ONLINE NEWS, ONLINE JOURNALISM, ONLINE DEBATE?

A feature analysis of popular Dutch online news media

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1. INTRODUCTION

The internet and the recent technological developments in software, user-friendly web applications, communication and film equipment enable today's non-professional citizens to do the work of a reporter, editor, movie director, photographer or author. The internet has gradually turned users or consumers into prosumers.[1] This means that their role has been blurred with the role of professionals or producers; consumers now increasingly take part in the creation of publicly available (media) products. Citizen journalism is part of the latest generation of internet content: user-generated content; that is responsible for major changes in the media landscape. From day to day many people in modern societies use the web to publish their own material, to name a few: text via Blogger, photos via Flickr, videos via YouTube, news via Digg, information via Wiki, whereabouts via Twitter[2]. Opinion, discussion and comments are no longer exclusive to forums and newsgroups; they are now ubiquitous on the Web and even coveted by mainstream online newspapers. These publication outlets that work with user-generated content are contrary to institutionalized media where no one but trained and paid professionals produce this content. This can be seen as a wonderful development: it is about sharing, about creativity, about participation, about community, about democracy. But it has also brought along many uncertainties.

Mainstream media have always worked with professionals and were accustomed to selling their products within the market. Then came the arrival of all these new free online services, created by their audiences. Whether this is a good thing or not is debateable, but user-generated content is here to stay. "It is a sign of the times", says Sp!ts[3] editor-in-chief Bart Brouwers (2006) on De Nieuwe Reporter. Figures show that the audiences of news papers and other traditional media[4] are fading and gradually turning to the Internet for news and entertainment.[5] Does this mean mainstream media professionals should fear that their jobs will be taken over by amateurs? At the very least they need to figure out how to involve the public in their news reporting. Today's media landscape is undergoing a transformation and the air is full of tension and questions concerning the future of the practices and processes within the field of media production and consumption.

1.1 Today's news

[1] Introduced in the book *The Third Wave* (1980) by futurologist Toffler.
[2] See http://www.blogger.com, http://www.flickr.com, http://www.youtube.com, http://www.digg.com, http://www.wikipedia.org, http://www.twitter.com.
[3] Sp!ts is one of the four freely available national news papers in the Netherlands.
[4] In 2006 one in four people aged 16-24 does not view any BBC content. BBC director Mark Thompson foresees a big shock for the medium television. "[…] the foundations of traditional media will be swept away". Sherwin, Adam. Times Online. 26-4-2006. http://business.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,9071-2151851,00.html
[5] PEW Internet (2006) research shows that in December 2005 for a 40% of all broadband users the Internet is their primary source of news.

Presently, spring 2007, the transformation of the international media landscape is taking place online as well as offline. News is probably the field that suffers most from the tensions generated by this process. The concept of news still seems to belong to conventional mass media, and the journalists working in this field already face certain pressures. They feel the pressure of profit-making on their shoulders, while their original task is keeping people informed in order to maintain a democratic society. As Henk Blanken (2007a), a Dutch journalist, author and media researcher explains: 'For journalists, mass media are a natural surrounding; the vehicle for the press that is, if all is well, free and independent. Democracy, mass media and free press did not arise more or less at the same time by accident'.[6] But the traditional mass media are losing their masses.[7] Why buy a morning newspaper or watch a weekly TV show if you can do the same thing online, at any time you like?

> 'Every modern consumer is witnessing the consolidation of power in mass media. An increasingly smaller number of publishers and 'anchormen' have their powerful say in what their employees produce and how this content is distributed, and who pays for it. They are commercial, they originally served a political aim and they are restrained by no one' (Blanken 2007a).

But now more than ever, journalists' conservative methods of production are challenged by an increasing number of progressive media types such as alternative news sites, blogs and 'social' news sites. These websites offer citizens' reporting, live streaming video, up-to-the-minute reporting, and comment or discussion opportunities. They also do fact-checking and put new topics on the agenda. Journalists are prone to emphasize the importance of their work for a healthy democracy. Only well-informed people would be able to make responsible decisions.

But when it comes to being well-informed we must never ignore the fact that information, including the news, is always presented to us trough a framework; a lens; a discourse. Journalistic items bring along questions like: who is speaking here? And sometimes even more important: who is not speaking? A European country, a state in the Middle-East and an American state will never report a news item in exactly the same way. Whenever you watch news broadcasts, it is difficult to tell who succeeds most in approaching the truth. Who has got it right? Who are they and where am I?

Because of the speedy developments in new media, almost anyone sitting behind a computer with an internet connection is able to access news that is created from other perspectives than those of the mainstream media. News channels and papers have most of their

[6] All quotes from Henk Blanken are translated from Dutch by the author.
[7] See for example: Bakker, Piet. 18 January 2007. Oplagecijfers - goed nieuws of gegoochel? *De nieuwe reporter.* http://www.denieuwereporter.nl/?p=747.

content in word and image online, on their own websites. They increasingly incorporate contributions from citizen reporters or photographers[8]. Alternative media bring news that has been ignored or underexplored by the mass media, or was presented in a one-sided manner. There is a vast amount of information freely available and everyone is able to benefit from it. But this makes for one major problem: quantity. All the information that a citizen could want to inform himself on any topic is to be found on the Web. The problem is that this requires work: searching, reading, selecting, evaluating. A lot of news that is offered on the Internet, at first seems comparable to a ready-made microwave meal. It is prepared and eaten quickly, but it does not contain enough vitamins and fibres, and its taste is artificially improved.

But is that a correct assumption? Through this study we will come a small step closer towards finding out how news is offered. Still, to extend the metaphor: the common user might instead lack the time and knowledge to find all the necessary ingredients to cook himself a complete dinner. The amount of perspectives, frames, discourses and points-of-view on the Web is huge. The web is full of facts and opinions, useless and useful, to different individuals.

1.2 Today's journalism

Citizen journalism has been acknowledged as a worthy addition to the news media, especially on a local scale. The contributions of citizens are generally known for being less balanced than the 'regular' news. Quite a few times confronting and controversial photos or video images from Iraq have attracted the attention of the international community, and became the talk of the day, week or month. The execution of Saddam Hussein was one of the most striking examples. There was an authorized video made of the hanging of the former leader of Iraq, and it was broadcasted worldwide. Then another video appeared on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com). It was unofficially filmed with a mobile phone by one of the security guards. This video not only showed clearer images, it also carried the sound of the last words that Saddam spoke and the officials in the room taunting him till the end. On the tasks of journalists of our time I will refer once more to Henk Blanken, who proposes:

> *'Journalists are supposed to add meaning to this mudslide of excesses. Why are people dealing this way with each other and with images? What does it mean for the stability of Iraq and for the war that security men are able to dance around the body of Saddam? Which truth may develop as the sum of several incoherent facts? And how real is this authentic video material?'* (Blanken 2007b).

[8] BBC will pay for citizen journalism. 17 November 2006. *Editor's weblog.* http://www.editorsweblog.org/news/2006/11/bbc_will_pay_for_citizen_journalism.php

Authors like Bardoel and Deuze (2001), Dahlgren (1996), Couldry (2003) and Tumber (2001) have been pointing out for years that the functions of journalism and the role of the journalist are changing. The era of presenting news as information without context is over, not only because the seriousness of events requires this, but also because the public is asking for it, and because the Web can easily provide the needed technological circumstances. American media expert Jeff Jarvis said on his weblog Buzzmachine (http://www.buzzmachine.com) that the new task of journalists should be giving the audience directions and teach them what they had to learn themselves: 'that sometimes "the facts" outpace the truth' (Jarvis 2006). The help of journalists seems essential here; they are the professionals who can get a grip on the unstoppable information flow and make a trustworthy and reliable story out of it. It must be considered a step in the right direction if even an 'old media' tycoon like former Reuters' editor-in-chief Geert Linnebak is ready for some change. On the changing role of media professionals he has said:

> '*Now everyone can be a reporter, commentator or a film director — the days of owning and controlling these processes are over. But there are downsides to user-generated content in a news world. To remain relevant, the role of editors has to change from someone who uses a megaphone to someone that brings people to the table' (*Press Gazette, 25-3-2007).

Is this indeed how the role of the journalist is changing? This thesis will focus on the tasks of journalism identified in the literature, and relates them to today's online news. Does Dutch online news reflect the aims and standards of journalism?

1.3 Research questions

Given quickly evolving internet culture in which we live, online news is on its way to becoming the main media genre that citizens of Western societies use to be informed about national and international affairs, along with many other areas of interest[9]. Considering that the Internet offers opportunities to be newspaper, radio and television all in one, this is a major change. One reason for research in this field is to find out how exactly citizens are informed when they consult online news, and then how the public debate is affected by this. This thesis will focus on the role of journalism in today's online news media. The central question here is:

[9] NU.nl announces that since 2004 Dutch news websites saw their visitor's numbers double. Nieuwssites zien bezoekersaantal verdubbelen. 28 November 2006. *NU.nl.* http://www.nu.nl/news/901000/50/rss/Nieuwssites_zien_bezoekersaantal_verdubbelen.html

In order to facilitate public debate, how do online news media utilize journalism and new media characteristics to inform citizens?

The initial focus will be on how journalism is defined by the literature and how it is said to help in maintaining a healthy democracy. Then an overview is provided of the different types of journalism that we may encounter when studying online news media. A case study among eleven popular Dutch news sources in different genres will answer the following questions in further detail:

What publication types exist on the Web when it comes to news facilitation within the Netherlands and how should we categorize them? What specific characteristics and functions do they have?

A genre categorization will help us to identify different types of news sources, based on (journalism or Web) characteristics and functions. Their origins may offer an explanation for their differences: some were put up as an extension of a traditional medium, others were user initiatives, and still others have sprouted as web-based news sources.

What do the most popular Dutch online news media offer to users when it comes to interactivity, multimediality and hypertextuality?

When it comes to the original task of journalism: informing citizens, these major new media characteristics play an important role. How they are operated determines to a great extent the presentation of the news, interaction with the audience, and final journalistic product.

Which types of online journalism do the most popular Dutch news sources use?

In the next chapter an overview of types of online journalism will be briefly mentioned. In order to map the current online news situation, it is useful to indicate which journalistic type every news source uses or approaches.

To what extent are the online news sources able to fulfil the journalistic role of informing citizens?

In other words: are the classical aims and standards of journalism practiced? We may have to consider (some) online news sources as complementary sources; altogether they do fulfil this role but not independently. Or perhaps another role has taken over the classical task of informing citizens?

The case study that I chose for studying the Netherlands' most popular online news sources deals with the news events of 1) Saddam Hussein's execution and 2) the appearance of the unofficial video of this execution. For more about this case study, see chapter 3. These two events were studied in a variety of Dutch online newspapers, news channels, news blogs, alternative media and social news sites. Sorting through all of these media, it shows that professional journalists as well as citizens are responsible for a vast amount of heterogeneous news content on different formats, serving different goals. A qualitative analysis will clarify how Dutch online news media make use of technological features that add up to interactivity, multimediality and hypertextuality, and what journalistic aspects are applied or abandoned.

The central aim of this study is to map the field of online news as it exists in the Netherlands, and the relationships between journalistic and technical production of news and public debate. Or on another level: between media professionals and citizens with online news content as the medium.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As the main task of journalism is informing citizens, this study is about how citizens are informed via the latest forms of news facilitation on the Web. The first step is to know how journalism is defined, and how its' role of informing citizens may help maintain democracy, which is what I set out to do in this chapter. Furthermore this chapter deals with the different types of journalism that the literature mentions, which are likely to be encountered during the case study. Last, this chapter provides a historical view on the changing nature of journalism and the current functions and practices of online journalism are discussed.

To understand the changing nature of journalism in the new media era, it is useful to first grasp the most essential historical concepts on communication (by James Carey) and journalism (by Walter Lippman and John Dewey) in relation to culture and society, as they are informative on the role of journalism in society.

2.1 Classical conceptions of communication and journalism

The two conceptions of communication that James Carey (1989) presented are best summarized as that of communication as transmission and of communication as a ritual. In Western societies, communication used to be mainly considered information transmission. 'It was viewed as a process and a technology that would sometimes for religious purposes, spread, transmit, and disseminate knowledge, ideas and information farther and faster with the goal of controlling space and people.' Later on the concept of communication as a ritual became more important than it had ever been, although it is by far the oldest. This view is based on similarities, repeating, sharing information and above all confirmation. In this view communication creates (a sense of) community. Reading a newspaper provides brilliant examples here: this is a repeated action, it confirms our world view, it is done by millions of people in the world, newspapers provide readers with subjects for discussion and sharing information, and in doing all this they create a community amongst their readers. Also new media have adopted the conception of communication creating community, as we see for example with online social networks such as Hyves (http://www.hyves.nl) and specialized news sites with highly active user communities such as Slashdot (http://www.slashdot.com).

When we look at media production, there is an important intersection related to both of these views. Walter Lippman (1922) largely represented the transmission view including the idea that thought and action should be left to experts and elites. Journalists were there to get information from them and transmit this to the public in such a way that they could understand it. Corporate mass media can be viewed as the ever dominating result of these views. In response

John Dewey wrote *The public and its problems* (1927), a book that heavily contested them. It reflected more of the ritual view of communication. 'Communication can alone create a great community' (Dewey 1927: 144). Dewey emphasized the binding forces of communication: 'Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communications is the way in which they come to possess things in common.' (Dewey 1916: 5-6). For politics, knowledge about the society is needed, and this can only come from citizens. Therefore interaction amongst elites, experts and citizens takes place with journalists as mediators and facilitators. According to Dewey the focus of journalism should not be on actions or happenings but on choices, consequences and conditions. Journalism should not create news as a static product that informs about things that already happened, but as knowledge in a constant state of evolution created by and for the community. Not surprisingly, Dewey's ideas are the basis of public journalism. Furthermore, web initiatives based on participatory journalism, where the audience effectively takes over the role of the journalist, such as Indymedia (http://www.indymedia.org) have sprouted from this conception.[10]

So both these views have been of great influence on the media landscape, and they still are today. While both views exist correspondingly, we can see that for many decades, traditional mass media to a large extent have remained true to Lippman's ideas. But how are online news media dealing with these conceptions? By asking ourselves how Carey's, Dewey's and Lippman's views are reflected in today's online news, we can learn more about the relationships between information, community, authors, and the public.

2.2 What is journalism and what does a journalist do?

Dasselaar (2006: 42) comes to the conclusion that there is no empirical definition of journalism as far as it concerns the activities of a journalist, however among journalists it is usually defined as "that what journalists do". This is in the first place because there is no agreement upon matters as: who is a journalist and who is not? Second, as Van Eijk (in Dasselaar 2006: 42) notes, the field of journalism is not excessively burdened by definitions of what it is or what it should be about. Using studies of Kovach and Rosenstiel, Deuze, Weaver, Dasselaar (2006: 46) arrives at the following definition: "Journalism is truth seeking storytelling aimed at citizens, which is editorially independent". This is not much different from Dahlgren's (2001: 78) definition of classical journalism as "the stories that tell accurately and impartially about reality that exists independently from these stories, and outside of the journalistic institutions". A study by Weaver and Cleveland (1993: 12-13) points out some specific functions for classical journalism (although they were not all

[10] In the literature on public/civic journalism the debate between Dewey and Lippman is extensively covered. Most of this text is based on Drok, Nico. Civiele journalistiek. In: Bardoel et al. 2002. *Journalistieke cultuur in Nederland*. Amsterdam University Press. 373-389.

considered equally important by journalists themselves): getting information to the public quickly, investigating government claims, being an adversary of government and/or business, analysing complex problems, providing entertainment.

Kovach and Rosenstiel conducted research by interviewing hundreds of U.S. journalists and concluded that:

> *'The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth. Journalism's first loyalty is to citizens. The essence of journalism is a discipline of verification. Journalists must maintain an independence from those they cover. Journalists must serve as independent monitors of power. Journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and comment. Journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant. And journalists should keep the news in proportion and make it comprehensive.'* (Kovach et al. 2001, 17.)

Neuberger (2006) points out three roles for the journalist. The first would be that of a mediator: the working methods of a journalist focus on mediating information according to the agreed professional norms, which make them a guarantee for quality. From this has also sprung the definition of journalist as a profession. Second, journalism is a social system that fulfils a function in society and contributes to other subsystems such as politics and economy. The third function comes from Jürgen Habermas who emphasizes the input of relevant issues, information and interpretation in order to fulfil the requirements of the political public sphere.

This last function also points at the importance of journalism for the public debate, which was often emphasized as an indirect but key aspect to maintaining democracy. This is in opposition to journalism as a direct influence. The next chapter deals with the relationship between media and public debate in more detail. According to Gans' 'Journalistic theory of democracy' journalism is needed to make informed citizens, who are able to participate politically in order to maintain a healthy democratic nation (Gans 1998: 6-12). But this theory does not fully succeed in explaining the importance of journalism for democracy: it does not tell how citizens should be informed or what kind of news may be offered. This leaves us with the question: In what way does journalism make well informed citizens? Second, it is still unknown to what extent being an informed citizen makes people perform democratic responsibilities. And the people who are politically active, is that because their being well-informed or due to, for example, their socio-economic position or level of education? (Neuberger 2006). So, we must continue to view the role of journalism in the public debate which provides a way in which citizens can relate to politics in everyday life. This is what a functioning democracy needs besides elections (Benhabib in Dahlgren 2001: 64); a public culture. The public debate is part of a public culture, which consists of

shared values and everyday practices that unite the members of a democracy (Dahlgren 2001: 64).

2.3 Media and the public debate

A term linked to the public debate is the "arena" where it takes place: the public sphere. This term was introduced by Habermas in *The structural transformation of the public sphere* (1962/1989), as a non-physical space in 18th and 19th century Europe where the people were able to discuss public matters. Citizens that normally did not have any input in the governing powers were able to join the public debate that took place in salons and coffee houses, but also via newspapers and other print media. Authors like Dahlgren underscore the key position of media for the maintaining as well as the transformation of democracy; making society, politics and every other aspect of everyday life visible and recognisable. 'Their role in providing information, analysis, forums for debate and a shared civic culture is beyond dispute' (Dahlgren 2001: 64-65).

There are three essential factors to the original public sphere: 1) It comes into existence through discussion, either or not in mediated form; 2) It offers the opportunity to participate in this discussion for those who where excluded before; 3) Any idea that entered the public sphere was considered on the basis of its potential value and not because of the social status of the speaker (Poor 2005). This concept is still in use but the public sphere has changed heavily meanwhile, particularly due to technological change that facilitated easy worldwide communication, global networks and online publication. These developments have lead to the claim that the public sphere is no longer attached to a particular place or territory: 'Members of a particular organic community or a nation are no longer tied to a given territory to meet each other and build collectivities' (Van Dijk in: Broeder 2005). However when it comes to the public sphere, the task of the media is to provide information, analysis and facilitate debate and opinion sharing for all members of society. On the Internet, this is now done through an increasing variety of formats and genres. Although technology, knowledge and finances still make for obstacles in many countries, you can access the Web without having to depend on social status, network or far-reaching technological knowledge or skills. To a greater degree than the 'old' media like television, radio, newspapers and magazines do, the Web offers citizens opportunities to self-publish, and to share opinions and comments. This more open, interactive and democratic nature makes the Web an excellent arena for a public debate to take place.

But even before the Internet became part of our media landscape, there were some snakes in the grass. The public sphere does not necessarily function as a place for transparent, democratic, and conscious debate. Habermas did realize the public sphere was not a fixed phenomenon but was altered by cultural processes such as the increasing complexity and rationalization of societies and the growth of the mass media (Downey and Fenton 2003: 186).

And ‘the public sphere becomes the court before which public prestige can be displayed – rather than in which critical debate is carried on’ (Habermas in Downey and Fenton 2003: 186). Bardoel also points out that notions of commodification and commercialisation in mass media may stand in the way (Bardoel 2002: 501).

Research into the relationship between the Internet and the different aspects of the public sphere by Dahlberg (2001); Palczewski (2001); Papacharissi (2002); Poster (1999) and Poor (2005) has shown us that there are different forms of this public sphere. Poor (2005) argues that it can be claimed that the Internet is able to bring a public sphere into existence or contribute to it, but this would not happen automatically. According to Bardoel (2002: 509) the increasing individualization and fragmentation of audiences are reasons not to take things like community and public debate for granted. Also Broeder (2005) argues the public sphere will exist solely as a […] segmented, pluralist model: Something like a "complex mosaic of differently sized overlapping and interconnected public spheres" (Keane in: Broeder 2005). What binds people in this contemporary public sphere is a "diversified and shifting complex of overlapping similarities and differences". But Fisher et al and Dahlgren (2001: 75) point to the idea that like-minded people connect with each other and that this fosters the emergence of mini-public spheres that do not necessarily connect with conversations and discussions on a broader scale (Fisher et al in: Dahlgren 2001: 76).

Sunstein (2001) comes with some critical as well as promising results. First of all, the internet has provoked large numbers of radical websites and discussion groups that could encourage the public to bypass their moderate and possibly more balanced opinions. As a consequence we witness group polarization (Sunstein in: Downing and Fenton 2003: 189). To create more balanced opinions, a solution would be to expose people to news or information they would not have chosen in advance. This would result in ‘a reconsideration of issues and often recognition of the partial validity of opposing points of view’. Also when people share common experiences, these may act as ‘social glue’ and make people understand certain issues better (Sunstein in: Downey and Fenton 2003: 189). In the past, mass media have created many of these shared experiences, sometimes referred to as media events. However, the media landscape has become fragmented with the amount of media channels multiplied, and the audiences of film and television slimming down over the last decades, these media events may lose most of their power.

So, on the one hand group polarization may be a threat to democracy, on the other hand ‘[it] helped fuel many movements of great value – including, for example, the civil rights movement, the antislavery movement, and the movement for gender equality (Sunstein in: Downing and Fenton 2003: 190). For example, the Internet now functions as an organizational tool for what has been described as the ‘global social justice’ movement, demanding more democracy and an equal spread of (political) power (Castells 2001, Leon et al 2001 in: Morris 2003). Castells (2004: 154) also stresses once more that the Internet is the only medium through which interaction and debate take place in an autonomous, electronic forum, bypassing the control of the media. Not depending

on the established political structures, citizens are creating a flexible, adaptable political field. This brings the focus to the current discussion on the "neutrality" of the Internet. Currently, the Internet is full democratic initiatives with many co-creation models such as Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org), but in an interview on the weblog Sargasso (http://www.sargasso.nl) professor of Journalism and New Media Mark Deuze warns: 'As soon as it becomes divided into different sections controlled by corporations, our last potentially democratic medium on this planet has been lost' (Deuze 2006).

2.4 Types of journalism

The literature uses terms such as participatory journalism, online journalism, traditional journalism, service journalism, public journalism, citizen journalism, dialogical journalism. Some of these terms we have known for decades, some are very recent. With help of the literature I will explain the types that may be encountered when studying online news sources. The main strands of journalism set out here are traditional, online, public and participatory journalism. Online journalism is divided into several subtypes that are primarily defined by their level of editorial control and audience participation.

Traditional journalism is journalism before we started to question it. There was the profession of a journalist, there was news that had to be communicated to the public and the journalist was the one who carried out this task of 'storytelling'. At the beginning of this chapter I gave an overview of its functions and standards. Despite these characteristics, which help to maintain a healthy democracy, traditional journalism is a product of industrial society with its centralised, hierarchical and paternalistic characteristics (Heinonen in: Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 97). Mainstream media attempted to translate their practice of traditional journalism to the web, but cyberspace has demanded a type of journalism that is more suitable to its technological possibilities and networked structure. Dahlgren (Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 93) argued that cyberspace would have a strong impact on how journalism gets done and possibly on how we define it as well.

Mark Deuze speaks of *online journalism* as the fourth kind of journalism, after print, radio and tv: a type of journalism that indeed differs in its characteristics from traditional types of journalism (Deuze 2001a). According to the literature the essential characteristics of online journalism are interactivity, customisation of content, hypertextuality and convergence or rather: multimediality (see for example Singer 1998; Deuze 1999, Deuze 2001a). Deuze explains:

> *'The online journalist has to make decisions on which media formats best tell a certain story (multimediality), has to allow room for options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories (interactivity) and must consider ways to connect the*

> *story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks (hypertextuality). This is the 'ideal-typical' form of online journalism, as professed by an increasing number of professionals and academics worldwide (…).'* (Deuze 2001a).

According to Bardoel (1998) due to the convergence and the unity of production, content and distribution within each separate medium will cease to exist, and a specialisation of information services is at hand. Bardoel and Deuze (2001) then argue that produced news content can be published through a variety of communication channels, which means that journalistic production of news is not directly linked to specific media types, genres or ways of distribution (Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 93-94). How online news facilitation is subject to these characteristics will be demonstrated by the case study in the next chapter.

In redefining online journalism, which can be divided into different types again, Bardoel and Deuze (2001) have come up with *network journalism*. This has everything to do with convergence that online content is subject to. Convergence takes place on the levels of technology, profession and culture (Jenkins 2001: 93) and together they make this socially constructed form of journalism, because technology is not the only determining factor in defining what the recent changes in journalism mean (Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 95).

When it comes to journalism on the Web, Deuze (2003: 217) sets out four different types. *Orientating* and *instrumental journalism* focus most on editorial content, while *monitoring* (introduced by Schudson 1999) and *dialogical journalism* (introduced by Martikainen 2000) are more closely connected with the public. Bardoel (1996 in: Deuze 2003: 217) describes orientating journalism as providing a general public with general orientation (background, commentary, explanation). And instrumental journalism offers functional, specialized information to interested audiences or customers. According to Broeder (2005) this could be an answer to the increasing individualization and segmentation in communication. Monitoring journalism is described as what takes place on news sites 'where online editors and reporters answer the demands of their publics by posting stories, backgrounds and annotated links in a FAQ-capacity' (Deuze 2003: 219). To define dialogical journalism he uses the word prosumers, pointing out that no strict division remains between producers and consumers of news. So it is a more radical and democratic type of journalism, that approaches the ideal, described by James Carey (1989), of professionally amplifying the conversation of society and its citizens (Deuze 2003: 219).

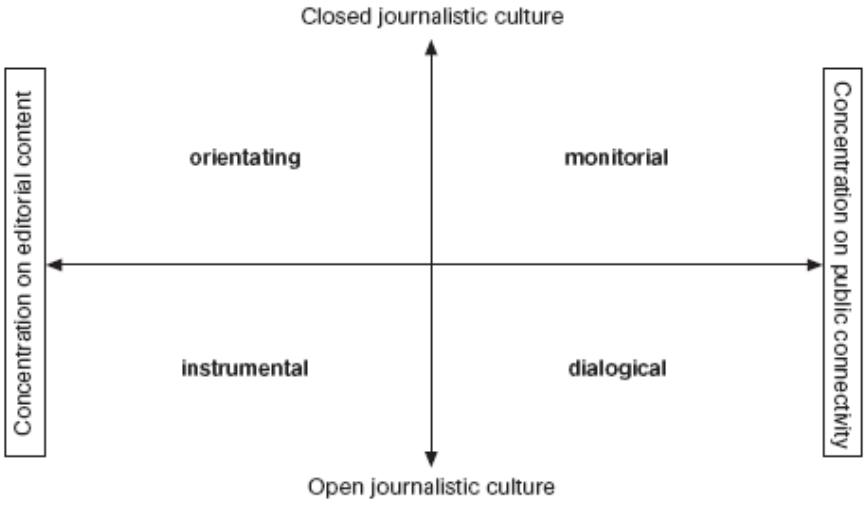

Figure 1. Deuze, M. 2003. The web and its journalisms. *New Media and Society* 5 (2), 218.

When put into a cross scheme it shows that orientating and instrumental journalism are of a relatively closed structure; where content is filtered, selected and edited along the needs of reporters and editors aiming for an "invisible" public (see figure 1). The other two are categorized as types of journalism which serve a more open journalistic culture; one that is interactive, responsive and accountable (Deuze 2003: 218).

Yet another strand of journalism, *public journalism*, may better be known as the civic journalism movement. It attempts to engage the public or the community and treats them as participants rather than spectators. The Pew Centre for Civic Journalism (http://www.pewcenter.org/) defines it as a journalism that has 'an obligation to public life that goes beyond just telling the news or unloading lots of facts'. This type of journalism was first practiced by traditional media; since the early nineties they sought to involve their publics through focus groups, opinion polls and reaction on news stories. Online news publishers have taken over these elements of interactivity and this type of journalism has become an essential part of online news.

According to Bowman and Willis, public journalism only enables participation of the audience up to a certain level: it is still the news organization that sets the agenda, chooses the participants and moderates the conversation. The common desire for dialogue and conversation could only be fully fulfilled by a form of journalism where no central news organization would control the flow of information: participatory journalism (Bowman and Willis 2003: 9). Participatory and *citizen journalism* share the same roots; namely media types that are mentioned as citizens' media or alternative media, radical media, grassroots media or community media. Generally, citizen

journalism and citizens' media are the media produced outside mainstream media institutions and networks that directly oppose their conventions and representations (Atton and Meikle 2005).

In their book *We Media: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information* (2003), Bowman and Willis define participatory journalism as:

> *'The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires'* (Bowman and Willis 2003: 9).

Futurist and author Watts Wacker explains the rise of participatory journalism as follows: 'the world is moving faster than people can keep up with, there are fewer common cultural references that can be agreed upon. To combat the confusion, consumers are seeking more perspectives' (Bowman and Willis 2003: 7). For instance they read amateur reviews in order to make a balanced decision when purchasing luxury goods. 'Does this also account for news?' do Bowman and Willis ask. They argue that early adopters such as the Korean website Ohmynews.com (http://www.ohmynews.com) give us insight in how news could be produced, published and used in the future. This collaborative online newspaper attracts over 2 million readers a day who 'can not only pick and choose the news they want to read - they also write it' (Bowman and Willis 2003: 7). Ohmynews.com has over 26.000 registered citizen journalists.

Critics have claimed that thanks to the Internet, where everyone could be a journalist, de-professionalisation might be at hand (Porteman, 1999: 15). Some argue that professionally trained journalists are needed to moderate, mediate or facilitate the conversation (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001: 24). But is this really so? The blogosphere has become an arena for dialogue and conversation on a variety of (news) topics where professional journalists or news organizations do not interfere. Forums and online communities seem to function effectively in the same way. At any rate, questions have been raised about the need for and the tasks of trained journalists.

2.5 The changing nature of journalism

Kovach and Rosenstiel state that:

> *'Each time there has been a period of significant, social, economic and technological change, a transformation in news occurred. This happened in the 1830s-40s with the advent of the telegraph; the 1880s with a drop in paper prices and wave of immigration; with radio and the rise of gossip and celebrity culture in the 1920s and in*

the 1950 at the onset of the Cold War and television' (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001, in: Bowman and Willis 2003: 11).

The latest changes in news were induced by broadband internet and mobile technologies. And at the moment two major news trends are at hand, that both may cause more dramatic changes than the past developments have. Firstly, the Internet and the increased usability of websites and applications now cater to the option for all online users to publish. Simply said: 'everyone can be a journalist'. Second, news is now increasingly produced by companies outside journalism, from an economical, profit-driven perspective. So we must consider the possibility of 'independent news being replaced by self-interested commercialism posing as news' (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001: 13). So with these two given aspects of the news situation, the future for journalism seems unclear. What will be its new tasks, functions and responsibilities? When concentrating on online types of journalism and its services for the public sphere, we can outline some trends.

First of all, the journalist's task as intermediate between the citizens' world and the outside world has become less important (See also Singer 1998, Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 96). These worlds are not separated anymore, as firstly journalists have tried to approach citizens by practicing public or civic journalism, and later on many citizens started to join the club of journalists by actively participating in news creation and publishing. Less than a decade ago, the journalist was still to decide what information could "go through the gate": he had the control over what content, coming from newswires and reporters, would be published. The medium brought the journalist to this privileged position, and now it is again the medium, the Internet, that might remove them from that position (Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 96). With the use of the Internet, the flow of information has grown enormously: desk research and finding news topics has become easier. Due to this development, also the public has changed; the homogenous collective has been replaced by heterogeneous citizens with their very own interests, participation levels, consumer behaviour and the like. Serving this 'multi-faced, fragmented public, for whom the news "product" is no longer sacred' is one of the main challenges for journalists (Bardoel en Deuze 2001: 97). Add to this the competition among publication outlets that has increased over the last decades which is one of the reasons why news became more sensational, emotional and polarized. These have become a success formula for appealing to a relatively large audience. Many have argued that journalism faces a paradigm shift, one that is very necessary for journalism to maintain its much-loved position and continue to be a stable pillar for democracy and the public sphere, instead of getting swept aside by amateurs-who-know-it-better and profit-driven media conglomerates.

Steve Yelvington, editor of Startribune.com, indicated back in 1999 that the journalist would no longer be a gatekeeper. He spoke of a new role as a 'trusted guide' (Yelvington in: Tumber 2001: 108). Aufderheide (1998) also emphasizes that journalists should consider themselves as

those who can enable responsible public debate, instead of as the gatekeepers of public knowledge. He sees journalists more as 'the people who help us make the connections between pieces of information that we are too busy or harried or ignorant to make for ourselves' (Aufderheide in Tumber 2001: 108-109). Gatekeeping was defined by McQuail (1994) as 'the process by which selections are made in media work, especially decisions whether or not to admit a particular new story to pass through the "gates" of a news medium into the news channels' (McQuail in: Bruns 2003: 31). He also notes that the concept is limited as it implies that news arrives in a ready-made, unproblematic event-story form.

> *'The gatekeeping framework is largely based on the assumption … that there is a given, finite, knowable reality of events in the real world, from which it is the task of the media to select according to appropriate criteria of representativeness or relevance'* (McQuail in: Bruns 2003: 31).

Bruns (2003) also mentions the problem of 'hard news'. Hard news is believed to be the common core of news items that should be of interest to everyone. But instead of that there is an abundance of news categories in online media as well as offline: politics, science, human interest, sports, economics, culture and many other niche categories for more specific audiences. This leads to a multitude of "gates" for the news to enter, and criteria for evaluating newsworthiness, and special news outlets with their own form of news reporting, policing their own gates. Thus, gatekeeping may no longer be the most appropriate activity regarding newsgathering; a suitable but perhaps temporarily alternative is gatewatching (Bruns 2003: 34). This shift has made us move away from a mass media 'information-push' news model to an individualised 'information-pull' approach. Gatewatchers point out those gates to their readers which are most likely to open into useful resources (Bruns 2003: 34). Still we cannot be sure that gate watching becomes the new gatekeeping. As it was pointed out by Dan Gillmor in *We the media*, Big Media is conservative and acts like a dinosaur: 'It will try to control the new media, rather than see its business models eroded by it' (Gilmore 2004: chapter 8, electronic version). So a shift to new ways of producing content by traditional media may be delayed for a long time.

Those working in journalism consider it obvious that their profession must survive, not only for its own sake but also in relation to its function as a facilitator of public debate, by informing the public in the best possible way (Blanken and Deuze 2007: 90). Over the last decades, this task has become more complicated and at the same time, more essential than it has ever been. Not in the least because competition has increased and media corporations are more successful in reaching the audience with infotainment, edutainment and commercial contents. Bardoel and Deuze (2001: 98) and Gillmor (2004: 63) claim that what journalism does different must be emphasized: bringing information with context in a way that is transparent, responsive and

interactive. Because readers do know more than journalists, and that is in fact liberating (Gillmor 2004: XIV). But how this new kind of journalism can be best practiced is still to be discovered. The Web allows digital articles to be changed indefinitely, and users are usually happy to give feedback, or "help to make things work". The people formerly called the audience are now participants, "that's a different kind of relationship", says Jay Rosen in *We the Media* (Gillmor 2004: 30). At some media outlets citizen reporters or editors have become key players so participatory journalism is one type of journalism for the future. But at the same time, at other news outlets, another type may be more suitable, because conversations on the Web could be established in many ways, as is shown by online communities, user-generated content sites and blogs.

2.6 What does it all mean for this study?

For the rest of this study, the role of the journalist and the presentation of online news are the central focal points. First, we have taken a close look at the historical developments in journalism as highlighted in the work of Lippman, Dewey, and more specifically the role of the journalist in Bardoel, Deuze, Weaver and Cleveland, Kovach and Rosenstiel, Bowman and Willis, Gillmor and others. To provide a basis for analysing news articles on the role of the journalist, the standards for professional journalists that Kovach and Rosenstiel put together in *The Elements of Journalism* (2001) are used:

> 1) '*The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing.*
> *2) Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.*
> *3) Journalism's first loyalty is to citizens.*
> *4) The essence of journalism is a discipline of verification.*
> *5) Journalists must maintain an independence from those they cover.*
> *6) Journalists must serve as independent monitors of power.*
> *7) Journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and comment.*
> *8) Journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant.*
> *9) Journalists should keep the news in proportion and make it comprehensive.'* (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001:17).

These also cover the most essential aims and professional standards that were highlighted by others in paragraph 2.2. They will be translated into a few examinable research questions, then used in a qualitative analysis of several news articles, found on eleven different news sources on the Web. Through the same analysis, it will be examined which types of journalism as mentioned

in the former section, are being used for online news nowadays. As the literature shows, online journalism includes the following types as described in paragraph 2.4: orientating, instrumental, monitoring, dialogical and participatory journalism. It has yet to be seen whether these types fit onto the current forms of online news facilitation. I do not exclude the possibility of finding several types combined or disposing alternative types of journalism.

Changes in journalism also will be closely studied; focusing on three trends. The first is the transformation of the role of the journalist as described by McQuail (1994), Bruns (2001) and Tumber (2001) from gatekeeping to gatewatching. Second, according to Porteman (1999) de-professionalisation is at hand, thanks to the increased opportunities for participatory journalism along with other types of user-generated content on the Web. Third, Bardoel (in Tumber 2001: 108) and Broeder (2005) argued that the increasing individualization and segmentation in communication would offer more opportunities for instrumental journalism.

Much attention has been paid to the facilitation of public debate as the most important task of journalism. This relationship has been described in section 2.3. The study will also make this connection so that we can draw some conclusions regarding to what extent public debate is facilitated by online news.

But focusing on just journalism would be too narrow; the wide range of options that digital media offer to present news to a public should not be disregarded. In section 2.4 Deuze (2001a) pointed out how strong online journalism depends on the three main characteristics of new media; interactivity, hypertext and multimediality. The extent to which these characteristics are found in the researched news articles is analyzed as well, and takes up an equally essential part of the study. By addressing all these issues the full spectrum of online news making can be covered: from the very basis of technical production, to the journalistic production, and finally to the general end result of news facilitation in society; public debate.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Case study

On 26 December 2006 it was announced that Saddam Hussein would receive the death penalty. He was to be executed within thirty days. For about three weeks, it dominated the international press. The execution itself and the way in which it was eventually carried out became a topic of discussion amongst world leaders and citizens. The news flow continued long after the event itself took place; on December 30th. Saddam Hussein's execution in Iraq was seen by millions via the web, because of an illegally recorded video posted on the internet.

Through a case study I will examine one news item of the execution and one of the appearance of an illegally shot video (that became immediately available on YouTube, Google Video and many other websites) on multiple Dutch online news sources. These include traditional media (and online newspapers), online news media, blogs, newspaper blogs, alternative media and social – or user generated content -news media. So, for both news events I will analyse the publications regardless of their format, genre and style.

These news events were not chosen only because they were controversial. We can correctly speak of a pre-announced news event that the world press was dying to publish or broadcast. What makes this news so interesting is that the execution took place behind closed doors in front of the eyes of a small number of people. At least, that is what we assume. Still, within a very short time span the whole world has become aware of it through the videos and its reconstruction in words by the press. It would not have achieved this level of hype without the international press picking up on what a security guard who used his camera phone and the Internet had done. Partly, this media hype can be ascribed to the Internet that enabled anyone who wanted detailed information, images and video material on Saddam's death, to access this data.

The announcement of this news event on such a large scale has had far-reaching consequences. Take for example the re-enactments of the events by young children, some with a fatal ending.[11] Of course, we cannot hold the media hype responsible for the effects in the first place, but it is also utterly impossible to estimate to what extent they have to do with the Internet's ability to spread controversial news quickly. All those people that have read online news articles on Saddam's execution or saw the explicit video on the Internet, in what manner were these presented to them? Was there any context provided, or historical background or openness about

[11] See for example: 'Several kids die copying Saddam hanging'. Times of India. 15 January 2007. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/World/Rest_of_World/Several_boys_die_copying_hanging_of_Saddam/articleshow/1206901.cms and 'Algerian children hang 12-year-old after watching Saddam execution'. Daily Star. 9 January 2007. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=78337

the source(s)? Was the information one-sided? Were these users warned for controversial content? These are only examples that point out that we should be critical towards the way in which online news is created, presented and distributed. To cast the positive and negative consequences of an event like this, it is important to gain more understanding of the mechanisms of news facilitation. In this study the role of journalism is a central focus. The current level of web technology can be used as a starting point in order to study how 'news makers' currently employ technology in order to produce online journalism. The result will be related only to a moment in time, but still we need to see what forces are at work when it comes to online journalism and its functions for the public debate.

Mapping the way in which online news is created, presented and distributed in the Netherlands may be a crucial phase in the process of creating a field of healthy, promising and democratic online journalism. The transition from mass media to personalised media based on content sharing ensues rapidly, but an appropriate form and practice of journalism (or just more than one) still has to take root (Blanken and Deuze 2007: 117). An overview regarding online news facilitation in our country can provide insight in the trends, progress and the pitfalls that online journalism currently encounters. Subsequently, this study's results may bring more clarity to the future of online news in the Netherlands.

3.2 Method

The news event of Saddam Hussein's execution was not broadcasted by any of the national news, therefore, this study will focus on a large number of Dutch online news sources. The aim of this study is twofold: first- the description and categorisation of these news sources in order to provide a solid start to mapping the field of online news in the Netherlands. Second, a qualitative feature analysis on these news sources that will provide insight into their journalistic working methods, presentation methods and interaction models. This will help us find out how today's Dutch online news sources facilitate (or disregard) public debate.

In carrying out this analysis two contexts must be incorporated, introduced by Holsti (1969, in: Pleijter 2006: 10-11), namely that of the sender and of the receiver. The first is about the producers of media products; how did these 'online publications' come into existence? Due to which technological preconditions and what does this mean for the message that is communicated? A separation has to be made between the working method and choices made by people (journalists, editors, programmers, web developers) and the technical circumstances under which they work. This makes studying online news a discipline that differs fundamentally from studying print media or television broadcasts where each have their own means of production.

The context of the receiver will be studied to a limited extent because a content analysis will not be the most suitable method to inform us about this. But, the Internet, above all, an

interactive medium that enables dialogue between producer and the user. All forms of interaction used by the studied news sources will also be subject to analysis, so that we will be able to draw, at the very least, some conclusions on the reception of the studied 'media products'.

3.3 Research material

Mostly Dutch sources were chosen because this subject was covered so widely in international news outlets, it was necessary to reduce the data sample. The variety of perspectives from which this news was covered made this an extra interesting subject for research but a choice had to be made to focus either on these perspectives or the different online news media types. The research material consists of a variety of sources that have been categorized for the sake of this study. The categories are as follows: traditional news outlets, Internet-based news outlets, news blogs, newspaper blogs, online opinion magazines, online alternative news media, social or user generated news media. This genre categorization will be tested through this study as well, in order to answer the question: does every source have the features that typify the category it belongs to, or claims to belong to?

I will give an example of how this study deals with classification. In the so-called "genre category" alternative news, Indymedia was chosen. But the basis of this news channel is handling user-generated content. So should Indymedia not be in the category of social media instead of alternative media? Possibly, however Indymedia was the first online news medium that accepted content from any citizen, so there is a crossover here. The main reason to classify this website as alternative (besides that Indymedia has been called "alternative", "grassroots" and "independent" since its very first day (Kidd 2003)), is that over the last few years the Internet has experienced an explosion of user-generated content websites. Since the relative success of Digg.com there are many that focus on news gathering. Therefore I decided to analyse at least two of them in the category *user-generated news media*, and use Indymedia in the *alternative news*" category. In the end the classification is not about the main focus, classification does often cause more problems than it offers solutions. But we cannot deny that features and uses determine genres in websites and that these genres provide a structure or order of what we find on the Web. For instance, when it comes to books it is good to know beforehand whether we are about to read poetry, fiction or non-fiction. In the same way classification has become a helpful tool in comparing websites, it can make us aware of remarkable differences and similarities that would not be noticed or taken for granted otherwise.

For each online news genre either (one of) the most representative websites were analysed, or the most popular. Altogether a large part of the selected sources are in the top 100

most visited Dutch websites by Alexa.[12] The only news sources in that list that are not included in this case study are AD (http://www.ad.nl), Fok! (http://www.fok.nl) and MSN (http://www.msn.nl). The top 250 that was put together in 2006[13] contains all of the reviewed sources except for Indymedia, Wikinews, Ekudos (which did not exist yet) and Sargasso, but the latter took the nineteenth position in the top 100 of best visited weblogs in 2006[14].

Some genres only contain one popular website that could be compared with features on other news sites, therefore some categories have one source, others have two. If a chosen news source could not provide a Dutch article on the news event of Saddam Hussein's execution and/or the appearance of an illegal video, the English equivalent was consulted. This was the case with Indymedia and Wikinews. Below is the complete list of news websites that were subject to the analysis.

Internet news outlets

These websites are considered accurate and up-to-date news sources that are not linked to a newspaper or another traditional (off-line) medium. Their content is produced solely for the Internet.

NU.nl (www.nu.nl)

NU.nl is the most popular news website in the Netherlands and receives 472.050 unique visitors a day. [15]

Nieuwnieuws (www.nieuwnieuws.nl)

Nieuwnieuws is a news website that recently started competing with NU.nl. It combines hard news with opinions and aims for a younger public as it is a sister of the extremely popular and rebellious weblog GeenStijl. Nieuwnieuws receives unique 78.076 visitors a day.

Traditional news outlets

These are websites that are owned by news media companies that have been publishing newspapers and broadcasting television news since their early days. Now they are also online to keep their audiences informed in multiple ways.

[12] Top sites Netherlands. Alexa. Retrieved on 17-5-2007. http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_sites?cc=NL&ts_mode=country&lang=none. Alexa computes traffic rankings by analyzing the Web usage of millions of Alexa Toolbar users. The information is sorted, sifted, anonymized, counted, and computed, until the traffic rankings are finally shown in the Alexa service.
[13] Top 250 websites 2006. Pc Plein. Published on 2-6-2006. http://www.pcplein.nl/#top250websites2006
[14] Top 100 weblogs 2006. Pc Plein. Published on 28-5-2006. http://www.pcplein.nl/#top100weblogs2006
[15] All visitor numbers are based on the Top 250 Dutch websites according to Alexa's world ranking list. Published on 2-6-2006. http://www.pcplein.nl/#top250websites2006

Telegraaf (www.telegraaf.nl)
This newspaper has the largest audience of all Dutch newspapers. Unlike many other newspapers De Telegraaf has a website on which all news articles are freely accessible to everyone, even non-subscribers. De Telegraaf receives 402.468 unique visitors a day.

NOS Journaal (www.nos.nl/nosjournaal)
NOS Journaal is the online equivalent of the NOS Journaal, the first and best viewed television news bulletin in the Netherlands. It is part of the portal NOS.nl which also includes the video section NOS Headlines, and other television bulletins NOS Studio Sport, NOS Jeugdjournaal, NOS Teletekst. This portal receives 185.880 unique visitors a day.

Opinion magazines

Elsevier (www.elsevier.nl)
Opinion magazine Elsevier publishes news and opinions on national as well as international political and societal issues. Elsevier aims at a well-educated public and receives 216.261 unique visitors a day.

Alternative news sources

Indymedia (www.indymedia.org)
Indymedia Nederland (www.indymedia.nl)
The only alternative news channel in the Netherlands that does not hang on to one specific ideology or political side. Its content consists of news articles and multimedia and is solely posted by users. Visitors numbers of Indymedia are not publicly available, the international portal is said to receive from 500.000 (Kidd 2003: 21-22) to 2 million unique visitors a day (Anarchogeek 2005[16]).

News blogs
A blog is generally a website where entries by its owner(s) appear in a reverse chronological order. Usually they cover a particular topic with content in multiple formats and they have interactive elements such as reader comments and a list of related blogs.

Sargasso (www.sargasso.nl)
Geenstijl (www.geenstijl.nl)

[16] Anarchogeek is a weblog that analyses alternative media.

There are only a few highly popular web logs in the Netherlands that have news as their most important content category. GeenStijl and Sargasso are the two most visited: both are in the top 20 of most visited Dutch blogs (according to Alexa.com ranking, 28-5-2006). GeenStijl receives 117.277 unique daily visitors and Sargasso 14.700.

Newspaper blogs

Volkskrantblogs (www.volkskrantblogs.nl)
NRC weblog Wereld (weblogs.nrc.nl/weblog/wereld)
This category holds the only two blogs in the Netherlands that are directly linked to a news paper. Both are in fact a portal to multiple blogs, maintained by readers (Volkskrant) or staff members (NRC). These portals offer both an overview of the most interesting blog posts of the day which is created by an editorial staff. NRC Wereld is part of NRC.nl that receives 80.362 unique visitors a day. This blog is maintained by the editor, international affairs, the chief opinion and the editor, foreign affairs. At www.volkskrantblog.nl readers and staff are able to put up their own blog, they are free to publish any (type of) content as long as it does not violate the Volkskrant's terms of agreement. During the last semester 1255 bloggers created 33.519 posts.

User generated content news sites or *social* news sites
These websites belong to the web2.0[17] generation of Web based communities and services. They use a many-to-many principle: every user can share his or her own data with other users.

Wikinews (http://nl.wikinews.org and http://en.wikinews.org)
Wikinews calls itself a free content news source. Extending the collaborative wiki encyclopedia model to news, everyone can write news on any subject. This project started in November 2004 and carries out its mission, which is "Creating a diverse environment where citizen journalists can make news independently on a wide range of recent events". The Dutch Wikinews started out in January 2005, ever since 708 articles have been written by 262 users.

Ekudos (www.ekudos.nl)
Ekudus is one of the first Dutch clones of the popular American news site Digg.com that offers user powered content. Users can post any news article that they have found on the Web and they can also rate news and comment on it. The most valued (digged) articles appear on the front

[17] This term was introduced in 2005 by Tim O'Reilly in his online article *What is web2.0*' http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html

page. Ekudos started out in 2006 and no exact visitor numbers are known yet. Nevertheless, the site received 70.000 hits in April 2007.[18]

3.4 Analysis

The analysis focuses both on features and on the journalistic approach of two selected news articles. The aim is to find out how these websites give shape to interactivity, multimediality and hypertextuality and how these aspects interact with the types of online journalism that are being used.

A codebook was created in which all the features are listed, so that to begin with we can state which websites (in which genres) have certain features. In the category interactivity we find features like readers' comments, discussion opportunities, RSS, opportunities for posting (additional) news or photos, and so on. The complete list can be found in appendix I. The category multimediality lists features like audio/photo/video material, print and advertisements. Hypertextuality deals with all sorts of hyperlinking and tags.

A fourth category called journalism will be analyzed separately; in a qualitative manner only. It deals with aspects such as copyright, authorship and editing (all of these aspects can also be found in the list in appendix I). Analyzing these aspects must clarify how the news became produced in a journalistic manner, this was done by asking the following questions: To what extent is the journalistic process of news making open or closed: is an article static and unchangeable after publication or is there opportunity for editing, revision, comments and discussion? What were the sources for each article (press agencies, journalists, television broadcasts)? What editorial activities took place (selection, revision, referencing) and by whom (intern or with help of readers)? How does the site deal with copyright?

The journalistic standards put together by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001: 17) were also taken into account when analyzing these articles. For every news article, a close look was taken at context, balance, opinion, type of news sources. In other words, to what extent did the news articles provide context (hyperlinks, background stories, not at all?), was news offered in a balanced way by letting multiple voices 'speak', what kind of sources were used, and was the piece strictly objective news or was a particular view expressed? Clearly, this category does not cover only technological features that can be analyzed objectively. The journalistic standards may especially be of a subjective nature, but nevertheless they are helpful when comparing the different news outlets on what choices are made when creating and presenting news.

The core of this study consists of the regrouping or re-categorization of the news sources. This was done on the basis of the features they shared and the type(s) of journalism practiced. In

[18] Essers, Loek. 'Geenredactie Nederlands meest lucratieve Digg-site'. Trip My Wire. 10-5-2007. http://tripmywire.nl/archief/loek-essers/geenredactie-meest-lucratieve-nederlandse-digg-site/

the next chapter these new categories are explained and for each news source it is made clear why it belongs in a particular category.

3.5 Positioning

Studying the current online news landscape for the Netherlands as part of an MA thesis was only viable by making selections and choices; otherwise its scope would become too wide. Still, a Media Studies background enabled a focus on communication theories and journalism as well as technological developments. The author would like to express awareness that the choices made may all have had consequences for the results of this study, and some of them may need a little explanation.

The online news media that were examined varied heavily from each other, therefore trying to compare them would not get us anywhere. A qualitative analysis would provide the best results, but it also brought many surprising aspects to online news making that had to be taken into account.

For every chosen news medium, not one but two news events were studied, including a range of video material that was found on other websites. However examining those videos gave insight in the different ways in which multimedia are presented. Comparing two news articles for every source provided interesting findings, that wouldn't have come out by analyzing just one article.

Using a national issue for a case study could have lead to different findings as this might have been treated differently by news media, for example it could have offered more opportunities for interactivity or using other journalistic methods. And so it must be emphasized that from this case study with a limited scope no conclusions can be drawn on the overall situation of online journalism in the Netherlands. This has been an explorative study focusing on the situation of online journalism and different genres of online news, both in relation to the public debate. It certainly does not mean that every important aspect has been covered. For that a large-scaled study with the scope of a PhD would be necessary. Bearing in mind the quick developments on the Internet, the situation is never static. And although the findings of this study are only valid at a certain point in time, we must value them in light of the process that makes for a constant transformation of our media landscape.

Although this case study addresses the strong and weak points of several online news sources, there has been no effort made to judge or value any of the ways in which news is produced or presented on the Web right now. Still the author wishes to express that academic work should be everything but separated from those working in the field of online news. For media, and certainly journalism, there is still much to improve on this point. A good starting point in the

Dutch field of journalism and news media is De Nieuwe Reporter (http://www.denieuwereporter.nl), where news content and academic content meet, and their authors engage in hearty discussions.

4. RESULTS

To find the articles on every website, their own search engines were used. A search for “saddam”, if necessary followed by “execution”, showed a list out of which it was easy to pick the first article published after the event took place, on December 30, 2006 around 3 AM Many websites posted the news only a few hours later. The websites that posted a different article on the appearance of the amateur video did so the next day.

Three different but not entirely separate analyses were carried out. To begin with, the focus was placed upon technological features; listed as interactive, multimedia or hypertextual. This makes up the first part of the analyses, as these three characteristics demonstrate how online news and online journalism differ from traditional methods of news making. These findings will be listed first in the paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3. Multiple videos of the execution of Saddam Hussein were found, and to study how they were presented, a different codebook was used. Moreover, the videos were often located on websites other than the studied selection, so these results are best presented in a paragraph of their own. This useful addition to the other findings is to be found in paragraph 4.1.4. To complete the study, some journalistic aspects on which the sources could be quantitatively analysed were derived from the standards of journalism (ao. Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001). Along with that, every source was examined to find out what type of journalism was used; these findings are all in the final paragraph 4.1.5 of this chapter. Lastly, the hypothetical categorization of the news sources as it was presented in the methodological chapter, has been revised. This has been done on the basis of their interactive, hyper textual and multimedia features and types of journalism. Paragraph 4.2, titled News media genres, deals with this new categorization and explains, for each source, why it belongs to a particular category and what sets it apart from the others.

4.1 Findings

The separation into three aspects that characterize digital media is not fixed but rather overlapping, there are some conclusions to be made on the role that is played by interactivity, hypertext and multimedia in today’s news media. The codebook as well as the full analysis is enclosed in Appendix I.

4.1.1 Interactivity

Interactivity points out all features that allow users to respond, react, or engage in the news article. For example when readers’ comments are featured, interactivity allows users to make themselves heard and to connect with other users. This aspect allows citizens to enter the domain of journalists; however, it does not mean that they play the same role.

As the results show, some websites are not acting consistently when it comes to interactivity. For example, the Telegraaf has disallowed its comment option at both reviewed articles and NU.nl at one of the reviewed articles. The Dutch version of Wikinews is the only website that lacks a comment feature completely (while the English Wikinews does have this feature). Every Wikinews article has a tab for discussion but it is meant to be a communication tool that helps the community create better news articles. The news event itself is not to be discussed there. NOS Journaal uses a forum, but it has not been directly referred to in the article.

Trackbacking[19] (or pings), still a progressive way of interaction that allows bloggers to comment via their own blog, is only possible at NRC and Sargasso. Not every news website has placed a mail-a-friend button, but RSS feeds are prominent for most of them.

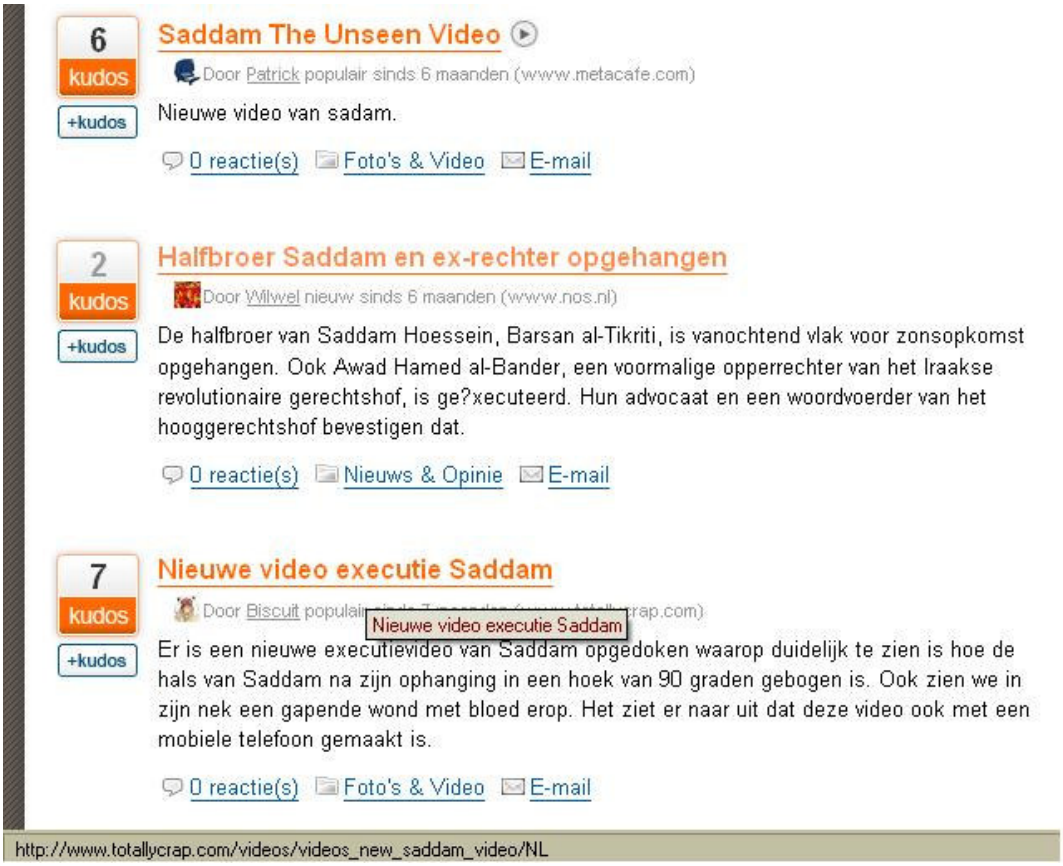

Figure 2. At Ekudos, users briefly introduce their content, which is rated by others with “kudos”.

Only at Sargasso, GeenStijl’s video dump box Dumpert and Ekudos it is possible to rate an article through a content sharing site (Ekudos, NuJij). At Ekudos, interactivity is extra high because it works on two levels. Through the Ekudos website users can rate an article by giving it a “kudo”. They can also put the kudos rating feature on their own website or blog which enables their visitors to do the same thing. Here we must note that Ekudos does not create news, it only provides access to content elsewhere on the web. These references are all made and briefly introduced by

[19] Trackbacking means that comments are submitted by webloggers or website owners from their own website instead of using the comment feature on the website in question. The signals (here: comments) that are sent through this action are called pings.

users.

Considering the role of interactivity, GeenStijl is worth mentioning here. GeenStijl receives many comments, but further interaction is limited. Still the audience is everything but powerless here, in their posts the editors show an awareness of what their readers want and likewise adjust their tone, use of language, and choice of information. It is likely that it works the other way around as well, the use of language by GeenStijl has been adopted by their readers. For example, both editors and users make use of newly invented words like “reaguurders” (which means “readers that leave a comment”), we may assume there is a symbiosis where both sides can invent and adopt these kinds of words.

Contrary to the other reviewed sources, on Indymedia this controversial news event does not bring about any comments. This could be explained by Indymedia’s poor navigation and slightly outdated design which does not make it appealing to spend extra time on the site. Another reason could be that Indymedia is a decentralized news network that aims to “empower the local” (‘Misnomer’ 2005), and therefore its users might be more likely to comment when directly involved or when the news affects their own community.

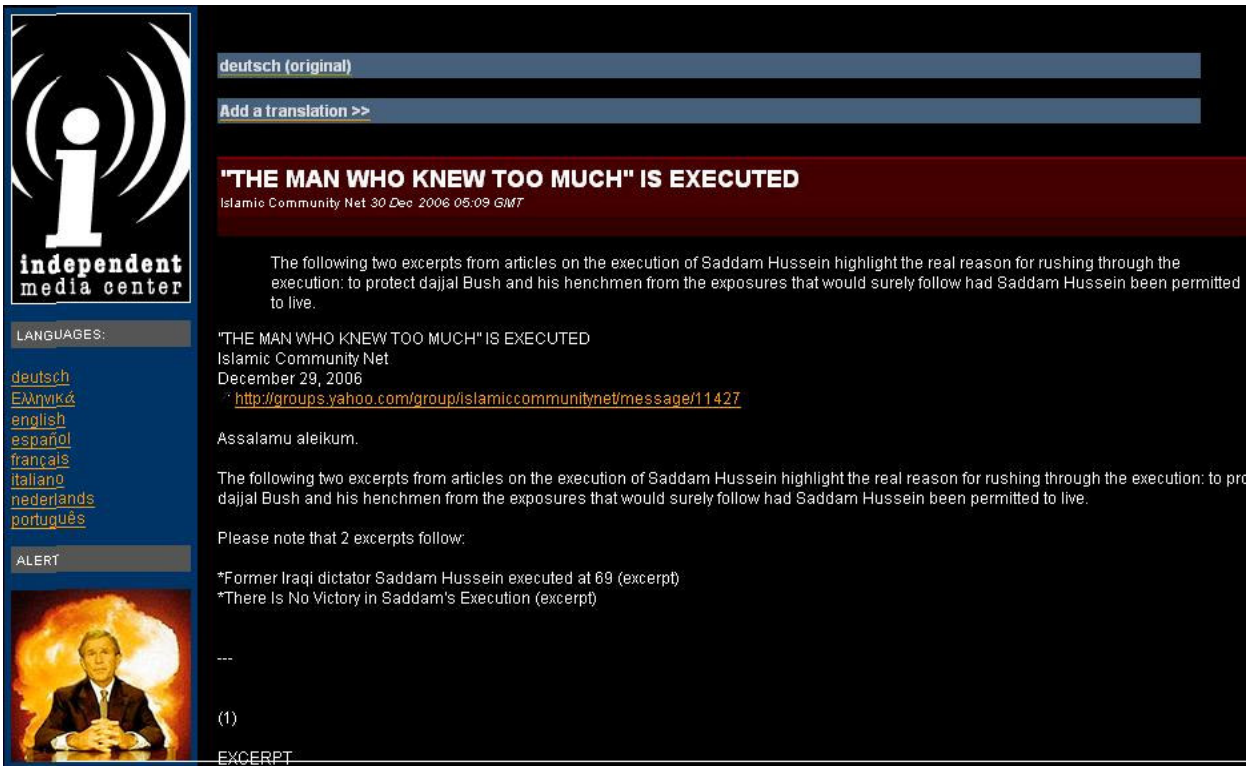

Figure 3. “The man who knew too much” is executed. December 29, 2006. Indymedia.org.

4.1.2 Hypertextuality

Hypertext is about ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so on through hyperlinks. It helps provide extra information that users may choose to view . It is the task of journalists or editors to make use of hypertext in a way that supports their journalistic aims (or those of the news company).

For this case study, the use of hypertext can be roughly divided into three purposes. GeenStijl and Ekudos only use hyperlinks to refer to video files elsewhere on the net, while all other sources link to other types of content on other websites: usually foreign news channels. Above all, blogs and opinion media refer to foreign news sources (among them are Washington Post (2), Reuters, CNN, Sky News, Fox News, Engineers Voice, LA Times and MSNBC). Traditional and Internet-based news media often link to articles of their own. Remarkably there are hardly any hyperlinks to websites of organizations, companies, blogs, news groups, forums or other types of web sources.

Some of the reviewed sources are characterized by the way they apply hypertext. In the case of Wikinews, these news articles contain “wikitags” that refer to Wikipedia’s encyclopedia entries (http://www.wikipedia.org). Also blog portal Volkskrantblogs is much more concerned with hypertextuality: every individual blog features a blogroll that contains links to other blogs, and hyperlinked lists of the most recent and most valued posts of the author. The portal adds context by categorizing the blogs, making all of them searchable, showing the most recent posts and recommending posts. On Indymedia, for both reviewed articles the content was copied from another website were it appeared earlier (this was done by the same author). Hyperlinking is also used here to present extra sources that use different perspectives. For Ekudos, as stated above, hyperlinking is the very basis of its existence; all content was found elsewhere on the Web, posted by users.

NOS Journaal probably does the best job when it comes to hypertextuality. With the two reviewed news articles, *Irak dossier* (Iraq files) was presented in the overall right column. It contained nineteen articles, videofiles, audiofiles (both taken from NOS’ television broadcasts) and a reference to a Bagdad-based weblog. On Indymedia, for both reviewed articles the content was copied from another website were it appeared earlier (this was done by the same author). Hyperlinking is also used here to present extra sources with different perspectives.

In this case study the hypertext use of two sources was even more extraordinary. Nieuwnieuws is one of them. New visitors to this website may soon become aware that Nieuwnieuws is a “sister-website” of GeenStijl, because many general or navigation hyperlinks point to GeenStijl pages. Contacting the editorial staff goes via GeenStijl (as they run both sites), and watching videos is done at GeenStijl-owned Dumpert.nl, a so-called dump box for photo, video and audio files, all uploaded by users. The identity that GeenStijl communicates may be

typified as rebellious, young, innovative and daring, while Nieuwnieuws keeps its tone a little bit more serious. So a result of this cooperation may be that for example the by-lines of the videos conflict with the overall tone of Nieuwnieuws. Also NRC Wereld should have used hyperlinking more consciously. The authors did provide a link to the homepage of Iraqslogger.com, but from that location the two promised videos could not be found at the time of this study (May 2007). Via Google only one video on Iraqslogger could be traced, which was the uncensored amateur video, so without knowing the authors provide their public with only this video.

4.1.3 Multimedia

On the Web storytelling is not limited to just words and photographs, news makers can include a range of media formats. For this aspect, we take a look at the use of audio, photos, print options and commercials or advertisements with(in) the articles. Video has its own paragraph, it was analysed more deeply and so there are more findings.

To start with, on most websites a print button is part of the standard feature package. On NU.nl, Nieuwnieuws and Ekudos the news articles were interrupted by advertising. The formats differed; there were videos, banners, and text (Google Ads). Elsevier places their advertisements below the article, so their articles can be read without interruption.

Figure 4. Flashy advertisements interrupt the news articles on Nieuwnieuws.

Photos are frequently used; with the exception of Indymedia every source included photos with the two chosen Saddam articles. Telegraaf uses video stills for their first article and Sargasso uses a former temporary logo designed from a photo of Saddam Hussein. The content on Sargasso and GeenStijl is mostly based on photo and video, usually large in size and accompanied by some sarcastic, strong and creative lines by the editors.

Figure 5. Sargasso presented the news in a mix-up of artwork and hyperlinked sources.

The *Irak dossier* is a big plus for the multimedia level of NOS Journaal. Besides articles and references, it contains two audio files with short interviews with correspondents in Bagdad and the United States. There are two video files as well, that consist of (parts of) television broadcasts by NOS. Ekudos users seem especially keen on multimediality, as on this topic there were four videos posted. The videos can be found on blogs or video sharing sites. Besides the videos, the news event of saddam's execution was only covered on Ekudos with one textual news article. This is not very surprising as most contributions are about technology or funny trivia rather than public affairs.

4.1.4 Video

Analyzing two articles on every website resulted in seven different videos, found on a large number of online locations. The videos and their locations are presented in table 1 below. Indymedia and Wikinews NL do not provide any information on (where to watch) the execution videos. For these sources, as well as Volkskrantblogs, the content always depends on the choices made by the users who created it. Telegraaf offers video with their first article, but not with the second, of which the main subject is the appearance of a clandestine execution video. Elsevier mentions Aljazeera.com (http://www.aljazeera.com) as a location for Saddam videos, but does not inform the reader where and which video may be viewed.

For showing videos NU.nl, Telegraaf and NOS Journaal use their own players. GeenStijl created a website dedicated to user-submitted photo and video content: Dumpert (http://www.dumpert.nl), which is also used by Nieuwnieuws. Sargasso and Ekudos provide direct links to external websites where the video can be viewed: Dailymotion, Metacafe, Google video, Totallycrap and Clipstop.[20] NRC does refer to the videos but the hyperlink refers to the homepage of a website were the video cannot be watched (anymore).

Some websites had disabled the videos in question, which were NU.nl and Telegraaf. On the websites is not stated why the videos cannot be viewed (anymore). All recent videos are viewable without problems so the most probable answer is that videos older than a certain period are removed from the servers so that the space can be used for new video files.

There were two official videos that were shown on Iraq state television, Fox News, CNN and many other television international news channels. The amateur video is most widely distributed, and only at NOS Journaal was it censored. It is the only video of the execution that has sound. Furthermore there were some compilations of images shown on television and a fake video created out of an official shot of Saddam's body followed by a fictional enactment that shows how "Saddam turns out to be still alive".

[20] http://www.dailymotion.com, http://www.metacafe.com, http://video.google.com, http://www.totallycrap.com, http://www.clipstop.com. Specific URLs of the video locations are placed in appendix III.

		Nieuwnieuws	NOS	NRC	GeenStijl	Sargasso	Wikinews	Ekudos
Which official videos?								
Saddam prior to execution	4	1	1		1		1	
video							Engineers	
location		Dumpert	NOS		Dumpert		voice	
Body saddam	2				1			1
video								
location					Dumpert			Totallycrap
French compilation	1					1		
video								
location						Dailymotion		
US compilation	1					1		
video								
location						Dailymotion		
Total displays	*8*							
Which amateurvideos?								
Uncensored execution	7	1		1	1	1	1	2
video						Google	Engineers	Sargasso/Google
location		Dumpert		Iraqslogger	Dumpert	video	voice	video
								Clipstop
Censored execution	1		1					
video								
location			NOS					
Fake video body saddam	1							1
video								
location								Ekudos/Metacafe
Total displays	9							

Table 1. Different locations and versions of the Saddam Hussein execution videos.

All videos appeared online on December 30 or 31. An analysis of the presentation of these videos focused on the location of the video player, integration in articles, descriptions or additional text, interactive features such as rating, email, recommendation, download and user-comments. There are some remarkable journalistic choices made by the webmasters or web editors of the reviewed pages. They will be named first and then we will continue with some conclusions on the features that come with the videos. They inform us particularly about interactivity and multimedia aspects on all the websites from this case study that host video. The complete analysis is included in Appendix III.

The first remarkable journalistic aspect are the different ways in which context was added to the videos. Usually the site where the video is hosted indicates what is to be seen, sometimes as a warning (NOS Journaal), sometimes as an excited introduction (GeenStijl, Ekudos). The explicit

accompanying texts on Dumpert and Totallycrap may be harsh to many but seem appreciated by their audiences. Obviously the comments are supposed to be funny and they function more as a warning of what is not going to be seen ("The money shot is not there." - Dumpert[21]*)*, than actually warn the user ofexplicit content. From the descriptions it appears that these websites assume that its users want to see the explicit content ("New video of Saddam, on which his neck, bent 90 degrees, is clearly visible and a gaping wound." - Totallycrap). Nieuwsnieuws does not have the sharp edge of GeenStijl but also directs its users to Dumpert for these videos, and if they have the same group of readers there is no problem, but others who read Nieuwnieuws might be surprised by these descriptions.

Figure 6. Saddam gaat HANGEN. December 31, 2006. Dumpert.

The blog Engineers Voice, referred to at Wikinews EN, is the only medium that radically puts the uncensored video first and the official version second. The transcript on Iraqslogger[22] and the Dutch subtitles by NOS are useful journalistic services to the user. Furthermore NOS provides its

[21] All translations from Dutch in this paragraph are done by the author.
[22] To be found at http://www.iraqslogger.com/index.php/post/445/Full_Uncut_Video_of_Saddams_Execution.

own television broadcast material which allows the user to view this international incident through a Dutch perspective.

Figure 7. Saddam Hussein bespot op schavot. December 31, 2006..

Considering multimediality, NOS Journaal is the only Dutch source among those reviewed that integrated the video into its article. This leaves the user with a more complete and direct multimedia experience, compared to clicking and watching the video in another window. On the player is stated what video will be shown: Censored amateur images of Saddam's execution. Censored means: when Saddam falls down the screen turns black. Contrary to the official videos this one has sound. Furthermore NOS Journaal offers two videos that are part of the Iraq dossier. They both open in a special video window where no other features of significance are found. The first is the official *Saddam prior to the execution*-video, as how it was shown on Iraqi television and by NOS on Dutch television. The second video in the *dossier* shows a broadcast by NOS on this topic.

After NOS come Telegraaf and NU.nl as the most direct hosts of videos. GeenStijl and Nieuwnieuws refer to a sister-website of theirs, thus they come third. Ekudos, Sargasso and Wikinews offer videos on an external source so they take fourth place. We must consider them

indirect hosts of video material. NRC Wereld, Elsevier and Indymedia take the last place as their users must perform a search on another website in order to watch one of the reviewed videos.

The video on Clipstop is the only one that starts playing automatically as soon as the URL is found by the browser, which forces the user to decide really quickly whether they want to view the explicit content. The commercial video hosting sites Dailymotion, Dumpert, Clipstop and Totallycrap (all comparable to Youtube) offer many interactive features, such as emailing, rating, placing it elsewhere on the web. They are commercial, so they try spreading their content to receive more visitors. Some also put their logos on the video while it plays. The Saddam Hussein videos are only viewable on Dailymotion by a logged in user who is over 18-years old, as the content was flagged as explicit by other users.

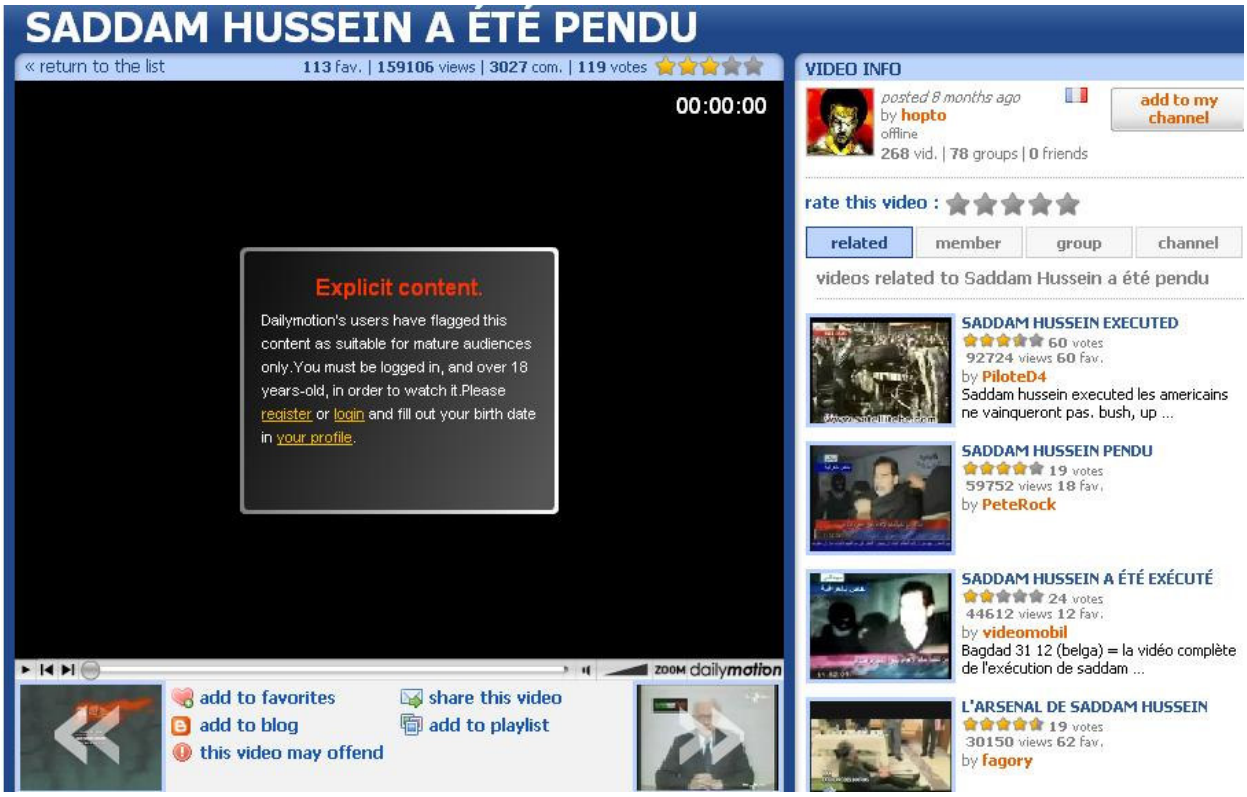

Figure 8. Saddam Hussein a été pendu. December 31, 2006. Dailymotion.

Videos on Dailymotion and Dumpert receive many comments, but videos provided by other video hosts, reviewed through Ekudos, are not frequently commented. This is also not very surprising because the videos (except for the fake video through Metacafe) are actually viewed on a page that is on another domain. So for many users it must be a little odd to get back to Ekudos just to place a comment.

As table 1 shows, Sargasso refers to the uncensored amateur video on Google Video. On Ekudos there is an entry that points to this Sargasso posting and so again points to the same

video on Google Video. Most likely this was caused by the Ekudos button that Sargasso offers with every article.

4.1.5 Journalistic aspects

Which types of journalism are used by the eleven news sources? For every source this was defined by looking at the level of editorial control and relationships between audience and editors. Also opinion and voice, the characteristic element in blogs, were taken into account. Most sources where found to use one of the types of online journalism mentioned in paragraph 2.4: orientating, instrumental, monitoring or dialogical. Participatory journalism (paragraph 2.5) is also used.

Figure 9. NU.nl, a very popular Dutch news site, offers orientating journalism.

Orientating journalism is used by websites where editors simply provide a general public with the most general information. This is found at NU.nl, Nieuwnieuws, Telegraaf, and also by Elsevier and NOS Journaal but their articles have a hint of instrumental journalism. They provide handles (hyperlinks usually) for particularly interested users so they can find their way to more detailed or specialized information. With the *Irak dossier* NOS tries to provide context and background to "hard news" which people can use to more carefully shape their opinion. It is instrumental because

we could say here NOS offers functional or specialized information. Depending on their specific interests users might only view the parts of the dossier that are most interesting or useful to them. As Dasselaar (2006) concluded, in general Dutch blogs are not so very journalistic. But is there journalism to be found when we look at a so-called newspaper blog? NRC Wereld was characterized as a blog, probably because it is maintained by three NRC editors and it provides online additions to their usual work. This blog offers orientating journalism, and the hyperlinked external sources give it a hint of instrumental journalism as well.

GeenStijl is usually referred to as a blog but describes itself as an *actualiteiten site* (current affairs site). For GeenStijl there are both reasons to speak of journalism and reasons not speak of it. Firstly, the editors are former professional journalists so why wouldn't they still be while working for a different medium? The topics are all national current affairs that can be found in all Dutch news papers. But the reviewed articles show that Geenstijl offers its readers facts brought in a very personal manner that is typical for this website. The opinionated tone of voice is what separates blogging from journalism as 'truth seeking storytelling aimed at citizens, which is editorially independent' (Dasselaar 2006: 46) and other descriptions from the literature.

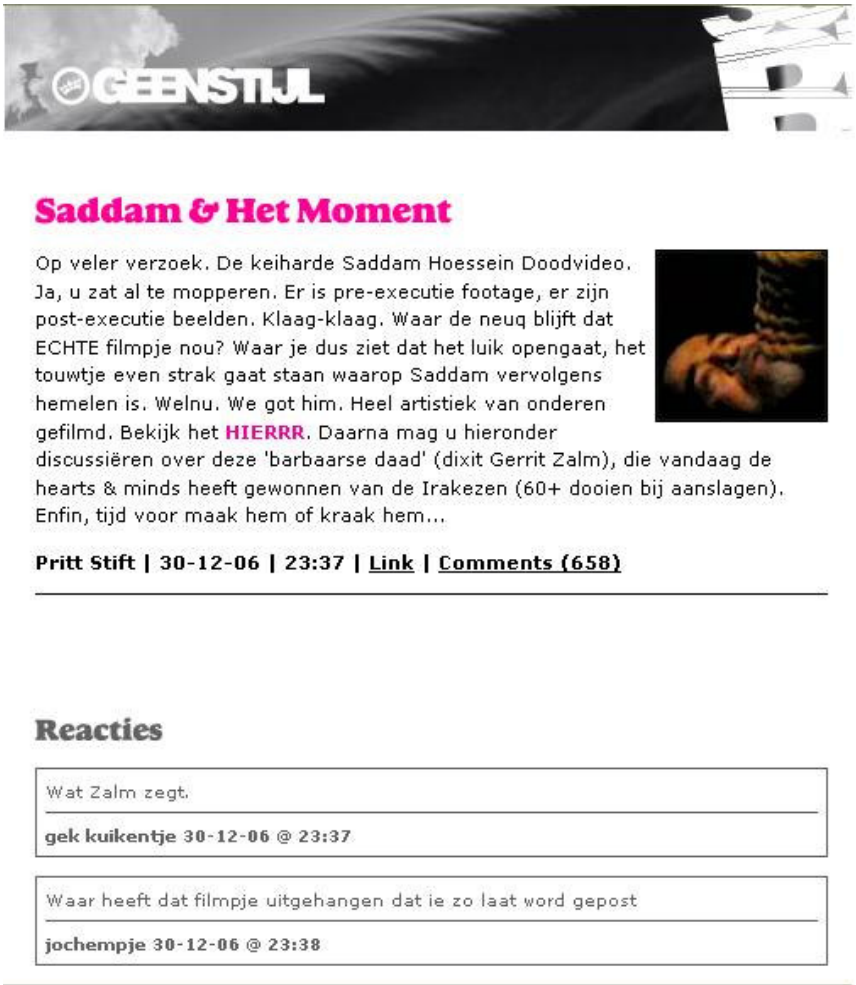

Figure 10. Saddam & Het Moment. December 30, 2006.

However GeenStijl makes use of two main types of journalism: monitoring and dialogical journalism, because the editors respond to their readers' requests and opinions. In the second news article the bloggers reflect on the requests for the uncensored video of Saddam's execution, and in response they put the video on their site and invite users to share their opinion on it. Sargasso could be compared to GeenStijl in a journalistic manner, but from the reviewed material, the the amount of influence amount of influence readers have cannot be measured. There might be a hint of monitoring journalism, but blogging is still the most suitable typification as Sargasso does have a personal touch. Other arguments are: they leave the actual task of journalism to traditional sources: the first blog post refers to MSNBC and Reuters. And because so little text is used, Sargasso relies mostly on hyperlinked resources, photos and videos.

Indymedia offers participatory journalism. All the news is presented by users. The role of editors is very limited: they only remove (parts of) posts if necessary and coordinate the composition of the main pages. It must be noted that the reviewed articles were not solely published on Indymedia but also on other websites.

Wikinews is a true form of participatory journalism, as it is created by multiple users who can discuss their "editorial" decisions online. Anyone is free to join the dialogue. Contrary to newspaper blogs like NRC Wereld, Volkskrantblogs are personal blogs, although many bloggers write about current affairs. Often they create a mix of facts and opinion. Altogether these blogs can be a form of participatory journalism as well.

Although at Ekudos users determine what is on the news agenda and they link the actual content to Ekudos, these activities do not match any of the existing types of online journalism. But contrary to Indymedia for example, not much writing is done here. Even so it is not possible to submit an article that is not on the Web yet. So Ekudos acts most of all as a database with popular news-like entries in categories like technology, internet, news and opinion, entertainment, and science.

4.2 News media genres

Before the analysis was done, the news media subject to this case study were hypothetically grouped according to their origin. The answer to the question "How did they come to exist?" roughly indicated the media type of each source. But how accurate was that division? On the basis of the feature analysis and taking into consideration the journalistic aspects of each website, they were regrouped into four types: the news media group, the opinion group, the blog group and the user-generated content group.

1. The news media group

Tradtional and Internet based news media share many similarities, therefore NU.nl, Nieuwnieuws, Telegraaf en NOS Journaal could be placed in the same group. For all of them, editorial control is still an important aspect that we see reflected in the choice of features and how they are handled and presented. Comments, for instance, are sometimes blocked or not shown. When they do see a participatory role for their audience it is limited to assistance in providing pictures and tips for the editorial staff. These could be the first steps towards citizen reporting, but it cannot be claimed that they are or will be a platform for citizen journalists. The type of journalism used is generally orientating journalism.

It seems that none of these media are keen on hyper linking to external sources. In fact, they do not provide these type of links at all. Even video material is shown via an internal player. All references made are to other articles by the same website. This lack of external links is easily explained by the fact that all have professionals working for them, so the material produced by their news corporation gets priority, and must be accessible for the audience. Anything that leads them away from this expensive content is to be avoided. The Internet based news media NU.nl and Nieuwnieuws offer prominent advertising, while the traditional media avoid placing ads anywhere near the news content. This is easy to understand considering that Internet based media do not have other (offline) sources of income. Most likely it is traditional media channels that have to adapt, as online advertising is growing steadily whilst advertisers continue to move away from offline media[23].

2. The opinion group

The articles on the blog NRC Wereld and Elsevier seem, at first, not very different from the articles in the News Media group. But it is remarkable that they provide external links instead of only links to their own content. And, as a key aspect of opinion articles, the role of its author is more prominent. The name of the journalist is shown and he or she is personally contactable.

Both websites produce the same kind of content, news presented within opinion articles, and whether these are presented on a web*magazine* or a web*log* is just a matter of form. Still Elsevier is more of a news source because it offers an article on any news event, while the NRC blog posts are published occasionally (in this case there was only one article on Saddam's execution while all other news sources offered more). These choices result in a mixed type of journalism, somewhat instrumental but generally orientating. Because of the format, opinion or voice is allowed but it is not overly present in the articles reviewed for this case study.

[23] Allen, Katie. Online advertising share overtakes newspapers. The Guardian. Consulted 19 June 2007. http://www.guardian.co.uk/frontpage/story/0,,2044429,00.html

3. The blog group

The Blog group has a totally different view on informing citizens than the two other groups. Instead of telling a news story themselves, Sargasso and GeenStijl let photos, videos and references tell the story. Remarkable too is the tight connection to their audiences. In the first place, they receive more comments than the most visited news source in the Netherlands (NU.nl) and readers do not just react but offer useful suggestions and links to sources and multimedia. In one of their posts GeenStijl openly responds to readers' requests that they received by email. Considering that GeenStijl also owns a user-submitted content site, Dumpert, they also rely on their users for photos and videos. In collaboration with their users a range of new words has been invented, which are used by the editorial staff and in user's comments, and gave these blogs an identity of their own. The most characterizing aspect of the Blog group are these identities and posts with *voice* (instead of a specific type of journalism), which is the main characteristic of the better blogs according to Jay Rosen (Gillmore 2004: 29).

Let's briefly compare the way in which (user-generated) video is presented by GeenStijl and Ekudos. The latter offers media that have been found on the Web by users, and they may be rated and commented on. Through Dumpert, GeenStijl allows users to upload their own media files, which might be used for the blog posts done by the editorial staff. Afterwards, rating and commenting is allowed as well.

4. The user generated content group

The main aspect of this group is that these websites have only user generated content. Based on the analysis this group consists of different types of news media, however *news* media is probably not always the correct term to use here. Due to a total dependence on users, many of the sources are filled with content that is of interest to them, but which is not particularly news content. Furthermore, almost every reviewed source in this group is a genre of its own.

Volkskrantblogs for example, do have things in common with the other blogs: GeenStijl, NRC Wereld and Sargasso, but because they are maintained by individual users who have all the freedom to create their own publication channel, there is not much basis for comparison. The level of hypertextuality is high as they are part of the Volkskrantblogs network, which discloses their content, categorizes them and so they are constantly presented in relation to other blogs that write about the same topic. This is what makes this blog portal unique for the Netherlands. Because of its relationship with the Volkskrant newspaper users blog mainly about current affairs; those who wish to keep a diary style blog would fit better with Web-logger.nl (http://www.web-logger.nl) or Blogger.com (http://www.blogger.com). Among the bloggers are Volkskrant editors as well. The main page automatically shows the most recent blog posts, which altogether can be seen as headlines, so the news aspect is still present. However it does not mean that this portal is used as a news source by readers.

Ekudos is also genre on its own. It is all about hyperlinking and multimedia here, there is no content created or uploaded by users. The fact that this website only refers to Web content that already exists, is the main factor that distinguishes this source from all the others. So there is no foundation to speak of journalism, but it is still very useful to consider the process users engage in when they add content or rate content through this site. This participation is made very easy and after log in it often takes no more than two clicks.

Indymedia is the most different from the rest due to its focus on social empowerment. All other sources focus on national or international current affairs from a more general or sensational perspective. Indymedia has a so-called open publishing model where users can upload news that they wrote themselves or that was published on the Web before (unless protected by copyright). This is participatory journalism, however after publication the content can only be altered or removed by the editorial staff and not by other users as with Wikinews. Although Indymedia has been using this manner of generating content for a long time, and its design and navigation are somewhat outdated, all types of media can be included. RSS feeds and comments are available, yet it lacks typical web2.0 features like rating, tags or trackbacking. In fact, we do not find these on most sources in the News Media group. In a journalistic sense, and especially when considering the reviewed news items, Indymedia would best fit into the Opinion group as much of its content is opinionated. But contrary to news media in the Opinion group the nature of Indymedia's submitted content varies along with the quality which depends on participating users who are responsible for the variety. When analyzing news from Indymedia it appears to be too characterized by input from users, to fit into any of the other groups.

Wikinews uses the most open structure of all news media, as users can join in the process of news making, and even edit the contributions of others. So in theory Wikinews is the most social, most open-source and most independent of all news sources. In practice it shows that only a few contributors are responsible for the entire article, which in terms of this topic, results in news articles that are not very different from those created by professional journalists for the mainstream news media. The big plusses are the references to other sources and many wiki tags that link to wikipedia entries, so there is some basic context and explanation available.

Figure 11. Saddam Hoessein geëxecuteerd. December 30, 2006. Wikinews NL.

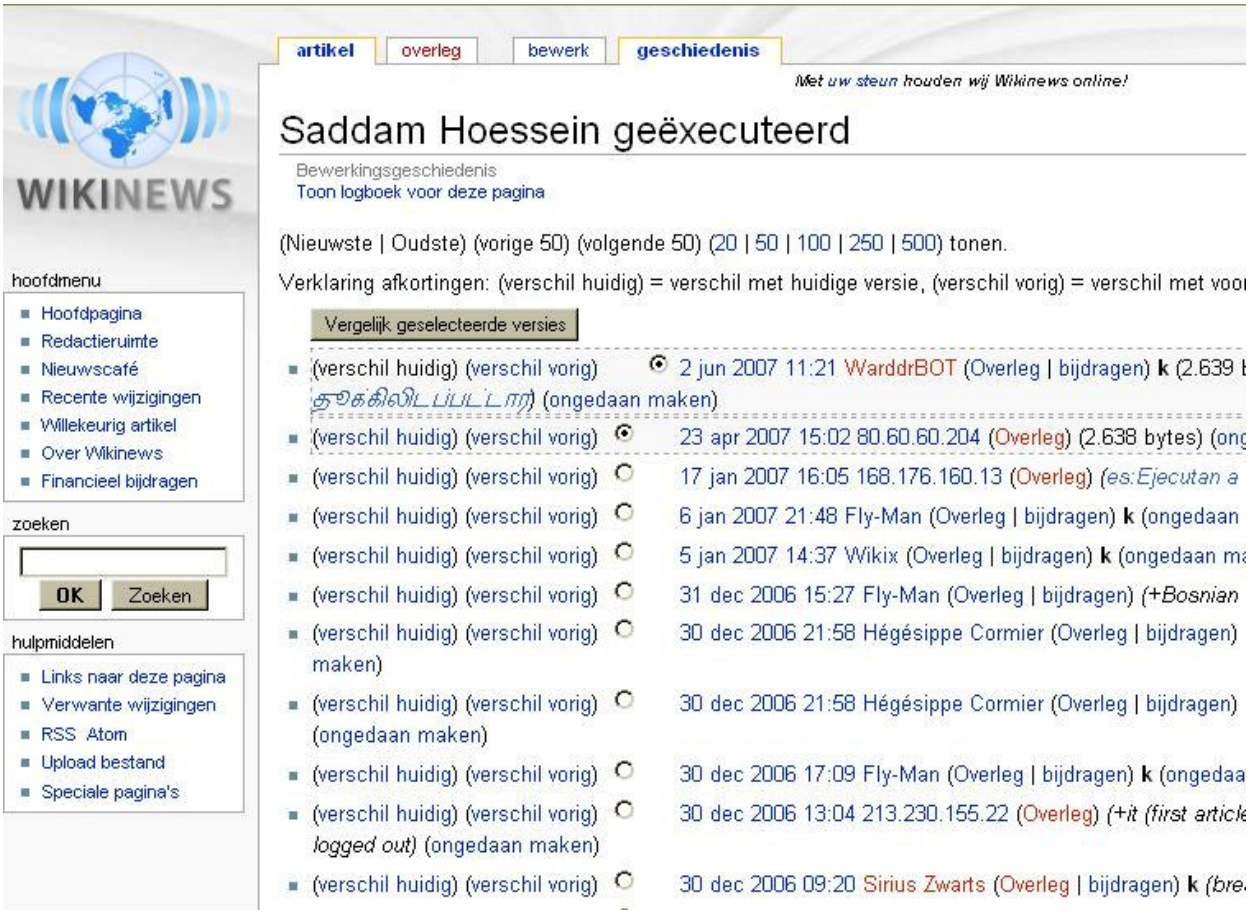

Figure 12. The revision history of the same news item.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis we have taken a close look at the current situation of online news and journalism in the Netherlands. The aim was not to try defining journalism but rather, see to what extent the established frameworks that were constructed for online journalism fit today's online news articles.

Based on the literature, an overview has been presented of what online journalism should do in order to allow citizens to take part in the public debate. The second step was to indicate what types of online journalism were (or were not) used on several Dutch online news sources. And third, what features were applied for the distribution of news. As we see with interactive features, they may play a key role in allowing users to directly speak out in the public sphere. The subject of this case study, the filmed execution of Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein, allowed us to focus on multimediality and hypertextuality as well, and highlight how video was offered by the news sources under question. Together these three main aspects of new media were a leading instrument for mapping the online news situation in the Netherlands. Following the analysis, the reviewed Dutch news media were re-grouped according to their features and journalistic approach. The news media group contains NU.nl, Nieuwnieuws.nl, Telegraaf and NOS Journaal. The opinion group holds Elsevier and NRC Wereld, the blog group consists of GeenStijl, Sargasso, Volkskrantblogs and eventually the user-generated content group holds Indymedia, Wikinews and Ekudos.

Currently we face some strong economic and audience-related tensions between traditional media and new media worldwide and in the Netherlands as well. Economic because the traditional mass media see their revenues decrease by the day, and audience related because in new media, as Jay Rosen (2006) claims on his weblog PressThink, control is moving form large, central, mass market organizations to individuals; the people. The analysis shows that many different news outlets bring news in different ways, each of them having a different role for the audience in mind. How most of these online news media relate to the public sphere has not yet been studied. This study has been a very basic start.

The central question, put forth in chapter 1 of this thesis, was:

In order to facilitate public debate, how do online news media utilize journalistic and new media characteristics to inform citizens?

A general answer would be: for citizens who go online, there are almost as many different ways to be informed as there are news media. Every reviewed website has its own mix of journalism and

entertainment, editorial content and user involvement, text and multimedia. Because of this enormous variety, every user should be aware of the strengths and shortcomings of various news media "genres".

5.1 The role of the audience

Whatever the medium is, whatever the format, whatever the type of journalism, at every news outlet there is information made available for a large Dutch speaking audience, which means there is input for the public debate. We see that because of this large amount of news outlets, the public debate around the execution of former dictator Saddam Hussein has splintered. Discussions take place on most of the reviewed websites, but most intensively at GeenStijl, Telegraaf and Elsevier. The websites in the News media group do feature discussion, but not with every article and not always in the same, direct way (sometimes via email). Media that rely upon content submission from users who are acting as participants (Indymedia, Volkskrantblogs, Ekudos, Wikinews), do not attract much discussion, though it is featured. Based on this study it may be concluded that these media reflect issues that are "out there" in the public sphere, either online or offline. In the first place they were put on the agenda by citizens, through online publication. However, as far as this case study is concerned, these media do not necessarily directly fuel public debate.

Distributing content has recently become one of the most promising Web characteristics, due to the success of web2.0 applications. Most of the reviewed news media provide features for emailing, downloading or printing content. Articles can be put on a website or blog, or sent to a user-generated website like Ekudos. In this manner news content is being copied and distributed by users. This means they actively engage and invest some of their time to make other people aware of a particular news event. This study does not offer explanations for such behavior, but chances are it has something to do with the controversial content of the videos. But still, spreading these videos and news articles within the public sphere makes that more people are confronted with them - through multiple channels, from multiple angles - and they are more likely to discuss this news item. As so it happens with media hype: a news event that receives a lot of media attention, in turn provokes interaction between the media and society, which is called "interactive momentum" (Vasterman 2004: 239).

We see the consequences of the increasing influence of users in the popularization of news by the use of multimedia wherever possible. At NU.nl, Nieuwnieuws, Telegraaf, NOS Journaal, GeenStijl, Sargasso and Ekudos, videos and audio are incorporated in many different ways. Traditional media try their best to integrate multimedia in their own news articles, while blogs and user-generated news media provide hyperlinks to video material on external websites. GeenStijl and Nieuwnieuws share a special content uploading site called Dumpert

(http://www.dumpert.nl), which follows the trend of publishing and sharing videos, initiated by Youtube (http://www.youtube.com).
News brought as information *and* entertainment turns out to gain most response from the public, as we witness with GeenStijl and Sargasso who bring news with lightness and humour using commentaries, jokes and funny pictures. From the success of Dutch television shows like RTL Boulevard, Man bijt hond and Hart van Nederland[24], and the increasing amount of gossip and lifestyle items in all news papers, we have learned that this approach is popular in traditional media as well.

5.2 Types of journalism

The advent of cyberspace will inevitably impact on the factors which shape how journalism gets done - and may well even colour how we define what journalism is" (Dahlgren in: Bardoel and Deuze 2001: 93). This prediction by Peter Dahlgren generally describes what is happening now. As explained in paragraph 2.4 we deal on the web with some different types of journalism. When editors are responsible for news content they use orientating, instrumental, monitoring or dialogical journalism (Deuze 2003). When content is submitted by ordinary citizens we usually speak of participatory journalism, but it could be dialogical journalism, when there is more editorial interference. At Ekudos for example, the contributions of citizens do not meet journalistic standards, so we would rather not use the term journalism at all. And that's where Dahlgren seems to have hit the bull's eye.

From the findings in paragraph 4.1.5 we see that orientating journalism was most extensively used by the News media group. According to this type of journalism these media provide general news for a general public; sometimes more compact (Nieuwnieuws) and sometimes more extensively (NOS Journaal). The Opinion group has also opted for this type of journalism. Wikinews and Indymedia are the only true participatory news outlets, as they allow the user to create any news article. At last we encounter a set of media outlets that do not match the existing types of online journalism. Sargasso and Geenstijl use some monitoring or even dialogical journalism, but these blogs choose voice and identity over the standards of journalism as described by Weaver and Cleveland (1993) and Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), saying journalists should care particulary about truth, relevance, comprehensiveness and should not judge.

[24] Broadcasted by RTL4, NCRV and SBS6.

5.3 Changes in journalism

In paragraph 2.4 and 2.5 some trends and tendencies within journalism have been described from the literature. However, not much is known yet on their validity. The findings have allowed us to partially test these claims for the online Dutch news media.

Has gatekeeping become gatewatching? Has there been a shift away from the mass media 'information-push' model to an individualised 'information-pull' approach? Bruns (2003) sees journalists as gatewatchers who point out to their readers which gates are most likely to open into useful resources. The answer is "no". As noted earlier, the "news media group" merely points out articles of their own, and so they still practice gatekeeping. Other media do refer to useful resources: general news articles from established media companies and the "must-see" videos. NRC Wereld, Wikinews and Indymedia have come up with some additional, more specific resources such as a blogpost, video material from different sources and critical articles. But taking into account the "high" expectations of Bruns and other academics mentioned in the theoretical chapter, this is not a spectacular score. We may also note, that most gatewatching is done by citizens or users themselves. Also the model used by Ekudos is based on the principle of gatewatching.

Another tendency was first brought up by Porteman (1999); is de-professionalisation at hand? And, because of that, is more moderation by professional journalists required (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2001)? It is not possible to make a general, grounded statement on this question. Some news sources work with highly professional standards (NOS Journaal) and professional staffs; others rely on citizens but still offer steady journalistic work (Wikinews, sometimes Indymedia). But citizens are also responsible for less professional content at sites like Volkskrantblogs and Ekudos and for these websites that means: varying quality.

The claim made by Bardoel (in Tumber 2001: 108) about more opportunities for instrumental journalism has, according to the findings, not resulted in a more extensive use of this type. But this should not be taken an undisputable fact; it could be explained by the chosen set of news outlets for this study. They all focus on a large, general public, and the information that is provided is, therefore, relatively general as well. Furthermore the type of news may have been a reason why orientating journalism was used most frequently. A controversial international event like this is generally reported using hard facts.

5.4 Discussion

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) provided the most complete description of what would be the original task of journalism. It should provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing. Truth is the most important value and citizens are the audience that must be

served. Furthermore it must be independent and provide a forum for public criticism and comment. Journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant, and they should keep the news in proportion and make it comprehensive. These claims can barely be measured objectively. For instance, what is significant or relevant these days? Who decides what kind of information citizens need to be proper participants in a democracy? This raises the question: how much value should we grant to these standards if they are not verifiable?

Only with other research methods like content analysis and interviews with journalists, more specific conclusions about this topic might be drawn. However from the findings of this case study we can generally say that not every news outlet puts these standards into practice. Generally, younger and independent websites are more innovative (Sargasso, GeenStijl, Indymedia, Ekudos) than the traditional news providers; they engage in experimenting with interactive features and sometimes use multimedia as a substitute for text. Are they so courageous because they do not feel they are restricted by journalistic standards? As we see from the content and features it appears the most traditional media make efforts to act upon the standards (NOS is on the frontline followed by Wikinews, Elsevier, NRC Wereld en Telegraaf).

Contrary to the working methods of these media, we notice a shift towards online news that is offered in a different, less complete way: snack sized. This is reflected by the large number of websites with photo and video as their main content that we encountered during this study (such as Dumpert, Ekudos, Dailymotion, Totallycrap, Clipstop)[25]. Sargasso and GeenStijl offer news in one or two sentences, sometimes compiled by hyperlinked sources. Perhaps in these cases it is better not to speak of news sources or news media, but of “news content providing media”.

This tendency might be a startling answer to one of the sub questions put forth in the first chapter: are the news outlets complementary? They may be, depending on what types of information one prefers. On the basis of our findings, a rough indication on what kinds of news content are brought to us by the different media would be the following:

Type:	Mainly offered by:
Orientating news, multimedia	The news media group
References	Wikinews, Indymedia, Sargasso
Multimedia, commentaries, jokes	The blog group and Ekudos
Opinion, voice	Elsevier, Indymedia, the blog group

For this case study there were no websites that successfully served all categories. The website with the largest range of videos (Ekudos) fails to provide an orientating news story. And even the most complete news stories (for example on NOS Journaal) do not contain opinion and humour.

[25] Even traditional media organization NOS offers a video website: NOS Headlines (http://www.nosheadlines.nl).

This connects with claims from Bardoel (2002), Broeder (2005), Fisher et al (1996) and Keane (1995) about the public sphere only existing as a segmented, diverse model where people connect and discuss issues that matter to them in so-called mini public spheres. Debate can take place on almost every reviewed Dutch news site, but the discussions usually cover one news item. This makes it difficult to speak of *the* public debate. These discussions cover just one news event, generally each is taking place among its own user group, resulting in numerous public debates. Still, sometimes they may overlap. Take for example Sargasso linking to a video on Dailymotion: a French website were videos are played and discussed. The Sargasso audience can join or be influenced by the public debate going on at Dailymotion. Considering the overall internet landscape, where people join multiple social communities, social networks and the blogosphere, debate is everywhere and certain social issues or news events will cross all these mini public spheres and enable citizens to encounter all sorts of opinions.

All in all, the type of journalism that has been practiced since the printing press was invented is something we still need. It still forms the basis for the masses' news gathering on the Internet. The democratic processes that the Internet facilitates have lead to complementary types of content that are now highly valued. So it seems the often problematic relationship between journalists and non-journalists is reflected in online news content; take for example the "are blogs journalism?" discussion.[26] The question is not any longer about when to speak of "real" journalism and when not, the problem is that the new types of content are sometimes seen as a threat to, or a substitute for journalism. Right now, at their best they are additions. The media landscape has become fragmented, the public sphere has become fragmented and so has online news.

The audience may benefit from this by using RSS-feeds or create an individual bookmark page to assimilate self-chosen news media or "news content providing media". As long as these different news types will exist next to each other, and user-friendly software allows citizens to manage their own media online, this development merely adds to diversity and freedom of choice. However, getting the attention of a *worldwide* public and reaching across all the mini public spheres, may soon be exclusive to news content that is both controversial and on video.

5.5 Future research

This explorative study points out many directions for which more research is necessary. Online news is a relatively new area for academic work. PEW Internet (2006: IV) found that in the United States online news is dominated by the large companies that also own the traditional media, while foreign news and NGO's are a niche in the market. For the Netherlands, such a large-scaled study that provides a complete map of Dutch online news has not been done.

[26] See for example Dasselaar 2006: The fifth estate. On the journalistic aspects of the Dutch blogosphere.

Just a few more examples. A comparative analysis of readers' comments on different topics or among different news media would be very interesting, as it would shed light on what news is valued most by the public, what topics provoke most discussion and how that relates to the (professional, economical or ethical) aims of the online news media.

Relationships between citizen journalism and professional journalism could be examined on many levels, such as photo journalism on Skoeps (http://www.skoeps.nl) and public debate on BBC's Have your say (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/default.stm). To find out more about online news in the near future, it is useful to start studying the behavior of early adopters who gather news individually through for example RSS feeds, iGoogle (http://www.google.com/ig), Pageflakes (http://www.pageflakes.com) and Netvibes (http://www.netvibes.com).

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APPENDIX I

Code book for analysis as described in Chapter 3.

Interactivity

Readers' comments on news article
Forum / other option for discussion
Reader can publish articles
Reader can upload photos/videos
"Rate this article"
"Mail a friend"
RSS
Trackback
Save to a content sharing site
Editorial staff can be contacted
Misc.

Hypertextuality

Internal hyperlinks
- To other news articles
- To a blog

External hyperlinks
- To an individual website
- To an organisation
- To an online news source
- To an offline news source
- To a blog
- To a news group/forum

Tags
Misc.

Multimediality

Use of video - intern (on the same page)
Link to video - extern (on another website)

Use of photos
Use of audio
Print option
Advertising (video, banner, text) disrupts article?
Misc.

Journalism

Author is mentioned
Sources are mentioned
Editorial updates/revisions are mentioned
User updates/revisions are mentioned
Original article located elsewhere (here is a copy/reference)
Copyright

Additional journalistic questions:

Does the article contain an opinion?
Is context provided?
Is the article balanced with multiple sources, or voices?
Misc.

Videos

Where was the video found?
Where was it originally published?
When was it published?
What does the footage show?
How is it accessible? Direct or via a link?
Does it come with a description or warning?
How many times has it been viewed?
Can it be commented on?
Can it be downloaded?
Can it be rated?
Can it be emailed?
Misc.

APPENDIX II

Analysis results for the technical and journalistic features per source. A division has been made into the features applied in general, and specifically on news articles. Every first article covers the execution of Saddam Hussein, every second article is about the appearance of the illegal execution video.

1. Nu.nl

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*		
Upload pictures by user			*
RSS			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*	*	
Hyperlinks to other sources		*	
Video (internal)	*		
Photos	*	*	
Audio (computer generated audio file of this article)		*	
Advertising disrupts article	*	*	
Time of revision	*	*	

Articles

1. Saddam Hussein opgehangen
http://www.nu.nl/news/930339/23/rss/Doodvonnis_tegen_Saddam_Hussein_voltrokken.html
2. Nieuwe executievideo toont lachende Saddam
http://www.nu.nl/news/931209/50/rss/Nieuwe_executievideo_toont_lachende_Saddam.html

Findings

- This website does not deal with every news item in the same way. The article on Saddam's death shows readers' comments that were send in by email and a selection is shown when you follow the link "lezersreacties" (readers' comments). The second article does not have a comment-feature at all.
- Only the second article has a button for spoken text, for those who are blind or unable to read. The text is read out aloud by a computer, so there is a human voice but pronunciation and tone make it clear that the speaker obviously does not know what she is saying.

- The first article is interrupted by a video commercial and a text advertisement, the second only by a text advertisement. Both articles have photos and the first also contains three videos that can be viewed through this websites' own media player.
- Furthermore they both show a hyperlinked list of related articles on NU.nl. Readers are able to contact the editing staff and send pictures via an online form.
- The sources used for the articles are mentioned, which at the same time informs readers about who holds the copyright. Information for the first article came from ANP, NU.nl and Novum Nieuws, the second copyright is in the hands of Maarten Nannes, editor at NU.nl.
- The final remarkable thing about NU.nl is that with every article the time of its last revision is stated, but not *what* has been edited. However for the first reviewed article I could tell from the search results that the title had been changed ("Doodvonnis tegen Saddam Hussein voltrokken" became "Saddam Hussein opgehangen") as both titles showed up in the list but linked to the very same article.

Brief conclusion: The editorial staff do not allow much interaction with readers but value their assistance. NU.nl is not very consistent in offering features for comments and audio, and advertisements.

Journalism

Orientating journalism as it simply provides a general public with the most general information.

2. Nieuwnieuws

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*	*	
RSS			*
Contact editorial staff (at GeenStijl)			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*		
Video (external)	*	*	
Photos	*	*	
Advertising disrupts article	*	*	
PDA content			*

Articles 1.

Saddam Hussein geëxecuteerd

http://www.nieuwnieuws.nl/archives/2006/12/saddam_hussein_geexecuteerd.html

2. Executie saddam met mobiel gefilmd

http://www.nieuwnieuws.nl/archives/2007/01/executie_saddam_met_mobiel_gef.html

Findings

- This site is not very in favor of interactivity, although readers' comments are consequently shown.
- New visitors of this website may soon become aware that Nieuwnieuws is a "sister" of GeenStijl, by referring to it constantly. Contacting the editorial staff goes via GeenStijl as they run both sites, and watching videos is done at Dumpert.nl, a so-called dump box for photos, videos and audio files, all uploaded by users. The identity that GeenStijl communicates may be typified as rebellious, young, innovative and daring, while Nieuwnieuws keeps its tone a little bit more serious. Oneresult of this cooperation may be that, for example, the bylines of the videos conflict with the overall tone of Nieuwnieuws.
- Nieuwnieuws uses photos with every article, and articles are usually interrupted by advertisements. In the first article this is a video and a banner, in the second it is a video and some GoogleAds. The choice of the video does lead to confusion; because it does not clarify that it is a commercial. It starts with a classroom of children that, at first glance, might have something to do with the news item.
- Sources were not mentioned with the articles, but Nieuwnieuws states elsewhere on their site that they use ANP as a regular source and in the first article CNN was mentioned as well. Instead of the name of the author, at the bottom of the article we can only read "Redactie" (Editorial staff).

Brief conclusion: Nieuwnieuws only appreciates a little bit of participation from the audience and in turn offers RSS and even PDA updates. But it seems somewhat inappropriate how they offer the videos on a related website that has a more outspoken identity than Nieuwnieuws.

Journalism

Nieuwnieuws offers orientating journalism.

3. Telegraaf

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*		
Mail-a-friend			*
RSS			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*		
Video (internal)	*		
Photos	*	*	

Print option	*

Articles

1. Saddam is dood
http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/56123731/Doodvonnis_tegen_Saddam_Hussein_voltrokken.html?p=2,1
2. Saddam in laatste momenten bespot
http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/article56150001.ece?cid=rss

Findings

- De Telegraaf offers opportunities to comment only on the first article. Overall this site offers RSS, mail a friend and print options and users may contact the staff.
- Hyperlinked related articles are provided, but no other references.
- The first article includes one video that can be played in Telegraaf's own mediaplayer, as for photos, stills from this video are used. There are no advertisements included in the articles.
- Contrary to a printed news paper article, these do not mention the name of the author nor press agency or any other source. Telegraaf holds all copyrights.

Brief conclusion: Telegraaf seems to have taken their news paper articles online with only a few basic features added, but in a journalistic sense falling short (compared with print newspapers *and* online news outlets).

Journalism

Telegraaf offers orientating journalism.

4. NOS Journaal

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Forum			*
Mail-a-friend			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*	*	
Hyperlink to blog	*	*	
Video (internal)	*	*	
Audio (short interviews)	*	*	
Photos	*	*	
Print option			*

Articles

1. Saddam Hussein opgehangen in Bagdad
http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2006/12/30/30/301206_saddamdood.html
2. Saddam Hussein bespot op schavot
http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2006/12/31/311206_saddam_nieuwbeeld.html

Findings

- This site does not offer readers' comments directly with articles but there is a forum where news topics can be discussed. Unfortunately there is no direct link to the specific forum thread with the article, so users have to do more clicking. Interactivity is limited to an option to contact editorial staff and a mail-a-friend button.
- NOS Journaal probably works the best when it comes to hypertextuality. With these news articles they present an "Irak dossier" (Iraq files) in the overall right column. It contains nineteen articles and a reference to a Bagdad weblog.
- The *Irak dossier* adds up to multimediality as well. It contains two audio files with short interviews with correspondents in Bagdad and the United States. There are two video files as well, directly viewable via a player of omroep.portal.nl. Both (partly) show television broadcasts by NOS.
- The reviewed articles contain photos and on these pages the most directly viewable video is provided. There is a player directly on the page of the news article and the user only has to press play to watch the censored images of Saddam's hanging.

Brief conclusion: with the *Irak dossier* the site succeeds in providing context to their articles in words, sounds and moving images. Also the video is very accessible and comes with a correct introduction/warning. Discussion or comment opportunities are not offered in a direct way because it takes place in a forum that the article does not directly refer to.

Journalism

NOS Journaal offers orientating journalism, but it comes closer to instrumental journalism than the other traditional and Internet based news sources, because with the *Irak dossier* NOS tries to provide context and background to 'hard news' which people can use to more carefully shape their opinion. It is instrumental because we could say NOS offers functional or specialized information. Depending on their specific interests users might only view the parts of the dossier that are most interesting or useful to them.

5. Elsevier

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*	*	
"Rate this article"			*
Mail-a-friend			*
RSS			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*	*	
Tags			*
Photos	*	*	
Print option			*
Hyperlinks to other news sources		*	

Articles

1. Iraakse ex-dictator Saddam Hoessein opgehangen
http://www.elsevier.nl/nieuws/buitenland/artikel/asp/artnr/132434/index.htm
2. Honende laatste woorden voor Saddam
http://www.elsevier.nl/nieuws/buitenland/artikel/asp/artnr/132623/zoeken/ja/index.html

Findings

- Elsevier appears to be more interactive than the other traditional and online news outlets. Besides comments, RSS and mail-a-friend features it enables users to rate articles.
- Hypertextuality is represented by a list of related articles; but they are all from the past. The articles are tagged as well and the second article has some references to online sources.
- Elsevier does not provide any videos or direct links to them. One picture per article and a print button are the only multimedia aspects.
- When it comes to journalism, Elsevier does better. The authors are mentioned and clicking on their names leads us to a page that shows a short bio and a photo. The copyright belongs to Reed Business.

Brief conclusion: Elsevier offers some context to the written article (through hyperlinking) but it is not presented in a multimedia surrounding. Interactivity features are more numerous than with the traditional media, but still limited.

Journalism

Elsevier offers orientating journalism, and the hyperlinked external sources give it a hint of instrumental journalism too.

6. Indymedia

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments (no comments were posted)	*	*	
Reader can upload articles			*
Reader can upload photos			*
Reader can upload audio			*
Reader can upload video			*
RSS (depending on country/region)			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Reader can upload a translation			*
Support Indymedia/get involved/volunteer			*
Hyperlinks to other sources	*	*	
Hyperlinks to newsgroup	*		

Articles

1. "THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH" IS EXECUTED
http://publish.indymedia.org/en/2006/12/877604.shtml
2. Saddam Snuff Videos the Darkest US Propaganda Game of All
http://publish.indymedia.org/en/2007/01/877830.shtml

Findings

- Users have all the freedom to shape their own news articles and upload them; they determine, almost completely, what's on Indymedia. So this type of online news belongs to a category different from those we have encountered so far.
- Readers' comments are not frequently used; even a news event that gains worldwide attention does not bring about any comments. This could be explained by Indymedia's poor navigation and slightly outdated design which do not make it attractive to spend extra time on the site. Another reason could be that Indymedia is a decentralized news network that aims to "empower the local" ('Misnomer' 2005), and therefore its users might be more likely to comment when directly involved or when the news affects their own community.
- For both reviewed articles, the content was copied from another website were it appeared earlier (this was done by the same author). Nevertheless, hyperlinking is used most extensively, also to present extra sources that use different perspectives.
- Multimedia features were not enclosed in the reviewed articles. Indymedia states that content has no copyright unless the author says otherwise.

Brief conclusion: The contents of this medium are created by users, with only minimal editorial interventions. But interactivity, for the most part goes one-way: users provide input, but emailing an article or sending it elsewhere on the Web are not options. Many messages are copied from another web source.

Journalism

Indymedia offers participatory journalism. All the news is presented by users. The role of editors is very limited: they only remove (parts of) posts if necessary and coordinate the composition of the main pages. It must be noted that the reviewed articles were not solely published on Indymedia but on other websites as well.

7. NRC Wereld

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*	-	
RSS		-	*
Trackbacking		-	*
Hyperlinks to other sources	*	-	

Articles

1. De laatste minuten van Saddam
http://weblogs.nrc.nl/weblog/wereld/2006/12/31/de-laatste-minuten-van-saddam/
2. -

Findings

- This blog does give publishing credit to its authors, they are NRC editors. They are not available for contact via NRC Wereld. Readers can comment or trackback via their own website, but still we do not find any other interactive features that are commonly used in the blogosphere; such as mail-a-friend, save to content sharing websites and article rating.
- NRC Wereld does hyperlinking but it makes the mistake of providing a link to the homepage of Iraqslogger.com, from where the two promised videos cannot be found. Only one video on Iraqslogger could be traced via Google which was the uncensored amateur video, so without knowing the authors provided their public with only this video.

Brief conclusion: Through hyperlinking and by highlighting different perspectives NRC Wereld does cover the subject in a balanced way. Still it does not function very differently from a printed article due to incorrect hyperlinking and limited interactivity.

Journalism

As Dasselaar (2005) concluded, in general Dutch blogs are not so journalistic. But can we what journalism is there on a so-called newspaper blog? NRC Wereld was characterized as such because it is maintained by three NRC editors and it provides online additions to their usual work. This blog offers orientating journalism, and the hyperlinked external sources give it a hint of instrumental journalism too.

8. Volkskrantblogs

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments			*
Forum			*
Reader can upload articles			*
Reader can upload photos			*
Reader can upload audio			*
Reader can upload video			*
Mail-a-friend			*
RSS			*
Contact author/editorial staff			*
Recommend to other users			*
Hyperlinks to related articles			*
Hyperlinks to other blogposts			*
Hyperlinks to other blogs			*
Tags			*

Articles

Tens of blog postings cover this topic. A general analysis has been done.

Findings

- Just as with Indymedia, the user- in this case a "Volkskrantblogger", has a great deal of freedom. As long as the posts meet the general conditions of VK Blogs and do not contain content with a copyright. However these conditions are not taken too seriously it appears, as many blogs contain pictures that are not free from copyright. The blogs have all the interactive features that you can find at most (popular) blogs these days.
- The blog portal earns points on hypertextuality: every individual blog has a blogroll and it also shows the most recent and most valued posts of the author. The portal adds context

by categorizing the blogs, making all of them searchable, showing the most recent posts and recommending posts.

- The multimedia aspects all depend on the bloggers' contributions.
- Although they share the same publishing method, VK Blogs differ a lot from Indymedia which features news by citizens. These bloggers offer news too, but in a very personal way. They usually provide more information about themselves than regular journalists do and readers can directly contact them.
- Although the portal helps to disclose the contributions, the blogger has to make sure there is a base audience for his/her writing.

Brief conclusion: Very interactive and hyperlinked. Many aspects are featured, the blogger decides whether to exploit them. The personal contributions make blogs into a specific genre that does not necessarily include journalism (Dasselaar 2006). The portal helps to disclose the contributions.

Journalism

Contrary to newspaper blogs like NRC Wereld these blogs are personal blogs, although many bloggers write about current affairs. Often they create a mix of facts and opinion. Altogether these blogs can be a form of participatory journalism.

8. GeenStijl

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments	*	*	
RSS			*
Save to a content sharing site			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Tags			*
Video (internal)	*	*	
Photos	*	*	

Articles

1. Saddam Hoessein 1937-2006
http://www.geenstijl.nl/mt/archieven/045281.html
2. Saddam & het moment
http://www.geenstijl.nl/mt/archieven/045293.html

Findings

- The content on GeenStijl is mostly based on photos and videos, usually large in size and accompanied by some sarcastic, strong and innovative lines by the editors.
- Video is offered via Dumpert.nl, a dump box where GeenStijl-users can upload multimedia that has its own features and a communication style that resembles GeenStijls sarcasm, innovation and rebellion.
- GeenStijl receives many comments, but further interaction is limited to sending tips and posting the video's on a content sharing site (Ekudos). Still the audience is everything but powerless here, in their postings the editors show an awareness of what their readers want and likewise adjust the tone of voice, use of language, choice of information. It is likely that it works the other way around as well, the use of language by GeenStijl has been adopted by their readers. For example, both editors and users make use of newly invented words like "reaguurders" (which means "readers that leave a comment"), we may assume there is a symbiosis where both do invent *and* adopt words like this.

Brief conclusion: GeenStijl keeps a close eye on their users and uses their opinion/feedback to create its own identity. Multimedia is high, other features limited.

Journalism

GeenStijl likes to think of its own website as an "actualiteiten site" (current affairs site), but it has all the characteristics of a weblog and that is how it is usually referred to. For GeenStijl there are both reasons to speak of journalism and to not speak of it. Firstly, the editors are former professional journalists so why wouldn't they still be while working for a different medium? The topics are all national current affairs that can be found in all Dutch news papers. But the reviewed articles show that Geenstijl offers its readers facts brought in a very personal manner that is typical for this website. The opinionated tone of voice is what separates blogging from journalism as it was described in the literature.

However GeenStijl makes use of two main types of journalism: monitoring and dialogical journalism, because the editors respond to their readers' requests and opinions. In the second news article the bloggers reflect on the requests for the uncensored video of Saddam's execution, and in response they put the video on their site and invite users to share their opinion on it.

9. Sargasso

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments (currently closed at both articles)	*	*	
Mail-a-friend			*
RSS			*
Trackbacking (currently closed)			*

Save to a content sharing site			*
Contact editorial staff			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*		
Hyperlinks to other news sources	*		
Tags			*
Video (external)	*	*	
Photos	*		

Articles

1. Logo des Tages - Saddam

http://www.sargasso.nl/archief/2006/12/29/logo-des-tages-saddam/

2. Volledige versie executie Saddam

http://www.sargasso.nl/archief/2006/12/31/volledige-versie-executie-saddam/

Findings

- Sargasso offers an editorial mix in which hypertext plays an important role. The reader does not get factual information from the posts but from the hyperlinked resources (traditional media online) referred to via links. Also the videos are offered via hyperlinks.
- Instead of creating a sole posting for the news on the death of Saddam, Sargasso chooses to update an older posting (that is about the Sargasso logo in “Saddam-style”). The appearance of an amateur video has its own posting but both are very brief. Also Sargasso shows a strong identity through its tone of voice, use of language and it makes many references to its own content.
- Pings (trackbacking) and comments are currently closed, as it seems users can only comment on postings from the current month.
- Sargasso publishes its content under a Creative Commons liscence, which means that it may be re-used as long as the original source is mentioned too.

Brief conclusion: It is fair to say Sargasso is playing with hypertext more than any other news source. Readers are dared to inform themselves by clicking trough and reading comments. Sargasso is being creative and open-minded, and we see this reflected in their postings and creative commons copyright policy.

Journalism

Sargasso could be compared to GeenStijl in a journalistic manner, but from the reviewed material it is difficult to calculate how much influence readers have. There might be a hint of monitoring journalism, but blogging is still the most suitable typification as Sargasso does have a personal touch. Other arguments are: they leave the actual task of journalism to traditional sources: the first

blogpost refers to MSNBC and Reuters. And because so little text is used, Sargasso relies mostly on hyperlinked resources, photos and video.

10. Wikinews

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments (English Wikinews only)		*	
Discussion			*
Reader can upload articles			*
Reader can upload photos			*
Reader can upload video			*
Reader can upload audio			*
RSS			*
Hyperlinks to related articles	*	*	
Hyperlinks to other sources	*	*	
Tags			*
Videos (external)		*	
Photos	*	*	
Editable by all users			*

Articles

1. Saddam Hussein geëxecuteerd (nl.wikinews.org)
http://nl.wikinews.org/wiki/Saddam_Hoessein_ge%C3%ABxecuteerd
2. Iraqi government to investigate Saddam video (en.wikinews.org)
http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Iraqi_government_to_investigate_Saddam_video

Findings

- The process of news writing is open and every user can view the contributions and changes made by others. There is room for discussion but it is meant to be a service that helps the Wikinews community create better news articles. The news event itself is not to be discussed here. The English version has a readers' comments option, the Dutch does not.
- Logically the role of the user is big; he/she writes directly in the source code of Wikinews. But in practice the group of writers is small, to a large extent the Dutch article was written by only two people. On the English version the editing process had been stopped, the article is static now.

- There is context offered through words in the article that were made in to hyperlinks. These refer to encyclopedia articles on Wikipedia and offer basic explanation or context to the news. The English Wikinews version has many more references, both to Wikipedia and to other sources.
- Through the English article, two videos were found when consulting one of the references; on Wikinews itself only some photos are provided.

Brief conclusion: News content is published by a small group of users in a democratic way. The english version does especially well in offering context through Wikipedia tags and references to traditional online sources. Multimedia are optional and the English version is more interactive as it allows readers' comments.

Journalism

Wikinews is a true form of participatory journalism, as it is created by multiple users who can discuss their "editorial" decisions online. Anyone is free to join the dialogue. The studied articles were of an orientating nature as well. They provide the basic news facts to a general public and offer some references, or background information via Wikipedia.

11. Ekudos

Features	Art. 1	Art. 2	General
Readers' comments			*
Reader can upload articles (only from Web)			*
Reader can upload photos (only from Web)			*
Reader can upload audio (only from Web)			*
Reader can upload video (only from Web)			*
Mail-a-friend			*
"Rate this article"			*
Rating (kudos) from your own website			*
Contact editorial staff (only after login)			*
Create a profile			*
Make friends			*
Win karma			*
Video (external)			*
Advertising disrupts article			*

Articles

More than ten posts cover this topic. A general analysis has been done.

Findings

- Ekudos does not make news or create news, it only provides access to content elsewhere on the web. References are made and briefly introduced by users, for whom Ekudos is also a social platform because you can create a profile, make friends and win karma (the percentage of your articles that made it to the front page).
- Interactivity is extra high because it works on two levels. Through the Ekudos website users can rate an article by giving it a “kudo”, but they can also put the kudos rating feature on their own website or blog which enables their visitors to do the same thing.
- Ekudos users seem keen on multimediality, as on this topic there were four videos posted. The videos can be found on blogs or video sharing sites. Besides the videos, the news event of saddam’s execution was only covered on Ekudos with one textual news article. This is not very surprising as most contributions are about technology or funny trivia.
- Copyright remains with the original source, as all contributions are viewed “on location”.

Brief conclusion: Ekudos belongs to a genre that is entirely different from the other Dutch news sources: existing content on the web is made accessible by users and even so valued by users. This is a social process; users have a profile and are rewarded for helping make contributions popular. Ekudos is doing well in multimedia because video format is the most popular among users.

Journalism

Although at Ekudos users determine what is on the news agenda and they link the actual content to Ekudos, these activities do not match any of the existing types of online journalism. But contrary to Indymedia for example, not much writing is done here. Even so it is not even possible to submit an article that is not on the Web yet. So Ekudos acts most of all as a database with popular news-like entries in categories like technology, internet, news and opinion, entertainment, and science.

APPENDIX III

Complete analyses of the presentation of the videos.

NU.nl

NU.nl has links in its article (http://www.nu.nl/news/930339/23/rss/Doodvonnis_tegen_Saddam_Hussein_voltrokken.html) and by clicking on them a new window opens, showing the video player. In this screen are also other news videos (the most recent) which can be viewed. The three videos on the death of Saddam Hussein were not online anymore so they could not be included in table 1.

The first video is accompanied by the following text: *BAGDAD - De voormalige Iraakse dictator Saddam Hussein is zaterdagmorgen vroeg opgehangen. Hij stierf aan een galg, naar verluidt in een van de militaire centra in de hoofdstad Bagdad waar zijn regime gevangenen martelde*, translating as: *The former Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein was hanged Saturday morning. He died on a gibbet, assumed to be in one of the military centers in the capital Bagdad where his regime used to torture prisoners*.

The second by: *De Iraakse televisie heeft laten zien waarop de voormalige Iraakse dictator Saddam Hussein de strop om zijn nek gelegd krijgt door bewakers die maskers dragen*, translating as: *The Iraqi television has shown how a strap was put around the neck of former Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein by security guards wearing masks.*

The third by: *BAGDAD - Een commercieel Iraaks televisiestation heeft zaterdagmiddag beelden getoond van het lijk van de terechtgestelde dictator Saddam Hussein. Het was in een wit laken gewikkeld maar het hoofd was zichtbaar*, translating as: *On Saturday afternoon a commercial Iraqi television channel showed images of the body of the executed dictator Saddam Hussein. It was wrapped in a white blanket but the head was visible*.

The user has to press the play button, so a video would not be shown automatically. Therefore these descriptions may function as a warning for the images that will follow. NU.nl does not show how many views these videos received and there are no special features with them, users only have the option of emailing the link for the video.

Nieuwnieuws and GeenStijl

Nieuwnieuws has links that direct to Dumpert, the upload center of GeenStijl, so this brief analysis of the videos shown on Dumpert counts for both news websites. The video of Saddam prior to the execution (http://dump.geenstijl.nl/mediabase/8369/84fdf889/index.html) is accompanied by the following text: *Saddam gaat HANGEN. -edit: Het money shot zit er niet bij*. And below the video player: *Gaat u daar maar even staan*, translating as: *Saddam goes HANGING. –edit: The money shot is not there*, and: *You can just stand over there.*

Obviously the comments are supposed to be funny and they function as more of a warning of what is not going to be seen, than to really warn the user about explicit content. GeenStijl assumes that its users want to see the explicit content as well. Nieuwsnieuws does not have the sharp edge of GeenStijl but shares the same video portal so if they have the same group of readers there is no problem, but others that read Nieuwnieuws might be surprised by these comments.

This video itself has logos of the Iraqi television channel and Fox News on it, and in the upper left corner is the GeenStijl logo. There is a mail-a-friend button. Displayed is also the amount of views that this video received, as well as comments by readers, amount of Kudos (rating on Ekudos) and a few tags.

Dumpert also provides the uncensored amateur video (http://www.dumpert.nl/mediabase/8387/abe6ea1c/index.html) that is again offered by both websites. It is accompanied by the text: *Saddam. DEAUD. Komt-ie dan he*, translating as: *Saddam. DEAD. There he goes*. A hyperlink below the video player reads: *KRAK! Oops, het is wat druk download 'm anders!*, translating as: *KRAK! Oops, it's kinda busy download it elsewhere!* And so this hyperlink refers to the same video in another GeenStijl-location in case the server is too busy. Also here the GeenStijl logo is placed in the left corner and besides tags the other features mentioned are present as well.

The last video on Dumpert (http://dump.geenstijl.nl/mediabase/8370/ad22f520/index.html) is only on GeenStijl, not on Nieuwnieuws. It shows the body of Saddam after the execution. On the viewing screen there is the following text: *Saddam is echt dood. De eerste beelden van de oud-dictatort die vannacht gedwongen stopte met roken*, translating as: *Saddam is really dead. The first images of the former dictator that last night by force of circumstance quit smoking*. It shows logos and subtitles by an Iraqi television channel and CNN, and again there is a GeenStijl logo in the upper left corner. The other features are present as well, except for tags.

Telegraaf

Telegraaf does not offer the videos anymore, so these could not be included in table 1either. There is still a pictogram of a video camera in the article (http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/56123731/Doodvonnis_tegen_Saddam_Hussein_ voltrokken.html?p=2,1) and by clicking on it a window opens. Besides the player there is one line of text that reads: *Beelden executie Saddam verspreid*, translating as: *Videos of Saddam execution were distributed.* Telegraaf has not included other features for videos, but it is remarkable that the pictures placed in the article were screen shots of the official video from the Iraqi television and CNN. In the second article, Telegraaf mentions the appearance of an amateur video of Saddam's execution, but does not point out where it may be viewed.

NOS Journaal

Directly within the news article there is a video player (http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2006/12/30/301206_saddamdood.html). On the player is stated what video will be shown: *Censored amateur images of Saddam's execution*. Only after pressing the play button does the video appear; censored means that when Saddam falls the screen goes black. It is the only video were Dutch subtitles are provided.

Furthermore NOS Journaal offers two links to videos that are part of the Iraq dossier. They both open in a special video window were no features are found except for more information about the media player and links to other general NOS websites.

The first is the official *Saddam prior to the execution* video, as how it was shown on Iraqi television and by NOS on Dutch television. The logos of both news channels are visible. It contains the following description: *Saddam Hoessein is opgehangen. De Iraakse justitie voltrok het doodsvonnis tegen de Iraakse oud-dictator om zes uur vanochtend, plaatselijke tijd. Het was toen vier uur bij ons. De Iraakse staatstelevisie vertoonde zes uur later beelden van de ophanging*", translating as: *Saddam Hussein was hanged. The Iraqi justice executed the Iraqi former dictator at six this morning, local time. It was then four AM our time. The Iraqi state television showed images of the hanging six hours later.* There is a textual link that reads: *More on the Video of the execution* (as this video is titled), but it refers to the same video again.

The second video in the *Irak dossier* shows the broadcast by NOS on this topic, it includes images from the Iraqi television: a newsreader, people yelling joyfully on the streets of Baghdad, Saddam in court, the head of the team of Saddam's lawyers, a conversation between the NOS news reader and their correspondent in Amman, and a lot of archived video material about Saddam and Iraq. The text that accompanies this video is the same, only the last sentence is missing here.

Elsevier

Elsevier only refers to the main page of Aljazeera (http://www.aljazeera.com) as a place where a video could be found, but it remains unclear which video, and which page on this website the author is referring to.

Indymedia

The reviewed articles did not provide any hyperlinked or direct references to the videos.

NRC Wereld

This blog offers a reference to Iraqslogger that at the time of this study only offered one video (http://www.iraqslogger.com/index.php/post/445/Full_Uncut_Video_of_Saddams_Execution), while

at NRC it was said there were two. Again the uncensored version of the execution was there. It is shown in a Google video player, accompanied by the text: *Full, Uncut Video of Saddam's Execution. Graphic, Grainy Video Taken From Cellphone Camera of Witness. Posted on Google Video: Saddam Hussein's execution as seen from the cellphone camera of a witness. It's grainy, shaky, and graphic, including Saddam hanging from the noose. The transcript of what's heard on the video (from our colleague Zeyad)[…]*. This transcript is a service provided by Iraqslogger, the only other feature is an email-this-post option and two links to the latest news on *causalities in Iraq* and *Iraqi government*. The URL of this website was present throughout the video.

Sargasso

With the first post Sargasso refers to two videos, both found on Dailymotion. Both are only viewable by a logged in user who is over 18-years old, as the content was flagged as explicit by other users. The first video (http://www.dailymotion.com/cluster/news/video/xvxgi_saddam-hussein-a-ete-pendu) is a compilation of official television news images including Saddam just before he was hanged, people on the streets of Baghdad and clip of CNN's Breaking News. The logo on the screen tells us this comes from Iraqi television. It was accompanied by the warning: *This video may offend* and a French description: *Saddam Hussein a été pendu. L'exécution du dictateur ce samedi peu avant 6 heures du matin a été filmée ; les premières images viennent d'être diffusée à la télévision irakienne*, translating as: *Saddam Hussein was hanged. The execution of the dictator that took place on Saturday a little before 6 in the morning has been filmed. The first images were distributed by the Iraqi television.* Dailymotion shows the amount of views the video received, how many times it was added to favourites, tags. Rating and commenting are featured as well.

The second Dailymotion video (http://www.dailymotion.com/search/saddam/video/xw4t8_ saddam-hussein-execution) shows a similar compilation by Fox News. It also had the warning *This video may offend* and the same features. With their second post on Saddam's execution, Sargasso offers the same video via a link to Google video (http://video.google.nl/videoplay?docid=-2269346183614501083).

Ekudos

This first post on Ekudos is titled *Volledige, grote versie executie Saddam Hussein (Full,big screen version of execution Saddam Hussein)*, which is a variation on the title of the second Sargasso post. So via Sargasso (http://www.sargasso.nl/archief/2006/12/31/volledige-versie-executie-saddam/) the user finds the same video on Google video (http://video.google.nl/videoplay?docid=-2269346183614501083).

The second post is titled Nieuwe *video executie Saddam*. It is found on Totallycrap (http://www.totallycrap.com/videos/videos_new_saddam_video/NL), the user-submitted content page of VKmag (http://www.vkmag.com) better known as the Dutch weblog Volkomen Kut. Both the weblog and the video upload page are comparable to GeenStijl and Dumpert. The video is accompanied by the text: *Nieuwe video van Saddam, waarop duidelijk zijn 90 graden afgebogen nek is te zien en een gapende wond met bloed*, translating as: *New video of Saddam, on which his neck is clearly visible bent 80 degrees and a bleeding wound.* There are no logos on this video, but it is clearly the same version as shown on Iraqi and American TV channels. It does not automatically start to play. Via hyperlinks users can email the link, or place a link to this video on their own website. Furthermore it can be added to a range of content sharing/rating websites such as Ekudos, Digg, Technorati, Del.icio.us and so on.

The third post is titled *Saddam The Unseen Video.* It is the only video that can be played on the Ekudos site via a Metacafe player (http://www.ekudos.nl/artikel/5716/saddam_the_unseen _video), while for the other three the user is transferred to another website/domain to watch it. *Nieuwe video van Sadam*, or: *New video of Sadam* is the only additional text. This is the fake video that was mentioned earlier in this paragraph. It is edited with professional video editing software; for example the CNN headlines bar was put in there. There is also a logo that says Hosted @ theYNC.com and the Metacafe media player also placed its own logo in the right corner below. Users can embed this player in their own website or email it. With this video Ekudos also presents an email feature, comment feature and a link to more recently added photos and videos.

The last post to a video on Ekudos is named *Uncensored Saddam Hussein Hanging Video* and this video was found on Clipstop (http://clipstop.com/videos/Extreme/Full_Saddam_Hussein _Hanging). It is accompanied by the line: *This is the full version of Saddam Hussein's execution!!!!* And so it is again the uncensored version, it is no different from the other versions of this video. But the media player used is the only one that automatically starts to play. It can be placed on Del.icio.us and Technorati via buttons, it can be rated, downloaded, placed on a website and emailed. Commenting is featured as well.

Wikinews EN

Among the hyperlinked references provided by Wikinews (English version) there is one that directs to a blog named Engineers Voice which directly shows two videos (http://www.engineersvoice.com/2007/01/video-of-saddam-hussein-hanging-execution-leaked/). They were introduced in the article, followed by a warning from the author: *I'm not responsible for whatever actions/emotions that you might take/have after viewing this video. It's one of the hottest news items in 2006 and it's here just for sharing and thoughts. First comes the uncensored amateur video in a LiveLeak player, with also a logo of LiveLeak in the upper left corner. The*

second video is introduced by the author as one that gives a clearer view of what happened on the stage. It is hosted by Youtube, but unfortunately no longer viewable. The text and logos on the screen indicate that is is material that was broadcasted by the Iraqi television. It seems to be the offcial video that has indeed clearer images but is censored at the height of the action.