

The role of citizen journalism in the changing media landscape

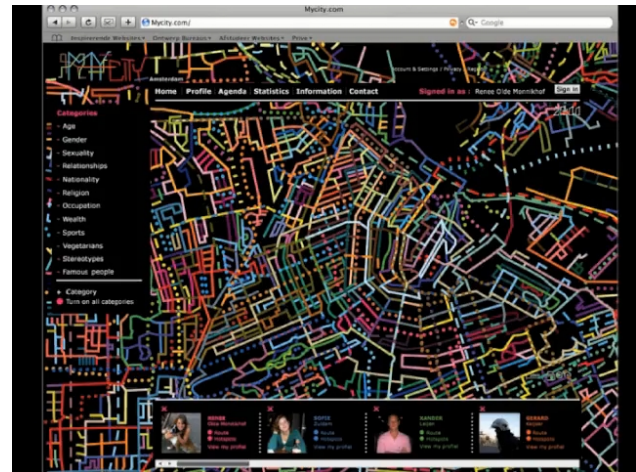
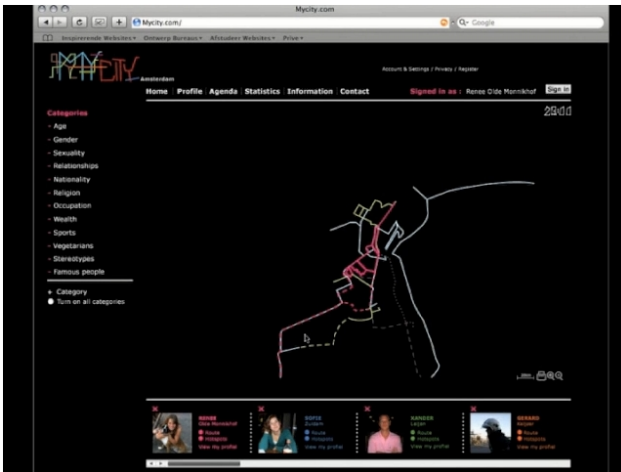
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“According to the blog Paper Cuts, newspapers lost 15,974 jobs in 2008 and another 10,000 in the first half of 2009. That’s 26,000 fewer reporters, editors, photographers, and columnists to cover the world, analyze political and economic affairs, root out corruption and abuse, and write about culture, entertainment and sports”.(The news about the internet, The New York Review, august 13th 2009). It is clear that the Internet has had a great impact on newspapers, and for the newspapers to get back in shape they need to start to think what they need to change to keep ahead of the crowd. The Independent, for example, launched a cheap tabloid digest edition called ‘The I’. It gives the readers the same content but simply edited down so that it can be read quickly on your way to work. This is an example of how the design changes to fit its new audience. Another example is Bloggers Mickey kaus and Andrew Sullivan. Kaus is the founder of the blog kausfiles in 1999, his way of writing became so popular that he was asked to write for Slate. Sullivan founder of the blog, The Daily Dish in 2000, was asked to write for the Atlantic. Their articles are short, sharp, conversational bursts of commentary and opinion built around links to articles, columns, documents, and other blogs, and this is exactly the type of writing people today are waiting for. People are waiting for “blog like” texts. Short, simple and to the point, but also gives the option to read more on the subject by clicking on selected links. I believe that the future of the newspapers lies in the hands of professional journalists that establish themselves in professional blogs such as the Daily Dish and the Huffington Post.

Through the advancement of modern technology, we expect everything in our lives to be done fast, easily and efficiently, and this has also translated into the media world. People do not have the time, or the patience to read an entire newspaper everyday, they want fast news, the big stories quick and easy, and they do not want to have to pay for day-to-day news. Internet has all this to offer and is also one of the major reasons the newspaper industry has to change. The Internet has also created this urge within people to participate, interact and reflect on things that are going on in the world. I believe if the newspaper industry wants to survive it needs to change to fit its new audience. One of the major reasons newspapers are still alive now is because they offer both local and global news with comments and analysis. I want to investigate what newspapers are doing to keep up with this fast changing media landscape and how citizen journalism (blogs, twitter, you-tube, facebook) plays a major role in it and maybe can be seen and represented as a symbol of change. Professional journalism will always remain but the way they work, collect information, write articles, use references, and interact with there audience has to change, and is changing at this moment. The key questions driving my research are, In what ways do we as ‘readers’ now differ from ‘readers’ in the past? (from print to pixel), What are the major reasons newspapers sales have gone down severely in the last couple of years?, What do newspapers offer that the Internet does not, and vice versa?, Is there a fundamental difference between the way we consume and produce online news compared to offline news?, How can we compare professional comments and analysis to that done on for instance blogs? And what are the particular aspects of blogs that make them so attractive to its readers?

My interest in this research stems from earlier projects I've made. For example in 2009 I created a new initiative for a website titled "MyCity.com". It is a social web community, travel-guide and interactive map all in one. Visitors of the site are able to explore the city Amsterdam (or other cities of choice) through the eyes of others. Colored lines and pictograms show the routes and the destinations of its inhabitants. The more people participate the more the contours of the city are revealed and the more information is given. bringing both a microscopic view of peoples activities and at the same time building a macroscopic urban and social map. In this manner i was able to give people the opportunity to explore the city in the way that its inhabitants explore it, rather than explore it as an ordinary tourist.



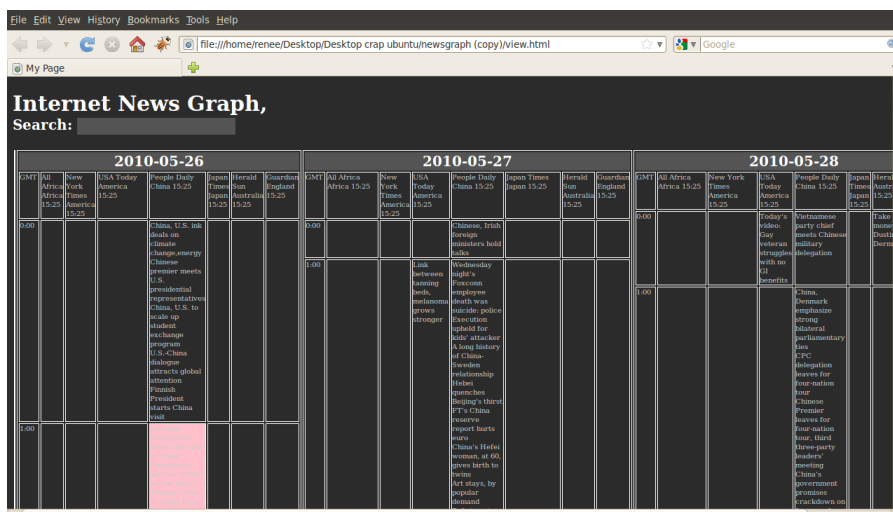
MyCity.com

In 2010 i created a map of Rotterdam called '24hour Rotterdam' that shows how the city center shifts throughout the day according to opening and closing times of all major chains within the city. I decided to work with the opening and closing times of stores because it would give me a good approximation to how, where and when the center was shifting. I started of by compiling all major chain stores, pharmacies, bakeries, restaurants, cafes, clubs etc. and recording individually their opening and closing times on a regular Saturday. Then I looked up all the addresses and placed them onto a map, and then turned the stores on and off according to the times they where open. In this way I was able to get a moveable image that showed me exactly where and when the city sleeps and re-awakes. This created an interesting view on how to look at the city in a different way and at the same time gaining more information from it.



24 Hour Rotterdam

In 2010 i created an interactive graph (Internet News Graph) that focuses on four different newspapers from four different continents. The graph collects headlines of each newspaper and places them within the graph according to the time and date that they are released. In this way you are able to see the exact time that headlines are being published and the delay some newspapers have according to others. The graph also allows you to search for particular words, the words are then highlighted thereby giving you a visual image of the published time of each newspaper and the amount of headlines that are being written about your particular word search. The project gave you a understanding of what the newspapers of each continent are more focused on, how long it takes the newspapers to publish and allows you to read the same articles in four different view points. The reason I made this graph is because I wanted to show a different way of perceiving and viewing the vast quantities of information the Internet is giving us, and this is also what I am aiming for in my practical project.



Internet News Graph

These three projects show that i am very interested in working with huge amounts of information and organizing it in such a way that it becomes understandable and useful. I am interested in using information that is available and structuring it in such a way that people start to perceive and view the information in a different way than first intended. For this project I tend to follow the same route. For my thesis i want to collect all the information that is out there and explain and examine how news, both contextually and visually, has shifted from start to now. I want to explain how news has been reformatted to fit the web and how human behavior has effected the way we read today. By researching the history of journalism with the focus on news I attend to show the many transitions news have made in the past and see how they differ to the transition it is making now. I will investigate how these transitions correspond to the human behavior at the time, and explore how these behaviors changed and how the media followed along this process. I will examine old newspapers and compare them to current newspapers to see how there style in writing has changed, and compare there layout and sources, both on/offline. I will look into social networks such as youtube, twitter, facebook and myspace, blog and forums and examine the style and manner of writing and also compare this to more professional newspaper articles as well as compare them to professional blogs. My aim is to show that the future of the newspapers lies in the hands of professional journalists that establish themselves in professional blogs.

For my practical project I want to focus on the idea that a printed newspaper only gives you that what is printed. A tabloid printed version of a newspaper gives the reader even less information, but allows the reader to read fast and efficiently, and that a professional blog on the internet, although similar to tabloid newspaper (short, quick and efficient information) provide sources that allow you to get even more information on a particular subject than a regular newspaper does, thereby having the best of both worlds. You can read fast and efficiently, but at the same time you can get endless information on a particular item. With this in mind I want to create a plugin that allows the readers of these professional blogs to highlight particular words that interests them and are eager to read more about. After highlighting the word the plugin searches for all the feeds that have been added to the internet in the last 24 hours and places them into a “old fashion” designed newspaper format thereby creating an extreme newspaper per subject matter. This not only gives you more information but also shows the reader which subjects are the most popular on the internet within the last 24 hours globally.

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