

A global study of eyewitness media in online newspaper sites

by Pete Brown, PhD

Published 12 May 2015



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Acknowledgements

Eyewitness Media Hub would like to thank the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida and the Hugh Cunningham Professorship in Journalism Excellence. We would also like to thank the Knight Foundation. The generous support from these institutions enabled the research to be published.

In July 2014, Storyful provided seed money for the establishment of Eyewitness Media Hub, and we would like to thank Mark Little especially for his unwavering support and enthusiasm for this project. We are extremely grateful to Adam Rendle, Senior Associate at Taylor Wessing, for the advice and time he has given us over the last few months and finally, we would like to thank the eyewitnesses who very kindly agreed to speak with us about their experiences. Their insights were invaluable.

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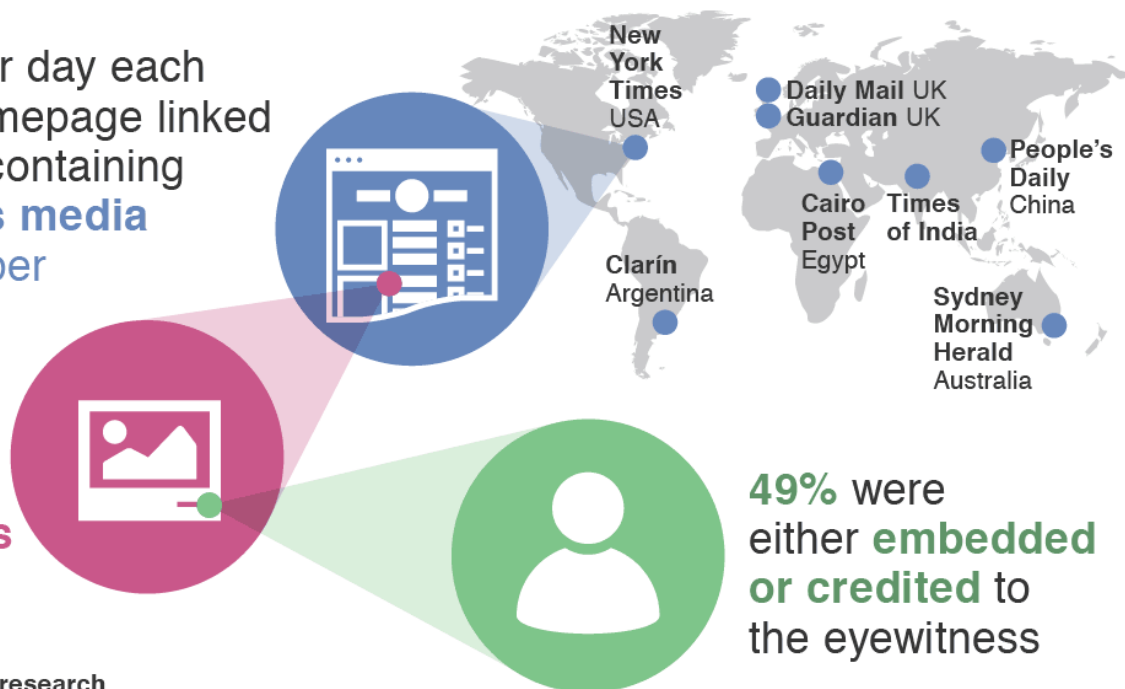
1

Executive Summary

We captured each website's homepage at 6pm local time every day for 21 days. This provided a sample of 27,802 news articles, each of which was combed for eyewitness media

On average per day each newspaper homepage linked to **171 pages** containing **30 eyewitness media items** (1 item per 5.6 articles)

74% were labelled as **eyewitness media**



49% were either **embedded or credited to the eyewitness**

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Aim of the research

The first aim of this research is to deepen our understanding of how eyewitness media¹ is utilised by some of the most popular online newspaper sites on the web. It draws upon a sample of 27,802 articles, accessed from eight leading news sites over 21 consecutive days, and provides empirical evidence of when, where and how eyewitness media is used in these titles' online output.

The second aim is to begin exploring the knowledge and understanding of eyewitnesses whose content is used by online news outlets. It intends to shed light on their awareness of their rights and their attitudes towards crediting and permissions in order to identify the areas news organisations and social network platforms need to address if they are to empower and develop strong, collaborative relationships with their users and audiences.

Methodology

This report provides an in-depth analysis of how much eyewitness media was used by eight major newspaper websites over a three week period.² The news sites were:

Cairo Post (Egypt)
Clarín (Argentina)
Daily Mail (UK)
The Guardian (UK)
New York Times (USA)
People's Daily (China)
Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)
Times of India

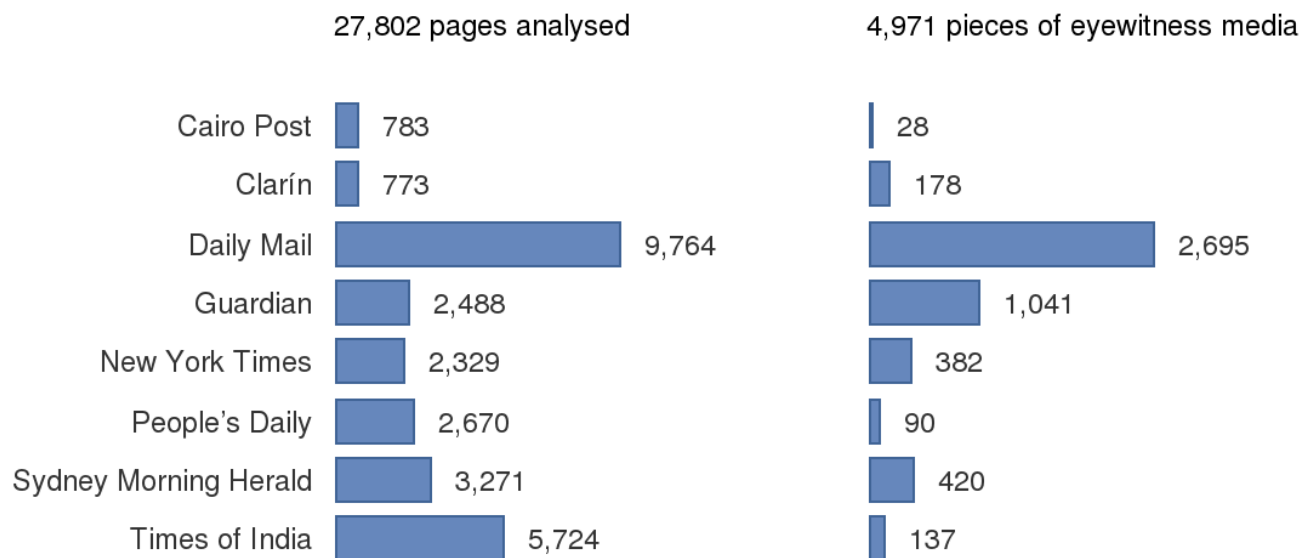
We captured each website's homepage at 6pm local time every day for 21 days. This provided a sample of 27,802 news articles, each of which was combed for eyewitness media.

1. We consider eyewitness media to be a specific branch of user-generated content. The definition used in this study was: media captured by people who are not professional journalists and are not related to a news organisation. Unlike our earlier study of TV news (Wardle et al., 2014a, 2014b), we did not include any content posted by celebrities.

2. These newspapers were selected due to their popularity. A more detailed explanation is provided in the methodology section.

Figure 1: Sample size

Totals gathered over the three week sampling period



The resulting 4,971 pieces of eyewitness media were coded and analysed in accordance with the parameters defined by our research questions so as to help us understand when, where and how eyewitness media is used by these online news sites.

Having identified suitable case studies, we then contacted a number of eyewitnesses whose content had been published during our three week sampling period. The qualitative findings from these discussions with eyewitnesses are presented as detailed case studies so as to provide a snapshot of some of the emerging issues, including: attitudes towards sharing content with the news media, knowledge of rights as content creators, attitudes towards the importance of being credited, and the impact of having their content used without permission.

Key points: Quantitative analysis of online news

- Eyewitness media was used in all eight newspaper websites and covered an extraordinarily broad range of topics and stories.
- Some newspaper sites were found to making substantial use of eyewitness media in their output, particularly among the titles based in Australia, Argentina, the UK and USA. One news site alone, the Daily Mail, contained 27% more items of eyewitness media than was found in the 1,164 hours of TV coverage analysed in our earlier study of eight 24-hour news channels.
- Concurrently, there was surprisingly low usage on other websites, e.g. an average of 1 item per 42 articles in the

Times of India, stimulating questions about why the website of the biggest newspaper in India by circulation is making such little use of eyewitness media.

- Eyewitness media is vital to reporting of ISIS, accounting for 24% of all content found during the sampling period.
- Unlike 24-hour TV news, where eyewitness media use tends to be very similar due to the strong emphasis on breaking news, we found discernible differences across high-usage newspapers.
- The New York Times mostly used eyewitness media in well produced videos that added depth and colour to nuanced world news stories (e.g. detailed coverage of ISIS), further demonstrating the capacity of eyewitness media to inform audiences in ways that simply would not be possible without it.
- The Guardian made more use of eyewitness media in live blogs than many other sites and made extensive use of its own exclusive, in-house eyewitness media platform, GuardianWitness, giving it a potential advantage over rivals.
- While the Daily Mail and Clarín do utilise eyewitness media in hard news stories, other cases were more in keeping with pejorative stereotypes about eyewitness media, e.g. viral videos, celebrity sightings, footage of talented pets.
- Given the markedly different ways in which eyewitness media was used by different websites, we would exercise

caution before making generalisations about eyewitness media equating to 'dumbing down' or 'tabloidisation'. While eyewitness media was often (although not exclusively) used to cover the 'softer' types of stories typically associated with more derogatory critiques of eyewitness media by the likes of Clarín and the Daily Mail, the same, for example, was not true of the New York Times.

- Overall, 78% of content was labelled as eyewitness media in some form or another, an encouraging finding that suggests online newspapers are more likely to inform their audience that the content they are viewing is eyewitness media than TV news channels (equivalent figure: 22%).
- The finding that the New York Times – which uses a lot of eyewitness media in video features akin to TV news coverage – was the least likely to label content as eyewitness media (51%) suggests that video producers on all platforms may be struggling to identify suitable ways to inform their audience when content has emanated from an external source.
- As with labelling, the news sites analysed in this study performed better at crediting than did the TV channels covered in our earlier study, with 49% of content being either embedded or credited to the eyewitness.
- Video content is sometimes being stripped of vital contextual information (e.g. that it is unverified or that it is user-generated) when it makes the transition from an article to a standalone video page. This is an area that needs to be addressed.
- Even taking into consideration the numerous situations in which embedding is not possible, this practice was surprisingly under-utilised by most sites, with seven titles embedding 6% or less of the eyewitness media found on their pages (the exception, the Guardian, embedded 84% of content). This is an area that could be looked at because embedding gives content creators a degree of control and a lot of content that could have been embedded was not.

Key points: Qualitative eyewitness stories

- There is emerging evidence of a possible problem where some news outlets are using eyewitness media without gaining permission from the content creator. The

ramifications for this are not just legal or financial: news outlets are risking their reputations and the future trust and cooperation of eyewitnesses who upload content.

- There is a demonstrable lack of understanding among some eyewitnesses about their rights and ability to retain control of their content. Some believe anything they post online to be 'fair game' or that content posted to a non-private profile can be taken without permission. This lack of knowledge may be being exploited by parts of the news industry and urgently needs to be addressed through educational initiatives.
- News organisations are risking the future cooperation of eyewitnesses whose content they do not credit appropriately, with some describing the practice as 'theft' and 'stealing'.
- Some eyewitnesses describe specific reasons why they do not want their content to be used by news outlets. This is their prerogative and right, and news outlets should not just assume that permission will always be granted or that eyewitnesses will automatically be satisfied with a credit.
- Where permission is given, news outlets should be as clear as possible about when, where and how content will be used. Initial findings from our small, qualitative sample suggests that some are interested in the context in which their content will be used. This is entirely understandable because the context in which content is used can impact upon how eyewitnesses are viewed, which may have implications in terms of the contact they receive from others on social media.
- Online news outlets cannot afford to lose sight of their duty of care to the eyewitnesses whose content they use. Irresponsible or unethical use of content can expose eyewitnesses to abuse or any number of other unpleasant outcomes.
- News outlets and social networks need to work together to reach an agreement around the ethics and practicalities of embedding content without permission of the eyewitness. At present, social media content can legally be embedded without the uploader's permission, which can cause personal distress to those who do not wish or intend for their content to be exposed to the sizeable audiences enjoyed by major news outlets (occasionally resulting in unwelcome attention or abuse).

2

Introduction

This piece of research gives us more compelling evidence that not only is eyewitness media an integral part of both soft and hard news coverage, but more must be done to raise awareness around the rights of and responsibilities towards eyewitnesses.

Last year, Claire Wardle, Sam Dubberley and I - co-founders of Eyewitness Media Hub - launched our first major study into eyewitness media and the news media (Wardle et al., 2014a). That research, which focused on the output of eight global TV channels and their websites, shone a light on a number of issues around broadcasters' use of eyewitness media, particularly in the areas of crediting and labelling. We were adamant that that the project should represent the beginning, rather than the end, of our research endeavours. Accordingly, this report contains a detailed study of how eyewitness media is used by eight major newspaper websites – online versions of established print publications – from around the world. As such, it marks the latest installment in our ongoing commitment to assessing and understanding the landscape in this exciting and rapidly evolving area of journalism.

Given that eyewitness media is synonymous with the online world, we have been keen to undertake a systematic analysis of when, where and how this content is utilised by some of the web's major players. Online news outlets represent a very different proposition to their more established counterparts in TV because there are fewer limits to the format and they enjoy the luxury of near limitless space. Newspapers represent a particularly fascinating proposition in the contemporary media climate because, while many are struggling to sustain their legacy products in the face of rapidly declining sales and dwindling advertising revenues, a number of the sites in our sample can lay claim to being among the most popular news outlets on the web.

Many newspapers have sought to adapt their workflows and digital strategies to incorporate eyewitness media. It has become commonplace to see online news sites imploring their loyal readers to contribute photos and videos during breaking news events, while some have established their own independent platforms to allow readers to share content relating to specific assignments set by dedicated editorial teams, as with the Guardian newspaper's GuardianWitness initiative. Elsewhere, high profile examples of newspapers breaking eyewitness media-centric stories are numerous.

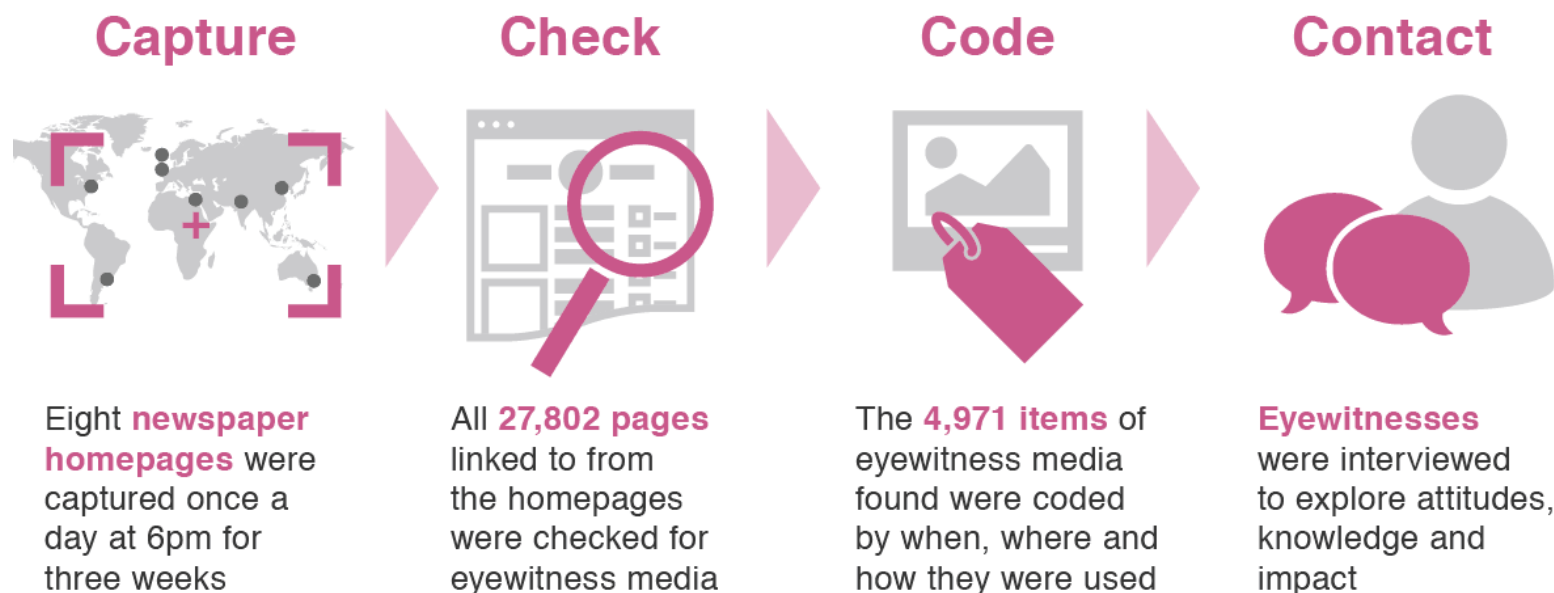
This research clearly shows that it's not just broadcasters who are relying on eyewitness media. Online editions of newspapers are also adapting to the rigours and demands of a world where eyewitnesses are frequently using smart phones and social media to provide the first pictures from the scene during breaking news events. The research outlined in this report is intended to provide a detailed, systematic overview of major online newspapers' use of eyewitness media in order to understand existing practices in this area and help us better understand the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead for news organisations as well as the eyewitnesses operating in this space.

This report is divided into two sections. The first contains the quantitative findings from our examination of when, where and how eyewitness media was used by these eight news sites over our three-week sampling period. The second delves deeper into our sample to present a series of detailed case studies, giving a voice to some of the eyewitnesses whose content was discovered in the earlier part of our study. Through these case studies we highlight some of the ethical issues around online news sites' use of eyewitness media and outline the possible implications for outlets that do not adopt better practices in this area, paying particular attention to the issue of permissions.

3

Methodology

The sampling period for this research was Tuesday 26 August to Monday 15th September 2014



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The research method employed in this study was quantitative content analysis. All coding and analysis was completed by Pete Brown. A sizeable proportion of content was not explicitly identified as eyewitness media, so a degree of detective work was required to investigate specific cases. This was achieved by trawling individual platforms for original posts and cross-referencing content on the Storyful portal. Where there was still uncertainty, contentious content was referred to Eyewitness Media Hub colleagues. Thus, while every effort was made to ensure consistent and accurate coding, it must be acknowledged that there is likely to be a small margin of error in this area.

We chose eight news sites from around the world.

Cairo Post (Egypt)
Clarín (Argentina)
Daily Mail (UK)
Guardian (UK)
New York Times (USA)
People's Daily (China)
Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)
Times of India

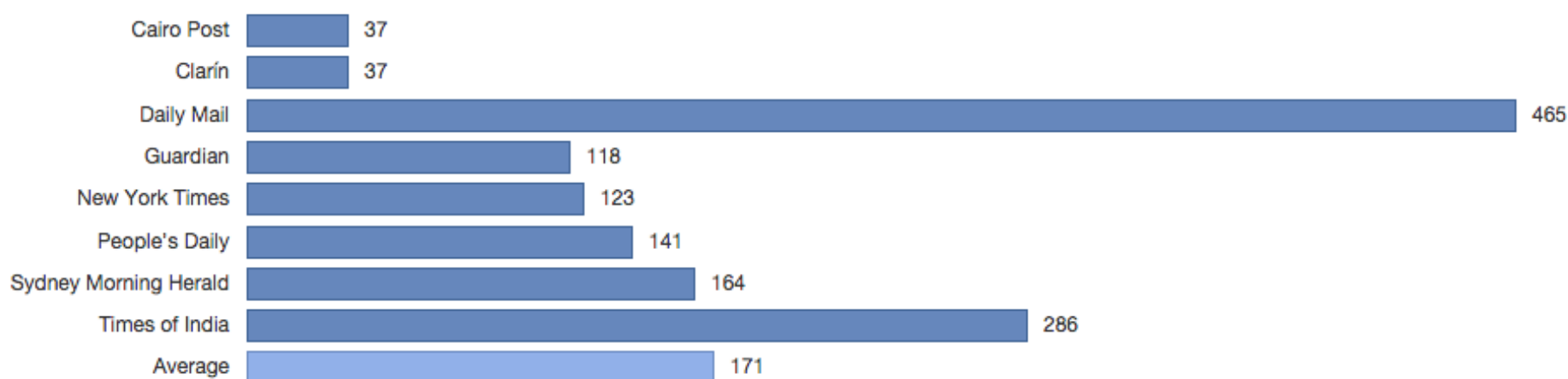
These websites were chosen on the basis of (1) geographical location and (2) popularity. To gauge popularity, we used Alexa, a web service that provides metrics based on global website traffic. Drawing from this data, we restricted our choice of websites to those within the top 1,000 on Alexa Rank while striving to achieve a broad geographical spread. The one exception was the Cairo Post.

We had originally intended to include Youm7, but in the absence of an Arab-speaking team member, we settled on the Cairo Post, Youm7's English language sister paper, by way of a compromise. As such, the Cairo Post was effectively selected on the basis of its sister paper's popularity (as of 31 March 2015, Youm7 was ranked 302 on Alexa).

The 21-day sampling period for this research was Tuesday, 26 August 2014 to Monday, 15 September 2014. Each newspaper's homepage was captured daily at 6pm (local time for the headquarters of each newspaper) using page capture software provided by Reed Archives. Technical issues and the failure of Reed Archives' software meant that some homepages were not captured.

Overall, we captured 96% of the homepages we intended to examine. We then analysed every page that each newspaper homepage linked to, combing each one for eyewitness media (this involved watching every video in case it contained eyewitness media clips or images). The total number of pages analysed was 27,802. The average number of pages linked to from each site was 171 per day, but there was considerable disparity between sites, ranging from 37 per day on the Cairo Post and Clarín to 465 per day on the Daily Mail.

Figure 2: Number of pages linked to from home page per day



Interviews

The eyewitness stories presented in the second section of this report were not part of the original research design. In fact, they are best described as serendipitous bonus material. They came about as a result of detective work carried out while collecting data for the quantitative content analysis. Where it was unclear whether a photo or video had been shot by an eyewitness, we would go in search of the original. Once located, contact was made with the uploader to decipher key background information such as: whether they had taken the original, whether they were aware their content had been used, what stipulations they had made about crediting, etc. As it transpired, a number of the people we contacted were very keen to discuss their experiences. Conscious that eyewitness voices are rarely heard, we embraced the opportunity to conduct interviews and have utilised the rich qualitative data that emerged from these discussions in a series of case studies. All interviews were conducted by Pete Brown and took place via email and social media platforms.

Unit of analysis

Each piece of eyewitness media was coded according to certain key characteristics, such as: date of publication, page type, story topic, media type (i.e. photo, video, still), whether the item was embedded, whether the item was labelled as eyewitness media and whether the item was credited. If multiple items of eyewitness media were found in a video (e.g. edited clips, stills, photos, etc.) each individual piece was counted separately.

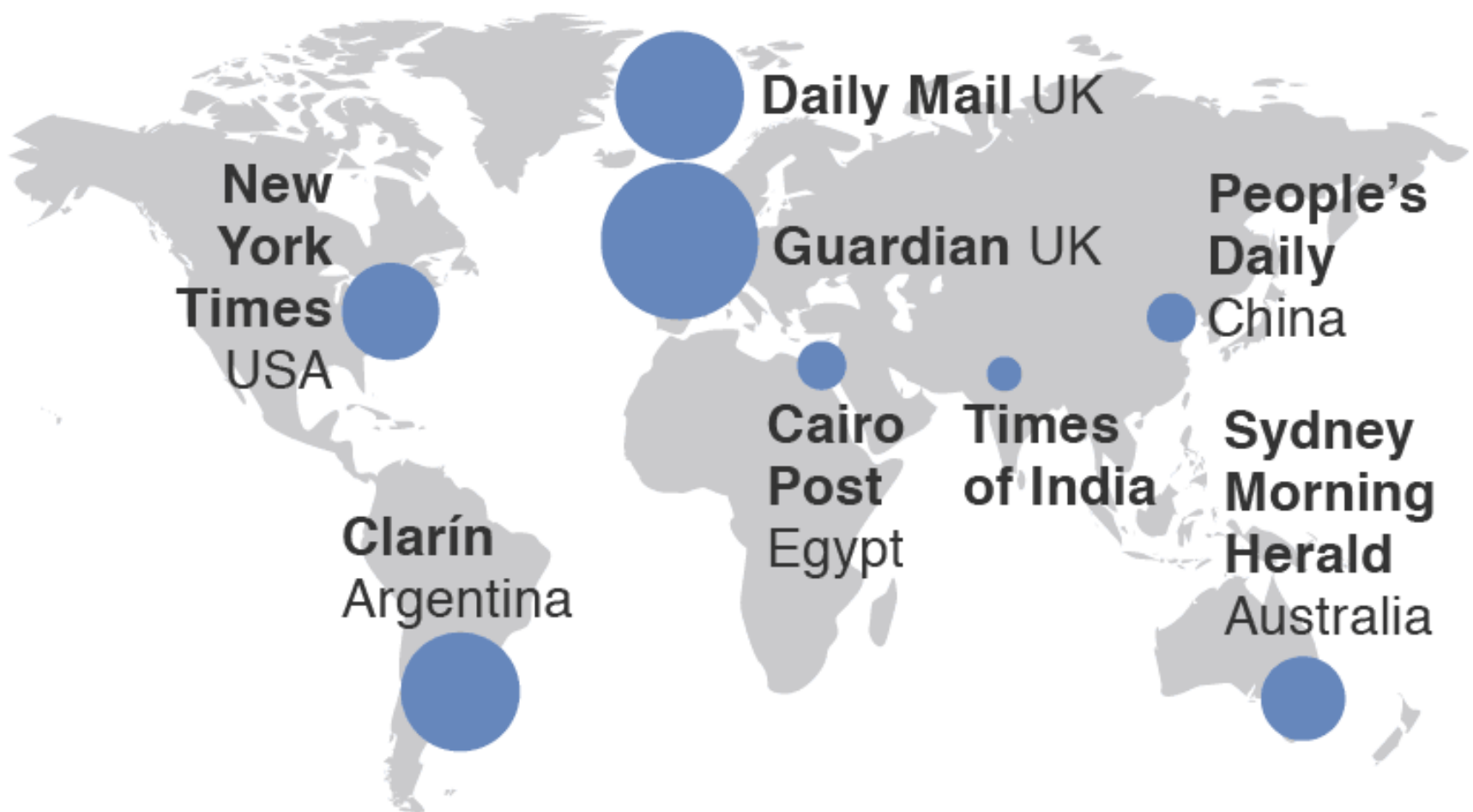
In our previous research we used the term 'user-generated content' (UGC). In this study we have adopted our preferred term of 'eyewitness media' instead. This is because we feel UGC, as a term, is too broad and does not accurately reflect the specific subset of content in which we are interested. The qualifying criteria for eyewitness media was: media captured by people who are not professional journalists and are not related to a news organisation. This did not include comments posted below articles or text-only social media posts utilised in copy (e.g. text-only tweets embedded into stories). Statements posted on social networks by newsmakers (e.g. celebrities, politicians, sports people, or institutions like the United Nations) using social media to bypass traditional public relations channels were not counted as eyewitness media. Unlike our earlier TV study, we did not include any content taken by celebrities.

4

Part I: Analysis of Quantitative Data from Newspaper Website Study

Eyewitness media usage

Amount of eyewitness media weighted by number of pages



On average per day each newspaper homepage linked to **171 pages** containing **30 eyewitness media items** (1 item per 5.6 pages)

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RQ1: How much eyewitness media was found on each newspaper website?

Over the course of our 21-day sampling period, a total of 4,971 eyewitness media items were found across our eight websites, an overall average of 237 items per day. While eyewitness media was found on all eight newspaper websites, there was considerable variation between titles, with content published by the two UK newspapers, the Daily Mail and the Guardian, accounting for three-quarters of the overall total (75%).

Figure 3: Number of eyewitness media items per day on each newspaper website

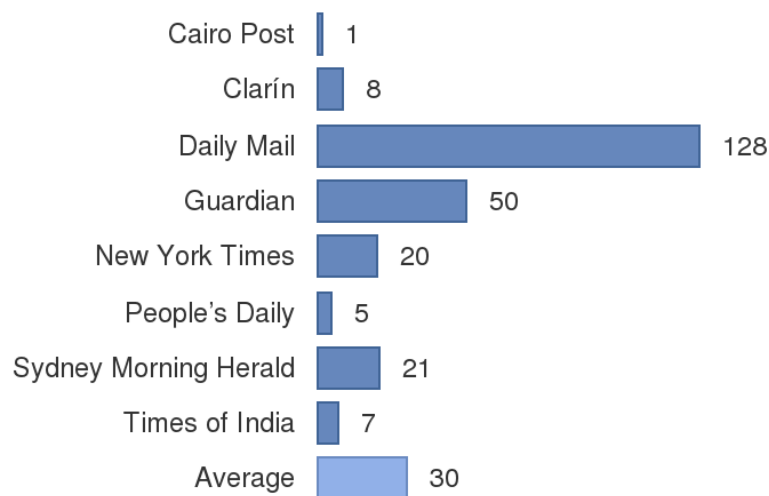


Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the daily averages for each newspaper, which range from one item per day in the Cairo Post to 128 per day in the Daily Mail.

Unlike our analysis of TV news, wherein all stations had roughly the same amount of airtime to fill (the only difference being the amount of time lost to adverts), news websites are not standardised and there can be considerable variation in terms of the number of articles linked to from one homepage to the next. In the websites captured for this study, the average homepage linked to 171 pages per day, ranging from 37 per day in Clarín and the Cairo Post to 465 per day in the Daily Mail. This is an important caveat when seeking to make comparisons between websites.

Accordingly, Figure 4 seeks to level the playing field by weighting the amount of eyewitness media found on each website to the number of articles analysed on each respective newspaper's homepage.

Figure 4: Use of eyewitness media on different newspaper websites

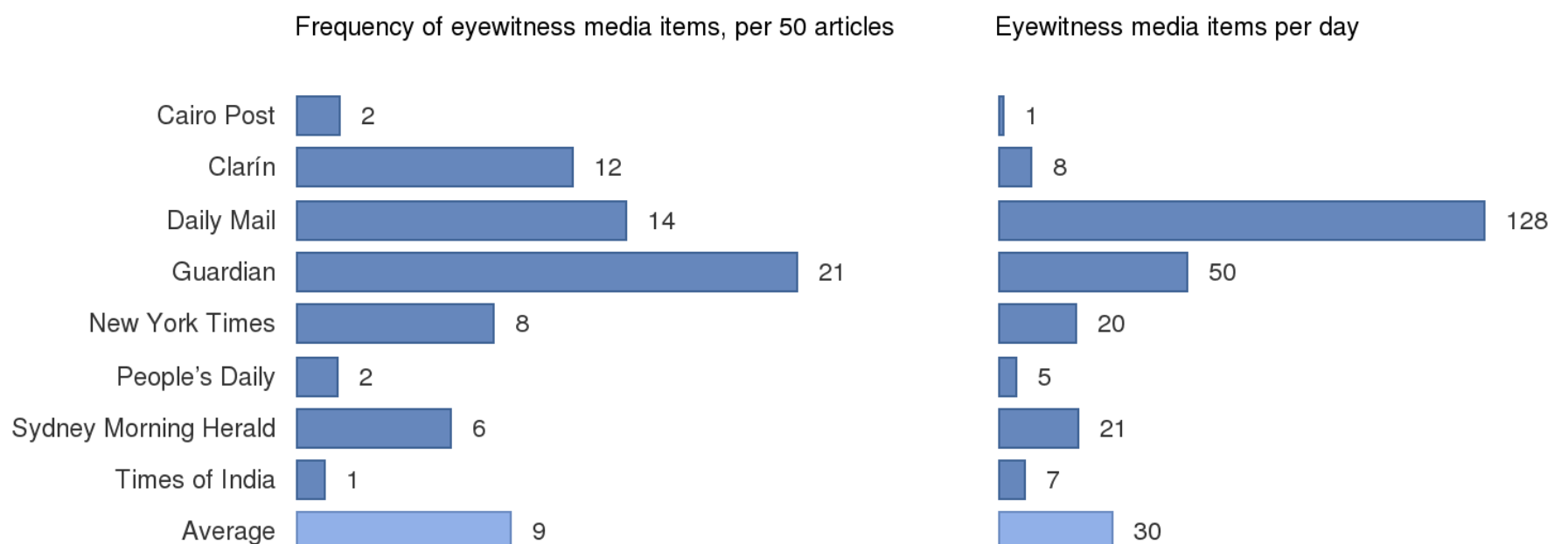


Figure 4 presents a clearer indication of the differences between high and low use websites. Even before digging further and examining the differences between individual newspapers (of which there are many), it is evident from this chart that eyewitness media plays a significant part in the output of the Guardian, Daily Mail, Clarín, New York Times and Sydney Morning Herald, all of which could be considered high use websites. By contrast, our data suggests that eyewitness media is currently of less importance to the Cairo Post, People’s Daily and Times of India. While some of these findings are not surprising (we were not expecting to find much eyewitness media in the state-run People’s Daily, for example), others very much are.

A particularly striking finding was the low amount of eyewitness media found in the Times of India.

There are numerous possible explanations for this. One unavoidable consideration is that, in contrast to their western counterparts, many Indian newspapers remain in relatively good health and have therefore held back from investing in digital strategies, with some major players keeping their digital operations physically separated from the traditional newsroom (Bélair-Gagnon and Agur, 2013).

Having conducted interviews with journalists from Indian newspapers for Nieman Lab, Bélair-Gagnon and Agur concluded: “What we heard suggests a very different set of perspectives on social media than those that exist in Western newsrooms. While some American and European news organizations are making Twitter and Facebook an essential part of their journalists’ work, Indian journalism is still searching for a meaningful role for social media” (Bélair-Gagnon and Agur, 2013). While it is important not to make crude assumptions about a whole country based on separate analyses of different titles, the low eyewitness media usage at the Times of India suggests that some of the institutional attitudes observed at the Hindu, the third most widely read newspaper in the country, may apply to the Times of India.

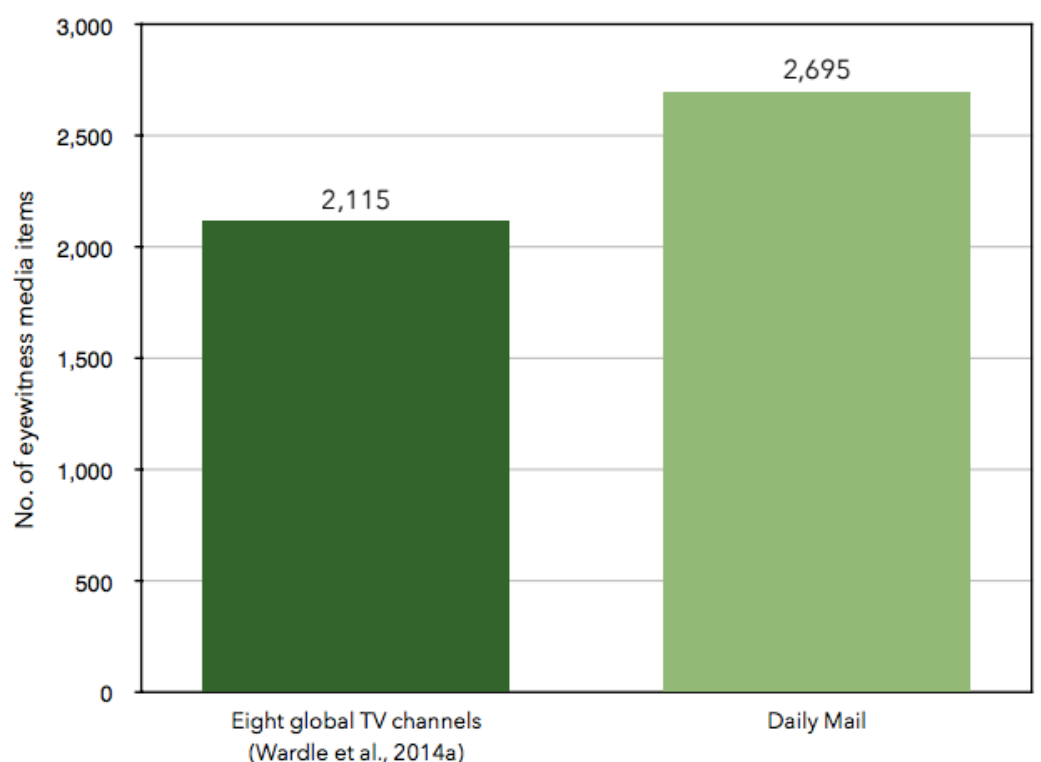
This, however, may not remain the case for long. Trushar Barot, current Apps Editor for BBC World Service/Global News and former assistant editor of the BBC’s UGC and Social Media Hub, has predicted that

2015 will see the rise of digital India, noting that it “will have the world’s highest smartphone user growth rate and will overtake the U.S. in the number of total smartphone users. Newspaper circulation will continue to grow, at the same time that digital news operations will see exponential increases in user numbers” (Barot, 2014). With the expected rise of the “cheap smart phone”, major upgrades to the country’s 3G and 4G networks, plans to extend the roll-out of broadband through the government’s Digital India programme and a noted increase in traffic to western news organisations’ websites and social media channels (Barot, 2014), there is every possibility that increased access to, and appetite for, technology may force Indian news organisations to embrace eyewitness media. It would be interesting to do a follow-up analysis of the Times of India in 12-18 months.

At the other end of the scale, some of the figures for the high usage newspapers are eye-watering. To offer one point of comparison, the 2,695 eyewitness media items coded in the Daily Mail means that this one newspaper alone contained 27% more eyewitness media than we found in the 1,164 hours of TV output analysed in our earlier study of eight global TV channels. (Wardle et al., 2014a).

While we acknowledge that any comparison between TV and online output is unavoidably crude, these figures highlight the extraordinary extent to which news sites with a taste for eyewitness media are incorporating this content into their digital output.³

Eyewitness Media in the Daily Mail Vs Eight TV news channels



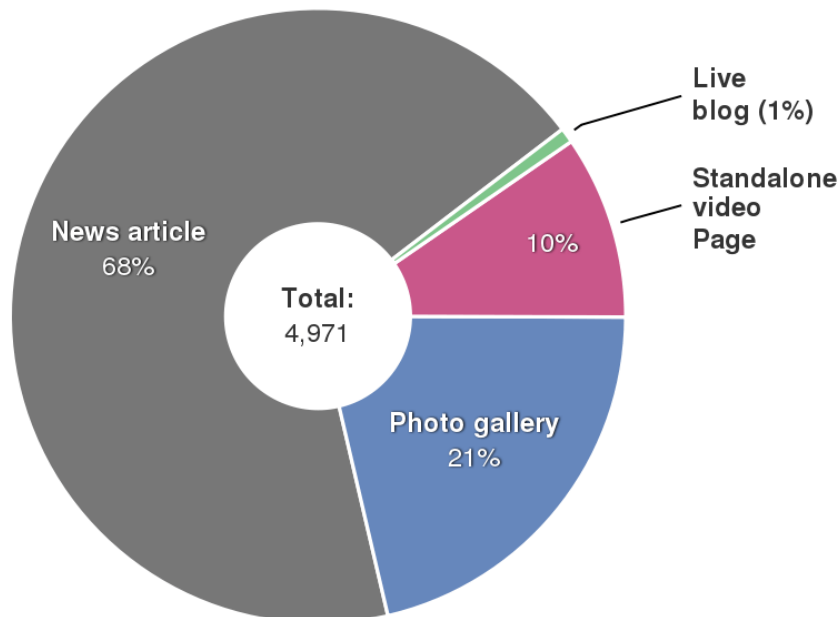
3. Sceptics could quite justifiably point to the high number of articles carried on the Daily Mail’s homepage. However, even if we were to make a conservative estimate that each of the TV news channels analysed in our earlier study broadcast an average of eight segments/stories per hour, the 2,115 eyewitness media items coded in that study would have been derived from 9,312 segments, a figure broadly comparable to the 9,764 articles from which the 2,695 eyewitness media items in the Daily Mail were found.

RQ2: Which types of pages contained eyewitness media?

One of the criteria against which we coded each piece of eyewitness media was the type of page on which it appeared. The emphasis here was on the types of page that distinguish newspapers' digital output from their traditional, legacy offerings. Thus, while no distinction was made between a news page, commentary piece or editorial (these were all coded as news articles), special note was taken of content that appeared in photo galleries, standalone video pages and live blogs.

Figure 5: Type of pages that contained eyewitness media

Overall

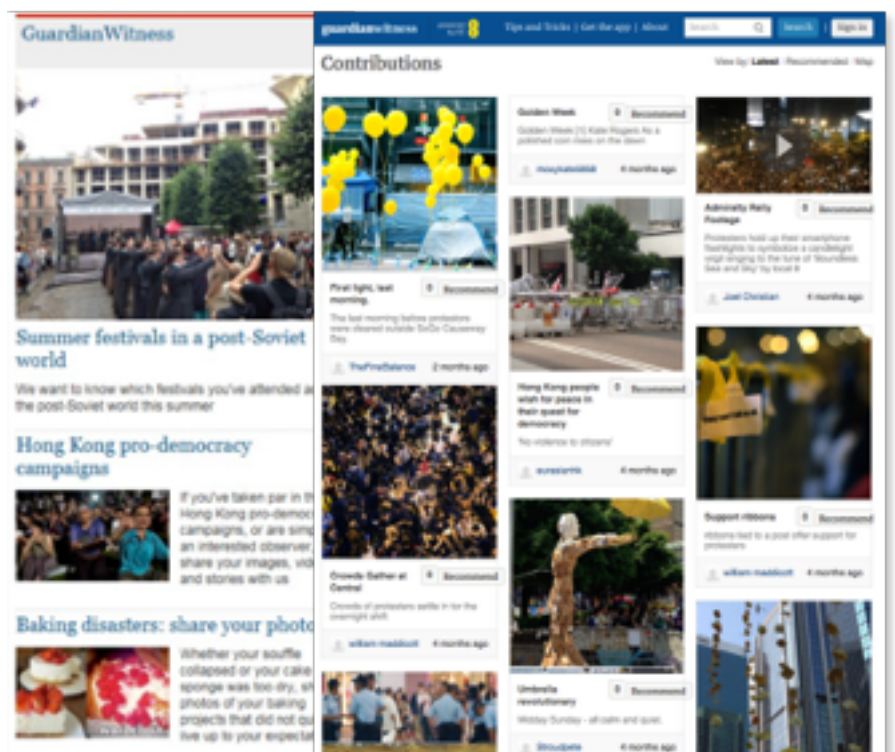


As expected, the highest proportion of eyewitness media was found in news articles (68%). Second highest was photo galleries (25%). However, far from being a general trend, this was largely driven by extremely high usage in the Guardian, a high use site in which 79% of all eyewitness media was found in photo galleries, and, to a lesser extent, the People's

Daily (72%). Photo galleries also accounted for one-third of all content found in the Sydney Morning Herald, partly (although not exclusively) due to collections of child-related viral media compiled in galleries on the Essential Kids pages, which appeared in the parenting section of the homepage.

The high proportion of eyewitness media found in photo galleries in the Guardian was largely driven by content sourced from the paper's exclusive in-house platform, GuardianWitness.

During our period of analysis, the Guardian homepage would typically link to two or three of the latest GuardianWitness assignment galleries per day, each exhibiting around 20 pieces⁴ of content shared by Guardian readers and curated by a dedicated team.⁵



The Guardian's use of Photo Galleries for displaying eyewitness media

4. These galleries often contain considerably more than 20 pieces of eyewitness media; however, we only coded items that appeared on the first page.
 5. The layout of the Guardian homepage has been redesigned since this research was conducted.

Figure 6: How frequently did eyewitness media appear on photo gallery pages?

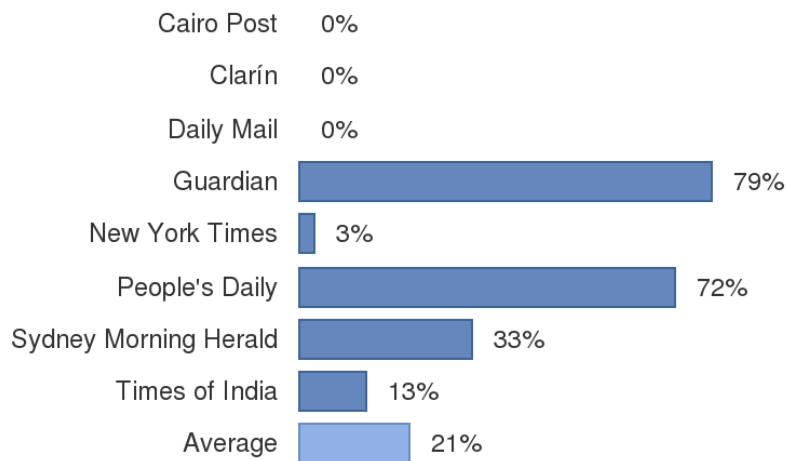
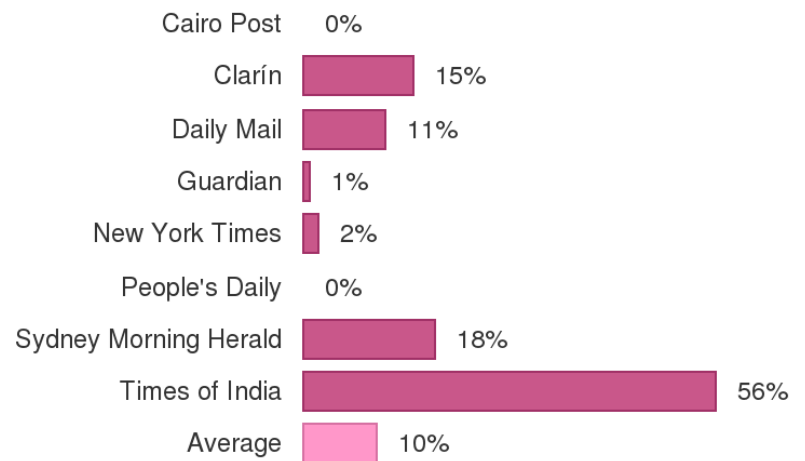
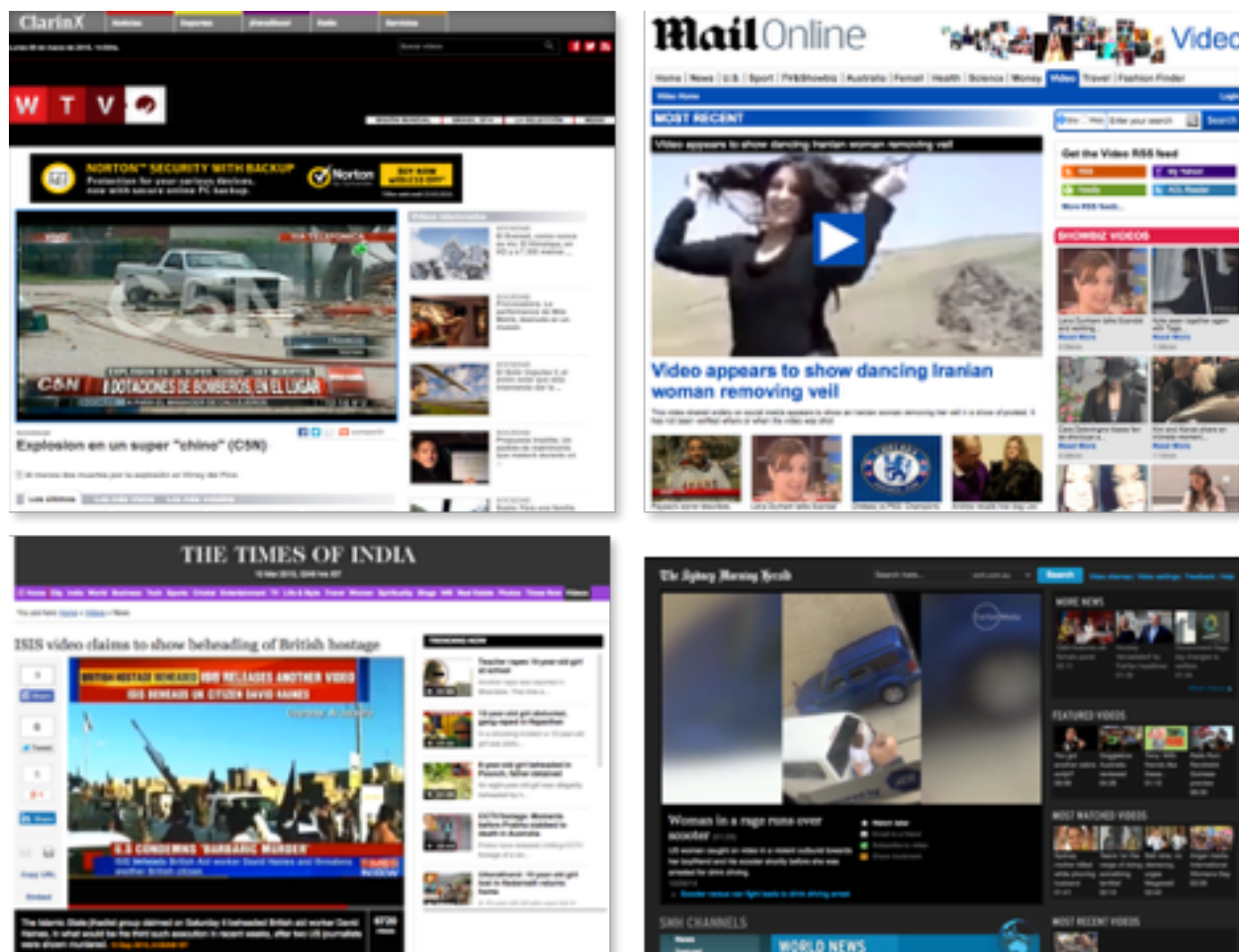


Figure 7: How frequently did eyewitness media appear in standalone video pages?



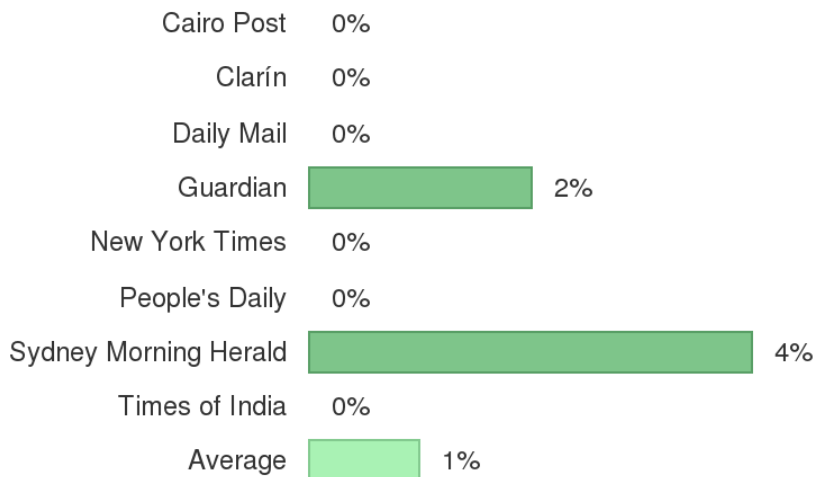
Standalone video pages

Relatively high amounts of eyewitness media were found on standalone video pages in the Sydney Morning Herald (18%), Clarín (15%) and Daily Mail (11%). However, the obvious stand-out is the Times of India, wherein over half (56%) of all the paper's eyewitness media was found in standalone video pages. This figure is noteworthy because the vast majority of content coded in this category came from clips featured on TimesNow, the 24-hour TV news channel owned by the Times Group. As such, it further illustrates just how little eyewitness media is sourced and used by the Times of India newspaper itself.



(Clockwise from top-left) Standalone video pages in Clarín, the Daily Mail, Times of India and Sydney Morning Herald.

Figure 8: How frequently was eyewitness media used in Live blogs?



Live Blogs

A surprising finding was that only two newspapers – the Guardian and Sydney Morning Herald – used eyewitness media in live blogs; the former covering events such as an impromptu gold hunt in Folkestone and the Scottish referendum campaign trail, while the latter used eyewitness media to help cover events such as a fatal explosion in Rozelle, New South Wales.

We had expected to find online newspapers making greater use of live blogs because they provide immediacy and have the capacity to cover breaking news events in much the same way as rolling TV news, i.e. drawing upon eyewitness media to make sense of an event before news outlets can get professional journalists to the scene or where access is restricted by emergency services.



Eyewitness media embedded into a Guardian live blog covering the Folkestone gold hunt

10:40am: smh.com.au reader Steven Davidson took this remarkable photo just after the blast.



Huge explosion: Flames engulfed the shop on Darling Street. Photo: smh.com.au reader Steven Davidson

10:27am: Rozelle resident Shan Handran-Smith took this remarkable photograph minutes after the explosion, which was also heard in surrounding suburbs including Drummoyne and Camperdown.

It shows a car on fire and shattered glass scattered all over Darling Street.



A car caught fire while shards of glass littered the street after the explosion. Photo: smh.com.au reader Shan Handran-S

Sydney Morning Herald's effective use of eyewitness media in its Live blogging platform

Indeed, the Sydney Morning Herald's coverage of the Rozelle fire is particularly illustrative of this because eyewitness footage taken by local residents enabled the paper to show the moment of the blast and the immediate aftermath in a way that the paper's journalists could not due to the unexpected nature of the event and the subsequent evacuation of the surrounding area.

It is not uncommon for videos used in news articles to be recycled in standalone video pages.

Elsewhere, the Guardian's use of eyewitness media in live blogs was notable for the frequency with which they embedded content. Overall, 21 of the 23 eyewitness media items used in Guardian live blogs (91%) was embedded directly via a social platform, highlighting the speed and efficiency with which embed codes enable online news outlets to utilise eyewitness media.

A consequence of this is that vital contextual information accompanying the video in the original news article does not always travel to the standalone video page. From the examples observed during our analysis, we would argue that more could, and should, be done to avoid this in order to ensure audiences are aware that (a) they are viewing content produced by someone unattached to the newsroom and/or (b) the content has not been fully verified (see detailed examples below).

Example 1: 'Iranian dancing woman'

On 3 September 2014, the Daily Mail homepage linked to an article headlined, 'Iranian woman is cheered on as she breaks strict Muslim laws and takes off her hijab to reveal her hair in provocative viral video' (Daily Mail, 3 September 2014). This story revolved around an unverified video posted to YouTube of a woman – possibly Iranian – removing a hijab while dancing on top of a car. The page contained a copy of the video and four stills (three of which were credited to ©YouTube). In contrast to the headline, the copy of this story was replete with references – both implicit and explicit – to the unverified nature of the video.

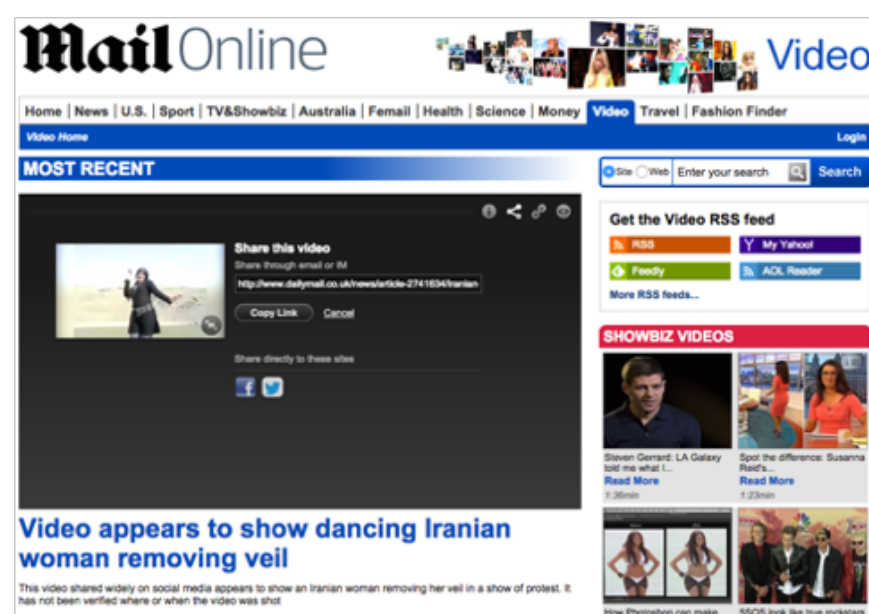
- Both the bulleted summary below the headline and the lead paragraph stated, “A woman thought to be Iranian dared to take off her head scarf while dancing in a YouTube video”.
- The summary and copy also stated, “It has not been confirmed if the woman is actually from Iran, where women are required to wear head coverings, called hijabs”.
- Copy further down the article read, "The video appears to be filmed in a desert”.
- An image caption states, “The woman, who may be Iranian, is seen dancing and taking off her hijab in the popular video”.
- The title of the video was, “Video appears to show dancing Iranian woman revealing veil”.
- An onscreen ‘credit’ on the video read, “source unknown”.

In light of this list it is debatable whether it was responsible or ethical to publish this video or story, the text of which acknowledges that the woman’s safety may be at risk: “[Fox News] reported that it has not been confirmed if the woman is actually from Iran, where women are required by law to wear head coverings, called hijabs - but if true, her safety may be at risk.” This is vital context, which may deter viewers from sharing the video.

This vital context was entirely missing when the multimedia content was transferred to a standalone video page.

The title of the video page was 'Video appears to show dancing Iranian woman removing veil' and the caption read, “This video shared widely on social media appears to show an Iranian woman removing her veil in a show of protest. It has not been verified where or when the video was shot”.

While the video’s unverified status is made clear, the fact that the subject may not even be Iranian is not acknowledged, nor is the vital contextual information about (a) why the removal of the veil is prohibited and (b) the risk to the safety of the woman, who, it should not be forgotten, may not have even been aware that the video had been posted online (e.g. she could have been the victim of a revenge attack). Despite this, options are still provided to share this video via email, IM and social media.



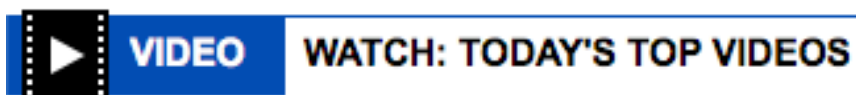
Options for sharing the video of a potentially endangered ‘dancing Iranian woman’

Example 2: Unverified ISIS video

On 28 August 2014, the headline story on the Daily Mail homepage detailed the emergence of an unverified video purporting to show the mass murder of soldiers by ISIS ('Marched to their deaths: Sickening ISIS slaughter continues as 250 soldiers captured at Syrian airbase are stripped then led to the desert for mass execution', Daily Mail, 28 August 2014). In the third paragraph of the copy, above the video and nine screen grabs, it was explicitly stated that the the video "has not been independently verified".⁶

However, when the same footage was transferred to a standalone video page, it was devoid of this vital contextual information. The headline stated only, 'ISIS executes 250 Syrian soldiers (GRAPHIC CONTENT)', while the accompanying caption read, "A video posted on YouTube, and said to be genuine by an Islamic State fighter, shows bodies of 250 Syrian soldiers after they were executed by Islamic State fighters" (emphasis added).

A shorter version of the same unverified footage appeared in another standalone video page published on the same day (promoted in the "Top Videos" section of the homepage alongside a video of Homer Simpson taking the ice bucket challenge), this time with the headline 'ISIS forces prisoners to march to execution in underwear' and the caption "ISIS forces prisoners to march to execution through the desert in their underwear before displaying hundreds of corpses." Again, the unverified status of the video was not acknowledged.



The banner of the top videos section on the Daily Mail homepage

Example 3: Eyewitness commentary in video of Calais migrants

Possible confusion can also arise when videos make the journey from news article to standalone video page and information about the author – and his/her non-attachment to a news organisation – is not made clear. For example, a piece of eyewitness media was published in a standalone

video page in the Guardian under the headline 'Migrants try to force their way onto UK-bound ferry at Calais - video' (Guardian, 4 September 2014). The footage was shot by Mark Salt, a lorry driver, but the only source identified on the Guardian page is Reuters. The video is not identified as eyewitness media in the video or the accompanying text. When the playback of video commences, Mr Salt begins commentating on what he is witnessing: "Police have just turned up to try and rein them all in, but there's fucking loads of them [migrants]."



A video on a Guardian video page, credited only to Reuters, with no indication it is eyewitness media

The above seems a pertinent example of a time when news outlets could do more to ensure their audiences are made fully aware that they are viewing eyewitness media, e.g. an onscreen label or information in the accompanying caption. The limited amount of context provided in this latter example is made especially noticeable because video playback is preceded by an ident reading, "The Guardian: the whole picture".



Collectively, these examples, and others like it, highlight how news organisations could do more to ensure that critical contextual information about eyewitness media (e.g. original source, verification status, the fact it is eyewitness media, etc.) remains intact or is replenished when it is transported from a new article to the more isolated surroundings of a standalone video page or a photo gallery.

6. This acknowledgement that the video was not 100 percent verified was also implicit in the lead paragraph, which read, "Sickening footage appears to show Islamic State militants parading around 250 captured soldiers through the desert in their underwear before they are killed and their bodies piled on the bare earth."

RQ3: In which types of story do newspaper sites use eyewitness media?

Across our sample, the most common use of eyewitness media was in coverage of ISIS. This accounted for 24% of all content. The only newspaper not to contain any eyewitness media related to ISIS was the People's Daily. At the other end of the scale, 84% of the eyewitness media found in the New York Times related to ISIS.

The dominance of ISIS-related eyewitness media is entirely unsurprising because (a) it is an ongoing story of global interest, (b) militant groups continue to release a significant amount of content, and (c) our sampling period began just after the murder of journalist James Foley and included the release of videos showing the murders of Stephen Sotloff and David Haines.

In our earlier study of TV output, a few high-profile breaking news events accounted for a sizeable proportion of the eyewitness media in our corpus and caused noticeable spikes in eyewitness media usage, e.g. items relating to the Glasgow helicopter crash of November 2013 alone accounted for 14% of all eyewitness media found on TV (Wardle et al., 2014a). On the newspaper websites included in this study, the picture is very different. Only items coded as ISIS (24%), Viral media/stunt/mishap (14%) and celebrity (6%) – the three of which collectively account for over two-fifths of all content (44%) – made any kind of impact.

There were specific events for which above average amounts of eyewitness media were recorded, such as in the Sydney Morning Herald's coverage of the Rozelle fire, which contained 37 pieces of eyewitness media (9% of all content found in that newspaper), but in the overall picture these events were dwarfed by coverage of less specific happenings. Indeed, the overall breadth of topics was remarkable, with eyewitness media being used to cover everything from ISIS and Boko Haram to a noted decline in the number of teenagers taking up part-time jobs and research about the amount of leg room provided by different airlines.

One notable trend observed in the Daily Mail involved the use of eyewitness media to form articles about 'moments'.

MailOnline

Sample of headlines captured between 26th August and 15th September 2014

- ▶ **'He lost everything': Lifeguards capture dramatic moment Frenchman is rescued from burning houseboat as he attempted to sail from Iceland to Holland**
- ▶ **Horrifying moment medic in biohazard suit boarded BA jet over fears 10-year-old girl passenger was suffering from ebola**
- ▶ **Stomach-turning moment clam opens up and giant 'tongue' emerges to lick salt off a kitchen table**

▶ **'Get out of the water!': Terrifying moment two unsuspecting swimmers are circled by a shark in Florida**

▶ **Adorable moment rescue puppy runs, jumps and slides as he experiences snow for the FIRST time**

▶ **Feeding frenzy! Holidaymaker captures incredible moment swimmers are dive-bombed by flock of pelicans swooping into sea to pursue shoal of sardines**

▶ **Beautiful moment woman with Alzheimer's recognises her daughter**

▶ **The shocking moment staff in Mexican Kennel beat dogs**

In many ways this term – 'moment' – perfectly encapsulates why eyewitness media holds such appeal to the news media: it describes a specific happening that is (typically) unplanned and unrehearsed, thereby meaning it will only be witnessed by people who happen to be in the right place at the right time. Overall, 307 of the eyewitness media items found in the Mail came from articles containing 'moment' in the headline.

Variations on this theme, all taken from headlines found during our three week coding period, were: *Adorable moment, awkward moment, beautiful moment, dangerous moment, dramatic moment, emotional moment, explosive moment, gut-wrenching moment, horrifying moment, incredible moment, precious moment, shock moment, shocking moment, stomach-churning moment and terrifying moment.*

During our interviews, a senior news manager at a major global news agency described his clients' demand for eyewitness media as "rapacious"⁷

In terms of a business model, then, the Daily Mail's repeated pattern of incorporating content produced by non-news professionals into output about eyewitness media-driven 'moments' seems to represent one strategy through which one major player has sought to adapt to the changing climate of the news industry in order to meet the relentless demands of the 24-hour online news cycle.

Viral content

During our study of 24-hour news, we noted a surprising lack of viral media on broadcasters' television output and websites (Wardle et al., 2014b: 28). The same cannot be said of online newspapers. Indeed, it is difficult to understate the popularity of viral media, which accounted for 14% of all content and was found in every newspaper except the New York Times and Cairo Post.

The parenting section of the Sydney Morning Herald linked to a rundown of child-related viral photos, Clarín and the Daily Mail routinely featured viral media as news, and the Guardian had a viral video chart. Even the People's Daily – the state-run newspaper of China – contained galleries showcasing viral media such as photos of babies dressed as lettuces and shots of a 'beautiful traffic warden'.



Viral photos of babies dressed as salad items (left) and 'beautiful traffic wardens' (right) published by the state-run Chinese newspaper People's Daily

That said, it is important that eyewitness media does not become synonymous with viral media or 'soft news'. There are significant differences between titles and while eyewitness media categorised as 'viral media/stunt/mishap' did account for a large proportion of the eyewitness media in some high use newspapers (e.g. Clarín, Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Mail), it is a broad category and such content was entirely absent from the New York Times and all but absent from the Guardian (3 items).

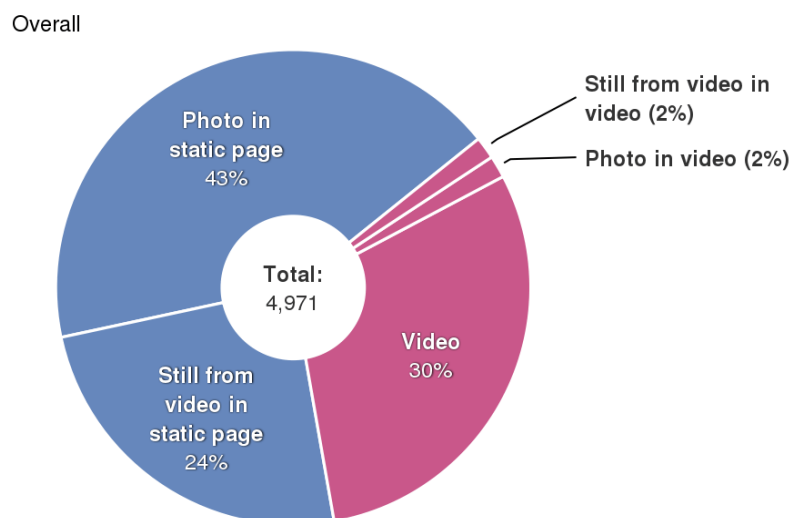
Caution should be exercised before concluding that news outlets' willingness to utilise eyewitness media automatically equates to 'tabloidisation' or 'dumbing down'.

The New York Times, in particular, was a good example of a high use website that was selective in its use of eyewitness media, using it mostly to add context or depth to a news story (a very sizeable proportion was found in detailed video packages on ISIS, for example), rather than in a gratuitous pursuit of clicks or ad revenue.

7. This quote was not cited in our final report.

RQ4: What type of eyewitness media did newspaper sites use?

Figure 9: Eyewitness media by media type



In terms of the types of eyewitness media used by newspaper websites, static media – photos and stills from videos – was the most common, accounting for around two-thirds of all content. This was to be expected, due the ‘flat’ nature of the traditional newspaper formats from which these sites evolved.⁸

That the remaining third of content was moving video is noteworthy, as it highlights the value of eyewitness media video to online news sites, and the fact that most titles have long accepted that they can not rely solely on content that can be transferred to and from their traditional paper formats.⁹

What’s more, the relatively high amount of video coded suggests that eyewitness media may have an important role to play in these news sites’ ongoing evolution into dynamic, multimedia operations.

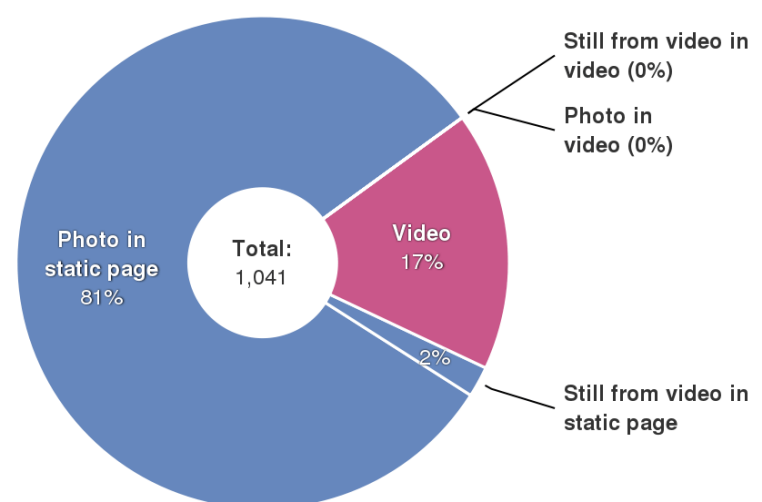
Only the Cairo Post and People’s Daily did not contain any eyewitness media in video form.

Notable differences in individual sites’ reliance on different media types are revealing about some of the highly distinct

use cases among three of the high use news sites, the Guardian, Daily Mail and New York Times.

In the case of the Guardian, the extremely high use of photos (81% of all content) was largely driven by the publication of photo galleries showcasing readers’ contributions to GuardianWitness assignments. (N.B. It should be noted that GuardianWitness does not cater exclusively for photos and also invite users to share videos and audio.)

Figure 10: Guardian's usage of eyewitness media by media type

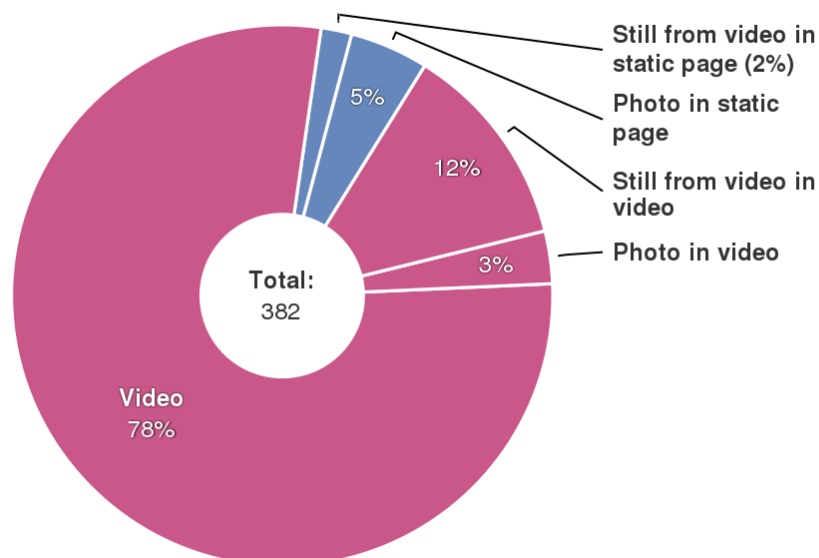


In contrast to the other newspapers, the New York Times used very few photos (just 5% in static pages, compared to an overall average of 43%). Instead, the vast majority of eyewitness media found in the New York Times was in video form (78%). For context, that figure is 8% higher than the equivalent for television news, in which 70% of eyewitness media was video and 30% was photos (Wardle et al., 2014a: 23). What’s more, a further 15% of the static media found on the site was also utilised in videos (12% of screen grabs; 3% of photos), meaning that 93% of all eyewitness media coded in the New York Times was found in videos.

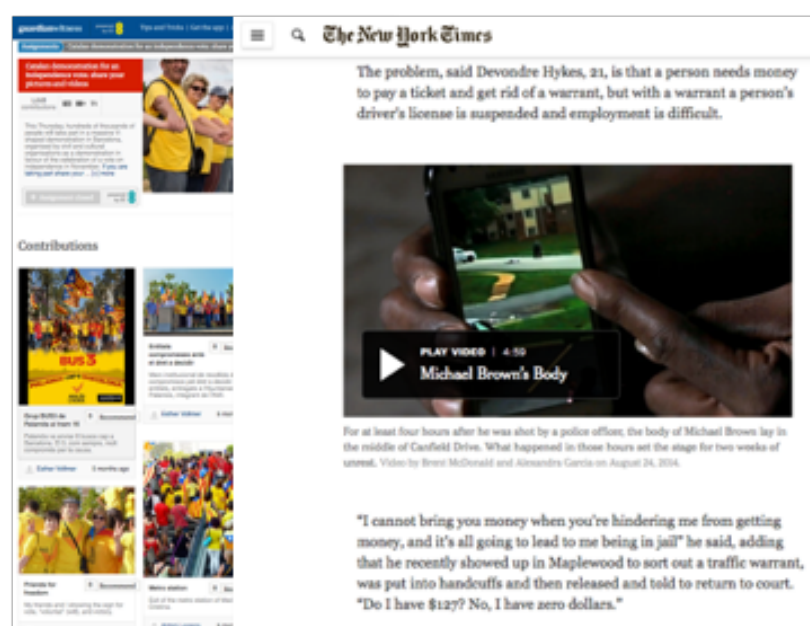
8. Likewise, TV broadcasters’ websites contained a relatively high proportion of video (49%) because that is their area of expertise and a lot of video packages produced for TV had been transferred directly to the channel’s website.

9. This does not contradict the earlier point about the surprisingly low use of eyewitness media by the Times of India. As discussed earlier, a sizeable proportion of the eyewitness media found on this website came via the TimesNow TV station and there did not appear to be a particularly strong appetite for eyewitness media in the copy produced by the Times of India newspaper itself.

Figure 11: New York Times' usage of eyewitness media by media type



As discussed in the previous section, very little of the eyewitness media in the New York Times was found in standalone video pages. Instead, videos were usually embedded directly into relevant news articles, adding vital context, colour and depth to the stories to which they related. Rather than being scrapes of videos from YouTube or the like, these packages tended to be highly polished, in-depth pieces akin to television news features, produced by dedicated in-house video professionals and drawing on eyewitness media from a range of sources.



A GuardianWitness photo gallery (left) and a video feature embedded into a New York Times article (right)

As well as coding photos and videos, we created a category for screen grabs. These accounted for around a quarter of the eyewitness media found across the sample. One key factor behind this was the frequent publication of stills from ISIS videos.

The People's Daily was the only site not to publish a still from an ISIS video.

Away from ISIS, a trend observed in some papers was for screen grabs to be used to construct/pad out stories about rather less serious matters.



Low-resolution stills from a eyewitness media video on Clarín's website (top) and in the newspaper (bottom)

emhub.co/research > Recommendations for news outlets using eyewitness media

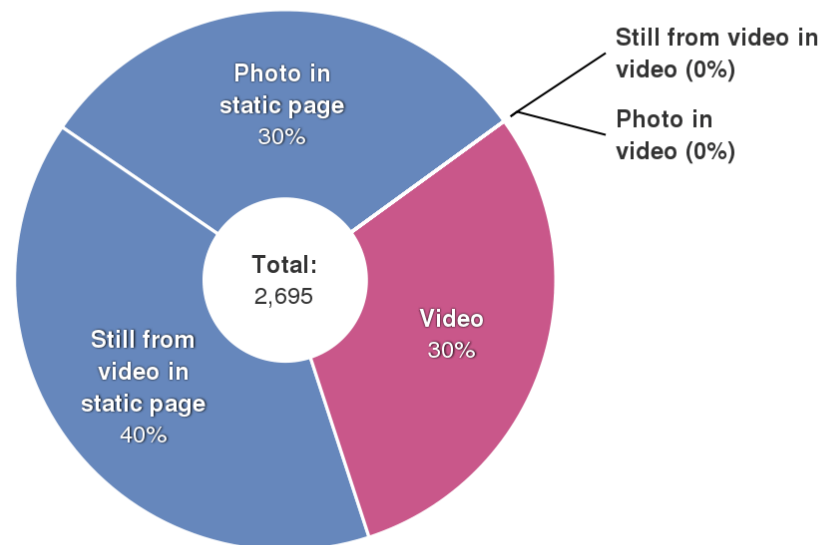
#3
When utilising screengrabs from eyewitness footage, follow the same protocol for crediting as should be applied to the original video.

This was particularly common in the Daily Mail, where 1,069 screen grabs from videos were found (40% of all eyewitness media found in the Mail).

Many of these were used as part of what appears to be a deliberate digital strategy. These articles typically follow the same formula: a headline, sub-headline and bulleted summary designed to achieve prime search engine optimisation; a detailed account of the video's contents; the video itself, contained within the Mail's commercial player; and, crucially here, numerous sharable screen grabs from the video.

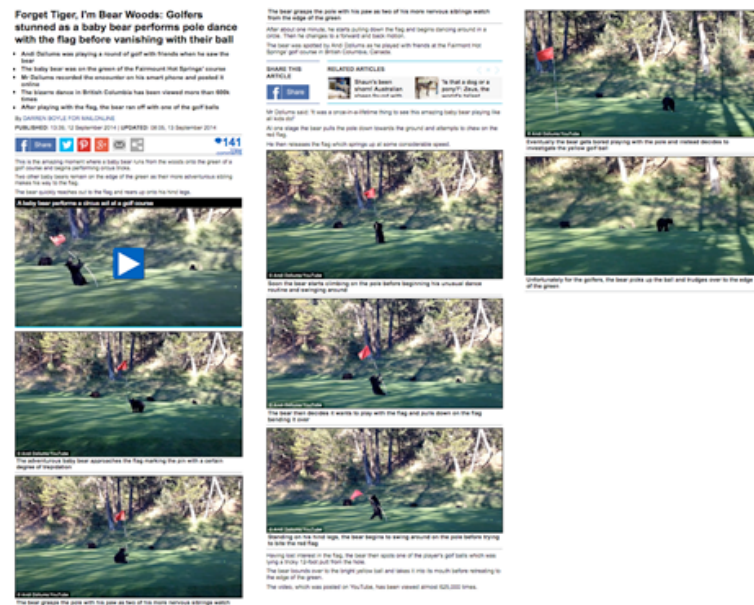
Short eyewitness media videos are made the subject of fully-blown 'news' articles. In other words, the eyewitness media video is the story.

Figure 12: Daily Mail's usage of eyewitness media by media type



This example below, which shows seven screen grabs in an article about a YouTube video of a bear 'performing a pole dance' on a golf course, is typical (lead sentence: "This is the amazing moment where a baby bear runs from the woods onto the green of a golf course and begins performing circus tricks").

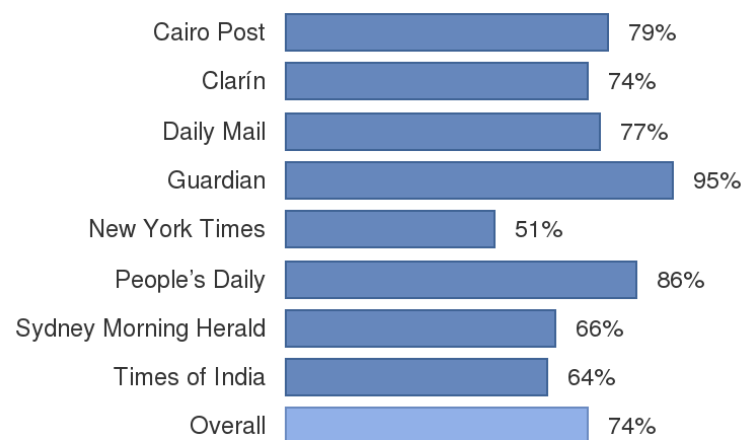
Such videos will often appear in separate sections of the Daily Mail – i.e. a news article and a standalone video page – increasing the chances of being seen and viewed, thereby generating valuable ad revenue. On 13 September 2014, for example, the Daily Mail's homepage contained one link to the news article about the 'pole dancing bear' and two to standalone video pages carrying the same content.



A Daily Mail article and standalone video page about a viral video.

RQ5: Was content labelled as eyewitness media?

Figure 13: Proportion of content labelled as eyewitness media



Newspapers appear much better at labelling content as eyewitness media than TV news channels.

This is unsurprising due to the structural differences between the two formats, e.g. TV has severe space limitations (hence concerns about screen clutter), whereas a web page has limitless space. An image on TV may only flash up very briefly, leaving limited time for producers to display a readable label, etc. The breakdown by publication is presented in Figure 13.

In our sample from online news sites, 74% of content was identified as eyewitness media (equivalent figure for TV: 22%).

This figure shows that labelling of eyewitness media was pretty solid across the board. That the New York Times was found to label the lowest proportion of eyewitness media is unsurprising because a sizeable proportion of that paper's use of eyewitness media came from short clips/compilations in video features, which are subject to the same limitations as TV (limited space, etc.). That said, there were occasions when identical clips were used in separate videos but not afforded the same level of labelling.

In the example below, the screengrabs on the left contain a label of "via YouTube user Abu Al Fada Al Ansari" in the top-left of the screen (signposting to the viewer that the pictures came via the web rather than a New York Times journalist or an agency) whereas the screengrabs on the right show the same footage being used in different videos without any form of label. This would seem to imply a level of inconsistency rather than an inability or unwillingness to add on-screen labels.

The labelling of eyewitness media is important because it signals to the audience that the content they are viewing: (a) was produced by someone unrelated to the newsroom (i.e. not a professional journalist); (b) should have been subject to a verification process, and (c) in the case of Syria and Iraq, was produced by someone who has a particular political position (and in the case of content disseminated by ISIS, labelling is especially critical because the audience must be left in no doubt that they are viewing propaganda material).



Inconsistent labelling of eyewitness media in New York Times videos.

We have argued before that labelling is especially important when dealing with eyewitness media that has been watermarked with the logos of activist groups because an uninitiated viewer or reader could assume the logo belongs to a legitimate news outlet, thereby making them unaware the content is eyewitness media (Wardle et al., 2014a: 28). Across our sample we encountered 540 pieces of content carrying a logo, of which 61% was labelled as eyewitness media. This is an encouraging finding, but there is still clearly room for improvement.



Still from an ISIS video containing two logos but no clear label identifying it as eyewitness media (Daily Mail).



Footage from an ISIS video containing a logo, with a label added by the News York Times to show it is eyewitness media.

Across our sample, it was not uncommon to find examples of unverified eyewitness media being handled in a manner that may be confusing for readers or viewers. For example, on 14 September 2014, the Times of India carried a TimesNow video report on the release of an ISIS video purporting to show the beheading of British aid worker David Haines. Through the course of this report, a splash screen intermittently appeared with “Another hostage beheaded” displayed across the screen in large, capitalised text. It then cut to a split screen showing stills from two ISIS videos with further, seemingly unequivocal statements: “British hostage beheaded”, “British aid worker executed by ISIS”, “David Haines executed”, “UK citizen beheaded by ISIS”, “44 yr old David Haines executed” and “ISIS released another video showing beheading of British Aid Worker”. Casting doubt over these statements, however, were two disclaimers – one over each still – reading, “TimesNow does not vouch for the authenticity of the video”, a statement that seemingly conflicts with the others on the screen and could easily confuse viewers.

Rather clearer handling of the same story was evident in a Guardian report of the same day, in which the sub-headline and lead paragraph were consistent in highlighting the same video’s unverified status: “Video purporting to show the murder of British aid worker David Haines is reminiscent of those depicting beheadings of US journalists”, “Isis video claims to show beheadings of British aid worker”, “A video purporting to show the murder of British aid worker David Haines was released by Islamic State militants on Saturday” (‘David Haines video has marked similarities to Sotloff and Foley killings’, Guardian, 14 September 2014).



Potentially confusing handling of unverified eyewitness media by TimesNow/Times of India

RQ6: How much content was embedded from social media platforms?

Journalists working online are afforded a raft of functionality that is not available to colleagues working in television. During our interviews with people working in this space, the editor of one UK news website enthused, “That’s the great thing about digital. It’s much more collaborative because you can embed content, you have photo expansion via Twitter embeds, that sort of thing. It actually allows you to use a lot more UGC in a much more natural way” (Wardle et al., 2014b: 91). This was touched upon earlier, when we noted the Guardian’s frequent use of embedding in live blogs.

Figure 14: Proportion of eyewitness media embedded directly

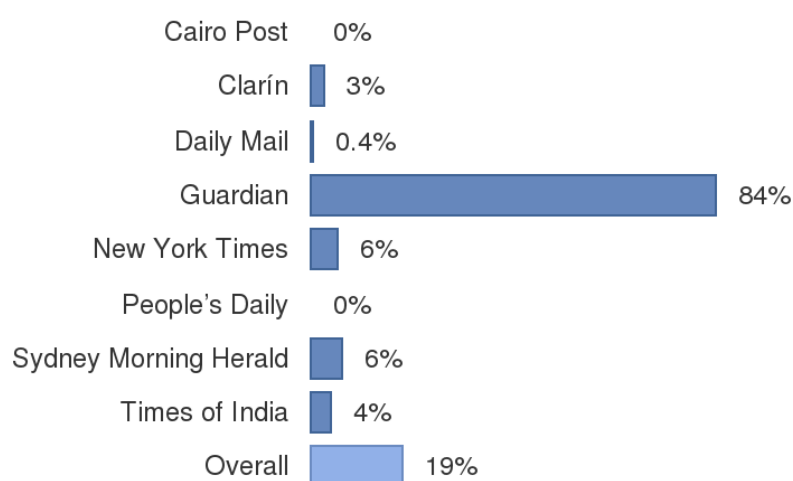


Figure 14 shows the amount of eyewitness media embedded directly from a social platform. The overall figure across the sample was 19%. Again, however, this is not an accurate reflection of the overall picture.

It is important to recognise that there are numerous situations in which embedding is not feasible or practical, e.g. when using photos, stills or edited clips in video packages; when using photos received via email and when using content posted to platforms that do not facilitate embedding, etc.¹⁰

However, even after taking these considerations into account, the majority of the figures in Figure 14 are still

surprisingly low, given the ease and speed with which it is possible to embed content.

Two of the websites we analysed didn’t embed any eyewitness media (Cairo Post and People’s Daily). Of the other six, all but one embedded 6% or less of their eyewitness media, including four of the high use sites. The obvious anomaly was the Guardian, which embedded a total of 873 eyewitness media items (84%) – 667 of them via GuardianWitness. (Thus, even without content embedded via its own platform, the Guardian still embedded 206 items from other platforms – YouTube, Twitter and Vine – which is considerably more than any other newspaper.)

If embedding is truly about making online news collaborative, then our findings suggest that Guardian is the only paper in our sample that is actively collaborating with its readers on a frequent basis.

A major standout from Figure 14 is the near total lack of embedding in the Daily Mail. Given that this site carried by far the most eyewitness media, it is noteworthy that less than 1% of content was embedded. This can be partly attributed to the frequent use of video stills, of course (see discussion of RQ4). However, even after taking this into account, it is clear that there is preference for scraping and re-uploading over embedding because a lot of content that could have been embedded was not.

Possible explanations for the Daily Mail's reluctance to embed content are numerous. It could be down to workflow (e.g. when content is received from an agency), a commercial choice (e.g. opting to host videos in their own commercial players in order to generate revenue from pre-roll ads), concern about unsightly black spaces being left when content is removed/made private, or even just a lack of awareness/training about this functionality. However, the fact that some content was embedded (albeit a minuscule amount) shows that this functionality is possible through the site’s content management system.

10. Many of these apply to the New York Times, which is noticeably consistent in its practice of embedding content where possible.

From an eyewitnesses perspective, embedding has many benefits (and a few drawbacks, discussed in the next section).

- It allows eyewitnesses to retain a modicum control over their content (e.g. if they receive unwelcome attention or change their mind about publishing their content they can make their profile private or delete the relevant post);
- It ensures eyewitnesses receive a form of credit and signals to the audience that a photo/video was found via the social web.
- In the case of YouTube videos, it ensures that the original uploader is the recipient of any revenue generated by video plays.

None of these benefits apply when news outlets opt to download content and re-upload it to their own servers, resulting in something of a loss of control for eyewitnesses (this is discussed in greater detail in the eyewitness stories presented in the next section).¹¹

This example (right), shows where the Daily Mail opted to take a screen grab of a social media post rather than embedding the same content. The screen grab has all the same credentials as would an embed, except that the uploader cannot control its visibility. It is also notable for having copyright attributed to the platform, © Instagram.¹²

An example that further crystallises this point is shown below. A photograph of Barack Obama posing for a photo with a family while visiting Stonehenge, was published by the Daily Mail on 5 September 2014.



(Above) A screenshot of an Instagram post creating the illusion of having been embedded in the Daily Mail (with copyright attributed to © Instagram)

(Right) The ‘Obama selfie’ published as a screen grab from Sky News with copyright attributed to the broadcaster, © sky news (Daily Mail)



This image, which became known as ‘the Obama selfie’, was posted to Twitter by the woman shown in the photo. She has subsequently made her Twitter profile private, meaning that embeds of her original tweet are now blank.¹³



Blank spaces in the Guardian (left) and Daily Mail (right) where the ‘Obama selfie’ was embedded from a profile that has since been made private

This is one of the few occasions in which the Daily Mail did embed, however, the photo remains visible in the article because the paper also inserted a screen grab taken from Sky News when the photo was onscreen (with copyright attributed to © sky news). The ethics of embedding is an important, yet murky, topic and is discussed in more detail in the second half of this report.

11. We acknowledge the situation is different when news organisations arrange to ‘buy’ content from eyewitnesses.

12. The uploader’s caption begins with the hashtag #regam, which is a term often used by Instagram users to indicate that they are not the original author of a photo. Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to ascertain whether the uploader identified in the Daily Mail’s screen grab was the original author of the photo.

13. It is unclear whether the circulation of this specific photo was a factor in the uploader’s decision to make her Twitter profile private.

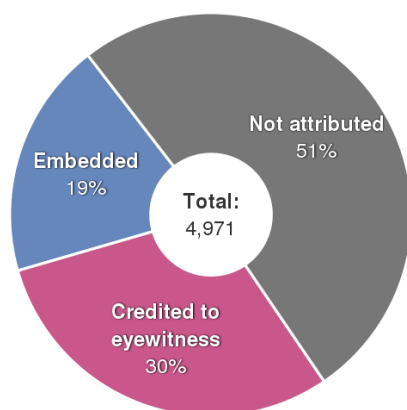
RQ7: Were people who uploaded the content credited?

Crediting remains an important issue. Following interviews with news professionals, we concluded that many journalists and news managers are not giving crediting the attention it deserves or that their colleagues in legal and rights departments feel is warranted (Wardle et al., 2014b: 92).

As part of this quantitative analysis, we wanted to ascertain the proportion of content that was attributed to the eyewitness, either explicitly through a credit added by the newspaper (e.g. “Source: Joe Bloggs/Twitter”) or through the implicit route provided by embedding content via the social media platform to which it was uploaded.

Figure 15: How eyewitness media items are credited, if at all

Overall



Overall, around half (49%) of all eyewitness media was either embedded (19%) or credited to an eyewitness by the newspaper (30%). This is encouraging, although there is clearly still room for improvement. There is considerable variation between newspapers, but the Guardian is very much leading the way in this area, with 95% of content either embedded or attributed to a named eyewitness.

Digging deeper into crediting practices, we also decided to remove embedded content from the equation in order to get a better understanding of how news sites opted to credit eyewitness media when left to their own devices.

With the 964 pieces of embedded content removed from our corpus, Figure 16 presents an overview of how the remaining 4,027 eyewitness media items were credited.

Figure 16: The ways online newspapers credit non-embedded eyewitness media

Overall

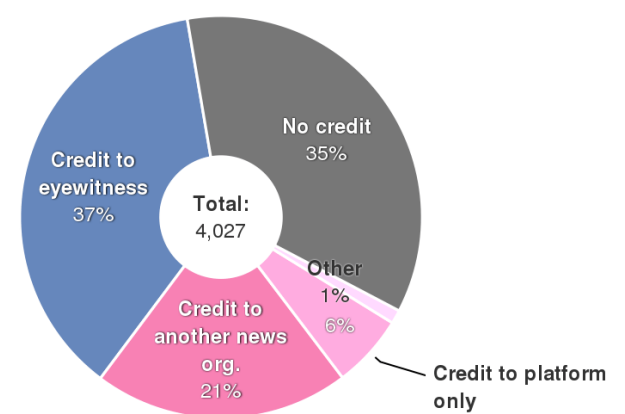
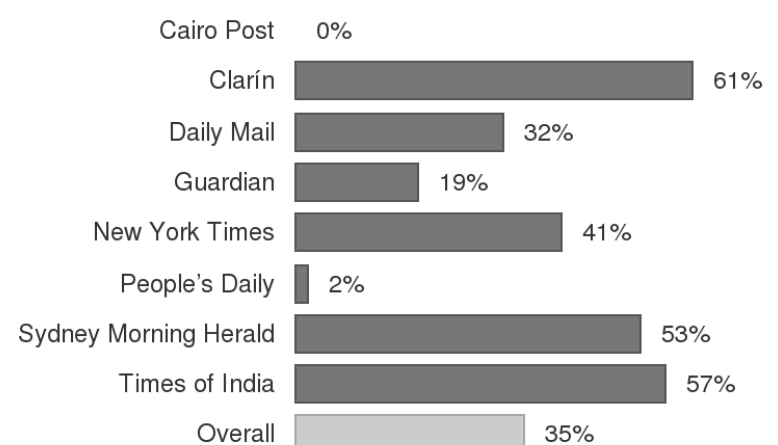


Figure 16 shows that newspapers actively added a credit to 65% of non-embedded content. Of course the negative spin on this finding is that over a third of non-embedded eyewitness media did not receive any form of credit (35%).

In terms of news sites not adding any kind of credit, there is particular room for improvement at Clarín (61%), the Times of India (57%) and the Sydney Morning Herald (53%).¹⁴

Figure 17: Proportion of non-embedded eyewitness media with no credit

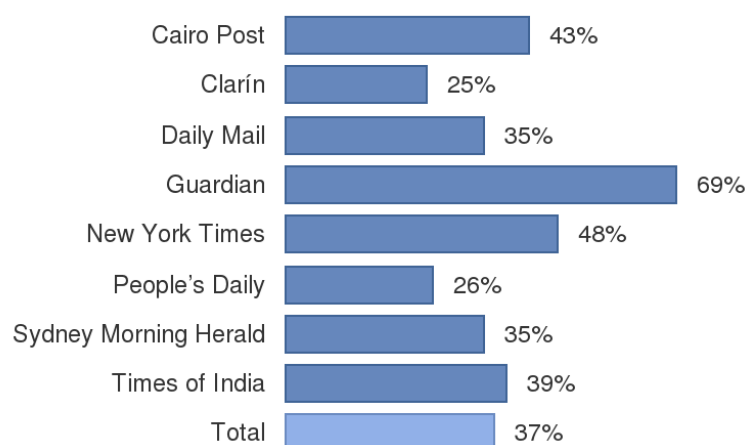


14. We acknowledge that there are instances when eyewitnesses actively choose to not have content attributed to them.

In Clarín, more than twice as much content was either (a) uncredited or (b) credited only to a platform (70% combined) as was credited to an eyewitness (25%).

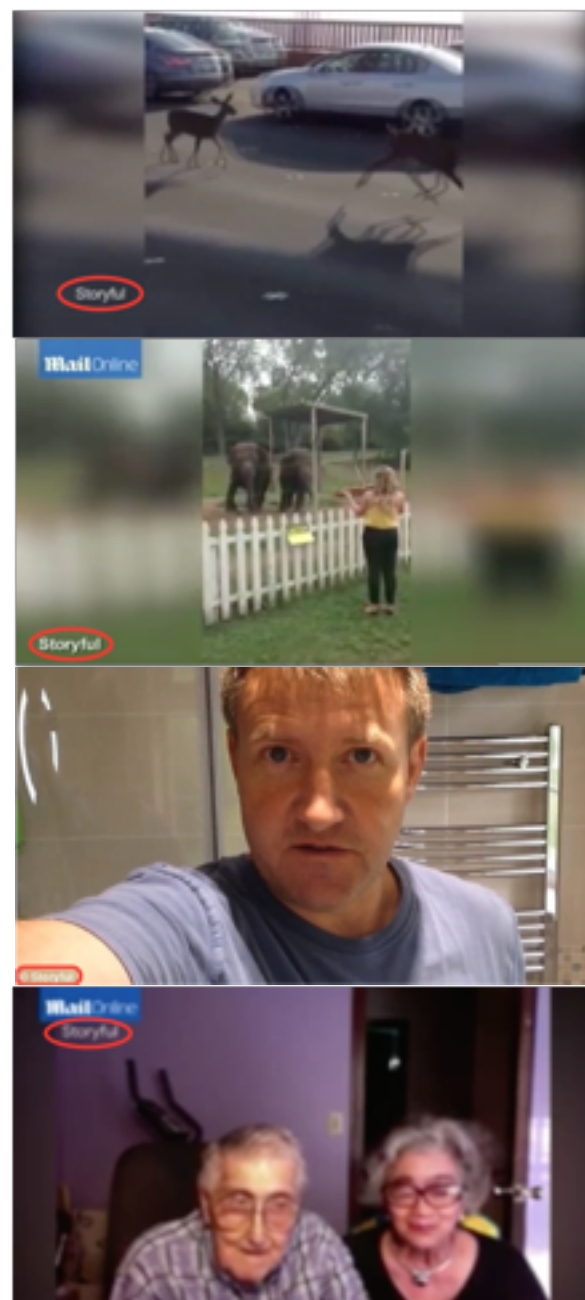
Overall, 37% of non-embedded content was actively credited to an eyewitness, with the Guardian (69%) and New York Times (49%) appearing particularly conscientious in this area. Around one fifth of content was credited to another news organisation, usually an agency such as Reuters, AP or AFP (21%). This often involved content released by militant groups, some of which contained the group's logo (which could be viewed as a form of DIY credit).¹⁵

Figure 18: Proportion of non-embedded eyewitness media credited to an eyewitness



It should, however, be noted that there were also numerous instances in which content not related to ISIS or Syria was credited only to a news agency. In such instances it is unclear whether news agencies did not cite the original source in the dope sheets distributed with the content, or whether the newspapers (a) actively chose to only cite the news agency, or (b) did not pay due attention to the crediting information provided by the agency supplying the content. Either way, we would argue that improvements could be made here and eyewitnesses should always receive a named credit where desired.

Similarly, improvements could also be made in relation to the practice of attributing exclusive credits to social media platforms. This type of credit, which typically takes the form of "Video: YouTube" or "©Twitter"¹⁶ accounted for 6% of non-embedded content. This practice is undesirable because it means content creators do not receive due credit



Four videos published by the Mail and credited only to the news agency Storyful

for their photos and videos. Not only that but, like content attributed to news organisations, the credit is actively assigned to another party.

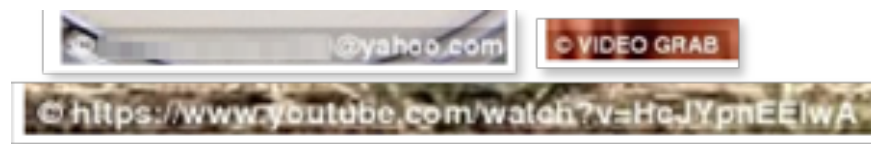


Captions attributing credit to YouTube in the Guardian (top) and Cairo Post (bottom)

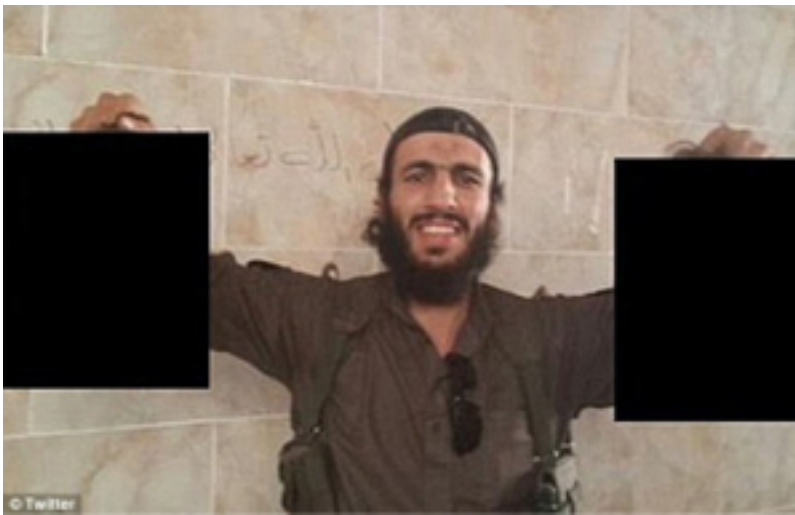
15. We acknowledge that the question of whether or not to name militant groups is a thorny issue. To clarify, the point raised is purely about giving the reader as much information about the original source of the content.

16. Through the course of this research we also encountered "source: internet" and "Image courtesy: Procured via Google search".

This practice is also problematic insofar as it may perpetuate the myth that platforms take ownership/copyright of content once it is posted online, fuelling the misconception among uploaders that their content is 'fair game' and that they have no control over its distribution.



Daily Mail credits attributing copyright to an email address, "Video grab" and a URL.



While some platforms may privately view this as a form of free advertising, caution should be exercised. Indeed, this may even be an issue about which the social platforms themselves seek to initiate change because it is not difficult to find examples where credits erroneously attributed to them may create unwelcome or damaging associations for their brands, e.g. when attached to particularly harrowing or gruesome content.

The first example on the left shows where ownership of a photo purporting to show a militant holding up two severed heads is attributed to Twitter through the credit © Twitter.



This second example is a still from a video showing a kitten being doused in petrol and set alight with copyright attributed to Facebook.

Regardless of whether content was credited or embedded, what this doesn't tell us is whether permission was sought. It is to this issue that we turn our attention in the next section, Eyewitness Stories.

A censored photo purportedly showing a militant holding up two severed heads (top), with copyright attributed to Twitter (Daily Mail) and (bottom) a still from a video showing a kitten being doused in petrol and set alight with copyright attributed to Facebook (Daily Mail)

emhub.co/research > [Recommendations for news outlets using eyewitness media](#)

#2

Take care to credit the eyewitness instead of social platforms or agencies, but never assume they will want to be named.

 Eyewitness Media Hub

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5

Part II: Eyewitness Stories

The headline figure from our content analysis of TV news output – and the finding that had most traction in newsrooms – was that just 16% of eyewitness media received an onscreen credit (Wardle et al., 2014b). A noted drawback of content analysis as a research method is that it can only describe manifest content, i.e. while it is a very powerful approach for quantifying what content is and is not present, it cannot answer deeper questions such as how or why it got there. Thus, when analysing quantitative data in isolation - such as that pertaining to the crediting of eyewitness media, for example - we can be forced to adopt somewhat simplistic positions in order to make sense of our findings, e.g.

- Credit = good;
- No credit = bad;

This is an entirely logical position from which to draw conclusions about crediting habits.

Legally and ethically, news organisations should be crediting content creators when using eyewitness media.

However, what a content analysis of eyewitness media cannot reveal is (a) whether permission had been given for the content to be used in the first place, or (b) whether the eyewitness wanted to be credited. Thus, to draw conclusions about news organisations' crediting habits, we are forced to put faith in their professional practices, give them the benefit of the doubt, and assume that all necessary permissions were secured before content was used.

Like crediting, the importance of permissions is something about which journalists claim to be acutely aware. As noted in our earlier research, "Broadcasters working outside the pressures of rolling news explained that obtaining permission from an uploader was mandatory before using content." (Wardle et al., 2014b: 64).

Permissions are also a critical part of gaining and retaining the trust of eyewitnesses – trust that will be key to developing the collaborative relationships necessary to thrive in this rapidly evolving area of journalism.

As one senior news manager put it, "Nine times out of 10 in the UGC space it's not about money, it's about attribution and permission." (Wardle et al., 2014b: 65).

This is why we feel it's time to move the conversation on. Through the course of this research, interactions with eyewitnesses have shone a light on a range of questionable practices in news outlets' use of eyewitness media.

emhub.co/research > Recommendations for news outlets using eyewitness media

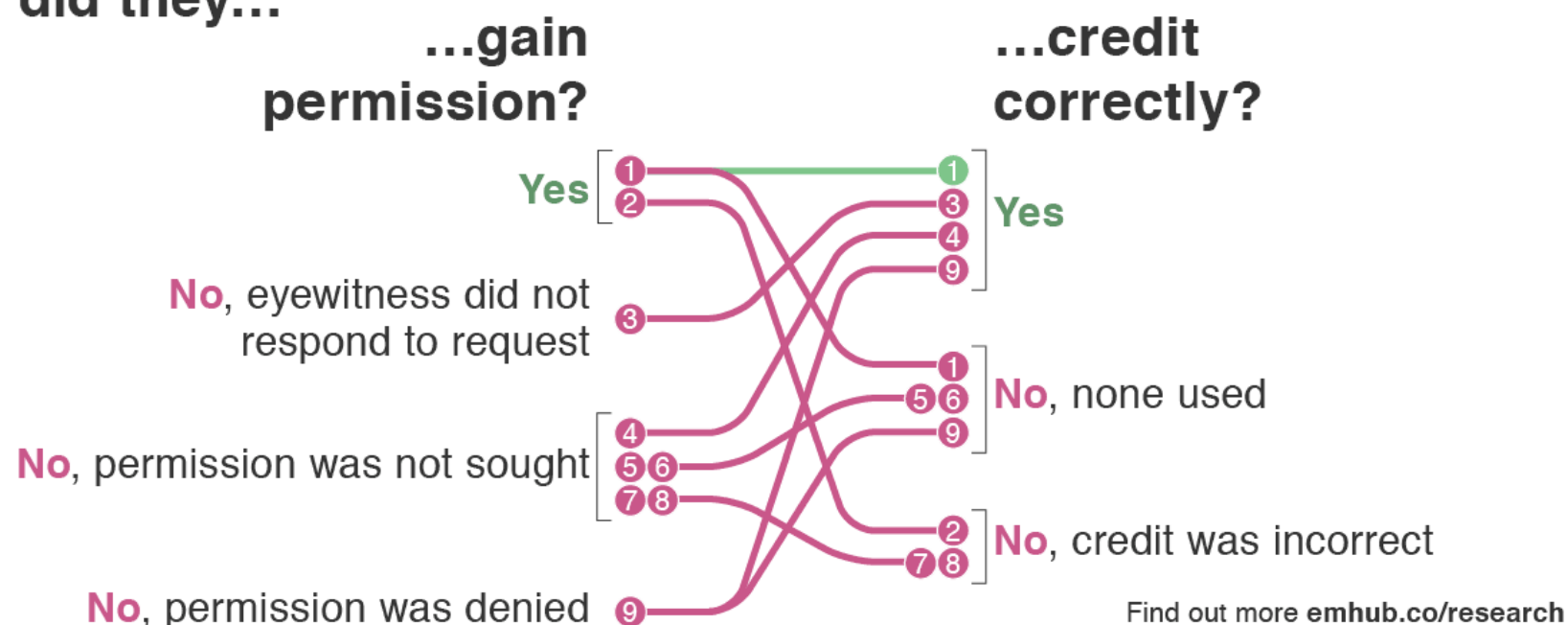
#1

Consider embedding instead of scraping from social platforms so the eyewitness can retain control of their content.

 Eyewitness Media Hub

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When online newspaper sites used eyewitness media, did they...



Focussing solely on eyewitness media found during our three-week coding period, we have come across instances of:

1. Permission being granted on the basis that the eyewitness be credited by name, only for the content to later be re-used without credit.
2. Credit for eyewitness media being solely attributed to a news agency, despite the agency providing full crediting information and stipulating it be displayed alongside the content.
3. Eyewitness media being used (with credit) without the eyewitness having responded to a permission request.¹⁷
4. Eyewitness media being used with credit, but without eyewitness permission being sought or given.
5. Eyewitness media being used without credit and without the eyewitnesses permission having been sought.
6. A YouTube video exclusively licensed through a news agency being scraped and used in a commercial player, without credit, by a news outlet that was not a client of the licensing agency.
7. Eyewitness media being used without permission having been sought and with ownership attributed to the wrong Twitter handle.
8. Credit for eyewitness media being solely attributed to a social media platform.
9. Eyewitness media being used both with and without credit despite the eyewitness declining permission requests.

It goes without saying that these findings are alarming – and the possible ramifications are various and far-reaching. In the following section, we present five detailed case studies covering some of the the problematic use cases outlined above, drawing upon the personal accounts of affected eyewitnesses where possible. Both collectively and individually these case studies highlight a range of issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed by those working with eyewitness media.

17. As of the date of our interaction with the eyewitness, exactly 20 weeks had passed since the page containing the content (a YouTube video which had been scraped and re-uploaded to the newspaper's own commercial player) had been published. The eyewitness told us he had not responded to the permission request because he had not noticed the message in his inbox.

1: The Pirouetting Buckingham Palace Guardsman (Clarín, Daily Mail and Guardian)

One of the stories found on multiple newspaper websites involved eyewitness footage of a guardsman pirouetting while on duty at Buckingham Palace. This video, in which a Grenadier Guard was caught entertaining onlookers by pirouetting and performing funny walks between the sentry box and the palace wall, was posted to YouTube by Andy Richards on 20 August 2014. The eyewitness subsequently licensed his video through Storyful, whose guidelines stipulated, “Clients must use the download button under the videos and provide an on-screen credit to the uploader”.

Clearance - LICENSED

Clients must have an agreement in place with Storyful to use these exclusively licensed videos.

Clients must use the download button under the videos and provide an on-screen credit to the uploader.

MRSS clients will receive this video via MRSS. Please see emails with the published link.

All other clients who do not have an agreement around Licensed content for use in broadcast and players should contact licensing@Storyful.com.

Credit: YouTube/Andy Richards.

Crediting guidelines provided by Storyful stipulating that clients must cite the uploader and platform

Articles containing this video were found in both of the UK newspapers, the Daily Mail and the Guardian, as well as the Argentine tabloid Clarín. As well as demonstrating eyewitness media’s ability to transcend geographical borders, these newspapers’ handling of this single video also highlight some of the inconsistent ways in which eyewitness media is credited and used by different news outlets.

Daily Mail

The guardsman footage was found in three pages in the Daily Mail – two news articles and a video page. The first occurrence, headlined 'The pirouetting Palace guardsman: Soldier captured on video showing off his dance moves to delighted tourists (but top brass aren't so impressed)', was found on 3 September 2014, when news emerged that the video had gone viral and that the Ministry of Defence had launched an internal investigation.

Contained within the Daily Mail’s own commercial player (which facilitated the playback of a 30-second pre-roll ad) was a 90-second edit of the original video with a full credit added by the newspaper as per Storyful's requirements:

YouTube - Andy Richards.



grim military prison: British soldier's superiors left "livid" by dance stunt', contained the same embedded video and the same four screen grabs. This time, however, all four screen grabs carried a credit attributing copyright to the platform: ©You Tube (sic).

Scroll down for video



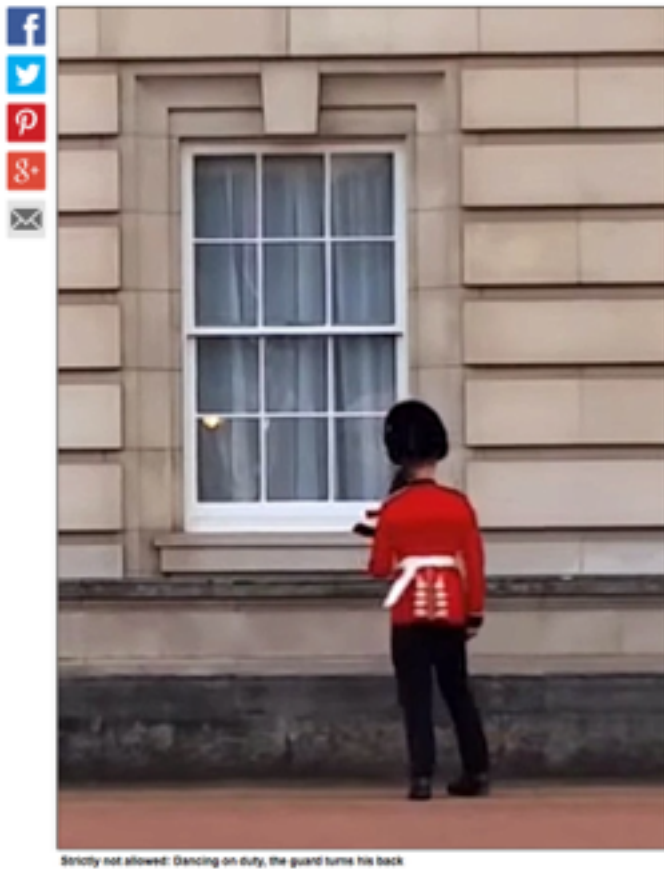
The Grenadier Guardsman who broke strict rules by dancing on parade outside Buckingham Palace is potentially facing a 21-day prison sentence and a £1,000 fine

Two of four screen grabs published by the Mail with copyright attributed to YouTube

The above practices of either not crediting screen grabs, or of crediting them to a platform, appear to be a product of uncertainty rather than in-house policy because the data gathered for this study identified 100 instances of video screen grabs receiving a full credit (i.e. uploader and platform) in the Daily Mail, such as in this example below: © Andi Dzilums/YouTube.

Viral video in the Daily Mail's in-house commercial player with credit added by the newspaper as per the requirements of the licensing news agency

In addition to the edited video, the article also contained four screen grabs, none of which carried a credit. All four contained buttons through which readers could share the image via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ or email in order to draw friends to the Daily Mail's site.



A shareable, uncredited screen grab published by the Daily Mail

The later story, published on 13 September under the headline 'Pirouetting palace guardsman faces three weeks in



A screen grab from a video with a full credit in the Daily Mail

The Guardian

Similar inconsistencies were evident in the Guardian. The first day on which the story was found on the Guardian's home page was 3 September 2014, in a Press Association-bylined article headlined 'Army investigates Buckingham Palace guard who put on a show for tourists'. In this instance, the Guardian's approach and crediting practice was identical to that of the Mail. The story was decorated with a screen grab from the original video which was credited only to the platform: "Photograph: YouTube". Further down the page, the original video was embedded via YouTube.



A screen grab in the Guardian credited only to YouTube

Two days later, the same paper featured the video as part of its viral video chart ('Viral video chart: Grenadier Guards, swatting and selfies', Guardian, 5 September 2014). On this occasion the full video was published (as opposed to a screenshot). Unlike the Daily Mail, the Guardian chose to embed directly from YouTube, but still credited only the platform, citing "Source: YouTube".

This practice has been criticised before. Mark Little, founder of Storyful, for example, has argued that crediting only a social platform (e.g. "Source: YouTube") is no more logical or informative than citing "Source: Telephone" – or in the case of the Daily Mail, ©Telephone. Youtube, Twitter, Facebook et

al. are platforms; they are not content creators. Broadly speaking, the same principle applies when dealing with copyright ownership.

Copyright does not belong to the social networks.



■ A guardsman outside Buckingham Palace gets creative. Source: YouTube

A video embedded into a Guardian article and credited only to YouTube

Clarín

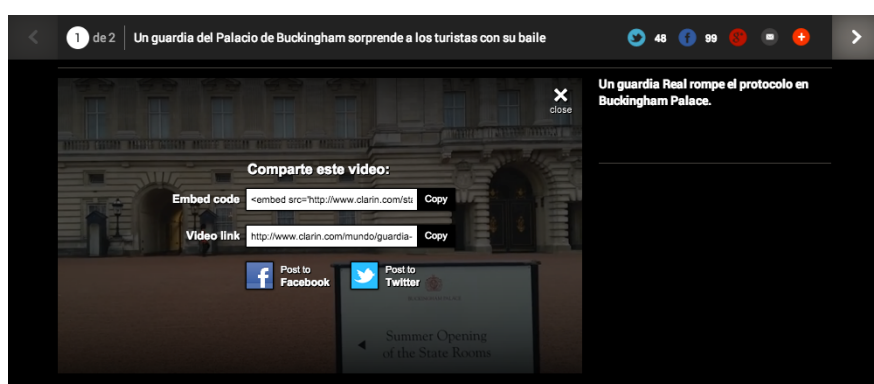
Demonstrating the ability of valuable eyewitness media to transcend geographical boundaries, the Buckingham Palace guardsman video was also picked up by the Argentine tabloid Clarín ('Un guardia del Palacio de Buckingham sorprende a los turistas con su baile', Clarín, 3 September 2014). The story also featured prominently on Clarín's homepage on both the 5th and 6th of September.

Immediately below Clarín's headline was an uncredited screen grab from the video with a play button in the top right corner. When clicked, this button launched a modal containing two items: (1) a scraped version of the original 3:23 video, hosted inside Clarín's own player and preceded by an unskippable 30-second advert; and (2) a screen grab taken from the video. Neither the video nor the screen grab carried any kind of credit to acknowledge the eyewitness or indeed the platform. (The translation of the description accompanying both items is, "A Royal Guard breaks the protocol at Buckingham Palace.")



A screen grab published without credit by the Argentine tabloid Clarín

What's more, the video offered options to share or embed Clarín's scraped version of the video – a practice that aids the undesirable and unethical practice of disseminating scraped, uncredited content and ensures that credit and any revenue generated from pre-roll ads or video plays are withheld from the original content creator and redirected to the news organisation.



Screenshots from Clarín showing an uncredited video with sharing options

Clarín is not a client of Storyful, the news agency that exclusively licensed the Buckingham Palace guard video. However, this does not mean that Andy Richards' video was inaccessible to them; the paper could have

embedded the content directly from Mr Richards' YouTube page, as did the Guardian. That Clarín opted not to do this is concerning, not least because it suggests that parts of the news industry may be complicit in perpetuating the unethical practice of scraping and re-uploading eyewitness media as if it were their own.

This is a known problem on YouTube. However, YouTube has taken steps to tackle it, providing a webform through which uploaders can submit copyright infringement notifications and request that scraped duplicates of their videos are removed from the company's servers.

YouTube has a Content ID system which alerts rights-owners when copies of their videos are uploaded.¹⁸

Therefore, if the Buckingham Palace guardsman video was scraped and re-uploaded to YouTube then the licensing agency (Storyful, in this case) would be alerted and could issue a take down notice due to copyright infringement. Unfortunately, however, this process is not as straightforward when dealing with scrapes on other websites, highlighting just how difficult it is for eyewitnesses or licensing agencies to keep track of content.

More generally, the Buckingham Palace guard case study highlights the inconsistent treatment given to eyewitness media. From our small sample of eight newspaper websites, we came across this same piece of eyewitness media in six articles published by three different newspapers based in two different countries on opposite sides of the world. In these articles we have found:

- 11 inadequately credited screenshots – six of which went entirely uncredited (four in the Daily Mail; two in Clarín) and five that were credited only to YouTube (four in a Daily Mail article, one in the Guardian).
- An embedded video credited only to YouTube (in the Guardian).
- An entirely uncredited video contained within a newspaper's own commercial player (in Clarín).

Examining these various use cases, it is noteworthy that only

18. This functionality is currently only available to YouTube partners, but given the frequency with which newsworthy content is scraped and re-uploaded to the platform a case could surely be made for rolling it out more widely.

the video hosted in the Daily Mail's player displayed the name of the content creator, Andy Richards. In the pages of Clarín and the Guardian, and in the copy of the two Daily Mail articles, Mr Richards' name was conspicuous by its absence. Having been excluded from the text of the stories, and the credits attached to screenshots and embedded videos, some of which were credited only to YouTube, the only way a reader would be able to identify the content creator (without visiting the original YouTube page) would be to watch the video in the Daily Mail's player.

If the content creator had wanted a credit to travel with his video, it may have been advisable for him to burn his name onto the original video (ensuring a credit remained visible in scraped videos and screenshots) and/or insert his name into the title of his YouTube post (making a named credit visible when the video is embedded, as was the case in the Guardian). The former tends to be unpopular with journalists, but some news outlets' failure to give due credit may leave eyewitnesses with little choice.

Points raised by this case study:

- The above examples illustrate the inconsistent ways through which the same eyewitness media can be credited by different news outlets.
- There is uncertainty about how to credit screen grabs from videos; newspapers in this case study either credited the platform (YouTube) or left the image uncredited. There were no examples of the eyewitness receiving credit for screen grabs taken from his video.
- News outlets that embed eyewitness media via a platform and wish to ensure copyright holders are credited should endeavour to add named credits in captions where necessary (see below, for an example from the New York Times).
- Eyewitnesses may need to be proactive if they wish to ensure a named credit travels with their content. For example, they could credit themselves in the title of YouTube videos or watermark their content – the latter is functionality the networks could bake into their platforms.
- Some news outlets may be perpetuating the unethical practice of scraping eyewitness media and re-uploading it as if it were their own.



A YouTube video embedded into a New York Times article with a credit to the uploader actively inserted into the caption

2. Redfoo assault photo scraped without permission (Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Mail)

While socialising at the Golden Sheaf Hotel in Double Bay, New South Wales, Australia, Maddy Campbell (also known as Mawdy Cyrus) and a friend were invited into the venue's VIP lounge by Stefan Gordy AKA Redfoo, a musician, dancer and DJ known for being a judge on X Factor Australia. During the evening, Campbell posted a photo to her Instagram account in which Redfoo was visible in the background, '@' mentioning both her companion and Redfoo himself, "Just met redfoo #VIP #nohateplez".

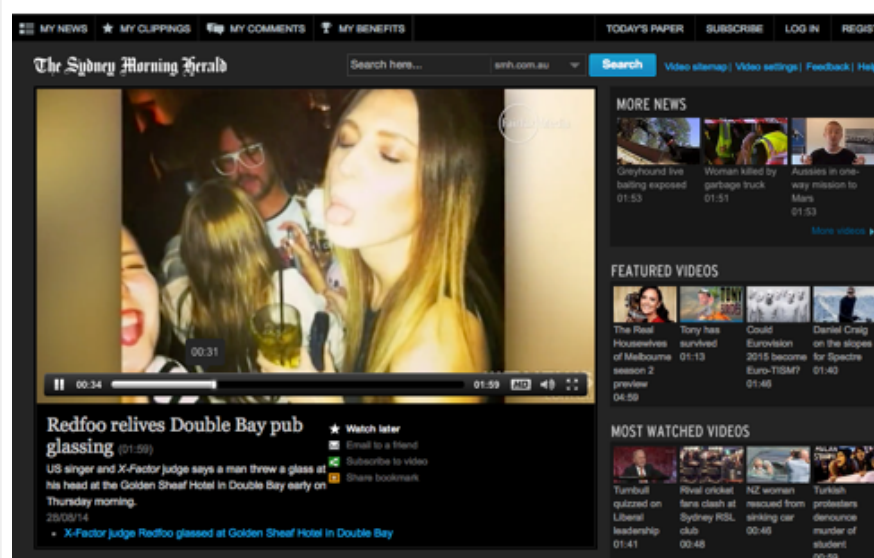
Later in the night, events took a dark turn when Redfoo was struck on the head and wounded by a bottle deliberately thrown by another patron of the bar. News of this violent attack on an international celebrity quickly spread and journalists began contacting Ms Campbell for an eyewitness account and permission to use her photo. One wrote, "I am a reporter with 9 news – we were hoping to be able to put [the uploader's photos] in our story" before providing an email address. Ms Campbell replied, "Ok! Don't think I will send any, sorry!"

According to the uploader, no news outlets were given permission to use her photo.

She said: "I didn't grant permission to any [news outlets]. They took it from my Instagram page. I did however get asked to send other photos to several media companies but declined" (emphasis added). Despite this refusal – a point she reiterated on Instagram during correspondence with a member of Redfoo's entourage shortly after the event ("I didn't send this photo out either btw they stole it from my insta . I woke up this morning and it was on 9 news @farmboxq") – Ms Campbell's image was used by various news outlets around the world, including two of the websites included in this study, the Sydney Morning Herald ('[X-Factor judge Redfoo glassed at Golden Sheaf Hotel in Double Bay](#)', 28 August 2014) and the Daily Mail ('[The shocking moment X Factor judge and rock star Redfoo was glassed in the face by a 'jealous' thug as he partied with girls in the roped-off VIP section of a Sydney hotel](#)', 27 August 2014). (News of the attack was also found in [the Guardian](#), but no eyewitness media was used in their article.)



Maddy Campbell's photo in a Nine News video report published at the top of the Sydney Morning Herald article



The same report on a standalone video page



Maddy Campbell's photo embedded into the Sydney Morning Herald article via her Instagram page



Maddy Campbell's photo in the Daily Mail article (credit highlighted in red)

Discussing the unsanctioned use of her photo, Ms. Campbell described to me her grievances with news outlets that had taken her content nefariously: *"I was really annoyed[.] I literally woke up in the morning and I was all over the news. I just felt like they didn't have the right to take it. Also it could have looked like I sent the photo in which is super embarrassing because I didn't. #cringeworthy"* (emphasis added).

News outlets covering the story may have taken the view that permission was not required due to a fair dealing exception in copyright law that exists for news reporting.

This, however, is secondary to this discussion, which highlights the negative impact that unwanted and unexpected exposure can have on an unwitting eyewitness. As such, the above response is revealing about the possible distress that the unsanctioned use of eyewitness media can cause. Ms. Campbell described a feeling of violation from seeing news outlets use her content (which shows her face) without permission. She also expressed annoyance and embarrassment that she personally was *"all over the news"*, an unwanted association having been created between her and an unpleasant high profile event, against her will and against her wishes.

Mistakenly believing her content to be 'fair game' (a misconception shared by other eyewitnesses interviewed for this research), Maddy Campbell described feeling powerless to stop the use of content because she was of the belief that the impetus was on her to hide her content rather than on news outlets not to use it without permission:

"I was actually considering suing but couldn't be bothered. Apparently because my Instagram isn't private they have the right to use it without permission which sucks!"

This, of course, is not the case (unless content is embedded) and the implications of this response, and others like it, are two-fold. First, more needs to be done to educate eyewitnesses about their rights. Second, news organisations need to heed the warning that they may soon face legal challenges over alleged infringement of copyright if practices do not improve.

The table below details how Maddy Campbell's photo was used by the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily Mail.

No.	Newspaper	Media Usage	Credit
1	<i>Sydney Morning Herald (1)</i>	Photo in video at top of the page (produced by Fairfax stablemate Nine News).	Uncredited
2	<i>Sydney Morning Herald (2)</i>	Embedded into article via Instagram	Visible on embed
3	<i>Daily Mail</i>	Scraped photo inserted into story	Copyright attributed to uploader's Instagram handle: © Instagram/MaddyCyrus (<i>sic</i>)

This highlights the ease with which control of eyewitness media can be wrestled away from uploaders. Once Ms Campbell's photo had been scraped from her Instagram page, she was all but powerless to control its use in two of the three use cases above (no.1 and no.3). Even if she had resorted to (a) removing her photo from Instagram or (b) making her profile private, she would have achieved only limited success in terms of stemming the recirculation of her content.

In terms of the case studies outlined above, only the image embedded into the Sydney Morning Herald article would have been affected; the Nine News video in the Sydney Morning Herald article and the image in the Daily Mail both would have remained intact.

Had she wanted to request the removal of her photo from these articles, Ms Campbell would have been forced to go through the arduous, time-consuming task of contacting each site individually.

Even then, with multiple news organisations having used her content without permission, it would be a challenging task to identify every instance of its use – particularly if she was not familiar with image searching facilities such as Google Images and TinEye. This, of course, would not be possible with television coverage or printed publications. And even so, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this kind of time-consuming detective work should not be imposed upon an uploader who has made no attempt to encourage the publication of her photo.

Ignoring for a moment the uncredited use in the Nine News video (the only use case that would normally cause alarm bells if we were solely reliant on a content analysis and did not know the background to this case), it is worth considering the usage and crediting of the other two examples outlined above. The Daily Mail article contained a full credit, attempting to attribute copyright to the content creator's Instagram handle: ©Instagram/MaddyCyrus (this should have been MawdyCyrus).

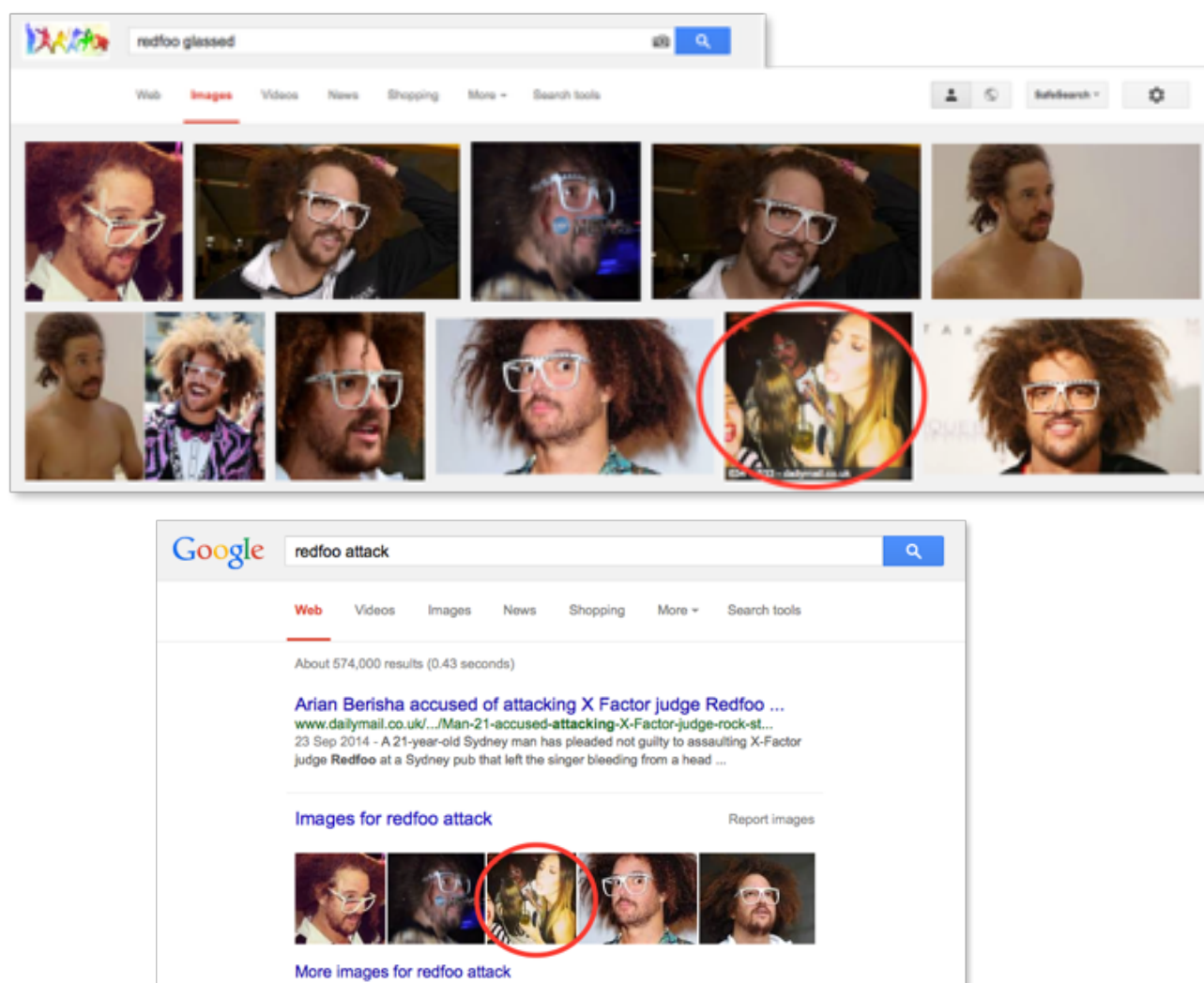
Typically, in a situation where informed consent had been secured, a full credit such as this would be commendable. In these circumstances, however, where the uploader had refused permission and did not want the attention or embarrassment of having her social media handle published in connection with this high profile news story, it is not. Indeed, the credit is of little consolation as Ms Campbell did not want her photo to be used by the news media and was upset and inconvenienced by the prospect of receiving negative attention due to its ongoing (re)circulation. As such, this represents a useful example of why news organisations, themselves sketchy about best practice in this area, should not assume that all content is fair game or that

eyewitnesses will be happy for their content to be published in return for a credit. It also highlights the riskiness of assuming that clearance to use eyewitness media will always be forthcoming, a justification sometimes used for running particularly compelling content without permission during high-pressure breaking news situations (Wardle et al., 2014b: 70).

Additionally, some journalists have spoken favourably of a system alerting uploaders when their content is embedded (Wardle et al., 2014b: 64-65). This case study is also therefore an example of a time when such a system may have been beneficial because, having decided she did not wish for her photo to become news fodder, an alert system would have given Ms Campbell an opportunity to take evasive action (e.g. lock her Instagram account or remove the photo¹⁹).

As a final point, this case study also demonstrates that the lifespan of a piece of eyewitness media – its digital footprint – can extend far beyond its initial usage (e.g. in the initial breaking news situation). More than two months after the incident at the Golden Sheaf Hotel, Ms Campbell was informed by a friend that her photo was again being used by the news media – this time in a more general article about nightlife and safety in the Double Bay Area published by the Wentworth Courier, a regional subsidiary of the Australian Daily Telegraph. She replied, “Hahaha is it in the news again?!”, then, “Hahaha oh god, not sure why they keep using it! So embarrassing! Haha” (emphasis added).

Additionally, Ms Campbell’s photo is among the first returned in Google searches for “Redfoo glassed” and “Redfoo attack”. Thus, through no fault of her own, Maddy Campbell's name and photo remain strongly associated with this violent event.



Google searches prominently displaying Maddy Campbell’s image (taken on 14 February 2015)

19. Of course we cannot assume that uploaders are necessarily aware that these actions will stop their content from being published. Education is likely to be needed in this area.

Points raised by this case study:

- News outlets may be lifting eyewitness media without permission or even publishing when permission has been refused, leaving them open to copyright complaints.
- Ms Campbell viewed the unauthorised publication of her photo as theft and would have considered action had she been suitably informed about her rights.
- There is a demonstrable lack of awareness about rights: Ms Campbell believed that a public profile made her content fair game and open for use beyond her control.

It could be argued that it is this very lack of awareness that is being exploited by some news organisations

- More needs to be done to inform eyewitnesses about their rights and entitlement to retain control of their content. This responsibility could be taken on by the social networks themselves and/or other stakeholders (e.g. educational bodies).
- News organisations should be aware that eyewitness media taken without permission can cause distress to the eyewitness. Ms Campbell felt embarrassment at the ongoing recirculation of her photo and anxious that people may assume she had actively sought publicity for her photo when in fact the opposite was true.

This embarrassment and anxiety was a direct product of the news industry's actions and Ms Campbell felt helpless to stop to it.

- More could be done to inform eyewitnesses when their content is embedded, either manually (e.g. asking for prior permission) or automatically (e.g. functionality built into social network platforms). This remains "a difficult space" (Wardle et al., 2014b: 64)
- Journalists should not assume that eyewitnesses will always give permission for their content to be published or that they will automatically be happy for it to be used in exchange for a credit.
- Eyewitnesses and news organisations alike should remember that the digital footprint left by the publication of eyewitness media can extend far beyond the initial breaking news period.

In this instance, Ms Campbell did not give permission for her photo to be used, yet it was still appearing in online news articles and Google searches long after the original event.

- In cases where permission is granted, news organisations should be clear with eyewitnesses about their distribution and syndication policies.
- The above arguments are no less relevant because they were derived from a celebrity case study. In fact, the content of the individual photo is of minimal relevance because, (a) they still relate to an upsetting assault on a man in a public space, (b) many of the same criteria – eyewitness not wanting their content to be shared by the news media, eyewitness experiencing embarrassment/anxiety/unwanted attention as a result of news organisations sharing their content, eyewitness losing control of their content as a result of widespread scraping, etc. – could very easily be applied to any number of scenarios.

3. Photo of the BBC Scotland march re-used without credit (Daily Mail)

In the week leading up to the vote on Scottish independence a march was held outside the Glasgow offices of BBC Scotland by a group protesting against the corporation's coverage of the referendum. News of the march was reported in the Daily Mail with a mixture of eyewitness media and agency photos ('Police guard on BBC's Scottish headquarters as hundreds of nationalists descend on studio to protest against "biased referendum coverage"', Daily Mail, 14 September 2014). One of the images used in the article was sourced via Twitter user Julie Arbuckle, who was present at the march and had posted a photo with the tweet, "Crowd singing 'where's your cameras BBC?' #indy-ref glasgow".

Ms Arbuckle was approached via Twitter by the Daily Mail's picture desk, who tweeted, "@joolzarbuckle [we] would like to use your protest image outside BBC Glasgow on the MailOnline". She replied, "yes - but please refence (sic) me as photographer".



Twitter user Julie Arbuckle permitting MailOnline to use her photo in return for a credit

When the resulting article was published online, Ms Arbuckle's photo was used and credited as requested, with copyright attributed to her as the named photographer and Twitter cited as the paper's source: ©Julie Arbuckle/Twitter.



Julie Arbuckle's photo as it appeared on the Daily Mail website on 14 September 2014

The following day, the Mail published a follow-up story, which again featured Ms Arbuckle's photo ('Nationalists brand BBC's Nick Robinson "a liar" as thousands protest at corporation's "biased" coverage on referendum', Daily Mail, 15 September 2014). This time, however, there was no sign of the credit she had stipulated when permitting its original use. Instead, the caption below the photo read, "Anger: Scottish nationalists believe the BBC has given a one-sided view of the debate".



Julie Arbuckle's photo as it appeared on MailOnline on 15 September 2014, without credit

A number of important points are raised by this use case.

a) Misuse of content by news outlets may deter eyewitnesses from sharing newsworthy content in future

In this instance, Julie Arbuckle was unhappy that her photo had been re-used without credit. Describing her feelings about the situation, Ms Arbuckle, an artist by profession, showed awareness that the content remained hers and made a telling reference to the unlawful reproduction of professional artwork:

“I do not consider any content I post to be ‘fair game’ once it has been posted online. It remains my property and belongs to me. If my paintings were to be reproduced without credit or a link to my website I would take action against the publisher. (This is becoming an increasing problem for artists, for example with companies in China stealing images to use and sell reproductions without permission).”

This should ring alarm bells for any news outlets taking unethical shortcuts when using eyewitness media. Responses such as this, and that of Maddy Campbell, author of the Redfoo photo, suggest that eyewitnesses may have an appetite to fight their corner when they feel their content has been exploited.

This is not the only potentially damaging consequence of which news organisations should take heed. There is also a very real possibility that eyewitnesses – stung by the unethical (mis)use of their own content, or conscious of the frequency with which other people’s photos and video are being treated as free content – may refuse to share newsworthy content in future. As Julie Arbuckle put it,

“I do not like the fact that my image has been re-used without my credit, but I am not surprised. With hindsight, I probably would refuse if asked again. But then someone else’s image would have been chosen” (emphasis added).

The lesson here is that the unethical clamour for short-term gains may have much more damaging consequences in the longer term.

b) Eyewitnesses care about how their content will be used

In addition to feeling aggrieved that her content had been re-used without credit, Ms Arbuckle was also disappointed about the context in which her photo was used. This can be a tricky dilemma for eyewitnesses when debating whether or not to share content with the news media.

Julie Arbuckle described having a ‘moral crisis’ about whether to share her image in the first instance but concluded that the end justified the means:

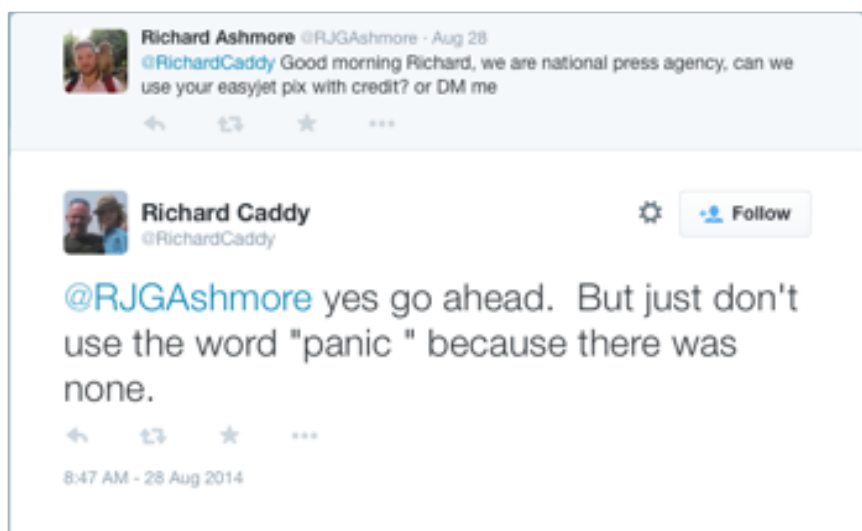
“When I was asked by them [MailOnline] via Twitter for permission to use it [the photo] I had a moral crisis... and I asked my friends what they thought. We decided that with the almost total lack of mainstream media coverage of the march, it was better to have it ‘out there’ than not at all. It is for that reason alone I granted permission.”

However, regarding the later use, she said, *“I do not like the context in which it was used subsequently... referring to it depicting an image of a ‘mob’ demanding Nick Robinson’s resignation - that was NOT the purpose of the march... but I suppose once I had agreed to let them use it, even if they had credited me, I was powerless over the context in which [it] would be used.”*

As the above quotes highlight, some eyewitnesses care about how their content is used. As such Julie Arbuckle’s account acts as a reminder that we should not think about eyewitnesses in overly simplistic terms, e.g. that they just want their photos to be seen by a large audience. As demonstrated by the Redfoo example, wherein the uploader did not want her photo to be used because she didn’t want people to think she had actively sent it in or was courting infamy or financial gain, eyewitnesses give consideration to how they as individuals may be perceived if they appear complicit in the reporting of a particular incident or the perceived forwarding of a ‘media agenda’.

Additional examples of this were evident elsewhere in this study. For instance, when an EasyJet flight from Liverpool to Naples was forced to make an emergency landing at Gatwick Airport after smoke was detected in the cockpit, Twitter user @RichardCaddy, a passenger on the flight,

responded to Caters News Agency's request to distribute his photos by saying: "yes go ahead. But just don't use the word 'panic' because there was none."



An eyewitness hoping to retain control of the context in which his photographs were used

c) Exposure to a wider audience can bring unwanted attention

One reason why context can be such an important consideration for eyewitnesses is that the added exposure brought by sharing content with a news website can result in them being subjected to 'trolling' or other forms of abuse. This was something experienced by Julie Arbuckle, who said:

"From posting this photo alone, I received some unwanted communication through Twitter, with people assuming I was a 'CyberNat' when really all I did was document an occurrence"

Having received this unwanted communication, Ms Arbuckle expressed regret that her content had not been embedded directly from her Twitter page. While embedding does have its drawbacks (discussed in the next section), in this instance it may have been beneficial, e.g. it would have allowed the eyewitness to delete the photo or make her profile private as soon as she started receiving unwanted attention, thereby reducing the chances of receiving further abuse; while unlikely, it may have deterred potential trolls from posting abuse if they could see to see the eyewitnesses photo in the context of her other posts (i.e. that she was not a vociferous 'CyberNat').²⁰

d) It's time to think about permissions beyond initial usage

As with many of the eyewitnesses contacted for this research, Julie Arbuckle was unaware of exactly where her content had been used. Discussing this matter, she stated,

"I think people should be alerted when their content/media is used and re-used by organisations" (emphasis added).

This issue around the re-use of eyewitness media is important because it suggests some uploaders may wish to maintain a modicum of control over when, where and how their photos and videos are being published beyond initial usage. It has become commonplace to see journalists requesting permission to use eyewitness media through convoluted, technical sounding questions such as, "Can we and all domestic and international affiliates use this photo in perpetuity on all platforms and online?"

The wording of these standardised questions almost certainly come via lawyers or rights departments, but it is debatable whether eyewitnesses – who in some circumstances may be traumatised after witnessing a shocking or upsetting event – giving a simple "Yes, you can use my picture" on Twitter are truly aware of what they are agreeing to – or indeed whether any such agreement should be considered informed consent.

This is an area that requires improvement, and news organisations and social networks both have a role to play. For example, news organisations could be clearer with eyewitnesses about how they intend to use their content (e.g. one-off use; time-limited usage; archived for all future use; archived for future use pending further permission from the eyewitness, etc.).

For their part, social networks could aid eyewitnesses by developing functionality to simplify the process through which they manage their newsworthy content. This could allow them to grant permission for journalists to use their content for a pre-defined period of time and specify the organisations/titles to whom they grant permission of use, etc.

20. 'CyberNat' is a pejorative term used to describe online supporters of Scottish independence.

If nothing else, this would reduce the chances of eyewitnesses being bombarded with messages immediately after their content has been discovered.

e) Eyewitnesses may wish to be selective about the news outlets with whom they share their content

One of the points to take away from this case study is that eyewitnesses do not automatically want to share their content with all news outlets. As content owners, this is their prerogative.

Eyewitnesses may have reasons – moral, personal, or otherwise – for not wanting to share content with certain news organisations or titles.²¹

In this specific example, the eyewitness is not an advocate of the Daily Mail and would not normally share her content with that publication.

Journalists should be wary of automatically assuming that consent will always be forthcoming or that eyewitnesses will always be happy as long as they are credited.

She described a “moral crisis” and concluded that the ends (increased exposure for the cause she was supporting) justified the means, stating “*It is for that reason alone I granted permission*” (emphasis added). Thus, while on this specific occasion the eyewitness was willing to share her photo with the Mail, at other times she would not be, strengthening the argument made in Case Study 2.

Points raised by this case study:

- The crediting stipulations of eyewitnesses – which can be important to them – are not always adhered to in later usage.
- Misuse of eyewitness media by news outlets may make people less willing to share newsworthy content in future.
- It is the prerogative of the eyewitness to be selective about the outlets with whom they share their content.

It should not be assumed that (i) permission will always be forthcoming or (ii) eyewitnesses are always happy for content to be used in exchange for a credit.

- Some eyewitnesses care about the context in which their content will be used, not least because certain news angles can leave them vulnerable to personal attacks or other unwanted attention.
- Some eyewitnesses would like to know when, where and how their content is re-used in future.
- News organisations and social networks both have a role to play in simplifying the messy and confusing process through which eyewitnesses are approached for permissions and notified about the use of their content.

A global study of eyewitness media
in online newspapers: **Findings**

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#2

We should avoid assuming that eyewitnesses will automatically be satisfied with a credit or pleased to have their content reach a more sizeable audience.

 Eyewitness Media Hub

Supported by College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida, the Hugh Cunningham Professorship in Journalism Excellence and the John S. and James. L. Knight Foundation

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#3

The context in which an eyewitness media is presented can impact upon how they as individuals are viewed.

 Eyewitness Media Hub

Supported by College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida, the Hugh Cunningham Professorship in Journalism Excellence and the John S. and James. L. Knight Foundation

21. To take an obvious example, it is fair to assume that few people with links to Merseyside or Liverpool Football Club would want to share content with the Sun newspaper, for example. Elsewhere it is easy to find examples of eyewitnesses being selective about who they permit to use their content, accepting some while rejecting other with responses such as, “no thanks. I’d prefer not to have anything to do with your ‘newspaper’”

4. Aeroplane video used without credit or permission (Daily Mail)

On 12 September 2014, the Daily Mail reported on the publication of new figures comparing the amount of legroom provided to passengers by each of the British airlines ('The British airlines offering passengers the most legroom revealed ... with British Airways coming out on top (and Ryanair in THIRD place)', Daily Mail, 12 September 2014). Towards the top of the article, positioned prominently above the fold, was text inviting readers to "Scroll down for video".

The British airlines offering passengers the most legroom revealed ... with British Airways coming out on top (and Ryanair in THIRD place)

- Budget airline provides 30-34ins of legroom compared to easyJet's 29ins
- Figures revealed following a spate of air-rage incidents over space
- Ryanair recently announced plans to fit even more seats into new planes

By SIMON CABLE FOR MAILONLINE

PUBLISHED: 09:18, 12 September 2014 | UPDATED: 14:21, 15 September 2014



It is not an airline often associated with comfort.

So it will perhaps surprise some travellers to learn that Ryanair can actually lay claim to providing its passengers with more legroom than most of its rivals.

The budget airline's smallest seats were behind only British Airways and Aer Lingus in offering the most room among Britain's airlines.

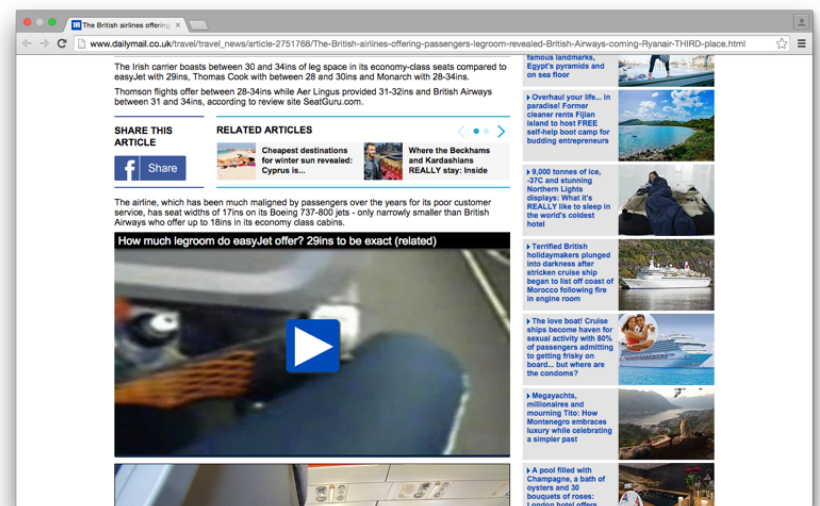
Scroll down for video

Text above the fold inviting readers to scroll down to view the scraped video (highlighted)

The only video in the article – tagged as 'related' and hosted in the Daily Mail's own commercial player – was titled 'How much legroom do easyJet offer? 29ins to be exact (related)'.

This video was sourced from YouTube. The original, titled 'Easyjet – NO leg room!', was uploaded by YouTube user @169pxn on 21 May 2012. During the 42-second clip, purportedly filmed aboard an EasyJet flight to Lisbon, the cameraman highlights the limited amount of legroom he has at his seat, contrasting his discomfort with the relative luxury of his 5' 4" tall travel partner, who is named as Sarah and whose face is shown in the video.

Far from being a viral sensation, this video had received 268 views as of 3 March 2015.



The same eyewitness media video in a Daily Mail article (top) and a standalone video page (bottom)

The version of @169pxn's video used in the Daily Mail article is entirely uncredited and no indication is given that it was sourced from YouTube. Not only that, but, according to the uploader, the Mail did not seek or receive permission to use the video, which is contained within the paper's commercial player and preceded by a 30-second advert. In the uploader's words,

"[I] had no idea it was on their website. [It] Was shot on [our] way to holiday. Should we have been asked permission by the Daily Mail?"

A particularly alarming aspect of this case study is the lack of knowledge the uploader had about his rights or the legality of news outlets using his content. In addition to querying whether the Mail should have sought permission to use his video, @169pxn asked: "Should they [the Daily Mail]

have paid for use of the video... or is YouTube content fair game?" Of course, we cannot generalise about the knowledge of all uploaders based on a handful of examples. But evidence that some uploaders are so patently unaware of their rights – that they may assume that anything posted online is ‘fair game’ and can be taken without permission – is cause for concern and serves only to re-emphasise how little education and awareness-raising has been done in this area. This is something that needs to be addressed, particularly if this lack of knowledge is being exploited by parts of the news industry and beyond.



Adverts playing before @169pnx's video

When compared to other cases of eyewitness media being taken without permission this example takes on an additional angle because, unlike content posted to Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, YouTube videos can generate direct revenue for the original content creator. Therefore, if @169pnx's video had been embedded into the Daily Mail article – thereby overcoming the issues of permission and credit, as per the terms of the standard YouTube licence through which the video was originally shared – he may have stood to receive revenue from each play of his video. Instead, however, having been scraped from YouTube and re-uploaded to the Daily Mail's own player, any revenue generated by the video (and the adverts

that preceded it) was kept by the news organisation, and the content creator, oblivious that his video had even been published outside YouTube, was left entirely unremunerated.

This case study also demonstrates the extent to which even content that is not immediately newsworthy – or even obviously newsworthy – is at risk of exploitation.

Far from being jaw-dropping footage of the immediate aftermath of a dramatic explosion or an extreme weather event, or even footage of a supremely talented cat, this was a short, largely unremarkable video that, in the uploader's own words, he and his travel partner "just took on holiday a couple of years ago". Yet it was still taken without permission and used without credit by one of the biggest online news outlets in the world. That it was a couple of years old, or not of interest or value to other news organisations is of little relevance. It became valuable at the point at which the Daily Mail thought it worthy of being scraped from YouTube, re-uploaded to their own player and embedded into a relevant article.

For the uploader's part he had done nothing wrong. He had posted his video to YouTube using the standard license, which permits content to be re-used via an embed code (the question of asking permission to embed will be discussed later). This arrangement is mutually beneficial: outside parties can use the content to add colour to their stories; content creators can generate revenue through the potential spike in plays brought about by the added exposure of appearing on a major news site. That this arrangement may be being abused is cause for concern and needs to be addressed.

Points raised by this case study:

- It provides an example of eyewitness media being used without permission or credit.
- It shines further light on uploaders' possible lack of awareness about their rights.
- It demonstrates how uploaders can be deprived of potential revenue when content is scraped without permission.
- It highlights the need for better education for uploaders.

5. Photo of the Forbes & Burton Cafe published without permission (Sydney Morning Herald)



Sign language: A poster attached to the outside of the cafe. Photo: @burrngerfeed

Early in our coding period, the Sydney Morning Herald reported on the closure of an inner-city cafe in Darlinghurst, Sydney, which had been boycotted by customers after the owner had refused to hire a black barista ('Darlinghurst cafe owner shuts his doors after refusing to hire black barista', 26 August 2014). Midway down the article was a photo of a hand-written sign said to have been attached to the door of the cafe, which read, "How dare you come here and tell us how to do racism, we've been practicing it since 1788, thank you very much". The caption below the image read, "Sign language: A poster attached to the outside of the cafe. Photo: @burrngerfeed".

The image in question was a cropped version of a photo posted a couple of days earlier by Twitter user @burrngerfeed with the tweet, "Yaaaaaas. Smart arse street art near 'that racist cafe' on Forbes and Burton Sts"

Twitter user @burrngerfeed's image as it appeared on the Sydney Morning Herald website

According to the uploader, the Sydney Morning Herald did not ask permission to use his photo in their reporting. This is noteworthy because the Herald's publication of @burrngerfeed's image brought him a variety of unwanted attention.

On 27 August, the day after the article's online publication, @burrngerfeed posted a screen grab of the article containing his photo alongside a tweet with an @ mention of the Sydney Morning Herald, "Since @smh [Sydney Morning Herald] used my pic in an article, I've all manner of racist trolls direct their fuckery my way. #infinityblock!"

Responding to a follower, he explained, "A: they searched, B: interact w me (evn DM), C: make illogical racist remarks + expect me to argue/agree? WhoTF r these ppl?"

@burrngerfeed's tweet, including an @ reply to the Sydney Morning Herald, describing the impact of the newspaper's use of his photo



This case study raises a number of issues around crediting and permissions. As the uploader put it:

“[I]n hindsight it would have been nice to have been asked whether I wanted to have my photo used, or my handle attributed, to this article”.

Unfortunately for @burrgerfeed, Australian copyright law is understood to provide broad copyright exceptions for news reporting that mean that permission is not always a legal requirement. However, this case study highlights why dialogue between the newspaper and the uploader is so crucial. In this instance, it would have given the uploader an opportunity to stipulate that he only be credited by his real name or anonymously – both of which would have made him harder to trace, thus reducing the chance of him becoming the target of abuse.

In the absence of any contact from the newspaper, the uploader was left oblivious that his photo had been scraped by the Herald and published alongside his Twitter handle, an action that left him exposed to unexpected attention and abuse. The uploader feels there was direct correlation between the Sydney Morning Herald’s publication of his photo and handle and the unwelcome attention he received. He said:

“I had some inflammatory [comments] directed my way [on Twitter] which I don’t think would have happened if the SMH [Sydney Morning Herald] hadn’t attributed the photo credit to my twitter handle... [W]hen the dreggs [sic] of Twitter chose to involve my handle in some nasty remarks, I knew it was because of my photo on the SMH [Sydney Morning Herald] article.”

Points raised by this case study:

- It is illustrative of how a culture of 'use now, secure permission and/or pay later' may be problematic.
- It demonstrates why news outlets cannot treat eyewitness media as fair game and assume eyewitnesses will automatically be satisfied with a credit.
- It shows why dialogue with eyewitnesses remains so vital.
- It highlights some of the negative outcomes to which news organisations can expose eyewitnesses through inconsiderate use of their content.

A global study of eyewitness media
in online newspapers: **Findings**

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#1

**Online news outlets
cannot afford to lose
sight of their duty of care
to the eyewitnesses
whose content they use.**

Reflecting on Eyewitness Stories

It is time to reopen the conversation about the ethics of embedding eyewitness media

Our data shows that with the odd exception – most notably the Guardian – the practice of embedding eyewitness media directly from social media networks is relatively rare among the news sites included in this study. This was a surprise, given the ease with which embed codes can be generated and implemented.

The practice of embedding has many positive qualities:

- It ensure that eyewitnesses receive credit and signals to the audience that the photo or video was found via the social web.
- It allows eyewitnesses to retain a modicum control of their content (e.g. if they receive unwelcome attention they can make their page private or delete the relevant content and it will no longer be visible);
- In the case of YouTube, it ensures that the original uploader is the recipient of any revenue generated by video plays.

For these reasons it would be tempting to argue that embeds should be used more frequently. This argument certainly has merit and embedding is unquestionably preferable to scraping. Again, however, there are certain nuances that need to be considered – particularly when it comes to permissions.

During interviews with people working in this space, “a number of journalists expressed disquiet about publishing someone’s Twitpic on their site via an embed code, since that person will not even know it has happened” (Wardle et al., 2014b: 64).

A case in point from this study is the photo taken by Maddy Campbell prior to the Redfoo incident in New South Wales

(see Case Study 2). The use of this photo by Nine News (without credit or permission, in a video report embedded into a report by Fairfax Media stablemate the Sydney Morning Herald) and the Daily Mail (scraped and used without permission) is indefensible. Its use in the body of the Sydney Morning Herald article, however, is more tricky.



Maddy Campbell’s photo of Redfoo embedded into the Sydney Morning Herald’s article via her Instagram

The Sydney Morning Herald report on the Redfoo incident contained an embed of Ms Campbell’s photo, sourced directly via her Instagram account. Typically, this approach would be applauded for the reasons outlined above. However, Ms Campbell made it clear that she did not want her photo to be used by the news media, describing herself as annoyed and embarrassed that it had been. In her words: “I just felt like they didn’t have the right to take it. Also it could have looked like I sent the photo in which is super embarrassing because I didn’t.”

As such, Maddy Campbell's case study is demonstrative of how eyewitnesses do not always want themselves or their content to be placed before the large audiences enjoyed by major news outlets. Had her permission been sought to embed her photo, she likely would have declined. Had she been warned that her content had been embedded she could have taken evasive action (e.g. making her page private or deleting her post). In the absence of a request for permission or a warning of its impending use, Ms Campbell was powerless to act, oblivious that her photo and profile had appeared in a page featured prominently on the homepage of the Sydney Morning Herald, one of the most popular Australian news websites on the internet.

Additionally, the added exposure brought by news websites can leave eyewitnesses open to trolling or other forms of abuse. This possibility was highlighted in this study by the cases of Julie Arbuckle, who received unwelcome attention from people believing her to be a 'CyberNat' after her photo of a rally at BBC Scotland was used by the Daily Mail (see Case Study 3), and @burrngerfeed, who received a variety of racist and homophobic comments after a photo of his was used by the Sydney Morning Herald (see Case Study 5). As the latter described, "*when the dreggs [sic] of Twitter chose to involve my handle in some nasty remarks, I knew it was because of my photo on the SMH [Sydney Morning Herald] article*".

An additional consideration when embedding without permission, therefore, is that embed codes typically provide a direct route for sending replies, thereby leaving eyewitnesses more exposed to possible abuse.

17 RETWEETS 19 FAVORITES



The reply button below an image embedded from Twitter (circled)

In our previous report we described debates around embedding, shrouded as they are by uncertainty and inconsistency, as a "difficult space" (Wardle et al., 2014b: 64). This remains the case. As with crediting, it is not as straightforward as saying that embedding is good and non-embedding is bad. It is far more nuanced than that. Embedding is certainly one of their more ethical

methods of utilising eyewitness media, particularly when the uploader receives due warning and has given permission.

Some will continue to argue that permission is not required to embed because (a) it is legal and (b) eyewitnesses retain the power to remove their content at source and/or make their pages private, thereby making any embed null and void. But should people who are otherwise happy for their content to be shared with their limited band of friends/followers be forced to remove memorable pictures from their profiles because of the actions of the news media? Should people that were otherwise content for their profiles to be publicly accessible be forced to adjust their privacy settings to protect themselves from unwanted attention? Is it fair that eyewitnesses could suddenly and unexpectedly be subjected to abuse or other unwanted attention as a result of their photos being misconstrued or recontextualised by a news website on the other side of the world? These are just a few of the questions that remain unanswered and which need to be addressed.

Eyewitnesses lack knowledge about their rights

There is a demonstrable lack of understanding among eyewitnesses about their rights and ability to retain control of their content. YouTube user @169pxn, who uploaded the video of himself and a companion aboard an Easyjet plane (Case Study 4), said, he "*had no idea it was on their [the Daily Mail's] website... Should we have been asked permission by the Daily Mail?*" In a later exchange, he asked, "*Should they have paid for use of the video... or is YouTube content fair game?*"

Another eyewitness we contacted, Melissa White, whose Instagram photo was taken without permission by the Daily Mail and other news organisations (including a print magazine), stated,

"I assume once you [post] on Instagram [your content] is free game"

Another Instagram user, whose image was also taken without permission, said,

"I understand when posting anything to the internet it's generally fair game and I am aware that this happens all the time."

Of course content posted to social networks is not “fair game”. But these comments shine a light on the level of uncertainty that exists among eyewitnesses. Many lack knowledge about their rights and about news organisations’ obligation to gain their permission before using eyewitness media.

Given the ease with which we found examples of eyewitness media being used without permission, it might be argued that it is precisely this lack of knowledge that is being exploited by some news organisations. The fact that some uploaders presume their content is “fair game” and observe that the use of eyewitness media without permission “happens all the time” implies that the behaviour of these news organisations have cultivated and, to some extent legitimised, a culture of taking content without consent.

This is disempowering for eyewitnesses and there is a clear need for someone – be it an educational body, a foundation, or the social networks themselves – to step in and educate eyewitnesses about their rights.

In the absence of any such educational initiatives it is likely that eyewitnesses will continue to be exploited – not least because, without definitive and accessible guidance about their rights, they are reliant on unreliable sources, hearsay and misinformation.

For example, Maddy Campbell (see Case Study 2) – who wanted to take action after her photo appeared on the websites of various news outlets, despite her refusal to give permission for its use – believed she was powerless to act because of the status of her privacy settings: “*Apparently because my Instagram isn’t private they [news outlets] have the right to use it without permission[,] which sucks!*” In other words, she believed that it was her fault that her content had been taken without her permission. This is a situation that urgently needs to be addressed.

The ramifications for using eyewitness media without credit or permission are not just legal or financial: news organisations are risking their reputations and the trust of eyewitnesses.

News organisations that continue to use eyewitness media without permission or without giving due credit should be braced for legal challenges. However, it would be short-sighted to assume the potential ramifications of such practices are purely financial. At a time when news

organisations should be seeking to develop strong relationships and build their reputations in this emerging and rapidly evolving space, the kind of questionable, unethical practices outlined in this study could do considerable long-term damage.

During our interviews with journalists, an editor of a UK news website enthused: “*That’s the great thing about digital. It’s much more collaborative because you can embed content, you have photo expansion via Twitter embeds, that sort of thing. It actually allows you to use a lot more UGC in a much more natural way*” (Wardle et al., 2014b: 91).

The case studies discussed above highlight how and why some news organisations are seriously jeopardising their chances of building collaborative relationships with eyewitnesses.

Some eyewitnesses spoke of the “theft” and plagiarism of their content.

Having been stung by news organisations’ failure to ask permission to use eyewitness media and/or give due credit (where desired), others discussed how they may be less willing to share newsworthy content in future.

As Julie Arbuckle, uploader of the BBC Scotland protest photo, put it, “*I do not like the fact that my image has been re-used without my credit, but I am not surprised. With hindsight, I probably would refuse [to give permission for my content to be used] if asked again. But then someone else’s image would have been chosen*” (emphasis added). Another eyewitness said, “*Next time I spy a celebrity I might have to contact a publicist and get paid for the pics first! And not be so quick to post on IG [Instagram]!*” (emphasis added).

In some regards the latter response is particularly troubling as it highlights that the inconsiderate actions of journalists actions could affect the way in which people engage with social networks and share their content more generally, i.e. they may resist sharing photos and videos with their social media followers/friends through fear that they will be repurposed by journalists without permission/credit. Similarly, they may decide to limit their content to smaller, more private networks, e.g. closed Facebook groups or private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp. As such, this point further highlights why this is an issue that affects social networks and not something to which they can afford to turn a blind eye.

6

Conclusion

Conclusions from part I:

Quantitative data from newspaper website study

It was never the objective of this research to make generalisations about use of eyewitness media across all online newspapers. That is not possible from a small qualitative sample of eight titles. Rather, we wanted to broaden our understanding of how some of the most popular online newspaper sites have adapted to incorporate this content into their output.

On that note, the most rudimentary (but noteworthy) finding was that all eight sites used eyewitness media, and they did so to cover an extraordinarily wide range of topics and stories.

While traces of eyewitness media were found on every site, levels of usage and individual use cases varied greatly between titles.

Thus, while it may be tempting to focus on headline grabbing figures about the average frequency with which eyewitness media appeared on the high usage websites (i.e. 1 item per 2.4 articles in the Guardian; 1 per 3.6 articles in the Daily Mail; 1 per 6.1 articles in the New York Times, etc.), this could be misleading and create an inaccurate perception of the varied and at times creative ways through these newspapers have incorporated eyewitness media into their digital output.

In the cases of the Guardian, Daily Mail and New York Times, the high amount of eyewitness media could often be attributed to highly concentrated use in a relatively small number of articles, e.g. GuardianWitness galleries in the Guardian, articles containing numerous screenshots from

videos in the Daily Mail, ISIS clips edited together in detailed video packages in the New York Times.

Given the markedly different ways in which the sites in this study used eyewitness media, we would encourage caution before making crude generalisations about increased use of this content equating to 'dumbing down' or 'tabloidisation'. While eyewitness media was often (although not exclusively) used to cover the 'softer' types of stories typically associated with more derogatory critiques of eyewitness media by the likes of Clarín and the Daily Mail (e.g. animal stories, embarrassing mishaps, etc.), the same was not true of the New York Times, for example. In fact, eyewitness media in the New York Times' was almost entirely found in well produced, highly polished videos that added depth and colour to nuanced world news stories, further demonstrating the capacity of eyewitness media to inform audiences in ways that simply would not be possible without it.

To some extent, it seems that more traditional notions of the 'popular' and 'quality' press may have carried over to newspaper's use of eyewitness media in the digital realm.

Among the low use sites, the Times of India represents a particularly intriguing case study. The majority of usage was found in TV footage lifted from TimesNow rather than the Times of India's own output. There were numerous stories that were ripe for eyewitness media (e.g. floods, vehicle accidents) where it was not used. With access to technology set to expand, it would be interesting to repeat this study of the Times of India in 12-18 months' time to see if eyewitness media is used any more prominently. It seems reasonable to predict it almost certainly will be.

Our eight online news sites made much more varied use of eyewitness media than was observed on rolling TV news channels. Of course they have far more space to make use of and face much more competition from rivals across the web. Given the intense competition for clicks and ad views, it should come as no surprise that, in another departure from TV news, viral-style content was found across a majority of the sites (the exceptions being the Cairo Post and the New York Times); indeed, at times, viral content was the sole subject of a story, with screenshots and detailed descriptions of the video sometimes being used to pad out entire articles.

This practice of padding out eyewitness media-centric stories with numerous screenshots is not exclusive to light-hearted viral content (it is also far from exclusive to the sites featured in this study). It is therefore worth noting that such content sometimes needs to be handled with care due to graphic or potentially upsetting imagery because, unlike videos, screenshots cannot be preceded by a warning yet can often be equally upsetting and do not give viewers the opportunity to turn away (a memorable example seen during this research showed a series of screenshots of a man plummeting to his death from the top of a block of flats).

In terms of how the news sites in this study labelled and credited eyewitness media there is much to admire.

There is, of course, also plenty of room for improvement. Compared to our findings from TV channels, our eight online news sites were much better at labelling content as eyewitness media. While there were disparities between titles, it was encouragingly solid across the board, possibly due to the additional space afforded by the platform (i.e. fewer concerns about 'screen clutter'). Where inconsistencies were in evidence – such as in the New York Times' inconsistent labelling of videos – there are obvious and easy ways to improve. Elsewhere, more could be done to ensure consistent language is used to ensure readers are left in no doubt about the status of unverified status.

As with labelling, the news sites analysed in this study performed better at crediting than did the TV channels covered in our earlier study. Again, this is probably at least partly due to the extra space afforded by the platform.

There remains clear room for improvement in this area, particularly when it comes to crediting eyewitness media to

platforms and/or the agencies rather than the content creator. In the case of the former, platforms should be wary of celebrating this practice as a form of free advertising because we encountered numerous instances where news sites' credits implied that the platforms were the owners/creators of some highly unpleasant content. Indeed, this may be an area where social platforms may wish to work with news outlets to improve practices.

Conclusions from Part II: Eyewitness Stories

Interactions with eyewitnesses have uncovered emerging evidence of some concerning practices in some online news sites' acquisition and use of eyewitness media. During our three week coding period, we found instances of:

- Eyewitness media being used without credit and without permission having been sought;
- Eyewitness media being used with credit, but without permission having been sought or given;
- Eyewitness media being used (with credit) without the eyewitness having responded to a permission request.
- Permission being granted on the basis that the eyewitness be credited by name, only for the eyewitness media to later be re-used without credit.
- Eyewitness media being used without permission having been sought, and with copyright attributed to the wrong Twitter handle.
- A YouTube video exclusively licensed through a news agency being scraped and used in a commercial player, without credit, by a news outlet that was not a client of the licensing agency.
- Credit for eyewitness media being solely attributed to a social media platform;
- Credit for eyewitness media being solely attributed solely to a news agency, despite the agency providing full crediting information and stipulating it be displayed alongside the content.
- Eyewitness media being used both with and without credit despite the eyewitness declining requests to share content.

Among the most important findings from this part of the research is that unethical use of eyewitness media – whatever form it takes – can cause distress to eyewitnesses in a variety of ways, e.g. anxiety, embarrassment, exposure to abuse, etc. Consequently, we should avoid assuming that eyewitnesses will automatically be satisfied with a credit or pleased to have their content reach a more sizeable audience. In some instances, these are the very things they don't want. This casts doubt on the viability of continuing with the attitude of 'use now, pay/get permission later'. In the online space dialogue between news outlets and eyewitnesses is absolutely critical in order to establish permission to publish, whether or not they wish to be credited, how they wish to be credited, etc.

News outlets that are not giving due consideration to these issues may be playing Russian roulette with their reputations and the future trust and cooperation of eyewitnesses.

Those that are taking risks for short term gains may pay the price in the form of more damaging longer term implications. What's more, the risks are not solely financial, e.g. potentially expensive legal challenges. Even among the relatively small number of eyewitnesses with whom we engaged, there was evidence that some had an appetite to take other forms of retaliatory action. Indeed, the feedback we received suggests it is perfectly feasible that eyewitnesses who feel wronged by a particular news outlet may be less willing to share their content in future.

Where permission is given, news outlets should be as clear as possible about when, where and how content will be used.

Although we cannot make sweeping generalisations about all eyewitnesses, feedback from our small, qualitative sample suggests that some are interested in the context in which their content will be used. This is entirely understandable because context can impact upon how they as individuals are viewed, which may have implications in terms of the contact they receive from others on social media.

For eyewitnesses, it may be relatively clear how their content will be used in the first instance (i.e. when permission is initially sought during a breaking news event), but as Julie Arbuckle, eyewitness to the BBC Scotland

protest, found, it is rather harder to ascertain how photos and videos will be used further down the line. This should give food for thought to organisations that are approaching eyewitnesses with convoluted and confusing requests for permission to use content "permanently" or "in perpetuity". The overarching conclusion has to be that online news outlets cannot afford to lose sight of their duty of care to the eyewitnesses whose content they use. Inconsiderate or unethical use of content can expose eyewitnesses to abuse or any number of other unpleasant outcomes.

This is particularly important given that our findings suggest that some may have an alarming lack of knowledge and awareness about their rights. Some presume their content is fair game as soon as they post it online, believing this to be the explanation for why news outlets have not asked permission to use their photos or videos. This is not a desirable or sustainable situation and more needs to be addressed this lack of awareness through educational initiatives.

As a final point, we feel it is time to think seriously about the ethics of embedding content. While embedding without permission is permitted by social networks' terms of service, the ethics of this practice are open to debate. As demonstrated by Maddy Campbell's experience (case study 2), eyewitnesses do not always welcome their content being placed before the sizeable audiences enjoyed by many major news websites. Had she been alerted to the impending embedment of her photo, or asked for permission, it is likely she would have taken evasive action. Consequently, we would argue that more needs to be done to give eyewitnesses forewarning that their content is to be/has been embedded. News organisations that want to take the lead on this may wish to ensure they contact eyewitnesses for permission to embed in much the same way as they would in other circumstances. Equally, social media platforms may wish to investigate functionality that automatically alerts users to embeds or requires their permission before embeds become active.

Overall, it is nigh on impossible to ascertain the prevalence of the issues highlighted in this study. However, we fully intend to explore them in far greater depth in a dedicated uploader study. In the meantime, we have outlined a number of areas in which practices could be improved for the mutual benefit of news outlets and uploaders. In the collaborative online space this has to be a desirable goal.

7

Recommendations

As a final reflection on the findings of this study, we offer the following recommendations as guidance. In so doing we fully acknowledge that each story comes with particular pressures and issues, and that there can be no ‘one size fits all’ solution to the issues raised. For example, the question of whether or not to credit somebody can be dictated by individual circumstance if, for instance, their safety could be at risk or they could get into trouble for being somewhere they shouldn’t.

Recommendations for online news outlets

1. Where possible, consider embedding content instead of scraping. This provides a degree of control for uploaders (i.e. enabling them to remove content if they no longer wish it to be published) and will help foster more collaborative, mutually reciprocal relationships between news outlets and uploaders – relationships that will be vital in future as eyewitness media continues to make its mark on news output.
2. Ideally, when embedding, get permission from/give warning to the eyewitness so they can take appropriate action if they do not wish for their content to be exposed to a new site’s global audience.
3. Take care to credit eyewitnesses (where desired) instead of platforms and agencies. In the case of the latter, news outlets should pay attention to the crediting information detailed in the dope sheets provided by the agency supplying the content.
4. When utilising screen grabs from eyewitness videos, follow the same protocol for crediting as is applied to the video from which the stills are taken (i.e. crediting the content creator where desired).
5. Additionally, take caution when using graphic or potentially upsetting screen grabs from videos in news articles. Unlike videos – which are typically preceded by a warning and which readers can choose not to play – these grabs are harder to avoid and may cause undue distress to readers who would rather not be confronted by such material.
6. Be consistent and transparent in the labelling of eyewitness media. It is important that news organisations are transparent about the source from which footage has been obtained, be it ISIS, Greenpeace or an ‘accidental journalist’. Detail about the authorship of the footage should be considered as part of any story containing eyewitness media.
7. When transporting eyewitness media videos from a news article to a standalone video page, take care to ensure all vital contextual information is transferred with it, e.g. clarification that the content is unverified; notice that the content is eyewitness media and was not captured by someone connected to the news organisation.
8. When dealing with unverified content, be consistent in the language used to describe it, ensuring that readers are not given mixed messages about the verification status of the content in question.
9. When embedding content, ask the uploader’s permission in the same way as would be expected when not embedding – or, at the very least, make the uploader aware their content has been placed before a sizeable news audience. This will give the uploader the opportunity to take evasive action if desired.

10. When embedding content from a platform that does not include the uploader's name in the resulting embed (e.g. YouTube), add a credit to give due attribution to the content creator.
11. Ensure that staff are trained to respect and perpetuate ethical and respectful practices when acquiring permission to use eyewitness media and crediting it appropriately.
12. News outlets should refrain from scraping content without permission and using it as if it were their own.
13. As and when eyewitnesses refuse permission for their content to be used, this decision should be respected.
14. News organisations should heed the warning that eyewitnesses may have an appetite to take action if they feel they or their content has been exploited.
15. Even if eyewitnesses do not take legal action, news outlets should recognise that they are risking the future co-operation of eyewitnesses if they are not respectful of their content.
16. Staff should be trained to understand and appreciate the ethics of using eyewitness media. It should be recognised that when eyewitness media is not used ethically, the potential distress to uploaders can take many forms, e.g. anxiety, embarrassment, etc.
17. Where possible, journalists should resist from assuming that permission will always be forthcoming or that eyewitnesses will automatically be happy for their content to be published in exchange for a credit. This is an overly simplistic approach that does not give due recognition to the strength of feeling eyewitnesses can have towards individual news outlets (e.g. some may be willing to let News Outlet A use their content with credit, but not News Outlets B and C).
18. Where permission is granted, news organisations should be clear with eyewitnesses about their distribution and syndication policies.
19. News organisations should also be clear with eyewitnesses about their intentions for re-using content beyond initial usage.

Recommendations for platforms

1. Social platforms should make information about their users' rights more visible and accessible. While this information is available in each platform's terms and conditions, they are currently too convoluted. Were uploaders aware of their rights, they would be less likely to believe their content to be 'fair game' and would be better positioned to control the spread of their content.
2. Tools should be provided to allow users to watermark their content where desired.
3. Steps should be taken to introduce functionality that simplifies the process of permitting or denying permission for content to be used by news organisations.
4. Functionality could be introduced to alert users when their content is embedded into news sites, just as they can receive alerts when they receive comments, their content is shared, they are retweeted, etc.

Recommendations for eyewitnesses

1. With news outlets' crediting practices still somewhat patchy, eyewitnesses keen to ensure attribution travels with their content should consider adding their own credits. In some instances unobtrusive credits can be added using tools such as iOS app Marksta. The absence of a visible credit is also an issue with embedded YouTube videos – in such instances uploaders could use the platform's 'Branding watermark' functionality, or add their name/credit to the title of their video as a makeshift solution.

Recommendations for educationalists and other stakeholders

1. Journalism schools should ensure that sufficient time is dedicated to training the journalists of tomorrow in the ethics of sourcing and using eyewitness media.
2. Educationalists and other stakeholders should strive to develop educational materials to help inform eyewitnesses about their rights.

8

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