

Renegotiating Online News

Journalism in the Classroom

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Abstract

Online journalism is negotiated and renegotiated in the newsroom of *Journalen*, the training website for students in journalism at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, the paper examines three spring terms of online news production by journalism students, particularly looking at sources, links and their multimedia news production. The findings are compared to the students' professional peers in four news sites in the same period. All five sites are moving towards a convergent news modality. But the students tend to use more sources than their professional peers.

Keywords: online journalism, news stories, multimedia, links, update, sources, journalism education, reportage quality

Introduction

In the midst of rapidly ongoing change, online journalism is negotiated and renegotiated in the newsroom. This is also the case in the newsroom of *Journalen*, the training website for students in journalism at Oslo University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) in Norway. Even though one should not exclude the fact that digital journalism sometimes pretends to be newer than it actually is (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 260), the literature on online journalism "... indicates that the phenomenon of online news production and the study of it are at a kind of liminal moment between tradition and change" (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski 2009: 563).

The present article examines online news produced by first-year second-term journalism students, particularly their use of sources, linking and the marks of various media in their multimedia news production, in order to find out what their online journalism is like, and how it develops over a period of three years. Consequently, my focus is on change. Because the students' study and training at HiOA are preparing them for a craft and the ability to use journalistic skills in the newsroom, it is also crucial to ask how the students' online news production compares to the online news of the professional journalists: Do we find the same tendency in the online news of the students as we do in the online new stories of four professional websites? The study is based on quantitative and qualitative methodology: five content analyses and a qualitative in-depth analysis of some of the news stories at *Journalen*.

Intervening Research

The duality of tradition and change in journalism (Gentikow 2008: 98) is reflected in journalism studies. As teachers of journalism, my colleagues and I want to teach our students journalism based on ethical and professional standards. We train students to work in the newsroom, thus relating to the required skills and techniques the media are looking for. At the same time our values and priorities naturally affect the way we structure the courses and our teaching. Though we want to meet the digital news texts with an open mind, we carry with us our digital and paper background, as well as our views on what to keep from traditional journalism and which new journalistic opportunities should be developed further (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 279). When it comes to journalistic ideals, we could say, along with Martin Eide, that reality is one thing and ideals another, but also that ideals deserve a future (Eide 2011: 132). In doing so, we also make an effort not to train the students according to the craft the industry once demanded (Frith and Meech 2007: 142). As teaching supervisors who are responsible for the online course, one could claim that we are more participating researchers than observing researchers (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 263). This research could be seen as intervening, as the intention of the study is to improve the learning process that we examine (Kalleberg 1992: 29). In doing so we could find out whether or not we are on the right track in teaching online journalism.

Four Professional Websites

Journalism is continuously negotiated and renegotiated, and as Mitchelstein and Boszkowski point out ...

... the trend towards convergence has not been uniform across organizations, industries, and countries as a result of different patterns in the merging of the old and the new logics of content production that mark the various media involved (Mitchelstein and Boszkowski 2009: 570)

We felt the need to research the recent online news production of professional Norwegian journalists. In order to understand whether the students' work was comparable to the tendency in the work of their professional peers, we conducted a content analysis of four Norwegian websites. All of the four websites we selected for our content analysis are founded by newspaper organizations, but the ownership differs from publication to publication, as do their economy and publishing policy. We chose two leading websites, *VG Nett* and *Dagbladet.no*, and two sites belonging to the local newspapers *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad* (*Sa.no*) and *Østlandets Blad* (*Oblad.no*). We registered the top-ten news stories on the front page of each professional website around 11 o'clock Monday through Friday during one week in August 2008 and one week in 2010. In 2008 we analyzed 191 news stories, and in August 2010 we analyzed 178 news stories.¹

We are well aware of the differences between these four professional websites and *Journalen*. Obviously the professional journalists are in another league than our students, and objections to a comparison between the four websites and *Journalen* are many. On the other hand, the students themselves certainly do compare, and we as teachers are inclined to relate to the development of journalism and the new tendencies in journalism. Second, in conducting the content analysis, we made use of the same coding sheets, for

instance counting the number of sources in the texts, whether or not video is used and so on. Given our use of the same variables, it should be possible to compare the students' journalism to the journalism of the four websites at certain points. These points do not include participatory journalism, such as for instance crowdsourced journalism or Coveritlive. Nor is interactivity or the use of Twitter and Facebook included in our analysis.

News From Three Different Classes

The study of *Journalen*² is based on content analysis of online news produced by first-year students during three spring terms.³

Table 1. *The Number of News Produced by the Three Classes at Journalen*

	News stories
2008	187
2009	408
2010	263
Total	858

Because the quantity of news stories varies from spring term to spring term, some comments are necessary before we move on. In 2008 we were poorly equipped with Escenic Content Studio 2.0 with default configuration and limited possibilities. Our video cameras and audio recorders were old and we had inadequate editing options (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 263).⁴ In 2009 the recorders, cameras and editing systems were new. That year we made an extra effort to push the students toward working in a process with an ongoing deadline. As a result of a suggestion by one of the students, we also introduced shifts to update the website each morning before the newsroom meeting. This continued in 2010, and that spring we also had a new publishing tool; Escenic 5.0. Regardless of these improvements the news production declined. One explanation could be that the first-year students in 2010 had a new study program that tied them up with mandatory chores, and gave them less time to chase the news flow. On the other hand, as teachers we observe that each class has its own rhythm and preferences, and the explanation could be that the class of 2009 had an exceptionally high drive for news.

Speed and Episodic News

Neither the expression cut-and-paste, nor actually rewriting and editing news from other media started with news on the Web. But with the Internet and a constant deadline in the news battle (Ottosen and Krumsvik 2010: 18), speed picked up so that "...news is cut down and recycled in a matter of hours" – or minutes (Gynnild 2006: 162). This aspect I see mostly in the work of 2009, where 25 percent of the articles were cut-and-paste from other websites or from the press agency *NTB*. We believe that first-year students need to understand the nature and the possibilities of the Web, and speed is one of them. Being first-year students and working at a website that does not have production every day, it is not often students get a chance to follow breaking news. But one day in March 2009 on her way to school one of the students witnessed a smashed window in a shop

where a burglary had taken place. The student called in and reported this, and she also sent a picture by mms. This was published as the first story. Simultaneously one of the other students took a camera and went to the store. When the two of them came back with more information and pictures, they updated the story. Later they did a follow-up.

As mentioned above, speed is an attribute of online journalism. Another is the way web journalism accepts or expects that newborn stories will be published bit by bit as the information flow grows and develops. For the majority of our students, this is a strange way of thinking and working, but even so – given the right event or incident – they ought to be able to react according to an ongoing deadline of episodic news, whether they work at the news desk or as reporters. During the three spring terms, we have had episodes where students followed news that developed over time, and accordingly produced episodic news stories. For instance two students followed a police intervention against an occupied house in Oslo, and they published the story before *VG Nett* and *Dagbladet.no* did, an experience that built self-confidence in the newsroom of *Journalen*. It could still be argued that constantly publishing new information, which in turn leads to changes in professional news production (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski 2009: 569), is difficult to support at *Journalen*. Because we, as teachers, cannot wait for these rare opportunities, we have to train the students to think about the birth and rebirth of episodic news. One example is a story that grew to be four stories. It started with information that most of the kiosks in Oslo are robbed during the winter, continued with a source claiming that the police did not follow up the program of certification opposing robbery, then with an interview with a kiosk owner and finally to the main story (Example 1), where the students also included a video. The video explains the certification program. The students made fact boxes and a diagram in Photoshop and included them as jpg files in three of the stories. Both the video and the fact boxes gave additional information, and the news story as a whole put the pieces in context.

Example 1.

25 kiosker venter på politiet
 Tittellagt for web: Janne Gjerdland Stenstad og Jo Vismund Svandsted
 Publisert: 2010-03-23 13:27:31 © Oppdatert: 2010-05-31 16:34:58

...men politiet vet ikke om det.
 Flere Del de Leca-kiosker i Oslo har opplevd ras så langt i år. I hovedstaden har 25 av kjedens kiosker opplytt kravene for å bli ranssertifisert, men politiet har ikke kommet og godkjent dem.

SE VIDEO: Hva er ranssertifisering?

Bevisstgjør innehaverne
 På slutten av 90-tallet iverksatte Justisdepartementet et ranssertifiseringsprogram for kiosker og butikker i Norge. Programmet består av en rekke leve- butikken må oppfylle, før politiet kan godkjenne sertifiseringen.
 Se sertifiseringskravene til høyre i siden.
 – Flere butikker har gjennomført kravene, men politiet har hatt problemer med å følge opp, forteller Thor Martin Børke, sikkerhetskoordinatør i

Gangen i ranssertifisering:
 Virksomheten tar kontakt med Kildevektingsanvisningen for handlet og tjenester i Norge (KSH).
 Deretter må virksomheten gjennomføre en rekke sikkerhetsforlik.
 Etter at dette er gjennomført, kommer politiet på sertifiseringsbesøk.
 Kilde: stirei-med-ten.no

Sikkerhetsforlik, (ranssertifisering):
 1. Låsar kassastuff
 2. Smedeløske ranssertifiseringen
 3. Godkjent verdislag
 4. Ekstra telefonansvar eller mobiltelefon
 5. Klærutrust i butikker og god utvendig belysning
 6. Høydeklær med utgangspører og på steder ranseren vil bevege seg.
 Kilde: stirei-med-ten.no

Sikkerhetsforlik, (ranssertifisering):
 Gjennomgått godkjent ranssaks og ranssaks.
 Daglige sikkerhetsforlik:
 1. Bruk av smedeløske ranssertifiseringen
 2. Bruk av verdislag
 3. Varselende mennesker for pengetransport
 Kilde: stirei-med-ten.no

Context and Presence in News Stories

News has a tendency to be fragmentary bits of a larger picture, and so context is vital. On a website, context could be in the text story itself, and/or in the episodic texts linked together, as seen above. It is ancient history to believe that online texts need to be short, and today we know that the audience read longer texts on the Internet (Adam, Quinn and Edmonds 2007: 21). Consequently, there is room for necessary content, information and context in an online story. By underlining that this is one of the many choices a journalist has to make, the students learn that the news story should be as long as it deserves to be.

For the students to learn the value of meeting people and observing events in real life, we encourage them to get out of the newsroom. The vast majority of news presented at *Journalen* is researched out in the field. We also appreciate it when the students use their own observations in their stories, and by doing so I would say they use *presence* or reportage quality. By *presence* I mean that the reporter is on the spot observing and that her observations are shown as descriptions in the text. In news stories from spring 2008, we saw presence in 12 percent of the stories. The following year it sank to only 3 percent. It is commonly recognized that news reportages and feature reportages require more time and work than straight news items do (Bech-Karlsen 2000: 17-19, Allern 2002: 115-122, Frey 2007: 19, 91-93), and this could be one of the explanations why the students in 2009 had a higher production and less presence than the other students did. In 2010 we found 9 percent presence in the texts. One of the stories this year describes a situation that cries for presence: A team of students are making a movie at Oslo University College in 2010,⁵ and the other students complained because they were excluded from the library during filming. Both pictures and text have reportage qualities, and the student even writes a scene with dialogue. These are reportage qualities that we encourage, as we also do with creative ideas that could suit a news text. For instance, two students produced a news story with an innovative angle when the prime minister appointed a new minister, Anniken Huitfeldt, in 2008. The photos as well as the text concentrated on the journalists and photographers and the circus aspect of the event in front of the Royal Palace.

My colleague Anne Hege Simonsen and I started this research together, and we can both be said to belong to a journalistic tradition that favors reportage as genre and method. Presence in the field is to us a quality marker (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 275). Here we truly are more participating than observing, as we asked the students explicitly to use presence in their texts. All the same, the number of texts of reportage quality is not impressive. Of course this is not an easy task for new students struggling with many demands. Consequently, our request for presence could be neglected to meet other demands, such as multimedia journalism, interviewing or just being able to produce a news story. That said, the presence in articles at the four professional websites, *VG Nett*, *Dagbladet.no*, *Sa.no* and *Oblad.no*, in 2008 and 2010 is at the same level as the students achieved in 2009.

Multimedia Choices

Because the Web is a platform capable of containing all other forms of digitized media and lends itself to all sign systems (Erdal 2008: 175), the students are asked to tell their online news stories using the best storytelling tools for each particular story. These

tools and techniques could be web-specific, or they could be borrowed from other platforms such as newspaper, radio or television or a mixture of “... forms of expression that may be used across media” (Storsul and Fagerjord 2007: 24). By platform I mean the culture, the techniques, the conventions and the signs (Fagerjord 2003: 65) that are characteristic of a medium. Hence in the present article, platform and medium are synonymous terms. *Journalen*, as an online news site, provides potential both for remediation, the representation of one medium in another (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 45), and for multimedia. Although we guide the students hands-on and use the newsroom meeting to discuss which platform and tools are best suited to tell each news story, one could argue that making such choices, and then carrying them out in the process of making a digital news story, is difficult for new students. Accordingly they could be inclined to leave out story elements that require technical skills and a profound understanding of TV, radio, newspaper and online journalism – media that “have different beats” (Dailey, Demo and Spillmann 2003). The students of 2009 and 2010 therefore were required to use both sound and video in their news production. For the first-year students in 2008, sound and video were not mandatory in their news production,⁶ but they were asked to use video or sound if it suited the story.

Table 2. *Is Video Used in the News Stories at Journalen? Indicated in percent*

	2008	2009	2010
Yes	9	12	17
No	91	88	83
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(187)	(408)	(263)

Note: N = a news story

Table 3. *Is Audio Used in the News Stories at Journalen? Indicated in percent*

	2008	2009	2010
Yes	5	9	17
No	95	81	83
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(187)	(408)	(263)

Note: N = a news story

As shown above, there seems to be a growing tendency from class to class to look upon marks of various media as an integrated part of their multimedia news production. The findings could be linked to a trend in online journalism in general, which influences both teachers and students. But first and foremost, our findings show that the newspaper tradition still is dominating the online news.

The example below is a news story from 2008, where two students experimented with sound and formats. One could say it is an example of what Erdal suggests when he writes about rhetoric convergence as a buffet from which one may pick convergent ingredients (Erdal 2008: 72). Sound clips presenting slogans from a demonstration are

used as an integrated part of the text and as click options on the page. This way of mixing written material, pictures and sound in a hybrid text could be called a transmedia story (Bolin 2007: 245). A transmedia story is, for my colleagues and me, a journalistic story produced and presented by a journalist who picks from different media, techniques and genre conventions (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 261). A transmedia approach to telling a story could enrich it, as I think it does in this example. This story at *Journalen* points to a new and more convergent method of online journalism, where journalists reuse forms of expression in a new way (Storsul and Fagerjord 2007: 4).

Example 2.

JOURNALEN Journalen.hio.no

Her er den: **Innriks** / [Søk] [Avansert]

Solgte våpen i blinde

Av: Mari Erlendsen og Ida Anna Haugen

Changemaker ønsker bedre merking av håndvåpen Norge eksporterter.

Etter klisken er såvidt blitt tolv, og på Egeertorget er Changemaker i gang med å sette frem demonstrasjonsmaterialet sitt. De aller kvipste har solt seg opp med banneret og bepynt å ripe ut slagord.

Kravet er enkelt; økt kontroll ved norsk våpensalg.

Norge krever idag ikke sluttbrukererklæringer når man handler våpen med andre land i NATO. Det bør man imidlertid begynne med, mener Changemakers.

"Tusen drept hver dag i sør, Norge er krigsprofittor", roper det til de forbigående

[Her flere paroler her](#)

FAKLESPOR: Demonstrasjoner fra Changemakers. (Foto: Ida Anna Haugen)

Våpen i blinde
 For å rette oppmerksomheten mot Norges våpensalg hadde Changemaker stiftet representanter fra SU, KrfU, Utpe Venstre og Red Ungdom med bind for øynene, mens de lotet som de solgte våpen.

- Det gjør vi fordi vi mener dette illustrerer Norges våpensalg. Det er

Changemaker

- Ungdomsorganisasjonen til Kirkens Nødhjelp
- Søftet i 1992
- Nåværende leder er Ingerid Næss-Holm
- Organisasjonen arbeider for bevisstgjøring om fordelingspolitikken mellom nord og sør

Les også:

- [Påskudt norsk våpensalg](#)

Aktuelle Media:

- [våpensalg](#)
- [KrfU Røstad](#)
- [SU Beresta](#)
- [Changemaker Næss-Holm](#)

Meninger:

Norsk våpenindustri vokser i takt med u-landsbevilgningene. 2007 var et forelepeg toppår både for bistand og salg av våpen og ammunisjon til utlandet, viser første tall fra Statistisk sentralbyrå.

[Les mer](#)

Video in Online Journalism

As Erdal points out, different media require different journalistic and technical skills, and that restrains convergence (Erdal 2008: 119). Also for the students' professional peers, the legacy from the paper tradition still weighs heavily on the online sites.

Table 4. *Is Video Used at the Four Websites? Indicated in percent*

	2008	2010
Yes	14	13
No	86	87
Total	100	100
(N)	(191)	(178)

Note: N = a news story

The four websites use of video is at the same level as *Journalen*. As for audio, we found but one clip in *Sa.no* in 2008 among the news stories at the four websites. While audio is marginal in many Norwegian news sites, during recent years video and web-TV have gained space in online journalism. In Martin Engebretsen's findings from the period 2004-05, videos were scarcely used (Engebretsen 2007).⁷ In 2005, Dahlen found no use of video in either *Dagbladet.no* or *VG Nett* (Dahle forthcoming: 148,159).⁸ In 2008 both used video, and were moving toward a new way of conveying news (ibid.: 160-164, 219).

Our figures are too small and the period of time we analyzed is too short to draw any conclusions, other than to illustrate that also we found that video is a growing part of online journalism. Looking at our findings for each site, we find that *VG Nett* expanded from four videos connected to the top-ten stories over a period of five days in 2008 to 12 videos during the five days in 2010. That said, the local medium *Sa.no* actually was the site among the four that most frequently used video in 2008, with 13 videos connected to the top-ten stories over a period of five days. Due to cutbacks in the organization, *Sa.no* reduced to five videos during the five days in 2010, which is at the same level as *Dagbladet.no*. As for *Oblad.no* the use of video is modest; one in 2008 and two in 2010.

Fagerjord points out that videos could be used simply as descriptive illustration, but also as self-contained videos (Fagerjord 2003: 287-290), and we find both examples at *Journalen*. When the students tell the story twice, both in text and pictures and in a video, the reader of the training website has a choice of sign system. However, the two media tend to tell the story differently (ibid.: 301). At *Journalen*, video or video-clips are mostly used combined with text and thus making a hybrid text, where the student may use the best of the two media's conventions, where video is a medium of emotions and text a medium of facts and explanations (ibid.: 302). Because our students also use audio, they have conventions from yet another medium to relate to. Some of the audio-clips are combined with a slideshow of photos. All of these various sign systems and conventions from different media give the stories a wider range of content and experience.

As for the professional websites, Dahlen finds that the videos in *Dagbladet.no* and *VG Nett* have limited value, among other things the coherence with the texts is not clear, some of the videos have voiceover in a foreign language, and the videos are not updated (Dahlen forthcoming: 163-164, 170-171, 218-219). This is also something we see at *Journalen*. But video does create an impression of presence. When the audience see people talk and move it gives a sense of closeness, an experience of reality in details, place, color, movement and sound (Dahlen forthcoming: 21-22). As Fagerjord writes: "Things move in real life, so video resembles reality more. Moving images do also give a stronger sense of depth than still images do" (Fagerjord 2003: 287).

Linking

Ten years ago, Norwegian websites were reluctant to link to other sites, maybe fearing that the home site would lose its audience to a competitive site. Engebretsen shows that external links were rare in 2004-2005 (Engebretsen 2007: 57). But linking is a legitimate child of online journalism, giving the readers an option of more information both in depth and width, and offering transparency by linking to sources. Most modern websites today use internal and external hyperlinks, and Dahlen found increasing use of external links in Norwegian websites (Dahlen forthcoming: 145,147).

Table 5. *External Links in News Stories Indicated in percent*

	<i>Journalen</i> 2008	<i>Journalen</i> 2009	<i>Journalen</i> 2010	Four websites 2008	Four websites 2010
Yes	26	58	70	17	24
No	74	42	30	83	76
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(187)	(408)	(263)	(191)	(178)

Note: N = a news story.

It is essential to look further into the findings shown in Table 5: In 2008 the two smaller websites examined very seldom linked to other sites, but a third of the articles in *Dagbladet.no* and *VG Nett* had external links. The picture was about the same in 2010. The students of 2008 were linking out about as often as the journalists of *VG Nett* and *Dagbladet.no*, and were more eager than the journalists of *Sa.no* and *Oblad.no*.

Dahlen focuses on how the original text and the linking text are made coherent (Dahlen forthcoming). He finds that readers have to go through information without value and coherence in order to find relevant information and context. This, he claims, is due to the remediation of newspaper in online news (ibid.: 126). In training and teaching our students, we emphasize how they should sell the links to the audience and consider the journalistic benefit of offering alternative information through linking. Furthermore we stress the transparency that lies in linking to sources, which give the public an opportunity to check (some of) the sources. In view of the students' willingness to link out, Dahlen's reservation about irrelevant links is interesting. Although we stress the need for good, journalistic links in online journalism, in the future we should probably examine more closely whether the links at *Journalen* are as functional as they ought to be. But we can establish that the students do as the professionals do when they use external links to lay down thematic information on different events that develop from hour to hour (Dahlen forthcoming: 224).

Comparing the internal links at *Journalen* to those at the four websites, the picture is different than with external links.

Table 6. Internal links in news stories indicated in percent. N = a news story

	<i>Journalen</i> 2008	<i>Journalen</i> 2009	<i>Journalen</i> 2010	Four websites 2008	Four websites 2010
Yes	16	38	42	36	57
No	84	62	58	64	76
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(187)	(408)	(263)	(191)	(178)

Because the students link more seldom to other articles at *Journalen* than they link out, one could argue that students have less faith in their own and other students' news. Hence they are more reluctant to use internal as opposed to external links. It might also be essential that *Journalen* does not have a continuous news production (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 271). At the four professional sites, however, the internal links are more frequent than the external links. All the sites increased linking. Looking at the findings for each of the four websites, we find that from 2008 to 2010 *Oblad.no* really started using links. As for *Dagbladet* in 2008, one third of the articles had internal links, and in 2010 *Dagbladet* scarcely has articles without internal links. *VG Nett* has internal links in around 60 percent of the stories both years. *Journalen* is far behind the two bigger websites in 2010, but uses internal links more than the journalists in *Sa.no* and *Oblad.no*. One possible interpretation is that *Journalen*, in regard to linking, is a more modern online site than the website of *Østlandets Blad* and *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad*. Regarding tendencies toward change, both students and professional journalists use internal links more in 2010 than they did two years earlier. One could say that *Journalen* and the four sites – both in relation to linking and the use of video – show an inclination to move toward a convergent new modality (Dahlen forthcoming: 219).

The Students Use More Sources

In 2010 Anne Hege Simonsen and I wrote that the development toward more sources, which is considered an aspect of quality, seems to have taken a negative turn in online news (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 268, 274). We compared the use of sources in the four websites from August 2008 with the findings of Martin Engebretsen from 2004–05. He pointed out that one third of the news stories had no or one visible source, and that half of the web stories had at least three sources (Engebretsen 2007: 57). We, on the other hand, found that as much as 60 percent of the stories at the four websites had verbal sources, and mostly professional and official sources (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 268). Furthermore, the number of sources was unimpressive. One could blame the slack work with sources on the hastiness and time pressure associated with online journalism (Ottosen and Krumsvik 2008:14-19, Gynnild 2009: 37, Dahlen forthcoming: 222). But Gynnild found the same tendency of one-source journalism in local newspapers (Gynnild 2009: 102).

Table 7. *The Number of Visible Sources in News Stories Indicated in percent*

	<i>Journalen</i> 2008	<i>Journalen</i> 2009	<i>Journalen</i> 2010	Four websites 2008	Four websites 2010
0-1 source	30	36	27	60	44
2 sources	33	24	22	23	22
3 or more sources	37	40	51	17	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(187)	(408)	(263)	(191)	(178)

Note: N = a news story

As the table above shows, the four websites' use of sources has improved from 2008 to 2010. In 2008, there is no distinct difference between the four websites in their use of sources. This corresponds to my findings from a content analysis examining the sources of news reportages in the newspapers *VG*, *Adresseavisen* and *Helgelands Blad*⁹ in 2003, showing that all three newspapers were eager to have many sources, as also confirmed by the informants in my thesis (Frey 2007: 50-52). In August 2010, however, I find that *VG Nett* uses more sources in the news stories than the three other websites do. Still, *VG Nett* is far from the level of the students.

As for the students, their online journalism is also headed in the right direction. As we pointed out in 2010, the students use more visible sources in their news stories than the professional journalists do (Frey and Simonsen 2010: 272). It is interesting to note that the class of 2009, which produced more news stories and was focused on speed, still produced online journalism with many sources. One of the drawbacks of hasty online journalism could be few sources due to the pressure of production on the Web (Ottosen and Krumsvik 2008: 14-19, Gynnild 2009: 37, Dahlen forthcoming: 222). This is not the case, it would seem, for our students. On the other hand, in the work of the class of 2010, when the tempo was reduced, the stories with more sources augmented to 51 percent.

However, the most distinct finding is that the students produced stories with no or only a few sources to a far lesser degree than the journalists did. Although a large number of sources is a token of quality journalism, it is not the only mark of quality. One has indeed to consider what kind of sources the journalists and students use, alongside other variables. We find that new students are inclined to be impressed by professional and official sources, which are dominating sources in news journalism (Allern 2002: 169-176, Dahlen forthcoming 220-221). The use of expert and authoritative sources could be seen as a quality mark, in line with Huang, Rademakers, Fayemiwo and Dunlop (Huang et al. 2004: 85). It can also be pointed out that, by using the same official and professional sources, journalists repeat the same views and interpretations (Dahlen forthcoming: 221-223), and thereby could weaken the critical focus on people with power.

As mentioned above, our students do leave the newsroom to get their stories. One could guess that they – as one often sees in news reportages – interview and observe so-called ordinary people, non-professional sources. The class of 2009, which shows a stronger drive for news production, uses less ordinary people as sources than students the year before and the year after do. The class of 2008 had the highest level of non-professional verbal sources: 30 percent. If I compare this to the search for pres-

ence, observations made in the field that are visible in the text, it corresponds: The students in 2009 had only 3 percent presence in their texts, while the other students had 9-12 percent in their texts. That being said, I have to point out that the level of non-professional sources in the student work in 2009 and 2010 is about the same level as the four websites; around 15 percent of the news stories have verbal, non-professional sources. I will also mention that besides a high amount of verbal sources at *Journalen*, the amount of written sources – documents, other media and so on – at the training website is considerable.

Looking at the amount of sources at the four websites and at *Journalen*, one could point out that the professional journalists clearly have a heavier workload than the students do. This could influence the journalists' work with sources. Although we as teachers lecture about speed, updating and publishing stories bit by bit, and arrange for our students to practice working with a constant deadline, many of the students find it hard to submit their articles without checking, rewriting and reading through them again and again. First-year students do not produce high-speed news (Pavlik 2000: 23), as their professional peers do. It is also true that some students produce only one or two articles during a week at *Journalen*, thus having, it would seem to a professional journalist, all the time in the world. But this could also be linked to our demands that every student produce at least one multimedia story during their spring production at the training website. Besides grasping the concept of a news story and understanding online journalism, a student making a multimedia news story must master the techniques of different platforms. Earlier in the article, I mentioned that we encourage our students to get out of the newsroom and produce news stories with reportage qualities, and this also requires more time (Bech-Karlsen 2000: 17-19, Allern 2002: 115-122, Frey 2007: 19, 91-93). Furthermore, a working week at *Journalen* is interrupted by, for instance, lectures. On the other hand, it is necessary to emphasize that the professional journalists have other tasks to perform when working at a website, for instance answering questions and comments in connection with their news stories. Of course, these chores keep the journalists busy, and many of these tasks are excluded in our classroom. In teaching first-year students, we have to pick out the most important sides of online journalism and leave out other chores.

What we do give priority to throughout the first year is how to work with sources. We as teachers are strongly concerned with teaching our students resourceful use of sources. Critical source analysis and thorough work with sources are among the ideals we defend as part of the journalistic quality standard (Eide 2011: 38). Consequently the teaching situation in the classroom could be seen as creating a self-prophecy: We, the teachers, tell the students what to do, and they follow it up. This would indicate that the students should also act on what we teach them regarding other details such as linking, as we have seen them do when it comes to external links, but not internal links.

Conclusion

The first intention of our research is to systematically examine the online journalism of second-term students in order to find out more about their online production, such as their linking, multimedia stories and their use of sources. Comparing the work of three classes gives an opportunity to survey a possible development over a period of

time. Second, our goal is to examine whether we find the same tendencies at certain points in the online production at *Journalen* as we find in online news stories at the four professional sites.

We have seen that the impact from newspaper is still considerable at *Journalen* and at the four professional websites, but that all of the five sites have developed from 2008 to 2010. Furthermore, I find the same tendencies in the online news stories of the students as I do in the online news stories of the professional journalists: Linking out is more common in 2010 than in 2008, for both students and their professional peers. Internal linking has grown even more than external linking at the professional sites. The students are at the same level as the professional journalists, linking internally more than *Oblad.no* and *Sa.no* do, but less than *Dagbladet.no* and *VG Nett*. At the four websites audio is non-existent, but video and web-TV are clearly a part of their online journalism. The use of audio and video is expanding year by year at *Journalen*, as remediation of media on the Web and in multimedia texts, even occasionally as transmedia stories. Both professionals and students can be said to be moving toward a new form of news dissemination, and toward a more convergent modality (Dahlen forthcoming: 219). As we improve the learning process when teaching our students online journalism, professional online journalism is constantly changing. Hence in this period of tradition and change in journalism (Gentikow 2008: 98), it is important to discover that *Journalen* is changing in the same direction as the professional websites. Except for the use of audio, I find the same multimedia tendencies at *Journalen* and the four professional sites.

By focusing on teaching multimedia skills and an understanding of platforms with different beats (Dailey, Demo and Spillmann 2003), we may not have given the students enough practice in constantly publishing new information. That said, we are trying to encourage students to think about birth and rebirth of episodic news so as to change their methods of producing news in a way that online media make possible (Mitchelstein and Boczkowski 2009: 569). In short, *Journalen* lacks the speed required to take on the news battle of a constant deadline (Ottosen and Krumsvik 2010: 18).

It could be argued that, besides multimedia skills, the very process of producing news and the work with sources have been our main concern in teaching first-year students online journalism. The most distinct finding is that the students produce stories with no or only one source to a far less degree than the journalists do, and that the students more often use three or more sources in their stories than the professionals do. Clearly, we need to examine further how online journalists work with sources, and the quantity and quality of the sources. As to the notion that fewer sources is a possible sign of less quality in online journalism, the four websites have improved from 2008 to 2010, as has *Journalen*. Moreover, the fact that the professional journalists did improve their source work, and that the future journalists showed good source use when working on the Web, could be seen as a positive sign for the future of online news.

Notes

1. If the same story remained on the front page we did not register it again the following day. Accordingly, the number of new stories is 191 and 178, not 200 per study.
2. <http://journalen.hioa.no>
3. 67 students had online journalism for six weeks in spring term 2008, 67 students for six weeks in spring term 2009 and 75 students for eight weeks in spring term 2010.

4. As I am writing about online journalism, the videos, recorders and editing systems are the ones we used in the online newsroom of *Journalen*, and they are not to be confused with what the students used while training TV and radio.
5. In August 2011, Oslo University College (HiO) changed its name to Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA).
6. In 2008 the students were required to use both sound and video in online stories in a "rig" of press freedom. The project on press freedom is not included here.
7. Engebretsen's study of *vg.no*, *aftenposten.no*, *nrk.no*, *bt.no*, *aftonbladet.se*, *expressen.se*, *svt.se*, *gp.se*, *bt.dk*, *ekstrabladet.dk*, *dr.dk* and *fyens.dk*, November 2004-January 2005, the discourse of actuality.
8. Dahlen studied *VG Nett*, *Dagbladet*, *TV2 Nettavisen*, *BBC Online News* and *Guardian.co.uk*
9. In 2003 VG was the biggest newspaper in Norway with 380,190 issues, the regional newspaper *Adressavisen* had 86,570 and the local newspaper *Helgelands Blad* had 6,388.

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