

German Online Arts Journalism:

The analysis of the forms of publishing
and the forms of content

on the web pages FAZ.NET, kultur.ARD.de,
Perlentaucher.de, Spiegel ONLINE and
Sueddeutsche.de in April 2011.

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1. INTRODUCTION

April 2011 began with a news event that no arts publication in Germany could overlook, as foreign minister Guido Westerwelle flew to China to open a high-profile exhibition of German visual arts that were influenced by the Enlightenment. The opening of 'The Art of Enlightenment' at the National Museum of China by Tiananmen Square in Beijing was reported on with a critical irony. The German feuilletons¹ asked if it was ethically correct to use ideas of the Enlightenment to improve diplomatic relations with a country that is ruled by an autocratic regime. The whole field of German arts journalism seemed to be concerned with Chinese society and the instrumentalisation of the arts for the purpose of German foreign politics. Not one article focused on the content of the exhibition itself or the artefacts' potential merits as art.

Such unanimous reporting on 'The Art of Enlightenment' might feel harsh if it were not justified by the next big arts news item of that month. The arrest of the Chinese visual artist and political activist Ai Weiwei on the 3rd of April showed that the dissonance between arts and authority in China was just as strong as the feuilleton articles had depicted it to be.

FAZ.NET was one of the first web pages to report on the arrest, using the artist's friends as a source.² The initial news was followed by a step-by-step ticker report of the reactions to the event.³ The following day, the reports were expanded on by Sueddeutsche.de in the form of an interview with Ai Weiwei from shortly before his arrest⁴, and the day after that by releasing a portrait of the artist that was published as an image gallery⁵. Perlentaucher published Ai's final post on Twitter in their summary of arts news from the 4th of April.⁶ In the coming days the focus of related articles

1. The traditional name for an arts page in German newspapers; also used on some arts journalism web pages.

2. Künstler Ai Weiwei an Ausreise gehindert. Published on FAZ.NET / Politik 3.4.

3. Was geschieht mit Ai Weiwei? Published on FAZ.NET / Feuilleton 3.4.

4. "Wir leben im Zeitalter der Verrücktheit". Published 4.4.

5. Vom Künstler zum Staatsfeind. Published 5.4.

6. Heute in den Feuilletons: Und sei es der fernste Spitzenton. Published 4.4.

extended to in-depth analyses of the human rights situation in China, and of Germany's position within the context of the 'Enlightenment' exhibition. The critical voices grew louder as exemplified by Zeit Online, which called for clarification in the matter using the ironic title '*Klärt das auf!*'.⁷ Various experts and indirect participants of the affair were interviewed during the next two weeks, continually presenting the public with new points of view. Towards the end of April, Frankfurter Rundschau returned to the National Museum of China and the roots of the entire affair. There the newspaper's journalist was told by the museum personnel that "the German event is not a real exhibition, but rather a commercial project, for which the Germans have rented a room in the museum".⁸

The reports on the Ai Weiwei affair cast light on the distinct characteristics of arts journalism. It is interested in exploring the connection between arts and politics, as well as discussing art in its own right. Its style lies somewhere between candid reporting and literary expression. Compared to the relative neutrality of news journalism, it takes sides much more easily. According to Stephan Porombka, arts journalism is from its very *raison d'être* not suited to the objective ideals of 'pure' journalism. First of all, the object of analysis within arts journalism (most often a work of art) is open to a variety of interpretations, and is therefore difficult to reduce to the level of a news item or fact. Secondly, these objects have different meanings when viewed in different temporal or cultural contexts. Thirdly, the function of arts journalism is to observe its object in order to gain knowledge about the current state of arts and culture.⁹

The various profiles of German arts journalism websites fall into the previous parameters depicted by Porombka. Most of the variation depends on the definition of suitable content published on an arts page. For example, it is common for German online arts pages to publish articles on

7. The title is a word play on the German word "Aufklärung" that means both enlightenment and clarification. The article was published on 7th of April 2011.

8. Von Aufklärung keine Spur. Published 19.4.

9. Porombka 2007, p. 275. By showing how arts journalism is unable to respond to the requirements of news journalism, Porombka also shows the inaptitude of the predominant forms of journalism to deal with arts and culture.

events of social relevance in their web feuilleton, even if the topic has nothing to do with the arts. There is also ongoing confusion with regard to the classification of articles and how arts pages function within a larger website. An example of this was the link provided by a Perlentaucher news summary that led to an article about Google Books and the future of literature, as published by Spiegel ONLINE. The article was originally published on the technology-related *Netzwelt* section of Spiegel ONLINE but not linked to the publisher's arts page. Consequently, the article was available for the readers of Perlentaucher.de, but not for those readers of Spiegel ONLINE who follow the *Kultur* page but not the *Netzwelt* page.

The ambiguity in defining what an arts page should be has its roots in changes to the definition of the word 'culture' over the past decades. It has been affected by developments in cultural studies, cultural politics and the methods of arts consumption.¹⁰ The concept has lately been confused even more by the argument that 'everything is culture'. While there may be some truth to this argument, it simultaneously undermines the relevance of arts journalism as a distinct field of professional journalism that relies on the specified knowledge of art forms and cultural politics.

A clearly defined profile is vital for any arts journalism published in an online environment. The purpose of a specific website needs to be known by the publishers of arts journalism and its readers. It is not only a question of updating old methodologies to match the level of modern technology, but also of providing the type of arts journalism that justifies its own existence by understanding its special function as detailed above.

In addition to its own internal conflicts, arts journalism shares the present challenges of wider online journalism, the most urgent of these being the search for new funding models and the dynamic between traditional publishers and alternative sources of online information, such as public relations agencies and highly-specialised amateur writers. The most fundamental concerns touch upon the very existence of media itself in its

10. Porombka 2007, p. 273.

present form. It questions the role of journalism in the current online environment, where accurate information is available for free in all forms and where one can read the news as fast as it is published.

The context of online journalism in general and online arts journalism in particular as detailed above provides the backdrop for this research. The following chapters aim to define various forms of quality online arts journalism by analysing articles published across five major German websites. The analysis is based on a sample of more than 850 articles collected from those web pages during April 2011.

The analysis is divided into three parts. The first part introduces the selected web pages and their contents. The second focuses on various forms used in publishing the articles (e.g. text, video, image galleries), analysing them in relation to their content. The third part analyses the different forms of content (e.g. criticism, portraits, blogs) of these articles. Although the research does not focus specifically on what art forms are being reported on, it will be noted when deemed important for the analysis. Lastly, the research ends with an attempt to map out a possible future for online arts journalism.

Many interesting themes had to be left out of this research because of its limited scope. One branch of arts journalism that could not be included in this research was entertainment journalism. Its lack of interest in the arts as shown by German publishers makes it impossible to define as quality arts journalism. A quick glance at the Bild.de reports from the Frankfurt Book Fair revealed news mainly about celebrities and their love interests rather than literary art forms.

Perhaps the most important theme that had to be left out of this research was the search for future revenue models for online arts journalism. This topic was left unresolved by the five analysed web pages, none of which had by the summer of 2011 found a solution to financially securing their future existence on the internet. Therefore, the purpose of this research

should be seen as finding ways for ensuring the quality of arts journalism published specifically in and for the online environment.

2. ANALYSIS

The following analysis is based on the observation of five arts journalism websites during the spring and summer of 2011. Considerable weight is given to statistics compiled from all the articles of arts journalism published across these sites during the month of April. Content provided on other websites or originating from another period of time are also included in the analysis when deemed useful.

2.1. THE WEBSITES CHOSEN FOR THE ANALYSIS

The five websites chosen for this analysis were Perlentaucher.de, Spiegel ONLINE / Kultur, Sueddeutsche.de / Kultur, FAZ.NET / Feuilleton and kultur.ARD.de. The reason for this selection was to form a comprehensive picture of German online arts journalism. Other factors that were important in choosing the sites were their status as nationwide online media outlets, and their emphasis on the type of arts journalism that 'portrays the state of culture by analysing its events and artifacts'.¹¹

From the whole field of this specific branch of online journalism, Perlentaucher represents journalism that is published exclusively in a form compatible for the internet. Spiegel ONLINE is the largest German news portal that has an arts page.¹² Sueddeutsche.de and FAZ.NET were chosen because they represent the *feuilleton* tradition of German newspaper arts journalism and because of the prestige of their *feuilletons* in print form. Lastly, the arts web page of the public broadcasting company ARD was included because as a television and radio broadcaster it provides insight into the use of video and audio as a vehicle for online arts journalism.

11. One of the characteristics of arts journalism according to Porombka 2007, p. 275.

12. In the AGOF and IVW statistics from the first half of 2011, Bild.de is the number one news portal by visits, but it does not publish arts journalism.

In April 2011 these web pages published a total of 857 articles of arts journalism. Most of these articles (625) were published in text form, but there were also many other forms used such as tickers (125), video (60), image galleries (29), audio (10) and some cases of combined or rare forms like audio slideshows (1). Counting also the content that was published as an addition to an article, there were altogether 152 image galleries, 95 video clips, 22 audio clips.

The most popular forms of content were criticisms (261) and news articles (233), which accounted for more than half of the published articles. They were followed by tickers (125), blogs and columns (71), interviews (58), portraits (46), essays (25) and background articles (19). Less frequent forms of content included informational articles (9), artistic content (7), Q&A articles (2) and a series of compiled citations (1).

The most popular topic was literature, which was covered in 135 of the published articles. The next most popular topics were film (124), social topics (104), television (66), music (51), media (48), visual arts (47) and cultural politics (40). Among other art forms covered by the websites were theatre (20), photography (15), opera (11), memorials (11), comics (4), cabaret (2) and dance (1).¹³ Some articles contained more than one topic.

There could have been various other ways of choosing the analysed web pages. One of these would have been to include only the most popular sites for analysis. This kind of selection (based on IVW figures from April 2011) would have consisted of the arts pages of Spiegel ONLINE, Welt Online, Sueddeutsche.de, Stern.de and Focus Online. Such a selection would have made this research more difficult, because of the strong emphasis of some of these web pages on history (Welt Online) or entertainment (Stern.de and Focus Online) instead of the arts.

Another website that could have been used here was Zeit Online, which

¹³ This paragraph does not take into account the tickers published by Perlentaucher.de. If all of the topics listed in the tickers were included, the articles on literature and TV would gain more presence but the order of the topics would stay the same.

publishes a lot of original arts journalism, has a coherent profile and is by all means a dynamic, modern web page. However, increasing the volume of analysed websites would have expanded this research well beyond its permitted length.

2.1.1. PERLENTAUCHER

www.perlentaucher.de

Perlentaucher.de is the leading German book and culture magazine on the internet. The independent website has published its content since the year 2000 and is today one of the few German arts web pages that strives to keep up with the development of online media. As its articles are published solely online, Perlentaucher does not have to deal with competing formats for its content. By doing so the site has avoided one of the biggest difficulties that most other arts journalism websites have to deal with, namely adapting their traditional business models online.

Perlentaucher receives more than 722,500 visits per month¹⁴ with a number of 330,000 unique users¹⁵. This number seems somewhat low when compared to the arts sections of online newspapers, but it also makes Perlentaucher Germany's most visited journalistic site that reports exclusively on the arts. In comparison to other nationwide arts websites, Perlentaucher seems to be the strong dwarf among the withering giants.

Perlentaucher has largely gained its popularity by publishing essays written by well-known writers. These essays are few and far between, but its contributors include such renowned thinkers as philosopher Jürgen Habermas. A few years back the website was also noticed in international news when it acted as a forum for intellectual debate on the role of Islam in Europe.

Perlentaucher is profiled as an all-encompassing literature and arts news

14. IVW-4/2011.

15. AGOF-3/2011.

website. It functions as an up-to-date portal for second-hand information on current topics of interest, giving its readers a good overview of what is being written in the (mostly German-speaking and German-centric) media on arts, culture and cultural politics. The emphasis on actuality can be seen amongst other things in the website's use of a layout that clearly lists the most recently published articles first.

In addition to touching upon current debates and interesting articles, the website references and publishes articles specifically concerning the development of the internet. It also cites more internet-based content (e.g. blogs, tweets) than the arts web pages of traditional media. Guest writers' articles often deal with web-based issues and digital development.

The independent website is funded through advertising and by selling its summaries of book reviews to third parties such as online bookstores. Until 2008 it was also partially funded by the state via its participation in the daily European press survey newsletter Eurotopics.

Perlentaucher publishes its content in forms suitable for the internet. Its articles consist of compiled and summarised information from other media that are published as so-called tickers, i.e. with links to the original articles. The themes of these tickers vary from important daily news items ('Heute in den Feuilletonen') to the daily book reviews of the large newspapers ('Bücherschau des Tages') and weekly stories sourced from international magazines ('Magazinenrundschau').

As well as gathering the core of current arts journalism into the form of an edited article, tickers also provide a huge amount of links to featured articles and background information. This tendency towards hyperlinking can also be seen in other Perlentaucher articles, such as the editor's blogs (named 'hypertext-columns' by the jury of the Grimme Online Awards 2003) which are an example of providing a huge amount of informative links in the main body of text. These links serve both as background information for the reader and as validation for the published

opinion (i.e. by giving exact sources within a citation or reference).

The use of second hand content in the form of tickers has in the past angered some media houses that have felt looted by Perleнтаucher's interpretation of copyright laws. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Süddeutsche Zeitung have both sued the website for selling summaries of their book reviews to third parties. As a result of the legal action, the courts ruled that the ideas presented in reviews were to be classed as common property.

On the other hand, the importance of this new form of journalism is asserted by the fact that the most popular arts journalism website Spiegel ONLINE cites the daily "*Heute in den Feuilletons*" article from Perleнтаucher in its entirety. This serves as a good indication of Perleнтаucher's strong status in the current field of arts journalism in Germany.

Although most of the content on the site takes the form of regularly published ticker articles, there were also articles of a more traditional journalistic form. For example, Perleнтаucher's weekly film reviews could have been published on any of the analysed websites.

In the month of April 2011 there were six regularly published article titles. These were *Bücherschau* (daily summaries of book reviews from six newspapers, published 22 times in April), *Heute in den Feuilletons* (daily summaries of arts news from newspapers and blogs, published 24 times), *Medienticker* (a daily listing of online media and arts articles, published 19 times) and *Teletаucher* (a daily list of pickings from TV guides, published 25 times); *Im Kino* (the biweekly film reviews, published four times) and *Magazinrundschau* (weekly summaries of articles from international arts magazines, published four times).¹⁶

¹⁶ The articles that are published "daily" by Perleнтаucher.de are in fact published six times per week, because there is no activity on the website on Sundays.

The irregularly published articles available in April included an update of *Im Ententeich – Redaktionsblog* (the editorial blog, this time regarding ties between the French philosopher Jean Ziegler and Colonel Muammar Gaddafi), various listings of *Karikaturen und Cartoons* (links to current newspaper caricatures published online, published six times in April) and one update of the *Virtualienmarkt* blog (an irregular blog mostly concerned with the internet and online business).

In addition, April saw the publishing of the special article *Bücherfrühjahr 2011*, the first of two annual book review collections, compiled in the spring and autumn from Perlentaucher archives. There were also four articles published in English on Perlentaucher's sister site signandsight.com that provided translations of interesting European articles of arts journalism.

The types of Perlentaucher articles not available in April were the criminal literature blog *Mord und Ratschlag*, the literature previews *Vorgeblättert* and the correspondents' briefs *Post aus...*

2.1.2. SPIEGEL ONLINE / KULTUR

www.spiegel.de/kultur

The web-based version of Der Spiegel magazine, Spiegel ONLINE, was launched in 1994 as the first online news magazine in the world. Published by the Spiegel-Verlag¹⁷, it held the title of the most visited German news site for years until August 2009, when it was bypassed by Bild.de, the online version of the largest boulevard newspaper in Germany.¹⁸

Spiegel ONLINE offers content from the Spiegel ONLINE editorial team and news agencies, as well as some articles from the magazine's print version. According to the statistics from IVW and AGOF, the website receives 137.7 million visitors (IVW 4-2011) and 11.2 million unique users (AGOF 3-2011) per month. Out of all of the German websites taking part in

17. The majority of Spiegel Verlag is owned by Rudolf Augstein GmbH (50,5%) and the media concern Gruner + Jahr (25,5%).

18. Näveri 2010, s. 18.

the IVW ranking, Spiegel ONLINE is the ninth most visited website, again just behind Bild.de.

Arts journalism is featured in the section "*Kultur*", which is visited by 3.78 million unique visitors per month (AGOF IV-2010). With this amount of traffic "*Kultur*" ranks as the fifth most popular section of Spiegel ONLINE (after politics, panorama, the front page and finance), and notably receives in excess of a million unique users more than the sports section.

The layout of the Spiegel ONLINE / *Kultur* web page is divided into two vertical columns, the narrow left-hand column offering tools for navigation and the broader right-hand one a list of articles with an introductory text and picture for each. The left-hand column of the "*Kultur*" page links to the further sub-categories of *Kino*, *Musik*, *TV* and *Literatur*, this selection being broadly in line with the most popular topics on the site. However this categorisation is somewhat problematic, as it deliberately omits such art forms as visual arts or theatre, both of which featured on the website.

Below these four sub-categories the site offers other ways of navigating from one article to another. These include an automatic list of recently used themes that articles are tagged with (reviews, TV-reviews, bestseller) and the top five most visited articles. Under these lists there are links to additional services that provide added value to the site, such as articles from the monthly *Kultur SPIEGEL* magazine, the TV programme, the bestseller book listings, and two links to some of the more regular Spiegel ONLINE offerings (Matthias Matussek's video blog and Bastian Sick's language-themed photo gallery column). There was also a link provided to the independent online arts shop Seen.by.

The layout of these sub-category pages and that of the actual articles follow the same logic as the front page of the website. They also provide much of the same content, with the addition of occasional links for purchasing discussed items included in the left hand column.

In April 2011, Spiegel ONLINE published 217 articles of arts journalism. More than 75 per cent of these were in text form. 24 articles were published in hypertext form, 19 as videos, and all the others in a more traditional web-based text and picture format. Majority of the content consisted of news articles (74) and reviews (72), as well as columns (19), interviews (16), portraits (9).¹⁹ Approximately half of the text articles (90) contained an image gallery of approximately 7.4 pictures (at least 3 pictures, and at most 38). The most popular topics were film (40), television (30), literature (24), music (24) and social topics (22), and the articles with image galleries followed this same order.

The emphasis on articles dealing with film and television show how the arts websites lean towards popular subjects. Based on the statistics from April, Spiegel ONLINE published the largest amount of TV reviews, with a third of the website's reviews featuring a current TV programme. More than a fourth of these reviews (and almost ten per cent of the reviews in total) concerned a talk show broadcast. Almost as popular were the reviews of German detective television movies.

Despite this emphasis on mass art forms, the frequent reporting on visual arts indicates that the so-called high arts are not forgotten either. Visual arts were the sixth most featured art form in the covered topics, with 12 published articles in April. What is interesting, however, is the comparative lack of theatre journalism; it being limited to four reviews, one news piece and one video reportage during the month.

There were two video specials published in conjunction with a magazine reportage in Der Spiegel or a television documentary on Spiegel TV. These specials were simultaneously separate instances of online journalism and marketing tools of the Spiegel brand. There were also seven instalments of video interviews from the series *Interview Project Germany* (produced by film director David Lynch) and the daily "*Heute in*

19. In fact, the portion of reviews can be counted as even larger than this, since some of the articles can contain three or even four reviews within the same page (see the chapter on criticism).

den Feuilletons” article, cited from Perlentaucher with a new title text.

The inclusion of the *”Heute in den Feuilletons”* articles and the classical literature database *Projekt Gutenberg-DE* as part of Spiegel Online / Kultur can be seen as the website's aspiration to be an all-inclusive arts web portal. However, such development has remained in stasis for at least a year. Rather than widening its scope even further, the website has for instance scaled down its user-sharing features, from 16 social media services offered in March 2010 to nine in April 2011.²⁰

Another apparent part of Spiegel ONLINE's strategy is to incorporate e-commerce within the website's services. Links to enable the purchasing of covered artwork (mostly books and CDs) from the Spiegel ONLINE Shop are offered in the left-hand column of the layout. This option to order featured items through the Spiegel Shop can be seen as a partial effort to solve the issue of small financial returns that internet journalism is plagued by. As the income from such a restricted business model is likely to remain low, it can be seen only as a partial solution. However, it shows that the publishers are slowly beginning to find ways for financial gains without having to directly monetise their content. Another indication of Spiegel ONLINE's ambitions in profiting from online shopping is the Seen.by.Spiegel photography service that offers users the possibility to buy photographic art as well as order fine prints of their own photographs.

A slightly disappointing aspect of the Spiegel ONLINE / Kultur website was the existence of an outdated blog link on its front page. The literature blog of Daniel Haas was last updated in August 2010, yet a link to the blog was provided in the left hand column of the front page for most of April.²¹ This kind of outdatedness is more often seen on web pages that do not have their own editors. From a site like Spiegel ONLINE that has such a high reputation online, this can only be seen as carelessness.

²⁰ Sundqvist 2010, s. 3.

²¹ A link to the blog can still be found in the literature subpage of Spiegel ONLINE.

2.1.3. SUEDEDEUTSCHE.DE / KULTUR

www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur

Sueddeutsche.de / Kultur is the arts journalism web page of the daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung. After being founded in 1995 under the name SZonNet, the portal has undergone many reorganisations, the last of which took place in 2006.²² In AGOF statistics from March 2011, Sueddeutsche.de was listed as the fifth most popular online news page. The same statistics state that the website gets 6.52 million unique users per month²³. The arts page "Kultur" is the seventh most popular of Sueddeutsche.de sub-categories with 630,000 unique monthly users.²⁴

The content published on Sueddeutsche.de / Kultur originates from its online editorial staff, the arts page of the newspaper and from news agencies. The website follows the profile of the newspaper, in their own words "[r]eporting on hot topics in the field of arts in Germany and elsewhere [...] informing the reader critically and professionally about important cultural events". Even the 'subtle irony' of Süddeutsche Zeitung is transferred from the pages of the newspaper into means of online expression for the articles published on Sueddeutsche.de.²⁵

The arts page of Sueddeutsche.de is navigated through two horizontal menus. The higher of these two menus leads to adjacent categories like "*Politik*" and "*Sport*". The second menu offers the sub-categories of the arts page (namely film, visual arts, literature and music), three columns (*Angebote für Anfänger*, *Deutscher Alltag* and *Netz-Depeschen*), an archive and the services of the art photo web store Seenby.de.

Beneath these two horizontal navigation menus the content is further divided in two vertical columns. The left-hand column shows an edited list of recent articles and the right-hand one provides links to articles and

22. <http://www.sueddeutscher-verlag.de/info/facts/geschichte>

23. AGOF-3/2011. 31.8 million visits per month according to IVW statistics 4/2011.

24. Sueddeutsche.de Mediadaten: Title Presentation (AGOF internet facts 2010-III).

25. SZ im Überblick: Feuilleton. Translation mine.

groups of articles that offer either background information or have more of an additional value. In April the less-frequently updated right-hand column offered two image galleries of a humorous nature, an embedded player for the latest videos dealing with the arts, and links to the photo blog "*Elefant im Raum*", the "*Kinoportal*" for information on cinema listings, articles published in the series "*Frau im Bild*", the literature blog of SZ critics, two compilations of jokes, the video clip column "*Das Leben der Anderen*", the editorial blog "*on the Road*" and various internet games. In addition, there was a *Newsticker* from the German news agency DPA and a service for subscribing to *Süddeutsche Zeitung* or a newsletter containing the website's latest headlines.

The sub-category pages follow the layout of the main page, but they only offer a few (if any) links in the right-hand column. When available, these links are for theme-related services such as the aforementioned "*Kinoportal*", and a film quiz on the film sub-category page. In addition to these links, the right-hand column offers two tag boxes that are assorted by the most popular keywords (e.g. 2011, Oscars, Hollywood) and by the names of related people (e.g. Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt, Woody Allen). These links lead into a generated page that offers all of the articles that have been tagged by the chosen keyword or name, the most recent article coming first in the list. Navigating through the sub-category pages is made difficult because there are no real navigational tools available. This means that after viewing a sub-category page, the reader needs to go back to the main page of the arts section in order to access the other sections.

In April 2011 there were altogether 133 articles published on the arts page of *Sueddeutsche.de*. Of these articles, there were 87 texts, 28 independent image galleries, 17 videos and one audio sildeshow. The most common article type was the review (37), a large portion of which covered new films (21). There were almost as many news articles (35) featured, with the next most common article types being blogs and columns (16), portraits (16), interviews (10) and essays (8). Film was the most popular topic, with an overwhelming 47 articles

concentrating on that art form. Other popular topics included social topics (19), literature (13), visual arts (13), music (9) and cultural politics (7). It is worth noting that there were no articles about theatre, although there were three articles dealing with opera and one covering cabaret.

Sueddeutsche.de and Spiegel ONLINE publish their longer articles over two or three pages that are linked together. This is probably done to make the site more user-friendly, but it does not remove the user's need to scroll because one page of text is still longer than can comfortably fit onto a normal pixel resolution of a computer display. It is interesting however that these two websites divide their articles, which is something that the publisher of the longest articles, namely FAZ.NET, does not do.

Of the websites considered in this research, Sueddeutsche.de is the only one that uses image galleries as a regular form of independent journalistic content. This newly found form predominated the website's portrait articles, of which only 4 (out of 16) were published in text form. Although image galleries exist across all the other analysed websites as well, they are mostly used as an addition to text articles. In the profile of Sueddeutsche.de however this form has been put to use as a form of serious online arts journalism.

In addition to image galleries, there were other interesting forms of arts journalism available on Sueddeutsche.de. On one occasion the website published an article containing the thoughts of four museum curators about working with China. Similar compilations of expert views on a subject had been published on previous occasions as well. Another example is an article published during the Frankfurt Book Fair 2010, which compiled confessions of publishing mistakes from the top editors of big publishing companies. These kind of articles are an interesting way of adding weight to the site's online content. The weight of such an article depends of course on the status of the experts who are available for interviews.

Other interesting and uncommon forms of content included an audio slideshow and a short story written by author T.C. Boyle, published to mark the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. This short story was published in the *Magazin* section of Sueddeutsche.de but it was also linked to from the arts page. Publishing actual arts content is another way of binding arts journalism to its subject matter, but it must be noted that noteworthy arts content is not always easy to come by. It is also not journalistic content and therefore should be seen only as an addition to the typical content of a traditional arts page.

The various blogs available in the right-hand caption of the layout are published in a very loose schedule. Of the available blogs, only that of the SZ critics was updated in April, and even then not until the 29th and 30th of that month. The other blogs associated with Sueddeutsche.de ("*Das Leben der Anderen*" and "*on the Road*") were inactive, not having had new posts for more than a year. Such long spans of inactivity demand a lot from readers if they are thought to checking back for new content from time to time. Even a month's wait for a new post is something that most blog readers are not comfortable with. The case of the inactive blogs raises the question of whether there is still a need for offering them on the main arts page as if they were still up to date.

2.1.4. FAZ.NET / FEUILLETON

www.faz.net/feuilleton

FAZ.NET is the web portal of the national newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (also known as F.A.Z.) published by Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH. The majority of the publishing company is owned by independent FAZIT Stiftung, founded to ensure the independence of the newspaper. In the AGOF statistics from March 2011, FAZ.NET was listed as the ninth most popular German news page on the internet, receiving 23 million visitors per month (IVW-4/2011) of which 4.2 million were unique users (AGOF-3/2011). The number of visitors for specific categories of the web page were not available.

FAZ.NET has had its own editorial staff since 2001. This staff produces only some of the articles published on FAZ.NET website. A large portion of this content originates from the F.A.Z. newspaper and its Sunday edition Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (F.A.S.). The newspaper articles are most often published online a couple of days after the print version. After being available online for approximately a month, the articles are placed into a chargeable FAZ.NET archive.

The feuilleton page of F.A.Z. is one of the most influential and appraised arts pages in Germany. In the words of the publisher, the F.A.Z. feuilleton is "a cultural institution in Germany. It analyses and reports on, praises and shatters – always with the objective of letting our reader take part in a forward-thinking discussion regarding our society and other societies".²⁶ These pompous words contain two important points for analysis. First of all, the arts page of F.A.Z. is widely known for its quality and influence. Secondly, almost all (if not all) of the web articles published on FAZ.NET / Feuilleton take into account a certain social perspective. Reporting on foreign societies is also made ever more credible by the fact that F.A.Z. is one of the largest employers of foreign correspondents (41) in the world.

The layout of the feuilleton web page on FAZ.NET is divided into two vertical columns, over which there are two horizontal ones for navigating the main headings "Home page", "Politics", "Finance", "Culture" etc. From the two vertical columns of arts journalism, the left-hand one deals with new articles. The list of the latest or most important articles is sectioned three times by a horizontal element, the first section offering links to the most interesting articles from the past weeks and the latter two containing advertisements.

The right-hand column includes navigation tools for the feuilleton, links to regularly updated content (such as commentaries written by the editors, a Q&A literature column, daily or monthly updated cartoons, and readers

²⁶ Wo Ihre Werbung wirkt? Werbemöglichkeiten 2011 in der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung, der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Sonntagszeitung und auf FAZ.NET, p. 10. Translation mine.

opinions); tickers of recent feuilleton articles; static banners linking to thematic pages; the videoblog column *Richterskala*; the F.A.Z. apps for the iPhone and iPad; a database for published film reviews and to old content about a literature competition from the autumn and winter of 2010; information on upcoming events; a search engine; and as the last element in the lowest corner of the page, links to various social networks and widgets.

There are ten sub-categories within the FAZ.NET feuilleton: literature, film, media, debate, human sciences, theatre & concert, visual arts, pop, research and education all have their own pages with a listing of the most recent articles. Apart from the regular articles for each of these sub-categories (such as "*CD der Woche*") and the ticker to the articles of the Neue Zürcher Zeitung (which uses some of the same foreign correspondents as F.A.Z.), most of the right-hand elements are the same as on the main page of the feuilleton. The only section with a right-hand layout of its own is the literature page. Its right-hand content includes (in addition to some previously mentioned elements) a novel atlas, a writing style test, links to archives of regular articles (such as cooking book reviews and books of the week) and a reading room (the updating of which has been ignored lately). For some unknown reason, the literature page is also the only one that does not provide the right-hand navigational tool as an incorporated element. In some of the sub-category pages, the possibility is given to purchase items from the FAZ.NET book shop. However, this web store is not as visibly advertised as the Spiegel Shop on the Spiegel ONLINE website.

Based on the volume of released articles, the arts page of FAZ.NET was overwhelmingly the most active of the analysed websites. In April 2011 there were 305 articles published on the web page, more than 95 per cent of them being in text form. In addition there were six articles in the form of independent image galleries. As with the other websites, the vast majority of the articles were reviews (118) and news articles (81). However, FAZ.NET was also the only analysed website where the amount of reviews

was larger than that of the news articles. The most frequently covered topics were literature (82), society (49), media (27)²⁷, cultural politics (24) and television (22). The emphasis of FAZ.NET on text content can be seen in the comparatively small amount of additional image galleries (23) published during the month.

As mentioned above, the profile of the FAZ.NET feuilleton page leans towards social topics. In addition to reporting on cultural politics, this was apparent in the huge amount of society-related articles (49) that had little or nothing to do with the arts. One of the most covered issues in the feuilleton page during April 2011 was the debate on nuclear energy caused by the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan. Other key elements in the FAZ.NET feuilleton that have nothing to do with arts include articles on ethical debates (Debatten) regarding subjects like cloning or euthanasia. The social profile of an arts page like this is explainable by the tumultuous change in the definitions of 'feuilleton' within the German newspaper industry during the 20th century. Transferring these categories from a print-based feuilleton into an online variety may be comfortable from the perspective of existing readers, but it also makes defining the distinct role of an online feuilleton web page very difficult.

In addition to social topics, FAZ.NET also emphasises literature reviews. Thematically this criticism ranges from brief reviews of scientific books to more thorough reviews of newly published works of nonfiction, and the analysis of the omnibus editions of great writers, such as the review of the works of *Heinrich Böll* (volumes 1 to 27) as published on the site in April. The average length of the book reviews was some 6,500 characters, with the shortest review being 1,200 characters and the longest 17,400 characters long.

An interesting observation that rises from the FAZ.NET statistics is the comparative lack of reports on art forms that proved popular across other websites. For example, there were only 13 articles concerning film (7 of

²⁷ Media is often seen as a section of its own in newspapers and on news websites.

them reviews) in April 2011. Also, popular music was featured in only some of the 12 articles published on music during that period.

FAZ.NET publishes some distinctive columns and other regular articles that exist outside the conventions of more traditional article types. Two examples of this are '*Dudenbrooks*' and '*Fragen Sie Reich-Ranicki*'. *Dudenbrooks* is a narrative experiment of text and image that will be discussed in greater detail later in this research. '*Fragen Sie Reich-Ranicki*' is a Q&A column, where the popular literature critic Reich-Ranicki answers readers' questions about world literature. These kinds of articles can potentially attract readers to visit the page multiple times.

Although generally cautious in its relation to the internet, FAZ.NET has adopted blogs as a part of its repertoire better than the other analysed websites. In April 2011 there were 40 blog posts written on arts topics. The only blogs that constantly referred to such topics were *Comic* (on comics), *Fernsehblog* (on television), *Post aus Tokio* (on the Fukushima nuclear disaster), *Antike und Abendland* (on ancient history) and *Deus ex Machina* (on the internet). The other blogs that featured occasional arts topics included *Sanchos Esel* (on Cuba), *Formfrei* (on politics and finance), *Stützen der Gesellschaft* (on society) and *Ding und Dinglichkeit* (on everything else). Other themes within FAZ.NET blogs included for example *Moskauer Monitor* (Moscow) and *Biopolitik* (biosciences and biopolitics).

An interesting point to make about the FAZ.NET blogs is that they are every now and then better adapted to the online environment than the actual wider FAZ.NET website itself. This may have to do with the cautiousness of the website and that the reporters are most likely given more freedom over their respective blogs. For example, the writer of *Formfrei* used the blog to expand on one of his own articles that covered a speech given by writer Günter Grass during an anti-nuclear energy rally. The blog report included the whole speech as a 43-minute long video file recorded by the reporter using his mobile phone. Although the video image was of poor quality, this instance shows how a blog article can be used

innovatively to expand, and not only to comment on the more official strands of journalism.

2.1.5. ARD AND THE REGIONAL PUBLIC BROADCASTERS

In the sphere of public-service broadcasting in Germany, arts journalism belongs to the remit of ARD²⁸. ARD is a joint organisation that brings together the nine regional public broadcasters (namely: BR, HR, MDR, NDR, Radio Bremen, RBB, SR, SWR and WDR²⁹) and provides some of their content in a nationwide TV programme on the channel ARD 1 – Das Erste as well as online on its website ARD.de.

In addition to regional programming, ARD also has national programming of its own, such as the news programme *Tagesschau* and various TV magazines. As an organisation, ARD is the largest of its kind in the world – it has 23,000 employees and an annual budget of 6.3 million euros.

2.1.5.1. KULTUR.ARD.DE kultur.ard.de

ARD.de has existed online since 1996. A reorganisation in 1999 structured the web page into a portal that now covers all the web services of the regional public broadcasters. Online ARD.de provides both an on-demand platform for its radio and television content (*Mediathek*) as well as the web domain www.ARD.de categorised under seven general topics.³⁰ One of these topics is the portal of arts journalism, namely *kultur.ARD.de*. In addition, all nine regional public broadcasting companies have their own internet sites.

28. Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

29. These are, except for Radio Bremen, the official abbreviations from Bayerischer Rundfunk, Hessischer Rundfunk, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, Saarländischer Rundfunk, Südwestrundfunk and Westdeutscher Rundfunk.

30. Most notably the news page tagesschau.de and the sports page sportsschau.de.

The internet presence of the German public broadcasting companies are limited by a law that regulates the permitted lifetime for certain types of online content . For example journalistic reports can only be available on a public website for one year, and entertainment for half a year. Sports content must be deleted from the pages 24 hours after being made available. These limitations are not wholly apparent in the profile of ARD arts journalism, but the pressure on public broadcasting from private companies may have something to do with the fact that kultur.ARD.de does not seem as interested in up-to-date reporting from the field of arts and culture as the other analysed pages. The number of visitors on ARD.de is recorded by IVW but not published.

Of the analysed websites kultur.ARD.de is the slowest to respond and the clumsiest to use. This can perhaps be a result of focusing too few online resources on specifically arts journalism content. The website makes use of only a fragment of the vast amount of professional arts journalism that is published on a daily basis by the public broadcasting companies across television, radio and the internet. Even that is done slowly, as was seen in the published news reports on the death of American film director Sidney Lumet. This item was reported on the Tagesschau.de news page many hours before it was picked up by kultur.ARD.de.

The home page of kultur.ARD.de is divided in three vertical columns. The left-hand column is for links to the following categories: *Film & Theater*, *Bücher*, *Musik*, *Kunst & Ausstellung* and the language column *WortLaut*. At the beginning of this research these categories were further divided into sub-categories like film, theatre, classical music, pop/rock etc. After an update in April 2011 these sub-categories no longer exist.

The right-hand column of kultur.ARD.de is reserved for banners linked to special services like TV guide tips, discussions on a current theme (in April this was the proposed women's quota in management), links to special ARD featurettes (e.g. the British royal wedding and the Eurovision Song Contest) and for other special content (e.g. an image gallery of the ten

most expensive paintings in the world).

Recent journalistic content is published in the middle column. This content is most often published in the form of an article with a title, a small image and an introductory text. Most of the articles include one or two links to other articles on the same topic. Some of these related articles were more than a month old. Both the main articles and the extensive articles are treated in my statistics as articles in their own right. Links to both kinds of articles navigate the reader to the original location of the article (either a regional domain, an ARD or another public broadcaster's website). Therefore, the function of the kultur.ARD.de web page is limited to publishing link listings for interesting articles that are provided on other ARD websites in the field of arts and culture.

Content in the middle column is organised by its importance or attractiveness rather than by its novelty. This practice did not always make sense from the point of view of published articles. For example the killing of theatre director Juliano Mer-Khamis in Lebanon was never organised as the first article of the home page, or the film & theatre sub-category. Instead, the first article on both pages at that time was a film review that had been published a few days earlier. This suggests either overly rigid working practices or of a lack of interest in the organisation of online content.

In April 2011 there were 126 articles published on the page, which equates to approximately four new articles a day. This volume makes kultur.ARD.de the most passive of the arts pages analysed in this research. Of the published content, 80 articles were published in text form, 24 as video clips and 22 as audio clips. 10 of the audio clips were independent articles. The huge amount of text articles is all the more interesting when considering that the major part of journalism normally published by ARD and its regional companies originates in video or audio form.

More than a third of the published content (43) consisted of news reports. Other published articles types included reviews (31), interviews (18), portraits (8) and essays & commentaries (5). There were also articles about upcoming television and radio programming (8), the livestream of a concert and a direct link to stream the audio file of a song.

The most frequently covered topic was film (21). It was followed closely by literature (15), socially relevant articles (13) and media (10). There were nine articles on both television and cultural politics, and eight on visual arts. In comparison to the other analysed web pages, there was only a small amount of news reports on film (1) or tv (1) and no theatre reviews.

The articles originated either from ARD's own pages (*Mediathek*, *Tagesschau* and occasional articles in kultur.ARD.de), from regional companies and from the web pages of other public broadcasters (3sat, Arte, Deutsche Welle and Deutschlandradio). Less than a third of them were originally published on ARD's own web pages (37) and a tenth of them were from the news site Tagesschau (12). The order of the other original locations of the content were (from the most actively used to the most infrequently used) BR (25), Deutschlandradio (11)³¹, SWR (11), HR (8), WDR (8), 3sat (4), Deutsche Welle (4), NDR (4), RBB (3), Arte (1), Radio Bremen (1) and SR (1). Out of all of the regional companies, only MDR had no content published on kultur.ARD.de.

As mentioned before, kultur.ARD.de is often slow in reacting to what is happening in the field of arts. Most of the articles published on the website had already been published in their original location for two days or more. This is partly a result of the new content being sourced from the web pages of the regional broadcasters, which takes far longer than if the content was written and published by the same editorial personnel. However, even with efficient contact between the editorial staff of ARD.de and the original publishers it should not take days to get the latest articles published there.

³¹ Of these, nine articles originated from Deutschlandradio Kultur.

Closer communication could also help to source the best articles across all topics on kultur.ARD.de. A clear example of how this was not achieved was the German film prize gala, which was remarked on with a single telegraph from RBB, while the BR website simultaneously offered an extensive report and an additional image gallery of the event. In terms of finding the best content from regional pages, BR would be preferable for news content, and RBB & HR for their vast amount of published criticism.

In the beginning of April, kultur.ARD.de suffered from a lack of updates in some of its sub-categories. For example, the main article in the detective literature sub-category was a birthday article about author Agatha Christie that was published in autumn 2010. The problem here was partly solved by removal of these sub-categories. Such measures may make it easier to periodically refresh the organisation of articles, but they also do not make the actual content any more up-to-date.

In a way, the aforementioned reorganisation is as much misleading as the current kultur.ARD.de practice of publishing one of the existing weekly film reviews as its own text. The review originates from the same source as the other reviews, that is BR, but it is published as if it was a part of the main ARD website. From the reader's perspective such "enhancements" are not necessary.

This neglect and bad practice in web development seems all the more awkward when taking into account ARD's biannual special pages. The buchmesse.ard.de microsite is built around the two most popular book fairs in Germany – Frankfurter Buchmesse in the autumn and Leipziger Buchmesse in the spring. This special website provides fast and up-to-date reports from the two book fairs, with interesting and original content (e.g. the entertaining "Read for meat" interviews, where authors tell what book they would trade in for an Argentinian steak). The elegant and modern design of this microsite supports the previous claim that kultur.ARD.de already has the resources in place for publishing quality arts journalism online if it wanted to.

Public broadcasters excel in publishing their television and radio content online. The practice of uploading video and audio content via the *Mediathek* service is one of the best ways of providing such content online. Content lifespan online is limited by various different arrangements, but the daily programming of a broadcaster continually feeds the website with an inexhaustible reserve of fresh new content. *Mediathek* can be seen as a practical extension of the traditional functions of a broadcaster in an online environment. Text based journalism still lacks this kind of efficient online extension.

2.1.5.2. THE REGIONAL BROADCASTERS

As mentioned before, there are nine regional public broadcasters in Germany. All of them have their own web pages, and all but one of them have an arts page. Even the exception, Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, offers arts content as a listing that is generated from recent articles tagged with the word "*Kultur*".³² This content is, however, often limited to articles about TV and radio programming, and occasional telegraphs from the MDR regions concern regional cultural politics.

Graphically both kultur.ARD.de and the regional companies are a step behind the commercial websites. Many of them have an outdated layout and the look of many of web pages is made even more antiquated by the old fashioned use of the internet as merely an advertising space for the broadcaster's television and radio programming.

The two regional web pages that excelled in their online arts journalism are Hessischer Rundfunk (HR) and Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR). Out of all the regional broadcasters, these two are focused on most in this research, because of their impressive volume of daily arts journalism updates. Their content translates well into an online environment and is occasionally produced exclusively for online visitors. The aforementioned web pages

32. In addition MDR publishes the buchmesse.ARD.de special web page from the Leipzig book fair annually.

also make the best use out of their outdated layouts.

Although not a part of the main analysis of this research, some of the observations made about the BR Kultur website are worth noting here for their possible relevance to arts journalism. One of these observations concerns reactions to a specific arts event, while the other two relate to static parts of the website.

The re:publica 2011 conference (on blogs, social media and the digital society) was reported on by all of the arts web pages mentioned in this research. Although the conference was held in Berlin, the most interesting reports were done by the ON3 radio channel of BR. The channel had its own dedicated page for the conference and it provided video interviews of the conference guests with differing views on the future of the internet. The building of a special microsite around an event like this is a common practice in current German online journalism. While previously used for mainly large-scale events like the Berlin Film Festival or major book fairs, there are indications (like this one) that it may be widening into a way of reporting on even smaller events like re:publica.

The BR Kultur site offers some elements that are ahead of many commercial websites in terms of their user-friendliness. For example, BR readers have the option of subscribing to a newsletter that regularly informs them of arts events in the region. As common as it may sound, it is an interesting service because it extends the responsibility of the editorial staff from reporting on a web page into taking care of the readers' interests in a wider sense. Another example of this thinking are the online dossiers, which are organised archives on people, institutions and themes. For example, the dossier on Bertolt Brecht includes pages of text regarding his biography, art, acquaintances and published works.

Observed as a whole, the arts journalism content published on the regional broadcasters' websites leans more towards reviews and descriptive types of articles than towards traditional news journalism. Most

of this arts criticism focuses on reviewing new CD's, books, films and visual arts exhibitions.

The nine regional public broadcasters are variously sized companies that have differently sized budgets. A quick analysis of the online arts pages of these companies however seems to indicate that there is no relation between budgets and the quality of their arts journalism. A good example of this is Hessischer Rundfunk which, although one of the smallest of the broadcasters, is also one of the best and most efficient in transferring its existing content into an online format.

2.1.6. OTHER SITES OF ARTS JOURNALISM AND SPECIAL PAGES

The web pages presented above are not the only quality arts pages in the field of the German online media. While directly referring to the statistics of those aforementioned sites, this research also uses other German online arts pages as a background reference. This is done to compare the assumptions and the statistics of this research to the wider field of online arts journalism in Germany. The websites chosen for this purpose were Focus Online, Frankfurter Rundschau, Hamburger Abendblatt, Kulturnews.de, N-TV.de, Stern.de, taz.de and Zeit Online.

Another interesting development in online arts journalism that unfortunately cannot be analysed in greater detail in this research are special microsites. They are most often built around an event of limited duration, the best examples from the German field of arts being the Berlin Film Festival Berlinale and the book fairs of Frankfurt and Leipzig. Content for these pages is published and updated with a pace that beats the publishing rate of the same publisher's regular arts pages.

Various web-specific forms of publishing are ideal for the rapid pace that reporting from such events demands. This is mostly achieved via blogs (e.g. Stern.de and Spiegel ONLINE) or live streaming (Sueddeutsche.de). Other noteworthy forms include podcasts, downloadable festival material,

and interactive features such as user discussion forums. Stern.de's video reports from Berlinale 2011 also suggest the suitability of videoblogging for special event publishing.

3. ANALYSING THE FORMS OF ONLINE ARTS JOURNALISM

The elements of publishing online arts journalism are divided here into two categories. These categories are the forms of publishing and the forms of content. The forms of publishing refer to the technical platforms that content is published in. Examples of these forms are text, video and image galleries. On the other hand, the forms of content refer to various types of articles that are commonly used in arts journalism. Examples of this second category include news reports, portraits and criticism.

Both of these categories include among them forms that are specific to online publishing. Livestreams and image galleries (as forms of publishing) or blogs and tickers (as forms of content) are just a few examples. Particularly the web-specific forms of content in fact include attributes from both categories, which reminds us of the artificial nature of traditional classifications when used in the context of an online environment.

3.1. FORMS OF PUBLISHING IN ONLINE ARTS JOURNALISM

The websites publishing arts journalism can be seen as multimedia versions of the traditional newspaper arts pages. An online arts page includes in its repertoire the traditional forms of other media (like audio and video from radio and television broadcasters) as well as new forms of online publishing (such as image galleries and hypertext).

The most common form of publishing is the text form. From the content published by the analysed web pages in April 2011, 62 per cent was published in text form. Image galleries comprised 15 per cent of the total published content. The amount of hypertext, mostly available in the form of tickers, was twelve per cent. Video comprised nine per cent and audio only

two per cent of the whole.

The forms of publishing analysed in this chapter include text, images, image galleries, video, audio, livestreaming, combined forms, user-related forms and social media services. Hypertext is analysed later in the ticker chapter, as it is almost exclusively published within that form of content.

3.1.1. TEXT

Written text has from the beginning been the most common form of information produced on the internet, and in online journalism it is still the standard form of publishing. An overwhelming amount of journalistic content is published as text, even when compared to other more popular forms like video and image galleries.

The status of text as a standard form of online publishing may sound self-evident, but it should not be if the internet is really to be taken as a multi-platform environment. This textual dominance can be explained historically in that text requires less data storage than other forms and is therefore much more quickly downloaded by a web browser. This reasoning however loses its grounds as the power of home PC's increases.

From yet another point of view, an over-emphasis on text can be viewed as 'taking the job too seriously'. This is certainly the case when observing a certain practice on the Deutschlandradio Kultur web page. Articles that are originally aired on the radio broadcaster's channel are published online in text form, with a link provided to stream the content in its original audio format. However, the radio articles are not translated into text form, but rather transcribed word for word as they were aired. The resulting text is most often difficult to read. It also begs the larger question of whether it is at all necessary to have text as a standard for the online publishing of radio journalism.

In April 2011 there were 625 articles published in text form on the web

pages analysed for this research.³³ Unsurprisingly, the most popular types of text articles were the same as the overall most popular types, i.e. criticism (244), news reports (196) and blogs & columns (68). The same correlation with the overall statistics existed in the popularity of topics of arts journalism published in textual form. The types and topics of articles vary more in other forms of publishing that are preferably used for those types and topics that are formally closer to them. However, because of its dominance of online journalism, the text form is used as easily to report on film or music as it is to review literature.

The average length of an article was 6,300 characters.³⁴ The lengths ranged from short telegraphs, most common on Kulturnews.de and RBB, to the lengthiest textual ponderances of FAZ.NET that were almost more like essays than articles. There was little evidence of the correlation between the length and the type of an article. For example, criticism, portraits and blogs / columns were usually shorter in length, but there were also many examples of reviews that were more than 10,000 characters in length.³⁵

The style of writing in German arts journalism is less objective and more descriptive than the writing style in other sorts of journalism. Articles and their paragraphs are longer, and their structure tends to be more complex. In addition to challenging their reader, the writers easily take sides in the subject matter that they write about. The tradition of expressing one's own (or the newspaper's) view may be one of the reasons why certain social topics regularly pop out on arts pages even when they do not have any relation to the arts.

33 Most of the text-based articles published on Perlentaucher.de are analysed as a part of ticker form (instead of text form) because of their emphasis of hypertext.

34 The lengths of text-based articles on kultur.ARD.de are excluded from this research because of the various layouts on the regional broadcasters web pages, that would have made the collecting of the statistics impossible in the confines of this research. Kultur.ARD.de articles are included in the lengths of other forms (e.g. video and audio) because of the smaller number of such articles.

35 The numbers published in this research are rounded up to nearest hundred. In some cases, the approximate numbers are the result of many such rounding offs and are therefore presented as advisory rather than exact values.

Text articles on the analysed German arts pages originated from various sources. Most often they were written by online journalists or other journalists of the same publisher. A much smaller proportion of the articles were dispatches from German and international news agencies, most often from DPA, DAPD and AP. Other text-based content included edited non-journalistic texts such as speeches, short stories or excerpts from books. In addition to these, there were occasional older texts offered again in connection to more recent headlines.

The dominance of text as a form in online arts journalism belies the fact that some art forms are better or more comprehensively observed in other forms of publishing. For example, it would be hard to imagine an online report about visual arts with no pictures illustrating the subject matter. Of course, there is a long journalistic and scientific tradition of reporting on visual arts by means of text, but this is more a result of historically limited means than of choice. From the viewpoint of arts journalism, text lacks the power of image galleries or videos to directly depict the visual art forms.

This kind of confusion between forms of publishing and art forms is not only commonplace for text. There are some instances in other web pages (e.g. Zeit Online, Stern.de) where book reviews are offered in video form in a similar way to the literature criticism of television magazines. However, when compared to the possibilities that film reviews show in video form, these literary videos seem somewhat out of place. This practice seems to have more to do with the pressure to publish more videos than with the video form being somehow ideal for conveying literary criticism.

These remarks do not mean to imply that visual arts should not be dealt with in the form of text or literature in a more visual form, as even these forms of reporting have their own benefits. However, when searching for the best way to convey arts journalism to the user of a web page, such reporting ignores the form of the criticised object and the benefits of reporting on it in a similar form of publishing.

3.1.2. IMAGE

The use of images and graphics is one of the most crucial things that affects the success of a web page. The increased visualisation of our culture has led to some rather overdone layouts online, but this hype does not seem to have affected German arts journalism. Good use of visual material does not have to mean overuse or exuberance, but rather a user-friendly approach to photographs, illustrations, graphics and moving image (videos and animation) in ways that make the viewing experience more comfortable and versatile.

Within the context of the analysed web pages, the increased role of visual material can be seen in the dynamic between video and audio as a publishing form. The use of both forms has become more convenient through the development of streaming technology. Of these two forms, video has become much more common, although it takes more time and work to produce than audio.

Still images are used in online journalism almost exclusively in connection with textual content. On the analysed five web pages, almost every text article was published with an accompanying image that was laid out under the title or introductory text. The majority of the articles contained only one image, but there were exceptions of 1 – 3 additional images that were usually smaller in size. FAZ.NET was the only web page that regularly published articles without any images attached.

The smallest images were published by Perlentaucher, which used image thumbnails on its home page. The sizes of these thumbnail images were 80 x 130 pixels for the tickers and 125 x 145 pixels for images of film reviews. Larger images were published only in connection with film reviews, their size being approximately 425 x 285 pixels. Spiegel ONLINE adopted a standard of 520 x 250 pixels for the main header image on its home page, with the following images having dimensions of 180 x 180 or 90 x 90 pixels. Images published in the articles were sized 520 x 250 pixels like the main header image. Sueddeutsche.de published in its arts

page images in the standard size of 536 x 301 or 180 x 135 pixels. Inside the articles, the size varied a bit from 536 x 301 to smaller dimensions. The landing page of the FAZ.NET feuilleton offered images sized 174 x 174, 174 x 130 or 111 x 111 pixels. The images published in kultur.ARD.de were 512 x 200 pixels for the main article and 192 x 108 pixels for any subsequent articles. The size of images published in the articles linked by kultur.ARD.de varied depending on the standards of the website that they originated from.

FAZ.NET / Feuilleton was the only web page that did not have any standards for the images that illustrated the article pages. This led to both the biggest and the smallest overall images being found in articles from that website. From the user's point of view, some of the images were uncomfortably big or small. There were also some cases where the large images were used very well, so that they corresponded with the great length of FAZ.NET articles. Another innovative example of using images were the embedded image galleries of two or three large images that could be viewed without leaving the article page.

Further analysis of the interaction between images and text in German online arts journalism is a subject that would require a research of its own. Instead of discussing the role of still images any further, this research focuses on two specific forms of publishing arts journalism that could not exist without the image. These forms are image galleries and video.

3.1.3. IMAGE GALLERY

In addition to images, one of the most common forms of visualisation across the German online arts pages were image galleries. Often considered as merely an entertaining surplus, one of the analysed arts pages uses this somewhat dated form as an interesting new form of journalism. The arts page of Sueddeutsche.de uses the potential of image galleries as an independent form of journalism instead of a mere illustration of a text article. This use has developed to a point where the

form can be seen as an integral part of the Sueddeutsche.de profile.

Image galleries consist of three or more separate images that can be viewed one at a time in a certain linear order that moves forward or backward. The word image gallery is used here on purpose instead of another common term "photo gallery", because these galleries consist not only of photographs, but also of illustrations, pictures of paintings and other images. These images are commonly accompanied by text, the length of which ranges from a couple of sentences to several paragraphs when forming part of an image gallery article.

In addition to an article, the image gallery is most often accessed by clicking a link in the main image of an article. This may be frustrating in such cases where the gallery consists of only three images. An exception is made by FAZ.NET that occasionally embeds a small image gallery in the article so that the reader does not have to leave it to view the images.

In April 2011 there were more than 150 image galleries published across the analysed web pages. Most of them were published as additions to a text-based article. Only 29, most of them on Sueddeutsche.de, functioned as independent articles. An image gallery consisted of approximately 8 images, the smallest ones containing three and the largest ones featuring 38 images. Perlentaucher was the only web page that did not publish any image galleries.

Image galleries were used mostly in addition to (or as a form of) criticism (68), news reports (41) and portraits (22). Other common forms for them were blogs & columns (10) and interviews (9). There were instances of image galleries being used with or as background articles (4), polls (1) and programme information (1). The most popular topics for image galleries were film (44), television (24), visual arts (15), social topics (13), music (12) and literature (11), followed by surprisingly few galleries on photography (8). Further gallery topics included memorials (6), food (5), theatre (4), history (3) and cultural politics (2). There were also single

galleries available relating to media, opera, dance, architecture, entertainment and travel.³⁶

Many of the analysed web pages used image galleries in the traditional way, i.e. as a visual addition to their text articles. For example Spiegel ONLINE offered an image gallery with almost 50 per cent of its text articles. However, only Sueddeutsche.de and FAZ.NET published arts journalism in the form of independent photo galleries. On Sueddeutsche.de these included portraits (13), criticism (5) and columns (3). The text oriented FAZ.NET used image galleries for a group portrait of Chinese dissidents and for a series of arts telegraphs (*Kulturnachrichten*) that consisted of an image related to each news item.

Most of the image galleries published on Sueddeutsche.de were articles of arts journalism in their own right. Where the text portion of a traditional image gallery is limited because of its association with newspaper photojournalism, the reinvented image gallery can be thought of as a text article with a lot of big images. Instead of the traditional short commentaries, the complete texts of the galleries were most often more than 5,000 characters long. It is probably only because of the resources and limited possibilities of print media that the same form is not used in the newspaper journalism as well.

A good example of a Sueddeutsche.de image gallery is the review of a New York exhibition that displayed art works inspired by films of Quentin Tarantino and the Coen brothers.³⁷ This image gallery consisted of 14 images and altogether 6,600 characters of text. The text was divided into parts, with every part referring to a certain image. Thus, this kind of an image gallery combines the image and text into a complementary whole. This whole provides journalistic value as a review, which makes it more than just additional entertainment for the reader.

³⁶ The multiple topics of the FAZ.NET arts telegraph series *Kulturnachrichten* (5 galleries and 35 topics) are not included in this list.

³⁷ Du bist mein Lieblingmensch. Published 30.3.

This method of publishing arts journalism is most suited to articles that deal with visual art forms. Good examples of this are articles that depict visual arts exhibitions, the history of visual arts or picture books. A picture taken of a painting gives the viewer of an article the possibility to judge the criticism of an artwork themselves. In addition to Sueddeutsche.de this type of criticism was published by kultur.ARD.de (SWR). Another art form that was very common on the analysed web pages was film. For example, almost every film review published in April 2011 had an image gallery attached.

The profile of Sueddeutsche.de displays another peculiarity relating to the reporting on film. The web page publishes more than one image gallery portrait of a film star on a weekly basis. This portrait, called "*Im Kino*", consists of film stars that are starring in that week's movie premieres. The images that the gallery consists of show the development of this film star's career and the text complements the gallery with a narrative. In April 2011 Sueddeutsche.de published portraits of six American and two European film stars.

In addition to visual arts and film, independent image galleries are published in connection with topics that are not as easy to visualise. For example FAZ.NET used illustrations of different types of Chinese dissidents in an image gallery that served as a background article on China. Sueddeutsche.de published a portrait of Ai Weiwei in an image gallery that consisted of photographs of the artist rather than his works. Image galleries can even be used in connection with book reviews, as was shown by HR with a detective book review published in mid-April. Stern.de went even further by offering its compiled reviews of new audiobooks as an image gallery.

Yet another function is the use of image galleries as a form of entertainment such as the humorous columns on Spiegel ONLINE (*Zwiebelfisch*) or Sueddeutsche.de (*Abgeben für Anfänger, Deutscher Alltag*). These forms occasionally make use of the linearity of image

galleries as a narrative form.

Older image galleries are sometimes reused as additions to other articles. For example, image galleries of film stars reoccur on Sueddeutsche.de website every year in connection to reviews of new films that they star in, or to news articles about their current projects (such as the republishing of a Robert de Niro image gallery portrait "*Ewige Taxi Driver*" in connection with a review of his latest film).

3.1.4. VIDEO

The increased visualisation of our culture has made video one of the most important forms for content to be published on the internet. It is best made use of by YouTube and other similar websites that make it possible to share user generated content. In online journalism, video has also secured its position as a method of publishing content. This is common even on the web pages of newspapers that most often did not have existing conditions for producing video material before the advent of the internet. The web pages for many newspapers have indeed come up with imaginative solutions for obtaining such material.

All of the web pages analysed for this research publish some of their journalistic content in video form. Apart from ARD, video was published relatively infrequently and the published videos were of varying quality. In April 2011 there was a total of 95 video clips published across the websites. The largest amount was published on Spiegel ONLINE (34 clips), kultur.ARD.de (24 clips) and Sueddeutsche.de Kultur (17 clips). The most commonly covered topic was film (18), with most of the other videos featuring current events (such as the royal wedding in Britain) or specific art forms. Apart from Perlentaucher and kultur.ARD.de, the analysed websites all published a regular videoblog.

The analysed arts pages made use of both original and externally produced content. Their own content consisted of videos made by the

online editorial staff or another team working for the same publisher (e.g. Spiegel TV). External content included material from news agencies (most often Reuters), clips from other companies (e.g. *Project Interview Germany* on Spiegel ONLINE), user generated videos from YouTube and similar services, film trailers etc. The published videos varied from edited final products (e.g. film review clips) to raw material (e.g. unedited footage from an event).

Video material was also published either as independent clips or in connection with other articles. In terms of the layout of the website, independent clips were published either with an introductory text and picture in the article listing (kultur.ARD.de), in a special section for video articles (Spiegel ONLINE) or in an external video service (Sueddeutsche.de). Videos published in the external video service were not always linked to the arts page.

When in connection to a specific article, video clips were most often embedded so that they could be watched without leaving the article page. For example Perlentaucher used embedded videos from YouTube and *Arte Mediathek* in their tickers to give more insight into their summaries (e.g. a YouTube video of a choir performing Bach's Cantata or an Arte documentary on Ai Weiwei).

The video clips were also occasionally published as larger features. This method of publishing was used by Spiegel ONLINE in two video specials during April 2011. The first one of them, focusing on Jesus of Nazareth, consisted of five videos between 1:30 and 3 minutes in length, and was published in connection with the Easter issue of Der Spiegel. The other video special "*Ein Tag schreibt Geschichte*" dealt with the last day of the Third Reich. It was published in conjunction with a Spiegel TV documentary and consisted of twelve video clips that ranged from 3:40 to 5:10 minutes in length.

Most of the published video clips had a corresponding article in text form.

A good example of this practice were film reviews, which also happened to be the most common type of content for a video clip. Every film review published in video form was also reviewed in text form on the same web page, which made video-based film criticism only an additional feature for added value.

Video was used more than other forms as means for entertainment. It is interesting that Sueddeutsche.de, which takes the traditionally light-hearted form of image galleries quite seriously, published a video clip on their website purely for entertainment of two fishermen whose boat fills with salmon springing out of the water. This contradiction may perhaps be explained by the video's status as purely added value. However this ignores the possibilities that the form has developed in the arena of TV arts journalism.

Aside from the video clips published by kultur.ARD.de, the length of the videos published in April 2011 were between two and three minutes.³⁸ The only articles that were over 10 minutes long were film reviews that covered four or five films. This may have to do with the publisher's fear of losing audience interest with longer videos. However, using only short content also makes the articles lose something of their journalistic potential. This becomes clear when watching some of the longer examples such as BR ON3 radio channel's video interviews from the re:publica internet conference, which offer the viewer insightful views on the subject that would not be possible in a shorter format. Publishers should not be afraid to experiment with occasionally longer clips or articles online, where such experiments are easier to produce and trial than ever before.

The video form seems to be well suited for reporting about film. Sharing its audiovisual means of expression, criticism published in video form can comment on its object, while simultaneously showing what it comments on. Considering this, it is strange how much of the film criticism was still

38. As the videos published on kultur.ARD.de are much longer, since they originate from the public broadcaster's television programming. In April 2011 their length ranged from a news clip of 1:30 minutes to an artist profile of 24:30 minutes.

published in text form across the analysed web pages. For example FAZ.NET published a weekly article named "*Video-Filmkritik*" that is in fact a long text with an embedded video of a shorter video review. Another case in point is the lack of video film reviews on the kultur.ARD.de page. From all of the available material across its subdomains (that include reviews in text, audio and video form) kultur.ARD.de regularly picks only the reviews written by the BR editorial staff in text form (with an occasional image gallery).

Aside of the required time and costs of video production, some of the reluctance of publishing serious arts journalism in this form may have to do with the uneven quality of the form. For example many of the analysed video film reviews (with some exceptions) do not contain much more than a review spoken over the film clip, with only the slightest interaction between the two. This is true also in videoblogs, many of which could be released in text form without losing much of their quality or effect. These observations seem to indicate that video arts journalism needs to develop further before it achieves its full potential.

3.1.5. AUDIO

Internet arts journalism is currently very seldomly published in audio form. This may have to do with the global shift towards an increasingly visual culture as well as with the predominance of text in online journalism. Both of these reasons however ignore the possibilities of audio reporting as part of the multimedial journalistic environment that the internet encourages. They also ignore the fact that the work of most journalists produces a lot of unused audio material. In particular newspapers could for example easily publish longer versions (or even raw versions) of their interviews in audio form.

In April 2011, the only one of the analysed web pages that published arts journalism in audio form was kultur.ARD.de. Its total output was relatively low, as there were altogether only 22 audio clips published on the website.

When examined more closely, ten of these were web articles in their own right and twelve were published as an addition to a text article. Of the clips, 21 were reports from various radio programmes from ARD and the regional broadcasters. Only one of the clips was published solely for additional value. This clip was an acoustic song recorded and used as part of an artist's interview on the Bayerischer Rundfunk music programme.

The most typical forms of arts journalism in audio form were interviews (9) and news reports (8). This, and the fact that there were more interviews in audio form than in video form, seems to suggest that audio is seen as better applied to more seriously-minded contexts. The variety of art forms that were reported on was very broad. There were also articles about more visual art forms, such as a report on the power of disaster photography. The length of the provided audio clips ranged from 2:30 minutes to 43 minutes.

It must be noted that it is much easier for a radio broadcaster like ARD to publish quality audio material than it is for the other, traditionally print-based media within this analysis. This has to do with the technological infrastructure and work distribution of a radio broadcaster's organisation. However, this reason alone should not exclude the possibility of others using material as a part of journalistic practices such as audio clips, live audiostreams or downloadable audio clips such as podcasts.

As an example of audio clips of added value, Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR) publishes readings of literature from its radio programmes for online listening or downloading as podcasts. In April 2011 BR published six audio clips of such readings. Comparable to these literature readings is the occasional publishing of old and new radio plays by ARD in its *Mediathek* and on the Radio Tatort website, the latter specialising in the detective genre popular in German television and radio. Such services may become more commonplace if arts journalism develops more in the direction of amalgamating both original arts content and journalism into the same portal.

Live audio streaming at the moment relates to current programming being available for online listening in real time. Another form that this could take in the future is live reporting from the site of news events. This is already done in radio and television, which makes the practice easy to incorporate into the workings of an internet news site. This development may be slowed down by the emphasis of written text online, but it has apparent benefits as a quick and thrilling method of reporting.

Downloadable content offers its own additional benefits for the users. For example, podcasts can be downloaded into a mobile player or smartphone and listened to while moving from one place to another. Many radio broadcasters are already podcasting some of their own content. Downloaded content will most likely continue to gain popularity until streaming possibilities get better with more accessible wireless internet connections and improved bandwidth.

Most of the arts web pages appear to look down on audio as a form of publishing content, even though it is quicker to edit and cheaper to produce than video. Ignoring the audio form can be seen in the analysis of the public broadcasters' internet content. The case in point is the aforementioned practice by *Deutschlandradio Kultur* of publishing its reports as full text transcriptions of the original audio source and providing the audio version only as a link in the article. This practice is even more peculiar when taking into account the distinctly different ways of formulating journalistic content in audio and text form.

3.1.6. LIVESTREAM

Streaming video or audio content is a technology that enables the user to watch or listen to a clip through a media player without having to download the source file onto their computer. Sections of the clip are constantly received by the user's computer while being simultaneously presented to them. All online video and audio that is not downloaded tends to be streamed. This kind of content viewing has become more and more

common with the advent of high-speed internet connections in home PC's.

Live streaming means broadcasting digitised media on a website immediately (i.e. in real-time) through a connection between the camera/recorder and the receiving computer. In private use, this technology has already become very popular due to the prevalence and low-cost of consumer webcams. For the purposes of journalism, livestreaming can be used as a means of reporting live from an event or just offering a constant flow of images and sounds from the event.

Based on the findings of this research, live streaming remains to be taken into full use by the German online arts journalists. The two live streams offered across the analysed web pages in April 2011 did not contain any journalistic content but instead featured music concerts (one pop and the other classical) that were televised and broadcast live on the web pages of regional public broadcasters. One of these two was noted on the kultur.ARD.de web page. The video live stream of Hessischer Rundfunk was published afterwards on the HR Kultur web page as streamable video clips.

In the context of arts journalism, live streaming works exceptionally well with reporting from special events like festivals, fairs or demonstrations. An example from Sueddeutsche.de shows what the livestream form is capable of in this kind of reporting. "*Das blaue Sofa*" was a regular livestream programme from the Leipzig Book Fair 2011. This programme offered the popular "blue sofa" interviews with authors and publishers in the form of a live video feed. It was produced co-operatively with Club Bertelsmann, the second national public broadcaster ZDF, Süddeutsche Zeitung and Deutschlandradio Kultur. In addition to the Sueddeutsche.de live stream, the interviews were broadcast on television and radio. Following the event, they were further published as video clips on Sueddeutsche.de.

The example detailed above shows that the resources for high quality live

streaming can be attained by co-operation. However, collaborations are not always necessary for live streaming, as a decent broadcast quality can be achieved with increasingly inexpensive technology.

Live streaming has many advantages over traditional video journalism. The most significant of these are the immediacy of live video and the fact that the streams do not need to be edited or otherwise processed. Live reporting already has a long tradition in television and radio broadcasting, and it may only be because of the current over-emphasis on text that it has not been properly utilised in online journalism.

3.1.7. COMBINED FORMS

Current online journalism has many ways of publishing content that combine the various forms described above. These experimental forms range from loose combinations of separate elements, to binding them together, and still further to merging different forms into completely new (or at least uncommon) forms of journalistic content. In their relation to content, they offer a variety of new possibilities for online arts journalism.

An example of the first category would be publishing an online series that includes articles in different formats. This practice was quite common across the analysed web pages. Kultur.ARD.de is a good example, because its articles were only rarely published on that page without additional articles in either the same or another form.³⁹ The quality of this kind of multi-publishing depends on whether the content of these articles differ from one another or not.

Probably the most common category of the combined form is the second one. Even the standard practice of publishing text articles with at least one accompanying image makes them combined form articles. Another example of this category would be a combination of text and video or text and image gallery, where the latter form is embedded in the text and can

39. Even the occasional special pages can be seen as belonging to this category.

be accessed only by first opening the relevant article. A simple example of this were the video film reviews of FAZ.NET. The possibilities for reader discussion offered at the end of an article can also be seen as being part of this second category. Yet another form of the second category are cases where parts of the presented artwork are offered for viewing or listening in a different form of media, for instance samples of music or literature attached to review articles.

The most interesting and so far the rarest of the combined forms is the third one. Even it is not a completely new form, and has been around from the very beginning due to the internet's ability to support coexisting forms. The most common form of this category is the image gallery, which has been a popular (if widely undervalued) form until now. As is seen in the analysis of this form, it has even become a method for serious journalistic content across some of the websites analysed here.

The combining of forms is wholly justified when it creates a unique work of journalism that could not be thought to exist as such in either of its separate forms. This is particularly true in the case of some image galleries, where much of the article's quality is based on the interplay between text and image.

Half of the combined forms of this third category found in April 2011 were based on image galleries. Sueddeutsche.de published an audio slideshow portrait of Simone de Beauvoir on the day that marked the 25th anniversary of her death. It contained photographs of the author and an audio narrative. This audio slideshow was released via the video service of Sueddeutsche.de (and linked to on the arts page) in video form, which made it impossible to browse the images in a backwards order.⁴⁰ A gallery of images with accompanied speech or music (or both) has a lot to suggest for the future development of journalistic websites. Such content is very close in form to video and image galleries. Another variation of this

40. As a form it belongs somewhere between video and image gallery rather than being a variation of either one of them.

combined form was seen on the MDR's special page for the Leipzig Book Fair in 2011, which featured an image gallery that had a separate audio clip for each image.

Another variation of the image gallery was the video gallery published by FAZ.NET for the occasion of the royal wedding in Britain. The gallery functioned under the typical carousel principle often used in image galleries. It contained ten videos that the viewer could watch one at a time. As the analysed arts pages have already displayed significant initiative in gaining access to a wide range of video material for publishing, video galleries could potentially have a part to play in the future development of online journalism.

Yet another combination of content forms was the *Dudenbrooks* column published by FAZ.NET. Based on the interplay of text and images, the column was a weekly collaboration between writer Jochen Schmidt and illustrator Line Hoven. Each part of the series centered on one letter of the alphabet, containing a text about it accompanied by an illustration of the letter. Although the *Dudenbrooks* column can be said to belong only partly to the third category and partly to the second one, its specific focus on the interplay between text and images (perhaps the oldest kind of interplay between two forms of recorded expression) must be seen as a part of the same thinking process that is behind the more modern combinations of content forms in publishing.

In April 2011 there were no combinations of web 2.0 services with any other (traditional or similar) content forms. However, considering the increasing importance of social media, user generated content and interactivity-based structures in the present online environment, one can easily assume that these will have a part to play in future combinations developed for publishing journalistic content. The following chapters will focus more on some of these recent forms of online publishing, which highlight the very innovative and unique nature of the internet itself.

3.1.8. SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB 2.0

During the past few years, new developments in online communication, namely web 2.0, have emphasised the role of the public as publishers and middlemen of content. Online journalism has developed to a point where articles are read depending on their quality and value for the reader.

Articles of interest can easily be read without bothering to look at other content that the publisher is offering. In addition, content can be compared and shared more easily than ever before.

This paradigm shift in online journalism as detailed above has made the publisher's website less meaningful than the content itself. Instead, it has given importance to other kinds of publishing techniques (e.g. RSS) and to the social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). The most popular techniques and applications are these days available on the websites of even the most old-fashioned German websites of online journalism (e.g. *Berliner Zeitung*).

Strictly speaking, neither web 2.0 nor the context of social media services are actual forms of publishing. They are rather a category of techniques and applications that give the user more freedom to search for articles of interest, to evaluate them, to share them with other users, and/or view them in customisable third-party applications. Because of their importance in providing published content in a web-specific way, they can not be ignored in this analysis.

Every web page analysed for this research offered at least some of these elements. Every page offered an RSS feed and the possibility to recommend their articles via Facebook and Twitter. Most of them provided the user with a listing of their latest or most important articles in both of the aforementioned social media platforms. Only FAZ.NET offered this listing in a graphic format that mirrored the layout of the FAZ.NET web page.

It must be noted that all of the aforementioned services were focused on in

the overall journalistic reporting on the websites. Apart from the arts-centered social media services of Perlentaucher, the only website that offered exclusively arts journalistic services was FAZ.NET. In practice this means that among other options, FAZ.NET offered the user the possibility of subscribing to its RSS feeds and tweets by focusing only on the updates of the *Feuilleton* page.

After Facebook and Twitter, the most common social media services across the five websites were Deli.cio.us (3) and Digg (3). Google Bookmarks, Mister-Wong.de, Webnews.de and Yigg.de were available in two of the websites. Other included services were AIM Share, Blogger, Furl.net, Google Buzz, LinkArena.com, MySpace, Oneview.de, Reddit, Studi-VZ, StumbleUpon, Windows Live and Xing. All of these services are based on recommending and sharing content with other users, with some variety in how they function. In a similar fashion, some of the websites offered the possibility to send a link to an article via e-mail.

The greatest variety of social media services was offered by FAZ.NET (10), followed by Spiegel ONLINE (9), kultur.ARD.de (8) and Perlentaucher (8).⁴¹ The most passive was Sueddeutsche.de that only enabled recommending articles via Facebook and Twitter.

There have also been some visible changes in the social media strategies of the websites. Most notably, Spiegel ONLINE has reduced its social media services by almost a half since March 2010. A large number of these services could perhaps be argued as being trivial or distracting, but the variety also provides the user with more freedom to decide on which of the services they prefer for sharing articles and social bookmarking online. An interesting fact was that FAZ.NET and kultur.ARD.de offered more German social media services than any of the other websites.

In addition, some of the websites offer widgets for displaying their RSS

41. The number of social media services of kultur.ARD.de concerns only the articles published on ARD main web page. The regional public broadcasters have each their own strategies for using social media.

feeds in various ways (e.g. on the user's desktop or in a personalised iGoogle home page). These kind of programs were available on Spiegel ONLINE and FAZ.NET websites, and on the Tagesschau.de website of ARD. Some of these widgets also enabled the user to further organise aggregated content by categories such as arts journalism.

3.1.9. USER GENERATED CONTENT

Among the specifically web 2.0 related forms of publishing online content are the forms that require and encourage user participation. These forms consist of platforms made available for user generated content and interactivity. On arts pages analysed for this research, such tools are limited to discussion forums, interactive services, quizzes and games, and tools enabling customisation.

The potential of user generated content has been acknowledged by online publishers ever since the success of YouTube and other similar web services. This development, rising from the internet's inherent capability of allowing users to publish content cheaply and easily, has been received with mixed feelings by the publishers of online journalism. On the one hand, the user's role has been hailed with exaltations on the potential of online interaction for transparency and democracy. On the other, the publishers have been either slow or reluctant to incorporate elements of user interaction into their web pages.

User generated content was very rare across the analysed websites. Apart from a few embedded YouTube videos, such content was often limited to user discussion forums, which were offered by all of the websites except kultur.ARD.de. Discussions were organised by themes of the published articles. Almost all of the published articles contained the possibility to comment, the exceptions being some reviews and articles published in forms other than text. On Sueddeutsche.de the lack of commenting possibilities on image galleries can be seen as a handicap because of the importance of some articles published in that particular form.

Participation in any of the discussions requires user registration. The reasoning behind this measure is that it limits disruptive and illegal posting on the forums. In addition, FAZ.NET moderated user generated posts before allowing them to be fully published. In general the lack of commenting options seemed to result from the form and not from the content of an article.

All of the discussion forums were regularly used, which can be seen as proof of both the importance of arts journalism and of the popularity of user participation in a German online environment. Perlentaucher's journalists themselves even took part in the discussions, showing their commitment to the interactive possibilities of online journalism.

Most publishers seem to shy away from user generated content. As ignoring it will certainly not make it go away, it would be a better idea to provide an environment for such content. A good example of a user-engaging environment is the popular blog page blogs.taz.de. Apart from some popular portals for specific art forms, such as the reader theatre reviews (Leserkritik) of Nachtkritik.de, there is no blog service specifically centered on arts in the German-speaking internet. When taking into account the popularity of both blogs.taz.de and the active discussion witnessed across the analysed arts pages, an arts blog portal could prove to be a successful addition to any online arts page.

Other featured content that required an element of user participation can be divided into three separate groups. The smallest of these groups were the quizzes, games and polls. Of the analysed pages these were provided only by Sueddeutsche.de, which provides access to various games and quizzes in the right-hand column of the website. This can be argued to be a relatively antiquated category of purely added value. Most of the arts journalism web pages have stopped publishing them while having created more specific profiles. However, the occasionally published user polls can perhaps be seen as a successor to these formerly featured quizzes. In April 2011 there was only one such poll published in the analysed pages.

This poll was published by Sueddeutsche.de in the form of an image gallery in which readers could vote for their favorite out of a list of memorial statues commemorating German unification.

Another type of user interaction is the incorporation of e-commerce functionality into a website. This can be done for instance by offering the user the possibility to subscribe to the newspaper itself or by providing links to the publisher's web store. All of the analysed websites that had a commercial nature (i.e. all except ARD) provided at least a basic link for web shopping in their arts page. At the more passive end of the marketing, these web stores were available via a single link placed far below from the actual journalistic content (FAZ.NET, Sueddeutsche.de).

At its most aggressive, the web store was advertised within the frames of the journalistic content itself (Spiegel ONLINE, Perlentaucher.de). On Spiegel ONLINE this marketing was done by attaching the reviews to a link for buying the reviewed content (most often a CD or a book) from the Spiegel Shop. On Perlentaucher it involved adding links to a series of review summaries directing users to purchase the reviewed books from the online shop buecher.de. Incorporating web shopping into a journalistic website can be seen as a good way of marketing arts products. On the other hand it can be seen as compromising the impartiality of the journalistic content.

A third type of user interaction offers the user the freedom to customise the web page to their own preferences. The extent of this freedom ranges from allowing the user to customise the arrangement of the published articles by their main categories (news, sports, arts) to giving them the option to control even finer areas of the website (such as forms of publishing or forms of content).

Only a few of the German providers of online journalism offer customising services. From the analysed pages, such service was only available on FAZ.NET, and even that feature was limited to arranging articles by

category. In practice this only allowed users to move the arts articles further up or down within their customised home page.

More limited forms of customisation included various bookmarking services, which enabled users to save interesting articles into a list for later reading. This service was provided by Spiegel ONLINE for its registered users in addition to personal data concerning Spiegel Shop customer data, subscriber data and a personalised stock exchange service.

3.2. FORMS OF CONTENT IN ONLINE ARTS JOURNALISM

Articles were published on the analysed web pages in various different forms of content. Most of these forms were inherited by online journalism from the newspapers. They included both traditional journalistic forms (e.g. news reports, criticism) and forms that are specific to online publishing (e.g. blogs, tickers, e-newsletters). Most of these forms of content were published in all the main types of media (i.e. text, image galleries, video).

Of the 850 articles published on the analysed web pages in April 2011, 30 per cent were reviews. There were almost as many news articles (27 %). The other common articles were tickers (15 %), blogs & columns (8 %), interviews (7 %) and portraits (5 %). There were also instances of content published in the form of essays (3 %), background articles (2 %), informational articles and artistic content (both 1 %), as well as Q&A articles and compiled citations (both less than one per cent of the overall published content). The most popular of these will be analysed next.

Some of the content categories used in this research merge two or three forms into one. This is always done on the basis of similarity in form and function, and for the purpose of an appropriate analysis. For example telegraphs, news reports and longer news articles are all news-related text-based forms that inform the reader of actual occurrences in the field of arts. Blogs and columns are even more similar, their form and function being mostly interchangeable with one another. In this sense separating

them into two distinct forms of journalism would seem illogical.

3.2.1. NEWS ARTICLES

One of the main functions of an arts page is to report on important events in the field of arts and culture. This function is also apparent online, where news articles are the second most common form of arts journalism (and the most common when excluding FAZ.NET). They are produced a variety of lengths as telegraphs, news reports and sometimes as longer news articles. More length in an article means more in-depth analysis of the event, which gives that event more importance. However, even the lengthiest articles are not as long as many articles of other forms, and it is very rare for a news article to extend a limit of 10 000 characters.

The five analysed web pages published a total of 233 news articles in April 2011. Of these 195 were text and 25 video-based. Six of the articles were published in audio form and only two as image galleries. The texts were approximately 5,700 characters long.⁴² The videos were approximately 4:30 minutes long and the audio clips approximately 3:30 minutes long.⁴³ The seven galleries consisted of an approximate of 7.5 images.

News reports were the only form of content that originated partly from external news agencies. Such content was published both in text and in video form. It originated both from the German agencies (most often DPA and DAPD) and from the international ones (texts most often from AFP, videos from Reuters). The agency text was commonly used as source material, which was edited with more expressive language and assessment of its facts.

As can be seen from the statistics, a textual dominance is clearly visible in online arts journalism. The form of these texts was near the traditional news journalism, although it did not follow the inverted pyramid structure

42. Excluding texts published on kultur.ARD.de.

43. Including all lengths that were available in the video players of the analysed websites.

as systematically. There was only one article that was published in a different form. The article published on FAZ.NET about the reactions for the arrest of the Chinese visual artist Ai Weiwei was published in a form that reports on the course of events moment by moment "as it happened". Most of the texts were written as complete texts before publishing, which differs from the practice in online news journalism to update articles throughout the day. Sometimes the texts included a fact box to clarify the context of the reported news event.

News reports seem to fit within all the different forms of publishing. The overwhelming majority of text form can be easily explained by its rapidity of publishing information that is required from news journalism, as text is most often the fastest form to produce and to publish.

The predominance of text as a form in news reporting does not change the fact that the other forms of publishing also have their advantages with this form of content. The inherent visual narrative present in video and image galleries can also be used well in reporting events, as can be seen in the popularity of television news coverage. Audio also contains this potential for narrative, although it lacks the visual element that can be used to reaffirm spoken content. Text based material often addresses this lack with the help of images.

Image galleries were used as a form of publishing news telegraphs by FAZ.NET. The cultural news (Kulturnachrichten) of this website were published as an image gallery that contained between five and eight telegraphs with corresponding images. This is an interesting form for compiling shorter telegraphs into a series. However, a downside of this is also that the user cannot read the telegraphs separately to obtain only the information that they are interested in.

News reports often did not provide coverage on what was happening in specific art forms. Instead, they reported on such instances where social issues and the arts overlapped. The most often covered topic in news

articles in April 2011 was that of media (42). The next most covered topics were cultural politics (30), social topics (27) and film (27). Only other art form that was covered in more than 20 news reports was visual arts (22). There were also relatively much coverage on literature (18), music (18), television (14) and internet (12). All of the traditional art forms were covered at least once.

3.2.2. INTERVIEW

In the forms of publishing online arts journalism, there are two forms that focus into a person as the subject of an article. These forms are interview and portrait. In an interview, the impression of a person is constructed by citations of his or her words. The writer of an interview stays more in the background, so that he most often seems only to direct the course of the discussion with his questions. Editing of the article is mostly left unseen.

Based on the statistics compiled for this research, almost half of the interviews published across the analysed websites were originally published in newspapers. The other half was produced and written by online editorial staff. Online journalists tended to also carry out high profile interviews. For example the Spiegel ONLINE editorial staff regularly interviewed Hollywood film directors – in April these included Zack Snyder and David O’Russell. An exception to this practice was kultur.ARD.de, whose interviews originated from its television and radio programming.

The interviews were most often published in the form of so-called Q&A interviews. This form states only the questions asked by the journalist and the answers given by the interviewee. Other types of interviews, in which the answers are laid out as citations within the body text, were also found, although more infrequently. The use of the Q&A form in interviews made the look of a website more versatile. It is a comfortable form for content that needs to be skimmed through without too much effort.

In April 2011 there were altogether 57 interviews published within the

analysed web pages, which makes it the fifth most common form of content. The biggest part of the interviews were published by kultur.ARD.de (18) and Spiegel ONLINE (16), with FAZ.NET (13) and Sueddeutsche.de (10) trailing close behind. Of the interviews, 47 were published in text form, eight as video clips and three as audio clips.

The large proportion of audio material in comparison with video and text is particularly interesting when bearing in mind that with audio is virtually unused for other types of content. This observation is even more remarkable when taking note of the fact that out of the eight featured video interviews, seven were part of a single video series - *Spiegel ONLINE's* Interview Project Germany. It must be also noted, that audio form was almost solely used by *kultur.ARD.de*.

The most common topic for interviews was social themes (12), followed by music (9), film (8), visual arts (6), television (4), internet (3), memorials and monuments (2) and opera (2). In addition to these, there were single articles published on the topics of architecture, cabaret, cultural politics, fashion, history, media, philosophy, photography, sports and theatre. Most often the interviewees were television and film actors (7) or political activists (7), but there were also interviews of administrators of arts institutions (5), musicians (4), film directors (3), researchers (3), theatre and opera directors (3), visual artists (3), architects (2), authors (2), opera singers (2) and some professions that were interviewed only once.

Interview articles exist in all traditional forms of publishing. Aside from the most common text and video interviews, audio interviews are also comfortable to listen to and they can be used for publishing longer versions of interviews published in text form. A good example of this is the use of longer interviews in the *ON3 (BR)* video coverage from the Re:publica internet congress. These type of 'complete' interviews are important for enthusiasts of a topic, which means that their use would raise the website's overall quality only when applied to interviews of all possible topics.

There was one instance on FAZ.NET, where the interview was added within a 'fact box' in the end of a news article. This kind of publishing is good for adding value to the original news article, but it will most likely also hide the interview from those who might not be interested in reading the original article.

As far as the more web-oriented formats go, the use of chatroom discussions as dynamic interviews between interviewer, interviewee and guests is sometimes seen on websites. Image galleries could also be thought as a possible medium for interviews, although the images should more likely need to depict the themes of the article rather than the interviewee.

3.2.3. PORTRAIT

Another form of journalistic content that focuses on a single person is the portrait. Owing its name to an artistic representation of a person, portrait presents its object through their personal history, work and character. It has a similar function as an interview, although it most often does not let its object speak for themselves. The most often seen types of portraits were artist portraits, obituaries and articles dealing with birthdays of prominent persons.

In April 2011 there were 46 portraits published across the analysed web pages, which makes it the sixth most popular form of content. More than a third of them (16) were published on Sueddeutsche.de. Two thirds (32) of the portraits were published in text form. The emphasis of image galleries on Sueddeutsche.de was seen in that every fourth (12) of the portraits was published in that form. In addition, there was one video and one audio portrait. The length of a text portrait was approximately 6,000 characters. An average image gallery portrait consisted of approximately 12 images. The length of the video was 24:30 minutes⁴⁴ and the length of the audio

44. The portrait of the murdered theatre director Juliano Mer-Khamis that originated from an ARD television arts magazine and was published on kultur.ARD.de.

03:40 minutes.

Birthdays were the most common reason for a portrait, with 13 articles published on the birthday of a prominent figure related to the arts. There were eight portraits published to mark a film premiere, seven obituaries and nine portraits that were published for other reasons, as for example the portrait of the detained Chinese visual artist Ai Weiwei.

The most common topic for portraits was film (16), which is explained by Sueddeutsche.de's general emphasis on both portraits and on film. This was followed by social topics (8), literature (6), music (5), visual arts (4), television (3) and theatre (2). In addition, there were single portraits published on the topics of architecture (1), cabaret (1), fashion (1), media (1), opera (1), sports (1) and visual arts (1).

Three-fourths of these articles were portraits of artists. The most often featured occupations were those of an actor/actress (16), a writer (5), a pop star (4) and a visual artist (4). In addition to the artist portraits, the most common occupations were those of an activist (2) and a politician (2). There were occasional surprises such as the lengthy portrait of football player Michael Ballack published on the FAZ.NET feuilleton. For this portrait to find its place within the arts pages (as well as the sports pages) is a further indication of the current confusion regarding the role of an arts page online.

The portraits seemed most compatible when published in the form of text or an image gallery. Their use in text articles followed the rules of portrait writing in newspapers. The specific use of film star portraits in image galleries is already dealt with in the image gallery chapter of this research. As evidenced by the single video and audio portraits published on the kultur.ARD.de website, there is no reason why portraits could not be published in these forms as well. However, publishing a video portrait of a high quality would often also require access to a lot of archive material for illustrating the portrayed person's life story.

As portraits tend to be reflective and less related to present events, they can easily be reused later on. Kultur.ARD.de and Sueddeutsche.de both recycled their archived portraits as background information for more current articles.

3.2.4. ARTS CRITICISM

Arts criticism in the form of a review is one of the most traditional forms of arts journalism. In Germany, its roots go as far back as J.W. Goethe's theatre criticism in the 18th century.⁴⁵ Criticism is one of the forms of journalistic content that is seen as experiencing greatest problems with adapting to online environment, where everyone can be a critic. In this chapter, I will outline some of the reasons for this problem as well as try to point out some ways out of it.

Despite this crisis, reviews were the most common form of arts journalism across the analysed web pages in April 2011. There was a total of 264 review articles published on the five arts pages, almost half of them (118) in FAZ.NET feuilleton. Of the published articles, 245 were published in text form. In addition, there were 15 video, seven image gallery and three audio reviews. The fact that there are more than 264 reviews when counted by the form is a result of some of the review articles including two forms.

The focus of these reviews ranged from Bob Dylan's first concert in China to volumes 1 – 26 of Heinrich Böll's complete literary works. The most common topic for a review was literature (102). There was a wide range of books reviewed, with common categories being fiction, non-fiction, children's literature and picture books. Poetry reviews were rare and reviews of drama non-existent. From the reviewed art forms literature had the widest scope in the lengths of its reviews. Lengths ranged from a little more than 1,000 characters in FAZ.NET's science book reviews to more than 10,000 characters in some of the fiction reviews from the same

45. Löffelholz 1992, p. 20.

publisher.

The second most common topic for reviews was film (72). Film reviews were published on Wednesdays (a day later on kultur.ARD.de) in anticipation of Thursday's cinema premieres. Film was also the only art form being reviewed in video form, although there were no such instances of video reviews that would not have had a corresponding article in text form. After literature and film, the most commonly reviewed topics were television programmes (34), music (cd's and concerts) (18), visual arts exhibitions (16), theatre (11), opera (6), photography (3) and historical exhibitions (2).

The reviews were an average of 6,000 characters long (or 5,000 when excluding the longer FAZ.NET reviews). Video reviews ranged from 2.30 minute review of a single film to a 13 minute compilation consisting of three or four reviews. The approximate length of the audio review articles was not available.⁴⁶ The approximate number of images in the reviews published as image galleries was ten images per article. The length of the reviews did not necessarily depend on the reviewed art form, as even the typically concise CD reviews were occasionally more than 11,000 characters long.

Most of the review articles contained only one review, but there were some articles that offered more reviews in one article. Most often these multi-review articles were regularly published music or film reviews. The most common of this type of publishing were the video film reviews published by Spiegel ONLINE and Sueddeutsche.de. Other examples of such articles were weekly CD review by Spiegel ONLINE ("Die wichtigsten CDs der Woche") and the two-film reviews published on Perlentaucher. Yet another type of multi-review publishing was presented by FAZ.NET, which packaged some of its weekly fiction and non-fiction book reviews together by offering a separate menu page that contained links to the actual

46. In the embedded audio players of the regional public broadcasters the length of the clip was available only in one occasion, a book review audio of 04:45 minutes of length.

reviews.

The majority of the reviews were written in the traditional newspaper sense of arts criticism. There were some exceptions that emphasised the context of the film rather than the film as a work of art. An excellent example of this was published by Sueddeutsche.de on the 25th memorial day of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. The review of the Russian film *V Subbotu* focused more on nuclear disasters as a theme in film history rather than the film itself.

The internet gives the publishers of reviews a chance to offer the user something that the newspapers often cannot – that is, multimedia samples from the reviewed work. An extreme version of this practice was seen on the FAZ.NET feuilleton page in April when the review of television programming regarding the British royal wedding was accompanied by a gallery of ten videos.⁴⁷ A more typical example of this are music samples attached to CD reviews or movie trailers attached to or, when in video form, made a part of film reviews.

Providing samples may seem like a cheap addition to the actual criticism, but they often give the user a chance (however limited) to compare these samples to the review. Compared to free audio samples, using trailers poses an even more difficult question, because the trailers are edited to show only the better aspects of the films.

German arts journalism reports a lot on television programming. The criticism of various kinds of television films, series and shows is more common than media business news or interviews with popular actors and actresses. Most of the television criticism published online in April 2011 reviewed the latest TV-films of popular detective series and other domestic TV-movies. But the most original subject for this type of criticism appeared to be reviews of the recent talk show broadcasts.

47. The size of this video gallery is even more surprising when taking notice on the fact that these videos belong to the mere 15 published on FAZ.NET feuilleton in April 2011.

The practice of talk show criticism is a common form of arts journalism in German newspapers and online formats. Reviews of the most interesting (or socially relevant) talk shows are published in newspapers the morning following the broadcast. A good example of a talk show review, and its topical social themes, was the review of an episode of talk show Beckmann, originally broadcast on April 11th on ARD's TV channel das Erste. The show dealt with Germany's wave of domestic terrorism in the 1970's and 1980's. This already engaging topic was heightened further by a panel of guests that included the offspring of a victim of the RAF terrorist group, a relative of a convicted perpetrator and the director of a RAF-themed film. This talk show episode was reviewed online by FAZ.NET feuilleton and Spiegel ONLINE / Kultur. The reviews were clearly aimed at keeping the debate going as well as actually reviewing the show and its guests. In a way, a talk show review is partly written as an extension to the discussion started by the original television programme.

Although talk show reviews are a widespread form of criticism both in newspapers and on the internet, reviews of TV-films were much more common online. The newspapers publish short reviews of them every now and then, but more in-depth features are almost exclusively found online. Aside of it being a sign of different evaluations of art forms online and in newspaper journalism, it can also be seen as a relief for criticism that has had to conform to decreasing amount of column inches in newspapers at the cost of its most important characteristic, i.e. evaluation of an artefact through apprehension of its contexts. In the limitless space of the internet there is no need for such confines that thwart this purpose and make arts criticism comparable to any other opinion posted on the internet.

The limited resources of online editorial teams were also apparent in the reviews of art that was being exhibited at a great geographical distance away. It was interesting to see how dependent international websites were on their parent companies. For example Spiegel ONLINE published its only theatre reviews on performances held at Hamburg's Thalia Theatre, which is located practically in their own backyard. Not only about

resources, this is more a question of the parent company's will to contribute to the areas where the online editorial staff's own resources are not sufficient. An example of such contribution stems from F.A.Z. that utilised its foreign correspondents and provided in April reviews of Parisian visual arts exhibitions in FAZ.NET.

From the forms of content, the online environment is particularly challenging for arts criticism. The internet is full of opinions and evaluations of works of art that are published in blogs, social media and elsewhere. Although most of these tend to be somewhat superficial, it is not hard to find well-informed statements that can compete with professional criticism. This kind of competition cannot and should not be ignored. Instead, there are two constructive ways of addressing its challenges.

The first option is to allow users to have their opinions displayed on the website, as was proposed earlier. This encouragement of user generated amateur criticism could perhaps be seen as compromising the need for professional content in the first place. However it can also serve to reinforce the status of the professionally published criticism as has been the case with *Nachtkritik*, and at the very least provide a catalyst for maintaining the quality of the original content.

Another option would be to improve arts criticism in relation to its function. One reason for the form's current problems is that it has (at least partially) lost its primary function in newspapers. Increasingly shortened reviews have begun to lose their relevance, as a coherent analysis of a work of art in its various contexts becomes impossible when limited to a short enough space of column inches. As in-depth and quality criticism are disappointingly rare in the current newspaper journalism, it is no wonder that serious commenting on arts has found a new home on the internet. A re-identification of criticism in the terms of online publishing can thus be seen as one way out of the crisis. An example of such development is depicted below.

Arts criticism is increasingly available on the internet in databases, portals or websites that focus on this form of arts journalistic content. A good example of this is the theatre criticism portal *Nachtkritik.de*. Since 2007, *Nachtkritik* has published reviews of theatre performances within the German-speaking cultural area, with occasional reviews of foreign performances or theatre festivals. The site works according to web-based principles similar to *Perlentaucher*, but it publishes a larger number of original articles written by its various collaborators.

In April 2011, *Nachtkritik* published 106 reviews and summaries of reviews and 56 articles of other content. Of the 104 reviews, 50 were so-called *Nachtkritiks*, original texts published the morning after a premiere. These reviews covered performances from all over the German-speaking area, the most common of the 31 cities being those with an abundance of theatres (in order of the amount of reviews: Berlin, München, Hamburg, Leipzig, Wien).

In addition, the website summarises reviews from other publishers. These summaries are included at the end of a *Nachtkritik* and announced on the site's frontpage. In April 2011 there were review summaries of 46 different performances, with each performance having between one to six summaries attached. Most of these external reviews originated from national newspapers or radio programmes, but there were also summaries of local newspaper reviews as well.

The third form of criticism on *Nachtkritik* were user reviews that were featured in their own section. There were eight such reviews published in April 2011. As a fourth form of criticism there were two "theatre letters" published on the website, one from a theatre festival in Warsaw and the other a review of a South African performance of a German play.

In addition to the aforementioned criticisms, *Nachtkritik* published 32 telegraphs (on prizes, appointments of personnel and deaths of prominent artists), 12 summaries of individual articles published in newspapers, four

portraits, four blog updates, two "guest articles" written by theatre professionals, one book review and one update of the editorial blog. The website also documented the current financial hardships of theatre companies in a separate *Nachtkritik Krisometer* that aggregated relevant telegraphs or summary articles. This separate feature allowed important articles to be available for longer on the frontpage without compromising the freshness of other content.

The practice of *Nachtkritik* of immediately publishing its reviews the morning after a premiere was at first criticised by newspapers, arguing that it would lead to a decline in the overall quality of journalism. However the real reason for this criticism was more likely the inability of the newspapers to compete with this near real-time pace, as most of them are traditionally printed in the evening and overnight. After this initial criticism, the practice has become more commonplace as other arts web pages have also begun to publish so-called *Frühkritiks*.

Another element that is often criticised from the side of traditional media is the anonymity of user-generated criticism published on the website. It is certainly true that user anonymity is often abused in online environments, for instance in the case of *Nachkritik.de* by posting unsolicited advertisements for performances. However since these user criticisms are featured separately from the 'proper' *Nachtkritiks* and summaries, the influence of such abuse is at most very limited (and certainly more limited than the influence of anything – be it articles or advertisement – published in traditional media).

When viewed in the same context as Perlentaucher, these levelled criticisms seem to tell us more about the traditional media and its relation to the power-balance shift from newspapers to the internet. Traditional media companies seem to be so confused with their inability to adapt to this new online environment that they try to prevent or slow down the development of those who are already better adapted. The majority of criticisms from the side of traditional publishers can indeed be said to

originate from their fear of the ever-changing digital landscape. Whatever the consequences of such industry attacks are, they most surely will not improve the overall quality of online journalism or its contact with the public.

From the user's point of view, one of the most valuable things that online portals such as *Nachtkritik* can offer is their role as a database for vast amounts of arts criticism. With such databases, the user has a possibility to search for information and different views on any current or past performance or artwork that they are interested in. This integration and user-friendliness can also be seen in the *Nachtkritik* discussion forum, which has a large base of users engaged in in-depth discussions on the reviewed performances.

Another very important factor is that such portals provide arts criticism the space that it needs to properly fulfill its purpose as a serious form of professional journalism. As the form is continuously denied such a space in newspapers, there seems to be no other place for it in traditional media. In this sense the high-quality reviews published across the arts websites are signs of the virility of the a form not being suppressed by economic factors. The online portals are, for their part, a tour-de-force of this revitalised form of arts journalism.

It must be noted here that many online arts pages already have the means of organising their criticisms into a more dedicated portal. The one with best possibilities of doing so would be the public broadcasting company ARD, with its access to reviews and other articles published by the various regional broadcasting companies. Instead of centering on one art form or one form of content, a seriously developed online arts page could be restructured into a robust database consisting of all forms of arts journalism. In a way, this is already done in a narrow sense by giving the user access to the website archive (e.g. by search engines, metadata and tagging facilities), but the common lack of organisation within these archives continues to make them unfriendly for the users.

Even the aforementioned examples of quality online criticism have to compete with other evaluative texts offered online. On the one hand this is a positive thing, as it means that arts criticism must maintain its standards and develop even further. On the other hand these other types of arts criticism, mostly written on amateur blogs, may in time partly replace their traditional kin. Although it is improbable that these forms would totally replace criticism, their existence is already changing its structures, as we have already seen.

However uncertain the current situation of arts journalism may seem, the continuing need for comprehensive and articulate reviews of an artwork that explain it within appropriate aesthetic and social contexts is not going to vanish. In this sense, arts criticism should not shy away from promoting its writer's expertise. Be the reason for such avoidance the cut column inches or the assumed user-friendliness, a lack of expertise in professional criticism will only make it harder for the form to defend its *raison d'être*. In short, as content of a superficial quality is available practically everywhere online, users hardly need to look for such content from a professional arts journalism website.

3.2.5. BLOGS AND COLUMNS

Blogs are one of the most popular forms of publishing on the internet. A further developed form of threads (commentaries on discussion forums), the form known first as weblogs was one of the main factors in web 2.0 revolution with its emphasis on interactivity and user-generated content. Even online journalism has little by little begun to use blogs as a possible news source. A pioneer in this is *Perlentaucher* that frequently includes material from blogs in its arts news summary *Heute in den Feuilletons* and its tickers. Because of their grown status as essential elements of new internet publishing, blogs have also been made a part of online journalism with various results. What is often not noted is the fact that this new form was already familiar for journalists from traditional newspaper columns.

In online journalism, both blogs and columns⁴⁸ are written as commentaries from a subjective point of view. They both exploit an easier style of writing than news journalism, with a common addition of humour. The tone of blogs tend to be slightly more unofficial than the tone of columns, but in German online arts journalism articles identified as blogs and columns were difficult to separate from one another. The only clear distinction was that the columns were published according to a regular schedule while the blogs appeared sporadically but more frequently. Because of the apparent similarities in content, these two are treated here as one form.

In addition to blogs and columns, the statistics detailed and analysed below contain some other similar articles published on the analysed web pages as "opinion articles" or "commentaries". The reason for this is their sharing the same style and that they put emphasis on the journalist's point of view without centering on a specific artwork (which is the function of criticism). Another problem of categorising rises with the fact that the Perleнтаucher website is completely built into a structure of a huge blog. Since this is a question of structures and not of content, the tickers and summaries of Perleнтаucher are excluded from these statistics.⁴⁹

In April 2011 there were altogether 71 articles falling into this category published in the analysed websites. Textual forms were again dominant, with 61 articles published as texts. In addition, there were five videoblog, three image galleries and two columns published in hypertext form. The themes that these articles mostly dealt with were social issues (16), the internet (6), television (6), food (5) and literature (5). The overwhelming role of social topics defines the role of online commentaries on German arts pages.

An average column was slightly over 5,000 characters long, which makes

48. Blog can also be categorised as a form of publishing, but that form is not clearly distinguishable from the text and hypertext categories of this research.

49. The two blogs (in the sense of "blog as content") published by Perleнтаucher.de in April 2011 are, of course, included.

it one of the shortest forms of textual content on web-based arts pages. An average videoblog was more than five minutes in length. The image gallery columns published by *Sueddeutsche.de* consisted of an average of five images per gallery.

An interesting observation that can be made from these statistics is that the topics of blogs and columns seemed to be the opposite of those dealt with in articles with a more official tone. Some of the art forms that had a high presence in online arts journalism in general (e.g. film and visual arts) had only some (two and one) blogs and columns written on them, while other topics seemed to take their place (e.g. food [5], language [3] and even comics [2]). In this way, the appreciation of an art form seems to be related to the selection of subjects for the different forms of arts journalistic content.

A significant majority (40) of blogs was published by FAZ.NET, which has its own page for blogs. The blogs are available as links on all FAZ.NET pages including the home page.⁵⁰ Nine of the 26 permanent blog titles commented on arts topics once or more. The comics blog (Comic) was the only blog focusing completely on one art form.

The FAZ.NET Blog Community (consisting completely of FAZ.NET's 'own' blogs⁵¹) is a good example of a website utilising its existing journalists for additional value. Especially noteworthy was the use of foreign correspondents who were an active part of the blogging community, as was seen in the Spain-related blog "Sanchos Esel", which featured two updates in April on youth photography in Cuba. The use of images and video clips was at times more developed in these blogs than it was in FAZ.NET's more official articles. Another good example of the possible added value that blogs can offer a journalistic website was the long video of a Günter Grass speech, dealt with in the FAZ.NET chapter.

50. Because FAZ.NET blogs exist only as an extra category in the right margin of the web page (not only in feuilleton), this research includes only those blogs that deal with arts.

51. Meaning there was no user generated content in the Blog Community.

Videoblogging in particular seems to be a form that is still searching for its role within online journalism. A videoblog is often no more than a column that is spoken to camera with possible edits and cut-aways to different footage to underline key thematic elements. It lacks the interactivity in comparison to the immediate commenting possibility that is common for other forms of blogs. The makers of videoblogs could however take notice on the possibilities of a commenting service, as the potential of discussing video clips is seen to be fruitful e.g. on the video pages in YouTube.

The videoblogs published in April 2011 consisted of three new episodes of *Matusseks Kulturtipp* on Spiegel ONLINE and one update of both FAZ.NET's *Richterskala* and Sueddeutsche.de's *Speak Schneider*. What is interesting is that all of the three videoblogs used known journalists as a point of interest for the videos. Having a celebrity for the videoblog seems all the more important when looking at the content of the videos, which is mostly rather superficial. For example, the former Spiegel Kultur chief Matthias Matussek's humorous videoblog had nothing to do with tips and only a little with culture. Instead, these videoblogs offered quick comic relief on current affairs (such as the British royal wedding in two episodes of *Matussek* and German political parties in *Richterskala*). The exception here was *Speak Schneider*, which focused on current peculiarities of the German language in an interesting and informative way. The humour was not forgotten on this videoblog either, as is shown in the episode published in April, where the 86-year-old Wolf Schneider talks about cursing.

Blogs and columns published on the analysed websites can be defined largely by their commenting style, their interactivity, and their tendency of both extending more serious journalistic content and offering a variety of topics that are mostly ignored elsewhere on the website. The noted elements of videoblogs are passivity (in not enabling discussion), humour and the featuring of big names.

This last element is intriguing when observed from the perspective of what blogging is about. Using one of the internet's most democratic vehicles to

publish empty content promoted by a renowned name must be seen as somewhat peculiar. A complete opposite to this trend was offered on the website of the regional public broadcasting company of Bavaria (BR), which published several blogs throughout the spring on a German school reform that affected students in the last year before their matriculation examination. These blogs were written by several students who wrote about their own daily lives. It goes without saying which of these two forms of blogs was of more importance, not only contentwise, but also in their understanding of the possibilities inherent in the form.

3.2.6. TICKER

Hypertext, in other words a piece of text that links to other content or areas of the web, is one of the very basic elements of the internet. In a way, all of the written content that contains at least one link can be seen as hypertext, which would make all the texts published in the analysed web pages fall into this category. However, in the context of this research it is more helpful to treat as hypertexts only such texts where linking has an important core function. Hypertexts are a good way of displaying the sources of an article for both transparency as well as the added value that they give their readers in form of extensive information. It was used occasionally in Perlentaucher blogs and in some articles published by Spiegel ONLINE and Sueddeutsche.de. Although rare, the very fact that hypertext was used on the web pages of big newspapers may tell of a slow shift towards more transparent and interactive link-oriented content.

Another important form of hypertext are tickers. In this research, a ticker is understood as an article that works by linking references to other web pages. A ticker can be either a listing or a summary of the linked content. In its most simple form a ticker is an automated list of the most current news items ordered by actuality or importance. More than 90 per cent of Perlentaucher's published content consists of tickers.

All of the analysed websites offered some sort of an automated ticker with

links to the latest articles on arts journalism originating either from that website or from the news agency DPA. The only website that published edited tickers was Perlentaucher, which has developed a way of aggregating the most relevant news and articles into a user-friendly summary. As these automated tickers can hardly be seen as much more than a widget of extra value, the statistics of the published tickers in April 2011 contain only the edited tickers. The statistics and the description of different types of tickers can be found in the Perlentaucher chapter.

There were three different variations of tickers available in the analysed web pages. These variations can be defined by the amount of information that they give about their subjects. The most common variation was the previously mentioned automated ticker that offered a list of links to the latest news articles ordered by their publishing time. The content that these links led to were most often provided by news agencies. An exception to this was FAZ.NET's Feuilleton-ticker that provided links to the latest content published on that particular page and updated itself in real-time with published content. Kultur.ARD.de and Perlentaucher did not have automated tickers.

The second variation were tickers that were published as link listings. They differed from the first variation in that they were edited as a list of the most interesting articles picked from external sites. Most of the time links were published with a short informative commentary on the content of the article. As a form, these kind of tickers were very close to newsletters. *Perlentaucher* published two daily tickers of this variety. *Medienticker* listed the latest writings in the field of arts and media and *Teleticker* offered pickings from the current day's television programme. The amount of links varied especially with *Medienticker*, which sometimes consisted of more than one hundred links.

The third variation of the ticker form were the summaries of arts news and book reviews. This form of content is not commonly called a ticker. This research counts them as tickers because of their dependence on articles

that originate from external websites. The *Perlentaucher*'s summaries are in fact very similar to *Medienticker* and *Teleticker*, as they are also edited lists of interesting articles. The only difference between these two variations of tickers was that the summaries contained more written text around the link.

From all the forms analysed in this research, the ticker is perhaps best adapted to the rapid, real-time environment of online news journalism. In addition, it offers an effective way of centralising and aggregating large amount of content into one place, which gives users no reason to search for more information elsewhere. The best example of this logic in practice is *Perlentaucher*, which has gained both criticism and recognition for its work. Most of the criticism however fails to mention the fact that journalism itself to a large degree consists of editing existing material into new forms.

The efficiency of tickers does not come without a price or risk. Content-wise the form is heavily and almost irredeemably dependent on other websites. Aggregating content from external websites into a central portal could in a worst case scenario lead to a decreased number of users on those original websites and thus weaken their integrity and quality of content. The uncertainty around the extent to which this is occurring is perhaps the main source of grievance for newspapers with regards to *Perlentaucher*.

3.2.7. NEWSLETTER

Some of the analysed web pages offer their users the option of subscribing to a dedicated arts newsletter. These newsletters are sent to their subscribers via e-mail on a weekly or monthly basis, and sometimes even daily. The content of a newsletter depends on its planned remit. Its role can be either to support the journalistic content already published on the website or to provide useful original information to subscribers as an additional service.

From the analysed web pages, the only one that offers all of its online content in a newsletter format is *Perlentaucher*. Its available newsletters are the daily *Perlentaucher aktuell* that consists of *Heute in den feuillets* and *Magazinenrundschau* tickers, the daily *Medienticker* and the monthly *Bücherbrief* that summarises the website's book review summaries.

Some of the analysed websites provide links in daily e-mails that highlight content published on their sites. *Sueddeutsche.de* gives its users the possibility to personalise the content of these newsletters to their interests. From the available options, the literature newsletter is the only one that contains content related to arts journalism.

The role of providing additional information as an extra service was rare across the analysed web pages. Some of the arts websites provided newsletters that gave information on regional cultural activities. This group consisted both of regional public broadcasting companies (e.g. *BR*) and of regional newspaper websites (e.g. *Hamburger Abendblatt*). From the point of view of regional media this can be seen as a good way of providing their users with locally relevant content in order to compete with national media.

Newsletters are ultimately a good way of providing extended services in specific areas of interest. At best they can create a new mode of contact between a website and its users. However, the thought of publishing journalistic content in a newsletter form is at the moment not common in the German online arts journalism.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the statistics used in this research, German arts journalism published online during the spring of 2011 was generally of a high standard. It dealt with various subjects, some of which went beyond the definitions of culture and sometimes beyond the profile of the publishing website. The use of various forms of publishing was multimedial, but with a continuing emphasis on text form. From the point of view of the forms of

content, the web pages seemed to have assimilated the priorities of newspaper arts journalism.

The arts articles were long in comparison to articles published in other sections of the publisher's website. At times the quality of the published journalism seemed to suffer from a reluctance to give thought to the internet as a self-contained media platform. Traditional methodologies and practices of journalism seemed to occasionally dominate the publishing. The layout of the pages was often outdated in international comparison.

The smaller publishers that only publish online were an exception to this trend. The digital orientation of websites such as *Perlentaucher* and *Nachtkritik* gives much insight into the potential future of arts journalism that is published with a clear understanding of the online environment.

The more traditional publisher's disinterest in investing in online content is perhaps understandable because of the lack of clear revenue streams from that area of publishing. However, holding back on digital development will not help them compete in that arena if and when a satisfactory solution for monetising is eventually found. Neither does it change the fact that the user-oriented character of the internet will inevitably change the traditional hierarchy of media to correspond with the needs of the individual reader.

The development of online media in the near future will determine how these changes will affect the forms of online journalism. Some hints are already seen in the analysis of this research. If arts journalism wants to retain its high quality in an online environment, it should invest in original content, rethink the dynamic between various forms of publishing and different forms of content, and ultimately pay more attention to the user.

Roughly put, there are two different existing developments in German online arts journalism at the moment. One of them is the strengthening of major websites that are better known by the public, and have more resources than their smaller counterparts. An example of this is the

hegemony of the traditional publishers as the owners of the most popular websites. The second development is the segmentation of arts pages into smaller professional websites that will focus their output on a limited number of art forms or topics. An example of this specialisation is the theatre criticism portal Nachtkritik. The future of online arts journalism will most likely be some sort of an amalgam of these two developments, the power relations of which can only be guessed at.

The practice of publishing arts journalism content in an online environment is carried out against the backdrop detailed above. A successful arts web page cannot exist long without original quality content, but it needs other things as well. The most important of these things are the status of the website, and the ability to offer its users the widest possible variety of content and services.

The status of a website comes partly from an existing brand, but that is not enough in itself. It is also gained through visibility and the good reputation (i.e. reliability) of the website. Other important factors are the names made by the website's journalists and the level of access the site has to important names in the field. Bearing these in mind, even the smaller publishers are not excluded from gaining status in an online environment. For example, the essays of sociologist Jürgen Habermas published in Perlentaucher have had a significant part to play in the increased popularity of that particular website.

A wide variety of offered content and services is again best exemplified by Perlentaucher, which reuses various kinds of content sourced from other arts publishers. For some reason this element of all-inclusive publishing has mostly been used by smaller websites. The ultimate goal in this practice would be that the user would not need to leave the website for more information on the same subject matter.

Collaboration is another efficient way of strengthening profiles and creating variety. It can occasionally be seen in German online arts journalism, the

most visible example being the "Das blaue Sofa" live interviews. This kind of collaboration between different actors in the field of arts does not eat away at the credibility of a journalism website when its associates are chosen carefully and there are no conflicts of interest.

Another good example of gained status and all-inclusive content is *Nachtkritik*. Led by renowned theatre critics, the website offers a wide variety of theatre-related content. *Spiegel ONLINE* has also developed its *Kultur* page into a more all-inclusive direction through co-operation with *Project Gutenberg* and various other services offered on its web page.

As mentioned in the introduction to this research, the development of web 2.0 has brought along with it a certain 'crisis of content'. The development of the internet into an endless forum of amateur opinion has consequently questioned the hegemony of professional criticism. This phenomenon does not only affect arts journalism, but indeed the whole field of online journalism. In fact, arts criticism could be argued to be faring quite well when compared to news journalism, which can never aim to be quite as personal in its approach. Ultimately, the questioning of this hegemony can be a positive force by preventing arts journalism from stagnating. It is hard to see them totally abolishing the need for professional observations that are put into an appropriate context, written understandably, produced with a respect for professional ethics, and published on a profiled website among other articles of the same high standard.

Considering these facts, it is easy to see why professional online journalism may be developing in the wrong direction for arts journalism. When the financial pressures on publishers cause them to turn journalists into general specialists of all subjects, a lot of professionalism is lost in the process. The pressure for more entertaining, more standardised and more a generic kind of journalism makes competing for the readers' attention increasingly difficult. This kind of development may indeed be fatal for arts journalism, which needs specialisation in order to survive and compete.

The other big question posed at the beginning of this research (and the one without a clear answer) concerned the financial future of the online journalism. To find a way out of looming financial losses, online publishers are desperately trying to find out what their users want. The answer is easy. The users want everything, but they also want it for free.

It is unlikely that after more than a decade of free online journalism, there would be enough users who would be satisfied with paying for content that they have already had access to for free. Even if journalism websites charged subscription fees from the outset, the status of news as public property would have made it difficult to prevent new competitors from offering that same content for free. However the willingness of internet users to pay for additional services might be of use to publishers in online journalism as well. In a very limited sense, this has already been tried and tested by incorporating the e-commerce functions across several of the discussed web pages. The development of the semantic web should make these functions all the more efficient in the near future.

The online publisher's need to find revenue streams is increasingly urgent due to the continuing deterioration of profits within the newspaper industry. Even smaller online publishers need to find money for their content, as is seen in the present crisis of *Nachtkritik*. Finding potential strategies for monetising online journalism would require a research paper of its own, and most likely much more than just one.

Deteriorating profits and inevitable financial losses however do not detract from the fact that the significance of arts journalism itself is certainly not in decline. The continued importance of explaining arts and culture has been reasoned before by the role of mass media (film, television) and its influence in the people's lives. This influence has gone nowhere. Instead, it has been fragmented and transformed by the constant impact of the internet and digital media on our lives. The interpretation of discourses and effects, which is the main expertise of arts journalism, is needed today more than ever before.

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