserving of inclusion and prominence ...

When compared to the news selection underway at other mainstream news websites, *Google News* has been found to consistently pick the same stories (White, 2003).<sup>13</sup> Is this evidence of the genius of Google's algorithms, or evidence that journalists everywhere determine news importance more or less identically? Could it be evidence that the human editors at Yahoo and CNN are looking, from time to time, at other popular news services to see how they rank stories, and adjusting their rankings accordingly? Or, as this paper posits, could it be that the news agenda of all the popular online news services is substantially determined by the similar choices of two wire services? All are possibilities, but it is beyond the scope of the current study to provide a more definitive answer. There is a need for new research into the online news production process at the international level to answer such questions.

A Wall Street Journal writer complained that, “Google comes up with occasionally humorous results. It has featured parody news articles and reports by partisan political organizations as its top headlines, for example” (Delaney, 2005). A further intriguing point about *Google News* is that it includes a “personalised” option based on the “suggestions” component of Amazon's shopping service. It promises just the news each individual wants, based on their news viewing habits. Sunstein (2001) has pointed out the dangerously undemocratic trend toward excessive

---

<sup>12</sup> [http://news.google.co.uk/intl/en\\_uk/about\\_google\\_news.html#1](http://news.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/about_google_news.html#1)

<sup>13</sup> White reports on data gathered by [www.newsknife.com](http://www.newsknife.com).

personalisation of information gathering via the internet, whereby internet users limit their exposure to general public affairs information, reducing, or even eliminating, the possibility of a public sphere and polarising the public (also see Scott, 2005). In another form of critique, some speculate that the future of journalism lies with one, and only one, giant, personalised, and automated news gatherer through which everyone will learn about the world.<sup>14</sup> The trend toward “personalisation” and “customisation” is industry wide. As put by former Los Angeles Times new media columnist Gary Chapman, in an insightful prediction from 2001,

The idea that anyone with an e-commerce Web site could sell anything under the sun seems completely dead now ...The alternative seems to be a move toward closed networks, not unlike America Online, in which the user experience is guided, shaped and far more controlled -- something advertisers and online retailers are demanding (in Solomon, 2001).

Google News has yet to rival the more established portals. According to Nielsen/Netratings data, in 2004 Google News reached 6.3 million people, far below the news audience of the other major online news services (Hearn, 2005).

The premise of this paper, that sites like Google News could not exist without reproducing mostly news agency content, has been indirectly demonstrated through a lawsuit against Google. Google’s approach to news has riled the news agencies in a way that the other portals – who have mostly agreed to pay for a direct flow of stories from the news agencies – had not. In March, 2005, Agence France-Presse (AFP) announced a lawsuit in the United States and France against Google for continuously breaching their copyright. The suit was for 17.5 million dollars. Google quickly agreed to remove all AFP content from the site.<sup>15</sup> The suit has not yet come to trial, but is likely to have a significant impact on news aggregation services and news agencies. Currently, Google has agreed to provide AFP with samples of its news content over the past three years (Cozens, 2005; Washington Internet Daily, 2006).

Google’s position is that “news headlines” – the only portion of the AFP content Google claims to display – are not protected by copyright, but this has never been stated by US courts. Google has, however, also displayed AFP sub headlines and images, a practice it has failed to defend as clearly. Google also argues that their linking to AFP content at the websites of AFP clients brings

---

<sup>14</sup> This dark vision has been popularized in an online movie entitled EPIC 2014, by Robin Sloan and Matt Thompson (<http://www.robinsloan.com/epic/>).

<sup>15</sup> Neither AFP nor Google has explained how AFP material located in the stories of thousands of media outlets linked to Google News could be identified or removed.

profit, not loss, to AFP, which increases the possibility of the American courts seeing aggregation as “fair use” of copyrighted material.<sup>16</sup>

In 2005, AFP claimed to sell its material to about 600 online clients. AP claimed around the same time to sell its material to 15,000 news organisations, 300 of which are online news companies including AOL, MSN, and Yahoo. Soon after AFP’s announcement of a suit against Google, AP announced that it would start charging clients who post its material online, stating that “news outlets that buy AP’s news, sports, business and entertainment coverage have been allowed to ‘re-purpose’ the same material online at no extra cost since 1995” (Liedtke, 2005). AP’s own announcement about the price increase admitted that the issue is contentious since AP is owned by many of the same newspapers doing the “re-purposing,” and that the news agency was founded neither to compete with them, nor to make a profit. Some in the online news industry claimed AP was sowing the seeds of its own demise (Benz and Phillips, 2005). A few months later, AP quietly dropped the plan and claimed to build an online usage fee into its standard subscription, although that rate did not increase more than it had in previous years (Madore, 2005).

### **Increasing concentration**

Based on industry data circulating as early as 1999, commentators were declaring, “the World Wide Web, widely thought of as an endless myriad of choice, appears to be shrinking” (BBC, 1999). Industry surveys of online use were demonstrating that Internet users spent their time with the websites of fewer and fewer corporations, despite seemingly endless industry growth. Industry rating service MediaMetrix reported in 1999 that US web users “spend almost 20% of their time on the Web visiting only the top 10 sites”, up from 16% a year earlier. Further, “the amount of time spent at the top 50 and 100 sites has risen even more since 1998” (ibid).

By 2001 MediaMetrix was reporting that US web users spend more than 50% of their time online with websites owned by four companies: AOL, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Napster (CNN, 2001;

---

<sup>16</sup> It is a conflicting defence: Google is at the same time saying the AFP words they publish are not protected by copyright; but if they are, it is legal to use them given the fair use clause. AFP counters the claim that they benefit financially by noting their longstanding dependence on subscriptions. Other aggregators, including *Yahoo* and *AOL*, pay AFP for the use of its content, but it remains unclear whether such payment includes only stories obtained directly from AFP, or if it additionally includes the stories of other media which contain AFP text (Jones, 2006). *Yahoo* claims to pay some news services for content, including the major agencies, but to use many others “informally” (*Washington Internet Daily*, 2006). One industry newsletter reports that most aggregators do not pay for content (ibid). Earlier this year, the World Association of Newspapers announced that it would examine “options regarding copyright infringement by search engines and news aggregates” (Jones, 2006).

Solomon, 2001). An analyst from MediaMetrix, suggested these results, "show an irrefutable trend toward online consolidation and indicate that the playing field is anything but even." (CNN, 2001). The top news sites correspond almost precisely to the top media companies worldwide. The top twenty companies by revenue include Time Warner at the top, Viacom, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, and the New York Times (Advertising Age, 2003).

Despite the ability of the major international conglomerates to dominate online news since the earliest days of the World Wide Web, there seemed a time that the future of several of their news operations was in doubt. As the "dot com bubble" burst in the 2001, several of the major firms eliminated any efforts at original journalism, giving rise to the now dominant aggregation model.

In January, 2001, Disney closed its internet division branded "*Go.com*." This was despite the fact that Disney's 'Internet Group' was the eighth most visited online corporation. Ultimately, the *Go* brand was revived, but dropped its original content and news editing, shifting news visitors directly to *ABC.com* and acting as a content aggregator. This was apparently an attempt to placate investors who wondered why Disney paid staff to collect stories at *Go* and at *ABC*. But *ABC News* online was also significantly cut at the same time (as many major news organisations remarkably carried out massive staff cuts around the same time as the story of the decade: the 9/11 attacks, and the beginning of the endless "war on terror") (Hu and Olsen, 2002). *Go* has become somewhat more sophisticated since, in an apparent attempt to recapture its original place as a multi-purpose consumer home page.<sup>17</sup>

During the same 2001-2002 period, Time Warner and News Corporation also made substantial cutbacks and reorganised the management of their news websites. News Corporation's news site for the US, *Foxnews.com*, was originally part of News Corporation's internet division. But News Corp, as with Disney, decided against online consolidation and decided to place its news site under the direction of its popular cable television news service, Fox News, which, by 2001, had become the dominant cable news channel in the US (Wilbert, 2004).

Remarkably, the annual State of the American News Media study reported in 2005 that "62% of Internet journalists said their newsrooms have suffered recent cutbacks, almost twice the 37% of national print, TV and radio journalists to report that their newsrooms have suffered cutbacks" (State of the News Media, 2005). The general trend since 2001 seems to be away from investment in online news, even as the quantity and scope of online news providers has increased.

### **The top online news sources**

---

<sup>17</sup> For analysis of Disney's troubles with *Go* see Blevins (2004).

The analysis of what news a few online companies offer audiences<sup>18</sup> would be less consequential if the original hopes for the internet had been fulfilled. If news readers pursued a wide range of sources, as they can do, the focus on a few would be, at least, less urgent. But the online news audience has demonstrated over the past decade that it will not behave according to utopian predictions. Instead, it behaves as it always had with old media - it identifies (with the guidance of powerful marketing directed its way) a few favourite channels of information, and develops a loyalty to these that is extraordinary in view of the potential for taking in a wider view of the world.

As they always have, most Internet users consume news from just a few sources. In 2001, it was reported that one third of the time US net users spent online was with AOL Time Warner websites. When confined to home, versus business, use, the number rose to 75%.<sup>19</sup> A 2003 Nielson/Netratings ranking listed the top "Current Events & Global News Sites" (limiting its survey to US services) as follows. I have added the corporate owner's name to illustrate how some major conglomerates operate more than one major site:

1. <i>MSNBC</i>	18,174	Microsoft
2. <i>AOL News</i>	17,064	Time Warner
3. <i>Yahoo! News</i>	16,297	Yahoo
4. <i>CNN News</i>	15,271	Time Warner
5. <i>ABC News</i>	8,772	Disney
6. Gannett Newspapers	7,780	Gannett
7. <i>NYTimes.com</i>	7,690	NYTimes
8. IBS Inc.(local television websites)	6,731	
9. <i>washingtonpost.com</i>	6,056	
10. <i>USAToday.com</i>	5,984	Gannett
11. <i>Slate</i>	4,521	Microsoft
12. Hearst Newspapers Digital	4,252	
13. McClatchy Newspapers	3,771	
14. WorldNow (various media websites)	3,589	
15. <i>CBS News</i>	3,554	Viacom
16. <i>Time Magazine</i>	3,450	Time Warner
17. <i>Fox News</i>	2,940	News Corp.
18. <i>The Boston Globe</i>	2,728	NYTimes
19. <i>Netscape News</i>	2,656	Time Warner
20. <i>LA Times</i>	2,586	

---

<sup>18</sup> Use of the term "audience" in the context of a nominally interactive medium is usually discouraged, but in the new media sector of international news, a broadcast model applies, both for producers and audiences, so news readers are audiences in a traditional sense. News is broadcast from the few to the many, and there is little interactivity of consequence.

<sup>19</sup> Walker, 2001. There are several internet rating companies: Jupiter Media Metrix (referred to by its original name of MediaMetrix in this paper), Nielsen/NetRatings, and the UK service Hitwise. But their data is normally available only through subscription, although limited portions are publicly available. For the purposes of this budget constrained study, most data from these companies has been acquired through secondary sources.

A Pew survey found that 46% of US Internet users go to the website of a national TV news company such as CNN or MSNBC, while 39% go to “portal websites such as Yahoo or Google” (Horrigan, 2006). In each case the percentages are slightly higher for Internet users with broadband connections (ibid). Drawing from multiple recent rankings of the leading website owners, by audience time spent at their various sites, the current lineup of top online news services in the US is as follows:

<u>Corporation</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Microsoft	52,873,000
Google	45,069,000
Yahoo!	44,111,000
Time Warner	40,895,000
New York Times Company	21,118,000
News Corp. Online	20,867,000

Only one of these services is essentially just news – the New York Times. Companies like Microsoft will know from their internal research how much time their monthly audience of 52,873,000 is spending with just their news services, but there seems no public data to reveal that. In more extensive rankings, the internet services of Disney rank close behind. In the UK, the top news sites are similar:

<u>Corporation</u>	<u>Audience</u>
Microsoft	20,782,000
Google	19,095,000
Yahoo!	13,384,000
BBC	11,541,000
Time Warner	8,331,000
News Corp. Online	6,422,000

Hitwise (2006) reports that in the UK, the BBC is the most popular news site, capturing just under 40% of online news users (shared, apparently, between *news.bbc* and *bbc.co.uk*). It is followed by the Guardian Unlimited, Google UK News, CNN.com, Yahoo News, Times Online, and the Telegraph. The leading news providers are almost identical as well in Germany, with the addition of Bertelsmann as a major news provider, with sites like *Stern* and *RTL Television*.

### **The changing news agency role**

In previous iterations of this project, I concluded that global multi-media information conglomerates Associated Press and Reuters dominate Internet news, but do so in “mostly inconspicuous ways” (Paterson, 2005). That is no longer the case. At the beginning of the period

in question, dependence on AP or Reuters stories provided news websites an important association with well known and trusted, if little understood, news brands. Each was a vaguely known brand name without the negative associations more familiar media outlets might have had, for the mass audience had little direct experience with news agencies which could create such associations. A similar dependence on the two largest agencies was also driven by the need to have the same stories rival sites seemed to have. Thus, near identical menus of world stories would appear on each major site daily, based on agency news selection.

The emergency of a de facto duopoly in international news provision is the result of many factors. In the 1960s and 1970s there was great concern about control over international news flow by five major news agencies, but now with just two agencies dominating that flow, such concerns have, astonishingly, evaporated. AFP competes effectively with Reuters and AP in some spheres, but as this study indicates, its relative presence online is small. The formerly powerful American agency United Press International once spurred substantial investment in international reporting from the AP (Boyd Barrett, 2000), but after numerous ownership changes and its eventual takeover by the Unification Church, UPI now has little influence or credibility amongst journalists (but their stories can be seen in the menus of the news aggregators).

In the early days of the new millennium there was considerable speculation about the future of Reuters. The company has always made about 90% of its revenues in financial services, and has often lost money with its news products – especially television, which is extremely costly to produce. There is the feeling inside Reuters that their television pictures gave rise to CNN when Reuters might have been creating their own news channel - just as their stories made *Yahoo* news two decades later (Martinson, 2004).

Reuters cut 3000 jobs in 2002, and there has been speculation that it might drop its general news services altogether. But the company has invested recently in increasing its profile online and traditional media services appear to continue to hold their own as they are increasingly integrated. Most recently, it has offered a video news service and presented its own website as a major news service to consumers. It has also ensured far more prominent branding of its stories on the websites of other providers. AP has just introduced their own direct online video service as well, which, like that of Reuters, is advertising supported.

While Reuters and the Associated Press are equally ubiquitous in cyberspace, they have pursued distinctly different online strategies. Reuters aggressively moved away from its news agency roots in terms of distribution, while the AP has mostly remained tied to the subscription model it has relied on for 150 years. Consistent with its origins, the AP, as a means of protecting the print media which own it, only provides links at its own website to its content through the websites of member newspapers. Reuters still depends upon the subscription model in its agreements with

the media organisations to which it feeds video, audio, and text; but it has – in the last five years – essentially gone into competition with its subscribers and become an online news service marketing directly to the consumer and through its branded stories provided by news aggregators.<sup>20</sup>

The many convoluted layers of mediation and distribution agreements in online news have led to contention within the cyber-journalism industry. For example, the BBC - which is mixing news agency content with the work of its own journalists - posts news to *BBC Online*, the most popular site in the United Kingdom. UK license fee payers provide most funding for the service.

But *Google*, *Yahoo*, and other commercial providers, to the advantage of themselves and the BBC, link to the publicly funded BBC's news. While commercially funded UK news companies, like Independent Television News (ITN), have felt so threatened by this as to complain to regulators (Lipscomb, 2001), there remains little debate about the process of license payers subsidising the commercial gain of international media conglomerates. The same could be said of the Associated Press, whose product - as the quantitative portion of this study demonstrates, forms the backbone of the major online news sites - is supported by the readers of the local newspapers in the United States. That is, however, a voluntary (though largely hidden) subsidy.

There are few other significant international newsgathering services providing original online content, and many which did attempt to do so have failed. Many journalistically significant players were quickly starved of cash and collapsed. CNN reported, "The rapid disappearance of small companies starved of investor cash has contributed to the consolidation, as has a flurry of mergers between corporate behemoths such as AOL and Time Warner" (CNN, 2001).

### **Measurement of agency use**

The quantitative portion of this analysis employs a simple content comparison to determine the amount of verbatim news agency use by major news websites within new international stories. The rationale is to provide a previously non-existent measure of which news organisations are providing original news reporting of global events which fall outside of a select few "mega-stories" (like the Iraq war). A small amount of average verbatim news agency use is an indication that a news website is drawing from its own international resources and consulting a range of sources to construct original and unique stories, whereas a high degree of average verbatim news agency use indicates little investment or effort toward original journalism, leading to a subsequent lack of diverse perspectives on international events.

---

<sup>20</sup> The news agencies have taken many other steps to control and profit from their use by aggregators, but further discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper.

At the outset of this project, a pilot study was conducted with a single story in 1999.<sup>21</sup> For that initial analysis, a single, relatively fast breaking, and relatively major (in the sense of gaining worldwide attention) story was selected. The story was the escalation of violent student rioting in Tehran on the morning of July 12, 1999. Over a period of just a few hours, the text of stories published on-line by each of the following services were copied and electronically stored: Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, *Yahoo*, *MSNBC*, *ABC On-line*, *CNN Interactive*, and *BBC On-line*.<sup>22</sup>

It proved difficult to precisely quantify news agency use, but it was easy to demonstrate that major online news services produced almost no original journalism in this case, and published stories that were almost entirely barely-edited wire service material. For example, analysis of the *CNN*, *BBC* and *MSNBC* data revealed that less than five paragraphs from these three services combined were not close or exact duplications of paragraphs written by wire services. It is important to note that within the news industry such a finding is neither remarkable nor alarming.

It has always been the role of the news agencies to provide the words when a news service does not have their own correspondent on the scene, and the contracts the agencies provide to clients entitle them to use agency copy in this way. But this dependence was surprising in view of the pretensions of these news outlets to be international news services in their own right. This data seemed to indicate a lack of investment in original online international reporting which called for further investigation.

The study was repeated with a sample of fourteen international stories in 2001. The researcher compared the texts in of this larger data set using a basic text comparison software called "Copyfind", developed by Professor Lou Bloomfield of the University of Virginia, to detect plagiarism, and made available through his website.<sup>23</sup> Comparisons were made between each

---

<sup>21</sup> Texts were compared visually in a simple side-by-side comparison, where text from each of three major e-journalism sites was placed next to identical (or nearly identical) sentences in wire service copy. The author can furnish further detail of the study. The author is grateful for the research assistance of Andrea Paterson and several University of San Francisco students who helped with the gathering of data.

<sup>22</sup> Other sources, which might typically be used by journalists on such a story, were also retrieved and stored, including US State Department statements, the relevant output of the Iran News Agency (IRNA), and the statements of a London-based Iranian dissident group. Although not a goal of the present study, it was evident that on stories such as this almost every original source consulted by the writer can be identified – stories can be fully deconstructed.

<sup>23</sup> plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu. Many such programs are now available, and recent editions of Microsoft Word contain text comparison features. The software indicates strings of text in one document that are copied from another document. The user can set the parameters of what constitutes "copying". In this case, we asked the program to provide the number of words copied where copying was the duplication of a string of five or more words. After several trial runs, this appeared the best compromise to avoid the counting of names or common expressions (i.e. "appeared to be"), but to catch short sentences, or significant portions of sentences, copied

wire service story and the online news story published (or linked to) by each of the news services in the sample.<sup>24</sup> A total word count was performed (using a word processor) for each sample of news text. A typical result, for a 642 word CNN story on UN troops in the Congo, was that 553 words existed in phrases (strings of five words or more) copied from Reuters, and 29 words existed in phrases copied from AP. This was, in other words, a virtually unchanged Reuters story published by CNN (although CNN did not identify it as such). Finally, the amount of text each news service copied from news agencies were compared to the total amount of text produced by that service to provide the percentage of news agency use given below.

The study was repeated this year (2006), albeit with a slightly differing line-up of news organisations. In each case, I have tried to include both major US and UK online media, and to include both print and broadcast websites, within the limits of the most popular news sites identified earlier.<sup>25</sup>

---

directly from wire service copy without alteration. The system is still far from perfect. Among the problems encountered were when lengthy names were used together in similar ways from story to story (i.e. "Judge Juan Guzman charged General Pinochet"), adding, erroneously, to the total of copied words.

<sup>24</sup> In each year of the study, the sample was determined over the course of 1-2 weeks by monitoring international news during periods when research assistants were available to gather stories, and identifying stories which:

1. were not about, and did not take place in, either the US or UK, where the media being analysed are based
2. had no strong relevance to either the US or the UK
3. were selected by the major news agencies and at least three major news outlets as being worthy of prominent display during the periods analysed
4. were about events occurring outside of major news hotspots; especially the Middle East.
5. were new and breaking stories of international significance

When qualifying stories were identified as many versions as could be gathered of Reuters, AP and AFP output related to the story were obtained – through various means – and each news service in the study was monitored. If they posted a story on the topic, it was electronically saved for analysis. Although some exceptions were necessary, we attempted to gather data for each story topic within the same period of about four hours (so iterations of a story published over many days are not part of this study).

<sup>25</sup> While both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* have emerged as leading online news sources in international rankings, the *New York Times* usually ranks ahead, and so was the only one of these two services included in this quantitative portion of this study. Figures on the Times' international readership are not available, but one industry report claims that nearly ¾ (72 %) of the Times' US online readership comes from outside of the New York area (Hitwise.com, June 1, 2005). While the portal *Excite.com*, owned by *Ask.com* parent IAC Media, had declined in popularity during the period of this study, it also remains important and was included in the quantitative portion of this research. Excite hyperlinks from its home page to lists of news from each of the following services – but frequently the stories of most, or all, will be the same wire copy as the first two lists, from the agencies themselves: AP, Reuters, New York Times, CBS, MSNBC, USA TODAY, FOX News.

There are numerous complications in any attempt to track the sources of online news stories. Not least of these is the inconvenient fact that both the news agency copy and each news service story based upon it are moving targets – each is prone to constant change. Minor updates of existing online stories are known in the industry as “writethroughs,” and are a logical extension of long standing news agency practice. News agencies have, since the earliest days of the telegraph, sent first the bare facts, and then progressively added details and corrected information that was originally wrong. The result is a series of updates after a story is first released, which may continue for hours or days after the first version.

When updating is practiced by news organisations whose primary client is the news consumer, not other journalists, the practice becomes ethically thorny. In newspapers and broadcast, journalists do not get the opportunity to continually improve and modify the work they publish, and readers and viewers reasonably expect the story they see to be complete and accurate when they see it. But online journalists have proven comfortable with making frequent alterations to their work as new information comes in or old information is brought into question, or at times, when editors decide upon a more appropriate framing.

In an innovative computer-assisted content analysis, Kutz and Herring (2005) determined that “that the second most common type of revision (after clarification) adds ideology.” As with my 1999 pilot research, Kutz and Herring found that the news services they observed routinely rewrote stories to add “more emotionally manipulative” words and phrases.<sup>26</sup>

## Results

The basic results of the 2001 and 2006 content surveys are provided below.<sup>27</sup>

### Average Percentage of Verbatim News Agency Use, by Online News Service

							<i>Row Total Avg. %</i>
	<i>AOL</i>	<i>YAHOO</i>	<i>NANDO</i>	<i>LYCOS</i>	<i>EXCITE</i>	<i>ALTAVISTA</i>	
2001	88	69	41	87	89	36	68
2006	94	97			98	50	85

<sup>26</sup> Kutz & Herring, 2005 found that 51% of changes to stories in the three major news websites they observed added *no new information*, consisting just of “Formatting, spelling, grammar corrections; Stylistic polish; Rhetorical/ideological rewording”

<sup>27</sup> The original 2001 survey consisted of 14 stories, but for the sake of this reanalysis and comparison to ten 2006 stories, I have cut those to the ten stories receiving the most coverage. This provides slightly different results from the original 2001 study (Paterson, 2005).

	<i>MSNBC</i>	<i>CNN</i>	<i>BBC</i>	<i>ABC</i>	<i>SKY</i>	<i>GUARDIAN</i>	<i>NYT</i>	
2001	53	36	5	55	6		47	34
2006	81	59	9	91	15	62	32	50

In 2001, news portals/aggregators showed substantially no mediation of agency content, with their text duplicating news agency text for an average of 68% of the content studied (the average of the average duplication for each service).<sup>28</sup> By 2006, the average amount of measurable verbatim news agency use for these services had risen to 85%. The weaknesses of the methodology and the small sample mean these figures are tentative at best, but it is reasonable to conclude an increasing and now near total dependence on two news agencies among the top row of online sources, the aggregators.

Although a central purpose of this research was to find agency content where it is sometimes not acknowledged, in some instances the researcher had to depend on acknowledgement of agency sources by news services themselves.<sup>29</sup> In other cases, the main or only story at some portals was that of the New York Times or another non-agency source. In such cases the portal's editors seem to have taken the decision that the Time's coverage was original and superior to that of the news agencies. Such cases were rare however, within this sample.

The bottom row of data relates news agency dependence indicators for the major original news content providers online. The figure has risen from 34% dependence to 50% dependence in five years. It is especially noteworthy that the major US sites, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, and *ABC*, are doing substantially less original international journalism than they were five years ago. The New York Times seems to be doing more. BBC Online continues to exhibit little verbatim use of news agencies, and stories generally appear to draw from a wider range of sources than the American

---

<sup>28</sup> It is unclear if the remaining 32% accounts for actual changes made by web portal editorial staff to agency stories, variations in identifying text or unrelated portions of the web page (which were not edited out when the original texts were gathered), or slight changes in the versions of the wire service story compared. It is most likely a combination of those factors.

<sup>29</sup> Even though we worked to gather data on breaking stories within a short time period to minimise the possibility of multiple versions of a news agency story confusing the results, this happened in some instances. In cases where a news portal's story was clearly that of a news agency – because it was labelled as such and because the portal in question is known not to make editorial alterations, as with *excite* or *altavista* – but our analysis did not match the story fully with that of a news agency, it is assumed that the portal story is a later or earlier version of the news agency story which we did collect. 100% news agency use is therefore recorded, despite our less than 100% match.

services. Judging from the few Sky stories in the sample, Sky appears to draw just from news agencies, but their text has been extensively reworded in Sky's concise house style.

The hypothesis stated earlier is generally supported: *International News Flow on the Internet increases in apparent diversity of original reporting but decreases or remains static in actual diversity of original reporting.*

This longitudinal comparative analysis of international news stories from major news web sites with original wire service stories reveals a continuing scarcity of original journalism (or even copy-editing) and a nearly total dependence by major online news providers on news agency reporting and news agency writing.<sup>30</sup> I wrote after my 2001 analysis that "the multitude of on-line information providers evidence burgeoning 'cybermediation' of a limited diet of news, rather than the outright disintermediation evidenced in other cyberspace sectors," but now the results of longitudinal comparison evidence a mix of cybermediation with direct marketing of that same limited diet of original international news content. There seems a shift in these five years toward less minor rewriting of wire stories, with the broadcaster-based services opting more often now to simply publish wire stories in their entirety and clearly put the wire services label on the stories.<sup>31</sup> In effect, they seem less concerned with the image of providing original news coverage and more concerned with providing a large quantity of coverage.

## Conclusions

The aggregators offer the bizarre spectacle of readers offered dozens of links to entirely irrelevant media outlets for every story. For a breaking story in China, for example, readers may be offered links to the likes of the *Arizona Republic*, *KRQE Television* (New Mexico), and the *Calgary Sun*.

---

<sup>30</sup> This paper represents what is probably the final stage of a project ongoing since 1999, and first published as "Media Imperialism Revisited: The Global Public Sphere and the News Agency Agenda," in *News in a Globalized Society*, Stig Hjarvard, ed. (Göteborg: NORDICOM, 2001). The research method used here, developed by the author in 1999, has been duplicated by others with similar results (most prominently Langfield, 2003) but the academic literature so far shows no reliable replication of the original study. The results of the 2001 data analysis were disseminated in conference presentations and published in "News Agency Dominance in International News on the Internet" in *Converging Media, Diverging Politics: A Political Economy of News in the United States and Canada* D. Skinner, J. Compton and M. Gasher, eds. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005). A more comprehensive version of this paper is being prepared for journal submission, and so the author welcomes any critique.

<sup>31</sup> Where a small portion of verbatim news agency material appears in the story of a news service which generally does original reporting, as with the New York Times, it is normally the result of that service using an extended quote from the wire service's story. Increasingly, writers tend to acknowledge the news agency by name when using such quotes. It is not clear whether this has been instituted as a new requirement of news agency contracts with clients, or whether news services are simply becoming more cautious about attribution amid declining public trust in news and a string of high profile reporting scandals, especially at the New York Times.

Most of these local and regional news outlets, of course, will be providing the same news agency coverage and offer readers no unique coverage of the story. The intention seems merely to offer the “4,500 news sources updated continuously,” as Google news promises.

This leaves us with a picture of an online news world (in the English language) where only four organisations do extensive international reporting (Reuters, AP, AFP, BBC) a few others do some international reporting (CNN, MSN, New York Times, Guardian and a few other large newspaper and broadcasters), and most do no original international reporting. It makes the news aggregation industry appear a bit inane – why not just link to the four companies filing original reports from around the world and ignore the rest? That is not an acceptable solution, of course, either in terms of the marketing priorities of the aggregators, or for the global public sphere.

This research indicates that discourse on international events of consequence within the global public sphere is substantially determined by the production practices and institutional priorities of two information services – Reuters and the Associated Press.<sup>32</sup> McNair (2003) usefully suggests a “new sociology of journalism” which recognises that the social control functions of major media as elaborated by the Glasgow Media Group and many others have evolved into a far more complex and chaotic media environment. He writes:

This sociology will focus on the cultural space between order and chaos, where a proliferation of digital and on-line media have created a globalised public sphere of (practically) infinite size and complexity; a zone of dynamic ideological competition rather than static control; of anarchic irreverence for elites rather than subservience to authority  
...

In positing his new model of “cultural chaos,” McNair urges that we, “welcome the onset of communication chaos as a democratising force, demystifying established power and laying bare its excesses, including those associated with the rise of spin and promotional culture.”

But this study suggests we might be more cautious in our celebrations. The political economy of online news is not one of diversity but one of concentration, and the democratic potential of the medium remains mostly that – potential. This study has sought to demonstrate that despite the deluge of information available online, the most conservative (with a small c) old media sources remain the privileged tellers of most of the stories circulating about the world. Those providers are demonstrably wedded to journalism as tied to established power and promotional culture as it can be.

---

<sup>32</sup> It is beyond the means of this paper to address the next logical question: who sets the agenda of the news agencies? This is a vital question, nonetheless, and has been addressed in some detail in my earlier work and other studies of international news cited previously. My ethnographic research (Paterson, 1996) demonstrated, for example, that the BBC, CNN, and London newspapers – along with direct interaction with client journalists – all influence the news agency agenda.

It makes economic sense that the two leading news agencies should dominate international news delivery in cyberspace, for as in any open and unregulated market, the strongest producers with the lowest unit costs thrive. Such is the case for the major wire services, which each have a century and a half of experience in developing production processes which generate massive amounts of news. Digital technologies have made news agency production more efficient, and their (technological) convergence has permitted easy access into new markets through the creation of products tailored to new media, built from the same agency words and pictures upon which traditional media have long depended.

The internet has fully transitioned into what we have traditionally regarded as "old media:" it is now, for most users, a mass medium providing mostly illusory interactivity and mostly illusory diversity. It is becoming a substantially tailored mass media product through the personalisation of information delivery, but these phenomena make it no less a form of mass media than would the insertion of targeting advertising into a magazine delivered to someone's home. Because resources are being devoted to endless distribution and redistribution, internet journalism will continue to grow thinner. Given the massive explosion of distribution, there is surprisingly little new original journalism within the mainstream (mass audience) worldwide web. As put by the most recent State of the Media report in the US,

For now ... it appears that the resources devoted to skilled journalism will continue to shrink as the Web grows ((State of the News Media, 2006).

The evolution of the online news agency has laid bare the news industries' near total dependence on a few wholesale news providers and the limitations on public discourse that it inevitably yields. Such concerns were destined to remain substantially academic until the news industry itself revealed its previously hidden wholesale-retail structure online for the mass audience. While the online news industry continues to pretend for the moment that it brings readers a diversity of reporting on world news, it is a pretence which cannot last.

Predictions are dangerous, but it is not unreasonable to suppose in the near term that the online news industry will try still harder to disguise its dependence on limited sources through cosmetic changes, the addition of minor editorial adjustments to agency stories (by machine and human), and the addition of further bells and whistles at news sites. They seek to distract readers from the essential problem. But in the longer term the industry must invest in more original reporting as an alternative to the few genuinely international news organisations now on offer, and give more prominence to buying, and properly translating, original non-English language reporting from around the world. Without such change, new media will continue to present to most users the dangerous illusion of multiple perspectives which actually emanate from very few sources.

## Sources

- Allan, S. and Zelizer, B. (2002) *Journalism After September 11* London: Routledge
- Aufderheide, P 1998, 'Niche-Market Culture, Off and On Line' *The Electronic Grapevine: Rumor, Reputation, and Reporting in the New On-Line Environment*, edited by Diane Borden and Kerric Harvey. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- BBC, 1999, 'Web is 'shrinking'', August 25, retrieved April 2006, from [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid%5F428000/428999.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid%5F428000/428999.stm)
- BBC, 2001, 'CNN to axe 400 jobs' January 18, retrieved April 2006, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1121781.stm>
- BBC, 2001, 'Disney's internet division closed' January 30, retrieved April 2006, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/1143425.stm>
- BBC, 2001, 'Yahoo links with New York Times' February 13, retrieved April 2006, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/1168993.stm>
- Benz, B. and Phillips, M. 2005, 'Time for a change: The Associated Press as Napsterized news,' *Online Journalism Review*, April 28, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050428benzphillips/>
- Blevins, J. L. 2004, 'Battle of the online brands: Disney loses Internet portal war,' *Television & New Media*, 5(3).
- Borden, D. and , K. 1998, *The Electronic Grapevine: Rumor, Reputation, and Reporting in the New Online Environment*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. 2000, 'National and International News Agencies: Issues of Crisis and Realignment' *Gazette* 62(1): 5–18.
- , *The International News Agencies*. London: Constable, 1980.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. and Rantanen, T. 2004 'News Agencies as News Sources: A re-evaluation' in *International News the Twenty-First Century* edited by C. Paterson and A. Sreberny. Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey Press, 2004.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. and Rantanen, T. 1998 *The Globalization of News*. London: Sage.
- Burden, P. 1999 *Interactivity and On-line News at the BBC* Unpublished Masters Dissertation for CMCR, University of Leicester.
- Burns, E. 2006, 'Top U.S. Parent Companies and Stickiest Brands on the Web, February 2006' *clickz.com*, March 27 retrieved April 2006, from [http://www.clickz.com/stats/sectors/traffic\\_patterns/article.php/3594576#table1](http://www.clickz.com/stats/sectors/traffic_patterns/article.php/3594576#table1)
- Christopher, L 1998 'Technology and Journalism in the On-Line Newsroom' in *The Electronic Grapevine: Rumor, Reputation, and Reporting in the New On-Line Environment*, edited by D. Borden and K. Harvey. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- CNN, 2001, 'Study: Four sites account for half of Web surfing,' June 5, retrieved April 2006, from <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/TECH/internet/06/05/internet.consolidation/index.html>
- Cohen, A., M. Levy, I. Roeh, and M. Gurevitch. 1996 *Global Newsroom, Local Audiences: A Study of the Eurovision News Exchange*. London: John Libbey.
- Cozens, C. 2005, 'AFP sues Google over copyrighted content' *Guardian*, March 21, retrieved April 2006, from <http://media.guardian.co.uk/newmedia/story/0,7496,1442703,00.html>
- Delaney, K. 2005, 'Yahoo 'Hybrid' Now Dominates News Web Sites' *Wall Street Journal* April 14 via ABI/INFORM

- Fenby, J. 1986 *The International News Services*, Twentieth Century Fund Report, New York: Schocken Books.
- Harper, C. 1997 'The Daily Me' *American Journalism Review*, April.
- Hearn, K. 2005, 'Google's Bias for Bigness,' *Alternet*, July 14, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.alternet.org/story/23397/>
- Helland, K 1995 *Public Service and Commercial News*. Doctoral Thesis. University of Bergen.
- Hills, J. and Michalis, M. 2000 'The Internet: A Challenge to Public Service Broadcasting?' *Gazette* 62(6).
- Hitwise, 2006, 'BBC Favoured News Source But Wikipedia and Flickr Growing in Importance in the UK,' January 05, retrieved April 2006, from [http://weblogs.hitwise.com/heather-hopkins/2006/01/bbc\\_favoured\\_news\\_source\\_but\\_w.html](http://weblogs.hitwise.com/heather-hopkins/2006/01/bbc_favoured_news_source_but_w.html)
- Hjarvard, S. 1995 *Internationale TV-nyheder. En historisk analyse af det europeiske system for udvælgelse af internationale TV-nyheder*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.
- , 1995 'TV News Flow Studies Revisited' *Electronic Journal of Communication* 5(2).
- Horrigan, J. 2006, 'For many home broadband users, the internet is a primary news source' *Pew Internet & American Life Project*, March 22, retrieved April 2006, from [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_News.and.Broadband.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_News.and.Broadband.pdf)
- Hu, J. and Olsen, S. 2002, 'Cutbacks push dot-coms toward profits' *CNET*, January 9, retrieved April 2006, from [http://news.com.com/Cutbacks+push+dot-coms+toward+profits/2100-1023\\_3-804066.html](http://news.com.com/Cutbacks+push+dot-coms+toward+profits/2100-1023_3-804066.html)
- Jones, M. 2006, 'AFP Sues Google Over Copyrights,' *Presstime*, via Lexis-Nexis.
- Kempner, M 2001, 'CNN Gains: Web site closes in on MSNBC.com' *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 22, via Lexis-Nexis
- Kutz, D. and Herring, S. 2005, 'Micro-Longitudinal Analysis of Web News Updates,' Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences
- Langfield, A, 2002, 'Net News Lethargy Most Sites Fail to Make Use of the Medium's Main Strength-Speed' *Online Journalism Review* retrieved May, 2003, from <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/reviews/1017864558.php>
- Liedtke, M. 2005, 'AP to Impose Online Licensing Fees' *Associated Press Financial Wire*, April 19, via Lexis-Nexis
- Lipscomb, G. 2001, 'BBC Online Put Under Scrutiny' *Broadcast*, January.
- Madore, J. 2005, 'The Associated Press drops plans for fee,' *Newsday*, July 23, via Lexis-Nexis.
- Magid, L. 1997 'All Roads Lead to Reuters' *Currents.net* retrieved May, 2003, from [www.currents.net/magazine/national/1513/uout1513.html](http://www.currents.net/magazine/national/1513/uout1513.html)
- Martinson, J. 2004, 'Reuters takes its news into the home' *Guardian*, October 6.
- Massey, B. and Levy, M. 1999, 'Interactivity, On-Line Journalism, and English-Language Web Newspapers in Asia' *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 76(1).
- McChesney, R. 2000, 'The Titanic Sails On: Why the Internet Won't Sink the Media Giants' *Extra!* March/April.
- McNair, B. 2003, 'From control to chaos: towards a new sociology of Journalism' *Media, Culture & Society* 25: 547-555.
- Molina, G. 1990, *The Production of Mexican Television News: The Supremacy of Corporate Rationale*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Leicester.

- Paterson, C 1996, *News Production at Worldwide Television News (WTN): An Analysis of Television News Agency Coverage of Developing Countries*. Doctoral Thesis: University of Texas, 1996.
- . "Global Battlefields". Pp.79-103 in *The Globalization of News*, edited by O. Boyd-Barrett and T. Rantanen. London: Sage, 1998.
- . "Global News Agencies", in *The Globalization of News*, edited by Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantanen. London: Sage, 1998.
- . "Internet News: Source Concentration and Cybermediation." *EURICOM Colloquium on the Political Economy of Convergence*. London, 1999.
- . "Media Imperialism Revisited: The Global Public Sphere and the News Agency Agenda," in *News in a Globalized Society*, ed. Stig Hjarvard, Göteborg: NORDICOM, 2001.
- Paterson, C. and Sreberny, A. 2004, 'Shouting from the rooftops: Reflections on International News in the 21st Century', in *International News the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Chris Paterson and Annabelle Sreberny, Eastleigh, UK: John Libbey Press.
- Rodriguez, A. 1996, 'Made in the USA: The Production of the Noticiero Univision' *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 13(1).
- Ross, S. and Middleberg, D. 1998 *Media in Cyberspace Study*.1998, retrieved May 2003, from [www.middleberg.com/toolsforsuccess/cyberstudy.cfm](http://www.middleberg.com/toolsforsuccess/cyberstudy.cfm).
- Rubenstein, D. 2002, 'Google News Untouched by Human Hands' *Vue Weekly via Alternet*, October 7, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.alternet.org/story/14239/>
- Sarker, M., Butler B., and Steinfield C., 1995, 'Intermediaries and Cybermediaries: A Continuing Role for Mediating Players in the Electronic Marketplace' *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*.: 54, retrieved February 2001, from <http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol1/issue3/sarker.html>
- Scott, B. 2005, 'A contemporary history of digital journalism' *Television & New Media* 6(1).
- Solomon, N 2001, 'Denial and the Ravaging of Cyberspace' *AlterNet*, September 4, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.alternet.org/columnists/story/11422/>
- State of the News Media (2005) *Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2005>
- State of the News Media (2006) *Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2006>
- Sundar SS & Nass, C 2001, 'Conceptualizing sources in online news' *Journal of Communication* March, 51(1).
- Sunstein C., 2001, *Republic.com* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Walker, L 2001, 'AOL Time Warner Sites Dominate Data' *Washington Post*, 27 February.
- Washington Internet Daily*, 2006, 'Newspapers Want Pay from Google, Other News Aggregators for Excerpts' February 03, via Lexis-Nexis.
- Welch, M. 1999 'Is Reliance on the AP Draining the Life from Online News?' *Online Journalism Review*, May 20, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/business/1017968544.php>
- White, C. 2003, 'Google news performing well' *journalism.co.uk*, 8 January, retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/story538.html>
- Wilbert, C. 2004, 'Also-ran Fox retools Web site' *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 26, via Lexis-Nexis