A circulation revolution? Online newspapers and their global audience

Internationalising Media Studies: Imperatives and Impediments

Neil Thurman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>The two most prominent stories on front page of the paper</th>
<th>The two most prominent stories on the front page of the website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Nov 1999</td>
<td>Let me fight Livingstone says Dobson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Belize picks Ashcroft for summit team</td>
<td>General Pervaiz Musharraf, Pakistan's military leader, says country's economy must come before democracy</td>
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<td>8 Nov 1999</td>
<td>Brown to boost share ownership</td>
<td>Brown to boost share ownership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blair will allow me to run, says Livingstone</td>
<td>Chechnya accuses Russia of committing &quot;genocide&quot; against its people, and appeals to West to force Kremlin to halt its three-month offensive</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Nov 1999</td>
<td>Business Booms as City wins battle of euroland</td>
<td>Business Booms as City wins battle of euroland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mandelson is back on Election Duty</td>
<td>Hundreds of Boeing 767 aircraft could be flying with faulty tail bolts but company says this is not likely to pose safety threat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May, 2002: subscription charges for overseas readers introduced
October, 2004: subscription charges for overseas readers lifted
Avril Williams
Peter Bale
Stewart Kirkpatrick
Pete Clifton &
Mike Smartt
Richard Burton
Pete Picton
Tracey Corrigan
The “death of distance”

“Audiences are rapidly shifting from almost exclusively local to communities of interest that transcend geographic and political boundaries” (Pavlik, 1999).

“Distance disappears. Geography ceases to be a factor, except for language and culture” (Crosbie, 1998).

“The Web offers unique opportunities to create a new form of interactive communication within the global community” (McKinley, 2001).
“A lot of the blue-chip clients that we deal with are very focused on where their demographics are. I don’t think it is going to go down well if we tell them we’ve got two million people reading us everyday from Washington.”

Richard Burton, editor, telegraph.co.uk
[7 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman]
Source: Nielsen//Netratings (2005)
Note: The data is for April 2005 and records both home and work use.
“Long distance” market for US regional newspapers on the web = 34% of readers

Source: Chyi and Sylvie, 2001
US unique users as a percentage of total unique users

- DailyMail.co.uk
- Telegraph.co.uk
- News.bbc.co.uk
- ThisisLondon.co.uk
- Scotsman.com
- Guardian.co.uk
- Ft.com
- TimesOnline.co.uk
- TheSun.co.uk
- Independent.co.uk

Sources:
Referrers of US traffic to 10 British news Web sites* (June 2005)

* The sites were: News.bbc.co.uk, Independent.co.uk, ThisisLondon.co.uk, DailyMail.co.uk, TimesOnline.co.uk, theSun.co.uk, Telegraph.co.uk, Guardian.co.uk, Scotsman.com and FT.com.

Source: Nielsen//Netratings (2005)
“if [Drudge] ever said ‘we are only linking to newspapers that give us RSS feeds’, long term that could be a bit of a pain for us to be excluded”.

Martin King, editor, [ 16 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
Flight row eclipses Tory childcare pledge
Guardian 4 hours ago
The conservative leader, Michael Howard, today saw a key plank of his election campaign eclipsed by the ongoing row over former Tory deputy chairman Howard Flight, who was sacked for suggesting that the party intended to cut more than £35bn from public...
Howard Facing Grassroots Revolt over Flight Sacking in Scotland on Sunday
Flight stands firm as Howard tries to move on Times 0.5 hours ago

Camilla is one unpopular lady!
New Kerala 3 hours ago

Howard Facing Grassroots Revolt over Flight Sacking
By James Lyons and Gavin Gordon, PA
Michael Howard was tonight facing the threat of a revolt by Tory grassroots members over the sacking of deputy party chairman Howard Flight.
December 12, 2004. Google News’ outbound links to UK new sites
“In the *Google News* service . . . if a story is fresh and has caused considerable original reporting to be generated it is considered important”.

Krishna Bharat, *Google News*
“You sometimes get very strange things where the *Kansas Evening Gazette* will give you an update on the Northern Ireland peace process today simply because it published three minutes ago.”

Richard Deverell, *BBC News Interactive*

[ 3 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
Video: The University for business and the professions

Camilla is one unpopular lady!

[World News] London, Mar 28: Ever since Prince Charles’ engagement with Camilla Parker Bowles, there has been a lot of conflict over various issues ranging from the legality of the marriage to the Queen’s refusal to attend the ceremony. And now, a poll by the Daily Mail has confirmed that most Britons don’t approve of the Prince’s fiancee.

Sixty-five per cent of people in Britain believe the marriage will weaken the monarchy. While opposition to Camilla becoming Queen remains consistently strong, with 73 per cent believing she should never take the title.

Blow to Howard

Independent - 29

Michael Howard failed in his attempt to end the turmoil in the Conservative Party over his decision to sack Howard Flight as a Tory MP.

Tories would strand low paid, says Labour

Guardian

Howard faces backlash over flight’s sacking

Telegraph.co.uk

Financial Times - Scotland on Sunday - Reuters.uk - BBC News - all 443 related »

Prince Charles must atone for past sins: bishop

CTV - 59 minutes ago

Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles path to matrimonial bliss has stumbled over another yet obstacle. This time, a prominent Anglican Bishop has called on the couple to apologize for their past indiscretions.

Camilla is one unpopular lady! New Kerala

Royal couple ‘must apologise for adultery before receiving…’ Guardian

The Sun - Philadelphia Daily News - Ekklesia - Scotsman - all 431 related »

British surfer fights off great white shark

Independent - 22 minutes ago
“You see a lot more diversity in the news coverage on our site than on others. I think the diversity is a mirror to the diversity of opinion there is worldwide”.

Krishna Bharat, Google News

Source: Online Journalism Review
“The Guardian has seventy per cent of their audience overseas. You can’t commercialise that, you simply can’t. You are just paying an awful lot of server costs to serve those people”.

“I’d much rather have a 100% UK audience”.

Avril Williams, [ 22 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
Number of unique US users of four British news Web sites May 2004-May 2005

Subscription for overseas readers lifted

Source: Nielsen//Netratings (2005)
“Whiskey brands are trying to push hard in the States and it doesn’t hurt us that we have a very strong Scottish identity. For some people in the United States this matters and we are trying to do business with them”.

2005 - launched premium services which will “certainly have any eye to the US market”.

Stewart Kirkpatrick, editor, scotsman.com
[ 20 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
I think you’ll see the emergence of brands, many British, on a global stage. They will include video, text, pictures, user generated content. Some of those brands might have previously been British newspapers, some news agencies, some broadcasters. I believe the Guardian might be one of those brands”.

Simon Waldman, *Guardian Unlimited*
[August 2006, interview with Neil Thurman]
“It is my view that you should expand the brand globally.”

“The Times and The Guardian are launching US editions, and I think that’s a very sensible thing to do, and I think we should be looking at this.

Pete Picton, editor, [ August 2006, interview with Neil Thurman ]
"With our breaking news it seems to have recently developed slightly more of a global feel. I don’t think it is intentional it is just that we are not afraid to look at stories from abroad because we know the readership is there whereas the paper is probably thinking more of the UK."

Pete Picton, editor, [ 10 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]