Journalists in The Netherlands

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The consensus among online media professionals internationally, such as it is voiced at gatherings like the annual NetMedia Conferences in Great Britain or the Editor & Publisher Interactive Conferences in the US, seems to be that online journalism is "a breed apart" (Meek, 2000). Online journalism – featuring journalists working exclusively or primarily on the World Wide Web – can be seen as a fourth kind of journalism, next to radio, television and print, with its own distinct characteristics. It is for this reason that the focus of this chapter is on the characteristics and views of online journalists to study the articulations of Dutch journalism and the Internet. Two issues have been raised as research questions in this respect: [1] what are the basic, occupational and professional characteristics of online journalists and [2] what is the meaning and relevance of new information and communication technologies in Dutch journalism?

A detailed report of a Web-based survey among 66 online journalists is offered in this chapter, in order to explore the full range of characteristics of this particular group of media professionals. Our follow-up research question deals with the meaning and relevance of the Internet in Dutch journalism. As discussed in the first chapter, the debate about the (meaning and relevance of) Internet and journalism in The Netherlands is focused on two developments: Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR) and online journalism. As I am particularly interested in the articulation of the Internet to (the professional ideology of) journalism, I have chosen to direct the study to the characteristics, views and role perceptions of online journalists. Extensive in-depth interviews were held with (14) experts in the field of online reporting, which transcripts were coded and analyzing using the grounded theory method as put forward by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and an additional analysis of interpretative repertoires based on the work of Wetherell and Potter (1988; see the qualitative research design in chapter 11). In this chapter the analysis of these interviews is given, which links the material with the survey findings where relevant. There are two reasons to concentrate this part of the project on online journalists particularly. First, the assumption is that newworkers confronted most directly with the Internet – as in those journalists who produce editorial content most exclusively for a Website – are acutely aware of the interplay between a dominant occupational ideology and learning (by doing) the art and craft of the new media profession of online journalism.
The second reason follows the literature on new media studies and online journalism studies in particular, where this relatively new type of journalism is seen as a distinct kind of occupation operating within the profession as a whole (Singer, 1998; Deuze, 1999). The Internet is seen as affecting all aspects of the media business: production, distribution and reception of content, whether such effects are considered for the better (Negroponte, 1996; Pavlik, 1999), or for the worse (Porteman, 1999; Castells, 2000). This suggests that research into the characteristics and specifics of professional journalists within a single medium makes sense in terms of what is pertinent to its characteristics – looking for what Altheide and Snow (1979; 1991) have called its distinct ‘media logic’. Dahlgren (1996) has suggested that online journalism has its own unique media logic, and should be investigated in terms of this logic. The online media logic follows the assumption that the production processes within a single medium shape and are shaped by a developing mindset of its professionals. This means that the way online journalists negotiate and give meaning to their professional identity can be typified as the development of a mindset, which is specific to the characteristics (both structural and subjective) of working in an online environment. In other words: this chapter looks at the differences and commonalities of the characteristics of online journalists in terms of whether or not one may speak of a distinctive media logic or mindset of online journalists in The Netherlands (see also Deuze, 2000).

In the following section an analysis of existing research on journalism and the Internet available in The Netherlands and elsewhere is offered. The aim is to connect the conclusions of such studies to the project at hand and the empirical approach chosen. Based on the conclusions from earlier studies a specific theoretical framework for studying journalism online is laid out, with emphasis on the notion of media logic as it pertains to both the survey among Dutch online journalists, as well as the data gathered from the expert interviews. Next additional data analyses of the survey among online media professionals are offered, after which the procedure in selecting, contacting and interviewing online media experts is explained. The full analysis of topical categories and repertoires found in the interview transcripts conclude this chapter.

**Journalism and the Internet**

Looking at scholarly and trade journals today, it sometimes seems that the impact of new media technologies such as the Internet on journalism is the most popular discussion among journalists and media scholars alike – next to worries about (increasing) commercialism (see for example edited collections by Berkowitz, 1997; Weaver, 1998; Tumber, 1999; Scannell and Semetko, 2000).
Certainly the Internet has gained in popularity among scholars in the communications field, as shows from a special issue of the authoritative *Journal of Communication* on the topic in 1996, specialized scholarly publications like *Convergence* (appearing since 1995), and the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (published online), and the introduction of new academic journals on the topic such as *New Media & Society* (since 1999) and *Television & New Media* (since 2000). Published reports on studies specifically linking (daily practices and characteristics of) journalists to the global network of computers have been scarce, though. Most publications dealing with journalists and the World Wide Web have more or less accepted the discourse of Internet as a major player in redefining and rethinking 'traditional' journalism (see overviews in Wendland, 1999; Deuze, 1998 and 1999, Pavlik, 1999; Neuberger, 2000). A specific example of the impact the Internet has on journalists is the general trend among journalists to use the Internet for research, interviews and story ideas (see Middleberg and Ross, 2000 on US journalists; Bierhoff, Van Dusseldorp and Scullion, 1999 on European journalists; Quinn, 2000 on Australian journalists). This is an aspect of the Internet's impact that has to do with all journalists, and can therefore not be seen as particular to the online journalists. The results of the main phone survey in this project for example show that 92% of Dutch journalists use the computer, a majority of which journalists indeed seems to use Internet access in their news work: two-thirds of journalists are online at least a couple of times per week and all of the computer users have their own personal e-mail address (about which one-third said ever to have used e-mail to conduct interviews; see chapter III for details).

Studies which focus explicitly on online journalism and journalists suggest a combination of excitement and apprehension among journalists working for and within an online environment (Singer, 1997a and 1997b), less than clearly formulated approaches in terms of theory and operationalization on who in fact can be called an online journalist (Dahlgren, 1996; Singer, 1998) and finally several issues are raised concerning the perceived lack of institutional credibility of the journalist in an online environment where everyone is both producer and consumer of content (see for example Bardoel, 1996; Gahran, 1998; Heinonen, 1999). In 1995, Singer (1997a and 1997b) identified three 'archetypes' of journalists' responses to new media technologies in their work: the Benevolent Revolutionary was very enthusiastic about the new technology and found many opportunities in online media, especially chances for journalists to do their jobs better. The Nervous Traditionalist was more likely to fear the new technology — either because he was burned out and saw new media as one more example that journalism isn't any good anymore, or because he mistrusts
new media and believes journalists have to be mindful of the dangers it brings. The Rational Realist had a neutral perspective because he didn't foresee a significant change in his journalistic role, product or processes in the near future as a result of online media (see also McGregor, 1998). In a recent replication of Singer's work in The Netherlands, Schimmel (2001) found that regional newspaper journalists share similar notions, although the Rational Realist – Harper (1998) calls this type of reporter a 'serene separatist' – can be seen as the dominant type in the Dutch newsroom.

Luege (1999: 32), applying an online survey of a sample of self-selected online media professionals, concluded that the Internet couldn't be considered a tool for a 'fringe group' of journalists. He found that the (N=213) journalists participating in his survey predominantly agreed that the overall quality of information found online was good – even though they admitted to have problems separating 'good' from 'bad' information. In a study about online journalism in Germany, Friedrichsen and colleagues (1999) furthermore argued that a specific problem for online journalism seems to be, that these media professionals often work with 'tertiary' information, getting materials only after an event has happened, been reported upon and which report has then been edited for a print or broadcast medium. This 'third' stage of the information then gets 'shoveled' onto the website, where it is up to the online journalist(s) to add hypertext, interactivity and sometimes multimedia (see Schultz, 1999; Jankowski and Van Selm, 2000; Kenney, Gorelik and Mwangi, 2000). This emphasis on shovelware can be seen as a potential crisis of the credibility and thus legitimacy of journalism on the Web; if online reporters only repurpose content that is already available elsewhere, why bother? Such expressed concern contributes to a professional identity 'in the making' (Neuberger, 2000). Research by Garrison (2000) in the US and Cottle (1999) in the UK reveals some unrest new media technologies have created in the newsroom; journalists in these studies reported lack of time to adequately use and master the technology, and feeling stressed because of the 'immediate' nature of the Internet. But most authors conclude that CAR at least has the potential to further enhance the reporter's regular work, but does not impact upon his or her sense of professionalism, although several scholars discuss shifts in ethical perceptions of journalists working with online resources (Christians, 1998; Mann, 1998). Such a shift occurs particularly in CAR when determining the accuracy and credibility of materials and sources found online, as well as protecting the privacy of people when using privately published information online (such as posts in Usenet newsgroups of individual Homepages on the World Wide Web for example; see Cooper, 1998; Deuze and Yeshua, 2001). While looking online for
sources or information for a story, journalists can be seen as being in conflict with their professional deontology by not presenting themselves as 'professionals' when they communicate on the Net (Patterson and Willkins, 1997: 260). A related question in terms of newsgathering and accountability is how far a journalist may go in cyberspace, whether he or she is operating deliberately 'undercover' or not (Singer, 1996). Yet these issues do not necessarily pose entirely new questions to 'traditional' journalism ethics and can be seen as different forms of existing ethical dilemmas in journalism (Gordon and Kittross, 1998). This conclusion seems to be supported by our analysis of the phone survey data, which did not show any significant differences on journalists' views regarding ethical issues working for different media types (see chapter III).

The literature reveals a picture of a professional group, faced with a number of specific issues particular to the online environment. Summarizing one could argue that these issues have primarily to do with aspects regarding professional standards – discussing ethics, role perceptions, production of original content or shovelware – and skills – learning new ways of storytelling, using new technologies, dealing with interactivity (see also Deuze, 1999: 380-385; Neuberger, 2000; Paulussen, 2001). The discussion about skills and standards particular to the Internet suggests that online media logic is emerging (Dahlgren, 1996). The key characteristics of the Internet and specifically the Web – which can be summarized as hypertextuality, interactivity and multimediiality – can be typified as elements of the structure of the medium (Morris and Ogan, 1996; Bardoe and Deuze, 2001). 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 (in the us see Reddick and King, 2001; in Germany see Altmepenne, Bucher and Loeffelholz, 2000; in The Netherlands see Stielstra, 1999; Jager and Van Twisk, 2001). Although the literature suggests that a reporter working online certainly differs in some characteristics from colleagues elsewhere in contemporary journalism, a comprehensive look at the population of 'Net-native' reporters has not been on the forefront of published scholarly work. The few published studies among online journalists in for example Finland, Germany and Belgium primarily focus on the question whether or not one can consider this part of the media profession as a distinct, autonomous and competent group within the system of journalism as a whole (Heinonen, 1999; Neuberger, 2000; Paulussen, 2000). Re-
searchers indicate experiencing problems in terms of drawing boundaries (theoretical as well as practical) 'around' online journalists as a more or less specific professional group of media practitioners.

Online journalism can be considered as journalism practiced online - not as journalists writing about the Internet, or journalists using the Internet as a reporting tool. This professional type of journalism can be defined as gathering and distributing news content primarily on the Internet and is seen here conceptually as a fourth kind of journalism next to print, radio and television journalism (Singer, 1998). A specific problem in studying online journalism is the fact, that this is a kind of newsmedia profession which often does not produce the kind of content other journalism do (see for overviews of scholarly research and consequences: Altmeppe n et al, 2000; Kopper, Kolthoff, and Czepek, 2000). Analysis of characteristics of online journalists in Belgium and Germany suggests that we are dealing with a distinct group of media professionals in terms of their role perceptions and newly acquired competences such as for example handling of e-mail, writing specifically for a website, finding new deontological ground online (see Neuberger, 2000; Paulussen, 2001). Altheide and Snow (1979, revised and updated in 1991) offer a way to look intentionally at the core competences of a group of professionals in the particular context of the medium they work for by introducing the concept of media logic. They argue that content is constituted through a certain logic which can be seen as unique to each form or format of a medium, which logic consists of three distinct features: professional competences, technical attributes and organizational attributes. As a fourth element of media logic Altheide and Snow add the audience, concluding that both journalist and audience member employ a particular media logic that is used to present and interpret various phenomena (1979: 10). The explicit inclusion of technological attributes to their study of media production is often overlooked in communicator studies or definitions of journalists, but is of particular interest when studying online journalists (see chapter II for operational definitions; also: Baroel, 1997). Dahlgren (1996) has adapted Altheide and Show's concept of media logic to journalism on the Internet. As Dahlgren argues, Net-based communication in online journalism (his term: 'cyberjournalism') can be seen as being shaped by a distinctive media logic, which should be expected to differ from the respective logics of print and broadcast media. The term 'media logic' refers to:

"The particular institutionally structured features of a medium, the ensemble of technical and organizational attributes which impact on what gets represented in the medium and how it gets done. In other words, media logic points to specific forms and processes, which organize the work done
within a particular medium. Yet, media logic also indicates the cultural competence and frames of perception of audiences/users, which in turn reinforces how production within the medium takes place" (Dahlgren, 1996: 63).

The media logic of the Internet can be defined as a convergent logic, whereas it affects all existing media outlets which go online: print media news services, cable companies, service providers, broadcasters, e-zines will all have to adjust their organization to the Internet, which ongoing process can be seen as a convergence of established (institutional) journalism with the particularities of online publishing. Altheide and Snow argue that content emerges through the competences and attributes (or: the social forms) of a certain medium (1991: 7). They base their approach on the assumption that the news of the world reflects the logic of news production and the medium through which it is organized and presented (1991: 55). Dahlgren correspondingly argues that the logic of online journalism structures particular perceptual and cognitive biases, of which he mentions multimedia, hypertextuality and interactivity (1996: 63-64; similar appreciations in: Neuberger, 2000: 314; Paulussen, 2001: 11). He adds to this elements such as the vast archival capacity of the Internet and the figurative nature of social interaction online; two aspects I assume to be specifically related to using the Internet as a reporting tool (cf. CAR) rather than relating exclusively to online journalism as a distinct type of journalism (see also Deuze, 1999). For the study at hand these considerations mean that in order to explore the meaning and relevance of the Internet for Dutch journalism, one can specifically look at the ways in which professionals discuss the elements of online media logic whose daily practice concerns working with multimedia, hypertext and interactive options. Applying media logic, the professional competences, technical and organizational attributes underlying the media production processes of online journalists in The Netherlands were considered as variables in the Web-based survey, as well as topical questions (semi-) structuring the in-depth interviews with experts in the Dutch new media industry. In other words: all items in the questionnaire and propositions used by informants during the interviews have been analyzed in terms of whether or not these contribute to the construction of a mindset specific to online journalists.

Online Journalists in The Netherlands

The sampling procedure for gathering a number of online journalists to participate in the quantitative survey phase of the project has been discussed in chapter 11. The data, as reported in this section, follows the structure of the overall survey design. First the basic characteristics are discussed, followed by occupational and professional characteristics of Dutch online journalists. Spe-
specific mention will be made where new items were added to the online questionnaire.

**Basic Characteristics.** The demographics of the 66 online journalists participating in the Web-based survey show that most respondents are male (65%) and within the 26 to 35 years of age range (53%). One would have expected online journalists to be younger - since their job is still relatively new and new media in general are omnipresent among young people and journalism students in particular (see for example Deuze and Rennen, 2000). But only 8 journalists (12%) said to be younger than 25 years. Only journalists working for the Websites of Dutch broadcasters are both younger and more equally balanced in terms of gender representation. The respondents are highly educated (54% holding professional degrees, 37% academic degrees), with younger journalists more likely to have a higher education than their older colleagues. The general survey of Dutch journalists shows that reporters tend to enter the profession late in their twenties (26-27 years), which would explain the fact that we found relatively few younger online journalists. The basic characteristics of online journalists do not seem to differ much from the 'other' journalists, which can perhaps be explained by the fact that at the time of our study most online newsrooms were still quite young (cf. 'upstarts'), therefore mainly consisting of 'regular' journalists who more or less voluntarily moved to the online department of the print or broadcast medium (this explanation is supported by the in-depth interviews held in this phase of the project).³

**Occupational Characteristics.** In terms of occupational characteristics most respondents are employed by newspaper organizations: 47%, with 20% working for broadcast media, 6% for magazines and 27% for 'online only' media such as the news desks of Internet Service Providers and news services like Sapenda or Nu.nl. More than half (55%) of the journalists mentioned working exclusively for the online medium; the rest shifts in their daily work between the parent medium and the online edition - which shifting to and from particularly occurs in print media organizations. Most of the participants work fulltime: 77%, with 6% freelancing. For roughly one-third of respondents this is their first job as a journalist; these are not the youngest journalists though: 71% within the age group of 16-25 years already has had two or more employers as a journalist. This suggests high job mobility within the new media profession. On average the Internet news desk consists of four people, which seems more or less in line with a worldwide survey among online news desks by Swiss-based company Interactive Publishing in 1999. Since the interviews (conducted in the final quarter of 1999) several media companies first hired a lot of new ed-
itors and Dutch publishing houses such as Wegener (developing regional portal sites) and PCM (starting a 24-hour national newssite called EN.nl) made heavy investments and expansion of their online media ventures (Bierhoff, Deuze and De Vreese, 2000). But in the summer of 2001 (June-July), the same companies - most notably PCM - announced plans to reduce staff or shut down online operations altogether because of lack of profits, or because of perceived necessities to cut down costs. During August 2001 we called the same media outlets as we did in the original survey design (of August 1999), in order to get a new estimate on the numbers of online journalists: this time we found 214 journalists at the same sites against 135 two years earlier; adding several new online news operations we counted 244 people).4

The organization of labor shows a picture of an isolated, relatively autonomous group of people. The online departments of broadcasters operate as a separate branch of the main organization, whereas only a few newspapers tend to integrate the Internet desks with the regular newsroom(s). The separation of the newsroom does seem to fuel reporters' sense of autonomy: 95% of respondents reported full editorial freedom regarding the online edition. This may have more to do with the lack of communication between departments than with the relative freedom these reporters enjoy when producing content. This reported 'autonomy' does not mean these reporters are in fact producing their own original content online: only one quarter of respondents reported a score of 100% original content on their website. Original content can be defined as editorial material exclusively produced for the online edition, which should be understood as containing articles as well as still images, video footage, audio clips and interactive features such as a discussion forum or chat box (see for example Schultz, 1999). Most online journalists produce up to a maximum of 50% original content.

Regarding daily tasks almost all of the participants are predominantly reading and answering their emails (97%), researching the Net for stories (91%) and rewriting 'shoveled' texts (78%). Questions were also asked on several issues regarding online journalism such as learning new specialized skills, application of interactive features, the notion of (both virtual and geographical) community building online and credibility online. More than 90% of respondents agreed wholeheartedly with the statement: "the development of additional technological skills is a necessary precondition for the online journalist" - but only 63% feel that it is HTML (HyperTextMarkupLanguage) that one needs for the job. The results on occupational characteristics suggest that the online journalists work in a much more isolated environment than their 'offline' colleagues, where most – if not all – of the time is spent in front of a computer.
**Professional Characteristics.** The survey questionnaire designed for the Web contained a number of additional role items to the ones in the phone survey among all journalists in The Netherlands. These extra items related specifically to working in an online environment (see Deuze and Dimoudi, 2002). Table 1 therefore reports a full listing of all roles put to the online journalists in the Web-survey. The figures in Table 1 offer additional support for conclusions drawn in earlier studies, that journalism as it is practiced online allows for a strong emphasis on audience-directed role perceptions (like providing a platform for discussion, reaching a wide audience; see Dahlgren, 1996; Quinn, 1998). It seems that the Dutch online journalists still view the Internet as a mass medium directed at a 'mass' audience, where the role of the news media can accordingly be characterized by disseminating the news to the widest possible audience (Morris and Ogan, 1996).

Table 11 takes an additional look at the role perceptions items, using a factor analysis – but this time of the full range of questions posed to the online journalists. Table 11 offers more evidence to the suggestion that a specific commu-

![Table 5.1](image)

**Table 5.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media roles</th>
<th>Online sample</th>
<th>Main sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate information as quickly as possible</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on news intended for the widest possible audience</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide analysis of complex problems</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal and present new trends and ideas</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide a forum for discussion of public concerns</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase pluralism in the media</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critically monitor developments in politics and business</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate government claims</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build and sustain (virtual) community</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give the public a chance to voice their opinions</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide entertainment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop intellectual/cultural interests of the public</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a spokesperson of certain groups in society</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand up for under-privileged people in society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a good environment for (potential) advertisers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence public opinion/political agenda</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* n.a. (not available) means item not asked in phone survey.
### Table 5.11
Items and factor loadings (varimax rotated) for online journalists' role perceptions (N=66)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media roles</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To build and sustain (virtual) community</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide entertainment</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signal new trends</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give people a chance to express their views</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a good Umfeld for advertisers</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td></td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach widest possible audience</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand up for disadvantaged people</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a spokesperson of people(s) in society</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set the political agenda</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence public opinion</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get news to the public quickly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop interests of the public</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate claims government</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td></td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be an adversary (of govt/business)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide a public forum for discussion</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase pluralism in the media</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: only loadings above .10 (or -.10) are reported in this table. **Boldface** indicates highest factor loadings. Factor 1 explains 28%, factor 2 explains 15%, and factor 3 and factor 4 both explain 9% of the variance.

Community-oriented role perception is emerging among online journalists. Such an emphasis on a certain (virtual) community is something that according to the literature can be seen as a characteristic of 'ideal-typical' online journalism (Riley, Keough, Christiansen, Meilich and Pierson, 1998; Deuze, 1999: 384). This community orientation strongly correlates with a commercial perspective, though—which might fuel the criticism voiced in the literature regarding the ethical standards (or lack thereof) of online reporting (see for example Gahran, 1998). The other factors share similar elements with the typologies found in the main sample of Dutch journalists (see chapter 11).

In a final question in the range of professional characteristics the respondents were asked to reflect on a number of propositions regarding online journalism. From their remarks one may conclude that 78% feels strongly that online journalism is developing next to print and broadcast journalism, as a new professional type of journalism. Moreover, almost three quarters of the journalists saw that building a stronger and interactive relationship with the public is the best way to do 'online journalism'. In this respect one could argue that online
journalism is a more service-oriented kind of journalism than other forms of journalism – something with which 63% of the respondents agreed with. In terms of the classic agenda-setting theory of the press, half of the participants believed that such a traditional monopoly on agenda setting of journalists is diminished online. The low scores for the media roles of influencing public opinion and setting the political agenda support this notion. The final question posed to the respondents was: “Which professional title do you think describes you better: Online journalist, Print journalist, Broadcast journalist or Journalist?” Half of the respondents ticked the box for Online Journalist, the other half for ‘just’ Journalist.

These professional characteristics suggest that there may be two ‘types’ of online journalists emerging in The Netherlands: one is a more or less experienced reporter, who has worked in other journalism (print, broadcast, wire) before coming to the online business and therefore still carries the ‘weight’ of norms and values of that experience with him or her. The other type can be typified as a relatively younger reporter, who has started his or her career in journalism online, can be considered to be in high demand of several employers and is more likely to support roles such as building and maintaining (virtual) community online, presenting new ideas and trends and taking the advertisers into consideration. On average 69% of respondents younger than 35 years would endorse these roles, against 32% of their ‘older’ colleagues.

Expert Interviews
The next phase in this part of the project consisted of in-depth interviewing the key experts in the Dutch online newsmedia industry. The editors-in-chief of the main national online news operations in The Netherlands were determined as the leading experts in the field. Since at the time of data gathering (between August 1999 and November 1999) only a few nationally operating online news ventures existed online, a number of online journalists were also included in our group of expert interviewees. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, and were conducted and transcribed by two MA students and the author. First the editors of the online editions of the five Dutch national daily mainstream newspapers were contacted: Algemeen Dagblad, De Telegraaf, Trouw, Volkskrant and the NRC Handelsblad. Secondly the online editors of the two public broadcast organizations with specific online news departments were selected: the VPRO and the NOS. As a third step we invited the two main Dutch Internet Service Providers that feature an independent news service on their Websites to participate: Worldonline and Planet Internet. All of the editors agreed to do an interview, several journalists accepted our invitation as well, resulting in fourteen expert interviews.
The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way. Topics for the interviews were chosen on the basis of the literature review (see Deuze, 1998 and 1999). The questions asked were structured in terms of Dahlgren’s (1996) definition of online media logic, where we asked specifically for comments on the technical and organizational attributes of working in an online environment, the specific journalistic skills and standards involved, as well as the perceptions the informants had of their (potential) audience.

On several occasions the interviewees would remark, that the issues at hand are just not part of the daily reality of working as an online journalist in The Netherlands (yet). Especially more ‘advanced’ forms of online journalism – making multimedia for example – and discussions on changing ethics of newsgathering practices on the Internet would generate such response. This has led me to reconsider coining the various ways in which the informants talk about their work and experiences not as distinctive repertoires, but as more or less developed general attitudes. A repertoire presupposes the existence of a somewhat developed and ‘lived’ belief system regarding a certain issue or situation. The relatively short history of online journalism (in The Netherlands and elsewhere) does not provide enough grounds to make such an assumption acceptable for this part of the project. This does not mean one cannot apply the concept of interpretative repertoires as a method for transcript analysis; it means one has to interpret the different attitudes as emergent, as potential building blocks of a developing mindset regarding the (impact of the) Internet on journalism. This realization does suggest that the concept of media logic has to be considered in this respect as logic ‘in the making’.

**Analysis**

As a general remark, made by almost all participants, one should mention the fact that these journalists made it very clear that they were new at ‘the game’, which fact several website editors would painstakingly explain.

“*What we are doing, is taking it step-by-step. It is without question that you cannot give away scoops on the website – that would mean that everyone has got them. Then you have to choose for the newspaper readers. On the other hand, sometimes you cannot wait for stories to appear in print before putting them online. So between those two extremes – exclusive scoops and breaking news – there are a lot of possibilities, and that is what we are investigating […] it means trying, collecting, communicating and once you have made a decision, putting it down on paper […] But it primarily means talking, talking, talking, and making sure your back is covered by the editor-in-chief.*”
This participant explains the daily business on the online work floor as an ongoing process of negotiation between ideals of the Internet (speed, immediacy), business interests of the paper (getting the scoop before the competition—in print), and as of yet rather undefined principles of online news work. He also explicitized the complex framework of this process as it is located somewhere 'in-between' the print and online newsrooms. In short, one could argue that what the technology of the networked computer environment makes possible poses conflicts and complexities for what journalists can do with that (competences), and in what kind of professional organization these technologies and competences can be embedded.

The first coding process of the transcripts resulted in eight more or less distinct topical categories: [1] editorial autonomy, [2] e-commerce, [3] 'new' ethics, [4] regulation (or impossibility thereof in an online working environment), [5] translation of 'old' journalistic standards to 'new' online standards of newsgathering and reporting, [6] speed, [7] trust (and related issues such as legitimacy, credibility, trustworthiness of journalists vis-à-vis their audiences online), and [8] finding your 'own way' online (as in the process of determining the unique service one can offer readers online). The online journalists were furthermore found to apply statements from three coherent attitudes towards the impact of the Internet on their work and professional identity: a pragmatic, pessimistic, and optimistic attitude. Following the general remarks the informants made, it was found that several topical categories (most notably the editorial-advertising division online, its relationship with journalism ethics and the development of 'new' standards) tend to overlap to some extent. Yet I decided to maintain such overlapping categories as distinct sets of statements, considering the fact that the topics and attitudes derived from these transcripts should be seen as emergent, meaning that what interviewees talk about can be seen as 'primordial' accounts of the issues online journalists are facing.

**Category I: Editorial Autonomy.** The vast majority (95%) of online journalists in the Web survey reported being autonomous in their work (see also Dimoudi, 1999: 47). In the in-depth interviews informants indicated this predominantly means, that the online newsrooms of for example providers, broadcasters and newspapers have their own editor-in-chief, who can make autonomous decisions on what kind of content to publish on the Web. What this additionally means in terms of daily practices, is furthermore reflected in the various ways the experts talk about editorial autonomy in our interviews— as one editor explains:
"As editorial department which have been able to more or less work on our own until now. This mainly has to do with the fact that the Website is not the core business [in this case: producing a printed daily newspaper, MD] of our company. So we have never really been bothered by anyone."

On the other hand, this business-like approach can equally impair autonomy, or so it seems when looking at the following quote:

"We cannot really function as a distinct medium, this has to do with our organizational dependency on our parent medium – and with the fact that we are not able to fully exploit all options the Internet has to offer, to communicate with the audience. It is of course my personal opinion, but I think there is a great potential to do other things than what we are doing now."

Autonomy does not necessarily mean producing one's own stories - nor does it mean deciding which sources to include or exclude. It has to do with making decisions about what has been called 'tertiary content' (in: Friedrichsen, Ehe, Janneck and Wysterski, 1999):

"Our biggest daily task is to shovel say 40 or 50 articles from the newspaper and wire services to the Website – not the really small ones but almost all news stories. That is one aspect and the decision which stories to pick and move online, is ours. But that is going to change, those decisions will be decentralized."

**Category II: E-Commerce.** Several authors have expressed concerns that the already blurring distinction between editorial and commercial content in 'traditional' journalism is vanishing online (see for example Williams, 1997). This topic was addressed in particular by the journalists working for Internet Service Providers (ISP), and to a lesser extent by online newspaper and broadcast journalists. Instead of consistently singling out increased commercialism as a potential threat to journalism online, the participants clearly differentiated the issue between 'opportunity' and 'danger'. A Net-native news operation is inherently in conflict with the commercial interests of the ISP, as one editor explains:

"In the past there have been several instances where people in marketing got involved with the editorial policy regarding our homepage. This resulted in an agreement: our homepage serves both our commercial business of providing access, as well as offering a platform for editorial content. But in the practice of daily work it is not a problem [...] we have never taken advertiser interests into account."

At the newspapers a website is not part of the company's core business, which
context gives (e-) commerce a different meaning, allowing the journalist to think of the commercial possibilities when writing a story online:

"It is a problem for sites and advertisers alike: how to attract people? I am not an advertiser so it is not really my problem but I know that there are several attempts to offer something interesting [...] like for example a 'top 10' of books where editorial reviews are coupled with hyperlinks to places within our site where you can buy the book [...] to me this is like providing a service. You do not have to leave the site, we keep the people inside."

Some participants take these issues even further, but distinguish between how the website develops and what role they see for themselves. In this respect one might add that editorial autonomy, the editorial-advertising divide, and newsroom standards are all part of the way online journalists discuss e-commerce.

"We do want to extend things like entertainment, games, comics and service to create our own audience. So we say here is the editorial content, and here is something like service and games, and shops and stuff like that. And that will gain some importance, but it doesn't have anything to do with the work that I want to do. I mean it should be part of the website but not of the journalists' job."

**Category III: 'New' Ethics.** As an additional example of how editorial autonomy relates to commercialism online, one online broadcast editor describes newsites around existing television shows as: "it is a bit like advertising maybe, but we do our own little thing." This suggests somewhat of a conflict between the ethics of other journalism - in which ideology commercialism can be seen as a severe threat to 'real' journalism (see for example McManus, 1996; lamenting the pitfalls of 'market-driven journalism'). Elsewhere we have identified a number of ethical dilemmas for online journalists which can be seen as specific to the online working environment, several of which have been mentioned already: commercial pressures, the use of hyperlinks, verifying information online, using (anonymous) electronic sources, privacy, absence of any kind of regulation, electronic news gathering methods (Deuze and Yeshua, 2001). The interviews show that ethical dilemmas for journalists online present themselves in two ways: one as these pertain to specific Internet-related features of the website (interactive options, hyperlinks), the other as more general dilemmas related to the credibility of journalists on the Internet and to discussions about codes, statutes or other kinds of regulatory arrangements in the online newsroom.

Regarding interactivity, interviewees would express concerns regarding for example allowing the server to respond to user's previous behavior on the web-
site through the use of so-called 'cookies' (little bits of text stored on the user's computer each time he or she visits a particular site, containing information on what that user did on that site):

"The profile of your subscribers is the capital of your newspaper. It's the power you have in relation to the advertiser: 'this is exactly the target group you want to reach.' Dutch people are very careful to protect their privacy, much more than Americans. One should always keep that in mind. But you cannot escape the fact that, when you try to do something new, you want to know you could reach your potential visitors."

The ethical dilemma in this particular case could be described as the urgency of developing a knowledge base regarding online activity and customers, versus the tradition of protecting personal information and working completely independently of advertisers' concerns. Adding hyperlinks to stories on the website also causes some dilemmas, as several participants explain through specific examples:

"You cannot just put a link somewhere on a page. It is located somewhere in your text and from that text it should be clear what this link is all about. If you for example link in your text to sites offering 'for' and 'against' stances in certain issues, or these are for example the opponents – like in cases such as the Kurds in Turkey or the Palestinians in Israel – then it would be relevant to include links. But is has to be related to your message. Because it is part of your editorial responsibility to guide people elsewhere on the Internet."

It seems not as clear-cut as this sounds, though, as the same participant remarks later on in the interview:

"Of course it is difficult for people to discern the information from our site from that of another site. When you link to foreign sites that is mostly clear, but people still sometimes have difficulties with that. You have to make clear you are linking to another site, but not with a sign saying 'you are now leaving our site' or something like that. Yes, maybe that is not always ethical. These are difficult questions."

**Category IV: Regulation.** Autonomy, E-commerce and ethical dilemmas are all also discussed by the participants in terms of regulatory instruments. The Dutch media have a tradition – as many European news media and to a lesser extent Anglo-American media – of including editorial principles regarding policies towards minorities, relationship with advertisers and ways of dealing with corrections in a formal code or mission statement (Evers, 1994:}
Such statements or 'statutes' as they are called are nonexistent in the Dutch online newsrooms, even though some mentioned initiatives in this regard. Most of the journalists consider it absolutely necessary to have separate editorial statutes. Such statutes should provide clear information as regards the ethics of Internet journalism and the protection of editorial independence:

“Our newspaper has its own editorial statutes, but they date back thirty years ago, and have never been adapted to new developments like the Internet. Things I mention, problems with the separation between the editorial and the advertising departments, are not dealt with in those rules. All those things should be laid down in the form of rules and statutes.”

The literature suggests that a specific issue in regulation or for example a code of ethics in the Internet environment is the sheer impossibility to standardize and implement values in a constantly changing technological environment with no central control point (Cooper, 1998: 73). This issue has been indicated in the interviews as well:

“Online journalism sometimes has a bad reputation, it is something different. It uses facts much more easily, attributing truth to events long before they have been verified or checked properly [...] you do not put every story you hear about on the Web, but it can be done, so it happens. You can come up with a professional code of conduct, but the risk that people will not follow it, is quite big. How do you address those people?”

Participants would therefore say that, because of the ‘nature’ of the Internet, some kind of self-regulation would be preferred instead of a new set of rules and regulations. But this is definitely an issue under debate.

**Category V: ‘Old’ to ‘New’ Standards.** Journalists' work online is partly the same 'good old' journalism as it can be seen elsewhere, but the daily practice also differs to some extent. Certain skills and standards have different meanings and contexts online (Deuze, 1999). Participants were found to be particularly struggling with the ‘transition’ of established standards to these supposedly new elements of the online work experience.

“I guess I am still a newspaper man. Yes, I am not so fond of... I am not an IT [Information Technology, MD] specialist. I know a lot of things about the technology behind the Internet, because right now I have to have knowledge to build this website, but first and foremost I am a journalist [...] can't it be both? I mean, it is a new medium, like radio or TV, but the Internet is a medi-
This particular journalist clearly distinguishes the new media technological experience from his role as a journalist. His colleagues at the broadcasting side of the online operations in The Netherlands share similar problems addressing the 'new' standards:

"I definitely think that it is a new kind of journalism that is very different from magazine or newspaper or TV or radio journalism, because on the Internet you can integrate all these things, you know, you edit audio, you edit video sometimes, you make pictures and of course you write... it is about finding the best way to make your point, so if you need audio, you use audio, if you do not need it, you do not use it... and... it is pretty hard to explain this actually."

On the other hand there are those in online journalism that would disagree with the distinction, even though they admit this might be a position they cannot maintain:

"I have not been long in this field, it is very new to me. Our starting point is that the standards of the newspaper should be upheld for the website. It is not that these are two different kinds of journalism: one for the Internet and another for the newspaper [...] But I guess that is coming in the near future."

CATEGORY VI: SPEED. Central to the understanding of many dilemmas of professionals working on or with the Internet is the concept of speed, immediacy or 'real-time' decision-making (see also Gleick, 1999). Internet is a 'hasty' medium with a minute-to-minute, 24/7 deadline (Mann, 1997). A new story can become known worldwide in a matter of seconds (Singer, 1997a: 4). It can be considered difficult to perform a checks and balances procedure under this time pressure (Williams, 1997). Speed and immediacy are critical to success on the Internet and journalists work under these conditions affecting their daily work practices. When talking about speed, the informants reiterated statements regarding ethical guidelines as 'work in progress'.

"The Internet is a rapid medium and we use the Internet for 99% of our sources. Anything our journalists read on a website can be published. We do not really have a verification procedure - we just mention our source. I guess you could say we opt more for speed than for checking and verifying the stories of our sources."
A colleague at a newspaper website disagrees with the emphasis put on speed and reveals a different, more critical way of dealing with immediacy:

"I do not have this urge to get the news ‘out there’ as soon as possible. I think it has to do with what your goal is, of course you can publish the news as fast as possible on the website, but if you have an audience that looks at the website just once a week it does not matter if you get the news one hour later."

A way to incorporate the notion of speed into the routines of the news organization, some editors opt for a differentiation between the parent medium's product and the online product:

"Well, I think online journalism will be much more like real-time journalism, with less of the interpretation and background that you find in the newspaper, which has to do this strictly once a day, and as an online journalist you have to be on the news every moment of the day and this has consequences for your stories. So I think our stories will become more like press agencies, short stories."

An interesting aspect of the ways in which online editors talk about speed and their work is the attempts they seem to be making to ‘explain’ their views on the Internet by translating what they know about other journalism on the Web. This can also be seen as a particular feature of scholarly writing about online journalism in the first years of the World Wide Web’s existence (Deuze, 1998). Even the journalists working for ‘online only’ sites do so. A specific example of this can be observed below.

"We are a medium that goes on the entire day, we have no deadlines and the interaction with the audience is most important, so we have faster and shorter stories, I mean we do not have such longer stories. Sometimes the news is not more than just a headline, it is much more like radio journalism than print journalism. That interaction and that 24-hours rhythm, that has much more to do with radio."

CATEGORY VII: TRUST. A recurring, though not very popular (as follow-up questions often remained unanswered) point made by the participants is their role perception as ‘trustworthy’ gatherers and disseminators of news and information online. This particularly relates to the notion of working in ‘real-time’ (see the previous category regarding speed and immediacy):

"You should write the story as fast as possible but you should also make it correct and trustworthy, well-written and double checked […] and maybe you will not be the first to publish that story, but if you publish five minutes
later than the others, but offer a better written and more reliable story, the audience will know that your website is better than the others.”

This notion of trust, of being reliable, coincides for the participants with working for an established 'brand', which in the literature is referred to as institutional credibility (Bardoel, 1996):

"Journalists who do not work for a news brand do not have the image or the trustworthiness of existing media, and things can change but I do not think that one individual editor can compete with existing publishers online. So I do not think that this development within the next couple of years will have much implications for us, professional journalists."

Most of the interviewees more or less agree with such propositions; few online journalists seem to feel that the suggested blurring of the information producer-consumer distinction may have an effect on the trustworthiness of their medium when it goes online. In fact only two editors address concerns in this respect, both of who are considering using online characteristics such as interactivity to counter this concern.

"My main point would be that direct interaction with users reinforces credibility. You have to be more careful online, you have to correct mistakes instantly. I for example like the idea of offering a discussion platform beneath every story put online. It only has advantages: it makes journalism more transparent, more reliable."

The second editor feels that this direct interaction would be the 'second phase' in online journalism, whereas the first phase would be offering just a mix between shovelware, news summaries and hyperlinks to other sites.

CATEGORY VIII: FINDING OWN WAY. What the discussion of all topics mentioned clearly reveals, is that all editors and journalists at the time were still very much exploring, experimenting and finding their own way on the Internet – as noted earlier in the introductory comments to the analysis. The two sides to the issue of autonomy (organizational dependency versus being left alone, see category I) are a specific context for online journalists to discuss the still ongoing process of finding their way as an online newsroom.

"Because you have all these media – radio, TV, print – together, there should not be a separate digital journalist department to make content especially for the Internet, because you should start with the content and then just see what medium is best to put out the content. So we are asking ourselves at the moment where should we go..."
In the analysis of the topic 'speed' (category vii), one editor stated that using more direct interactivity could be seen as the second or next phase in online journalism. In the discussion of finding your own way, most online journalists indeed mention adding interactive options as a near-future goal for their news site, as the three examples show clearly:

“It is our intention in the long run to start writing our own stories online, which will then also appear in print. Furthermore we are working on a number of applications specifically aimed at the Internet such as a discussion environment or for example ‘chat evenings’, where people can go online and talk to a doctor.” (editor, national newspaper);

“The main characteristic online is the Internet as a network, so ideally you would use that network and have people interact, like user input or something, that is what I would really like to have. So that people who log onto our website don’t just receive information but can actively add-on to the information, but it is often very hard to realize that.” (editor, broadcast organization);

“We started from scratch, at first it was not really online journalism. It was called like that but it could have been called anything else. It was a kind of guide, an index of sites on the Web. That is the basis. Then we started thinking about what we could do with that […] We started turning things around, we wanted to be a source of news on the Internet […] Now take CNN online for example. You can see news on the Web is fast, but on the other hand it is constructed well, it is archived and accessible. I like it, it is as if you enter their living room, communicating also via email with them. That will change more and more.” (editor, isp news site).

The way the participants discussed these eight topics in their work can be seen as a reflection both of the fact, that many of them just started recently with a news site, as well as an understanding of the different characteristics the medium has or may have for (online) journalism.

**Repertoires**

All of the mentioned eight topics are discussed in several ways – ways that are sometimes even contradictory, and often overlap. The repertoire analysis aims to show the full range of ways into the discussion on journalism and the Internet. As mentioned above, this revealed three distinct attitudes rather than repertoires these participants applied to the discussion of the topics: an optimistic, pessimistic and pragmatic attitude. These attitudes were used by all interviewees, be it that the pragmatic approach seemed to be most popular
among the online journalists, followed by the pessimistic attitude. An optimistic set of propositions – as in foreseeing an idealistic future of journalism on the Internet where ‘everything will be better’ – was often implicitly assumed, but then tackled by offering pragmatic arguments (as in: “... if only we would have the money to get there”).

OPTIMISM. Issues regarding editorial autonomy, dealing with (e-)commerce, and ‘new’ professional dilemmas are commonly addressed more or less simultaneously by the participating online journalists. When discussing these issues in the context of professional competences, remarks are made about how the Internet potentially impacts upon journalistic standards – and sets new ones. In terms of the ‘freedom’ of the online environment, one participant (working for a public broadcaster) says:

“I've got the feeling that we are not using the website the way we should use it [...] Yes, it is of course my personal opinion, but I think there is a great potential to do other things than what we are doing now. But I see this happening in the future, the more technology and new business models develop, we will have a new medium, which will probably create its own audience.”

This rather utopian vision on the possible future of online journalism – defined by Van Zoonen (2001) as a repertoire used by Internet users to give meaning to their experiences online – is shared by most participants, although it means different things to them. For the ‘online only’-journalists it seems to mean options to further explore newsgathering and fact-finding on the Internet, while the broadcast journalists envision more interactivity with users/viewers, and the newspaper journalists mention adding and maintaining multimedia and (annotated) archival content to their site.

What seems to be of particular relevance for a vision on journalism and the Internet as ‘a better world’, is the discussion about new business models for news sites:

“Nowadays everyone knows what is going on in China but no one knows what is going on around the corner. So the news that you actually dig out yourself, in your own country, your own city or regional newspaper, will become more of an asset to your title. And that will change the nature of how an editorial organization works, is organized, how its hierarchy is shaped. I think in the future it will become more and more important to produce original content, content that is not offered by anyone else. That is the only thing you can sell for money on the Internet, I mean there is no way that you
can get people to pay to get access to information that they can get for free somewhere else."

It is important to note here the implicit and somewhat 'technical' notion the participants seem to share about the 'promise' of multimedia journalism in the future, as the convergence of media modalities will most likely facilitate better storytelling:

“We want people who are experienced or think they are experienced, to make a shift through all this material and make a selection of audio, video, pictures and text, put it all together and make it coherent, stronger.”

This Dutch optimism – however unarticulated – coincides with the American type of the benevolent revolutionary, found in Singer’s work (1997a). Like Singer concludes, the keyword in this repertoire is we: 'we the journalists' are key players in the new media world, journalism can only become better by using new technologies, 'we' just need the time, money, experience and infrastructure – and then it will be inevitable that things will improve and innovate across the board.

PESSIMISM. If the participants are sometimes rather implicit about the brave new world the Internet might offer to journalism, they are quite vocal in their doubts, disbeliefs and outright skepticism about some of the Internet’s features.

"Why did I leave a newspaper website? Because I got a better offer, I knew that what I was doing in the newspaper was not... there would not be a great future in it. The offer I got to work with a broadcasting company implied that I could work on the Internet with moving pictures, with sound and not only with text, which is what would happen if I stayed with the newspaper."

A pessimistic view also exists on the use of the Internet by 'offline' colleagues, those that write about material found on online, but not necessarily working with or for the online department in a media organization:

"To my biggest regret I sometimes read a story in our newspaper of which I can tell what sites that journalist has visited. This person has stolen a piece here, copied a piece there, translated it and presented the story in the newspaper without mentioning the sources, without permission. It is the laziest type of journalism, based on the idea 'I made the selection and I have put it together in my story'. Nonsense, it is not right that way."

The Internet can be seen as a threat to journalistic principles, according to this
view. This problem is signaled in different propositions, often related to the ethics of newsgathering online, but also more specifically connected with editorial storytelling:

“If you look at the Internet everything is different: because of the incredible pace it is much more difficult to judge if something is relevant to the public, and you are less capable to fully verify information. It happens often that we have to publish additional material or corrections to stories we put online. In short, the kind of stories will become a trend which we see now on CNN: this is the update so far, to be continued.”

The editors-in-chief we interviewed voiced such concerns in particular, seeing the future of the Internet as a potentially problematic place where the reader will not be able to distinguish 'good' from 'bad' content:

“I think it will be more complicated to protect our editorial autonomy online. That I think is the most important problem of the future. How can we maintain our journalistic credibility, when it becomes clear that we also sell all kinds of related products and services — regardless of what kind of products and services these are.”

The brightest future of online journalism for some would be adding much more interactivity to the newssite — something that from a pessimistic viewpoint would be the end of 'real' journalism.

“This community thinking, yes, well, I have a double feeling about that. I don't give a damn, really. It does not interest me who reads the articles and what they have to say about that. I think journalism should be a supply side activity. We decide what is news and if you do not agree, well, buy another newspaper. We have our own set of values and ideas about how we should report about the world [...] I don't give a damn what people think because it is our newspaper, not theirs [...] Technically the Internet is more suited to develop a community like that. But it is not clear for me yet what the consequences of that will be for reporting. It is simply another task of a newspaper which I would hardly call journalism.”

Clearly this attitude reflects a much more skeptical approach to the wonders of the new media world. Singer (1997a) typified this attitude as nervous traditionalism: a journalist strictly emphasizing the 'basics' of good journalism, refusing to let the enthusiasm of the new to run away from the establishment of the old. On the other hand, this repertoire analysis adds a dimension to Singer's type (which may have to do with the fact that our study was conducted five years later): this is also a journalist who is to some extent disillusioned
with the kind of text-only 'shovelware' being produced in most online journalism – in particular by newspaper sites.

**Pragmatism.** What characterizes the approach most, if not all, participants take to the Internet is pragmatism. Singer (1997a: 12-15) describes this attitude as a journalist considering him- or herself a rational realist, as they do not have anything for or against new technology, primarily because the changes are not seen as having much to do with their work at all. This attitude can be seen as the use of similar propositions to explain daily practices in the workplace, without addressing the changes the Internet brings as either threats or challenges:

“Our department sort of has an experimental way of dealing with the Internet and that is our goal to try and find out how to do this. And sometimes it does not work at all and sometimes it functions really well.”

This attitude can be also explained – according to the journalists themselves – by a lack of professional knowledge and training in 'how to do' online journalism.

“Well, we journalists are still looking for something to hold on to. The writing skills, they are not... almost no educators in The Netherlands or out there are teaching specifically what skills online journalism needs.”

On the other hand, some participants make the pragmatic point that such skills are perhaps not that different online, as compared to 'offline' media.

“For a reporter the Internet does not really make much difference, because the nature of reporting does not change. You still have to find good sources, you have to be able to check your facts, you have to be able to write a good story, find news or judge news or make news or whatever you call it.”

The survey among online journalists showed that many of these new media professionals are in fact older, experienced journalists coming from other 'offline' departments. This is also reflected in the pragmatic repertoire, as one editor comments:

“I am not the prophet of the Internet. No, I am too old for that, leave that to the young boys and girls who have not been working half their life for a newspaper. Anyway, the Internet is still very young, I mean I am only beginning to understand my own daughter of 14.”

Journalists who share this attitude can also been seen as shifting to and from optimistic beliefs to pessimistic concerns about the future of journalism online. This shifting to-and-fro does not seem to unsettle them too much though,
as the answers reflect what Harper (1998) called some kind of 'serene separa-
ratism'. Instrumental in this shifting are concerns about ways for journalism
online to make money, to develop a working business model which may guar-
antee the development of features that seem to be promising (such as multi-
media, services, interactivity for some). The pragmatics typically would not ad-
dress this issue in great detail, as one journalist would shrug and say: "We are
not ready for this sort of discussions yet." What is notably striking in the ac-
counts of the experts, is the virtual omission from 'the public' in their thinking
(aloud). Even though the survey suggested – see the tables earlier in this chap-
ter – an emphasis on audience-oriented role perceptions, this audience is cer-
tainly not in any specified way on the forefront of deliberations regarding
(implications and future of) online journalism.

Conclusion

Is it possible to speak of distinctive media logic of online journalists in The
Netherlands? And if so-, how this logic relate to the core values of the profes-
sion? The first question can be answered with a cautious "Yes" – even though
online journalism has only be around for approximately five years at the time
of writing this book. Within this (emerging) online media logic technical at-
tributes of daily work are perceived as essential for the occupation. In terms of
its organization of labor online journalism in The Netherlands is increasingly
professionalized and generally structured separately from its parent medium
(if any). The professional logic behind the kind of journalism as it is practiced
online is clearly focused on an interactive relationship with an (wide) audi-
dence, with less importance attributed to traditional media functions like agen-
da setting or advocacy journalism. The process within which online content –
be it original or shovelware – is shaped can be considered a separate and even
almost completely autonomous one, with little or no communication between
the online editors and other sectors of the media organization. Online jour-
nalists are surfing the Net, (re-) writing their stories and handling their email
 correspondence almost exclusively, which makes their work largely 'medium-
driven'. The production patterns within online journalism clearly reflect a
powerful role for the technological context of the job, coupled with a per-
ceived need to use this technology for including the public(s) into the journal-
ism experience instead of communicating to them as would be reflected in role
perceptions like being a spokesperson or advocate for certain (groups of) peo-
ple in society.

The analysis of the attitudes online journalists share in the discussions
about a wide range of topics regarding journalism and the Internet shows a
professional group of people trying to get to grips with the changes and chal-
lenges of the wired workplace. Like their colleagues in the multicultural field (see our analysis in the previous chapter) they apply notions of 'real' journalism or 'the' journalistic principles to the concepts they are faced with – and find that these notions are under pressure. This causes them to either look forward to the new options the Internet has to offer – interactivity in particular; to be quite skeptical of the potential threat to the traditional role of the journalist as autonomous storyteller and to be rather pragmatic about it, as their newsites are moving from a purely shovelware-basis to a new platform for (the exchange of) content, perhaps even multimedia content. There seems to be no consensus among the participating experts on whether this will make for a 'better' or 'worse' journalism – but it will further shape a distinctly different journalism, so much the interviewees contend to. In this sense one could consider the attitudes (rather than repertoires) of these online journalists instrumental for them to distinguish themselves as a separate professional group in de Dutch media system.

If one takes a closer look at the topics the online journalists mentioned in the interviews, it is quite striking that these seem to closely reflect the components of the ideology of journalism (as in: objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, ethics, legitimacy, and the public service ideal; see chapter 1). This conclusion contributes to answering the research problem of how the ideology of journalism can be seen as challenged by the meaning and relevance of the Internet to Dutch journalism. Journalists provide a public service, but in the transition from 'old' to 'new' standards the participants indicated that their traditional role as a journalist – a watchdog, interpreter, guide or filter – comes under pressure. Secondly one could argue that yes, journalists consider themselves to be neutral and objective but in finding their own way online they face a further blurring of the producer-consumer distinction. This happens for example as they are expected to actively engage in some kind of participatory communication online – something some participants do not consider to be 'real' journalism indeed. The issue of editorial autonomy in the online workplace does not necessarily correlate with producing 'original content'. Autonomy can been redefined online, as editorial departments are integrated (or expected to integrate) with so-called 'services and products'-sections, or: e-commerce. A shared sense of immediacy and urgency of journalists online is perceived as quite problematic and functions as a source of unrest. As online journalists would say: immediacy is fine, but in the context of a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week news environment these values can be seen as challenging professional ideals of verification of information, checking sources or following up a story lead before publishing. In terms of ethics, the Internet seems to pose a range of 'new' dilemmas for journalists operating online, dilemmas that are not dealt
with in a structural way by the online newsrooms. A way of addressing ethical issues is for example through editorial statutes, which is a much-debated topic, but has no precedent in Dutch online newsrooms. Finally the topic of trust (and related issues such as legitimacy and credibility) conflicts with the participants' belief in the institutional credibility of online journalism, which gets lost in an environment where one competes with thousands or even millions of other information-providers without institutional or media-organizational backing and background.