Will Twitter make foreign correspondence redundant?

Bas Steeman
S1506366
Supervisor: Dr. A. (Ansgard) Heinrich
Second reader: Prof. Dr. H.B.M. (Huub) Wijffjes
MA Journalism, Radio & Television
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
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Foreign journalism is in dire straits. Foreign news is disappearing from quality media at an alarming rate and foreign correspondents are falling victim to news organizations’ desperate attempts to cut costs. At the same time Twitter has emerged to give foreign journalists – both correspondents and reporters at foreign news desks – a tool that has the potential to change their profession in a profound way. It offers them easy access to non-official sources around the world, customizable news feeds about distant regions of interest, and the ability to build a journalistic network in areas far removed from where they stand. In theory, then, these journalists can report on remote events as if they were there without actually being there. It could even allow foreign desk journalists to become more like correspondents, as the main difference between the two kinds of foreign journalists is the fact that the latter live in the society they report on, immersing themselves in its daily life, and building a local network that helps them stay up to date about important developments. Whereas before, this was only possible by physically going to that society, Twitter offers a way to do it from a distance. With a content analysis of Dutch quality newspaper de Volkskrant’s foreign news section, the validity of this theory is tested.

Keywords: Twitter, foreign journalism, foreign correspondence, Internet, social media, foreign news desk,
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Finishing this thesis took a lot of perseverance (or, perhaps more accurately, bullheadedness) on my side. After three long years, I am near ready to convert to Christianity and thank the lord on my bare knees that it is finally over. However, that would not be fair to the very real people who have helped me along the way. It is to them that I want to extend my sincere gratitude. To begin with, I wish to thank all of my friends, family, and colleagues who would never let me forget that I still had a thesis to finish. But there are three people who deserve special mention. First of course is Dr. Heinrich, whose supervision was all that it needed to be and more. She always remained encouraging and supportive, even when it started to look like this was going to be a story with no end. I owe her many thanks for her very extensive feedback, and for all the time she put into helping me reach the finish line. I also want to thank Jacqueline Vrancken, who, during my final few weeks of revisions, motivated me to spend long days in Amsterdam's various libraries as we both worked on our respective theses. Without her, those final weeks would have probably been months. The person I am most grateful to, however, is Judith Katz. If it was not for her wisdom and support, I probably would have given up a long time ago. Whenever I got stuck, was unsure of what to do next, or simply lost all hope of ever completing my studies, I could turn to her for advice and inspiration. I deeply appreciate all the help and feedback she has given me over the course of this long, long process. Finally, I do not know who or what to thank for this, but I am so, so grateful that this is finally over. If I ever consider writing a thesis again, please, someone stop me.

Bas Steeman
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 Whenever Benjamin Franklin wanted to collect foreign news for his *Pennsylvania Gazette* three hundred years ago, he would take a stroll through the harbor. Incoming ships would deliver letters and newspapers from Europe, accompanied by sailors and passengers with myriad stories to tell of the Old World across the sea (Cole & Hamilton, 2008, 800). The tidings that Franklin thus picked up were not intended to be reports of foreign developments - except for the four-fifths of the *Gazette* he piped directly from the foreign newspapers (Ibid.). They were personal tales of travelers eager to share their adventures. There was no middle man putting bits and pieces of stories together to form one overarching narrative. Little was set in context or investigated further. Nor was any time spent on verification. Yet the tales served as news for colonialists who were keen to find out what was happening in the continent they left behind. The fact that these stories were months old by the time they were printed and distributed mattered little to anyone.

In the following decades, foreign news changed considerably. Together with the penny press, professional foreign reporting entered the scene in the early nineteenth century (Schudson, 1978, 23). Trained journalists gathered news from abroad specifically for the purpose of filling newspaper pages. In tandem, the notion of speed and ‘being first’ gained importance, awakening a chronic urge in journalists to always try and be faster than the competition. The next two centuries saw travel incessantly speeding up while innovations in communication technology similarly enabled correspondents to report their findings at an ever increasing rate. The acceleration did not stop before eventually airplanes made it possible to travel the world in a matter of hours, and satellites allowed reports to be sent back home in mere seconds (Murrie, 1998, 102). Foreign reporters (‘Specials’ and agency correspondents alike) possessed unique skills to make use of these instruments for a very important job. Paired with their relatively small numbers, it made them an elite force in journalism (Cohen, 1963, 17).

During most of the twentieth century, the environment was very friendly for foreign correspondents, especially American ones. Due to the strong dollar, the cost of living
overseas was very low. There were many magazines and other written media outlets that were very interested in their content, and willing to pay a lot of money to publish it. And because technology had not yet reached a point where correspondents could stay in touch with the home office all the time, they enjoyed a high degree of independence to write what they wanted to write (Hamilton, 2005, online). They had access to local media that people at home could not read. And they were the sole authority in places that no one else covered. (Perlmuter & Hamilton, 2007, 14).

Even so, foreign journalism has always been a cyclical affair. Cole & Hamilton point out that “each new conflict brings an increase in the number of correspondents; peace brings declines” (2007, 162). Hence why there was a relatively large amount of time spent on foreign news by American networks during the years of the Cold War, which then steadily declined following the fall of the Berlin Wall, only to veer back up again after the attacks of September, 11, 2001 (Enda, 2010, 21). By that time, however, something else had happened as well: the Internet.

The worldwide web presented a massive threat to foreign correspondents, even if they did not immediately recognize it. Up until the 1990’s, though the many technological improvements had made it easier for international reporters to find and report news from around the globe, they still had to physically travel the world to find it. If a correspondent did not pick up on a story, that story had nowhere to go – at least not anywhere beyond the borders of its own country. On first glance, the Internet simply made things even more convenient for reporters, as it made finding information a lot less cumbersome (Schroeder & Stovall, 2011, 191). For those working for written media, it had the additional advantage of providing a decidedly more efficient way of sending stories to the editor than airmailing them or dictating them through a telephone. But the unforeseen side-effect of this global infrastructure was the potential for information to travel by itself. When blogs started to emerge, news stories got legs of their own, legs that were replaced with wheels when social media emerged. Regular people suddenly had the opportunity to share their stories with a huge audience. If important or interesting enough, those stories would eventually find their way to places far removed from their point of origin.

This would all be fine and well if the Internet had not made one other major impact on the world of journalism as well. The wide availability of online news gave people the option to avoid official channels, mortally wounding traditional business models of
circulation and advertising, and leaving media organizations desperate to find ways to cut costs (Leurdijk et al., 2012). Since correspondents had always been by far the most expensive part of a news organization, it made sense to look at the foreign news budget first (Russo, 2010, online). After that, the environment for foreign reporters on contract, the so-called Specials (Hohenberg, 1995, 10) grew increasingly harsh. Their numbers had always been small, but whereas that fact had once given them the aura of an elite, now it sooner conjured an image of their kind as a species on the brink of extinction. News organizations gradually started closing down foreign bureaus and bringing their foreign reporters home (Enda, 2010, 15; Hiatt, 2007, online), or replaced their contract correspondents with cheaper freelancers (De Vente, 2013, online). Other media simply cut the amount of foreign news they published, or intensified their reliance on press agencies (Captein, 2010, online).

Another way to make foreign journalism cheaper is to have desk journalists produce it. This is a solution that has gained traction with the Internet. In fact, recent developments make the argument for a purely online form of foreign journalism even more plausible. If social media such as Facebook and YouTube replaced news stories’ legs with wheels, microblogging site Twitter gave them wings – the little blue bird in the service’s logo is not an unfitting symbol. Never before could news stories travel so far in so little time. This shift in gears was demonstrated on several occasions over the past years. One of the most famous examples is when US Airways flight 1549 made an emergency landing on the Hudson River in New York City at 3:31 pm on January 15, 2009. The news went around on Twitter fifteen minutes before any of the mainstream media made any mention of it (Beaumont, 2009, online). The first tweet had been sent by an eyewitness at 3:35 pm. Pictures and videos were similarly catapulted throughout the world in a matter of minutes after the incident, initially without any journalistic interference whatsoever (save for some of the retweeting being done by journalists).

There are certainly caveats about this method. Critics wonder how information gathered online could ever compete with actually talking to real people (Felle, 2013, online). Or how a journalist can ever know what a country and its inhabitants are really like if she has not lived among them for at least a few months, if not years (Enda, 2010, 22). But perhaps such concerns are uttered simply out of a sense of habit. This is how it has always been done, and it does not make sense that there would be any other way. Or does it? In
order to make a good news story – we are not talking about features or background stories in this instance, which require a slightly different approach – what is it that a good journalist needs? She needs leads, sources, and more sources. Twitter can provide all of those, just like ‘the real world’ can provide all of those. When a correspondent writes a news story, she goes out into the world, checks her beats, talks to her contacts, and walks around in the hope of catching something interesting. We live in an ever digitizing world, where more and more of people’s lives is spent online. Could the same thing be happening with journalistic practices? The Internet provides various possibilities of performing journalism online. One of which is Twitter, a social network that allows journalists to compile a global (or, if so inclined, local) network of sources and beats, find eyewitnesses and experts relevant to their area of expertise, and hopefully stumble upon something interesting that has not been reported anywhere else.

Richard Sambrook asks the question whether correspondents have become redundant in a world where consumers can do their own news gathering online (Sambrook, 2010). His answer is no, asserting that professional journalists will always be needed for the simple fact that there is way too much information out there for regular people to make sense of. In other words, correspondents are not redundant because the audience still needs them. That does not, however, deal with the difference between correspondents and desk journalists. Yes, journalists who can turn foreign affairs into a comprehensive story that readers can understand are still necessary, but do they actually need to be on the scene? If, with the help of Twitter, journalistic ways can be fully digitized, allowing journalists to do their job online just as well as offline, the factor of distance is eliminated. Journalists would be able to perform their job from anywhere in the world, including their home country. In that scenario, desk journalists could complement correspondent’s work.

It is this ‘if’ that will be examined in this thesis. By reviewing literature on the subjects of foreign journalism and Twitter, I intend to explore the potential benefits of the social medium for the world of foreign reporting. I want to know to what extent – in theory - it can help desk journalists working from their own country to complement or even replace correspondents working at the same media outlet. This theory will be tested in a practical case study. Studying the current impact of Twitter is not a feasible method, as the tool has not been used long enough yet to have really permeated foreign journalistic
routines. Instead, the focus will be on the impact the Internet has had so far. Since the characteristics that make Twitter beneficial to foreign journalism are sophistications of the same characteristics of the Internet, the results can then serve as a model for the potential impact of the microblog.

I conducted a quantitative content analysis of Dutch quality newspaper *de Volkskrant* (*VK*), a paper that traditionally holds foreign journalism in high esteem, and that still devotes a fairly large share of its output (35% in 2009) to foreign news (Captein, 2010, online). How has their foreign news section been affected by the rise of the Internet around the turn of the century in terms of role distribution between desk journalists and foreign correspondents? I compared *VK*’s foreign news sections from the mid-1990’s and the early 2010’s, assembling one constructed month for each time frame. The first constructed month occurred between October 1994 and September 1995, and the second between October 2011 and September 2012. Together, the samples consisted of 765 articles, of which 410 were written by *VK*’s own journalists. The rest came from press agencies or foreign newspapers. I did not pay further attention to those, as they could not tell me anything about how journalists working for *VK* did their job. It is the balance between desk journalists and correspondents within one journalistic organization that I am interested in.

Van Ginneken points out that there are four levels when media say they have a foreign correspondent somewhere abroad:

The first possibility is that one or more correspondents operate their own bureau: an office with a small staff. This is usually the case for large branches of American media. The second possibility is that there is one full time correspondent who is permanently employed, and mostly works alone. This is usually the case for normal branches.

The third possibility is that there is a regular part time correspondent, who is shared with other (non-competing) media. This is usually the case for media from smaller European countries such as the Netherlands (...) The fourth possibility is that it is a freelancer or stringer, who is paid per item (Van Ginneken, 2002, 136).

*De Volkskrant* employs correspondents from all but the first category. In this thesis we will
not use this distinction, however, because it makes little difference for the way they practice their journalism. The more important distinction is between them and the foreign desk journalist. The correspondent is set apart from the desk journalist in that she lives in the society she reports on, immersing herself in its daily life, and building a local network that will help her stay up to date about important developments. It is the latter distinction that is the most important, according to De Swert & Wouters, who maintain that this network “reduces the cost of using non-governmental sources (i.e., searching, checking, and trusting), which will result in a more source-diversified coverage, that is, coverage with fewer elite-dominated sources” (2011, 336). From this it follows that if desk journalists can manage to also diversify the use of sources in their coverage and have those sources be less elite-dominated, they would be more like correspondents.

The content analysis will not directly reveal the influence of the Internet, because most of that influence is ‘behind the scenes,’ but by looking for the changes I expect it to have caused, I hope to show the plausibility of the theory that Twitter can help desk journalists become more like correspondents. The hypotheses I am looking to verify with the content analysis are:

- An increased use of independent sources by both desk journalists and correspondents;
- More articles with a bottom-up perspective;
- A wider reach of desk journalists in terms of coverage of the world;
- Increased production by desk journalists in comparison to correspondents.

The main question that goes with these hypotheses is the following:

**How has foreign journalism at de Volkskrant changed from before the era of the Internet?**

To answer that query, four research questions were formulated:

**RQ1: How has the amount and composition of foreign news content changed?**
RQ2: What has changed in the use of sources by staff journalists?

RQ3: How has the balance between correspondents and foreign news desk journalists shifted?

RQ4: How much of social media usage is directly visible in the articles?

To put the results in perspective, I will additionally conduct interviews with (former) desk journalist Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi and current chief of the VK foreign news desk Bert Lanting, who is a former Russia correspondent.

In the next chapter, I will first establish the importance of foreign journalism, and then explain the difference between correspondents and foreign news desk journalists. I will also provide a bit more background on the troubles that currently exist in the world of foreign journalism and the Internet’s role in this crisis. After that, I will introduce Heinrich’s concept of network journalism, which offers a model of how journalism might work in the digital age. In the subsequent chapter, I will elaborate on Twitter, and explain what characteristics the social network has that can help desk journalists evolve into semi-correspondents. After that the methodology of the research will be detailed, before moving on to the discussion of the results. In the conclusion, finally, I will discuss the validity of the theory that Twitter can help desk journalists become more like correspondent, and suggest areas for further research.
Foreign news departments across the Western world are being cut down. It is the result of correspondents’ high costs, combined with a huge drop in revenues for news organizations, and cheap online competition (Enda, 2010; Kumar, 2010). Journalists and journalism watchers alike are concerned for the quality of foreign journalism (among others: Felle, 2013, online; Little, 2013, online; Terpstra, 2012, online). This thesis assesses the current state of foreign journalism and explores how Twitter has the potential to bring about change. Before I get to that, however, it is important to note that there are two main kinds of foreign journalists: desk journalists in the medium’s home country, and correspondents based abroad, either working for that particular medium itself, or servicing more media outlets at the same time. I am not dealing with press agencies here, as they have a different kind of competition with journalists working directly for news media. This chapter explains why correspondents are so important vis-à-vis desk journalists, while the next chapter talks about Twitter and shows how desk journalist might be able to use the service as a journalistic tool to simulate a correspondent’s modus operandi, which could enable them to do what traveling reporters do, but without the traveling.

First though, I will clarify why foreign reporting is such an important form of journalism, and explain how I distinguish between foreign correspondents and desk journalists. Then I will relate how the Internet has impacted foreign journalism so far, and how it has brought about a new kind of journalism, a kind that Heinrich calls Network Journalism. In the next chapter, before moving on to the research part of this thesis, I will explain what Twitter is and how it can help desk journalists do what foreign correspondents do.

1.1 Foreign News and its Messengers

Foreign news is an important part of our daily news diet. The reason for this is perhaps best explained in a 2007 educational special by The Washington Post, which aims to teach students the following lesson: “The foreign correspondent provides an eyewitness account, on-sight interviews and reports of trends, events and ideas from places around the world.
This global understanding is essential to being an educated individual and informed leader” (Lange, 2007, emphasis added). It can be argued that without foreign news, we are missing a crucial bit of information that may have a huge impact on our own lives. As Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent Max Frankel warned when after the end of the Cold War America’s interest in news from abroad started waning: “A shallow understanding of the world will damage the nation’s sense of itself, its commerce and its standard of living and may blind it to even greater threats” (Qtd. in Hohenberg, 1995, 321). How true this was became apparent with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. A nation does not exist in a vacuum. International developments effect national issues as well. This international intertwining is caused by globalization, and it is increasing due to modern communication technology. Giddens refers to globalization as a process in which “the modes of connection between different social contexts or regions become networked across the earth’s surface as a whole” (Giddens, 1990, 64). As a result, he argues, local events in distant localities are linked to each other through worldwide social relationships and are thus mutually influential. Simply put, in the words of Jeff Israely, co-founder of WorldCrunch, a website that translates non-English news articles into English: “Global stories are local because the world matters” (Qtd. in Goodman, 2010, : online). Foreign news, Israely argues, is just as important as domestic news.

Of old, the one to bring this foreign news to domestic audiences (through news media) has been the foreign correspondent, a profession that is for all intents and purposes doomed if we go by the pessimistic discourse around this particular kind of journalism in U.S. media (see Arnett, 1998; Shanor, 2003; Utley, 1997; Wu & Hamilton, 2004). Many worrisome figures are strewn around, among them the number of foreign news stories per day in American daily newspapers declining roughly from 98 in 1985 to 46 in 2010 (Kumar, 2010), the size of the overall U.S. foreign press corps falling from 188 to 141 between 2002 and 2006 (not counting the Wall Street Journal, which has several international editions) (Hiatt, 2007, online), and the 18 U.S. newspapers and two newspaper chains closing every one of their overseas bureaus between 1998 and 2003 (Enda, 2010, 15). These trends are very troublesome, if Cottle is to be believed: “The decline in international journalism (…) goes to the heart of concerns about an informed citizenry and its capacity for understanding today’s global world, its interdependencies and inequalities” (Cottle, 2009, 347).
There are two main reasons why many news organizations cut back on their foreign journalism: cost and a (perceived) lack of audience interest (Pichon, 2011, online). “Maintaining a bureau costs hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in correspondents’ salaries, rent and supplies, money for local staff and $4,000 or $5,000 a month in travel expenses,” says Roy Gutman, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist turned foreign editor at the Washington bureau of newspaper publishing company McClatchy (Qtd. in Enda, 2010, 23). This is a problem in a time when the Internet is offering much cheaper alternatives, making the high costs of traditional foreign corresponding seem all the more disproportionate. Why spend a lot of money on sending a camera team into a crisis area if footage is available from YouTube at no cost at all?

But the obstacles do not end with budgetary considerations: “Even if you can afford the upfront expenditure,” Gutman says, “you face a significant problem on the back end, as newspaper editors shun foreign news in favor of local stories” (Ibid.). This problem is the result of a rather pervasive attitude in news media. It is the idea that, as Hoge puts it in his aptly titled article Foreign News, Who Gives a Damn?: “To the general public, much of foreign news seems confusing and without sufficient significance to justify working it out” (Hoge, 1997, 50). Verwer spots a similar way of thinking in Dutch media: “Network coordinators and editors-in-chief assume that their readers and viewers are no longer interested in foreign countries, and consequently set less money apart for productions [there]” (Verwer, 2011, online). The question is how much of this assumption holds true, though. Verwer sees evidence to the contrary in the fact that “hundreds of thousands of Dutch people are involved in small scale development projects, or have donated money to major foreign aid organizations,” or that “Joris Luyendijk’s book about foreign journalism became a huge success, and sold over 100,000 copies” (Ibid.). In the UK, where the problem of shrinking foreign news coverage at least as big, Harding noticed that “knowing ‘what’s going on in the world’ is the biggest single factor when people are asked why they watch the news. 70% picked this answer out. (...) 40% say they are specifically interested in ‘worldwide politics and current events’” (Harding, 2009, 19). This finding goes against “the very widespread view in the [television] industry [...] that international equals low audiences.” (20) A Harris poll from 1978, done in the U.S., furthermore suggests that this discrepancy is not something of recent years only: “41 percent of readers expressed great interest in foreign news, but 5 percent of polled reporters, editors and news directors
believed consumers had such interest” (Riffe et al., 1994, 87).

The result, in any case, is that “international news is [...] seen by papers as an increasingly expensive ‘luxury’ lacking appeal for most readers, [and] the corporate response has been to cut costs, which means foreign news coverage” (76). The coverage that remains is furthermore kept as cheap as possible, which, as Constable argues, gives rise to journalism of a lower quality:

Newspapers are replacing bureaus — which require staffs and cars and family housing — with mobile, trouble-shooting individual correspondents. [...] But while] freelancers can help cover more remote or incremental stories, and newswire agencies can cover breaking news in global hot spots — [...] neither is enough(2007, online).

She also explains why quality foreign journalism is so important:

Don’t we learn more about Islam from Anthony Shadid’s wide-ranging Post interviews with thoughtful Muslims in Egypt and Turkey than from images of the latest bombing in Baghdad? Don’t we identify more with Sharon LaFraniere’s New York Times portraits of village customs in Malawi and Mozambique than with dry reports about the grim toll of AIDS across Africa? If newspapers stop covering the world, I fear we will end up with a microscopic elite reading Foreign Affairs and a numbed nation watching terrorist bombings flash briefly among a barrage of commentary, crawls and celebrity gossip (Ibid.).

According to Gutman, such quality journalism can only be achieved by traditional foreign correspondents:

Working in a bureau and getting to know a country or a region of the world enable reporters to pick up on things that outsiders—even seasoned journalists (and former foreign correspondents) who parachute in for days or weeks—would be much less likely to learn. (...) You have to get to know the place, the people, the pulse. (...) Very few newspapers spend the time or money to get to know the world anymore. They
have downsized so much that if they have foreign bureaus at all, they tend to be in war zones, places where the story is obvious and, to a great extent, dictated by government actions (Enda, 2010, 22).

The latter sentiment corresponds with the problems Verwer sees in the Dutch situation:

The number of correspondents in non-Western countries seems to be declining in favor of the network of correspondents in the economic and political centers of the world. (...) The fact that this goes at the expense of in-depth and complete coverage of those parts of the world is obvious (Verwer, 2011, online).

Exactly what is the difference between having a correspondent abroad and just letting an editor cover a foreign country from the home news desk was examined by De Swert en Wouters. They compared two Belgian broadcast news outlets between 2005 and 2009. During that time, public channel VRT decided to dispatch a permanent correspondent to China, while commercial competitor VTM, lacking the resources to do the same, kept covering the area from behind the desk back in Belgium. They had to rely on news wires and occasionally parachuted a reporter into The People’s Republic. While the study found that the presence of a reporter in a foreign region resulted in an increase in attention given to that area and a higher quality of reporting, it at the same time revealed that, overall, the kind of items that were aired were surprisingly similar.

The gap in China coverage between VTM and VRT used to be 29% when neither channel had a foreign reporter, a difference that rose to 70% when the latter chose to end that similarity. The public channel furthermore had more coverage outside of such expected news peaks as natural disasters and the Beijing Olympic games of 2008 (De Swert & Wouters, 2011, 339). There was also more visual attention given to the daily lives of Chinese people by the channel with the foreign correspondent, resulting in a more bottom-up approach (reporting from the viewpoint of the people rather than officials) (342). Finally, as expected, the correspondent had a better network, more expertise, and access to sources that were difficult to get to for the private channel (343). Simply put, the correspondent’s items were more in-depth and had more background coverage. On the whole, however, coverage on each channel was altogether not that different. The same
kind of actors appeared in items by both outlets, and the tone was relatively equal as well – predominantly negative (342). The reason for this parallel seemed to be that on VRT, the foreign correspondent’s stories accounted for only one fifth of all China related items that made it to air (344). The rest was still produced at the news desk back home, or taken from the wires. This was moreover no exception from coverage of other countries: in the case of the United States, only one in ten broadcasted items was actually made by the foreign correspondent who was stationed there (338).

This dominance of the press agencies and the – previously determined – news agenda is something that Dutch former foreign correspondent Joris Luyendijk experienced as well when he was reporting from the Middle-East for several Dutch media. He claims his job felt like “working at the end of an assembly line”:

> At the beginning (...) stand wire stringers observing a newsworthy fact—or PR [public relations] people planting one; then there are the wire reporters, the wire bureau chiefs, then some more gatekeepers, and somewhere down the middle, there is my foreign news chief in Holland, and some further down, there is me. (...) By the time I got involved, it had usually been decided already whether to cover something and also how. (...) In a peripheral country like the Netherlands, when it comes to foreign news, the Anglo-Saxon media rule is supreme. When the agencies produce large stacks of reports and urgent updates and CNN and BBC cover it, then it will be on the Dutch news too (Luyendijk, interviewed by Kester, 2008, 502).

What it boils down to is that quality foreign correspondence with original reporting is necessary, but the correspondents who are needed to do that are too expensive. If given the choice between sending a journalist to find foreign news on her own or letting the news come to the desk through the wires - perhaps parachuting in a reporter for some temporary additional coverage - many media organizations will opt for the latter. Nor is this likely to change any time soon, if ever at all. Greenslade praises Sambrook for opining that the heyday of correspondence is probably over (Greenslade, 2010, online). One can argue whether this is true or not, but perhaps it might be wiser to assume that it is, and seek a different solution, for example improving one of the other ways of ‘doing foreign journalism’ – ways which have so far been deemed subpar.
First, we need to determine which alternatives are available. Hamilton & Jenner contend that as a consequence of the Internet, traditional foreign correspondence has spawned seven additional kinds of journalists in the foreign news bracket (2004, 313):

- **The parachute journalist**: a journalist who is not permanently abroad but is being flown in when there is an important news event somewhere in the world.
- **The foreign foreign correspondent**: a national of one country reporting for a medium of another country.
- **The local foreign correspondent**: a local journalist doing a story for a domestic medium, but with an international angle, for instance about recent immigrants and their country of origin.
- **The foreign local correspondent**: a local journalist in one country, whose stories are being published or aired as foreign news in a different country.
- **The in-house foreign correspondent**: a correspondent working for a non-journalistic company, and who reports back only to that company.
- **The premium service foreign correspondent**: a correspondent working for a press agency, offering news to whomever is willing to pay for it.
- **The amateur correspondent**: an untrained and unaffiliated citizen journalist, who through digital media is able to write and publish about events in his or her own vicinity. Due to the Internet, these publications can travel around the world, making the author a de facto foreign correspondent.

Each of these categories have their flaws. Parachute journalists and local foreign correspondents are not sufficiently familiar with the country they are reporting on, due to not being immersed in its society (Hess, 1996, 100; Cottle, 2009, 347). They are, as Moore puts it, “‘boxing blind’ – unaware of where the story started, who the best people to speak to are, or how it is likely to play out” (2010, 49). Foreign foreign correspondents and foreign local correspondents conversely do not know enough about the country they are reporting for, for basically the same reasons. In-house foreign correspondents do not produce publicly available stories, and if all news organizations just used premium service foreign correspondents, they would all publish the same content. Amateur correspondents, finally, are not up to the professional level of actual news organizations, more on that in the next chapter.
Hamilton & Jenner only mention journalists who are actually out of the country, except for the local foreign correspondent, but in their version that is really just a reporter writing a domestic story with a foreign outlook. Yet, it is the one most similar to the foreign news desk journalist in the definition this thesis uses, in that she stays in her own area, and gathers her information through an international network. However, she currently still suffers from the same problem as the first two categories: not knowing enough about the country she is writing about. If the desk journalist is to be a sufficient complement to the correspondent, this issue has to be resolved.

In order to do so, we have to take a look at exactly what makes the correspondent better able to deliver foreign news than the desk journalist. What exactly is the difference between them? The answer, as used in this thesis, is that correspondents travel to faraway locations, collecting relevant primary sources and information and familiarizing themselves with a country (Chu, 1985, 10), while desk journalists rarely leave their own country, and instead find experts who can say something about a story that has often for a large part already been written by someone else (press agencies, foreign newspapers). They cannot add original reporting to the story, since they do not have easy access to primary sources, nor are they able to immerse themselves in a different society in order to get to know its people and keep an eye on local current events. In essence they can only give, in Constable’s words “dry reports about the grim toll of AIDS across Africa” (2007, online). In short, their use of secondary sources is what sets desk journalists apart from correspondents. Desk journalists’ sources are indirect, while correspondents’ sources are direct. It is for this reason that the latter are traditionally so much more highly valued than the former (De Swert & Wouters, 2011, 332). Traditionally.

The world of journalism does not stand still, however. Things have changed, and in some ways correspondents and desk journalists have even swapped roles. The former are for example now more prone to follow the news agenda, and sometimes even rewriting wire news, due to communication lines with the home front being shorter. The desk journalist, meanwhile, has only gained from the Internet. It has given them a wide reach where they used to be severely limited in getting direct access to foreign sources, or picking up original foreign news. The World Wide Web has made it possible for communication flows to circumnavigate the globe 24/7 in real-time (Cottle, 2009, 341), thereby enabling a new form of journalism, called network journalism.
1.2 Network Journalism

Traditional foreign correspondence stems from the fulfillment of the need to stay informed and to know what is going on in other parts of the world. Since at the early stages of journalism no technology existed to communicate with far-off places, there was no way of finding anything out about them but to physically go over there, or have someone else go in your stead and have him send information back to you. That information would then spread among people back home. Hermida describes the way news was disseminated back in 18th century France, when people had designated meeting points (the “tree of Krakau” in his example) where they learned about new tidings and discussed them with each other (Hermida, 2012, audio). Quandt makes a similar observation, noticing a communication process in early stages of societal development in which “people talked face-to-face with small numbers of other people, they did it in ‘real time’ and participants (...) reacted directly to one another” (Quandt, 2011, 161). These early societies soon grew more complex, demanding a communication system that could handle more information and distribute it to more people at the same time, giving rise to media organizations, and later to mass media (see figure 1.1).

Social media have given a new twist to this evolution of communication, says Hermida, especially services like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter:

As history shows, we will adapt and shape the uses of these new tools. What we see happening now is both new and old, a realignment of the media, a shift almost back
to the shared media space of pre-industrial journalism. This is a space where you have a system of mass media that’s been dominant for the best part of two centuries, and alongside we’re seeing a renaissance in how we used to gather and share information in the past. News is seeing a resurgence as a social and shared experience (Hermida, 2012, audio).

This implies two things. One, if the Internet and social media had been invented a few centuries earlier, there might not have been a need for foreign correspondence to begin with. Information could have been collected from a distance, and interpreted by journalists at home. If from the start it had been possible to go on the internet and talk to sources on the other side of the world, other ways to report on foreign issues might have emerged first. Two, as oral distribution of news in early stages of societal communication was eventually taken over by professional media, the same can now happen with digital communication. The early communication model eventually became too complex to occur between “equal communication ‘nodes’ – that is, individuals” (Quandt, 2011, 161). Similarly, social media are too complex and too overwhelming even for modern consumers to not require professional scrutiny.

The importance of the second point will be discussed in the next chapter, but for now let’s focus on the first point. It is an important realization that the way foreign journalism has always been done is not necessarily the only way, it is simply the way we are most used to it being done. One possible alternative is provided by Heinrich, who offers a conceptual framework of network journalism. Many scholars have talked about network journalism, in many different ways. Jarvis, for example, sees it as synonymous with citizen journalism, describing it as “professionals and amateurs working together to get the real story, linking to each other across brands and old boundaries to share facts, questions, answers, ideas, perspectives” (Jarvis, in his foreword to Beckett, 2008, 46). Bardoel & Deuze focus more on the “increasing level of interactivity, hypertextuality, multimediality, and asynchronicity” resulting from new digital tools, and for Karp network journalism pertains to the way distribution of content is being affected by modern technology (for an overview of definitions relating to network journalism, see Heinrich, 2011, 62). Heinrich, however, sees all of these points as part of a new structural concept underlying the whole sphere of (global) journalism (ibid.).
Before the Internet came about to shake things up, the global news sphere used to have a “fairly organized, linear news flow structure” (ibid.). News originated from “a small elite of politicians, PR people, and media organizations” (76), and was delivered to consumers through the medium of television, radio, or newspaper. Now that the whole world is digitally interconnected, however, the sphere has shifted to a model of “chaotic’ information flows produced and disseminated globally by an uncountable number of information transmitters” (62). “Alternative sources can get access, there is feedback between consumers and producers, etc.” (61). In other words, everyone, members of the elite and laymen alike, can be a source of news. Information can be communicated through two-way online media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, and it can be accessed by anyone from anywhere in the world at any time.

At places where information flows intersect, meaningful stories emerge. These intersections are called nodes and exist in various sizes. They are information outlets. As information in the global network journalism sphere travels through the dense net of information strings, it can eventually hit “a node that is strong enough to break the story and push it into the global information arena” (76). This can potentially happen at the largest intersections, the so-called ‘supernodes,’ which are usually professional journalistic organizations. Instead of being pushed, however, news can also be pulled from these nodes and supernodes by news consumers themselves. Instead of waiting passively for the news to come to them, like they used to, they decide themselves when and what they want to read. Consequentially, news organizations lose some of their authority: “Instead of the traditional push mechanisms with news organizations setting the daily information agenda of their audiences, users can pull their desired news dispatches and organize their very own personal news worlds” (81).

Another way to see this model, other than as a global news sphere with a net of information strings and nodes, is as a large playing field. The way it used to be, news sources – the PR people, government officials and other elites – stood on one side of the field, while journalists took their information across to the other side, where news consumers were waiting to pick it up. In the new situation, everyone is on the field intermingled and the distinction between news sources, news consumers, and journalists is fading. Everyone can be a source, and everyone may spread information. Journalists do still have the potential to stand out from this crowd, however, as they have a further reach,
a better understanding of the entire field, and more expertise to use the available technology underlying these developments to their advantage. They can be, as per Bardoel and Deuze's description, "a professional who serves as a nodal point in a complex environment between technology and society, between news and analysis, between annotation and selection, between orientation and investigation" (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001, 98). They are the connections between all the other actors, or, reverting the metaphor back to the network journalism sphere, the nodes in the network.

In essence, what the modern journalist should be doing is curating, which Sternberg defines as “the organizing of information filed by reporters into a deliverable packages [sic] for readers” (Sternberg, 2011, online), and Glenn as “snagging the fish out of the aggregated information streams” (Glenn, 2013, online). It is what Bardoel predicted in the mid-nineties: “More than ever, the task of journalism will lie in filtering relevant issues from an increasing supply of information in a crowded public domain and its fragmented segments” (Bardoel, 1996, 297). Heinrich describes a similar role for journalists in dealing with the news flows in the network journalism sphere when she writes: "In order to make sense of these flows, to distinguish valuable from useless content, journalists need to identify reliable sources within these non-linear information flows. They need to position themselves in between these non-linear strings” (Heinrich, 2011, 79).

Since these information flows are global, this insight has big consequences for the way foreign journalism is done, more so than is the case for any other kind of journalism. We no longer need someone to bring news from one country to another. Instead of news being static and unable to move by itself, it becomes fluid and flows everywhere of its own accord. It just needs to be picked up by someone, no matter where. The elite status of correspondents could effectively be eliminated in this way, and desk journalists would become capable of delivering content on par with that of their traveling colleagues. Translating this to the playing field model, we see that in the old situation, desk journalists are on the same side of the field as news consumers, waiting for correspondents to fetch and deliver news from abroad. There is no way for them to reach the other side themselves. Once intermingled on the field, however, desk journalists and correspondents suddenly become indistinguishable from each other. Correspondents keep their stature vis-à-vis news consumers because of their journalistic skills, but these skills do not set them apart from other journalists. Desk journalists are now able to directly engage with resources,
just like correspondents are, making them capable of coming up with original foreign news, i.e., news that was not plucked from the wires, but originated with the journalist writing the article. How much this is actually happening in today’s newsrooms, however, is not clear, and requires more research.

The particular kind of journalism that this model enables is what I would call global journalism. Several definitions of global journalism have been offered in the past, focusing on different facets of the concept. Berglez explains it on a context level, contrasting it with foreign journalism. “Global journalism,” he says, “focuses on the relations between peoples, places, and their actions, while traditional foreign journalism merely focuses on events in particular spatial, political, or cultural contexts” (Berglez, 2008, 849). In other words: foreign journalism looks at separate cases, while global journalism connects them. Volkmer and Curran both have audiences in mind. The former defines global journalism as global news for a global audience, stories where labels like foreign and domestic do not apply because it is not made exclusively for or by members of any particular nation-state (Volkmer, 2007, 65). Curran has a similar view, interpreting global journalism as a form of internet journalism where the audience share an identity rather than a nationality (liberals, Muslims, etc.) (Curran, 2003, 232). I would define it, however, as a journalism practice, a way to describe the act of doing journalism, in which the global journalist is not bound by any particular locality. It is a combination of globalization and network journalism, in which the global journalist utilizes the network journalism sphere to do any kind of journalism from anywhere in the world. It is not exclusive to foreign journalism, either. It can be used in domestic journalism as well, though that would be rather unnecessary. In theory, however, a Dutch journalist living in Wellington, New Zealand, could do global domestic journalism about Staphorst, the Netherlands, by connecting to a local community online. Obviously that is an exaggerated example, and in reality, it would not be a very efficient way of working (not in the least because the population of Staphorst are not exactly well represented online), but in theory it is possible.

In foreign reporting, global journalism can be practiced by any kind of foreign journalist, from backpackers to traditional correspondents, and from foreign foreign to foreign local reporters, but it is most valuable to desk journalists. It allows them to do proper foreign journalism, and connects them to distant places in the world that they could not reach before. The global foreign desk journalist complements her reporting with online
sourcing, adding layers and angles. She can link to other parts of the world without having to leave her turf, she can find sources and verify or invalidate information, and she can be part of a local digital community while physically being on the other side of the world. In other words, she can position herself between the non-linear information strings that span the world, and direct them to one place, one supernode: her own medium. And she can instantly tell anyone anywhere in the world about it. These abilities go a long way in making desk journalists an alternative to correspondents.

However, the very observation that the Wellington-Staphorst example would not be very efficient makes it clear that there is one very big problem with global journalism if used as the sole way of reporting on foreign affairs: online journalism by definition leaves a very large part of the world in the dark. Much like in Staphorst, there are not a whole lot of people outside of the Western world blogging, tweeting or facebooking about what is happening in their vicinity. In other words, there is a digital divide in the world and not everyone is connected. Correspondents are therefore still necessary in at least those parts of the world. On the other hand, though, a lot of correspondents are walking around in the brightest places on earth, places that are perfectly illuminated by digital media. It is in these areas that foreign desk journalists could benefit from global journalism, and relieve a few correspondents of their duties so they can go and be useful somewhere else.

While the Internet has laid the infrastructure that enabled the non-linear information strings and news flows in the network journalism model, placing oneself in between these strings – and thus, practicing global journalism – has only really been feasible with the arrival of Twitter on the social media stage. No social medium is more suited for network journalism, which requires a global reach and ease of access, than Twitter. The microblogging tool brings many different information streams together and provides a way to navigate them at the same time.
Microblogging service Twitter allows people to post short messages of 140 characters - the length of a text message (SMS) - to a feed that can be read by a number of followers. Everyone can choose to follow one another. Unlike Facebook, following is not necessarily reciprocal, meaning one person does not have the follow, know, or even like the person following them. In this way, twitterers (also known as tweeteters or tweeps, among other monikers) can assemble large flocks of followers, in some cases (mostly celebrities and big media organizations) even running into the millions. One thing that makes Twitter potentially interesting for journalism is its ability for “viral distribution” (Lasorsa et al., 2011, 2). Through its system of “retweeting,” followers of one account can pass on tweets to their followers, who can then forward it to their followers, who may in turn retweet it to their followers, and so on, and so on, and so on. This benefits journalists in two ways. First, links to their own news articles can easily be disseminated through a large network, and second, they may encounter interesting news stories that originate elsewhere and find their way into their own immediate network.

Another important Twitter feature are hashtags. These one word topic descriptions (often contractions of multiple words and/or abbreviations) preceded by a #-sign can be used to cluster tweets on one particular topic. If, for example, everyone talking about global journalism adds the hashtag #glojo to their tweet, clicking on that tag results in a stream of everything that is being tweeted on that particular topic in real time. This is particularly helpful for journalists looking for sources or witnesses. For instance, during the 2010 earthquake in Chile, the hashtag #terremotochile tied a lot of tweets on the catastrophe together, many of them sent out by people who were directly affected (Mendoza et al., 2010, online). The terms that are mentioned most often in a short period of time are listed to the side of one’s Twitter timeline (the feed showing in real time what is being tweeted by one’s followees). These “Trending Topics” provide a quick indication of what people are talking about the most at any particular moment. (Although when there are no big

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1 In the case of a severe dislike, however (or a spam account, which will follow people with the sole purpose of attracting attention to a product or service), a follower can always be blocked.
news stories, these topics often fall into the category of petty trivialities, such as *RIP Justin Bieber*, or *#WhatIDidLastSummer.*

Since its public launch on July 15th, 2006, Twitter has been growing exponentially. Between September, 2011 and March, 2012, the number of tweets sent out per day rose from 100 million to 340 million (Wasserman, 2012, online). The unique visits to the site grew from 250 million per month in the beginning of 2011 to 400 million in September of the same year. Although that sounds very positive, it is important to realize that a large part of those visitors never came back after their initial visit. According to Twitter CEO Dick Costolo the amount of users who do log in every day adds up to about 50 million (Tsotsis, 2011, online), but even of those returning visitors, the majority only read tweets by others and never post any themselves. A study by the French analytics company Semiocast, which counted that 383 million accounts had been created between the start of the service and January 1st, 2012, furthermore revealed that, worldwide, only 27% of people on Twitter had posted at least one message in the three months between September 1st and November 30th, 2011. An additional interesting finding for this thesis – which is about how Dutch journalists can benefit from the micro blogging tool – is that Dutch Twitter users (who ranked 17th in the world with regards to number of accounts (see figure 2.1)) were more active than any other nationality on earth, with 33% sending out at least one tweet in those same three months (figure 2.2) (Semiocast, 2012, online).

![Top 20 countries in terms of Twitter accounts](image)

*Figure 2.1: The Netherlands ranks nr. 17 in number of Twitter accounts (Semiocast).*
Another study, conducted by internet researcher comScore, found that in March 2011, the Netherlands had the highest relative internet penetration for Twitter in the world. In that month 26.8% of Dutch people logged on to Twitter at least once a month, more than Japan (26.6%), and Brazil (23.7%) (Azevedo, 2011, online).

More significant perhaps are the figures relating to Twitter activity by news media in particular. Wu et al. found that journalists and media outlets were by far the most active twitterers, yet make up only 15% of tweets received by ordinary users (Wu et al., 2011, 5). A Pew research into presidential campaign news conducted in the U.S. in early 2012, moreover found that only 2% of people got their news from Twitter. Most got it from more traditional outlets like cable news networks (36%), local TV news (32%) and national nightly network news (26%). Even YouTube scored higher with 3% (Pew, 2012, 7). Two years earlier, in May 2009, a Harvard Business School survey found that 10% of twitterers generated 90% of content (Newman, 2009, 42). Finally, the social media marketing agency ViralMS, by analyzing all tweets that were sent in 2011, found that over 75% of tweet content could be classified as “pointless babble” or “conversational.” News made up just 4% of the total number of tweets (Darell, 2011, online). The legitimate question therefore rises whether, and if so why, Twitter is relevant to journalism at all.
2.1 Is Twitter Relevant to Journalism, and Why?

The answer, first of all, is yes. But why? First, the fact that so few people are actually using Twitter the way it was meant to be used (posting short status updates), and even fewer are using it as their source of news is not necessarily a bad thing, especially since it is still a relatively new service. As Newman explains on the basis of the 1:9:90 rule (Figure 2.3): “Active participation [in social tools] is almost always a minority sport. (…) None of this undermines the case for social media, as 1–10 percent still represents a huge expansion in overall participation levels, with network effects leading to a disproportionate impact” (Newman, 2009, 42). The revelation that only 2% of Americans get their campaign news through Twitter is no cause for concern either. As commentator Jeff Sonderman and ABC News presenter Rick Klein agree: “It’s the right 2 percent,” because they are “the ‘early adopters’ of content and information” (Sonderman, 2012, online) This is backed up by Farhi, who says: “Twitter attracts the sort of people that media people should love — those who are interested in, and engaged with, the news. (...) The average Twitter user is two to three times more likely to visit a leading news website than the average person” (Farhi, 2009, 30). And even among social media users, Twitterers are the ones showing the most interest in news: as can be seen in figure 2.4, while most of the links posted on Twitter lead to news websites (28%), such links make up only 18% of the ones posted on the next most important social medium for the news business, Facebook (Crum, 2009, online).
Moreover, they are exactly the people who are interesting for news organizations: the ones who are hard to reach through traditional platforms. As BBC’s Philippa Thomas pointed out during a college of journalism debate on the function of Twitter in reporting:

People were talking back to me on Twitter and quite a few were saying ‘I don’t watch television bulletins, I don’t go home and switch on the news, I just keep Twitter on my phone.’ So you’re reaching a younger audience, a different audience. It’s a very small audience, it’s not what we (...) should be directly and only focused on, but it’s a growing audience, it’s significant and it’s young (BBCcojovideo, 2012, youtube).

We should also not forget that Twitter is still very early in its lifecycle. In the summer of 2013, its user base was still growing at an exponential rate (Fitzgerald, 2013, online). In 2012, Twitter became the fastest growing social medium in the world, gaining 40% active users (users who post at least once per month) between the second and fourth quarter of that year. By January 2013, one fifth of the entire global Internet population was an active Twitter user. More importantly, the number of active users grew faster than the total number of accounts, meaning Twitter was successful in engaging people who had already registered in the past (Smith, 2013, online). As for the amount of non-relevant content on Twitter, according to the latest figures, 400 million tweets are being sent out daily (Moore, 2013, online). Even if only 4% of those are news tweets, that is still 16 million news tweets each day. The fact that pointless babblers send out a multitude of that does little to diminish the gargantuan amount of potentially useful information that is constantly being churned out into the world.

The way people use Twitter is changing as well. More and more, people see the service as a source of discovery rather than as a microblog about the misadventures surrounding the early morning eating rituals and nutritional escapades of their friends (Smith, 2013, online). While still not many people often get their news from Twitter, those figures too are shifting: in 2010, 17% of American Twitter users said they regularly got their news from the social medium. Two years later, it was 27% (Duggan & Brenner, 2013, online).

Twitter itself, meanwhile, is embracing its image as ‘most newsy’ of the social media, reflected in several decisions and changes they have made over time. For example the
recruiting of a Head of News, who, according to the job description “will be responsible for devising and executing the strategies that make Twitter indispensable to newsrooms and journalists, as well as an essential part of the operations and strategy of news organizations and TV news networks,” (Bloomgarden-Smoke, 2013, online). But more subtle changes point in the same direction. The headline backtracing feature, for instance, adds links to a tweet’s permalink page that redirect to articles that have embedded that particular tweet (Ellin, 2013, online). Substituting their guidance prompt of “what are you doing” with “what’s happening” is another example, as is changing their motto to “Share and discover what’s happening right now, anywhere in the world” (Van Dijck, 2012, 340). All of these amendments suggest that Twitter is becoming a news medium more than anything else, as The Guardian’s Michael Wolff observes as well:

Twitter (...) has now evolved into a major part of the news media. It may be the most significant advance in news since, if not linotype and the telegraph, then, at least, cable. As with cable, every new news event of consequence advances Twitter’s presence and clout. It is first responder news; it is a real time news index; and, for more and more news consumers, it is background or passive news, like local radio once was, but on an international scale (2013, online).

What is more important for Twitter’s relevance to journalism than the way it is viewed by the general public, however, is the way it can be used as a tool for the practice of journalism itself, as Farhi acknowledges as well:

Twitter can be a serious aid in reporting. It can be a living, breathing tip sheet for facts, new sources and story ideas. It can provide instantaneous access to hard-to-reach newsmakers, given that there’s no PR person standing between a reporter and a tweet to a government official or corporate executive (2009, 28).

In some journalistic organizations, Twitter is not even a potential tool anymore, it is a must, to wit a report by the London School of Economics on the value of social media to journalism, in which BBC’s Chief International Correspondent of the news operation, Lyse Doucet, states: “There is no question, if you are not on Facebook and Twitter, you are not
getting the full story” (Hahn, 2013, 7). Her colleague Joanna Carr “wouldn’t hire anybody who doesn’t know how to use Twitter” (12). For some in the British news network, Twitter has even replaced the wire services. World affairs producer Stuart Hughes says he only does a fifth of his newsgathering on wire services anymore, and the remaining 80% on Twitter:

> Social media allows me to get much closer to story [sic], there are journalists and other people on the ground reporting in real time and sharing it in real time, so by the time a story actually appears on the wire, very often I will have already spotted it through social media (ibid.).

One of the most famous examples of Twitter being faster than the news wires is when it broke the news of the raid on Osama Bin Laden’s secret hideout in Abbottabad, which was more or less livestweeted by one of Bin Laden’s neighbors. It was seen as the “CNN moment” for the social medium, referencing the way that network’s coverage of the Gulf War had proven the significance of live television reporting roughly twenty years earlier (MacMillan, 2013, online). But this is by far not the only example, says Salon.com’s Roxana Gay:

> I cannot think of a significant event from the past three years I did not first learn about via Twitter: the midnight shootings in Aurora, Colo., the massacre at Sandy Hook elementary, the uprisings across the Middle East during Arab Spring, the activities of the Occupy movement, the 2012 presidential election, the shooting of Trayvon Martin and ensuing debacle, the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, the bombings at the Boston Marathon, and on and on the news goes (2013, online).

Another argument for why Twitter is a good alternative to press agencies is provided by the article “Can Twitter replace News Wire for Breaking News?” which actually wants to show that Twitter is not all that much better than wire news. It is not particularly faster and it does not cover different stories than the mainstream media (except for some minor ones that those media are not interested in anyway) – although it does provide more extensive eyewitness coverage (Petrović et al., 2013, 3). Inadvertently, however, the article begets a
very important realization: perhaps Twitter is not necessarily better than the wire, but it is not worse either. As Michael Wolff already noted, even though it was not conceived as a way to disseminate news, that is what it has naturally come to be. It is exactly this development that also makes Twitter such a useful tool to foreign desk journalists. If Twitter can get you the same stories as any major news outlet (which is of course partly because those outlets are themselves present on Twitter), then it follows that in any country with a reasonable number of Twitterers, you can get the same stories from Twitter as a correspondent would from following the local news – and more. Twitter thus diminishes the necessity for foreign journalists to actually be present in such countries. Desk journalists who make good use of their social network can do it from home. Of course this does not go for the ‘blind spots,’ the countries where Twitter usage is low. And even in those countries where Twitter penetration is relatively high, critical voices condemn its usage as a journalistic source. More on that later in this chapter.

2.2 How to Use Twitter

Twitter has been in the journalist’s toolbox for a few years now, and while it has done a lot of good, it has also been reviled as a threat to journalism, as lazy reporting, as a distraction, a disseminator of false rumors, and many other things (a.o. Arceneaux & Weiss, 2010, 1271; Brooks, 2011, online; Ingram, 2013, online; McHugh, 2012, online; Rieder, 2011, online). It has been suggested that the speed with which news travels through Twitter has taken its toll on the accuracy of its content (Barnett, 2009, online), and that it has led to the emergence of a “1440-minute news cycle” (Gillmor, 2011, online). In some cases, it has even proven potentially dangerous. After both the school shooting tragedy at Sandy Hook elementary, and the bombing of the Boston Marathon, social media had a big role in the misidentifications of and subsequent witch hunt for innocent people as the alleged perpetrators of these violent acts. Clearly, Twitter is not without its pitfalls. However, this can partly be chalked up to the relative newness of the medium. Journalists – as well as news consumers – are still quite unfamiliar with the service and have not yet learned how to use it properly. Making good use of Twitter is for a large part in knowing what it really is. As Hahn writes in the conclusion to her report on social media use in journalism:
It is a skill, like interviewing. It is a tool like the mobile phone. New technology and the Internet is clearly changing journalism, but social networks still require traditional journalistic values, like fact checking, accuracy, objectivity and communicating what is relevant and interesting (2013, 28).

Twitter gives online journalists full access to the disciplines that have always been part of good journalism, but in a digital form. Disciplines such as news gathering (that is stumbling upon news, getting tips, and checking beats), sourcing (contacting eyewitnesses, locating experts, or getting direct access to high profile sources), and verification (checking facts, finding multiple sources, and debunking rumors). It is for that reason the tool is especially useful to foreign desk journalists. If they apply all these disciplines to their online investigations, they can achieve a quality of journalism to match their colleagues abroad, with the difference being that, online, these disciplines can be performed on a global scale. However, not every journalist instinctively knows how to do this. It is important for them to get a good understanding of how Twitter works, and to adapt their expertise to an online environment.

The disciplines of sourcing and news gathering through Twitter are a matter of carefully managing one’s list of followees (i.e., people you follow). By regularly pruning that list, unfollowing tweeps that have not proven useful, and adding valuable ones found through retweets and recommendations, journalists can create their own news feeds. Dan Gillmor, Journalism professor at Arizona State University says journalists should “follow people who point them to things they should know about” (Farhi, 29). Social media trainer Sue Llewellyn agrees:

By choosing people who post things that are valuable to you, you create your own news. You create a filter and choose your trusted information guides. So, in order to be efficient, you need to be an active content manager who carefully selects the contacts on their network (Hahn, 2013, 15).

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2 Twitterers will occasionally endorse those whom they think worthy of following with the hashtag #FF – originally from Follow Friday, which in the early days of the service was the day that people traditionally promoted each other en masse.
A well-managed list could provide useful tips, early news alerts, and valuable connections, as illustrated by this anecdote from one of the most enthusiastic and well-known Twittering reporters, Sky News’ Neal Mann (who goes by the name @Fieldproducer on the social network):

A reporter I know who had just started working in India joined Twitter and quickly became ecstatic about how the real-time information network let her find knowledgeable sources for her reporting. In one case, Twitter connected her to a photographer she needed in a remote region of India in a matter of hours, something the photo desk at her newspaper had spent weeks trying to do (Qtd. in Ingram, 2011, online).

This system works so well because Twitter’s structure creates complex information relaying networks: “the average person on Twitter is connected to 140 people. Add retweets and reactions to the mix, and suddenly important information can travel faster than the traditional news cycle of responding to an event, checking facts, and reporting” (De Monte, 2011, online). By following the right people, journalists create a constant stream of information that is specifically relevant to them. It is the practical version of the redirecting of news flows into nodes and supernodes in the network journalism sphere discussed in the previous chapter. If something is being discussed on Twitter, it will not be long before those that follow the right tweeps will hear about it. That is because the social medium is what Hermida calls an “awareness stream,” an example of “ambient journalism” (2010, 298). It is an “always-on, event-driven communication system where news is shared, contested, verified and recommended” (2013, 12). Ambient journalism refers to the fact that, through modern technology, our daily lives are so saturated with news and information that we are in theory always aware of what is going on around us. Reporters can make use of these streams to fuel their journalism, as Hermida explains:

Some of it is what I had for lunch, some of it is rumor, some of it is gossip, some of it is news. What we have is these streams of information from millions of people (...) that are recorded, that are archived, that are searchable. We can mine them for information (2012, audio).
This idea corresponds to both Sambrook’s and Eltringham’s notion of Twitter as a way to keep an ear to the ground, the way neighborhood bars were in the offline days of journalism, when “journalists were told to get out of the office, get down to the pub and build a contacts book (or community) that told them what people were saying and what they were interested in[, which] then informed their own journalism” (Eltringham, 2010, online). Again, this does not mean that whatever information is found on Twitter is ready-to-publish material, as Sambrook emphasizes in his pub analogy: “Just as you wouldn’t take a conversation from the neighborhood bar and broadcast it as the truth, you need to do your own checking and verification and all those things still need to happen in your use of social media too” (Newman, 2009, 10). Twitter, however, is more than just a return to these communal spaces, it is a big improvement. Local bars were indeed just that: local. The ‘Twitter pub’ covers the entire world. It is that which, once again, makes the service so valuable to foreign journalism in particular. As the people behind Twitter themselves put it on its seventh birthday, the social network “has become a true global town square – a public place to hear the latest news, exchange ideas and connect with people all in real time. This is where you come to connect with the world at large” (Wickre, 2013, online).

The discipline of verification can be defined as a way to “determine the truth, accuracy, or validity of news events, establishing jurisdiction over the ability to objectively parse reality to claim a special kind of authority and status.” (Hermida, 2012b, 1). Some important practices that make up this discipline are “seeking multiple witnesses to an event, disclosing as much as possible about sources, and asking many sides for comment” (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, 71). The speed with which news travels nowadays, however, poses a problem to that method. Through social media, rumors find their way to news consumers much easier and faster than they used to. No longer can journalists just wait and only publish pieces of information after they have established their veracity, but neither can they already use them in their reporting, as they have not been confirmed. Matthew Eltringham and Charlie Beckett tried to tackle this problem by introducing their concept of the “line of verification.” Unverified information can be reported, just as long as it is made clear that it is still on the “dark side” of the line. As more information becomes available –indeed possibly in reaction to unverified stories, it can move to the light side, where the narrative is a proper journalistically valid news story (Beckett, 2011, online).

One J-tweeter (as twittering journalists are sometimes called) who is using his
Twitter account to do just that is Andy Carvin, who has been described as a “living, breathing, real-time verification system” (Silverman, 2011, online). Under the moniker @acarvin, he rose to fame and admiration during the revolutions in the Arab world when he would tweet about rumors and news stories, asking his followers whether they knew anything more about it, or could confirm or debunk it, while never having to leave his NPR news desk. Claiming to be completely transparent, he allows his audience to be a part of his discipline of verification, for example when they helped him contradict the persistent news stories that Israeli munitions were being used in Libya (Carvin, 2011, online; Hermida et al., 2012).

There is also criticism on this method however. Michael Wolff points out that by tweeting unverified information and asking his followers to verify or debunk it, Carvin is also sharing that unverified information with a large number of people, some of whom will retweet it as fact. Most of those retweeters will not do the same with subsequent corrections, thus perpetuating false information (Wolff, 2012, online). Wolff’s concern is confirmed by a study of the virality of false rumor tweets versus their corrections, which did indeed find a huge discrepancy between the two in favor of the former (Lotan, 2012, online).

There are other methods of verifying tweets as well, however. McAthy suggests taking an effort to assemble a network of trusted sources well ahead of time so that once news breaks within that network, there is at least a good indication that it is true:

That takes you half way through the process of verification, because you already know who this person is, you trust them, you’ve spoken to them. So when they upload the latest video you obviously have to do the same checks but you’re halfway there. (…) It comes back to old fashioned journalism and knowing who the right people are beforehand on a number of different stories (2012, online).

Van Ess additionally offers eight tips to quickly check information found on Twitter, including tools and online services that can help debunk rumors (2013, online). What is most important to realize, though, and what not all journalists seem to have understood yet, is that in the end:
Twitter is like any other information source – documents, anonymous tips, news releases, press conferences, interviews, databases – it can provide valuable information or deliberate lies or innocent errors. [The journalist's] job is to verify the information that looks useful (Buttry, 2013, online).

Ingram moreover suggests that perhaps it is not so bad that a lot of false information is circulating on Twitter. The news business is changing, he says, and we have yet to find the perfect way to deal with the new tool. This goes for journalists as well as for news consumers, who are not quite aware just yet that what they are watching is real-time journalism:

In the past, the chaotic process of journalistic sausage-making was kept mostly hidden from TV viewers and newspaper readers. Inside the newsrooms at these outlets, reporters and editors were frantically trying to collect information from wire services and other sources, verifying it and checking it as best they could, and then producing a report at some later point. The advent of 24-hour news shows like CNN removed part of the veil from this process, but social media has torn the veil away completely — now, real-time news reporting happens in full public view (2012, online).

Even if Twitter cannot be relied upon without severe scrutiny, however, there are still other reasons why it is a valuable place to find information. It allows reporters to find other sources than the ones they would traditionally use: “Digital media technologies such as Twitter facilitate the instant, online dissemination and reception of short fragments of information from sources outside the formal structures of journalism” (Hermida, 2012b, 1). After interviewing 25 – mostly Australian - J-tweeters, Julie Posetti found that some used it to “quickly go beyond press releases and official sources, like lobby groups and politicians, by interacting with followers who provided alternative perspectives, useful background and sometimes crucial facts in a story” (2009, online). And where the social network does not produce sources that can be used directly, it is still a good gauge of public opinion, explains ABC’s Michael Turtle:
You would certainly never claim the views online are representative, or seek to pass off a collection of tweets as an accurate poll. But it can point you in the direction of certain views, which can help guide some of the questions you might ask or angles you might follow-up (Posetti, 2009, online).

Or, as BBC’s Joanna Carr puts it: “What flies on social media, will fly on the radio” (Qtd. in Hahn, 2013, 14), meaning not that Tweeps’ opinions are representative of the general public, but that if a certain issue is heavily talked about on social media, the audience at large will be interested too.

The strength of Twitter, either way, stems from the fact that it is open to everyone. Anyone, journalist or not, can share rumors, news stories and personal experiences, thus creating a huge and extremely diverse pool of information. There is also a flipside to that coin, however. Yes, journalists can easily access global information streams, but so can their audience. Anyone with a computer or mobile device with access to the Internet can find (international) news themselves. So what is to stop them from cutting out the middle man, and follow news from around the globe directly?

2.3 Everybody is a Journalist

In April 2011, several technology blogs mourned the death of the Flip camera (Biddle, 2011, online; Pogue, 2011, online; Wong, 2011, online; among others). A mere five years after its introduction, the device, once hailed as ‘the future of journalism’ for its portability and simplicity of use (Trenholm, 2008, online), was symbolically laid to rest as it no longer made any sense to have a separate portable camera in a time when most people owned smartphones equipped with embedded HD cams. It is a development that is emblematic for journalism in general and for foreign correspondence in particular: modern technology makes it increasingly possible for ‘regular’ people to use the same tools journalists do, and to enter the (global) public arena without being part of the established media. Twitter is the latest instance of this. It gives journalists some very powerful tools to practice global journalism, but it gives them to the public too. It is a realization that breathes new life into Sambrook’s teasingly apocalyptic question whether correspondents are, in fact, redundant (2010, online).

Whether or not that is the case, the media world has definitely changed, as Hermida points out:
For the past 100 years, journalism has been based on an industrial model of production. It was a hierarchical model, where expertise and authority was in the hands of individuals and institutions collectively known as the press. To be a journalist, you needed to work for a company that owned the means of production (Qtd. in Silverman, 2012, online).

Foreign correspondents in particular had a huge advantage over their audience. They had always been in a better position to report overseas affairs. They could travel long distances, use technologies such as the telegraph, radio transmitters, and television cameras, and had access to newspapers and network television, enabling them to communicate their stories from one side of the globe to viewers/readers/listeners on the other side. Over the years, they were able to do so faster and faster – up to the point that live broadcasts delivered their journalistic fruits into people’s homes in an instant. They furthermore had the connections and the expertise to track down useful sources, stringers, and eyewitnesses in the far parts of the world, and could subsequently forge all the pieces of information they thus collected into one big narrative (Cole & Hamilton, 2008; Demers, 2002).

One by one, however, the Internet has defeated these advantages and made them available to the general public. “Now anyone can take part in the gathering of the news and reach a large number of people. This doesn’t mean that everyone is a journalist. But it does mean that anyone can perform an act that was previously the domain of the journalist” (Hermida, qtd. in Silverman, 2012, online). This trend started with weblogs enabling everybody with a computer and a modem to publish their writings and photographs for anyone in the world to see. YouTube and HD cameras in smartphones subsequently democratized the ability to make and distribute video footage. Twitter, finally, has given news consumers the opportunity to constantly stay up to date about any event in the world without the help of a foreign reporter. Whereas they used to need them to find information and bring it to them if they wanted to know more about what was happening elsewhere in the world, now all news consumers need is a relevant hashtag and perhaps a bookmark for Google Translate, and they can get updates about any situation in the world mere seconds after the fact – in theory at least. The Japanese earthquake and subsequent tsunami of 2011 was a good example: a Twitter search for the hashtag #津波³

³“Tsunami”
on the morning of March 13 would have resulted in a veritable tidal wave of relevant
tweets. Perhaps that is not a search that an average non-Chinese news consumer would
execute, but the point is that it is possible.

As noted in chapter two, however, just as oral distribution of news in early stages
of societal communication was eventually taken over by professional media, the same is
now likely to happen with Twitter or its social media successors. In its magnitude this kind
of social medium is far too complex to not require professional scrutiny. In the words of
Neil Mann: “journalists need social media as much as social media need journalists; people
want news fast but they want to know what’s true and what’s rumor” (Ingram, 2011,
online). Does this make journalists mere aggregators? No, journalists still have other jobs
than to explain what is happening on social media, but it is one of their tasks. After all, it is
only in their proper context, and with due investigation that bits of information on social
media can make any sense, as Harding agrees:

[The Internet] enables people to become their own individual newsroom seeking out
a whole array of reports and voices. But only a few people will have the will or the
time to do this. There is still going to be a demand from audiences for a professionally
edited digest of what has happened. (...) It will still be important in the future to
establish clear facts in confusing situations and to be able to interpret them and put
events into a fuller context (39, 2009).

This statement echoes Richard Sambrook’s suggestions in “Are Foreign Correspondents
Redundant?”, in which he argues for a reinterpretation of the job of foreign reporter as a
“farmer.” Instead of going out to hunt for and gather news, the correspondent should focus
on using her network and harvesting stories from all available channels. It is a process that
earlier in this thesis I have referred to as curation (Sternberg, 2011, online).

As scholars like Oliver Boyd-Barrett argue, there are still tasks professional
correspondents have that cannot be replaced by technology, tasks that lie at the core of
their existence (2000, 10). There is more than just transferring information from one place
in the world to another. Correspondents have another raison d’être: they not only interpret
information, place it into context and deliver a story that in simple terms tells readers at
home what is going on across the globe, but also explain what it means. As Sambrook points
out: “We used to need hunter-gatherers, now we need farmers” (Captein, 2011, online) To stick to that metaphor: correspondents not only hunt for sources and gather information, but they also prepare these elements and finally deliver a clear cut package, ready for news consumption. The hunting/gathering part is what the Internet has made redundant to an extent, or more precisely: it has made it something everyone can do, journalist or not. The information – sources, eyewitnesses, pictorial evidence – crops up everywhere now and can in principle be picked up by anyone. As Sambrook teaches us, however, it remains the task of the correspondent to tend to it, to separate the wheat from the chaff, the facts from the rumors, and to harvest a meaningful story.

However, while the ability to turn information into comprehensible news stories sets correspondents apart from their audience, it does not give them back the edge they once had over foreign desk journalists, who do have the journalistic skills that news consumers lack. Thanks to Twitter, the whole process, from hunting/gathering to harvesting, has come within their grasp. This does not mean that this is already happening, but the potential is there. Social media training is needed to enable desk journalists to capitalize on this potential. Once they do manage to add to this tool to their toolbox, it might go a long way in eliminating the disparity between desk journalists and correspondents. Sambrook asserts that “social media input can never become a substitute for eyewitness journalism” (Captein, 2011, online). But that is only relevant for background articles, where the journalist being an eyewitness is the entire point. That still leaves a good deal of news for which it is not necessary to have someone walking around on the scene. It used to be that even for regular day-to-day news a correspondent had to be abroad to report on it, but this is no longer the case. In fact, in some cases desk journalists might actually be more effective than foreign correspondents, something that The Guardian’s Jerusalem correspondent Harriet Sherwood personally experienced: “There were times when I felt my colleagues in London knew better what was happening than I did. That’s inevitable: they were monitoring a wide range of news sources, while my laptop stayed slung over my shoulder most of the time” (2010, online).

2.4 Devising a Research

Earlier in this thesis it was established that that some people – media watchers, journalists, scholars – are concerned about the state of foreign journalism. They observe that foreign
news is disappearing from quality media at an alarming rate and foreign correspondents’ work is not as highly valued as it once was (Altmeppen, 2010; Constable, 2007). At the same time, however, as we have seen in this chapter, Twitter has emerged to give foreign journalists – both correspondents and reporters of foreign news desks – a tool that has the potential to change their profession in a profound way. It offers them easy access to non-official sources around the world, customizable news feeds about distant regions of interest, and the ability to build a journalistic network in areas far removed from where they stand (Farhi, 2009; Nieva, 2013; Petrović et al., 2013; Wickre, 2013). In theory, then, these journalists can report on remote events as if they were there, without actually being there. It could even allow foreign desk journalists to become more like correspondents, who according to De Swert & Wouters “differ from (...) journalists working from the home country news desk, because they can rely on the local network they have built up” (2011, 336). If desk journalists working from within their own country could produce content rivaling that of foreign correspondents abroad, that would enable more cost-effective quality foreign journalism.

Testing the validity of this theory is no easy feat. Twitter started in 2006, and only really took off in the year 2009 (Pingdom, 2009, online), while the research I conducted took place in the year 2012. This is too short a period for the effects of the social medium to really have permeated journalistic routines. However, the aspects that make Twitter beneficial to foreign journalism are not completely new. The Internet already made it possible to find news and sources from all over the world, and social media already existed before Twitter. It was all just less sophisticated and streamlined than what the microblogging tool is offering today. The Internet and social media in general (blogs, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) have already been adopted for journalism for a much longer time, so the preliminary effect they have had on foreign news can be studied. Those results can then be extrapolated to say something about the viability of Twitter as a tool for foreign journalism.

But even these effects are hard to uncover. What I am interested in is the way foreign news has changed as a consequence of the Internet, more so than in how it is precisely being used by foreign journalists today. The most appropriate method to use for such a study, as I will explain in the following chapter, is a quantitative content analysis. The problem is, though, that the impact I expect the Internet to have had (as well as the
potential future impact of Twitter) is mostly 'behind the scenes,' and may not show in the content directly. It is in the way foreign journalists do their job and arrive at an article, rather than something that will be explicitly noticeable in the article itself. It can be; an online source can be attributed as such, but it is not something that necessarily has to happen, and an absence of any mention of social media does not mean that it was not used. The way to conduct this study, then, is to look for the subtle changes that are to be expected if the Internet and social media have indeed had their suspected impact. Finding these changes does not unequivocally prove that the Internet and social media are definitely behind them, but it is a clue that I may be on to something. It lays a foundation on which later studies can build.

The subject for this study is the foreign news section of Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant (VK). I will look for changes in the way correspondents and desk journalists wrote their articles before and after the onset of the Internet. For contextual purposes, I also want to find out whether and if so how the foreign news crisis that was talked about in the previous chapter has affected this particular media outlet. Wire articles will be counted, but will not be dissected any further. The reason for this is that, while they are important in revealing how VK deals with foreign news in general, since they are written by journalists unaffiliated with VK, they do not tell me anything about how staff journalists do their job. It is the balance between desk journalists and correspondents within one journalistic organization that I am interested in. I will also conduct two additional interviews with VK journalists discussing the outcomes of this study. Again, the purpose of these interviews is not to draw any definitive conclusions, but rather to give a little qualitative weight to the results.

In order to construct a fitting content analysis, I formulated research question to test several hypotheses. If the Internet and social media have indeed had the impact I expect it to have had, the following changes should have happened:

- Increased use of independent sources by both desk journalists and correspondents;
- More articles with a bottom-up perspective;
- A wider reach of desk journalists in terms of coverage of the world;
- Increased production by desk journalists in comparison to correspondents.
The main question that goes with these hypotheses is the following:

**How has foreign journalism at *de Volkskrant* changed from before the era of the Internet?**

To answer that query, I formulated four research questions:

**RQ1: How has the amount and composition of foreign news content changed?**

This question relates not only to the amount of articles and number of words of foreign news published on average in the paper each day, but also which type of author writes these articles. They may originate either from correspondents, desk journalists, press agencies, or a variation or combination thereof. If the concerns from earlier in this thesis are any indication, I would expect a sharp decrease in foreign news content, especially by correspondents.

**RQ2: What has changed in the use of sources by staff journalists?**

This and the following questions pertain only to correspondents and desk journalists writing for *de Volkskrant*. Wire articles are out of the picture, for the reason given earlier: they do not tell me anything about staff journalists’ routines. This question is about the use of particular kinds of sources in two categories: official and independent. The expectation is that there is an increase in sources from the second category, with more speaking citizens, and more contextual information from experts. Consequently, there should also be more articles with a bottom-up rather than a top-down perspective.

**RQ3: How has the balance between correspondents and foreign news desk journalists shifted?**

Correspondents are by default the dominant kind of foreign journalist, responsible for the majority of the paper’s foreign news output, and for coverage of the most distant areas of the world. I do not anticipate this dominance to be compromised in any serious way, but the prediction is that desk journalists are somewhat
encroaching on their colleagues abroad. They are better able to write foreign news articles and to cover faraway countries than they were before, so I expect to see some evidence of that in the data.

**RQ4: How much of social media usage is directly visible in the articles?**

As mentioned before, the use of social media is mostly invisible in the finished product, and I therefore do not expect to find many instances of it being mentioned. However, it would not be wise to exclude the few instances there might be from the results of the content analysis. They may still give me some valuable information on the way they are used, even if it is just a glimpse.

In the next chapter the methodology will be discussed, and it will be outlined how the sample was assembled and the research conducted. After that the results of the content analysis will be presented, and the answers from the interviews with the two VK journalists will be used to discuss them further. This thesis will then end with some final thoughts in the conclusion.
*De Volkskrant (VK)* is a quality newspaper that has always valued foreign journalism (Lanting, 2012), and that still devotes a fairly large share of its output (35% in 2009) to foreign news (Captein, 2010, online). It is therefore a good subject to study the effects of the Internet and social media on this form of reporting. The only other quality national newspaper the Netherlands has is *NRC*, which has a slightly lower circulation then *VK* (HOI, 2012, online). The main reason I chose to study the former, however, is that I am more familiar with that publication, having read it for many years. There are quality broadcast mediums as well, of course, but a paper medium is more suited for (historical) analysis, as it is much better archived and indexed than television or radio transmissions.

As my method of research, I chose to do a longitudinal comparative quantitative content analysis. There are a number of different definitions of (quantitative) content analysis given in just as many publications (Berger, 2000; Bryman, 2008; Krippendorf, 1969; Wright, 1986; Zito, 1975; among an inexplicably high number of others), but what all of them have in common is that they describe it as a way to get systematic, replicable, and objective readings from data. Each definition is some variation of the assertion that “[C]ontent analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text” (MacNamara, 2003, 3). Since I want to measure how often certain characteristics occur within foreign news articles published before and after the digital revolution, this is the method that best fits my desires. The historical comparative aspect is explained by Berger, who maintains that “Factual information – what we sometimes term factoids – by itself doesn’t tell us very much. (...) What we need is some perspective, something with which to compare the (...) factoid” (176). He goes on to give two examples of such comparative approaches: either placing the results in an historical context, or comparing them with results from another medium or nationality. For this thesis, an historical comparative approach makes sense, as I am looking for changes over time.

In order to get enough data from which to draw a valid conclusion, I decided to
compare two whole years by assembling a so-called “constructed month” for each. The reason to use a constructed time period is best explained by Riffe et al.:

The distribution of newspaper stories is simply not normal. Constructed weeks [or months -BS] produce better estimates that [sic] purely random samples of days because they avoid the possibility of oversampling Sundays or Saturdays. Our comparisons with consecutive day sampling, which may also avoid oversampling individual weekdays, demonstrate the further importance of sampling across weeks (as in constructed week sampling) if one seeks generalizability beyond the consecutive day period itself. (1993, 139).

As the years to compare, I chose the most recent one at the time of sampling (October 2011-September 2012), and one not too long before the era of Internet journalism, which really started to take off in the year 2000 (Meek, 2006, online; news aktuell, 2002, 7). I ended up choosing 1994-1995, mostly because of a small miscalculation on my part: for lack of any important criteria to choose a specific year, except that it had to be relatively recent so that digital media were as much as possible the only difference between the ‘before’ and ‘after,’ I decided I wanted the sampled dates to fall on the same days of the week for both years. For example, if October 3, 2011 fell on a Monday, October 3rd in the compared year should fall on a Monday as well. Upon quickly checking the calendars for the years before the turn of the millennium, it seemed that 1994 was the last time that had happened, and I settled on that time period. It only occurred to me much later, however, that unlike 1995, 2012 was a leap year. As a result, the dates became unmatched after February. Of course this was not so important that I had to choose another year because of it. It would not set any limitations on my content analysis and since I could think of no other objections against 1994-95, I stuck with it.

To construct each month, I picked dates that were two weeks and one day apart from each other (skipping Sundays, as no VK appears on that day). Only once did I have to pick an alternative day, for May 17, 2012, as that was Ascension Thursday, and no VK was published. I substituted it with the May 24 paper. This method gave me two papers per month, twenty-four per year, and 48 in the total sample.

The next step was to collect all articles that fell within the parameters I had set:
they had to be written by the foreign news desk or by correspondents, or they had to be wire articles appearing in the foreign news sections. Articles about foreign subjects that belonged to other sections, such as economy, sports, or entertainment, were to be excluded. The main reason for this was that I wanted to keep the sample size somewhat manageable. In addition, these specialized kinds of foreign reporting are not necessarily representative of foreign journalism as a whole, and therefore might distort the results. Their journalistic methods differ from general foreign reporters because they have a more specific subject to write about. Perhaps it would also be interesting to know how for example foreign sports journalism has changed, but it is beyond the scope of this study.

Other than in what section an article appeared, I made no distinctions between kinds of foreign news. Stories about war, uprisings, international summits, elections, crime, political scandals, or anything else: all were welcome as long as they appeared in the foreign news section (or, in the case of front section articles, it was clear that they would have appeared in the foreign news section had they not been selected to be featured more prominently). Each period had subjects that were more dominant than others, though the general subject matter showed similarities. Both periods had stories about war (Bosnia and Chechnya in the 1990’s, Afghanistan and Syria in the 2010’s), political elections (Germany and France in the former period, the U.S. in the latter), violence in Eastern Africa (First Somalia, later South-Sudan) and Northern Africa (Algeria vs. the aftermath of the Arab Spring), and struggles in the Middle-East. Additional big topics in the first period were political scandals in Italy, an earthquake in Haiti, and nuclear treaty negotiations between North-Korea and the U.S., and Egypt and Israel. Big recurring subjects in the second period were stories about political changes in Burma, Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik, the scandal surrounding Dominique Straus-Kahn, and the sinking of the Costa Concordia. Besides that, there were a lot of articles about miscellaneous matters in both periods. For a list of all the headlines of the assembled articles (in Dutch), see appendix C.

All of the articles from the 2011-2012 period were available on LexisNexis. I made sure I collected all foreign news stories by doing an advanced search for all articles that had appeared in the foreign news section of de Volkskrant on the specific dates I had selected (with the query “SECTION(buitenland)”), and a few additional ones for articles in the front sections of those papers (which contain any kind of news). Specifically, I made queries for
“BYLINE(correspondent),” “BYLINE(correspondente),” and “BYLINE(buitenlandredactie)” in combination with “SECTION(ten eerste)” (“Ten Eerste” being the name of the front section), using the Boolean operator “AND”. Finally, in order to collect the foreign news articles from press agencies and other sources, and to make sure I had not missed anything, I did a search for “SECTION(ten eerste) NOT BYLINE(correspondent) NOT BYLINE(correspondente) NOT BYLINE(buitenlandredactie).” This yielded lists of around 20 headlines per paper, which I would then evaluate one by one to determine whether they were about foreign news or not. In case of doubt, I would open the article and assess its contents. Each article I found through this method I downloaded. During the coding process, I retroactively discarded any irrelevant articles that had been caught in the nets. For example, as I had downloaded the entire foreign news sections for each paper, texts such as columns, subtitles of pictures that did not belong to any article, and sometimes stray advertisements were included as well. The front section results sometimes had financial news and other articles that fell outside of my parameters. After removing all of these I was left with 348 articles for the 2011-12 period.

The 1994-95 sample proved much harder to assemble. $VK$’s archive on LexisNexis did not go that far back, and the archive on their own site only barely did. Apparently, they had started digitizing articles somewhere in late 1994. For the first three days of my constructed month, there were no articles in the archive at all, and for later days, only an incomplete collection was available. In addition, the only information provided with the articles were date, title, and author. It was not specified in which section an article had originally appeared, meaning I would have to decide based on the title whether or not an article was foreign news. That is a method that works fine if you only have about twenty headlines to go through, as in my search for wire articles in the 2011-’12 front sections, but becomes a bit arduous if you have to go through an entire newspaper’s worth of headlines. My only reasonable option was to go to the National Archive in the Royal Library in The Hague, and check microfilms of all 24 papers I was to sample from. I ended up making two trips there. On my first visit, I only wrote down the titles of each foreign news article that appeared either on the front page or in the foreign news section. Back home, I downloaded all of the ones that were present in $VK$’s online archive. For the missing articles, I went back to The Hague and made hard copies from the microfilms. This method yielded 424 articles for 1994-95.
From all the collected material, I wanted to find out how much had changed over time. In particular, I wanted to know what impact the Internet had on the balance between foreign desk journalists and correspondents. In order to accurately assess any changes in that status quo, however, I also needed to see how the perceived decline in foreign news interest affected *VK*’s foreign news department. How hard, if at all, had the foreign journalism crisis hit *de Volkskrant*? The difference in amount of articles to code for each year (424 vs. 348) was a preliminary indication that, on the whole, the paper had indeed cut back on their foreign news. But internal shifts might prove the impetuous observer wrong. To find out what had changed exactly, I coded each article on up to ten aspects (see appendix A for the coding scheme and manual).

The coding categories I used are based on my research questions, and the variables for each category were mostly arrived at deductively. As Neuendorf explains, “A deductive scientific approach to research design requires that ‘all decisions on variables, their measurement, and coding rules must be made before the observation begins’” (2002, 11). I partly did that, as I devised all variables before I started coding, but I also kept the coding scheme flexible, so that I could add variables if I encountered them. For example, on the question what kind of sources were used, I later added the variables “anonymous source” and “blogger,” as I had not thought of those in advance, but eventually came across them during the coding process. This did not affect the articles I had already coded, as these particular kinds of sources had not occurred in any of them. If they had, I would have already added them earlier.

The first aspect I looked at was who wrote the article. Either they were taken from the wire, written by a correspondent or a desk journalist, or it was a combination or variety of those three options (for example, a traveling reporter, or a translated article from a foreign medium). I paid more attention to the articles that were written by *VK* journalists. If it was an article from a press agency, or a translated news story from a foreign newspaper, I would merely write down the number of words and dateline of the article, and then move on to the next. While wire articles would be important in revealing how *VK* deals with foreign news in general, since they were written by journalists unaffiliated with *VK*, they did not tell me anything about how staff journalists do their job.

For articles that were written by *VK* journalists, I examined five additional aspects (six for the 2011-12 period, as those articles could involve social media sources). First, I
specified whether the article was a news story, a background article, a feature, or an interview. Each of these classifications require a certain level of access to sources, which makes it an indication of whether desk journalists have gotten easier access (for example to citizens on the ground). Next, I checked whether the dateline matched the country in which the story was taking place. This was mainly to see how far correspondents had to travel. After that I coded how many and which sources were used in an article, only counting each kind of source once per article. So if for instance an article featured three government sources and one eyewitness, I would count four sources in total, but just one government source and one eyewitness. In general there were two types of sources I looked for: official and independent. The former included government, business, and military officials, and spokespersons. Independent types of sources could be experts (scientists, scholars, pundits), the “man in the street” (citizens on the ground), eyewitnesses, or group representatives (lawyers, union leaders, etc.). Next was the question whether the story was written with a bottom-up or a top-down perspective. Both these aspects (sourcing and perspective) once again say something about the journalist’s access and ability to get to the heart of a story. More use of independent sources could for example indicate that it has become easier to bypass information controlled by the authorities. In addition, it represents an enhanced depth of stories. For articles from the Internet era, I furthermore looked at whether and if so, how, social media sources were featured. The variables in this category were derived at inductively, as it was difficult to predict how – and if at all – social media would appear in the articles. In the end, it turned out that there were two ways in which it could happen: either by directly attributing a quote to social media, or by describing the general mood on them.

These coding categories help to paint a picture of how foreign journalism at de Volkskrant has changed during the Internet era. By separating the results for desk journalists and correspondents, they also help to properly assert whether there is a significant shift in balance between these two versions of foreign reporters. The number of articles, and the amount of words allotted to them, gives a basic indication as to how much foreign journalism each type of foreign journalist does. In addition, it shows whether the decline in how much foreign news is published, as perceived in the first chapter of this thesis, is present in VK as well.

For additional analysis, I interviewed two (former) members of the foreign news
desk: Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi, who was a desk journalist during the 2011-12 period, before moving on to another desk, and Bert Lanting, who was foreign news chief during the second period, and Russia correspondent during the first. These interviews gave a qualitative side to my research. I used an open-ended questionnaire, personalized for each interviewee (see appendix B (in Dutch)). Part of the questions were framed to elicit reactions to the content analysis, while others had the purpose of discussing ideas found in this paper’s theoretical framework, getting a better idea of VK’s foreign news department, or finding out how they perceived the role of Twitter and the Internet within VK’s foreign news corps (for both desk journalists and correspondents).

Every content analysis has its limitations. One problem this one has, is that its ultimate purpose is to analyze something that is hidden. Social media may well be used extensively by the journalists writing these articles, but it does not show in many instances. Only the practical results of such use can be coded, i.e., changes in sourcing and a shifting balance between desk journalists and correspondents. But it is possible that these changes have alternative causes. This hidden process, as well as the quantitative nature of my analysis, also results in another limitation: it is not possible to know exactly how a news article came about, meaning that “foreign news desk” articles might just be wire articles that were rewritten without attribution. So there is a possibility that the increase in foreign news desk output is simply a policy decision to have desk journalists rewrite more content from press agencies. That is still significant, though, as one way to turn wire articles into original content, is by adding sources, which should be easier now that desk journalists can find them online.

Another limitation is that due to the way I collected the articles – simply collecting each foreign news article separately, as opposed to coding them where they had originally been published in the newspapers – I could not see what the rest of the paper looked like, and therefore do not know how other news sections at de Volkskrant developed: whether there was a huge increase in domestic news of financial news; whether the total number of pages of the paper increased or decreased; and whether there was more or less advertising, for example. Doing that would have been beyond the scope of this research. This means that we can only use the results of this research to say something about the absolute changes in foreign news output, and not how it changed in relation to other kinds of news.
The bottom line of these limitations is that we cannot use the results of this research to draw any solid conclusions, but only to demonstrate that the changes that have occurred fit within the expectations we have of network journalism and social media as journalistic tools, based on the literature reviewed in the first two chapters. The interviews do help us a little by suggesting that the Internet and social media are indeed behind at least some of the changes, but since there are only two, it is not enough to confirm any theories. Bryman points out that “we can speculate, but our suggested answers can usually only be speculation” (2008, 291). It is for later studies to further pursue the validity of these speculations.
On the next pages, the results of the content analysis will be presented and analyzed. Each subsection starts by reiterating one of the research questions raised at the end of chapter three, before imparting the corresponding results from the content analysis, and discussing them in combination with relevant quotes from the interviews with Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi and Bert Lanting. The main research question will be answered at the end of the chapter.

The content analysis results are presented in the form of twelve color coded graphs and six world maps. Blue/red graphs represent relative figures, for example the amount of articles written by foreign correspondents as a percentage of the total amount of articles coded. Orange/purple graphs on the other hand represent absolute quantities, for instance the total number of news articles written by foreign news desk journalists within one time period.

4.1 VK’s Foreign News Section

The first research question was:

*How has the amount and composition of foreign news content changed?*

The literature discussed earlier in this thesis painted a dire picture of a shrinking foreign news hole. A quick glance at the numbers wielded by our research does indeed suggest that foreign journalism is in a bit of trouble at VK as well. Whereas a total of 424 articles were coded for the 1994-1995 period, for 2011-2012, there were only 348, and while in ’94-’95, with the front page and the foreign news section taken together, roughly 7210 words were spent on foreign news per day, this number was down to 5907 in ’11-’12. This in spite of the fact that the ‘front page’ – in the sense of the first section of the paper, where the most important stories from each section are put on display had been expanded to six pages. The conclusion could easily be drawn that there is a clear decrease of attention given to foreign news.
The picture changes, however, when we break these numbers down. In the former period, 53% of all foreign news articles (225) were taken from the wires, leaving only 199 that were written by VK’s own staff. Seventeen years later, the component of news that came from press agencies was only 38%, or 131 articles, while 217 articles were written by correspondents or journalists from the foreign news desk. Apparently, the fall in attention to foreign news has mainly been at the cost of press agencies. Foreign journalists working directly for de Volkskrant were actually better off than their predecessors – at least as far as amount of content goes. The biggest rise in original news production, as can be seen in figure 4.1, occurred at the foreign news desk, the journalists working from within the Netherlands. This category more than doubled its production, claiming a fifth of the total foreign news output in the 2010’s, while two decades earlier they had only been responsible for less than a tenth. Correspondents, while experiencing a slight drop in absolute terms (going from 167 to 146 articles), still gained a little bit in relative terms.

![Figure 4.1: Articles per author type as a percentage of the total number of articles. Correspondents and the wire have switched places as most productive category, but the biggest increase belongs to the foreign news desk. The total number of articles has however decreased.](image)

‘Original’ in this regard does not mean that they have necessarily found the news by themselves. These are often wire articles with original content added. As one of the interviewees, chief foreign news Bert Lanting, clarifies:
We do still use press agencies of course, but we are doing so a lot less often, and mostly use them as a sort of alert system and for getting information. But it is important that we add something of ourselves, or people might just as well read it elsewhere.

The same nuance as for number of articles applies to the amount of words spent on foreign news per issue. On a given day in 1994, there would typically be 4670 words of in-house foreign news, and 2540 that came from press agencies. In 2012, self-produced news had seen a slight increase of 7% (to 4980 words), whereas wire news had taken a tumble of 70%: on average only 760 words of press releases found their way into the paper each day. Wire articles had also become shorter, nearly halving in length (from 271 to 139 for an average article). The average length of original articles, on the other hand, stayed virtually the same (going from 563 to 567).

The decline in space given to foreign news is something that VK journalist Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi, who worked at the foreign news desk from 2005 until late 2012, recognizes. He does however not see it as the result of financial constraints:

I have noticed an enormous shift toward more domestic reporting, and telling the personal story. Everything has to be approached from the ‘human angle’, from the bottom up, in order to explain it. Foreign news often simply does not fit that approach. (…) I do not feel that there is less money or attention for it here, but there are only so many ways those pages can be filled, and you do notice that domestic reporting, fast news, and financial news often get preference over foreign news.

Lanting furthermore explains that the move from a heavy reliance on press agencies to an emphasis on original reporting was a conscious policy decision due to changes in the journalistic landscape at large:

Because of the increased competition on the Internet nowadays, you really have to flaunt your own people a lot more, and do more with them in order to stand out from the crowd. We want to make good use of our correspondents.
That does, however, not mean that these correspondents have remained unaffected by the alleged crisis in foreign journalism. Overall, VK's foreign press corps is still roughly the same size as it used to be at the end of the 20th century (around seventeen individuals), but the composition has changed considerably. In 2009, several correspondents on VK's payroll were replaced by freelancers, leaving only five with a permanent contract (De Vente, 2013, online). “Spending cuts,” admits Lanting. In addition, the average correspondent these days is a very different kind of journalist than the one that roamed the earth up until a few years ago, as Oñorbe Genovesi points out:

Ten years ago it was customary for someone to be rewarded with a nice correspondence post well into their career, but now you often see media organizations sending young, beginning journalists out into the world. They are cheaper, may be more willing to take risks, and, let's face it, are more likely to make use of social media.

Lanting, too, feels the profession of correspondent has changed dramatically since the time he was one himself during much of the 1990's:

The kind of correspondent I was has become extinct. We were free to do what we wanted; ninety-nine per cent of what I did in Russia was my own idea. I do try to give my correspondents the same kind of freedom, but due to the speed of news nowadays, we have to tell them to do certain things. I would prefer to handle the news items in some other way, though, and just leave them to find stories of their own.

Much of the reason for this change is the Internet, and the improvements in communication that came with it. Whereas foreign news chiefs used to have little choice but to rely on their correspondents when it came to knowing what was going on in another country, in this day and age they are very much aware of most anything that is happening around the world. They have a news agenda to follow, and, also owing to the Internet, they are now able to instruct their correspondents on which stories to cover. That, at least, is the picture journalists like Joris Luyendijk tend to paint. Lanting only partially agrees with this view:
Luyendijk is mostly talking about television, which is very much dictated by the footage they have available. I am not bound by any visuals. However, at editorial meetings I do sometimes notice the editors-in-chief planning out exactly what they want to see from a correspondent and how they want to see it done. I do not like that. I believe in giving correspondents as much freedom as possible. So when that happens, I'll tell them: "hold on, we haven't even spoken to the correspondent yet, let's hear what they have to say first."

The expected answer to the first research question was that there would be a decrease in foreign news output, and that the lion's share of that decrease would be at the cost of correspondents. This answer needs some nuancing. There does indeed appear to be a smaller amount of foreign news published each day, but – content-wise – VK's correspondents have not fared too badly, and desk journalists have actually gained a better position. However, the true cost for correspondents has been their freedom and their position at the paper. The Internet seems to have placed a restriction on them, as they now have to follow the news agenda much like their domestic colleagues do, while at the same time those on permanent contracts are gradually being replaced by freelancers.

### 4.2 Sources & Perspective

Research question number 2 was:

*What has changed in the use of sources by staff journalists?*

Figure 4.2 shows a breakdown of the kinds of sources that were used most in original foreign news articles by both correspondents and foreign news desk journalists. What becomes immediately clear is how much more evenly distributed – relatively speaking, as there are still big differences between the different kinds of sources in absolute terms – the separate categories have gotten in the latter time period. The amount of articles with government sources has nearly halved, while articles featuring no source whatsoever were reduced by a third.
In fact, if we group the first four categories together as the ‘official sources,’ and the second four (and the last two, but those are negligible) as the ‘independent sources,’ the difference becomes even more apparent (figure 4.3).

What caused this shift is not immediately clear, as sources were rarely explicitly labeled as being accessed via social media. However, it does conform to the hypothesis that official sources would lose ground while independents would grow. The idea that the Internet is behind that development is not entirely unfounded: it has been repeatedly established in this thesis that the Internet gives journalists more freedom to find sources and bypass official channels. This notion
is supported by the interviewees as well. Both of them acknowledge that, even though the Internet may have put somewhat of a leash on correspondents, the online revolution has some potential benefits for foreign journalism as well. For one, it affected the methodology of research in a good way by making it much simpler and less time-consuming to find data, something that Lanting can testify to: “These days you can simply look something up online,” he says, “In my time, you had to go to the library and read books!” In addition to finding information in this way, it also became much less cumbersome to find people who can provide relevant information. This is an advantage that is particularly beneficial to desk journalists, who are by definition far away from the scene, and have to rely more on secondhand information than correspondents do. It is then no surprise that it is they who are for the most part responsible for the rise in use of experts as sources. Whereas experts used to be a distant third behind official sources or no sources at all for desk journalists, now they are easily the most used kind of source (figure 4.4). Among correspondents, on the other hand, the category that has seen the biggest rise is that of directly involved sources (eyewitnesses), while there has also been a significant increase in the ‘man on the street’ category (figure 4.5).

Figure 4.4: Use of different categories of sources by VK’s foreign news desk as a percentage of the total number of sources used. The stay-at-home journalists have mainly increased their use of experts.
The fact that the expert category represents the biggest rise for desk journalists is an argument for the notion that the Internet is the most likely cause for this development. As Oñorbe Genovesi explains:

Back then, if something happened for example in Japan, you would just have to work with whatever analysis some Japanologist from the University of Leiden who happened to travel to Japan a couple of times a year could give you. Now you can go on Twitter and see what is being said about, for instance, the Japanese elections. You can read English language Japanese newspapers, and you can ask political experts in Tokyo for an analysis.

A secondary effect of the increased use of independent sources is the impact it has had on the perspective of many articles. The use of official sources will almost by definition result in a story from the viewpoint of governments and institutions, while independent sources are prone to make a story more sympathetic to ‘the people.’ It is then no surprise that figure 4.6 looks the way it does, confirming the hypothesis that there would be more articles written from a bottom-up perspective. Figure 4.7 shows that this is especially true for the correspondents.
The penultimate research question was:

*How has the balance between correspondents and foreign news desk journalists shifted?*

The expectation was that despite correspondents not losing their dominant position in the production of foreign news, there would be some changes in how much content is generated by each kind of foreign journalist. Desk journalists would take a bigger share, and cover more of the world’s regions. The results confirm this hypothesis. Figure 4.8 show that it is indeed not a complete transformation, as correspondents still write the large majority of articles in each category, but that desk journalists have certainly gained on them.
The figures show the slight increase of articles produced in total (199 vs. 217), and that the increase is disproportionately larger for journalists from the foreign news desk. Figures 4.9 and 4.10 paint this shift with more detail, and reveal that there is a definite change in focus for each group. As it turns out, desk journalists have augmented their production of news articles in particular, while correspondents have increased their focus on features.

**Figure 4.8**: Distribution of news categories per type of foreign journalist in number of articles. Even though Correspondents still write the majority of articles in any category, desk journalists have clearly gained on them.

**Figure 4.9**: Absolute amount of articles written by the foreign news desk in each news category. The figure is skewed by the fact that the total output by the foreign news desk has more than doubled (see figure 4.11 for a relative comparison).

**Figure 4.10**: Absolute amount of articles written by correspondents in each news category. Since the total number of stories in this category did not change much between both time periods, the figure is a more accurate indication of how their output developed.
As can be seen in figure 4.9, the desk journalists have seen a growth in output across the board. The graph is slightly misleading, however, as a big part of the increase is simply because of their heightened production in general. Even so, it is clear that the upswing in news articles is the greatest by far. In fact, when looking at it from a more reliable relative point of view (figure 4.11), it is the only category that has actually risen.

![Figure 4.11: Amount of articles written by the foreign news desk in each news category as a percentage of their total output. As it turns out, relatively speaking production of background articles actually decreased. News production, however, still had a substantial growth.](image)

This development is along the lines of Lanting’s wish of letting the correspondents run free and doing the news “some other way.” The foreign news desk seems to increasingly appropriate the task of writing the news, leaving the correspondents to pursue the bigger story. The exact cause of this does not become clear from the data, but it could be that it was, again, made possible by the Internet, which may have given desk journalists the tools needed to follow and write news articles from afar. Onòrbe Genovesi gives credence to this idea:

> Thanks to the Internet, you can easily contact local scholars or other individuals yourself, whereas it used to be that only correspondents could do that. Now you can pretty much do everything from behind your desk. Except for the sights and sounds, which in the end is the most beautiful thing there is: going somewhere, talking to the people, observing what is going on, and writing it down. But other than that, you can do all of it with a few clicks of your mouse and some phone calls.
The latter remark immediately makes clear why correspondents will always be needed: even though most of the factual information can be found through modern communication lines (the information streams from the network journalism model), face-to-face, interpersonal contact can only be made by journalists who are on the scene. Lanting explains why this is vital:

The most important thing about a correspondent is still the fact that he is there. Even if he cannot always be present at every event, he still knows more about it than we do over here. For example, we tend to think we know a whole deal about the US. But when you actually live there, you realize that we don’t know much at all. Watching local television every day, and talking to your neighbors, you will notice that people there have a completely different way of thinking. Little by little, you will start to gain an understanding of how that country would react to certain scenarios. That is why I prefer correspondents for analyses as well. A desk journalist in the Netherlands will always be affected by Dutch sensibilities.

The developments of how much of the world is covered by VK’s foreign news stories can be seen in maps 4.1-4.6. As one would expect, due to changing crisis spots, the countries that are covered differ from period to period. But there are also variations that cannot be explained simply by the occurrence of newsworthy incidents there. The increase in coverage by the foreign news desk in particular stands out. In fact, the maps show a development that is perfectly in line with the results in the first subsection of this chapter, about the amount and composition of the foreign news section. The decline of overall coverage is very similar: 80 different countries had articles written about them back in ’94-‘95, while in ’11-’12 only 66 did (maps 4.1 and 4.2), and – equally similarly – this decline can be mostly attributed to the cutback in wire articles. The foreign news desk furthermore went from covering 18 countries to 31 (maps 4.3 and 4.4). Correspondents actually did not see much change at all in terms of production, but due to the foreign news desk, VK’s total original reporting has done quite well (maps 4.5 and 4.6). Again, it is not immediately clear what caused the increased coverage by the foreign news desk, but it does correspond to the hypothesis that the Internet gives them a wider reach.
Map 4.1: Total coverage (correspondents, foreign news desk, and wire) in 1994-95.

Amount of articles:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-8</th>
<th>9-12</th>
<th>13-16</th>
<th>17-20</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>&gt;24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Map 4.2: Total coverage (correspondents, foreign news desk, and wire) in 2011-12.
Map 4.3: Foreign news desk coverage in 1994-95.

Amount of articles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5-8</th>
<th>9-12</th>
<th>13-16</th>
<th>17-20</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>&gt;24</th>
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</table>

Map 4.4: Foreign news desk coverage in 2011-12.
Map 4.5: VK's own coverage (correspondents and the foreign news desk taken together) in 1994-95.

Map 4.6: VK's own coverage (correspondents and the foreign news desk taken together) in 2011-12.
4.4 Social Media

The results discussed in this chapter demonstrate how foreign journalism has changed so far, and allow for the idea that there is already something resembling network journalism going on at *de Volkskrant*. How much of it actually is due to the Internet, however, is hard to tell. Let alone how much of it is caused by social media. This brings us to our final research question:

*How much social media usage is directly visible in the articles?*

As expected, the answer to this question is simple: very little. Out of all 217 ‘original reporting’ articles coded for the 2011-‘12 period, only sixteen articles – roughly seven percent - explicitly mentioned one or more social media as a source (see figure 4.12). This number is too small to provide us with any substantial information, although it does give us a few hints about VK’s social media usage during the sampled year.

First, Twitter seemed to be relatively the most popular service. Out of the 22 occurrences of social media in those sixteen articles, nine were Twitter, and one was Weibo, the micro blog’s Chinese equivalent. The rest were Facebook, YouTube, blogs, or miscellaneous social media sites. Second, while it happened that a particular quote was being attributed to one of the social media, nearly as many times they were referred to indirectly, merely describing the general mood on them. For example, when during the 2012 American presidential race a Democratic pundit called out Mitt Romney’s wife for “never [having] worked a day in her life”, an article detailing the backlash to the comment read that “a storm of working mothers, daughters, and grandmothers broke loose on Twitter and Facebook, renouncing ‘the feminist left’ and repudiating the notion that the Republican party was anti-woman” (Van Hoogstraten). Facebook and Twitter here were used as a substitute for ‘being there,’ making it almost a geographical place rather than a source.
The final interesting observation from this part of our research is that twelve of these sixteen articles were written by correspondents, and four by desk journalists. That is a couple of articles fewer than one would expect based on the ratio for the total amount of articles (75 out of 217 of which were written by desk journalists). In fact, since we established in chapter 2 that social media are arguably a more useful tool for stay-at-home journalists than for correspondents living abroad, one would actually expect an even higher ratio, meaning relatively more desk journalists would be using it. The fact that this expectation was not met, however, reflects the level of Twitter activity among VK’s foreign journalism staff. In the spring of 2013, out of nine desk journalists, five did not have a Twitter account at all, two did but hardly seemed to be using it, and only two were actively using the service. The correspondents, on the other hand, showed a slightly more positive picture: eight out of seventeen were active, while only four did not have an account whatsoever.

Not being active of course does not rule out the possibility that these journalists use Twitter as a source anyway. However, our interviewees confirm the observation that Twitter enthusiasm among the editors is rather low. When he was still working at the foreign news desk, Oñorbe Genovesi noted that he was one of the very few foreign journalists who used the service. He suspects his (former) colleagues’ reluctance is caused by the relative newness of the medium:

Despite the Twitter course we all went through, a lot of them are still very much unfamiliar with the phenomenon. They cling to traditional media such as the BBC, the New York Times, and press agencies, assuming that if those organizations do not mention something, it is probably not true. They feel like that is all they need.

Lanting is himself one of the staffers who is not quite convinced about the usefulness of Twitter:

Personally, I do not have time for it. I feel it causes people’s attention to scatter. Colleagues who do use Twitter sometimes come to me with ten different subjects, unable to tell me which one is the most important. So they do notice more things, but it is also harder to create some sort of order.
On top of that, Lanting simply does not trust the service enough to make much use of it:

Sure, in big events it is very useful to quickly contact people, but as a source of news, you have to be really careful, as it is very hard to verify anything you read on there. At such times, I still rely on press agencies a lot, who have a much higher standard for what they publish. Twitter is very good for collecting opinions, but it is not quite as good for collecting facts.

Oñorbe Genovesi sees more usefulness than that. After reading something on the wire, he would often go to Twitter not only to get closer to the original sources the press agencies used as well, but also to find alternative sources:

For example, when the Spanish soccer team won the European Championship, there was a discussion of whether players should donate their earnings to charity, since they made so much money while the country was in crisis. Of course there were commentaries and op-eds in newspapers, but by checking Twitter I found out about petitions and local activities, things you would not have read about in the newspapers. With a ‘Direct Message’ and a phone call, you can then ask those people about it, and incorporate it into your article.

Despite these differences of opinion, both journalists do agree that Twitter should be part of a journalist’s toolkit. However, while Oñorbe Genovesi would like to see it happen as soon as possible, saying: “I told Bert, and I told the editor-in-chief, that I think it is very important. It is a tool you can use, and that you absolutely should use,” Lanting would rather wait until it happens naturally: “I do think more of our journalists should use it, and hope they will, but I will not force anyone.”

4.5 A Closer Resemblance

With all the research questions dealt with, all that is left to be answered is the main question:

*How has foreign journalism at de Volkskrant changed from before the era of the Internet?*
The content analysis has yielded several significant results. While the decrease in amount of space VK devotes to foreign news each day seems consistent with the literature about the perceived crisis going on in this form of journalism, as it turns out, the drop has been primarily at the cost of press agencies. Productions by VK correspondents only fell by a relatively small number (167 in the first sample period, 146 in the second), while the amount of articles written by foreign news desk journalists actually grew. Does this mean that VK’s correspondents survived the crisis unscathed? No. Even though production levels remained relatively high, VK did replace part of its permanent correspondents with freelancers, and shifted a portion of the workload to the foreign news desk at home.

In fact, output by foreign news desk journalists more than doubled, going from 32 articles in the first coded period to 71 in the second. This increase was mostly in the form of news articles (going from 11 to 37), which correspondents actually produced much fewer of than they did before (51 instead of 82). They instead shifted their focus to writing more features (36 of which they were responsible for in the ’11-’12 sample, against only 20 in the ’94-’95 one).

The quantity of sources used grew as well. Desk journalists saw a jump in number of sources that was more or less in proportion to their increased output (41 in the 90’s sample, against 82 in the 2010’s), while the growth in sources used by correspondents (from 272 to 320) actually went against the shrinkage of their article output. This makes sense, as the kind of stories they did write more of, features, are typically quite source heavy. The more interesting change in sourcing practices, however, is in the kind of sources that were used. In the first sampling period, official government sources were by far the most dominant category, followed closely by “no sources used at all.” In the second one the independent sources took the lead, with desk journalists finding their way to experts much more often, and correspondents giving more attention to eyewitnesses, which is, again, in keeping with their increased production of features. As a result of this more frequent use of independent sources, there was also a considerably higher amount of articles with a bottom-up perspective in the second sampling period.

What exactly the role of the Internet or any kind of social media is in these developments is impossible to tell from the content analysis alone. As expected, sources are hardly ever revealed as being accessed through the web, and the instances that social media are mentioned are too few and far between to make any valid inferences about how
much they are really being used. What is true, however, is that nearly all of the hypotheses discussed at the end of chapter three have been verified. There has been an increased use of independent sources by both desk journalists and correspondents; more articles have a bottom-up perspective; desk journalists have increased their production in comparison to correspondents; and they cover a bigger part of the world.
Even if the content analysis cannot flat-out prove the theory that Twitter allows foreign journalists to become proper global journalists (doing foreign news about anywhere in the world from anywhere in the world), it certainly leaves the possibility wide-open. If the most important difference between a desk journalist and a correspondent is that the latter has a better network (De Swert & Wouters, 2011, 336), then de Volkskrant’s foreign news desk’s increased ability to contact independent sources, write news articles with a bottom-up perspective, and cover more areas of the world suggest they have become more like correspondents. Hard evidence that this transformation was enabled by the Internet or Twitter is not provided by the content analysis, but the interviews with Lanting & Oñorbe Genovesi do point in that direction. It is also in keeping with the literature discussed in chapter two, which outlines the different ways in which Twitter can help foreign desk journalists stay in the loop about distant areas without leaving their home turf. As expected, desk journalists at VK have increasingly appropriated the task of writing original foreign news (whether or not based on wire articles), which heretofore correspondents were much more properly equipped to do because they could make use of a local network.

So does that mean that Twitter could potentially render correspondents completely redundant in the long run? Not exactly. First of all, there are still many parts of the world that online journalism cannot cover, for lack of access to Internet for people living there. But even places that do have extensive Internet coverage still have a function for correspondents too. Even though simple news stories and – to a certain extent – even on-the-scene reports can be done by desk journalists from the comfort of their newsroom, there are still aspects of foreign correspondence that can never be replaced by the Internet or any kind of social medium (Constable. 2007, online; Enda, 2010, 22; Lanting, 2012). As Sambrook said, “social media input can never become a substitute for eyewitness journalism” (Captein, 2011, online). This still holds true. Social media can never convey what it is like to actually be at the scene. The value of a correspondent is in the fact that “he
is actually there, he can describe the smells and the colors of a place, and the grief on the people’s faces, or anything else that strikes him” (Oñorbe Genovesi, 2012). However, this mostly goes for feature stories, where the reporter actually describes her environment. For news articles, such descriptiveness is unnecessary. It is a waste of a correspondent to have her write articles that she could have written from home. In the words of VK’s Paul Brill:

> Correspondents do not, in the first place, exist to bring news, they are supposed to gauge another society. I won’t shed a tear for a correspondent not being able to sell the umpteenth automatic pilot story on some catastrophe in Africa. She is there to give an insight into society. That is what our readers want to read. That is why there will always be a demand for correspondents at papers like de Volkskrant and NRC. (Qtd. in Van der Valk, 2006, online).

There is one very interesting quote in the previous chapter that deserves more attention. Discussing the way the profession of foreign correspondent has changed since the arrival of the Internet, Bert Lanting admitted that he would like to “handle the news items in some other way,” leaving the correspondents to “find stories of their own.” This is interesting because it is exactly the path that foreign journalism is on, and what Twitter and social media are best suited to facilitate. News *can* be done some other way. Desk journalists are now perfectly equipped to follow the news anywhere in the world – again, excepting those places where people have no way to connect to the Internet – and gain access to much the same sources correspondents would. Perhaps it would be a good idea to let them do just that. That is, writing the news that is on the agenda, be it articles from press agencies with original content added, or stories that can be picked up by anyone with an Internet connection. That leaves correspondents to come up with stories that are not covered by other sources and that perhaps have less news urgency. In this way, correspondents can be kept more exclusive, using them for the big news stories to add local color, and otherwise have them cover whatever falls through the cracks of the big news flows. Rather than try and find a slightly different angle on a news story that everyone else already has too, correspondents can make a more effective difference by bringing truly original stories, stories that are not featured in competing media outlets.
Despite the tremendous possibilities the social network offers, Twitter does still have its caveats. The social network can be a devious companion for those not well-versed in its functions. It is not a news service, it is a journalistic beat, a global pub where experiences are shared, jokes are made, rumors are started and spread, and where some news is discussed. It is very important not to confuse the one with the other, and to learn to recognize a Tweet for what it is. But with the right skills, journalists can walk through this pub and pick up and investigate stories, verify or refute rumors, and find new angles on existing stories. Now that Twitter is increasingly becoming a journalistic staple (Nieva, 2013, online), more and more services are being developed that help make Twitter ever more effective for journalism. Services like, for example, Spundge or Hootsuite, which make it easier to discover news or organize the wild river of information into manageable brooks (Glenn, 2013, online).

Even so, adapting to Twitter can prove a struggle, as is illustrated by the way media tried to regulate its use among their employees a few years ago. For fear of losing the battle with social media, several news organizations severely limited their journalists’ freedom to break news on Twitter, or engage with followers, a move that critics regarded as a futile attempt to stave off an inevitable future (Jarvis, 2009, online; Lavrusik, 2010, online; Lepitak, 2012, online; Strupp, 2009, online). But journalists themselves have occasionally had a hard time knowing how to handle the tool as well. Examples where social media rumors are reported as fact still happen too frequently. Incidents such as the misidentification of the Boston Marathon bombing suspects and the erroneous linking of pope Francis to former dictator Jorge Videla are avoidable mistakes (Van Ess, 2013, online). It is therefore important that journalists take the time to get to know this new utility they have at their disposal.

Another consequence of Twitter becoming the ‘global neighborhood pub’ is that not only can journalists do their work on a global scale now, it also inherently puts the news consumer in the kitchen. Suddenly, they can see how news is being made, how journalism is being done. They see what they never saw before, when all they got was the final report, and many find it hard to distinguish between the process of journalism and the finished news product. Accusing journalism of having become sloppy and rushed because of Twitter, they do not realize that what they are seeing is journalism in action, stories that will eventually become news. It is like going to a farm and saying: “these steaks are terrible, they are still walking!” In the words of Matthew Ingram:
The reality is that a breaking news event like a plane crash or a bombing is an inherently chaotic situation, and no one really has a firm command of the facts, including the first responders and emergency workers who are on the scene and talking about the event on the police scanner. That maelstrom of conflicting information used to be hidden behind the walls of the command station or the walls of the newspaper and TV newsrooms reporting on the event — but now, thanks to Twitter, it is everywhere (2013, online).

All of these drawbacks, however, are due to the fact that Twitter is a relatively young medium. Journalists, their audiences, and scholars alike are still learning exactly what the service entails for each of them. The Internet already contains myriads of articles about Twitter and journalism, and several studies into the matter have been conducted (De Kloe, 2011; Broersma & Graham, 2012; Schroeder & Stovall, 2012, to name a few), yet a great deal still remains to be researched about this pairing. The potential effect on foreign journalism is just one area of such research, but it is arguably the most interesting one. To be sure, Twitter has benefits for other forms of journalism as well, but no other kind is so fundamentally altered by it. Like their foreign news colleagues, domestic journalists can use the tool to find new angles, discover news, and connect with sources, but it does not have the potential to completely change the profession itself the way it does for foreign journalists. Currently, much of research into Twitter focuses on the way journalists and their employers present themselves on the network (Holcomb et al., 2011, online; Lasorsa, 2012; Lawrence et al., 2013, online; Verweij & Van Noort, 2014). For future research, it would be interesting to see more studies into the way it is or can be used as a tool for doing foreign journalism. For example, how informed can a journalist stay through the social network alone? One implication of this thesis is that with Twitter, any kind of journalism, whether foreign or domestic, can be done from anywhere in the world. It would be an interesting experiment to test whether a Dutch journalist could do domestic journalism about the Netherlands from, for instance, Brazil.

We began this thesis in the harbor of Philadelphia where Benjamin Franklin took his strolls, perhaps now and then standing still to gaze over the horizon from where incoming ships would come and bring unknown tidings from places most of his contemporaries could only dream of. In the nearly three hundred years since, foreign journalism has seen
huge technological changes, each of them challenging a generation of correspondents to either update their routines and keep up with the times, or risk becoming a relic of a world gone by. Twitter is just the latest development in this cycle, and it will not be the last. The question is not if all foreign journalists will eventually adopt the tool in their journalistic practices, but when.


Hermida, Alfred, Seth C. Lewis, and Rodrigo Zamith. “Sourcing the Arab Spring: A Case Study of Andy Carvin’s Sources During the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions.” *The International Symposium on Online Journalism*. Austin, TX, April 2012. Print.


# Coding Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basic info</td>
<td>Who is the author?</td>
<td>Byline</td>
<td>To see whether the ratio between desk journalism, correspondence, and wire news has shifted in the last seventeen years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>How many words?</td>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Indicates the importance that is given to foreign news, measured in words because it’s the variable that’s least affected by differences in layout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>How can the article be classified?</td>
<td>News category</td>
<td>Has there been a shift in the kind of articles each type of foreign journalist writes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>What is the dateline?</td>
<td>Dateline</td>
<td>How big is the journalist’s reach? How far from ‘home’ does he stray? Do fewer correspondents have to cover more ground?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>In what country does the news take place?</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do questions 4 and 5 match?</td>
<td>Yes or no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>How many sources appear in the article?</td>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>How many sources are featured in the article? This gives an indication of the journalist’s access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>What kind of sources are featured in the article?</td>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>This shows whether journalists are able to find unofficial sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>What’s the perspective of the article?</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Bottom-up? Top-Down? This too is an indication of journalist’s ability to talk to ‘real’ people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Are any of the sources linked to social media? If so, how?</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Only relevant in the articles from the 2011-12 period. Without asking the author, it is not possible to know whether or not social media has been used as a source. However, looking how often it is mentioned at all may provide some preliminary insight into how foreign journalists use it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coding Manual

1. Who is the author?
   a. Correspondent
   b. Unnamed correspondent
   c. Wire
   d. Translated article
   e. “From our foreign news desk”
   f. Mix
   g. Traveling reporter
The correspondent will usually be credited in the byline. Sometimes the byline simply says “from our correspondent.” If known (or easily deductible) the name of the correspondent will be added in the “remarks” column. If a press agency is credited, it is wire news. The agency is specified in the “remarks” column. On occasion, a Dutch newspaper will publish translated articles from foreign papers, such as the New York Times, which puts it in category d, “translated article.” The category “from our foreign news desk” is self-explanatory. “Mix” is for example when a wire article has been expanded upon by a desk journalist. A “traveling reporter” is a desk journalist who has been sent to a foreign country for a short period of time.

2. How long is the article?
The exact number of words of each article are specified in LexisNexis, or, in the case of articles from the 1994-95 period (which are not available through LexisNexis), as deducted by multiplying the amount of lines in an article by five (the average amount of words that fits in the width of one column).

3. How can the article be classified?
   a. News report
   b. Feature
   c. Background
   d. Interview
An article that simply reports a news fact is a news report. A feature story is a human interest special or article that is not closely tied to a recent news event. It is recognizable by the author describing his or her investigation, and featuring many speaking actors. A background article provides the relevant history to and an overview of a current event. Interviews are stories where one (or more) person answers questions about a specific news issue.

4. What is the Dateline?
Self-explanatory.

5. In what country does the news take place?
So, not which country the dateline suggests, but where does it physically take place?

6. Do 4 & 5 match?
   a. Yes
   b. No
7. How many sources does the article mention?
Sources are actors (either people or institutions) that the author attributes pieces of information to.

8. What kind of actors are featured in the article?
   a. Government official
   b. Business official
   c. Military official
   d. Spokesperson
   e. Expert (scientist, scholar, pundit, etc.)
   f. Regular person/"the man in the street"
   g. Expert by experience/someone who’s directly involved in what the article is about/ eyewitness
   h. Group representative (Union Leader, religious leader, etc.)
   i. N/A (no actors featured)
   j. Anonymous source
   k. Blogger
Multiple answers are possible if the article features more than one actor.

9. What’s the perspective of the article?
   a. Top-down
   b. Bottom-Up
   c. N/A
A top-down perspective is if the article is written from the perspective of official institutions, while a bottom-up approach entails a perspective from ‘the people,’ or anyone that is on the other end of officially instituted policy. Not all articles have such a perspective, as not all news deals with the dichotomy of people versus the government.

10. Social media?
    a. No sources featured
    b. None of the sources have anything to do with social media
    c. Yes
    d. Yes, but not as a quoted source (rather as a substitute for being there)
Sometimes, sources are mentioned as having been found on social media. This may be directly (e.g., “the lead protestor said on Twitter that...”), in which case it will be coded with the letter “c.” It might also be that social media are described as a sort of geographical entity (e.g., “there was a lot of unrest on Twitter and Facebook about the controversial decision”), if this is the case, the correct code would be “d.”
Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi – 18-12-2012

Wanneer begon je op de buitenlandredactie?
Twee periodes gedaan. In de periode 2001 mijn eerste. Daarna was ik bij de verslaggeverij binnenland en deed ik zo nu en dan nog wel wat voor buitenland, als er iets was met Spaanstalig ofzo, zoals de aanslagen in Madrid. Toen ben ik op reportage geweest. Vanaf april 2005 t/m 1 november 2012 was ik vast. Ruim zeven jaar dus.

En daarvoor?
Ook bij de VK, maar toen in kader van leerproces, rouleren, toen acht a negen maanden bij de buitenlandredactie geweest. En toen vroegen ze of ik terug wilde komen, ook vanwege mijn studie, Internationaal recht & betrekkingen.

Hoe in journalistiek terecht gekomen?
Toeval, ze zochten mensen, ik vond schrijven leuk, heb me aangemeld en ben aangenomen om een journalistieke opleiding te krijgen hier.

Sinds wanneer Twitter jij?
Twitter ben ik gaan gebruiken – dat kun je met Twitter altijd heel goed nagaan - ik denk dat het ruim veertien, vijftien maanden geleden is geweest, omdat je toch merkte dat sociale media steeds belangrijker werden bij grote nieuwsgebeurtenissen. Dat mensen reageerden op bepaalde gebeurtenissen, informatie voeden(?). En met een snelheid die je met een teletext, internetsite, laat staan met een krant niet meer bij kon houden. Het leek mij in eerste instantie leek me dat het belangrijkste handvat om dat op te pakken. Om te gebruiken. En vervolgens zelf om dingen te gaan doen.

Is er een moment geweest dat je overtuigd raakte?
Ik denk dat er heel veel momenten waren dat ik niet overtuigd was van het nut ervan. Als er weer een enorm breaking fake bericht was dat Fidel Castro dood was of dat Mubarak dood was. Bij dat soort momenten weet je dat je inderdaad heel erg alert moet zijn, maar bij het begin van de Arabische Lente raakte ik overtuigd. Toen merkte je dat er heel veel dingen via Twitter kwamen. Dat had je daarvoor ook al gezien, maar toen was ik nog niet heel erg into it, bij de Iraanse opstand en de trammelant na de verkiezingen, merkte je inderdaad dat Twitter al heel veel gebruikt werd. Toen heb ik het spaarzaam gebruikt, toen heb ik het daarna ook weer een hele tijd laten liggen, maar toen ik inderdaad merkte dat het echt veel groter was geworden, toen ben ik het met de Arabische Lente inderdaad gaan gebruiken.

En nu in de laatste jaren dat je daar hebt gewerkt?
Toen heb ik het vooral gebruikt als bron om inderdaad, nou ja alternatieve bronnen bij bepaalde nieuwsgebeurtenissen in het deelgebied dat ik volgde, Italië, Latijns-Amerika en
Spanje, voornamelijk. En een beetje leuke dingen die aan de rand van het nieuws hangen. Maar bij politieke gebeurtenissen in Spanje, Italië; beraadslagingen in het parlement, stemmingen over bepaalde zaken zoals bijvoorbeeld wel of geen stierenvechtsverbod in Catalonië. Dat kon je inderdaad... die sessie kon je live volgen, van het parlement, kon je gewoon volgen op Internet en je kon op Twitter meteen real time het commentaar van de mensen die het ook aan het volgen waren, dus anti-Taurinos en Pro-Taurinos kon je ook volgen, en dat kon je gewoon allemaal verwerken in een stuk.

En zelf inderdaad om mensen op allerlei zaken te attenderen, waarvan je wist ‘dat haalt waarschijnlijk de krant niet’, vanwege het overige aanbod, maar waarvan ik wist dat mensen die geïnteresseerd zijn in Spanje, Italië of Latijns-Amerika wel fijn vinden om te weten. Dat konden nieuwsgebeurtenissen zijn, maar ook reistips en dat soort dingen. Dus ook een beetje service-gericht.

Dus je gebruikt het als bron zelf. Ook om bronnen te zoeken?

Nou ja, vaak wel, als je... je zag bijvoorbeeld bij de traditionele persbureau’s zag je iets aangegeven dat je wel even naar Twitter ging om te kijken ‘wat wordt daar gezegd over een bepaald iets’ en dat je dan gaat zoeken en dat je ook vaak linkjes krijgt naar primaire bronnen waar uiteindelijk AP en AFP ook soms gewoon grasduinen in lokale media of lokale dingen, maar dat je dan inderdaad dichterbij die bron komt van waar het nieuws vandaan komt. Dan kon je ook checken, hoe echt is het, hoe niet echt is het, hoeveel attentiewaarde moet je eraan geven. Hoe wordt iets becommentarieerd? Om een voorbeeld te geven, los van buitenland, maar heeft wel een beetje met buitenland te maken: op een gegeven moment was de Spaanse voetbalploeg had de Europese titel gemaakt en toen was er een discussie in Spanje over of die Spaanse spelers hun premies moesten afstaan of niet aan goeie doelen in Spanje, want, Spanje in crisis, voetballers grootverdieners. Nou ja, d'r waren inderdaad commentaren en opiniestukken in de kranten, maar je bent toch ook benieuwd wat er op sociale media gezegd wordt, dus ging je op Twitter kijken. Via Twitter kwam je er dan ook achter dat er allerlei handtekeningenaacties waren begonnen en lokale acties. Nou ja, dat waren dingen die je uit de kranten niet gehaald zou hebben, maar dankzij Twitter wel achterkwam. En dan kon je inderdaad ook bijvoorbeeld mensen van een lokale actie DM’en of even bellen om te vragen van ‘waarom organiseer je dat?’ Zo kom je veel dichterbij de bron.

Zijn dat dan bronnen van gewone mensen, of ook officiële?

Nou, ook officiële bronnen zoals, nou ja, dat merkte je laatst ook weer bij dat conflict tussen Israël en de Palestijnen, dat Twitter ook natuurlijk wel heel erg gebruikt wordt als propagandamiddel. Ineens worden allerlei accounts geopend waarmee informatie gevoed wordt in de hoop dat je dat ook gebruikt. Nou ja, daar moet je ook heel erg alert op zijn, of fake accounts. Ik heb bijvoorbeeld ook een keer een stukje geschreven, juist over Twitter, toen was er een man die zichzelf de persoonlijkheid had aangemeten van vijf Spaanse ministers en als die Spaanse ministers allerlei informatie ging Twitteren. Nou ja, al heel snel kwamen ze erachter dat het fake accounts zijn, maar bepaalde dingen die hij in die accounts had beweerd, die gaan een eigen leven leiden, nou ja, en sommige traditionele media zijn daar in getrapt. Die hadden keurig op hun site staan “minister zus en zo heeft dit en dit gezegd”, nou ja dat is ook een risico. Nu is het toevallig een internetkrant gebeurt, maar het kan je als schrijvende journalist van een krant ook overkomen.
Hoe vaak gebruik je het echt als primaire bron?
Als primaire bron zelden. Het is wel altijd dat ik denk van, ja het blijft... De hoofdzaak van je beroep blijft toch om dingen zelf proberen te checken, zover het kan. Met een telefoontje, of een mailtje, of weet ik veel wat, en Twitter gebruik je dan als één van de bronnen.

Dit is vaak nieuws dat je al kent en dan extra nieuws gaat zoeken via Twitter, toch?
Ja, of je hebt Twitter inderdaad, dat je gewoon achter iets komt, dat je denkt van hé, verrek, dat wist ik nog niet, die heb ik nog nergens gezien. Ineens heeft iemand iets op Twitter gezet, waarvan je denkt van ‘o? waarom zet je dat dan?’ en dan ga je zoeken. Dan kan het soms gewoon een gedachte-eruptie zijn van iemand, maar dat dat ergens voor staat, nou ja, dan ga je gewoon verder grasduinen en dan blijkt er vervolgens van alles aan de hand te zijn. Dat kan.

Hoe vaak gebeurt dat?
Nou, wat ik gemerkt heb tot nu toe vrij weinig, maar je merkt wel dat het steeds meer is dat als iets op Twitter groot is, dat het vaak op mensen in de media wordt overgenomen. Nou ja, sowieso sociale media hebben gewoon een veel grotere rol gekregen in de aansturing van normale media. Nou ja, dat is die hele discussie die je ook zag rond die Project X-feesten in Haren bijvoorbeeld. Of in het aankarten van een bonnetjesschandaal van een staatssecretaris. Het versterkt elkaar ook heel erg, zeker omdat vaak sociale media en televisie dan, en kranten eroverheen, en dan gaat het vaak rollen.

Hoe representatief voor de totale bevolking is Twitter volgens jou?
Ik denk heel klein. Sociale media en Twitter vooral pretenderen graag dat het echt enorm invloedrijk is, maar ik denk....het wordt wel heel veel gebruikt, maar het meeste gebruik, tenminste dat merk ik als ik naar de nuttige dingen zat te zoeken van Twitter, is dat heel veel mensen het toch blijven gebruiken om te zeggen waar ze nu zijn, wat voor boterhammetje ze nu eten, dat ze nu naar de sportschool gaan, daar gaan toch echt de meeste Tweets over. En echt inhoudelijk, ja, ‘t is wel bij Twitter tenminste, dat was me wel heel erg opgevallen, dat je heel erg selectief moet zijn in wie je wel en niet volgt.

Hoe doe jij dat? Hoe stel je je feed samen?
Voor een deel de collega’s hier, dan ben je toch nieuwsgierig waar de collega’s mee bezig zijn, en voor een deel bronnen waarvan je denkt daar zou ik wat aan kunnen hebben. Vaak kom je toevallig kom je dan via die bronnen kom je weer op andere bronnen, of hun eigen follow-bestand even bekijken. Zo probeer je een zo divers mogelijk palet van, ook qua onderwerpen.... Italië, dat je de correspondent van andere media volgt om te kijken waar die mee bezig zijn. Maar inderdaad ook van Italiaanse kranten of gewoon mensen waarvan je weet dat ze op sociale media actief zijn in Italië, die volg je dan.

Hoe je ook regelmatig je lijst bij? D’r uit gooien wie niet relevant bleek.
Tot nu toe heb ik inderdaad van mensen die ik zelf volg heb ik er wel de nodige verwijderd na verloop van tijd. Die volgers doen verder geen kwaad.

Experts noemen Twitter een awareness stream, dat het nieuws altijd om je heen is en je kunt er altijd bij. Dus je hoeft het alleen uit de lucht te plukken en er iets mee te doen. Ervaar jij het zo?
Als je er 24 uur per dag mee bezig bent, wel, maar dan wordt je gek. Zoals van die types die
niet van fb kunnen komen omdat ze er continu mee bezig zijn. Ja, Twitter gebruik ik eigenlijk alleen voor mijn werk en ik check ontwikkelingen op Twitter ook echt puur werkgerelateerd. En natuurlijk is dat ook op odd hours dat je even kijkt, maar verder nee.

**Dus als je iets zoekt kijk je, maar je houdt het niet altijd in de gaten.**
Nee, het kan zomaar zijn dat er een dag voorbij gaat dat je met iets bezig was waarvoor je andere bronnen geschikter vindt, en dan heb je met Twitter niks gedaan. Dat kan.

**Je heb ook in 2000-2001 hier gewerkt. Uit mijn onderzoek bleek dat er nu veel meer bronnen gebruikt worden, minder officiële en vooral ook door de buitenlandredactie zelf ipv de correspondenten. De redactie gebruikte eerst bijna nooit bronnen, nu heel veel. Dat was in 94-95, ik denk dat het in 00-01 ook wel zo was.Komt dat door sociale media?**
Weet je wat het is? Het is nu veel sneller verifieerbaar als er iets gebeurt, veel sneller ben je op de hoogte van dat er iets gebeurt. Ik zeg maar altijd…we hebben hier een oud-correspondent die in begin jaren negentig in Washington was, en daar was je eigenlijk bijna blind op. Je wist dat hij ‘s ochtends te wachten tot de Washington Post of the NY Times op de mat viel en die beide wat en, nou ja, soms kon het gebeuren dat iets gebeurde en dat pas anderhalve dag later in de krant stond. Dat vond je de normaalste zaak van de wereld. En nu, zoals de schietpartij in Newtown, dat gebeurt ‘s middags en dan verwacht je de volgende dag nieuws, achtergrond, alles. Ook gewoon omdat de nieuwsvoorziening veel sneller gaat. Los van radio en tv, op sociale media wordt ook gewoon ongelofelijk veel duidelijk. De meerwaarde van een correspondent vind ik dat, reportagegewijs, dat ‘ie ergens is, dat ‘ie de geuren, de kleuren, het verdriet of wat al niet meer opvat van het verhaal en als buitenlandredactie kun je vervolgens alles wat er omheen zit, daar heb je ineens heel veel bronnen waar je uit kan putten om inderdaad een goed verhaal te maken waarin je de lezer helemaal bijpraat over gun control, wat er daar gebeurt is, etc. etc.

**Als je vroeger vooral blind ging op de correspondent, die alles daar verzamelde, in hoeverre kan de buitenlandredactie dat nu overnemen omdat je makkelijker daar mensen kunt bereiken?**
Nou ja, sowieso met internet kun je veel meer inderdaad, ik noem maar wat, lokale hoogleraren, persoonlijkheden, kun je gewoon zelf bellen en dat waren vroeger dingen die je inderdaad aan een correspondent overliet, van probeer eens die en die te bereiken als dat lukt. Vanaf het bureau kun je vrijwel alles doen, tegenwoordig. Behalve de sights and sounds, uiteindelijk het mooiste wat er is, dat je ergens naartoe gaat, de mensen spreekt, observeert wat er gebeurt en het opschrijft, kun je alles met een paar muisklikken en een paar telefoontjes, kun je dat wel doen.

**Komt dat vooral door Twitter, of ook door andere sociale media?**
Nou ja, Twitter, persbureaus, en Internet. Er zijn veel meer mogelijkheden, meer bronnen. Wel met die kanttekening dat je vervolgens voorzichtig moet zijn met welke je bronnen wel en niet gebruikt, uiteraard, maar de mogelijkheden zijn veel groter geworden. Vroeger met Japan moest je ook maar afwachten inderdaad wat een Japaneskundige hier die toevallig aan de Universiteit Leiden een paar keer per jaar naar Japan was geweest, wat die voor analyse kon geven over Japan. Nu kun je gewoon op Twitter kijken wat er bijvoorbeeld over de Japanse verkiezingen gezegd wordt, je kunt Engelstalige Japanse kranten lezen. En je kunt wat politicologen en dergelijke in Tokio bellen om daar een analyse te vragen.
En dan zit je toch echt veel dichter bij de bron dan hier.

**Zou je zeggen dat, op reportages na, alle taken van de correspondent overgenomen zouden kunnen worden door bureauredactieleden?**

Nou ja, de analyses misschien ook niet, dan moet je denk ik toch...het in groter perspectiefzetten van bepaalde gebeurtenissen, denk ik dat ter plekke dat je daar de hele dag meebezigh bent en er midden in zit, zeg maar, dat je daar misschien meer zicht in hebt dan hiergebeurd, maar verder denk ik wel, absoluut.

**Qua percentage, hoeveel bronnen vind je via Sociale media, en hoeveel op de traditionele manier.**

De traditionele manier is in feite een vrij statisch geheel, je kranten, je radio en televisiezenders en je persbureaus en sociale media dat breidt zich uit, d'r komen ook gewoon blogs bij en andere types die sociale media gaan gebruiken, dus dat is groter. Of het allemaal even betrouwbaar is, is de vraag. Waar je je vroeger bijna blind baseerde op de persbureau's, dat dat 90 procent was, en dat je misschien tien procent sociale media had, denk ik dat het nu toch wel richting 50-50 gaat, zeker, absoluut.

**Hoeveel van je collega's gebruikten Twitter bij buitenland?**

Ik weet dat er één een account had, en voor de rest geeneen. Helemaal geeneen.

**Wat is de gemiddelde leeftijd daar?**

Ik was de jongste.

**Hadden jullie het er wel eens over?**

Ik heb ze zeker aangespoord er meer mee te gaan doen.

**Wat was hun reden om dat niet te doen?**


**Zijn ze nooit overtuigd geraakt door jouw artikelen? Dat je meer informatie kreeg.**

Nee, dat idee heb ik niet. D'r is wel besproken dat ze misschien meer moesten gaan doen, maar tot nu toe is het niet gebeurd. Ik ben benieuwd wat Bert daarover te zeggen heeft. Het heeft me altijd verbaasd, zeker omdat je merkt...zoals....Ik sprak ook wel eens met collega's van de NRC, dat het daar veel meer gebruikt wordt en ik heb me er altijd over verbaasd dat bijvoorbeeld niet al onze correspondenten op Twitter zitten. Juist omdat het ook een manier is om allerlei dingen die los van de krant zijn of gewoon om actuele dingen real time te kunnen doen, zeker omdat we een hele goede internetsite hebben, dat je dan ook, zou je denken, Twitter gebruikt om bij grote gebeurtenissen zo nu en dan even een Tweet uit te kunnen doen, van nu gebeurt er dit, nu gebeurt er dat. Dat zie je bij bijvoorbeeld Angelsaksische media ongelofelijk goed gebeuren.

**Die Twitteren ook over wat ze aan het doen zijn, doe jij dat ook? Transparantie?**

Heel soms.
Ik had ook gehoord dat de internetredactie uit elkaar waren getrokken.
Dat klopt, maar dat wordt nu weer teruggedraaid. Die fout wordt gelukkig hersteld.

Denk je dat er over tien jaar meer gebruik van zal worden gemaakt?
Ik denk het wel. Ik denk dat sowieso sociale media het gaan winnen van print en mijn overtuiging is dat print op een gegeven moment een soort paper by demand, dat je gewoon aanvinkt van welke interesses heb je, en dat krijg je dan. Maar het zou zomaar kunnen dat je over tien jaar alleen bijvoorbeeld de krant alleen nog maar op tablet leest.

D'r wordt soms gezegd van een crisis in de buitenlandjournalistiek. Minder geld, het publiek is minder geïnteresseerd, dus minder ruimte, minder geld. Zie jij dat ook?
Hier heb ik niet het idee dat er minder geld wordt vrijgemaakt. Het correspondentennetwerk is nog steeds redelijk op sterkte. Je merkt wel dat er een enorme verschuiving is naar meer binnenlandse verslaggeving en het persoonlijke verhaal. Alles moet echt vanuit de mensoptiek, vanuit het kleine, gebracht worden om het uit te leggen. En vaak zijn er gewoon dingen in de buitenlandjournalistiek die zich daar niet toe lenen om vanuit het kleine te laten zien, dus in zoverre, ja, ik heb het idee dat het hier niet zo is dat er minder geld of aandacht is, maar, ja, die pagina's kunnen maar op een bepaalde manier gevuld worden, en dan zie je toch dat binnenlandse berichtgeving en haastnieuws, economisch nieuws het dan wint van buitenlands nieuws. Maar als er grote buitenlandse gebeurtenissen of bijvoorbeeld in Syrië iets is of, zoals nu die schietpartij, dan claimt buitenland wel die natuurlijke rol die het altijd gehad heeft, op. Dan staat het toch wel vrij prominent voorin.

Wat is de reden dat het meer vanuit klein, vanuit de mens moet?
Ik weet het niet, ik zie het in alle kranten gebeuren. Telegraaf begon ermee, vanuit het individu, AD nam het over, en nu hebben kwaliteitskranten als VK en NRC het ook overgenomen.

Dus het is geen beleid?
Nee, meer een trend, je ziet het op televisie ook.

En qua kwaliteit van de buitenlandjournalistiek? Zie je een verandering tot tien jaar geleden?
Nou, meer een verschuiving van wie er op buitenlandse posten worden genoemd. Waar het tien jaar geleden zo was dat het de man of vrouw was die aan het einde van zijn carrière of halverwege zijn carrière beloond werd met een mooie post, zie je nu dat het vaak freelancers zijn, beginnende journalisten die door allerlei media gewoon ergens in het buitenland worden gezet omdat het wel iets goedkoper is en misschien ook meer risico’s durven te nemen en eerlijk is eerlijk, sociale media meer gebruiken.

Maar toch zijn er dus een aantal die dat niet doen. Of zijn dat nog de oudere correspondenten?
Inderdaad.

Ik zag dat Kees Broere het wel veel doet.
Heel veel, maar die werkt ook voor de NOS en daar wordt toch wel echt van je verwacht dat je als correspondent gewoon nieuwe media gebruikt, absoluut.
Waarom kan dat daar wel geëist worden en gebeurt dat hier niet?
Goeie vraag, vraag Bert dat vooral.

Door Twitter kunnen mensen ook beter zelf op de hoogte blijven, waarin ze geïnteresseerd zijn, dus in zekere zin is het ook concurrentie van de krant. Zie jij het meer als concurrent of als bondgenoot?
Niet als concurrent, want in 140 tekens zal je nooit zo uitgebreid informatief kunnen zijn als in een krant, maar je kunt wel dingen signaleren, mensen doorverwijzen naar andere bronnen, en gewoon sneller mensen ergens van op de hoogte stellen. Voorbeeld: soms had ik dat ik iets op Twitter zette, bijvoorbeeld iets dat gebeurde in Spanje of Italië en dat ik dat op Twitter had gezet en pas twee later was er plek voor in de krant, voor een artikel. Nou ja, de mensen op Twitter die hadden het op maandag al gelezen en had ik in één of twee tweets al bijgepraat over wat er gebeurd was en in de krant was het pas twee dagen later, nou ja, om maar te zeggen van het mist snelheid.

Maar dan is het in zekere zin toch een beetje een concurrent van de krant.
Nou ja, weet ik niet of dat een concurrent is, want eerlijk is eerlijk, de helft van onze lezers zal de hele dag bezig zijn met nieuws op sociale media en internet. Maar de andere helft baseert zich puur nog op het Acht-uur Journaal en de volgende dag de krant. Die hebben helemaal niets met sociale media, dus voor hun is dat nog steeds de...maar voor de andere is het vaak dat je zegt van, ja, dat is oud nieuws. Dat is ook de discussie die we nu vaak hebben met de internetredactie, dat....die hebben bijvoorbeeld 's middags al een stukje op de site staan wat je de volgende dag inderdaad bijna hetzelfde in de krant hebt. Dan denk je, ja, als je het op de site gelezen hebt....dat kun je eerder concurrenten van elkaar noemen: online kranten, dan Twitter of Facebook of wat al niet meer.

Hoe gaat zo'n discussie?
Nou ja, vk.nl vind de krant vaak een supertanker die maar moeilijk in beweging is te krijgen, en de kritiek vanuit prin op online is dat door de snelheid van online vaak de nodige check ontbreekt, waardoor je soms dingen moet corrigeren.

Worden er wel eens conclusies uit getrokken?
Ja, tuurlijk wel. Eén daarvan is dus dat er weer beter samengewerkt moet worden. Dat lostrekken had blijkbaar niet gewerkt want het moet toch wel complementair zijn.

Hoe belangrijk is het dat journalisten Twitter leren gebruiken?
Ik heb tegen Bert gezegd en ook tegen de hoofdredacteur: ik vind het heel belangrijk. Het is een hulpmiddel dat je hebt en ik zou zeggen, als je dat hebt, moet je dat echt zeker gebruiken, absoluut.

Hoe zie je de toekomst van Twitter? Blijft het bestaan? Gaat het ten onder?
Nou ja, als ze inderdaad steeds meer....dat ligt eraan of ze die slag kunnen maken of ze loskomen van de ‘ik ga naar de sportschool’ en ‘ik eet mijn broodje’...Als je daarvan los kunt blijven en mensen gewoon serieus discussies en nieuwsdingen via Twitter delen en tot zich nemen, dan zal het best nog een tijdje kunnen bestaan, absoluut.
Wanneer zat u in Moskou?
Van eind 1993 to '98.

En daarna?

Wat is precies uw rol als chef?
Ik stuur de correspondenten aan, dus ik bekijk wat voor nieuws er is. Die correspondenten sturen mij natuurlijk een mail met voorstellen enzo, en daar maak ik een keuze uit. Dus je kijkt naar het nieuws, wat je gewoon zo ziet, de persbureaus, van alles en nog wat. En mijn collega's die voeden mij de hele tijd met...de één volgt dit, de ander die volgt dat. Je hebt ook, qua regio hebben we het verdeeld, dus die voeden mij dan: “Hé Bert, d’r is dat of dat aan de hand” en dan maken we een keuze, zo rond tien uur dan hebben we de eerste vergadering als buitenland en dan hebben we daarna een half-elf vergadering met de hoofdredacteur en de andere chefs en dan gaan we aan de slag. En dan in de loop van de tijd, om een uur of vijf, dan hebben we nog een vergadering en dat gaat meestal over de voorpagina, wat daarop komt.

U stelt dus uiteindelijk de agenda samen. Bepaalt u dan ook wat mensen gaan schrijven?
Ja.

Ze gaan pas schrijven als ze weten wat ze moeten schrijven?
Ja.

Schrijft u zelf ook?
Zo nu en dan commentaar en ik ben nu bezig met een kaderachtig stuk. Maar ik schrijf ook nieuws en van alles en nog wat.

Heeft u ook invloed op beleid? Vergadert u daar ook over met de hoofdredactie?
Ja.

Over buitenlandjournalistiek wordt hier en daar gezegd dat er een crisis zou zijn, ziet u dat ook zo?
Nee, eigenlijk niet.

Er zou minder geld zijn...

Maar er wordt dus wel bezuinigd. Hoe?
Voornamelijk doordat vaste krachten worden vervangen door freelancers. Maar dat gebeurt niet op alle posten en we hebben op het ogenblik nog steeds zo’n zeven vaste
krachten van zo’n zestien correspondenten. Daar zijn ook wel, zoals Kees Broere, die werkt ook voor de NOS, Michel Maas ook. Maar die hebben behoorlijke contracten, al heel lang.

**En hoe werkt het met freelancers?**
Nou, dat verschilt. Die zitten gewoon vast op een post en die krijgen ofwel een lump sum, dan krijg je zo’n drieduizend euro en daar moet je dan voor schrijven, ofwel ze worden per woord betaald, dat doen we ook wel.

**En als er dan een andere freelancer wordt ingehuurd, die gaat dan naar dat gebied?**
Ja, maar hebt natuurlijk een contract met zo iemand. Die mensen zitten soms jaren voor ons op één plaats.

**Hoe wordt bepaald welke gebieden er verslagen moeten worden?**
Dat hangt van een paar dingen af. Als je naar de wereld kijkt en de ligging van Nederland, dan zijn voor ons natuurlijk van het grootste belang de landen om ons heen, daar hebben we het meest mee te maken. De EU...en we kijken natuurlijk ook veel naar de VS, die hebben veel invloed; China is ook belangrijk. We zitten momenteel met een probleem omdat onze correspondent niet aan de slag mag daar vanwege politieke problemen met China. En daarnaast heb je natuurlijk in Afrika hebben we iemand zitten, in Zuid-Amerika hebben we iemand zitten. Maar je ziet, in Europa hebben we meteen al een stuk meer mensen zitten. Dat vinden we veel belangrijker. We hebben in Australië nu niet iemand zitten, we hebben wel iemand in Nieuw-Zeeland die wel eens dingen doet. Japan hebben we nu niet meer iemand, dat heeft ook te maken met de enorme kosten in Japan. Dat is echt enorm duur om daar een correspondent te hebben. Maar Rusland hebben we nog steeds een vaste correspondent, en verder natuurlijk, sturen we mensen gewoon uit, dus als er iets belangrijks is gebeurd, of iets onbelangrijks, zoals nu dat je die onzin hebt over dat de wereld vergaat op 21 december, sturen we iemand daar naar die plaats in Frankrijk waar je kunt overleven, maar dan gaan er mensen hier van de redactie, of we sturen een correspondent uit een land dat er niet zo ver vandaan ligt. Zo doet Arjen van der Ziel, die in Turkije zit, doet ook Griekenland, dus die gaat vaak heen en weer.

**Hoe belangrijk is het dat een correspondent lang op dezelfde plek zit, volgens u?**
Ik vind het heel belangrijk dat je...ja, je moet natuurlijk het land kennen, je moet het liefst, vind ik, de taal kennen. We hebben nu in China ook iemand aangenomen die Chinees spreekt. Dat heb ik altijd heel belangrijk gevonden. Ik sprak zelf ook Russisch omdat ik naar Rusland ging, en ik merkte gewoon dat ik echt veel makkelijker kon werken dan correspondenten die die taal moesten leren terwijl ze daar zaten, dat is toch echt te ingewikkeld.

**Dat geldt ook voor freelancers, dat ze er al lang zitten?**
Ja, sommige wel.

**Hoe ziet de VK zijn missie tov buitenlandnieuws? Hoe belangrijk is het?**
Wij zien het als heel belangrijk.

**Als in ‘de lezer wil het weten’, of ‘de lezer moet het weten’?**
Ik denk dat het allebei is. Ik denk dat een deel van ons lezersbestand die leest de VK ook omdat wij dit bieden. Wat dat betreft delen wij natuurlijk een deel van de markt met NRC,
dat is toch wel onze voornaamste concurrent en die zitten natuurlijk ook goed in de buitenlandberichtgeving, maar ik schaam me er niet voor dat ik vind dat het wel onze taak is om de mens gewoon de gelegenheid te geven zich op de hoogte te stellen van wat er ook buiten de grenzen van Nederland gebeurt, want je merkt wel de afgelopen jaren zie je natuurlijk.... je ziet ook bij de tv, SBS en weet ik het allemaal, het is allemaal heel erg op Nederland gefocust. Terwijl Nederland toch echt een heel klein land is.

Dus buiten de VK-lezers, denkt u dat er minder aandacht is voor buitenland? Of is dat een idee van de media?
Moeilijk te zeggen. Misschien is er inderdaad wel minder belangstelling. Maar ik denk ook: het is natuurlijk wat je de mensen geeft. We maken heel vaak hypes van betrekkelijk kleine dingen die in het binnenland gebeuren, terwijl grote dingen in het buitenland, dan denken we van 'het is ver' dus daar wordt dan op de tv wordt er betrekkelijk weinig aandacht aan besteed en ik denk dat...dat heeft volgens mij wel een beetje invloed op...kijk, je moet ook wat kennis hebben natuurlijk, dat merk je ook wel. Sommige mensen die hebben echt van 'jeuh', dan gebeurt er iets, dan denken ze van 'allemachtig, hoe zit dat, Taliban? Waar zitten die lui eigenlijk?'. Er zijn mensen die het heel slecht volgen, dus ik vind dat je ze best een beetje mag opvoeden.

Waar merkt u aan dat die aandacht minder is?
Nou, voornamelijk aan het gedrag van de media zelf, maar ik heb natuurlijk ook maar een beperkt contact met de lezers. Je krijgt mails, en ik spreek gewoon mensen die ik ken – maar ja, mensen die ik ken, zijn over het algemeen wel geïnteresseerd in nieuws. Maar als ik zie hoe de media zich gedragen, de televisie, dan heb ik wel het idee dat er wel wat minder aandacht is voor buitenland.

Kunt u een verschil noemen tussen de redactie nu en toen u in Rusland zat?
Nou ja, kijk, het allergrootste verschil is natuurlijk een technologisch verschil. Toen ik in Rusland zat, ik heb in mijn laatste jaar in Rusland heb ik af en toe gebruik gemaakt van Internet. Maar de lokale lijnen waren daar zo slecht dat...je viel er de hele tijd uit...dus daar had ik erg weinig aan en het was erg duur, dus op een gegeven moment heb ik het opgegeven, net zoals een heleboel collega's van mij daar. We betaalden ons blauw, echt bedragen van 150 dollar per maand. En daar kreeg je echt...het duurde eindeloos voor je 's een keer een pagina voor je had, en verstures ging ook vaak mis. Je had ook geen mobiele telefoons, natuurlijk. Pas in Amerika heb ik een mobiel gekregen. In Amerika ben ik pas met internet gaan werken. Dus veel meer deed je gewoon zelf.

Heeft u zicht op het beleid van de redactie toen?
Nee, daar wist ik niets van. Ik ging mijn eigen gang. Het was natuurlijk ook zo: Rusland, daar wist met niets van. Ik was zo'n beetje de enige die daar wat van wist en ik belde dus gewoon op en zei: ik heb een verhaal. Toen ik in Tsjetsjenië werkte, moest je je stukken gewoon dicteren, doorbellen.

En als u nu ziet hoe Arnout Brouwers nu wel die technieken kunt gebruiken. Was dat u ook van pas gekomen?
Het was wel makkelijker geweest.
Had het iets toegevoegd?
Jawel, want je ziet natuurlijk meer bronnen, dat is absoluut waar. Het heeft zeker voordelen. Het grootste voordeel is dat je enorm veel tijd spaart. Als je iets moest opzoeken, moest je naar de bibliotheek. Nu zoek je dingen op het Internet dingen op. Maar wij moesten boeken halen om te lezen.

Uit mijn onderzoek bleek dat de totale hoeveelheid buitenlandnieuws qua ruimte wat is afgenomen, maar vooral ten koste van persberichten. Eigen nieuws is juist veel groter geworden. Vooral ook nieuws door de redactie tov correspondenten.
Kunt u dat verklaren?
Doordat er veel meer concurrentie is op het internet, moet je nu veel meer met je eigen mensen praten en je moet speciale dingen doen. We hebben een heleboel goeie correspondenten, dus daar moet je goed gebruik van maken. En de mensen die hier zitten, zijn over het algemeen mensen die veel ervaring hebben en veel kennis hebben. Daar proberen we natuurlijk ook zoveel mogelijk gebruik van te maken. We gebruiken natuurlijk wel gewoon de persbureau’s, maar we zijn dat wel minder gaan doen. We gebruiken ze meer als een soort alarmfunctie en voor informatie. Maar we willen er wel graag zelf iets aan toevoegen. Dat is belangrijk, anders kunnen mensen het ook wel ergens anders lezen.

Is dat meer gevolg van beleid, of technologische mogelijkheden?
Ook beleid. Er is bewust voor gekozen.

Sinds wanneer is dat zo?
Zo de afgelopen jaren is dat steeds meer die kant opgegaan.

Heeft u zicht op het Twitter-gebruik onder redactieleden en correspondenten?
Ja, dat verschilt nogal. Er zijn correspondenten die er heel veel gebruik van maken. Michel Maas bijvoorbeeld, in Indonesië, maakt er veel gebruik van. Arnout volgens mij ook wel. Arie minder, maar Diederik wel vrij veel. Hier op de redactie maken we er ook wel gebruik van, ik zelf weinig, moet ik zeggen. Maar bijvoorbeeld tijdens de Arabische Lente hebben we er heel veel gebruik van gemaakt. Meestal als je van die grote nieuwsgebeurtenissen hebt, dan is het vaak ontzettend handig, natuurlijk, om snel in contact te komen met mensen. Ik vind nog wel, als nieuwsbron moet je toch wel oppassen, natuurlijk. Gewoon omdat je vaak helemaal niet weet...steltijdens de Arabische Lente die gewoon die revolutie tegen Mubarak...de meest waanzinnige dingen hoorde je natuurlijk op Twitter. Onze Harald Doornbos had getwittersd dat Mubarak dood was, maar die ligt nog steeds in het ziekenhuis, in de ziekenboeg van de gevangenis, dus.....

Maar het valt wel te verifiëren.
Nou, soms niet.

Nabellen.
Jawel, dat kan. Soms kregen we via Twitter berichten over doden die er gevallen waren, of dingen die gebeurden en je wist absoluut niet van wie je die dingen kreeg, en daar kon je ook niet .....sommige dingen kon je absoluut niet verifiëren. Ik vind, dan moet je voorzichtig zijn. En op zo’n moment kijk ik toch wel veel nog naar de traditionele persbureau’s. Die daar zijn daar zelf ook en die stellen natuurlijk een beetje andere eisen.
En de andere functies van Twitter? Het vinden van bronnen bijvoorbeeld.
Ja, dat gebruiken we ook.

U zelf ook?
Nee, ik eigenlijk niet. Heel weinig.

U heeft ervoor gekozen om het niet te gebruiken?
Nee, ik gebruik het eigenlijk niet.

Iñaki zegt...
Ja, die is daar heel druk mee.

Maar hij zegt dat hij de enige is onder de redactieleden.
Nou, dat is niet waar, want Marieken Smit - maar die is nu weg – Fokke Obbema, die doet China, die doet het ook.

Hoe oud zijn zij?
Fokke 50, Marieken, die zal veertig zijn ofzo.

Iets anders dat uit mijn onderzoek bleek, was dat er nu meer bronnen worden opgevoerd. Er wordt nu ook meer aan bronnen toegeschreven dan vroeger. Kunt u dat ook verklaren? Is daar ook beleid voor?
Ja, ik vind dat heel belangrijk, dat dingen aan bronnen worden toegeschreven. Want dan kunnen mensen het ook zelf natrekken wat we doen.

Er zijn ook meer gewone mensen en experts als bronnen. Ook beleid?
Nou, deels, maar ik denk ook dat gewoon experts en de meningen van andere mensen veel makkelijker tot je komen dan vroeger. Vroeger moest je altijd in telefoonboeken gaan kijken en moest je mensen gaan zoeken. Dat is allemaal veel en veel makkelijker geworden.

Hoe gaat dat nu dan?
Je kunt via Twitter, via Internet kun je heel makkelijk.... je Googlet, je hebt zo heb je door van...ok, we hebben één of ander onderwerp, Noord-Korea, daar zit ik nu toevallig over te schrijven....(???)....Nou, dan tik je die dingen in, dan komen er namen tevoorschijn. Ok, dan denk je, dat lees je, dan denk je, zo’n kerel, die weet er veel van. Dan zoek je op wie dat is, en je belt hem op. Het is allemaal veel makkelijker geworden. Vroeger was het echt...daar was je eindeloos mee bezig.

Luyendijk had het gevoel dat ‘ie aan het eind van een nieuwsketen stond. Dat al vast stond wat ‘ie moest schrijven. Herkent u dat?
Soms wel.

Is dat veranderd sinds vroeger?
Vroeger was dat natuurlijk veel minder. Omdat die lui toen helemaal niet wisten wat er gebeurde. Ik zat in Rusland, zij konden geen Russisch lezen. Ze lazen dan wel eens wat bij de persbureaus. Maar je weet er dan toch veel en veel meer van. Jij zit daar. Ik ben het ook lang niet altijd met Luyendijk eens, hoor. Hij overdrijft het wel een beetje. Het is ook wel een beetje van...ik heb er zelf een enorme hekel aan als ze vanuit het hoofdkwartier gaan
zeggen van ‘jij moet dit en dat doen en het moet er zus en zo uitzien’… ik vind dat je… je moet er ook op vertrouwen dat je goede mensen buiten hebt zitten, die wonen daar, ik woon er niet. Die mensen voelen vaak veel beter aan wat er leeft dan wij hier op de redactie. Dus je moet ook een beetje op hun intuïtie afgaan. Je hebt ook wel eens dat je bij de persbureaus afdraait van, er is dit en dat gebeurd, en dan zeg je ‘nou, daar willen we een stuk over hebben”. Dus in zoverre stuur je je mensen natuurlijk wel. Maar ik ga ze niet vertellen hoe het eruit moet zien. Dat heeft hij natuurlijk wel een beetje in dat boek van hem. Zijn kritiek is dat het allemaal voorvoordelig is. Hij had het natuurlijk ook voornamelijk over tv. Televisiewerk wordt natuurlijk heel erg gedicteerd door de beelden die ze voorhanden hebben. Ik heb geen beelden. Ik hoor dat iets gebeurt. Maar mijn ogen die zitten daar, dat zijn die mensen, dus die moeten het vertellen. Ik vind dat je je correspondenten heel veel vrijheid moet geven. Ik merk ook wel eens bij de hoofdredactie, op die half elf-vergadering, dat ze dan heel erg zitten te penen. Dan zeggen ze “we willen het zo zien”, heel vaak zeg ik dan “wacht nou eens even, we hebben die hele correspondent nog niet gesproken. Zullen we eerst even luisteren wat die ervan vindt?” . Dus ik ben het gedeeltelijk met Luyendijk eens, maar ik heb wel het idee dat hij het een beetje chargeerd.

Maar er wordt dus wel meer gestuurd dan vroeger. Vind u dat positief of negatief? Het heeft twee kanten. Het maakt de krant aantrekkelijker, omdat je dan zegt, we gaan wat dingetjes verzinnen. Je kunt een mooie spread maken met verschillende stukken en dan zeg je “als jij je nou beperkt tot dit aspect, dan schrijven we er hier op de redactie wel een flankerend stuk naast, dan spitsen we dat hier op toe” en vroeger was dat veel en veel minder. Vroeger was het gewoon zo, dan kwam die correspondent met een fiks stuk en dat werd gewoon in de krant gezet: hup, klaar! Dus het maakt het soms voor de lezer aantrekkelijker, deze manier van werken, maar ik vind dat je er heel erg mee moet oppassen, dat je je niet al te veel laat leiden door de persbureaus bijvoorbeeld, want dan wordt het zo’n eenheidsworst over de hele wereld. Ik ben wel erg voor de vrijheid van correspondenten – omdat ik het natuurlijk zelf ook heel lang geweest ben.

U bent het er wel mee eens dat Twitter een gereedschap is voor journalisten, toch? Aan de andere kant hebben mensen door Twitter ook meer mogelijkheden om zelf nieuws te verzamelen, dus is het ook een beetje concurrentie voor kranten. Naar welke kant neigt u meer?
Ik neig meer naar positief. Al die dingen zijn handig. Ik vind wel dat je… je moet natuurlijk gewoon voorzichtig mee omgaan, omdat, kijk, Twitter is bijvoorbeeld heel goed om mening te verzamelen. Maar het is iets minder om feiten te verzamelen. Je ziet heel erg van, ok, mensen winden zich hier erg over op en je hebt deze en andere standpunten erin. Dat zie je heel makkelijk. Maar feitelijkheden zijn heel moeilijk te controleren.

En het ontdekken van nieuws?
Ja, dat kan, wij krijgen heel vaak via Twitter hebben we eerder dingen dan via het ANP dan de persbureaus. Dat komt via collega’s die zeggen “ik zie op Twitter dit”.

Waarom zitten er dan maar zo weinig mensen op?
Ja, het zou beter zijn als er meer op zaten.

Is daar geen beleid voor?
Ik dwing ze niet, nee.
Wordt het ook niet aangespoord?
Dat wel.

Hoe?
Nou, we hebben hier een Twittercursus gehad. Maar er staan geen straffen op als je het niet doet.

Wat waren de reacties op de cursus?
Die mensen zijn over het algemeen heel tevreden.

Die hebben ook allemaal Twitter genomen?
Ja, volgens mij wel.

En die doen er ook iets mee?
Volgens mij wel.

Íñaki had het idee van niet.
Nou, bij mij...We hebben nou verschillende mensen....Fokko zit op Twitter, Ben zit op Twitter.

Maar u vindt wel dat ze het zouden moeten doen?
Ja, dat vind ik zeker. Ik hoop ook dat we het meer gaan gebruiken, maar...nou ja, ik moet zeggen...ik heb er gewoon heel weinig tijd voor. Ik zie mensen er de hele tijd op zitten kijken, maar ik heb daar echt geen tijd voor.

Heeft u zelf de cursus gedaan?
Nee, die heb ik niet gedaan. Tuurlijk, waarschijnlijk als ik die cursus zou doen, zou ik het ook wel gaan doen.

Ik vind dat u die cursus maar eens moet gaan doen.
(lacht)

Welke impact heeft Twitter en andere sociale media op traditionele journalistiek?
Of is het verwaarloosbaar klein?
Nee, zeker niet verwaarloosbaar. Je ziet natuurlijk wel...op de binnenlandse berichtgeving heeft het veel meer invloed dan op de buitenlandse berichtgeving. Je ziet bijvoorbeeld...als je die enorme heisa hebt gezien om die bultrug Johannes...het is natuurlijk toch wel aardig dat je dan ziet van....dat is gewoon echt een sociologische beeld...je krijgt daardoor een goed beeld van het gevoel van dat merkwaardige beest dat het Nederlandse volk heet. Maar ook gewoon als signaal. Die verslaggevers van ons pikken daar de hele tijd dingen mee op. We gebruiken het heel veel, voornamelijk de binnenlandse.

Wat is de toegevoegde waarde van een correspondent tov een bureauredactielid en in welke mate zou Twitter de redactieleden kunnen helpen om taken van de correspondent over te nemen? Íñaki zei "op zich is een correspondent voor reportage en analyse maar alle andere dingen kunnen ook vanuit thuis".
Ja, daar heeft ‘ie voor een gedeelte gelijk in. Bronnen vinden kun je van hieruit ook doen. Ik blijf toch bij dat het belangrijkste aan een correspondent is dat ‘ie daar is. Ook al is ‘ie
niet altijd bij de gebeurtenissen, het is wel zo...kijk, je voelt gewoon dingen...we denken altijd dat we heel veel van de VS weten, maar als je in de VS woont, kom je d'r opeens achter dat we er eigenlijk helemaal niet zoveel van weten. Iedere dag zit je naar een tv te kijken, je praat me je buren en dan denk je 'hé, die mensen denken echt heel anders dan wij'. Dus langzamerhand begin je gewoon een begrip te krijgen, een soort intuïtie te krijgen voor hoe zo'n land zou reageren op bepaalde dingen, dus ik denk ook voor analyse, dan heb ik liever een correspondent dan iemand op de redactie, want die laat toch heel vaak ook dingen uit Nederland meewegen en dat zie je dan ook heel vaak terug. Dus ik denk echt die correspondent die zul je op die manier nooit kunnen vervangen. Je kunt wel zeggen 'nou, bepaalde dingen kun je vervangen', maar het is niet alleen de reportage waarin die onvervangbaar is. Het is ook de analyse en ik vind ik eigenlijk ook gewoon het nieuws...als je het zo opschrijft dat je er meteen ook een duiding aan geeft. Wij weten hier echt gewoon minder in Nederland dan iemand die in Amerika zit.

**Merkt u verschillen in artikelen van redactieleden die wel en geen Twitter gebruiken?**

Nou, bij Iñaki merk je het meteen. Het palet dat is anders, het heeft ook te maken met Iñaki's belangstelling. Die was iets wat anders dan de andere leden van de redactie. Maar je ziet wel verschillen. Ik reken mezelf ook wat meer tot de wat meer traditionele journalisten en wij zijn iets meer van de analyse en ga zo maar door dan jongere journalisten, dus die verschillen die zie je gewoon wel.

**En dat komt wel door Twitter?**

Ik denk dat het door Twitter komt, een beetje door de cultuur...want het heeft ook wel een andere kant, dat zie ik ook wel, dat mensen zoals Iñaki, die heel veel gebruik maakt van Twitter en ook heel veel op het Internet zat rond te vogelen, daar kwamen wel hele leuke dingen uit. Maar ik vond het af en toe ook wel heel erg alsof je met hagel op iets schiet en dan kwamen er een paar kogeltjes gericht aan. En honderden kogeltjes die vlogen gewoon maar in het rond en daar hoorde je nooit meer iets van.

**Veel werk voor weinig resultaat dus.**

Nou, het nadeel vind ik dat het heel erg versnipperend werkt wat je aandacht betreft. Ik zie wel collega's die dan veel met Twitter bezig zijn, en dan denk ik 'ok, maar nou heb ik van jou tien onderwerpen gehoord, maar eigenlijk heb jij mij niet kunnen aangeven welke van die onderwerpen nou belangrijk is'. Ze merken dus wel dingen op, maar het maakt het voor hen ook moeilijker om een keuze te maken daaruit en gewoon een beetje ordening in aan te brengen.

**Omdat het zoveel is?**

Ja, daarom en omdat ze naar zoveel dingen zitten te kijken tegelijkertijd, dat kan niemand bijhouden, volgens mij. Ik zeg dan ook wel eens tegen die mensen ‘focus dan op een bepaald gebied. Als je dan iets hebt gezien in een bepaalde richting, en je denkt, dit gaat nieuws opleveren, ga dan niet ook nog twintig dingen over ander landen die ook wel interessant zijn zitten lezen, nee gebruik dan dat instrument dat je hebt om op dit onderwerp alles naar boven te halen.’ En dat versplinteren van die aandacht, dat zie ik toch wel.
Hoe ziet u de toekomst van Twitter? Bestaat het over tien jaar nog?

Nou ja, dat kan ik onmogelijk zeggen. Als het verdwijnt dan komt er iets voor in de plaats dat eigenlijk hetzelfde doet, maar dan handiger. Dat kan ook, maar dan weet ik niet hoe het eruit ziet. Maar ik geloof als primaire expressievorm, ja, tuurlijk blijft dat bestaan, want die behoeft die is er kennelijk. Ik heb die behoeften veel minder. Ik hooft niet de hele tijd mijn mening aan andere mensen te laten weten, daar heb ik zelfs een hekle aan. Maar, ja, veel mensen hebben dat natuurlijk wel. Ik vind het trouwens raar, hoor, mijn kinderen, dat merk ik dan wel dat die er ook heel weinig mee doen, terwijl die wel verder zijn met Internet, facebook en weet ik wat, maar met Twitter doen ze weinig.

Dat zijn geen journalisten?

Nee.

Volgens mij is het daar vooral populair, de jongere generatie niet echt.
Zij zijn twintig, eenentwintig, studeren. Maar ik hoor ze er echt heel weinig over.

Hoe ziet u de toekomst van de buitenlandjournalistiek?
Ik denk dat zoals ik correspondent ben geweest, ik denk dat dat ras wel gaat uitsterven. Ik ben gewoön echt nog in de goeie tijd correspondent geweest. Er was veel geld bij de krant, we verdienden veel geld en ze konden je veel laten doen. Ik hooft wel dat dat in de toekomst wat moeilijker gaat worden. We zitten nog altijd, als krant, met het probleem van we hebben het internet, we hebben websites, maar we hebben nog steeds geen verdienmodel. Die website van ons, daar zijn we alleen maar geld aan kwijt. Tenzij ik zo’n ijzersterk merk hebt als de Financial Times, of een niche-merk zoals hier in Nederland het Financieele Dagblad, dan kun je wel achter zo’n paywall gaan zitten. Maar als wij dat doen dan weet ik niet of de mensen daar nou bereid zijn om daarvoor te betalen. Dan ga je gewoön naar NRC of, er zijn nog wel een paar goeie kranten in Nederland. Wij zijn natuurlijk wel goed, maar niet zo superijzersterk dat je denkt van ‘zonder de VK kan ik echt niet’. Zo is het helaas niet. Het enige dat ik voorlopig nog zie is iPad, omdat je daar gewoön heel makkelijke en abonnement kan regelen met mensen, die betalen dan wel.

Dus alleen nog een digitale krant.
Ik denk dat dat voorlopig nog niet gaat gebeuren. Je moet je natuurlijk bedenken: mensen van mijn generatie, en mensen vanaf zo’n veertig jaar, die lezen toch nog steeds vrij veel de krant. Die mensen die blijven volgens mij nog wel een hele tijd de krant lezen. Dat zijn bovendien de generatie....kijk ik ben 58, ik kan morgen doodvallen, maar misschien heb ik nog wel 30 jaar, maar ik zal niet snel mijn krant de deur uit doen. En niet alleen omdat het gewoon mijn beroep is, maar ik heb vrienden die hele andere beroepen hebben, maar die zullen het ook niet de deur uit doen. Het is toch een tamelijk kapitaalkrachtige generatie, natuurlijk. Die blijft nog wel even.

U zegt dat u in de goeie periode zat. Wat zijn de kenmerken die er toen waren en nu niet meer?
Bijvoorbeeld in Rusland was je gewoön heel erg vrij. Je deed wat je zelf wilde. 99% van wat ik gedaan heb, dat heb ik daar zelf verzonnen. Ik werd nooit gebeld van ‘hé Bert doe ‘s een keer dat’. D’r was ook voldoende geld om allerlei dingen te doen. Ik probeer nu natuurlijk ook nog wel te zorgen dat correspondenten dat kunnen doen, maar dat je...op de kaart zag ik een stad en die heette Dnor, dat betekent bodem in het Russisch en dan
dacht ik, weet je wat, ik ga eens kijken hoe het op de bodem van Rusland is. Nou, dan ging ik gewoon op weg. Dan kun je prachtige reportages maken. Dat zie je natuurlijk wel, doordat de snelheid van het nieuws is opgevoerd, komen correspondenten eerder in het gedrang, want dan zeggen wij ‘ja, maar we willen ook nog een verhaal over dit hebben’, of de website: “je moet ook nog over dat doen”, terwijl ik dan denk van ‘nou, weet je, eigenlijk zou het veel leuker zijn….laat die vent gewoon met rust, laat het nieuws, dat doen we wel op een andere manier en laten ‘m gewoon lekker daar rondlopen en een gek verhaal opvissen.’

Dus ze zitten nu meer vast aan de nieuwsagenda.
D’riswelmeer druk. Dat komt natuurlijk ook door de site. Op het ogenblik is het weer een beetje losgekoppeld, een tijd lang zat het veel meer in elkaar, nu is het voor een groot deel losgekoppeld. Maar ze bellen wel af en toe een correspondent voor een bijdrage. Maar in de toekomst gaat dat weer veel meer samen, en dan ontstaat er weer veel meer druk op de correspondenten. Het is net als correspondenten die voor de radio werken, die jongens kunnen bijna niet de deur uit, want die moeten de hele tijd bij de telefoon blijven. En de kwaliteit van hun mobiel vinden ze niet goed genoeg. Dat vind ik dus echt het rehashen van nieuws zoals Joris zegt. Die kant moeten we niet opgaan.

Als u zegt “dit ras sterft uit” dan doelt u op de vrije correspondent?
Nee, ik zou zeggen gewoon de luxe correspondent. De mensen die nog het geluk hadden dat er toen nog redelijk veel geld was en dat je onder goeie omstandigheden gewoon met een normaal, vast contract…. Ze zijn er nu nog wel. Degenen op de grote posten: Arie in NY, Duitsland, Frankrijk, Afghanistan…en nog drie. Die zitten redelijk goed.

Bij de NOS schijnen ze wel meer druk op de correspondenten te zetten om op Twitter te gaan. Waarom hier niet?
Ik denk dat dat door mij is, anders zou er wel meer druk zijn.

Dus als u opgevolgd wordt, verandert dat?
Misschien sowieso wel, misschien verander ik wel.
1994

Monday, October 3
WHO acht grootste gevaar pest geweken
Mladic wil strijd ‘definitief staken’
Sonarbeelden geven voedsel aan theorie over boegdeur
Berbers betogen voor vrijlating zanger
Italianen krijgen organen vermoord Engels jongetje
Verkiezingszege voor Meciar in Slowakije
Rood-bruine demonstratie tegen ‘Jeltsins’s bende’
Tsjechen betichten Moskou van aanval op dorp Kalinovskaja
Ex-minister Cardoso stevent in Brazilië af op presidentschap
Vladimir Meciar, een populist met kwaliteiten
Britse major Hewitt beschrijft in boek verhouding met Lady Di
VS besluiten milities Haïti te ontwapenen
Israël en Tunesië gaan economische banden aanknoopen
Tweede verdachte moord PRI-leider aangehouden
Republikaner ondoopt zich van voorzitter Schönhuber
Tribunaal gaat kantoren openen in ex-Joegoslavië
Fatwa treft uitingen Saudische oppositie
Japanse soldaten voeren eigen bevel bij missie Goma
In Bonn wordt algemene sancties Irak
Druk op Di Pietro groeit

Tuesday, October 18
Clintonaar M-Oosten voor vredesoverleg
VS en Noord-Korea bereiken nucleair akkoord
‘Achter dood journalist zit Russische legertop’
Rusland eist in V-raad einde sancties Irak
Akkoord Jordanië-Israël is cruciaal
Britse vorstin koel onthaald in Rusland
Arafat laat zich door Israël en Hamas naar slachtbank leiden
Haitianen zien GI's als hun bevrijders
Claes wil NAVO uitbreiden zonder ‘onmisbaar’ Rusland te isoleren
Voorhoeve bepleit grotere eenheid binnen de WEU
Zesjarige Noorse jongens doden peuter van vijf bij het spelen
Regering en verzet Angola sluiten akkoord over beëindiging oorlog
FDP moet na verkiezingen ravage onder ogen zien
Chinese politie in actie tegen criminaliteit op platteland
VS gaan met China’s leger samenwerken
In Afghanistan dreigt een desastreuze winter
Serviër staat in Oostenrijk terecht
Bulgaren kiezen op 18 december nieuw parlement
Regering in Botswana behoudt meerderheid
Cardoso officieel president, maar herstelling stemmen Rio gevraagd

**Wednesday, November 2**
Algiers en FIS geven elkaar schuld aanslag
Jordanië bereid Tempelberg over te dragen aan PLO
Kiezers VS morren over immigratie en belasting
Iraakse soldaten vluchten massaal voor amputaties
VS betichten Iraans verzet van wredeheden
Deense minister weg na schandaal
Indiase politie maakt einde aan gijzeling Britten
Amerikaanse machtsvertoon in Koeweit en zuiden van Irak
Parijs streng bewaakt bij begin proces-Bakhtiar
Leger leidt schoonmaakactie Rio de Janeiro
VS stellen zich openlijk achter opmars Moslims
Omstreden Russische generaal ontslagen
Moordend 'monster van Florence' krijgt 14 keer levenslang
Moordenaars jongetje Nicholas gearresteerd
Gekibbel politici beschadigt Italië's reputatie in Europa
Gijzeling Duitsland eindigt met overgave ontsnapte gevangene
Ruzieschopper Mečiar vormt kabinet Slowakije
Hutu-leiders voeren waar schrikbewind in kampen Zaïre

**Thursday, November 17**
Nice houdt nog steeds van zijn fraudeur
Angolezen moeten wennen aan nieuwe kans op vrede
Clans leveren slag om hoofdstad van Somaliland
Premier Felipe González spreekt beschuldigingen nepotisme tegen
'Het was fout Rusland een rol te geven in ex-Joegoslavië'
Politiek spel Bossi brengt Berlusconi in het nauw
Balladur 'baart muis' met lijst van 29 maatregelen in jongerenpolitiek
Bosnische roep om VN-hulp voor Bihac vindt weinig gehoor
Clinton dringt bij Suharto aan op humaner beleid
Dodental door storm Gordon nadert 500
Ex-legerleider waarschuwt Algerijnse machthebbers
'Folterpraktijken nog altijd gebruikt in Israelische cel'
Griffier bij tribunaal ex-Joegoslavië stapt op
Labour blaast Iers kabinet Reynolds op
Major dreigt dwarsliggende Euro-rebellen met aftreden
Model-project Wereldbank in Brazilië onder vuur
Oekraïne stemt onder voorwaarden in met NPV
Poolse ministers slachtoffer van rivaliteit premier en president
Sterke Benlux kan aanjager worden in Europa
Teams VS en VN inspecteren atoomindustrie Noord-Korea
V-raad acht Iraakse erkenning van Koeweit 'belangrijke stap'
Zweden bevriest hulp Tanzania vanwege fraude
Friday, December 2
Kozyrev weigert NAVO-akkoorden te tekenen
Nederlandse journalist moet O-Timor verlaten
Autoriteiten in China beginnen gevaren aids te onderkennen
Italië lost pensioen-geschil op en voorkomt staking
‘Kroatië zal val van Bihac met geweld verhinderen’
PEN zet vraagtekens bij dood schrijver
President Jeltsin slikt ultimatum aan Tsjetsjenië in
Ethiopië gaat leiders ‘Rode Terreur’ berechten
Zedillo belooft: geen geweld in Chiapas
Amerikaanse Senaat steunt GATT-verdrag
Belangengroepen teleurgesteld over aids-top
Gevangenissen Rusland ‘horror-verhalen uit de hel’
Groep gegijzelde VN-soldaten meldt goed nieuws per fax
RAF-terroriste komt nog even radicaal gevangenis uit
Journalisten en stadsbestuurders gedood bij Algiers
‘NAVO verliest als Bosnië wordt gesplitst’
NAVO wil in Bosnië Duitse Tornado-jagers inzetten
Passagiers op weg naar Mombassa
Premier Major nodigt Sinn Fein uit voor verkennend gesprek
President Clinton geeft defensie 25 miljard extra
Studenten VS en Egypt slaags op campus Cairo
Vietnam toegelaten als zevende lid Asean

Saturday, December 17
Europa stopt 3 miljard in deeltjesversneller
Justitie onderzoekt ‘rode corruptie’ Italië
Mandela pleit voor geduld bij achterban
Partij Indiase premier Rao in diepe crisis
Republikeinen wijzen fiscaal plan Clinton af
Doedajev gelast zijn troepen vuren te staken
Frans parlement verbiedt giften bedrijven aan politieke partijen
Oude garde Bulgarije keert terug
Moskou ziet plan-Karadzic als afleidingsmanoeuvre
Bonn ontkent plan tot inzet Tornado’s bij evacuatie Bosnië
Clinton raakt woordvoerster kwijt
Vrijspraak Collor verdeelt Brazilië
Japanse scholen gaan pesterijen bestrijden
Mariniers VS naar Somalië voor evacuatie VN-leger
Hans weg uit overleg met Palestijnse raad
Verpletterende nederlaag Tories bij plaatselijke verkiezingen
Negen dissidenten in China krijgen celstraf
Illegale kunsthandel via landen in Derde Wereld lijkt onuitroeibaar
Revolutionair Hunan in China lijkt de boot te missen

1995
Monday, January 2
Beroep op Sonia Gandhi blijft tevergeefs
Brand in Antwerpse hotel doet oudejaarsfeest eindigen in rouw
Gezanten Israël en Syrië praten in Washington
Leider Tamil-groepering in Sri Lanka
Nieuwjaarsfeest voor velen een drama
Opstandelingen in Mexico willen het hele land bevrijden
Paleis Doedajev in Grozny ingsingeld
Partijen Bosnië sluiten bestand om te onderhandelen over vrede
Schotelantennes verboden in Iran
Seriemoordenaar uit Gloucester verhangt zich in cel
Stalins gevangenen zitten vast in zelfgebouwde stad
Verdachte gepakt van moorden in abortusklinieken
Veteraan Shahak nieuwe stafchef Israël
Vier doden bij gevechten tussen Somalische clans
VN-gezant dringt in Kabul aan op vertrek president
Egyptische extreemisten doden politiemannen

Tuesday, January 17
Japanse consument is ‘mandarijnen’ op Tokyose ministeries beu
Lawine treft IJslands dorpje: 18 vermisten
Hutu’s gaan in kampen Zaire door met haatcampagne
Amnestie op laatste moment leidt tot ruzie in kabinet Zuid-Afrika
Gevechten tussen Koerden in Irak laaien weer op
Bloedonderzoek blijkt belastend voor O.J. Simpson
Christopher consulteert Kozyrev over NAVO
Controverse over herdenking Auschwitz
Duitsers kunnen niet nog meer belastingverhoging verdragen
Formatie Dini stokt door eisen van Berlusconi
Gaillot laat zich niet op de kop zitten door ‘pauselijke inquisitie’
‘Geweld leger Nigeria moet Shell paaien’
Kopstuk GAL-zaak zou 130 miljoen verduisterd hebben
Tsjernomyrdin wil praten met Tsjetsjenen
Tsjetsjenen verdedigen hun dorpen met jachtgeweren
Vijf Commissie-kandidaten te licht bevonden
VN verwijten alle partijen in Bosnie schenden bestand
Zjirinovski verkiesbaar als president Rusland
Zware aardbeving west-Japan richt verwoesting aan
Zwitsers houden referendum over ‘uitverkoop van geboorteland’

Wednesday, February 1
Aanslag radicaliseert ‘uitroeiers’ in Algerije
Ecuador biedt Peru bestand aan in grensconflict
Frankrijk wil internationale conferentie ex-Joegoslavië
Haiti ontvangt 1,5 miljard steun bij wederopbouw
Hongaren bestraft wegens doden betogers in 1956
Macht Korzjakov gaat veel verder dan die van lijfwacht van Jeltsin
Midden in de Rijn staan een klooster en een gymnasium
Peil van Maas overal in Frankrijk en België gestabiliseerd
Russisch leger begint offensief in westen van Tjetsjenie
Servische krant verschijnt onder nieuwe naam
Turkije beweert in zeeëngev louter te denken aan milieu
Volkspartij klem tussen rechts en links
Israël weigert Cairo tegemoet te komen over kernwapens
Machtscrisis Burundi wekt vrees voor nieuw Ruanda-Drama

Thursday, February 16
Akkorde met Milosevic als laatste kans op vrede
‘Algerijnse GIA valt grenspost in Tunesië aan’
Belgrado hekelt rol Amerika in vredesvoorstel
‘Duitser moet weg na kritiek op politie Oostenrijk’
FBI jaagt op medeplichtigen van aanslag WTC
Israelische politie arresteert leiders kolonisten Hebron
Meer dan 64 doden bij brand in bar Taiwan
Jeltsin constateert vertraging van hervormingsproces
Kapstellingen bedreigen zwarte scholieren
Luchtvvervuiling teistert Hanoi en Ho Chi Minh-stad
N-Korea dreigt met opzegging akkoord
‘Oorlogsverklaring’ aan fundamentalisme wekt wreeve
Pasok verkiest conservatieve president boven stembusgang
Santer houdt vast aan datum voor Euro-munt
Socialist Jospin loopt in op Balladur
Taliban stellen regering Afghanistan Ultimatum
Verdeelde EU blaast top met armé landen af

Friday, March 3
Bezoek Beatrix voert ook door Oost-Jeruzalem
Zuidelijk Libanon leert zijn regering kennen
Vredespost Contactgroep lijkt mislukt
Aéropatiale zou Vlaamse socialisten ook hebben betaald
Aidid vult vacuum dat VN achterlaten na vertrek Somalï
Andreotti moet terechstaan voor banden met mafia
Belgische politie pakt islamisten op
Carlos Salinas sloeg in drie maanden tijd imago aan diggelen
Duitsland sluit kantoorrij Koerden
Politieschandaal Hamburg breidt zich verder uit
Republikeinse revolutie loopt vast in Senaat
Van de Belgische oppositie moet Claes opheopelen
Van Velzen bepleit nauwere band met Tudjmans HDZ
VS lobbyen fanatiek voor nieuw NPV
Woede en verdriet in Moskou na moord
Wrak van veer Estonia wordt bedekt met beton

Saturday, March 18
Angstig Istanbul in fort veranderd
Politie Jakarta arresteert vijf journalist
Arrestaties in Pakistan wegens aanslag WTC
Volkscongres China voert hard oppositie
Ruzie tussen Zulu-leiders verhoogt spanning in Natal
Duitse politie ziet Koerd als organisator aanslagen
Fascisten verdacht van aanslag op zigeuners
Filipijnen rouwen om terechtstelling in Singapore
Jeltsin paait Clinton om Moskou in mei te bezoeken
Leider opstand in Azerbeidjan doodgeschoten
Moslim-sekte in nieuw fenomeen in Karachi
Oekraïne neemt Krim grondwet en president af
Sinn-Feinleider Adams viert Ierse feestdag op Witte Huis
Tapie wankelt in omkopingsproces
Verzet Chiapas bereid tot hervatting dialoog
Visserijberaad tussen EU en Canada zit vast
'Zwarte is het beest, blanke vrouw het slachtoffer'
Zweden stuurt eerste groep Kroaten terug

Monday, April 3
Amerika besluit tot halvering noodhulp
Bosnië meldt felle strijd in Bihac-enclave
Damascus belooft Hezbollah in toom te houden
Granaat maakt eind aan tweedaagse vredesmissie
Guerrillabeweging Lichtend Pad is nog niet afgeschreven
Japanners maken elkaar gek met geruchten na aanslag in metro
'Kleine Irma' uit Sarajevo in ziekenhuis Londen overleden
'Lijk van Hitler in 1970 door Sovjets verbrand'
Linkse non-conformist Jacek Kuron neemt op tegen Walesa
Manilla arresteert zes 'extremisten' uit Midden-Oosten
Manilla mag moord in Singapore nog onderzoeken
Oekraïne brengt de Krim onder gezag van Kiev
Oppositie Algerije wil praten met regering
Overloper Irak met informatie A-bomproject in Athene vermist
Russland blijft steun VS krijgen ondanks kritiek
Russische KGB keert terug als FSB
Peking zwijgt al één jaar over lot dissident Wei
Zeker zeven mensen gedood in Gaza

Tuesday, April 18
Berlusconi drijft Di Pietro en collega's uiteen
China werkt VS tegen door akkoord met Iran
Conferentie over nucleaire wapens begint moeizaam
Frankrijk bepleit meer veiligheid VN'ers Bosnië
Irak verwerpt nieuw olie-plan V-raad
Kadhafi vast van plan luchtaart-embargo deze week te schenden
Mitterrand laat zien dat hij nog altijd leeft
Moskou wil gratie voor 300 duizend gevangenen
Moslim-rebellen doden gijzelaars op Filipijnen
Opvarenden gered van zinkend veer
PLO en Hamas praten over staken terreur
Rusland wil ondanks verdrag troepen in Kaukasus houden
'Sekteleider gaf bevel voor maken gifgas'
Spaanse vissers negeren akkoord EU met Canada
Turks-Cyprioten moeten opnieuw naar de stembus
Turkse eenheden doden 24 rebellen in regio Tunceli
Filipijnse minister weg om zaak huishoudster

**Wednesday, May 3**
Bondgenoten geven handel met Iran voorrang
Chinees bedrijf wil laserwapen exporteren
Clinton alsnog bereid Cubaan asiel te geven
Cok & Knoop eisen herstel goede naam
Enkel ‘neutrale’ Milosevic kan linies verleggen
Groot Frans debat hoffelijk en zonder winnaar
Kroaten veroveren Servisch bolwerk
Onbekende groep koopt nieuwe Britse tv-zender Channel 5
Palestijns hof Gaza spreekt doodvonnis uit
Rolf Hochhuth koopt Berliner Ensemble voor zichzelf
Witboek EU geeft geen garanties aan aspirantleden
Twee aanhoudingen bomaanslag Oklahoma
Israëlische bulldozers jagen Palestijnen Jeruzalem uit

**Thursday, May 18**
‘Blauwhelmen moeten in enclaves blijven’
Boutros Ghali geeft V-raad vier opties voor vredesmacht Bosnië
Brits Lagerhuislid misbruikt collega uit eigenbelang
Burundi zoekt hulp opvang Ruandese vluchtelingen
Chirac benoemt Juppé tot premier
Concerns uit Z-Korea gaan geld steken in N-Korea
Dertien gewonden bij explosie van autobom in Algiers
Eerzame burgers van Texas mogen weer gewapend de straat op
‘Elite kiest uiteindelijk voor Vlaamse onafhankelijkheid’
Kiev geeft tijdschema voor sluiten Tsjernobyl
Moord op zigeuner wekt commotie in Tsjecho
Symboliek ligt op de loer bij sobere machtsoverdracht
Trouwe Juppé krijgt premierschap cadeau
‘Tweede man’ Libië zou onder huisarrest staan
Vredesmacht VN machteloos bij strijd Sarajevo
‘West-Afrika schuldig aan oorlog in Liberia’
Staking legt scholen Libanon plat
Chinese boeren blijven naar Yangtze-rivier hunkeren

**Friday, June 2**
Chinese proef met raket verontrust Amerika en Azië
Chirac vastbesloten Franse militairen in Bosnië te handhaven
Clinton gehekeld voor suggestie troepen Bosnië
Comité van Wijzen bereidt toekomst EU voor
Couzy voelt weinig voor versterking VN-troepen
Dissidentenleiders voorzien in Cuba ‘grote vrijheden’
Duitsland bereid tot verlenen van militaire steun
Elk voertuig is verdacht, ook de witte VN-wagens
Griekenland ratificeert VN-zeerechtverdrag
Leider Vlaamse liberalen weg na verkiezingen
Milosevic schroeft eisen voor erkenning van Bosnië verder op
Nigeriaanse oppositieleiders gearresteerd
Noorwegen kampt met ernstige watersnood
Oekraïense aflossing Dutchbat wegens wangedrag overgeplaatst
‘Rechter zaak-Solingen zit met mager bewijs’
Offensief tegen Tamils eist zeker 67 levens

Saturday June 17
Algerijns bewind praat opnieuw met leiders FIS
Alleen Moslims blijken te willen ‘sterven voor Sarajevo’
Amnestie voor alle militairen Peru wekt alom woede
Bosnische eenheden vallen overal rond Sarajevo Serviërs aan
Clinton: geld uit Azië M-Oosten voor actie Bosnië
Zelfs het medium kon Tansi niet redden
Gijzelnemer Sjamil Basajev is in Tsjetsjenië een levende legende
‘Het zijn onze Moslim-soldaten, het gaat super’
In Boedjonovsk regeert wanhoop en zindert de haat
Leger Tanzania stopt exodus Hutu’s bij grens
Moslims nog niet sterk genoeg voor grote krachtmeting
Parijs veroordeelt Iraniërs bij verstek tot levenslang
Voorstad huivert bij gedachte burgemeester FN
Groep zwarte Portugezen neemt wraak op blanken
Israëli ruziet met Nederland over status bij EU
Hans van Mierlo hikt aan tegen hoekige vragen

Monday, July 3
Argentijnse sergeant onthult macabere adoptievorm
Betogers botsen met politie in Istanbul
Britse zondagsbladen speculeren zich suf over kansen Major
Clinton gedwongen tot vroege champagne
Di Pietro lang verhoord over betrokkenheid bij corruptie
Expositie rond Enola Gay negeert slachtoffers Hiroshima
Gebruik heroine en cocaïne neemt toe in Marokko
Hoofdkwartier VN in Sarajevo geraakt
Israël en PLO opnieuw rond de tafel
Kohl spreekt veto uit tegen nationaal joods monument
Nederlanders mogen Srebrenica niet in
Philip Leakey steunt Moi tegen zijn broer
Politie en leger leveren slag met mohajirs in Karachi
Portugese minister gelast onderzoek naar afluisteren
President Algerije ontslaat havik uit kabinet-Sifi
Protesten tegen Franse plannen houden aan
Russische premier overleeft confrontatie met parlement
Spanning Sudan en Egipte loopt op
SPD en Groenen gaan regeren in grote deelstaat
Thaise oppositieleider bijna zeker van zege
Verzoenende parlementsvoorzitter Zaïre slachtoffer van duivelspact
Zeker 36 mensen naar ziekenhuis door gas in metro
Zoeken overlevenden ramp Seoul gestaakt

Tuesday, July 18
Bijna 200 Tamils gedood bij explosive
Catalaanse partij zegt steun aan Gonzalez op
Duitse rechter veroordeelt smokkelaars van plutonium
Dutchbat zwijgt bij terugkeer op Soesterberg
EU en Vietnam eens over samenwerking
Irak dreigt VN met opschorting medewerking
Krajina-Serviërs beschieten Osijek in oost-Kroatië
Malieveld is voor boze Bosniërs niet goed genoeg
Moderne mafia Italië pantsert zich tegen spijtoptanten
Moslim-strijders bereiken Tuzla
Rechtbank in Kosovo veroordeelt 72 Albanese
Van Mierlo wil evacuatie van burgers Zepa
VN'ers moeten zeggen hoe het voelde en rook
Beerput apartheidsbewind gaat open
Oliebrand verontrust Syrische bevolking
Boutros vertrouwt op wijsheid Afrika

Wednesday, August 2
Australië wijst Dassault de deur, Parijs slaat terug
Bevel tot ontwapenen aan troepen Tsjetsjenië
Bisschoppen in Wenen ontkennen homoseksualiteit
Dehaene maakt verhoren ministers makkelijker
Franse politie houdt verdachte metro-aanslag aan
Hamas 'wreekt zich' als VS leider uitleveren
Kenya acht gedrag minister vijandig en grof
Komst orkaan jaagt bewoners Florida weg
'Moslim-sluipschutters beschoten eigen volk'
NAVO gaat alle 'veilige zones' beschermen
Noors schip pikt vluchtelingen op uit Baltische zee
Operatie Vuile Handen in Italië loopt vast in het moeras
President Zimbabwe vaart uit tegen 'perverse' homo's
Serviërs bombarderen posities van Kroaten
VN staan bij Newyorkers zwaar in de schuld
VN zoeken onderdak voor tienduizenden Moslims
VS en China praten verder over betrekkingen
VS maken Kroatië weer tot buffer tegen Oosten

Thursday, August 17
China zet Taiwan verder onder druk met nieuwe raketproeven
Drie bootjes zetten Kroaten over de Sava
Gemengde reacties in Azië op excuses Japanse premier
In Jakarta draait het om zaken, niet om oude trauma’s
‘Israëli doodde gevangenen oorlogen Egypte’
Nederlanders en Belgen weigeren ritten op Sarajevo
Oppositie Irak mijdt overgelopen
PKK maakt balans op van bloedig jaar
PLO geeft fiat aan deelakkoord over autonomie
President Suharto prijst economische ontwikkeling
Rechter Ito doelwit in proces O.J. Simpson
Regering-Samper in Colombia roept noodtoestand uit
Sukarno’s magische formule is dogmatisch keurslijf geworden
VN verwachten offensief Kroatië bij Dubrovnik
Volgens Subandrio is Sukarno de schuld van alles

**Friday, September 1**
Afghanistan verbiedt vrouwen naar conferentie Peking te gaan
Begin van vrede in Bosnië nauwelijks te ontwaren
Bosnië-congres boos op Voorhoeve
Doodgesaamde EU’ers zijn volgens Serviërs vrijgelaten
Franse politie entert schip Greenpeace vlakbij Parijs
Geen sprake van paniek onder Serviërs Bosnië
NAVO eist einde aan belegering Sarajevo
Noord-Ierland viert geen feest na een jaar bestand
Opnieuw Hutu’s opgenomen in gewijzigde Ruandese regering
Politici Italië wonen goedkoop in luxueuze ‘volkswoningen’
Premier Indiase deelstaat neemt ontslag in ziekbed
Rusland vraagt Pale wapens te verwijderen
Sikh-strijders Punjab doden eerste minister
Vrede in SPD-leiding duurt maar twee dagen
Amnesty test vrijheid van meningsuiting Huairou

**Saturday, September 16**
Boeven moeten Moskovieten beschermen tegen de onderwereld
Heilige Stoel hekelt document van Peking
Pronk acht hogere status vrouwenrechten winst van ‘Peking’
Clinton eist stipte naleving van Sarajevo-akkoord
Frankrijk verscherpt wetten tegen drugshandel
Frontlinies Bosnië volledig gewijzigd
Hongkong kiest vóór of tegen China
‘Kans op onafhankelijkheid Frans-Polynesië zeer klein’
Militairen doden 51 Koerden in zuidoost-Turkije
Moskou blijf met tijdelijke stop NAVO-aanvallen
Politie India zoekt invloedrijke goeroe
Pro-Chinapartij Hongkong benadrukt eigen gezicht
Ruanda moet van VN moordende soldaten berechten
Serviërs vuren raketten af op NAVO-toestellen
Sluiting scheepswerven leidt tot rellen
Vermeende maoïsten Bangladesh verminkt

2011

Monday, October 3
Immigratiebeleid minder streng; Denemarken
President Birma luistert naar protest
Parlementair onderzoek naar corruptie; oostenrijk
Opnieuw toeriste ontvoerd in Kenia
Twee Nederlanders omgekomen
'Verkeerde aanval'; Jemen
Franse vrouwenorganisaties willen van mademoiselle af
Les in schieten, arresteren en goed gedrag
Oppositie verenigt zich in Syrische Raad
Ex-piloot Poch blijft in Argentijnse cel
Karzai staakt gesprekken met Taliban na dood
Israël wil praten met
'Wrakhout van de crisis’ in protest
Sirte loopt leeg; Libië
Schok na arrestatie van agent/crimineel
'Mijn leraar preekte elke dag over zelfmoordaanslagen’
'Tsaar Kiro' zag dorp als zijn privébezit
Parijs doet proef met elektrische huurauto

Tuesday, October 18
Ruil 1.027 Palestijnse gevangenen voor Israëlische soldaat leidt tot verdeeldheid in Israël
Rel over Occupy Rome; Italië
Nieuwe vlag Libië gehesen in Bani
Rijzende ster in Republikeins kamp
Vakbonden in Birma toegestaan
Serviërs handhaven wegblokkades; Kosovo
Praatgrage familie hindert president Peru
Referendum tegen massa-immigratie; Zwitserland
Rijk Turkije in trek bij hoogopgeleide Grieken
Invallen bij extreem-linkse groeperingen; Italië
Annan, Ahern, Adams: ETA moet wapens neerleggen
N-Zeeland vreest zinken ‘olieschip’
China schrikt op van gruwelijke dood peuter: niemand doet iets!
Miljoenen Mubarak in Zwitserland; Egypte
Arabische Liga stelt Syrië alleen nieuw ultimatum
Leger Kenia jaagt op militanten Somalië
Erfgename l’Oréal onder curatele

Wednesday, November 2
Waarnemer uit Nederland niet welkom in Rusland
Japanse politicus drinkt water Fukushima
Israël bouwt versneld huizen op Westoever
Syrië doet beloftes aan Arabische Liga
Opknapbeurt voor de omwenteling; Reportage ‘alles wordt anders’ aan de universiteit van Tripoli
President Colombia doekt inlichtingendienst op
Dissident Weiwei krijgt megaboete
Kadhafi’s geheime ruimte in het hoofdgebouw
Abramovitsj doet boekje open over Russische manier van zakendoen
DSK genoemd in prostitutiezaak
Cyberaanval op Mexicaans drugskartel
Technocraat met vereiste Tripoli-achtergrond
Boeing 767 landt zonder wielen; Warschau

Thursday, November 17
Monti: kabinet zonder politici
Aanval in hart van Syrië ‘Vrije Syrische Leger’ beschiet complex inlichtingendienst luchtmacht
Parlement bestormd; Koeweit
Rusland doet onderzoek naar kritiek waarnemers
Medicus, bolsjewiek, drugsbaas en oude rot in het guerrilla-vak; profiel Rodrigo Londoño
Spanje kiest tussen twee baarden
Toenadering Fatah en Hamas
Verdachten hebben recht op vertaling; Europese Unie
Meer migranten na Arabische Lente; Europese Unie
Tsjetsjeense dichter doodgeschoten; Rusland
Oppositie Syrië mist eendracht
Kazachstan krijgt meer partijen
Man gezocht na schoten Witte Huis; Verenigde Staten
Schip, doelwit van Tromp, gevonden; Zweden
‘Arrestatie hang af van toeval’
Al-Zawahiri: ‘Bin Laden was een lieve man’

Friday, December 2
Frans ICT-bedrijf hielp Kadhafi met spioneren via internet
‘Zeker 4.000 doden’; SYRIë
Strijders krijgen baan; LIBIë
Het kamermisje wilde zelf heel graag, zo laat DSK opschrijven
‘Alleen hier en hier alleen wil ik sterven’; Reportage Israëliërs
Chaos in Zuid-Ossetië na verlies Moskous romans
Bonden vallen Di Rupo al aan
Sarkozy pleit voor nieuw EU-verdrag
Saoedi’s drukken alle protesten de kop in
Veel Britse stakers gingen winkelen
Afrikaanse juriste gaat Internationaal Strafhof leiden; profiel Fatou Bensouda
EU: nieuwe sancties Iran en plan voor olieboycot
VS en Birma nader tot elkaar

Saturday, December 17
Toch beroep Assange; WikiLeaks
Turkije maant Parijs; Armeense genocide
Tien doden bij protest in oliestad; Kazachstan
Politie kwam zo snel mogelijk naar Utøya; Noorwegen
Doden bij geweld leger en betogers; Egypte
Centrale Fukushima ‘is gestabiliseerd’
Radioactieve lading onderschept; Rusland
‘Peking probeert dissident dorp uit te hongeren’ Inwoners van Wukan omsingeld
Fotobo’s van ‘vluchten des doods’ gepubliceerd Tastbaar bewijs dat Argentijnse ...
afgelopen tien jaar is het geweld in de Russische deelrepubliek Dagestan opgelaaide
Nieuwe president verkoopt paleizen; Tunesië
Nederland maakt Polen en Roemenië woendend
Dochter van Bahreins activist vast
Held, landverrader of slachtoffer?; Reportage soldaat Bradley Manning

2012

Monday, January 2
Chinees dorpje wint strijd met lokaal bestuur
Chili wil hulp bij blussen parkbrand
‘Merkel en Sarkozy’ in ‘Dinner for One’; YouTube-hit
Sekelid geeft zich na zestien jaar aan; Japan
Volkenstrijd laait op in Zuid-Soedan
565 buitenlandse militairen gedood; Afghanistan
Geld alleen is niet genoeg voor Titanic
Zeker vijf doden bij aanslagen in oosten; Kenia
‘Sneller overdracht macht aan burgers’; Egypte
Iran zet relatie met VS op scherp
Arabische Liga: haal waarnemers terug ‘Missie geeft Syrisch regime een Arabische dekmantel’
Noodtoestand in vier provincies van Nigeria
Campagnestrategie President Sarkozy

Tuesday, January 17
‘Nieuw goud’ van Zwitserland
Premier Pakistan in lastig parket
Reconstructie waarom het cruiseschip Costa Concordia op de klippen liep
Premier Orbán nodigt zichzelf uit in het Europees Parlement
Huntsman steunt Romney ‘Campagne is ontaard in golf van persoonlijke aanvallen’
Medvedev: directe verkiezing van gouverneurs
Verkoop tanks aan Indonesië niet
Garzón vecht voor zijn toekomst als rechter
Deel Mein Kampf wordt opnieuw uitgegeven; Duitsland
Saai was het nooit met het politieke beest; Postuum Spaanse Politicus Manuel Fraga
Protestleider Wukan; China
President Nigeria doet concessie
Israël moet rekenen met aanvallen aan het cyberfront
Felle protesten in Roemenië Demonstraties tegen de bezuinigingsplannen lopen uit de hand
Lekker uitrusten, er is werk zat; Reportage Chinezen
Ingrijpen in Syrië? Wereld heeft andere prioriteiten;
Een jacht cadeau voor queen Elizabeth?
Onderzoek naar kerkdossiers over misbruik; België

**Wednesday, February 1**
Kennedy-huis op Cape Cod voor debat en onderwijs
Oud-chef van Britse MI6 aangeklaagd door Libiërs
1,35 mln condooms blijken kapot; Zuid-Afrika
Dochter Kadhafi wil informatie delen; Strafhof
Militante islamisten leggen in het zuiden van Somalï ook het Rode Kruis aan banden
Cameron heeft weinig trek in heldendaden; Groot-Brittannië
Assange vecht tegen Britse uitlevering
Obama erkent inzetten drones tegen terroristen in Pakistan
Zware druk van front bij de VN op Assad om macht af te staan;
Snel, dodelijk en amper zichtbaar; De Obama-doctrine
Parijs roept nu het hardst om strenge aanpak Syrië;
Hongkong ontsnapt aan giframp
Russische machthebbers laten bondgenoot niet zomaar vallen;

**Thursday, February 16**
Breivik geeft televisie-interview
1.500 slachtoffers in Middellandse Zee;
Canada wordt met sprongen conservatiever
Zoektocht gestaakt in Costa Concordia; Italië
Rellen na brand in gevangenis
Vijf jaar is de eis, maar Berlusconi zal niet zitten
'Flinke vooruitgang' in kernprogram Iran
Het jawoord van Sarkozy komt snel en kort
Weg open voor militaire steun, maar mogelijkheden beperkt
Save the Children: voedseltekort bedreigt half miljard kinderen
Assad belooft referendum dat niemand nog wil
In Polen zijn de immigranten juist welkom
Amerikaanse beleidsadviseur Parag Khanna leert Nederlandse diplomaten een lesje
Het carnaval van Rio is gered;
Bloggers in Moskou aangepakt

**Friday, March 2**
'Het wordt vechten tot de dood voor president Assad';
Rutte houdt Roemenië en Bulgarije buiten; schengenzone
Prins Friso overgebracht naar Londen Wellington
afgetreden Duitse president krijgt levenslang twee ton per jaar
Buitenlanders land uitgezet om opruiing; egypte
 Arrestatie minister Soedan gevraagd; strafhof
Verkiezingsstrijd zonder oppositie
Twee Amerikaanse militairen in Kandahar doodgeschoten
Homs valt, rebellen op de vlucht
Moord op rechter schokt Rio
President Wade moet naar tweede ronde; Senegal

**Saturday, March 17**
Helikopter stort neer; Afghanistan
Belgische souplisse met de harde diamant
Aartsbisschop weg; Groot-Britannië
‘kindermeisje’ Amerikaanse president plotseling beroemd
Eind aan actie in kerk; Cuba
Pyongyang wil met lanceer satelliet raket testen
Assad kreeg advies van Britse schoonvader
Woede over gemanipuleerde pro-Poetin film op televisie
Teheran hamstert op grote schaal graan, zelfs uit VS
Moordmilitair VS ‘leed aan stress’
President Cristina toont bij redes twee gezichten ... van Evita Perón
Moorden Montauban; Frankrijk

**Monday, April 2**
Suriname te klein om Bouterse en zijn aanhangers te
‘Ik at tandpasta en dronk urine’; INTERVIEW Abu Kurke Kebato
Zetel voor Aung San Suu Kyi; Verkiezingen Birma
Timboektoe veroverd; Rebellen Mali
‘Dat zigzaggen heb ik geleerd van de Nederlanders het redde mij’
30 jaar geleden viel Argentinië de Britse Falklandeilanden binnen
Loterrij boekt record; Verenigde Staten
Eerste zege voor Aung San Suu Kyi Birmese oppositieleidster
Breivik overwoog aanslag op Obama; Noorwegen
Defensie volgt Kunduz-agents niet n Volkskrant en Nieuwsuur traceren agents n
‘Dit was een echte oorlog’; INTERVIEW Falklandveteraan
Kremlin krijgt rode waas van witte linten
Golfstaten: Syrische rebellen financieren
Britse overheid wil toegang tot e-mail- verkeer van burger
Hengelaars gered; Rusland
Rebellereende Toaregs nemen Timboektoe in
Peking maakt ‘retweet’ onmogelijk
Toch kandidaat Moslimbroeders bij Egyptische presidentsverkiezingen
Ex-president dood; Mexico

**Tuesday, April 17**
De eerste dag van het proces tegen anders breivik
Eerste VN-team in Damascus om toe te zien op stak-het-vuren
Geen grauwsluier te zien op de Dag van de Zon
Uitbaar naar vrouw Romney hindert campagne Obama
De laatste Talibanhit voor 10 afghani;
Servische vlag op Bosnisch bouwproject;
Secret Service in opspraak
‘Ik kan altijd zeggen: ik ben maar Azubi’; Interview Alex Knobbe, leerling-lichttechnicus
‘Hogerhuislid zette prijs op hoofden Bush en Obama’
‘NAVO faalde bij offensief Taliban’ Afghaanse president Karzai haalt hard uit naar
bondgenoten

**Wednesday, May 2**
Klacht van Sarkozy tegen website; Geld van Kadhafi
Arabische Lente goed voor persvrijheid
Obama op bezoek in Afghanistan;
Schoolexamens steeds makkelijker; Verenigd koninkrijk
Parlementariërs gedood bij aanslag; Somalï
‘De Iraanse bunkers zijn straks niet meer te treffen’; Interview Ehud
1 mei-vieringen in Parijs
Oppakken en doden van Bin Laden inzet verkiezingsoffensief van Obama
Cubanen voorzien einde uitreisvisum;
Houwitsers staan nog in steden Syrië; Staakt-het-vuren
Ban Ki-moon prijst flexibiliteit Suu Kyi; Birma
Mexico werkt aan register voor slachtoffers drugscriminelen
Militaire junta Mali weerstaat muntende presidentiële garde
Geen immuniteit voor DSK, civiele rechtszaak gaat door
Wie rijk is in China, is zijn bezit en vrijheid niet zeker;
Bahreiner weigert nog steeds te eten
Oud-minister Livni verlaat parlement; Israël
Partijkader van ‘naakte officials’

**Thursday, May 24**
Songfestival inzet imagostrijd
Verkiezingen Egypte bieden voor ieder wat wils
In ‘luiersstaat’ van David Cameron is het gezin politiek
‘PKK valt Turkije aan vanuit Syrië’; koerden
Congolezen vluchten naar buurlanden; uittocht
Rusland test nieuwe raket: ‘antwoord op racketschild’
Met extra controles op straat wil Peking gelukzoekers
Wapenhandelsverdrag is harder nodig dan ooit, zegt Amnesty
Arts die CIA hielp krijgt 33 jaar cel VS woedend op Pakistan
Israëliër redt Turk bij Everest
Italië herdenkt anti-maffiaheld

**Friday, June 1**
President Hollande: het echte werk moet nog komen
Surinaamse minister woest over EU-verklaring
Vrouw veroordeeld tot steniging; Soedan
Burgemeester New York trekt ten strijde tegen ‘emmers’ frisdrank
Taboe voor Britten: ‘dikzak’ roepen
Seksrel rond Chinese filmster Zhang
Arrestaties in hoofdstad Tibet na actie bij tempel
Jury te verdeeld om oordeel te vellen over oud-senator
Schaakmaatjes gezocht voor Breivik; Noorwegen
Premier: geweld door salafisten aanpakken; Tunesië
Noodtoestand na decennia beëindigd; Egypte
Lijken Palestijnen
Oud-minister krijgt levenslang; Rwanda-Tribunaal
‘Bahrein wordt niet door wetten geregeerd’ ‘Iran mag hier niet de boel overnemen’;
Moslima’s en sikhs in NY winnen strijd tegen logo
Syrische troepen vallen opnieuw regio Houla aan
Jacht op pornoacteur wegens moord; Canada

Saturday, June 16
Officiële excuses voor abortus; China
Obama hengelt zelfs naar giften van drie dollar
Laatste gezochte sektelid opgepakt; Japan
Leger Jemen verdrijft Al Qaida uit bolwerk
Frankrijk wordt een tweebronnenland
Geweld bedreigt VN-missie Chef waarnemers waarschuw: ‘Het wordt te riskant in Syrië’
‘We laten ons niet langer chanteren’;
Van volksoorde is geen sprake;
Oude krachten beheersen Hof

Monday, July 2
Opstandig Damascus is strak georganiseerd
Londen zien vanuit de hoogte en in stilte
Bosbranden treffen groot natuurgebied; Valencia
Kantoor Libische kiesraad bestormd; Benghazi
Mexicaanse jeugd roert zich;
Een koppige havik vol wantrouwen; Postuum Yitzhak Shamir (1915-2012), oud-premier van Israël
Marokko weert gay-cruiseschip
Terreuraanvallen op kerken in Kenia: zeker zeventien doden
Unieke architectuur verwoest Radical moslims zien werelderfgoed in Timboektoe als ‘afgoderij’
Pestfilmpje leidt tot hetze tegen ‘lafste bitch van België’
Vijfde ambsterrmijn IJslandse president; record
Netanyahu doet beroep op Morsi; Israël
Protest tegen herstart Japanse kerncentrale

Tuesday, July 17
Lengte van de rokjes doet Kim-watchers puzzelen;
Marineschip VS schiet op Indiase vissers; Perzische Golf
Mubarak uit kliniek terug naar zijn cel; Oud-president Egypte
Roze verf voor seksistisch geteisem; Reportage Egyptische Vrouwen
Voor de tweede dag zware gevechten in Damascus
Machtsstrijd ontbrand in N-Korea
Opnieuw klimmers dood in de Alpen; Frankrijk
Polen in de rij voor het spel ‘in de rij’
Interview Jon Cruddas (50), leider van de linkervleugel in de Britse Labourpartij
Vloeistofverbod handbagage blijft; luchtvaart
VN: corruptie tiet welig in regering; Somalië
Felle bosbranden teisteren Tenerife; Spanje
Zelfverbranding schokt Israël
Gevangenen in Brazilië kunnen zich dagen eerder vrij fietsen
Preventief medicijn tegen hiv te koop; Verenigde Staten
Berlusconi gaat ook zakelijk onderuit
Minder aanvallen op koopvaarders; Piraterij
Ex-nazi opgespoord in Hongarije

**Wednesday, August 1**
Actievoerder tegen Poetin aangeklaagd; Rusland
Beleefd applaus voor Romney in bevrind Polen
Dramatische stroomuitval
Chávez’ Venezuela treedt toe tot handelsblok Mercosur
Fundamentalisten stenigen ongetrouwd stel; Mali
Spaans politicus op Cuba aangeklaagd voor dood van dissident Oswaldo Payá
Rohingya’s, de paria’s van Birma
Lekker beulen in de buitenlucht
‘Zoon van Kadhafi niet in Libië berechten’; sTRAFHOF
Branden in de stad; Rome
Ex-vrouw Dutroux mag van rechtbank eerder vrij

**Thursday, August 16**
Rome blijft thuis of neemt de lunch mee in een zakje;
Test met supersnel toestel in VS mislukt opnieuw
Goederen maffia in beslag genomen; Italië
Nare foto moet roken ontmoedigen
Australisch Lagerhuis stemt in met asielcentra op eilanden
Geen besluit over asiel Julian Assange; Ecuador
Weer rel China en Japan om eilanden
VN: Syrië pleegt oorlogsmisdaden
Camera houdt Mladic in de gaten; Tribunaal
Bebaarde Britse gentleman met veel charme en zelfspot; Profiel Mark Thompson
Rechter blokkeert bouw stuwdam; Brazilië
‘Poetin kookt innerlijk van woede’; interview Violetta Volkova, advocate van Pussy Riot
Zaak-Poch kan jaren duren Nederlands-Argentijnse piloot staat met 70 anderen terecht
Weg uit Kabul, de hond mag mee; Reportage Amerikanen vertrekken uit Afghanistan,
Tsjernobyl ‘weer veilig voor mensen’; Oekraïne
Volkse charme breekt vicepresident Biden op
Bouw vliegveld Berlijn

**Friday, August 31**
Evacuatie uit vrees voor dijkdoorbraak; Verenigde Staten
Spy-on-gedienst Zweden bezuinigt net na peperduur feest
Vijf Australische militairen dood in Afghanistan
Conflict Spanje en Marokko
Aanklacht tegen mijnwerkers luidt ‘moord’ Zuid-Afrikaanse regering gebruikt een
omstreden clausule
Buren van Rowling willen geen Potter-speeltuin
‘Leger moet geweld in Marseille stoppen’; Frankrijk
Debat in VS over Bin Ladens einde
Een fortuin armer, zonder bul
Egyptische president Morsi kiest partij tegen het Syrische regime
Nucleaire capaciteit in bunker verdubbeld; Iran
Grimmig geweld rond Pussy Riot
Wanhopig beroep kompels op Rome
‘Priesters worden vaak verleid door jongeren’;
Landelijk dorpsruzietje over Vlaamse fietstocht

Saturday, September 15
30 jaar voor El Khalifi om plannen aanslag; Rechtszaak VS
Drank met te veel alcohol verboden; Tsjechië
Iemand roept: een Amerikaan! De menigte komt achter ons aan
Acties tegen VS om film in reeks moslimlanden
Knokke-Heist strijdt tegen golfkarretjes; België
Lestoestel KLM vermist; Arizona
Rechter krijgt inzage in tweets; Twitter
VN-gezant Brahimi praat met Syrische president over crisis
Sleutelfiguur in affaire Bo Xilai voor rechter
Z-Afrika ‘tolereert illegale acties niet’
Franse telelens vangt prinses Kate topless
Ook Dutroux wil vervroegde vrijlating
Klappen bij Statengebouw Curaçao, premier ‘ontslagen’
Doema verwijdert lid Goedkov
Tokio sluit alle kerncentrales