

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINT AND
ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN THAILAND
IN 2000
IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES
AND NEWS CONTENTS**

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By

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ABSTRACT

TITLE

“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN THAILAND IN 2000 IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES AND NEWS CONTENTS”

By

DANAYA TUTCHANOK HOLLOWAY

This thesis investigates the relationship between electronic and traditional newspapers in Thailand at the beginning of the 21st century. The data obtained from the study of four Thai national daily newspapers – *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon* – and their websites in 1999 and 2000 are used in order to examine the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their news contents and production processes, with reference to the gatekeeping concept.

This research employed three research methods: participant observation, interviews and content analysis. Participant observations of four newspapers’ newsrooms and interviews with their editors and webmasters, as well as a group of media professionals, were conducted in Thailand. Content analysis of news stories in fourteen issues of each print and electronic edition of the four newspaper samples was carried out in quantitative and qualitative terms to examine what kind of news content was selected and put through the news gate.

The findings of this study suggest that the news selection or gatekeeping process in Thai electronic newspapers differs from their print counterparts by following the same news policy as the printed editions and publishing virtually unchanged print products onto their websites. However, the reproduced content on the electronic versions is likely to offer an increase in home news over international news. There are notable differences in the basic production processes, news priorities and technological functionality of the four print and electronic newspaper samples. The flow of global technologies is the main factor influencing the introduction of electronic newspapers to Thai society. At the time of the study, the four newspapers’ websites were not exploiting the full potential of the Internet. Finally, as in most countries, the four electronic newspapers in Thailand have been created as supplements to their printed editions.

ขออุทิศคุณความดีใด ๆ ที่บังเกิดจากผลสำเร็จของการศึกษาระดับนี้แก่.....

อาป้า, นายเปงชีว แซ่ลิม; อาแหมะ, นางเสียง รัชชนก และคุณมณฑล ต่างใจ

ผู้จุดประกายความฝันสู่การมีการศึกษาสูงสุดของข้าพเจ้า

แต่ไม่มีโอกาสได้อยู่ร่วมชื่นชมในความสำเร็จ

**This thesis is dedicated to the memory of
my loving parents, Mr. Pengchew Lim and Mrs. Seang Tutchanok,
and Mr. Monthon Tangchai
who never had an opportunity to celebrate my achievement.**

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the relationship between traditional and new media in terms of the news production process and news content. It examines the process of news selection and the creation of news content that takes place in traditional and electronic newspapers in Thailand at the beginning of the 21st century. It also looks at the information society in developing countries, which influences the introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand. The gatekeeping concept is adopted as the major framework for understanding the way in which messages are processed and selected, including the news content published in print and electronic newspapers that is analysed in the case study. The research investigates the relationship between the news selection process and news production across these two mediums. It also explores the consequence of the different processes for their news content.

In this research, gatekeeping is defined as a traditional media concept and involves only the process of selecting from a large number of messages those few that will be transmitted to one or more receivers (Shoemaker, 1991). More importantly, in this research the study samples' newsrooms as a whole are considered as the gatekeeper – in other words, the newsrooms are studied as systems of news production that work together.

The objective of this study is threefold. First, it will identify the factors involved in changing from print newspapers to electronic newspapers in Thai society. Second, it will discover whether and how news production processes and news content in electronic newspapers in Thailand differ from their print counterparts in terms of the gatekeeping function. Third, it will explore the use of interactive elements in electronic

newspapers in Thailand. This thesis, therefore, raises two main arguments: first, that the new communication technology flow is the main influence on introducing an electronic newspaper to Thai society; and, second, that there are similarities and differences in news production processes and news content between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand.

The concept of gatekeeping has proven to be popular with mass communication scholars, particularly in the study of news selection (Shoemaker, 1991: 16). In its long history, there is ample evidence of the application of the gatekeeping concept in studies of the news selection process, for instance in David Manning White's study of 1950, which looks at the news-selection decisions of a wire editor at a small-city daily newspaper. Other research studies of news-selection decisions in newspapers and other media production processes include Gieber (1956), McNelly (1959), Bass (1969), Elliott and Murdock (1970), Chibnall (1977) and Gandy (1982). (All quoted in Shoemaker, 1996: 80). This thesis applied the gatekeeping concept not only to explore news selection in the production process but also to examine news content that is selected and produced by the process. This is because the gatekeeping concept helps to understand how the process of news selection operates and what kind of new messages are passed through the news gate.

Moreover, the process of selecting from a vast amount of information and then editing and shaping to a few completed news messages for the public is an important function in the news production of traditional mass media, particularly print newspapers (Shoemaker, 1991). The forces that influence this process, which involves decision making by mediators, are an essential element of the process that was first called gatekeeping by Lewin (1947, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 5). However, the emergence of the Internet as a new medium in mass communication has threatened this traditional

media function. This new communication technology provides the opportunity for users to select any information that interests them, including creating their own messages and sending them to other users. Now it would seem that the notion of gatekeeping is declining because of the Internet (Singer, 1998). However, there is some evidence that the new media see the gatekeeping function as evolving and adapting rather than disappearing (Singer, 1998). It shows that new media in the Internet still play a role of news selection but in the different way to traditional media.

The research for this thesis took place in 1999 and 2000, which was the period when most of the electronic newspapers in Thailand were launched. The study is based on four Thai national newspapers and their websites. Two of the four newspaper samples of this study are in the Thai language and the other two are in English. These particular print and electronic newspaper study samples have been chosen by purposive sampling for three reasons: first, they are the most well-known and respected national Thai- and English-language dailies in Thailand within the top ten circulations (Truehits.net, 1999); second, they have an electronic version that includes regularly updated news; and third, there are different aspects of news policy implementation in Thai- and English-language newspapers that are worthy of consideration.

The framework of this study has been influenced by the studies on the emergence of electronic newspapers, as well as the communication theory of gatekeeping. The thesis includes analysis of several in-depth studies on the gatekeeping model in traditional and electronic newspapers published by Shoemaker (1991), Li (1998) and Singer (1998). Before continuing to describe the complex issues of gatekeeping in the aforementioned contexts, it is worth defining the term here. Gatekeeping in the communication process involves an activity performed by a communication organisation and its representatives (Shoemaker, 1991). It is the process

through which ideas and information are filtered for publication: the internal decision-making process of the media to relay information to, or withhold information from, the mass audiences (Shoemaker, 1991). The concept of gatekeeping was first formulated by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1947 and is still one of the most important theories studied by students of mass communication and journalism (Shoemaker, 1991). The gatekeeping process occurs at all levels of the media structure, from the reporter deciding which sources are chosen to be included in a story to editors deciding which stories will or will not be printed. Moreover, as indicated by Singer (1998), the gatekeeping process has been conceived as both a media function and a reflection of professional values.

This thesis, however, has focused on applying the gatekeeping concept in the investigation of news selection processes and news content of a number of print and electronic newspaper samples in Thailand. At this point, it is worth noting that this thesis analyses gatekeeping in a specific way. It looks at gatekeeping only in the process of news production and in the news content that has been created by the process. The study has not included other antecedents of traditional gatekeeping study, such as factors influencing the entrance of items into the channel of media organisation, the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates and the individuals' personal attitudes, including the values of gatekeepers (Shoemaker, 1991).

Three research methods were adopted for this research. The first two methods were participant observations and interviews in order to investigate the argument of the study and answer the research questions. Participant observations of newspapers' production processes were carried out at the newsrooms of four Thai newspapers. Also, interviews with three editors and four webmasters of newspaper samples, including journalists and media professionals, were conducted in Bangkok, Thailand in July 1999

and again in January 2000. The third method was newspaper content analysis; this consisted of an examination of the content of the same four newspaper samples and their websites over a fourteen-day period from 4th September to 17th September 2000. The findings of participant observations and interviews are discussed in qualitative terms, whereas the content analysis outcomes are analysed in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In particular, the analysis of newspaper content will help to confirm the findings from participant observations and interviews in terms of the operations of news policies and production processes.

The findings of this thesis will improve understanding of the study of the relationship in the production processes and news contents between print and electronic newspapers at the beginning of the 21st century. This study will also demonstrate additional relevant data, which includes the trends and roles of electronic newspapers, the factors of moving from print to online newspapers and a list of electronic newspapers in Thailand including a brief profile of each one. These data will provide perspective of the introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand and the influence of the global technologies flow in non-western countries.

Another important term that needs to be defined at this point is ‘electronic newspaper’. In this thesis, ‘electronic newspaper’ refers to the publication of a national print newspaper in Thailand available on the World Wide Web, using Hypertext Markup Language (html) and other computer-assisted graphic devices to illustrate text and graphics containing news and additional information on a computer screen (Li, 1998).

It is worth noting that in order to support the investigation of the relationship between Thailand’s electronic newspapers and their print editions, this study focuses on the production processes and news content of the four print newspapers and their websites, and not on general news websites as such. It also concentrates on the

examination of news diffusion on the web and not general web services. Moreover, this is a study of newspapers on the Internet and not the ability of the Internet to support such services. Consequently, although the nature of this research area is involved with new media (which involves studying technology that is constantly moving forward), this study is also aimed at investigating the context of technology by comparing traditional and electronic newspapers, rather than by investigating technology itself. The data utilised for this study was collected between 1999 and 2000, which was the early stage of electronic newspapers in Thailand. The findings of the study have offered a fundamental historical context to electronic newspapers in Thailand that can be used for further discussion of the development and future trends of electronic newspapers in a non-western country.

This introduction will lay the foundation for the thesis as a whole. It begins by outlining the contextual background to the study and the rationale of the study, and then moves on to indicate the significance of the study. Following this is the conceptual framework of the study. From this perspective, the research questions are formulated. The research methodology follows and, finally, the structure of the thesis is drawn.

Contextual Background to the Study

During the 1990s, after the Internet had been introduced and had begun to spread, the following question was raised: ‘If the Internet is applied as a new medium, which is easy to access; convenient to handle; able to deliver immediate news; and providing free services, in the communication process, what will happen to traditional mass media, particularly print newspapers?’ (Internet Today, 1998). The answer to this question is that newspapers and other print industries have paid more attention to and taken

advantage of this new medium in order to survive. They are aware of the use of the Internet as a new delivery channel for their publications to a wider readership, and with the ability of the Internet network, the transformation of text, still photos, animation, graphics, film, video and sound are all possible.

The print publishing businesses around the world, including the ones in Thailand, have realised the potential of this new medium (Sudbantad, 1994). The Internet network, especially the World Wide Web, is the biggest information resource in the world, the best information-searching resource, and has the highest potential in operation. Most publishers are aware of the necessity of increasing online publishing in their business. At the same time, some publishers have switched from their traditional publishing avenues to online business. Traditional newspapers look toward this new medium as a new tool in the battle with broadcasting media (Sudbantad, 1994). This can be seen from Wollert's (1980:139) statement that Britain was the first country to introduce electronic publishing, known as teletext and videotext, in 1974. Also, it is reported in Quill Journal that, in 1995, 150 papers worldwide had Web editions (Cochran, 1995); two years later, nearly 1,600 newspapers were being published online worldwide (Levins, 1997).

Like many countries in the world, the first mass media in Thailand to adopt Internet technology was the newspaper industry (Kumvijitra, 1998). Thai newspaper industries have raced to improve themselves by publishing their publications on the Internet. However, because of the economic crisis in Thailand from 1997 to 1999, some newspaper organisations decided to postpone their plans for electronic versions and some were closed down entirely. The first electronic newspaper in Thailand was introduced on the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1995 and, by 2000, fifteen national

newspapers had published their electronic versions on the WWW in association with their print copies.

It is important to mention here that 2000 was the year when Thailand was entering the information society after recovering from economic crisis in 1997. A statistics report of the top ten Thai websites in 2000 by the Thailand Web Directory and Advance Web Statistics at Truehits.net illustrates Internet users' demand for news. This highlights that News and Media websites were the third and fourth ranked for Thai Internet users in 1999 and 2000 (Truehits.net, 1999 and 2000). It also shows that newspaper websites were the most viewed among journal and radio station websites (Truehits.net, 2000).

In relation to the capacity of this new media, newspapers on the Internet present information in different ways to traditional newspapers (Martin, 1998). From this point of view, the way newspapers' newsrooms select the news information to publish on their websites is therefore affected. As a consequence of this, Singer (1998) points out that a journalistic role that clearly seems threatened by the Internet as a new medium in which users can put their fingers on virtually any bit of information that interests them is the newspapers' function as gatekeepers. As far as the impact on the traditional gatekeeping model is concerned (which has been drawn upon by several scholars, including Shoemaker, 1991 and Singer, 1998) the lack of clarity in the gatekeeping function in new media is challenging media scholars to study it further.

The electronic newspaper is now a phenomenon running alongside the growth of the Internet. Online newspapers have undergone incredible changes since their first outings in the Internet world (Li, 1998). Singer (1998) raises a couple of questions in relation to the study of new and traditional media: 'How is what we know as "traditional" journalism similar to or different from online journalism? And how does

the nature of the interactive medium affect what journalists do?’ Li (2006: 3) also argues that ‘the more the Internet newspaper develops, the more questions arise about its operation, functions, effects and interaction within society’. On the other hand, the growth of this new medium offers great opportunities to examine relationships between the old and new media, including explaining and predicting what the new medium will bring to the media industry as well as the whole of society (Li, 2006).

In the case of Thailand, since electronic newspapers have been introduced, a number of studies regarding electronic newspapers have been conducted. Examples of those include Dounmanee (1996) studies the information diffusion of the Thai media through the World Wide Web. The results demonstrate that Thai media businesses mainly use the WWW as a new transmission channel to improve their images. Also Phoermsap (1997) studies the adoption of the Internet by the newspaper industry and the adaptation of organisations to the new technology found that the use of modern Internet technology in Thailand has been adopted from western countries. In 1998, Kumvijitra conducts a survey study of two Thai online newspapers. It finds that most newspaper websites in Thailand give more priority to information messages than to attractive design. Kumvijitra concludes that electronic newspapers in Thailand need to develop their production technology and creative ideas. Another Thai study worth consideration is a study by Thawecharoen (2000), which argues in his study about the trends of online newspapers in Thailand that online newspapers’ readers will expand to a wide range of people because of the growth in the number of Internet users and the progression of online newspapers.

As a consequence, it can be noticed from the evidence as revealed earlier that the studies of rapid diffusion of information technology and electronic newspapers have been conducted principally in western countries. Although several non-western

countries are starting to show the key traits of an information society and are producing electronic newspapers, minimal data of electronic newspapers in those nations are recorded (Li, 1998). Further studies of electronic newspapers in non-western countries would be helpful to discover how electronic newspapers as new information technology are operated and presented. This is one of the rationales behind why this study has been conducted in the case of Thailand.

Accordingly, the emergence of new technology such as the Internet has challenged media researchers to study the changes in traditional media functions in the new-media environment. Singer (1998) also suggests that one media function that clearly seems threatened by the Internet is gatekeeping.

Although gatekeeping has been covered in literature for more than 50 years since it was first proposed by Lewin in 1947, more studies on this oldest communication theory can still be done (Shoemaker, 1991). Shoemaker (1991: 3) also states that the gatekeeping concept has attracted many communication scholars who have sought to explain the differential flow of messages through time and space, particularly news, probably because gatekeeping has given mass communication researchers a conceptual structure for comparing media content with some other measure of reality. The gatekeeping approach has allowed media scholars to evaluate whether there is bias and distortion by showing that the selection process results in media content that somehow reflects reality (Tuchman, 1981, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 3). Gatekeeping is important because gatekeepers provide an integrated view of social reality to the rest of society. It is the fact that millions of selection decisions are made every day that makes the gatekeeping process highly significant (Shoemaker, 1991: 4). In addition, the gatekeeping concept is useful in analysing online media in the 21st century because of its structures and its important role in the communication process and in society. The

gatekeeping theory is a challenge for media scholars to think about when applying the traditional theory to new-media studies.

Although the above examples of Thai studies in electronic newspapers have shown the attention of Thai scholars to the development of this new medium, none of them have been concerned with analysing the news production process and news content in electronic newspapers through the gatekeeping concept, which is the principal aim of this thesis. Nevertheless, there are some studies of production processes and news selection in traditional newspapers in Thailand in this past decade that worth to mention here. For instance, Meelhom (1995) conducts the comparative study of factors influencing the selection of frontpage news between two Thai daily newspapers. The study finds that news value and readers' interests are two main factors that influence the selection process.

This thesis, therefore, has applied the gatekeeping model as the major framework to study the production process and news selection or gatekeeping process of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in order to partially fulfil the gap of this area study.

The contextual background discussed above has explained the effect of the arrival of new communication technologies (such as the Internet) on traditional newspapers and media research. In essence, it has brought about the context of the rationale of the study, and the following section will outline the reasons for choosing to conduct this thesis.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale for choosing to study this topic was drawn from several issues, primarily from a personal interest in this area of study, being a journalistic professional and

academic who has, over time, been following the development of traditional newspapers. The development of newspapers on the Internet has become a challenging and fascinating phenomenon for the researcher to study, especially in comparison with the traditional newspaper roles which may be affected by Internet technology.

The interest was, eventually, narrowly focused on using the gatekeeping concept to study these two medium's production processes and news content. This idea occurred during newsroom observation studies, when the relationships between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news selection processes and news policies were spotted. This process in newsroom routines is similar to the gatekeeping process. The researcher also learnt from Singer (1998) that although few published studies have specifically addressed gatekeeping in the online environment, there is some evidence that journalists see that function as evolving and adapting rather than disappearing. According to these perspectives, using the gatekeeping concept to understand the effect of the differences between these two media in terms of their news selection and news content is a challenging issue for the researcher.

The news selection process in Thai mass media, particularly newspapers, has played an important role in newspapers' production processes and the way news content is created. In relation to the freedom-of-the-press issue in Thai society, Bowra (1996) states that although the press is freer in comparison to radio and television in airing political issues and criticising the performance of the government, this does not mean that it is completely free from government control and interference. As with other sectors of the media, the government issued specific regulations to keep the performance of the press in tight check. As a result of that, Thailand's mass media, particularly newspapers, need to give priority to their selection processes in terms of what to publish and what not to publish in both their paper and their online editions in

order to survive. Therefore, the study of the production processes and news content in Thai's print and electronic newspapers through the gatekeeping concept will be a practical way of learning about the Thai mass media system and the arrival of new newspapers in Thai society.

There was also a significant need for studies on electronic newspapers and the gatekeeping function in Thailand due to the lack of previous studies of this kind. Whilst a number of studies on electronic newspapers in Thailand have been conducted, none of them have focused on the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers. Despite the importance of gatekeeping as a function of Thai mass media and society, as mentioned above, only a few studies in Thailand in the period before this study have concentrated on mass media and the gatekeeping function. It may be suggested that the study of electronic newspapers in Thailand should place an emphasis on their media function, production processes and messages. The reason for this is that Thailand is still developing its potential as an information technology society. Thailand's electronic newspapers at the time of the study in 1999 and 2000 were in their early stages and had not been recognised or used as widely as in western countries.

The researcher chooses Thailand as the case study of this research for three reasons. Firstly, Thailand in 2000 had one of the fastest-growing Internet industries in South East Asia (National Electronic and Computer Technology Center, 2000). Secondly, it is the researcher's home country, and the researcher understands its native language and intends to make a significant contribution to studies in this region. Finally, and most importantly, there is a need for more studies to pay attention to the study of the relationship between traditional and new newspapers in terms of their production processes and news content in relation to the gatekeeping concept.

Therefore, this study is conducted to help to fill the gap in the knowledge and understanding of electronic newspapers in Thailand and to support the notion that there are distinctions and similarities in news content and production processes between print and electronic newspapers, which will also reflect the relationship between these two medium. The significance of the study will be drawn in the following section.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to make a significant contribution to the concept of the gatekeeping in the study of production process and news content. It is expected that analysing the newspaper production process through the framework of gatekeeping in this thesis will offer an informative approach that expands understanding of the process and methods of the creation of news content in the online environment.

Moreover, as this is a study of Thai newspapers in 2000, when Thai media were starting to adopt new communication technologies in their production and distribution processes, the information from this research about the purposes and roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand in their initial stages will benefit the understanding of electronic newspapers' growth and roles in the present, as well as helping to predict their future trends. The study outcomes will also consider some new aspects of the news production process and of news content that was created in the new-media environment, which may allow new trends in electronic newspapers in Thailand to better serve the public.

Finally, it is also hoped that this research will attract more Thai scholars to this area of study in future.

It is therefore important to review the relevant literature in order to frame the concept of this study.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

In order to answer the research questions and confirm two arguments of the study, this study encompasses more than a restatement of the theories of communication technology and new media including conceptual approaches and related studies of traditional and electronic newspapers including the gatekeeping concept. Three media analytical perspectives including mass communication theory are adopted to study the relationship of production processes and news content as they relate to the gatekeeping process between Thailand's print and electronic newspapers: first, traditional newspapers; second, the Internet as a new medium; third, electronic newspapers; and fourth, gatekeeping theory.

The first conceptual approach is the concept of traditional newspapers. The newspaper is one kind of print media, which has its own traditional production process, content, presentation and design. The discussion of the newspaper concept in terms of the production process, content and presentation will help this research to understand the features and formats of newspapers in Thailand, which will help with the comparison of print and electronic newspapers. Also, it is necessary for this study to understand the connection between the development of print newspapers in relation to Internet technology in order to investigate the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in this study. Therefore, the general concepts of traditional newspapers will be defined and followed with a discussion of newspapers in the Internet age in this section.

The second perspective to highlight is the Internet as a new medium. The discussion concentrates on the importance of the advancement of communication technologies, particularly when Internet technology becomes a new medium in the

communication process. In an age of increasing technological innovation, the use of the Internet in the 1990s, for instance, may have spread more rapidly than any other innovation in human history – and it continues to influence the very nature of diffusion by decreasing the significance of physical distance between people (Rogers, 1995). As mentioned earlier, this thesis is a new-media study; therefore, it is necessary to explore the potential and effects of the Internet as a new medium on mass media. As a consequence, according to Li (1998), computer-mediated communication (CMC), particularly the Internet-based network, brings a fast and easily accessible way of communicating to computer users around the world. Technology has played an important role in the development of print newspaper production processes since the newspaper was invented. The development of communication technologies in the late 20th century opened up new possibilities for news delivery in mass media including newspapers (Gunter, 2003). Internet technology has changed the way print newspapers deliver their publications to readers, from printing by ink on paper to publishing by pixel on computer screens (via the Internet network). In addition, traditional newspapers have used this new medium as a tool in the battle with electronic media. The introduction of electronic newspapers is a phenomenon of traditional newspapers alongside the growth of the Internet (Li, 1998).

Another perspective is the invention of electronic or Internet newspapers within a positivistic framework, which is challenging the conventional normative approaches of traditional newspapers in the Internet age (Li, 1998; Pavlik, 2001; Gunter, 2003). The conventions of electronic or Internet newspapers are cited from several sources, including research articles, textbooks, and websites, so as to cover the perspective of the electronic newspaper as a new medium in the communication process. Also, the effects that the news content message and the webpage design of an electronic newspaper

might have on information retrieval have been discussed. The related studies' examinations of electronic newspapers in both developed and developing worlds, combined with information technology, new communication processes and new-media use, have been applied to obtain practical information on electronic newspapers. Plus, according to Brody (1990), the newspaper executives have been urged to modernise, to launch electronic information services individually, to acquire their existing distribution systems and to use the new technology to produce 'a new and golden age of newspapers'.

Finally is gatekeeping theory. Gatekeeping was first applied directly to newspapers by White (1950), although the term "gatekeeper" originated with the sociologist Lewin (1947). According to Shoemaker (1991), gatekeeping is one of the oldest and best-known constructs. It also plays an important role in the communication process, as Donohue *et al* (1972, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 1) suggests that gatekeeping can be defined as a broader process of information control that includes all aspects of message encoding: not just selection, but also withholding, transmission, shaping, display, repetition, and timing of information as it goes from the sender to the receiver. In addition, the concept of gatekeeping has been well-known with mass communication scholars, particularly in the study of news selection (Shoemaker, 1991). However, the traditional newspapers' gatekeeping function is affected by the invention of new communication technology, which has been created by the global information flow (Shoemaker, 1991).

Also, McQuail (2000) points out that the arrival and growth of the Internet widens the possibility of access to global information and cultural resources. Access is now possible without dependence on the various gatekeepers that always restrict and control the flow of content in traditional media. These gatekeepers operate at both the

sending and receiving ends of distribution channels. The Internet has invented a two-way communication process in which the receiver can be both sender and gatekeeper (McQuail, 2000). As a consequence, ‘newspapers traditionally have brought selected information about the world to local readers’ doorsteps but as print newspapers go online, their editors face new decisions relating to that gatekeeping role’ (Singer, 2001:65). In addition, Boczowski (2004) notes that newspapers in the process of moving to online publishing have reinforced ‘gatekeeping’ practices, which signify the ‘editorial function centred on the facilitation and circulation of knowledge produced by a vast network of users-turned-producers’. Applying the gatekeeping model as the major framework for studying the production process, news selection and news content will help to understand the ways print and electronic newspapers in Thailand create, select and disseminate news messages via their channels to their receivers.

The thesis’s review of literature concerning traditional newspapers, electronic newspapers and the gatekeeping model mentioned above has formulated the research questions of the study as follows.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study have been developed following the rationale of the study in order to explore the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news production processes and news content by using gatekeeping analysis. Five research questions have been developed to achieve the answers for this research.

‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their production process and news policy compared to their print counterparts?’

The first research question will help to examine the effect of the differences in newsroom routine and news policy on the news selection processes of print and electronic newspaper samples.

‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’

‘Does the electronic newspapers’ news content provide more or less home news than their print editions?’

‘Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics during the study period?’

These three research questions will together help to find the character of news content offered by print and electronic newspapers in Thailand. News content or news items which are the completed products at the end of news production will reflect the form and type of messages that pass through the news gates of print and electronic newspapers.

‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use the interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections, during the study period?’

The final research question will identify the level of potential of new communication technology that has been utilised in electronic newspapers in Thailand. The outcome will reflect the services of electronic newspapers in Thailand at the time of the study, which may provide recommendations for their roles in developing their products.

The multiple research methods are designed to explore the research questions of the study, and will be discussed in the next section.

Research Methodology Design

This study seeks to answer research questions by systematically comparing the news production process – in other words, the way in which news stories are produced, selected and shaped – in print and electronic newspapers. It also looks at the use of interactive elements on the news webpages. The research took place during 1999 and 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand. The samples of the study are four national daily newspapers, which are the most well-known and respected in Thailand. Two of them, *Thairath* and *Matichon*, are Thai-language newspapers; the other two, *Bangkok Post* and *Nation*, are English language. These were selected with their websites for comparative purposes. These particular print and electronic newspapers have been chosen by purposive sampling for three reasons as described earlier in this chapter.

Three research methods – participant observation, interviews and newspaper content analysis – were designed in order to investigate the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news content. Firstly, before investigating similarities and differences in news content between print and electronic newspapers, it is necessary to consider how they are produced and what news policy is used in the processes. Therefore, two research methods of participant observation and interviews were carried out in two periods: the first was from 12 to 29 July 1999 and the second was from 19 to 21 January 2000. The methodology consisted of observations of the newsrooms and face-to-face interviews with print editors and webmasters of four newspaper samples including five media professionals. These two research methods aimed to gather essential information about company development, production processes and news policies that gave insights into the way news content was selected and shaped. The findings from participant

observations and interviews have been used to construct the third research methods of content analysis.

Thirdly, analysis was conducted of the content of the same four newspaper samples and their websites in 2000. The newspaper content of each sample was thoroughly examined for a fourteen-day period, between 4th September and 17th September 2000. The analysis focused on the news and non-news messages on every page of each print and electronic edition including the interactive elements on the news content within the homepages of electronic newspapers. Specifically, looking at the overall contents, this included the number of news stories presented by content, and the characteristics of the news priority issues by news value, to examine the differences in the news selection process and the location of the news content presented. The content analysis also compared the top news stories in print editions with the top news stories that appeared in their electronic versions on the same day to examine the relationship between them in terms of news selection and news shaping. At this point, quantitative content analysis was used to measure the amount of news content, while qualitative analysis was utilised to examine the location, character of news content, including the emphasis of news topics, and news value. The findings of content analysis will help to verify the findings from participant observation and interviews.

According to the nature of this research area, which is a comparative study of old and new-media, one way to keep up with the technology is by analysing the changes in the news content and production process of media. Although this work does not intend to study the technology itself, it will look at the context of technology in the new-media environment by comparing different aspects of print and electronic newspapers. On the whole, these three research methods were combined to examine the findings of

the research questions and generate debates about relevant concepts and studies of the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers in non-western countries.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into two main parts. Part one comprises three chapters: chapter one reviews the literature and the conceptual framework of this study; chapter two consists of an overview of the background of newspapers in Thailand; and chapter three presents the research methodology design. Part two consists of three chapters (chapters four, five and six) which outline the findings and discussions of the study. These chapters demonstrate and analyse the findings of the three research methods; the conclusions and suggestions for future research appear in chapter seven.

Part One: Research Background and Framework

This part consists of three chapters. It will reveal and discuss relevant information about the case study background and literature to frame the area of this study.

Chapter One: Review of Literature

This chapter offers an overview of the conceptual and research studies that relate to the study and simplify the conceptual framework for this study. The following issues will be discussed thoroughly in this chapter: Context of traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers; the relationships between traditional and new newspapers in terms of news production process, news content, news presentation and functions; concepts of information technology and the Internet as a new medium; gatekeeping

theory including the debates on the gatekeeping concept and the studies of news selection and new media.

Chapter Two: Background of the Case Study

This chapter will focus on the case study of Thailand and Thai newspapers at the beginning of the 21st century (1999 to 2000). It will address the background of Thai mass media in 2000 with respect to the historical context and development of newspapers and information technology within Thai society, as well as the development of the Internet in Thailand and the use of the Internet as a new medium of newspapers in Thailand. The introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand as a whole will be examined to generate and understand the related picture of the development of new technology and traditional newspapers in Thailand. In addition, a list containing information about fifteen national electronic newspapers in Thailand in 2000 will also be displayed. This is followed by an overview of the four newspaper organisation samples of this study to understand the basic information of the case study. Finally, some related studies of Thai print and electronic newspapers that have taken place locally are reviewed to show the lack of study in this area.

Chapter Three: Methodology of the Study

This chapter will demonstrate how this study has been conducted to answer the research questions. The research methodology of quantitative and qualitative approaches will be addressed. Three research methods conducted in this study, which included participant observation, interviews and newspaper content analysis will be examined in terms of the rationale and purposes behind each research method, research sites, study samples, and

data collection and data analysis procedures, including the issues of validity, reliability and ethics of the study.

Part Two: Research Findings and Discussions

This part comprises another three chapters. It will demonstrate and discuss the distinct findings of the specific information of the print and electronic editions of four newspaper samples. The conclusion follows this discussion.

Chapter Four: The Relationships between Print and Electronic Newspapers in terms of Their Production Processes

First and foremost, the study findings will be discussed thoroughly in this chapter to identify, in relation to specific cases, the similarities and differences in production processes, news selection and news policy, which reflect the relationship between Thai print and electronic newspapers. The comparative analysis of newsroom observation findings will attempt to answer the research question: ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their production process and news policy compared to their print counterparts?’ The analytical topics include the relevant data of news selection in production processes, news policy, and relationships of newsroom routines of print and electronic newspaper samples.

In total, the outcomes of newsroom observations have provided the data for how differing newsroom routines and news policies affect the news selection process and shape the news content in Thailand’s print newspapers and electronic versions. From this point, it is important to examine the quantities and characteristics of the news content that has passed through the news gate of each newspaper sample. The analysis

of the news content of the print and electronic versions of four newspaper samples will be demonstrated and discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: The Relationship between Print and Electronic Newspapers in terms of Their News Content

The chapter will emphasise the findings of content analysis from four electronic newspaper websites and their print editions. It will present and discuss the study outcomes by attempting to answer the rest of the research questions, including: ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’ ‘Does the electronic newspapers’ content offer more or less locally focused news than their print editions?’ ‘Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics during the study period?’ And, ‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use the interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in the news sections, during the study period?’

The major analysis is the comparison of the quantity of news content overall, the proportion of national and international news content, and news presentation location, including the matches in news lead stories and topics between four websites and their print editions. Additionally, the quantity of reproduced news content and additional news content, including the use of interactive elements on electronic editions, will also be analysed to explore the characteristics of messages that have been selected and shaped by the selection process. Tables, graphs and photos will be used to demonstrate the figures of the quantitative findings, while text descriptions will be drawn to discuss the findings in qualitative aspects.

Chapter Six: The Roles and Trends of Print and Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

This chapter will consider the additional information gathered mainly from the interviews with media professionals, including some from editors and webmasters of four Thai newspapers. The findings will be discussed in qualitative terms with regard to the purposes of launching online editions, including the impact of the electronic newspapers in Thailand on Thai society as a whole and on the print newspaper industry. The trends and roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand, which may predict the future trends of electronic newspapers and newspaper businesses in Thailand, will also be revealed in this last chapter.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the final chapter, the analysis of the relationships between traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers in terms of news content and production processes related to the gatekeeping concept in the case study of Thailand in 2000 will be concluded. This will be discussed in the context of the research arguments, research questions, and methodology of the study and study findings. The discussions and conclusions will cover seven topics: The design of the study; the conceptual framework of the study; the methodology of the study, the study findings. Last but not least, the limitations of this study and the lessons learnt from conducting this research will be addressed. This will, eventually, bring forth any suggestions for further research concerning print and electronic newspapers in terms of their production processes and news content at both a local and a global level.

The thesis finally remarks that this study will make a significant contribution to the understanding of the relationship between Thai print newspapers and their electronic editions in terms of their news selection and production processes including news

content, including the circumstances of electronic newspapers in their early stages. The findings of this study, hopefully, will also confirm and expand the knowledge of the gatekeeping concept in the study of news selection in electronic newspapers in non-western countries. The study outcomes, which will suggest some new aspects and historical information about Thailand's electronic newspapers in 2000, may allow future development in electronic newspapers in Thailand to better serve the public.

PART ONE

**RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND
OF THE STUDY**

CHAPTER ONE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This chapter focuses on reviewing the relevant literature and conceptual framework that will help provide the theory-based foundations of the gatekeeping concept in the study of the news production process and news content in print and electronic newspapers. The literature review will discuss the information technology that influences the development of traditional newspapers, including the gatekeeping concept that relates to production processes of traditional and electronic newspapers. Gatekeeping has played an important role in traditional mass media, particularly newspapers, in their production process of selecting, shaping and disseminating information for a mass audience. However, it would seem that this traditional media function has been threatening since the introduction of the Internet. Nevertheless, Singer (1998) confirms that the news media see gatekeeping as evolving and adapting rather than disappearing. On the other hand, Martin (1998) suggests that because of the capacity of the Internet, electronic newspapers present information in different ways to traditional newspapers. The Internet network thus affects the way newspapers' newsrooms select the news information to publish on their websites. Moreover, Shoemaker (1991) also points out that the gatekeeping concept has been well-known with media scholars in the study of news selection.

The conceptual framework of this study has been partially inspired by a new conceptual paradigm of the introduction of electronic newspapers and the study of the relationship between traditional and new media including a media function of

gatekeeping. The literature and analytical perspectives applied for this thesis mainly refer to Internet technology as a new medium for newspaper distribution and gatekeeping as a process of message selection in newspapers. Importantly, communication theory has offered this study a framework for comprehending and analysing how the news selection process operates in electronic newspapers when compared to print editions. This thesis, therefore, has used the gatekeeping model as the main framework to explore the relationships between traditional and new newspaper samples in terms of the process of news production and news content.

Three conceptual approaches along with mass communication theory are adopted to create a conceptual framework in order to research news production processes and characteristics of news content of Thailand's print and electronic newspapers, which is the core of the study. The conceptual approaches contain traditional newspapers, electronic newspapers and the Internet, including a theory of gatekeeping.

The chapter presents the conceptual framework of the study in six sections respectively, as follows: the context of traditional newspapers; the Internet as a new medium; the introduction of electronic newspapers; gatekeeping theory; debates about changes from print to electronic newspapers and the gatekeeping function; and, finally, the conceptual framework of the study.

1.1 The Context of Traditional Newspapers

As this thesis concentrates on the study of the relationship between traditional and new newspapers, it is important to comprehend the definition of traditional newspapers, because it will lead to a better understanding of the relationship between the

development of newspapers and the emergence of new communication technologies. Reviewing the concept of traditional newspapers and their development also provides an understanding of the introduction of electronic newspapers. This section discusses the context of traditional newspapers in terms of several topics: definitions of traditional newspapers, types of newspapers, presentation (layout) of newspapers, content of newspapers, production process of newspapers and print newspapers in the Internet age.

1.1.1 Defining Traditional Newspapers

McQuail (1994: 14) describes the modern definition of newspapers as: regular and frequent appearance; commodity form; informational content; public sphere functions; urban, secular audience and relative freedom. A newspaper is a printed periodical that aims to deliver news and other information in an up-to-date and factual manner. Newspapers are published most commonly in daily editions, but may also be issued twice a day or weekly. Whilst the contents of newspapers vary, they generally consist of a prearranged combination of news, articles, columns, features and advertising. The editorial section is written by editors or reporters and other journalists under the direction of editors. A newspaper is usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint, which is not intended to last very long. Large printing presses print the editions and a network of delivery trucks bring them to the newsstands and geographical distribution centres for subscribers.

As newspapers are considered to be a traditional medium, media researchers are challenged to study them in comparison with their new counterparts, electronic newspapers. In this sense, the discussion of the knowledge of traditional newspapers in the following sections will provide a useful context for studying the similarities and differences between traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers.

1.1.2 Types of Newspapers

The understanding of newspapers' types is useful for this study in order to classify the group of newspaper samples.

Newspapers can be classified into a number of types depending on their size, region, publishing period and content characteristics. The types of newspapers are affected by the category of the contents, period of publishing, size, languages and region. They include: quality and popular or mass and specific; daily and non-daily; broadsheet and tabloid; local and foreign language; local, national and international (regional).

Most nations have at least one newspaper that circulates throughout the whole country: a national newspaper, as opposed to a local newspaper that serves a city or region. While most newspapers aim at a broad spectrum of readers, usually geographically defined, some focus on groups of readers defined more by their interests than their location: for example, there are daily and weekly business newspapers and sports newspapers. More specialists still are some weekly newspapers (usually free and distributed within limited areas) which may serve specific communities. In the same way, the printed newspapers in Thailand are classified into two groups by the character of the news content: the first is the quality newspaper, which publishes hard news such as political news, economic news, etc; the second is the popular newspaper, which offers soft or sensational news such as gossip, entertainment news, etc (Wanliko, 1973).

This study has chosen both quality and popular newspapers as the study samples in order that they might be compared and contrasted. Moreover, the knowledge of traditional newspapers' content, which will be presented in the following section, will be the guideline for this study to compare the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their content.

1.1.3 Content of Traditional Newspapers

The content published in newspapers is the primary data used for analysis in this study. It is essential to clarify the characteristics of traditional newspapers' content as follows. In general, there are five categories of content that are presented in traditional print newspapers: News, Editorial, Articles/Features, Columns and Advertisements (Pansitha, 2002). The details are presented below:

News

News is any new information or information on current events which is presented by print, broadcast, Internet, or word of mouth to a third party or mass audience. The reporting and investigation of news falls within the profession of journalism. News is often reported by a variety of sources, such as newspapers, television and radio programmes, wire services, and web sites. News reporting is a type of journalism, typically written or broadcast in news style. Most news is investigated and presented by journalists and can be distributed to various outlets via news agencies.

Commonly, news content should contain the "Five Ws" (who, what, when, where, why) of an event. Newspapers normally write hard news stories, such as those pertaining to murders, fires, wars, etc. in inverted pyramid style, so that the most important information is at the beginning. Busy readers can read as little or as much as they desire. Local stations and networks with a set format must take news stories and break them down into the most important aspects due to time constraints. Cable news channels such as *Fox News Channel*, *MSNBC*, and *CNN*, are able to take advantage of a story, sacrificing other, decidedly less important stories, and giving as much detail about breaking news as possible.

Although there is no standard definition of news, it is possible to compile a list of elements that always make news (Lovell, 1980:16). Some messages are clearly more

newsworthy than others, and the more newsworthy a message is, the more likely it is to be selected to pass a news gate. Lovell (1980: 40) concludes that:

“News is very different from ordinary, everyday events. Those with enough training and experience recognise it instantly for what it is: an event that will affect the lives of more than one person and be interesting to others to read about or view. An event must also be reported to be news. Elements like proximity, impact, accidents, crime, natural disasters, uniqueness, nostalgia, humour, sadness, prominence, government, war and timeliness help reporters and editors decide what news is. In this selection process they act as gatekeepers, making the decisions that affect the flow of information as it reaches the public. Front-page placement signifies newsworthiness. In deciding what is news, reporters and editors rely upon their training and experience and also take into account the policy of the newspaper and the opinions of readers.” (Lovell, 1980: 40)

In addition, Newsom and Wollert (1985: 12) indicate that many elaborate definitions of news have been constructed, but it is probably more useful to describe news than to try to define it. Newsworthiness is a character or element that can describe the meaning of the news. This is because events and situations regarded as newsworthy have certain characteristics in common. However, Newsom and Wollert (1985: 12) suggest that not all news stories will have all of these qualities, but all news stories will have some of

them. The following is a list of characteristics of newsworthiness by Newsom & Wollert (1985: 12):

- News is unusual. News involves the unusual issues.
- News is new. If someone does something that has not been done before that is news.
- Whenever something important changes, the change is likely to be newsworthy.
- News has impact. Anything that has a significant effect on people is news.
- News is interesting. Sometimes an event does not have much of an effect on anybody, but is interesting in itself.
- News is timely. News is what is happening today, what was not known until today, or what takes on a different perspective with new information.
- News is nearby. The closer an event is, the more likely it will be news, other things being equal.
- News is information. News is anything that people want or need to know.
- News is conflict. People disagree. When disagreements are widespread or when they are about things of importance to people, they become news.
- News is about people. The more prominent the person, the more likely his or her activities will qualify as news.
- News is surprising. Whenever something happens unexpectedly, or when something becomes known that no one had known about before, it is likely to be news.

These newsworthiness elements will be used as variable factors of content analysis to measure the news priority by news values (newsworthiness) and news topics in each newspaper sample, which will be discussed in the methodology and content analysis findings. The qualitative analysis of Thai print and electronic newspapers' contents in

terms of newsworthiness will help to investigate the process and policy of news selecting or gatekeeping in the study sample's organisations.

The next categories of content presented on traditional newspapers – Editorial, Articles, Columns and Advertisements – are described below:

Editorial

An editorial is a phrase or article by a news organisation, newspaper or magazine that expresses the opinion of the editor, editorial board, or publisher.

Articles/Features

An article is a stand-alone section of a larger written work. These non-fictional prose compositions appear in magazines, newspapers, academic journals, the Internet, or any other type of publication.

Columns

A column is a short newspaper or magazine piece that deals specifically with a particular field of interest, or broadly with an issue or circumstance of far-reaching scope. They appear with by-lines on a regular basis (daily, weekly, etc.).

Advertisements

Advertising is a paid, one-way communication through a medium in which the sponsor is identified and the sponsor controls the message. Variations include publicity, public relations, etc. Advertising is often placed by an advertising agency on behalf of a company.

The category of newspapers' content (as discussed above) has assisted this study to identify the content that is published in four newspaper samples and their counterparts. This will be used for content analysis study. However, this study concentrates on examining the news content and other non-news content, but not advertisements. The next section will reveal the presentation and format of traditional

newspapers, which is useful and necessary for this study when comparing the presentation of electronic newspapers.

1.1.4 Presentation and Format of Traditional Newspapers

The new technologies have enabled newspapers to publish colour photographs and graphics, as well as innovative layouts and better design. To help their titles stand out on newsstands, some newspapers are printed on coloured newsprint. The presentation and format of newspapers in this day is different from previous times.

Newspapers are usually printed on inexpensive, off-white paper known as newsprint. Since the 1980s, the newspaper industry has largely moved away from lower-quality letterpress printing to higher-quality, four-colour-process, offset printing. The changes in newspaper presentation and format are related to the inventions of new communication technologies used in newspapers' newsrooms. Desktop computers, word processing software, graphics software, digital cameras and digital prepress and typesetting technologies have revolutionised the newspaper production process, as will be discussed in the next section.

1.1.5 Production Process of Traditional Newspapers

First of all, Ericson *et al* (1987: 98) have created a diagram of the news production process in traditional newspapers describing how the news is produced in the traditional system.

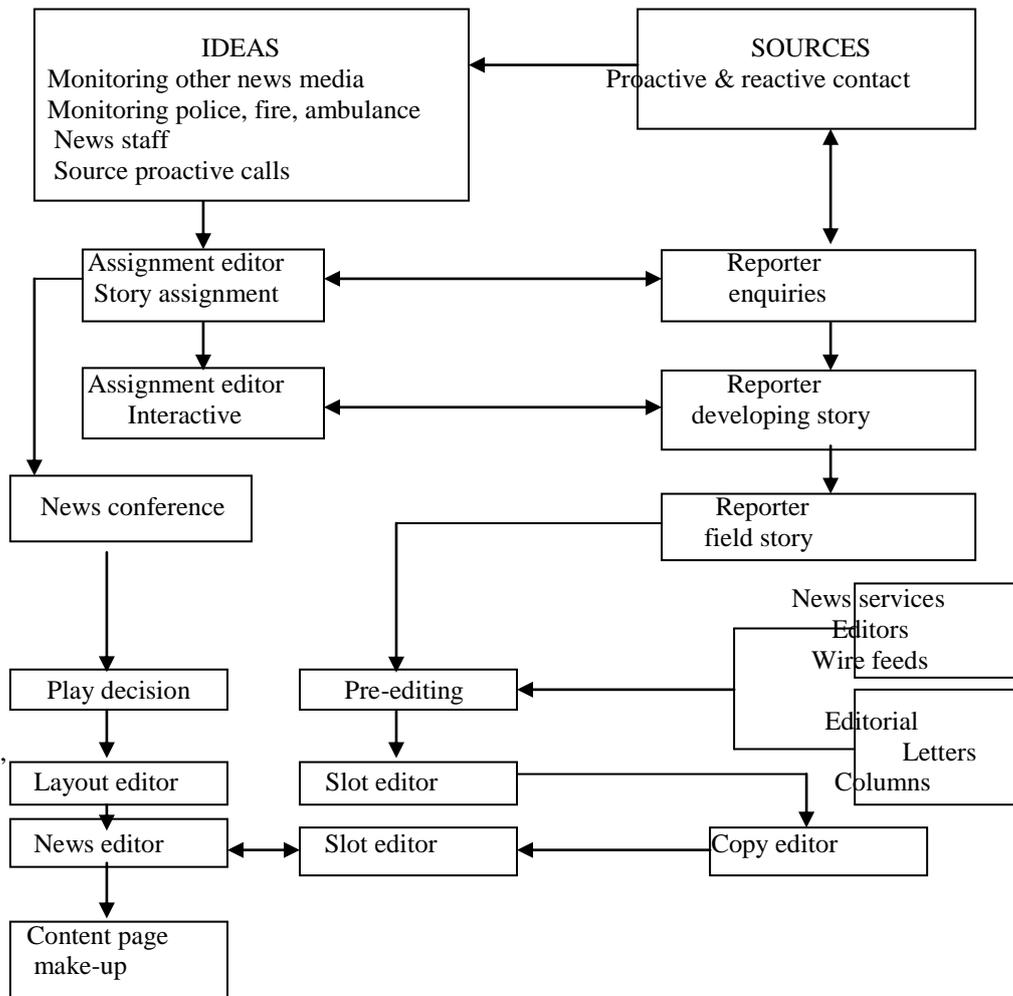


Figure 1.1: Diagram of the News Production Process in Traditional Newspapers

(Source: Ericson et al, 1987: 98)

Ericson *et al* (1987) explain that in the process of deciding what news or stories will be published, journalists and editors place varying importance on the different criteria of newsworthiness. These elements become more or less important depending on what else is happening, and there is always competition for journalists' attention. The more criteria are satisfied, the more likely the story will be chosen. Though one can identify standard criteria of newsworthiness, the story selection process is not necessarily systematic.

Similar to Ericson *et al*'s diagram, Pansitha (2002) has summarised the production process in Thailand newspapers' newsrooms as follows:

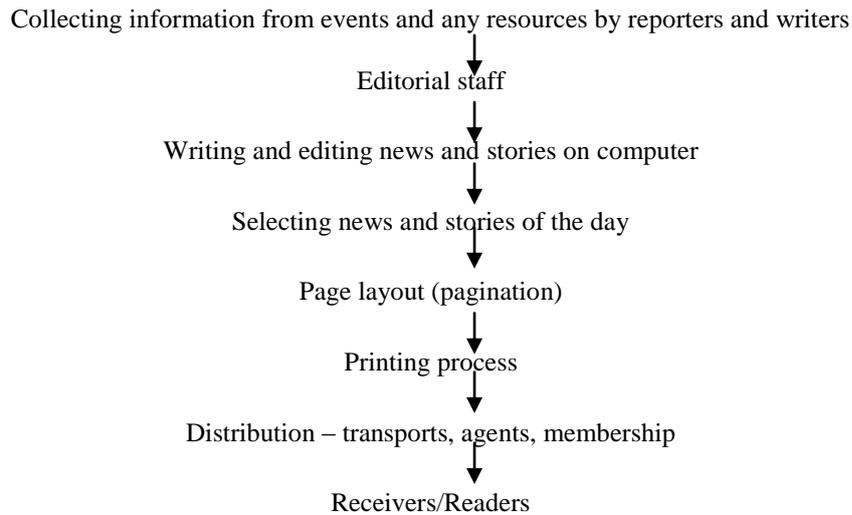


Figure 1.2: Diagram of Thailand Newspaper's Production Process

Source: Pansitha (2002)

The diagram presents a similar process to the one outlined by Ericson *et al* (1987). The process starts with the reporters and writers collecting information from the events and any resources, and then sending them to editorial staff in the newsrooms via communication technology, such as telephone, mobile phone, e-mail, fax or video link. At this point, the selection process will begin to select some information to be published and some information not to be published. This process, which involves the decision-making of the editor, is the process of gatekeeping, which McQuail (2000) defines as an initial selection process and later editorial processing of event reports in news organisations. The gatekeeping or news selection process, which plays an important role in the analytical concept of this study, will be discussed in section 1.4: gatekeeping theory. Analysing the relationship between print newspapers and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production process and news content will help to answer whether and how selection process operates in these two medium.

1.1.6 Print Newspapers in the Internet Age

Print newspapers have developed in line with the advancement in communication technologies, particularly in their production processes, from letterpress printing technology to new print technologies via computer systems. In the late 20th century, Internet network technology has opened up new possibilities for the news delivery of newspapers (Gunter, 2003: 1). The perspectives of traditional newspapers in the Internet era will help to understand why and how traditional newspapers go online.

Brody (1990: 214-215) reports that newspaper publishers received the following message about new technologies and traditional newspapers:

“Technology should not be used to mechanize an existing process or product, but to open new possibilities altogether. In contrast with newspapers’ past experience, advertising may be a much more important product to consumers than editorial content when it comes to new technological forms of delivery. This does not mean the pressure is off newspapers. The greatest danger for newspaper management lies in standing still. The status quo will not continue; newspapers that do nothing will fall further and further behind. Competition continues to emerge from often-unexpected sources. New technology will bring newspapers either a serious erosion of readership and revenues—or an explosion of new opportunities—according to how well it is managed”

Brody (1990) also adds that the newspaper executives have been urged to modernise, to launch electronic information services individually, to acquire their existing distribution

systems and to use the new technology to produce “a new and golden age of newspapers.”

Writing about the evolution of the newspaper in CMC Magazine, Lapham (1st July, 1995: 7) states that at the end of the twentieth century, two powerful forces have emerged to change the mass communication model: the use of computers and the constantly accelerating capacity of new technology to enhance communication. He adds that because this change in the mass communication model is occurring so rapidly, some are calling it a ‘technological’ or ‘information revolution’. Lapham also says that we are experiencing a natural step in the evolutionary progression of communication from oral and literal to computers. Lapham (1995) refers to Ong’s (1980) suggestion that if we can accept that writing is a form of technology, then computer-mediated communication (CMC) is simply another way of technologising the word.

In this decade the Internet system has become society’s new channel of communication and mass communication. This new medium has greater benefits than the old one. Gates (1996) mentions in his book “The Road Ahead” the benefits of Internet technology to newspaper industries. Firstly, the low costs involved in online newspaper production allow the publishers to save on the costs of printing, such as paper and ink. Secondly, the ability to reach more users through the Internet network benefits newspaper publishers greatly. Thirdly, this new media provides a high quality of message with more obvious and accurate reception. This is because digital data offers a better quality of picture and sound than analogue data. Finally, with the capacity of the Internet network, which is linked with fibre optics, satellites, telephone lines and mobile phone waves, the limitations on perception in terms of timing and location become less significant (Gates, 1996).

Due to the importance of the Internet network, newspapers and other print industries have to pay more attention to this new medium. Newspaper publishers are aware of using the World Wide Web as a new channel to deliver their publications to wider readers. At the same time, because of the potential of the World Wide Web and the Internet network, the transformation of text, still photos, animation photos, graphics, film, video, and sound are all possible. Therefore, traditional newspapers look toward using this new medium as a new tool in their battle with electronic media. Rieder (1999) proposes four strategies to help newspapers compete better in the Internet age: 1) ease of use: newspapers should be sectioned consistently and focused on better indexing, more news summaries and relevant content; 2) utility: newspapers should offer tips on how to simplify readers' lives; 3) local content: the news stories, as well as the advertising, should be local; 4) marketing: be aggressive about promoting the newspaper and its place in the local community. Rieder (1999) concludes that the challenge for the entire newspaper industry in the future will be to develop a true national network of local websites.

The print publishing businesses around the world, including those in Thailand, have realised the potential of the Internet network as the biggest information source in the world (Sudbantad, 1994). The Internet network also provides the great potential as an operation system. There are three reasons for publishers in Thailand to turn into online businesses: to catch up with the new global technology; to reduce production costs; and to seek new marketing opportunities (Internet Today, 1998: 29). Kritsanaprakornkit (1999) predicts that, eventually, electronic newspapers in the form of online news may replace all traditional media, such as newspapers, television and radio, as a news service for the global village. The non-stop progress of new communication technologies has allowed the rapid spread of the Internet across the world.

An understanding of the concept of traditional newspapers including their development in the Internet age as discussed in this section will help to comprehend the development of newspaper industries and the invention of electronic newspapers in Thailand. In addition, the discussion will be the first to investigate the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news content and production processes. The next section will disclose the growth and the capacity of the Internet including its roles and effects on the newspaper industry.

1.2 The Internet as a New Medium

The concept of traditional newspapers has been explored above. It is now necessary for this study to understand the connection between traditional newspapers and the Internet network. To do so, the revolution of communication technologies, particularly the Internet, will be analysed in this section. Examining the Internet as a new medium will help to understand the emergence of electronic newspapers and their changing gatekeeping role.

The discussion concentrates on the importance of the advancement of communication technologies, particularly when Internet technology becomes a new medium in the communication process. In an age of increasing technological innovation, the use of the Internet in the 1990s may have spread more rapidly than any other innovation in human history (Rogers, 1995). In the newspaper's newsroom, journalists use interactive media to carry out traditional functions such as, primarily, reporting and producing news. But journalists are beginning to use interactive media not only to gather information but also to disseminate it (Rogers, 1995). This is the

starting point for traditional newspapers making use of the new communication technology, the Internet network, as will be analysed in the following sections.

1.2.1 The Approaching of the Internet in Mass Media

The dramatic advances in computer and telecommunications technologies are changing our world into a new form of society: the information society. Due to this progress, mass communication has improved its capacity, its effectiveness and its stability for surviving in the competitive business world (Sudbantad, 1994: 12). The rapid advance of communication technology has created the new communication channel that does not have any significant limitations on time and space. Computer-mediated communication (CMC), particularly the Internet-based network, brings a fast and easily accessible way of communicating to computer users around the world. Using computer technology as an alternative channel offers a way for old media to make use of its capabilities, as print newspapers post their news on the Internet.

Hiltz (1978, quoted in Kumvijitra, 1998: 52) divides the use of computer technology as a medium in the communication process into three purposes. Firstly, the computer has been introduced as a new form of communication to replace an old one, for instance the use of electronic mail (e-mail) to communicate instead of telegrams or telephones. Secondly, computer technology is used along with the existing medium, for example reading television listings on the Internet before turning on the television. Finally, the computer network is introduced as a new channel in the communication process. Reading a newspaper on the Internet will be another form of consuming news. McCarthy (1994, quoted in Kumvijitra, 1998) also suggests that, in the information society, the Internet network has changed its role to become a new mass medium. This medium is not only a new channel dedicated computer usage, but can also be used by

old mass media. From this perspective, it is important to define the meaning of this new medium, the Internet.

1.2.2 Defining Internet Computer-based Communication (CMC)

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is defined by Li (1998) as any form of human interaction across two or more networked computers. While the term has traditionally referred to those communications that occur via computer-mediated formats (i.e., instant messages, e-mails, chat rooms) it has also been applied to other forms of text-based interaction such as text messaging. CMC was first introduced in the middle of the 20th century not long after the invention of the computer. In the attempts to understand the Internet as a new medium and to define the concept of Internet-based communication, communication scholars are grappling with the unique characteristics of the Internet (December, 1996; and Winter *et al*, 1996, quoted in Suriyasarn, 1998a).

According to Rafaeli (1988, quoted in Suriyasarn, 1998a), there are five qualities that help to identify Internet-based communication: multimedia; hypertextuality; packet switching; elasticity of synchronicity; and interactivity.

Multimedia: Unlike any traditional mass media, the delivery capacity of which is generally limited to one dominant sensory mode (e.g., print, audio and video), the sensory appeal of the Internet is vast, including text, graphics, pictures, animation, audio, video and virtual-reality.

Hypertextuality: Traditional linearity of content and media presentation is being replaced by the hypertextual nature of the Internet. Instead of a vertical/hierarchical order predetermined by writer and editor, the contents of the Internet are presented by a more horizontal/egalitarian pattern, with each piece of content being more or less

independent from the rest in the same package. Readers or Internet users can therefore access the content in any order they prefer without feeling too much discontinuity.

Package switching: This is an organising principle of the Internet. Information on the Internet is sent in a ‘package’, which floats through any given route in the globally interconnected networks in search of its destination. In this technical structure, the computer, rather than a living creature, determines which information will be transmitted through which route. Therefore, traditional ‘gatekeeping’ becomes obsolete.

Elasticity of synchronicity: Despite the fact that recent mass communication and telecommunication have become synchronous – for example, television programmes can be recorded by VCR, telephones have answering machine and voice mail, etc – the Internet effectively stretches the edges of communication on the synchronicity continuum. That is, while communication on the Internet can be completed instantaneously, it can also be consumed with an unprecedented delay.

Interactivity: Rafaeli (1988, quoted in Suriyasarn, 1998a) defines interactivity as ‘the extent to which communication reflects back on itself, feeds on and responds to the past’. Interactivity recognises three pertinent levels: two-way (non-interactive) communication, reactive (or quasi-interactive) communication, and fully interactive communication.

The widespread use of Computer-Mediated Communication in newspapers’ production processes obviously involves the capacity of this new medium. Therefore, the next section will discuss the capacity of the Internet as a new medium.

1.2.3 Capacity of the Internet as a New Medium

Rogers (1986: 150) discusses the effect of new technology on communications as a whole and the effect of information technology on the communication process, which, in the digital age, tends to create new concepts and models of communication. Rogers (1986: 150) refers to Johasen's notion from 1984 about new technologies and communication:

“The new media are shaking the foundations of how communication can occur. Designations, such as mass media; interactive; broadcast; and even communications, are being redefined on the fly. The scale of impacts is staggering. The potential uses are intriguing. The impacts are puzzling”.

Li (1998: 355-356) also proposes three new media models that are similar to Rafaeli's five qualities of Internet-based communication described above. These models reflect the capacity of new media in the communication process. They are: the interactivity model, the new hybrid model and the media transition model. Discussing the new media models, Bordewijk and Kaam (1986, quoted in McQuail, 2005: 145) have developed four basic communication patterns, which summarise the three new media models by Li (1998) describing how new-media capabilities benefit the communication system.

1. Allocation. Information is distributed from the centre simultaneously to many peripheral receivers, which is typical of the “old media” of mass communication.

2. Conversation. Individuals interact directly with each other, by passing a centre or intermediary and choosing their own partners as well as the time.

3. Consultation. Refers to a range of different communication situations in which individuals look for information at a central store of information.

4. Registration. The consultation pattern in reverse, in that the centre requests and receivers obtain information from a participant at the periphery (usually without their awareness).

Bordewijk and Kaam (1986, in McQuail, 2005: 145) conclude that the trend of the communication process in new media changes from allocutory to consultative to conversational. This change implies a broad shift in the balance of communicative power from sender to receiver. However, it is not clear to what degree the shift of control takes place in Internet newspapers.

Old media can benefit from this technology by using the Internet as an alternative channel, as print newspapers post their news on the Internet (Li, 1998). Although communication has always taken place between readers and newspaper editors, the Internet network has offered a new possibility for two-way communication (Li, 1998). This is the possibility of receiving rapid feedback from readers via web forums or e-mail. The two-way communication on the Internet also means that electronic newspapers' readers have been given a new opportunity to be senders by publishing their information on the websites. The priority of receivers in this new communication process is much more than in the old process because Internet users can choose to access anything they want to.

The discussion above has shown the ability and effect of the Internet as a new medium in the communication process. As discussed earlier, print newspapers in Thailand have adopted the Internet network as their new delivery channel. Although most mainstream newspapers in Thailand have published their products online (Thaweotchitcharoen, 2000), Thailand's electronic newspapers are still developing

their products. This thesis is, partly, an attempt to explore why and how print newspapers in Thailand go online. The context of the Internet as a new medium will be used to build a core understanding of the introduction of electronic newspapers. The next section will explore the concept and development of electronic newspapers.

1.3 The Introduction of Electronic Newspapers

The invention of electronic newspapers represents a huge step in the evolution of newspapers. Wollert (1985), for instance, believed that newspapers of the future would not be the thick papers, but electronic systems that can transmit a 100-page newspaper or magazine to the home in 24 seconds. The information and data appear on home screens in "video pages", which can be selected for reading in order or at random, much like a regular newspaper. This new form of information delivery to homes is known as 'Electronic newspaper', the newspaper of tomorrow. The electronic newspaper is a good example of a new medium in the mass communication process. This kind of technology is the new form of an old traditional newspaper that everyone in society has been using for a long time.

This section discusses the conventions of electronic or Internet newspapers from several resources to provide a framework for electronic newspapers as a new concept in communication theory. The possible effects of the news content messages and webpage design of electronic newspapers on information retrieval are also discussed. Finally, the related studies of information technology and electronic newspapers are considered to obtain practical information about electronic newspapers.

1.3.1 Defining Electronic Newspapers

The Conser Program Home Page of the Library of Congress (1998) defines an electronic newspaper as:

“A remote access computer file newspaper is commonly called an electronic newspaper. An e-newspaper must fit the definition of both a newspaper and a remote access computer file serial: a serial publication containing news on current events of special or general interest, issued in a machine-readable format, and ‘accessed via input/output devices connected electronically to a computer’. E-newspapers are accessed most frequently via the Internet”.

It is added that newspaper publishing is undergoing an evolution that will likely change the form of what is currently considered a newspaper (Library of Congress, July 1998). E-newspapers are often associated with an exciting newspaper in print. Most e-newspapers do not have a directory though they do have a chronology, and many maintain archives of back issues online. This definition excludes: homepages mounted by publishers (without links to issues); advertisements for online papers; websites that only compile news from external sources; online news services (without designated issues); and dial-up bulletin board services (Library of Congress, July 1998).

Furthermore, McGregor (1998) asks on her Boldly Go website: “What is an online newspaper?” This suggests that there is some disagreement over the term “online newspaper”. A newspaper in some people’s minds can only exist on newsprint, so websites should be called something else. The problem is that the term seems to have stuck. However, McGregor (1998) mentions that an online newspaper is usually a

website created and maintained by a print media or organisation. Many online newspapers share a name and/or brand identity with a “parent” print newspaper, but online newspapers go far beyond traditional print media brand names. Sometimes websites based on magazines or newsletters are called news services. Similar in design and content to print newspapers’ websites, they become online newspapers of sorts. Other online news services are entirely new and have never published or broadcasted news in any other medium; their sites too are competitors in the online newspaper market. McGregor (1998) concludes that the numerous online newspaper variations represent the power and essence of multimedia convergence online – or, in plain English, the use of traditional media (text, still photographs, graphics, audio, and video) together with new media (hypertext, image maps and other interactive tools) in one multidimensional, digital environment. Traditional media organisations that used to do different thing – black and white broadsheet versus glossy magazine pages, written text versus audio or video – are now competing in the same format. Although having different identities and capabilities, their interpretations and applications of the medium will vary.

An online newspaper, also known as a web newspaper, is a newspaper that exists on the Internet. Modern printed newspapers all over the world are developing and running web newspapers. Publishing online created more opportunities for newspapers. For instance, it allowed newspapers to compete more effectively with broadcast journalism in presenting breaking news online in a timelier manner than printing allows. Many in the newspaper industry also see the credibility and strong brand recognition of well-established newspapers, and the close relationships they have with advertisers, as strengthening their chances of survival. The movement away from the printing process can also help decrease costs.

1.3.2 The Structure of Electronic Newspapers

According to Mostrom and team (1995: 3), the following characteristics make up the core of the electronic newspaper concept: public availability; news; universal contents; regular publishing; journalism and editing; direct and ubiquitous access. They also report that the characteristics presented above are valuable guidelines in creating an electronic news distribution service. Looking into the core characteristics of the electronic newspaper concept also helps the producer to make use of the many possibilities the electronic medium offers. The producer can explore and implement the improvements that can be made to the traditional newspaper, without risking losing the advantages of the newspaper.

The study by Mostrom and team (1995) regarding regional newspapers on the Internet in Sweden shows that electronic newspapers are not only used as a concept for information distribution, but are also used as a metaphor when designing the user interface. The study also finds that there are several ways in which readers navigate through the information in a traditional newspaper, such as paging through it from beginning to end, or going straight to a special section, for example sports or editorial, and navigation strategies have been considered when implementing the prototype electronic newspaper. Furthermore, Mostrom *et al* (1995) assures that the most important aspect of an electronic newspaper is how well the readers are able to navigate and find the information they are looking for. They add that in a print newspaper this is an unimportant problem because most papers have the same kind of information at the same place in every issue; for example, to read the TV programme listings in X newspaper the readers just have to open the last page.

The next two sections will discuss the characteristics of the content and the format of electronic newspapers.

1.3.3 Contents of Electronic Newspapers

The content presented in electronic newspapers is also the primary content for analysis in this study. Although the electronic newspaper is a new phenomenon in mass communication, there are some suggestions from the studies of the content presentation in electronic newspapers as follows:

Doungmanee (1996) concludes in her study about the information distribution of Thai mass media through the World Wide Web that contents published in electronic newspapers can be categorised into three types: duplicated content, summarised or edited content, and additional or created content. The details are as follows:

Duplicated or reproduced content: This type of content is reproduced from content that was published in their print counterparts, both news and non-news stories. This includes the replication of the headline, the lead, the content and also the length of the stories.

Concise or shortened content: Although this kind of content is also reproduced from their print editions, it has been edited or shortened before posting on the Internet. The content from the print edition will be summarised and the length of the stories will not exceed a certain length.

Additional or created content: The last type of content is the content that has been created for publishing only in electronic newspapers and does not appear in their print editions. The major additional content in electronic newspapers is Breaking News.

There is not much knowledge about the characteristics of content in electronic newspapers. This study has tried to explore more information about the content of electronic newspapers in Thailand, which will be presented in chapter six. However, the next section will discuss the presentation or format of electronic newspapers from several studies.

1.3.4 Presentation and Format of Electronic Newspapers

Rogers (1986) suggests that because of the potentials of the Internet, newspapers on the Internet are able to present their content in several formats such as the interactive model, the multimedia model, continuous change, ease of navigation, etc.

On the other hand, McAdams (1994) criticises the presentation of newspapers on the Internet, and says that although Internet technology is rapidly growing, newspapers on the Internet are still attached to traditional newspaper presentation. This can be seen from the newspaper's website layout, which looks like its print parent. This probably stems from the old belief of traditional newspapers that "Design is fixed, it is content that changes" (McAdams, 1994). However, the study by Dounmanee (1996) suggests two formats of the presentation of electronic newspapers: frame and non-frame.

1.3.5 Production Process of Electronic Newspapers

The following diagram shows the production process of electronic newspapers as suggested by Mostrom *et al* (1995).

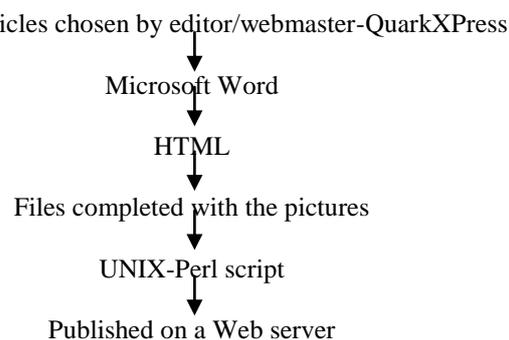


Figure 1.3: Electronic Newspaper Production Process by Mostrom et al, 1995

Mostrom *et al* (1995) explain that the production process of electronic newspapers begins with an editor selecting the articles to be published from the Quark XPress files

and transfers them to Microsoft Word, where a number of macro files convert them to HTML format. These files, when complete, together with the pictures, are transferred to a UNIX machine where a Perl script creates all indexes and makes a few other transformations. Then the result is published on a Web server.

1.3.6 The Benefits and Limitations of Electronic Newspapers

There are various benefits of electronic newspapers for the newspaper industry and for readers. A great advantage for the newspaper industry is the solution of the newspaper delivery problem (Moghdam, 1978: iii), as well as the reduction of the cost of printing production (Wollert, 1985). At the same time, readers of newspapers also gain benefit from this new technology. For example, the Internet network offers the chance to read the electronic edition before the print edition, and the chance to read newspapers from any country in the world at the same time.

On the other side, there are some limitations and effects of the electronic newspaper in terms of producing and receiving. According to Marshall (1983: 2-3), the electronic newspaper system still has major problems of access, privacy and copyright. Wollert (1985: 141) also discusses the problem of control and regulation of the electronic newspaper system, which is the combination of print media and electronic media, that 'the uncontrolled information system has directly affected the ethical and professional responsibility in writing on the website'. The readers who want to access electronic newspaper sites have to buy a computer screen before they can buy the information (Marshall, 1983: 2). The readers also need the knowledge and skills to use this new technology. Another problem when using the Internet is the uncontrolled system in sending and receiving useless or dangerous information on the Internet.

These are the economic problems, technological illiteracy, and cultural problems of many people, especially the population in developing countries (Marshall, 1983: 3).

1.3.7 The Debates in Moving from Print Newspapers to Electronic Newspapers

There is a range of debates about the change of traditional newspapers to electronic newspapers in this new era. The newspaper owners have started to realise that paper printing is more expensive than providing an online version. This statement has been proven when the first electronic newspaper service was available in London, England, including a report of news, features, an entertainment schedule and a sports programme. It also included special news for deaf children and the unemployed (Malamut, 1994: 23).

The Mercury Center is generally considered to be the first newspaper in the U.S.A. to publish online, launching on 10th May 1993 on America Online (AOL). One-fifth of this online newspaper, including headlines and short news summaries, was free, but the rest was available to paid subscribers only. Furthermore, according to Negroponte (1995), the electronic newspaper is a common but essential step approaching the supreme goal of interactive media. Negroponte (1995) sees the future trend of electronic newspapers as high-definition computer screens with all kinds of information. He also predicts that whole categories of publications and other media applications – for instance, culture-books, newspapers, magazines, videos, musical recordings, films and personal mail – will be digital in the near future.

Additionally, Wolferman (1994, quoted in Consoli, 1994: 19), the senior vice president for technology of the Newspaper Association of America, also sees new technology as one key to the future of the newspaper industry. He says, “Whether these new channels include interactive TV, online computer services, CD-ROM technology

or other emerging technologies, newspapers must ensure their place as the primary information provider regardless of the pipeline”.

McAdams (1994: 30-34) suggests that there are a number of advantages of print newspapers going online in her study “Molding the Medium”. Many of them are positive, for example an online newspaper does not have any significant limitations on space, allowing more local coverage. Moreover, an online editor does not have to worry about the slogan: “all the news that fits, we print” (McAdams, 1994: 30-34). Another advantage reported by McAdams (1994: 30-34) is that readers will be able to search the archives of the online newspaper to find related articles that may provide a background for today’s story. There are constant forms of information that do not appear in the newspaper but are well suited to an online version. Users can find information about recycling, country health services and parks. Furthermore, McAdams (1994) finds that online newspapers offer further functionalities, as they can provide information and services such as the electronic-mail addresses of editors and reporters and links to other sources of information, including original documents from a speech.

In contrast, Katz (1994) blasted the typical user interface of today’s Internet newspapers. Katz (1994) argues that reading a newspaper online is difficult, cumbersome and time consuming. Moreover, the characters and features of printed newspapers that still work – such as the convenience of paper, visual freedom, a sense of priorities, a personal experience – has disappeared according to Katz (1994). He concludes that online newspapers have thrown away what makes the newspaper medium special. Similarly, Karnjana (1999), a Thai scholar, mentions that reading a newspaper on the screen takes too much time and costs more money than reading a printed newspaper. Karnjana also claims that in Thai society the cost of a print

newspaper is cheaper than an electronic newspaper, which requires a computer and Internet service.

However, Lapham (1995) believes that Internet technology enables newspapers to deliver a better, more audience-aware product in an immediate and inexpensive way. The Web uses the hypertext capabilities to eliminate the news gap and open up an unlimited space for presenting news messages. Bromley and Bowles (1995), in an analysis of computer users in the Virginia Tech University community, also agree that:

“It would appear prudent for newspapers in a wired community with free public access to the Internet to actively and aggressively pursue reader service options from the onset. With a flat and aging subscriber base and decline in percentage of advertising dollars, the industry can ill-afford a wait-and-see attitude or to wait for technological perfection.”

In the meantime, there are still those within the technologically savvy community who have reservations about the future of electronic newspapers. For example, Stool (1995: 11), who wrote “Silicon Snake Oil”, analyses how the Internet will provide news and does not like what he sees:

“I don’t want my morning paper delivered over the computer, or a CD-ROM stuffed with National Geographic photographs. Call me a troglodyte; I’d rather peruse those photos alongside my sweetheart, catch the newspaper on the way to work, and page through a real book.” (Stoll, 1995: 11)

In 1996, a survey of newspapers and magazines by Ross and Middleberg (quoted in Li, 1998: 353) found that 77 percent of all newspaper and magazine editors in U.S.A. had planned an online edition. This figure shows the spread of online excitement when compared with the figure of 54 percent in 1995. It was reported that with daily newspapers, 15 percent are already online, and an estimated 72 percent are expected to be online within five years. Some 29 percent of the magazines in the sample were distributing an electronic product, and another 31 percent expected to be doing so by 1997. Until recently, mass communication researchers have overlooked not only the Internet but the entire field of computer-mediated communication, staying instead with the traditional forms of broadcast and print media that fit much more conveniently into models for appropriate research topics and theories of mass communication (Morris *et al*, 1996).

Also, Harper (1996) finds in his study “Online newspapers: Going somewhere or going nowhere” that while there had been a great deal of attention paid to the advent of electronic newspapers, the future of electronic newspapers is barely positive. In fact, the delivery system is the main difference between a printed newspaper and its electronic counterpart. So far, there has been little significant change in the basic content of the newspaper. The reporters file the same stories, and the electronic newspaper packages the material in a different fashion. There are advantages to the electronic version, such as the ability to search news items or classified advertising. There are no significant limitations of space in an electronic newspaper, but there are some questions about advertising revenues and whether the electronic newspaper is simply a transitional means to another form of providing information that includes not only text and graphics, but also audio, video and niche market news. There is a great

deal of discussion about the readership of this new newspaper, although the basic audience will essentially be the same (Harper, 1996).

Also, the study by Li (1998: 353-356) concerning the content of three U.S. Internet newspapers finds that Internet newspapers give more priority to textual information than to graphic information, and large graphics are more likely to appear on homepages than on front pages and news article pages. Li (1998) also found that the news links and the multiple communication channels adopted by Internet newspapers in webpage design have created a new environment of communication, which involves more than the host newspaper and initial audience. A new communication environment with interconnected links has turned the traditional one-to-many newspaper publishing process into many-to-many communication. This new communication process is centred with and facilitated by the host Internet newspapers. The interconnected news links brought in audience participation when producing newspaper content and providing information beyond the original newspaper content, which demonstrates a shift in the balance of communicative power from sender to receiver (Li, 1998).

When looking at the structure of webpages, Baird (1987) suggests that the World Wide Web has an advantage over print newspapers. The Internet network is excellent for displaying colourful graphics. Baird (1987) suggested that the remarkable change in American newspaper layout during the last decade has been created by the technological advances in graphic design. With advanced computer technology, retrieving graphics from databases and updating them as required by an Internet newspaper can be completed in minutes. The trend of newspapers' increased use of graphics can continue in the Internet environment. McAdams (1997a), on the other hand, argues that one of the problems that handicaps current hypertext systems is that

readers get lost. Internet viewers make so many jumps away from the article they start reading that they cannot find their way back.

Despite the fast growth of Internet newspapers, few studies have researched their changing roles. Some studies of Internet new media have focused primarily on the effect of new technology on the dominance of existing media. Because Internet newspapers have emerged at such a fast pace, the examination of Internet newspapers fell behind, and studies focused primarily on newspapers available on commercial online services, such as America Online. Some researchers contended that access to newspaper content on the Internet was a privilege belonging only to the most technically advanced readers.

Morris and Ogan (1996) note that mass communications researchers have overlooked the Internet, staying instead with the traditional forms of broadcast and print media that fit more conveniently into models for appropriate research topics and theories of mass communication. McAdams (1997b) also points out that the importance of a good user metaphor could not be underestimated. A person's expectations and assumptions about how an online system works and what it can and cannot do come largely from this metaphor. A design must choose metaphors so that the users understand the system, such as using the "front page" as the entry point to the system. In the meantime, Middleberg and Ross (1997) find in their annual survey of journalists that photos were most often cited as items that make a site useful.

In 1998, Singer's published paper provided the foundation for research into online journalists' changing roles. This paper suggests four approaches that may help provide theory-based underpinnings in the study of journalists and the way in which their roles and jobs are changing. Singer (1998) indicates in her paper that 'one of the most easily accessible theories is the journalists as gatekeepers, a role that clearly seems

threatened by a medium in which users can put their fingers on virtually any bit of information that interests them’.

In the case of Thailand, the emergence of electronic newspapers has attracted the attention of Thai media scholars since their birth in 1995. There are a number of researches on the use and effect of electronic newspapers in Thailand, but none of them focus on their gatekeeping role. The details of Thai studies will be fully presented in the chapter on the background of the case study.

The context of traditional newspapers and the impact of the Internet technology as a new medium for the communication process, including the invention of electronic newspapers, have provided knowledge of the evolution of traditional newspapers in the Internet environment. The next section will reveal the concept of the gatekeeping function and the analytical perspective on the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers.

1.4 Gatekeeping Theory

Due to the important role of gatekeeping in traditional mass media and its changes in the new-media environment, the main framework of this research has relied upon the gatekeeping process as a media function. Gatekeeping theory is one of the original classic approaches in mass communication research and has remained important since it was devised in 1947 by Lewin, a social psychologist. This is confirmed by Shoemaker (1991:75) who states that although gatekeeping literature covers more than 50 years and scores of studies, more can be done. Despite the fact that, during those times, severe criticism of the gatekeeping approach has been raised, it has not completely lost its place in the mass communication field (Shoemaker, 1991). Gatekeeping is still one of

the most important theories studied by students of mass communication and journalism. According to Jensen (2002), newspapers are said to play a secondary, intermediate role as a 'selector' or 'gatekeeper'; they perform such functions as selection, rejection, and re-editing in their day-by-day production process.

However, the arrival of the Internet as a new medium in the newspaper business has sparked further questions about gatekeeping as a traditional media function. Singer (1998) suggests that the function has obviously been threatened by the technology, as users can select any information that interests them. However, there is some evidence that the news media see the gatekeeping function as evolving and adapting rather than disappearing (Singer, 1998). Therefore, studying the gatekeeping function in relation to the news production processes and news content of electronic newspapers by comparing them with print newspapers is a principal issue for this thesis.

It is worth noting here that this thesis analyses gatekeeping in a specific way and distinct from the traditional conception of gatekeeping. It applies the gatekeeping concept not only in the study of news selection but also in the analysis of news content that has been selected and created by the production process. The study has overlooked other antecedents of traditional gatekeeping study, such as factors influencing the entrance of items into the channel of media organisation, the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates, and gatekeepers (Shoemaker, 1991). However, these dimensions of the traditional gatekeeping model could be a further approach.

At this point, it is important to define gatekeeping theory as it is used as the main conceptual framework of this study to understand the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news selection and news production processes.

1.4.1 Defining Gatekeeping Theory

The terms gatekeeping and communication were first introduced by Lewin in his unfinished manuscript “Frontiers in Group Dynamics: II, Channels of group Life, Social Planning and Action Research” in the Journal of Human Relations, 1947 (quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 10). ‘Gatekeeping’ has been widely used as a metaphor to describe the process by which selections are made in media work, especially decisions regarding whether or not to allow a particular news report to pass through the ‘gates’ of a news medium into the news channels (White, 1950; Shoemaker, 1991). However, the idea of gatekeeping had a much wider potential application since it can apply to the work of literary agents and publishers, and to the many kinds of editorial and production work in print media and television. It applies to decisions about the distribution and marketing of existing media products. In a wider sense gatekeeping refers to the power to give or withhold access to different voices in society and is often a locus of conflict.

Gatekeeping is also one of the best-known constructs of communication research and plays an important role in the communication process, as Donohue *et al* (1972, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 1) suggests:

“Gatekeeping can be defined as a broader process of information control that includes all aspects of message encoding: not just selection but also withholding, transmission, shaping, display, repetition, and timing of information as it goes from the sender to the receiver.”

It is obvious that the process of communication always involves the editing and selecting of information as it goes from the sender to the receiver. Therefore, the study of gatekeeping theory has attracted many media scholars.

McQuail (2005: 556) also gives the definition of gatekeeping as ‘a general term for the role of initial selection and later editorial processing of event reports in news organizations.’ In this sense, news organisations have to decide what ‘events’ to admit through the ‘gates’ of the media on grounds of their ‘newsworthiness’ and other criteria. At this point, it is useful to review the history and concept of this long-established traditional media function as follows.

1.4.2 History and Orientation of Gatekeeping

In 1947, Kurt Lewin, a psychologist, used the term "gatekeeping" to describe a wife or mother as the person who decides which foods end up on the family's dinner table (Shoemaker, 1991). The gatekeeper is the person who decides what shall pass through each gate section, of which, in any process, there are several. Although he applied it originally to the food chain, he then added that the gating process could include a news item winding through communication channels in a group. This is the point from which most gatekeeper studies in communication are launched.

White (1950, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991) was the person who seized upon Lewin's comments and turned them solidly toward journalism in 1950. This was further developed by McNelly in 1959 (quoted in Shoemaker, 1991) to include the whole chain of the gatekeeping process, from the initial reporting of the event in a real location to the editor in a newspaper's newsroom. In 1976, McCombs and Shaw (quoted in Shoemaker, 1991) took a different direction when they looked at the effects of gatekeepers' decisions. They found that the audience learns how much importance to attach to a news item from the emphasis the media place on it. McCombs and Shaw also point out that the gatekeeping concept is related to the newer concept, agenda-setting (Shoemaker, 1991).

Shoemaker (1991) also provides a useful context of the theory and the process and looked at how gatekeeping is applied at the individual, communication routine, organisational and institutional levels. Furthermore, it concludes with a new gatekeeping model that acknowledges individual gatekeepers working within a single institution, internal and external forces along the channels, and feedback.

1.4.3 Concept and Elements of the Gatekeeping Process

According to Shoemaker (1991), in journalism, gatekeeping is the process through which ideas and information are filtered for publication. It involves the internal decision-making process of relaying or withholding information from the newspaper newsrooms to the mass readers. Gatekeeping occurs at all levels of the newspaper news production process – from the reporter deciding which sources are chosen to be included in a story, to editors deciding which stories are printed, or even covered. The process of gatekeeping involves selecting from a large number of messages those few that will be transmitted to one or more receivers. This process is an activity that is performed by a newspaper organisation and its representatives. The basic process of gatekeeping is that messages are created from information about events that have passed through a series of gates and has been changed in the process. Some information ends up on a newspaper's front page, some in the middle of a news section or webpage, and some never makes it into the news at all (Shoemaker, 1991).

The concept of gatekeeping naturally corresponds to certain basic empirical observations at the micro level when news is brought into the newsroom; some of it is selected, rewritten and so on (Jensen, 2002). The public rely on news organisations to transform information about billions of events into a convenient supply of media messages. At the newsrooms, lessening a large amount of potential messages to a few

seems to be impractical, but gatekeeping, which is a long-established process, makes it happen day by day. This process determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of messages, such as news, will be (Shoemaker, 1991).

Gatekeeping is also one of the most easily accessible theories in mass communication. According to Katz (1994, quoted in Singer, 1998), no other medium has ever given individual people such an engaged role in the movement of information and opinions or such a proprietary interest in the medium itself as the gatekeeping function. In the reports by Singer (1998), the term "gatekeeper" was first applied directly to journalists by White, who studied the choices made by a wire service editor at a small Midwestern newspaper in the U.S.A. White (1950: 390) indicates that:

"Mr. Gates, who selected a relatively limited number of stories for publication and rejected the rest, saw to it that the community should hear as a fact only those events which the newsman, as the representative of his culture, believes to be true."

Subsequent study by Janowitz (1975, quoted in Singer, 1998) has indicated that the journalist's self-perception as the person who decides what people need to know is deeply ingrained. Indeed, it has been suggested that the identification and dissemination of what is worth knowing is the journalist's most basic and most vital task in a democratic society, in which information plays a central role.

In a comprehensive overview of the concept and related research, Shoemaker (1991) has extended the original model to take account of the wider social context and the many factors at work. Shoemaker draws attention to the role of advertisers, public relations, pressure groups, and varied sources and 'news managers' in influencing

decisions. In Shoemaker’s model, gatekeeping usually involves multiple and successive acts of selection over the period of news production and often group decision-making is involved. Reference is made not only to aspects of content but also to the kind of audience expected and to questions of cost (McQuail, 2005: 309).

McQuail and Windahl’s (1981, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991:10) version of White’s gatekeeper model is presented in Figure 1.4 below. This gatekeeping model will be used in this study as a basic concept to analyse the news selection process that occurs in traditional and electronic newspaper samples.

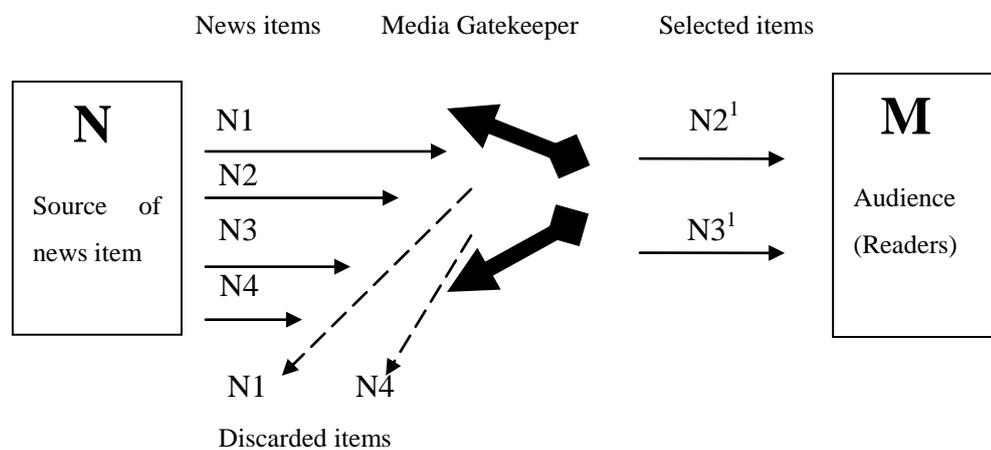


Figure 1.4: Gatekeeping Model

Source: White’s version of gatekeeping model by McQuail and Windahl (1981, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 10)

Shoemaker (1991) explains the process of gatekeeping that occurs in the above model as follows: news sources (N) send news items to the media gatekeeper, which turns some away (such as N1 and N4) and sends others (N2¹ and N3¹); the superior numerals indicate that the news items may be changed as they pass through the gate on to the audience (M).

Shoemaker (1991: 19-27) has proposed four central elements that determine which items come to the attention of communication workers. Shoemaker indicates that

these elements are: 1) the entrance of items into the channel, which is where all the messages come from and are brought to the newspaper organisations; 2) characteristics of the items – some messages are clearly more newsworthy than others, and the more newsworthy a message is, the more likely it is to pass a news gate; 3) the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates – the forces tend to change polarity as an item passes through the gate; and 4) gatekeepers' personal attitudes and values, and journalists' role conceptions and the type of job, which affect gatekeeping decisions.

This thesis focuses on the characteristics of messages in terms of the newsworthiness and news priority of news content of print and electronic newspapers. This is because this research is a media study, which aims to explore the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their production process and news content. The other elements are excluded in this study.

In order to investigate the relationship between traditional and electronic newspapers in terms of their news selection and news content via the gatekeeping concept, the next two sections will reveal the analytical perspectives about gatekeeping and the study of news selection including the concept of gatekeeping in the new-media environment, along with discussion of the gatekeeping concept applied in this thesis.

1.4.4 Gatekeeping in the Studies of News Selection

This thesis uses the gatekeeping model as the main analysis framework to understand news production processes and news content of print and electronic newspapers. According to Shoemaker (1991), the gatekeeping concept has proven to be popular with media scholars in the study of news selection. It is essential to reveal an awareness of the major criticisms raised in relation to gatekeeping analysis and news production study.

The gatekeeping concept is now more than 50 years old and has slipped into the language of many disciplines, including gatekeeping in organisations (University of Twente, The Netherlands, 2007). The main focus of gatekeeping research has been the degree of subjective news judgment within the news production process. For example White (1950, quoted in Singer, 1998) focused on the decisions of the lone editor, emphasising the personal and subjective aspects of that decision-making. However, subsequent studies by Gieber (1964, quoted in Singer, 1998), Epstein (1973, quoted in Singer, 1998) and Dimmick (1974, quoted in Singer, 1998) find that the gatekeeping process does not consist of single individuals making decisions independently. They are influenced heavily by other factors, such as the media owner's ideology, media routines and official sources, including government and corporate officials.

In addition, Shoemaker (1991:32-70) asserts that gatekeeping in a communication context can be studied on at least five levels: individual, routines of work, organisation, social/institution (extra media) and the social system. At the individual level, news selection is personal, influenced by the likes and dislikes of a journalist. At the routines-of-work level, gatekeeping decisions are based on a pre-established and generalised set of practices in judging newsworthiness, including accuracy, the right length, good visuals, human interest, novelty, negativity, conflict and violence, loss of lives and the story's timeliness. According to Shoemaker (1991:53), the study of gatekeeping at the organisational level is essential because organisations hire the gatekeeper and make the rules. The fourth level is the social/institutional level. Shoemaker (1991: 60) explains that communication organisations exist within a social system alongside other social institutions, many of which affect the gatekeeping process. The last level is the social-system level; gatekeeping has clear ties to the social

system. This level looks at variables such as ideology and culture (Shoemaker, 1991: 32).

1.4.5 Gatekeeping in New Media

Although severe criticism of the gatekeeping approach has been raised during the past two decades, it has not completely lost its place in the field (Shoemaker, 1991). The following studies confirm that the gatekeeping model is still as useful as when Kurt Lewin developed his first model in the mid-20th century. The overall theory is useful in analysing mass communication of the Internet era. The effect of the invention of news communication technology on gatekeeping has also challenged media researchers to apply the theory to a changing world. The following are the samples of important perspectives and studies focused on gatekeeping in the online environment.

Firstly, a survey by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996, quoted in Singer, 1998) finds that journalists continue to see their primary role as interpreters, rather than mere gatherers and disseminators, of information. Another important research is a study by Singer (1997, quoted in Singer, 1998) who indicates that people inside the newsroom are modifying their definition of the gatekeeper to incorporate notions of both quality control and sense making. In particular, news workers see their role as credible interpreters of an unprecedented volume of available information as fundamental to their value — and even as crucial to their survival in a new-media environment.

Some media researchers are concerned about the effect that the new communication technologies may have on the gatekeeping process. For instance, Singer (1998) suggests that the Internet and its user-friendly World Wide Web graphical overlay is the best example of a postmodern medium; it provides the opportunity for the

creation of a highly personal pastiche, in which all importance, all meaning, is relative to an individual perspective.

“Users can find anything they want online. They don't need someone else to do the picking and choosing. They don't need someone else to decide what's important. They don't need someone else to digest and package their information. They don't need someone else to interpret that information for them”
(Singer, 1998).

However, this new technology has threatened gatekeeping as a traditional media function. Although few published studies specifically address gatekeeping in the online environment, there is some evidence that journalists see that function as evolving and adapting rather than disappearing (Singer, 1998).

The increase in interactive media has gained the attention of communication researchers in the latter half of the 1990s. However, the focus to date of most studies has been principally on media audiences and their use of these new forms (Singer, 1998). Although the interest in online audiences may be especially intense because of the nature of these new media forms, the traditional receivers are not the only ones greatly affected by this change. The traditional senders of media messages, the journalists, are faced not just with a new delivery method but also with what may be a fundamental shift in their role in the communication process (Singer, 1998). In accordance with the capacity of this new media, newspapers on the Internet present information in different ways to traditional newspapers (Martin, 1998). It is clear that the Internet has affected the way newspapers' newsrooms select the news information to publish on their websites.

Concerning the impact of the introduction of electronic newspapers on the traditional gatekeeping role, the arguments that influence this thesis are the studies by Li (1998) and Singer (1998). These published studies focus on the invention of electronic newspapers and the gatekeeping role in new media.

Firstly, a study by Li (1998 and 2006) indicates that the more the Internet newspaper grows, the more questions arise about its operation, functions, effects and interaction with society. Li also points out that, on the other hand, the growth of the new medium offers great opportunities to examine relationships between the old and new media, including the opportunity to explain and predict what the new medium will bring to the media industry as well as the whole of society (Li, 2006). Online users' initial enthusiasm for their new freedom from media control may actually be changing into a desire for some form of gatekeeper.

Secondly, a published paper by Singer (1998) points out that gatekeeping theory is one of the traditional media functions that seem to be pressurised by new communication technology such as the Internet. Therefore, studying gatekeeping in the new-media environment is challenging as there is some evidence that new media see gatekeeping as evolving rather than disappearing.

Also, McQuail (2000) points out that the arrival and growth of the Internet does widen the possibility of access to global information and cultural resources. Access is now possible without dependence on the various gatekeepers that always restrict and control the flow of content in traditional media. These gatekeepers operate both the sending and receiving ends of distribution channels. The Internet has allowed a two-way communication process in which the receiver can be sender and gatekeeper. In addition, as confirmed by Youngs (2001), such a development does not mean the end of

traditional vertical journalistic communication, but rather transforms it ‘by moving more towards a many-to-many and multilevel, multi-source model of communication’.

Furthermore, Boczowski’s study (2000, quoted in Boczowski, 2002: 274) finds that “the editorial function got expanded to include work processes centred upon the facilitation of content creation by a vast network of heterogeneous production agents, and coined the term ‘gate-opening’ to capture such a modified editorial role”. This is similar to Boczowski’s (2004) notion that newspapers in the process of moving to online publishing have reinforced ‘gatekeeping’ practices, which signify the ‘editorial function centred on the facilitation and circulation of knowledge produced by a vast network of users-turned-producers’.

Therefore, applying the gatekeeping model in this thesis to analyse news production process and news content of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand is a significant way to understand the relationship between these two medium. In respect of the analytical concepts and perspectives reviewed above, the following section outlines the framework of this study that has been created to simplify the examination of the research questions.

1.5 Model of Conceptual Framework of the Study

As discussed earlier in this chapter, this research utilises the gatekeeping concept in the study of news selection and also includes the study of the character of news content to investigate the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand. In order to simplify the conceptual framework applied in this thesis, a model has been drawn, as shown in Figure 1.5 below:

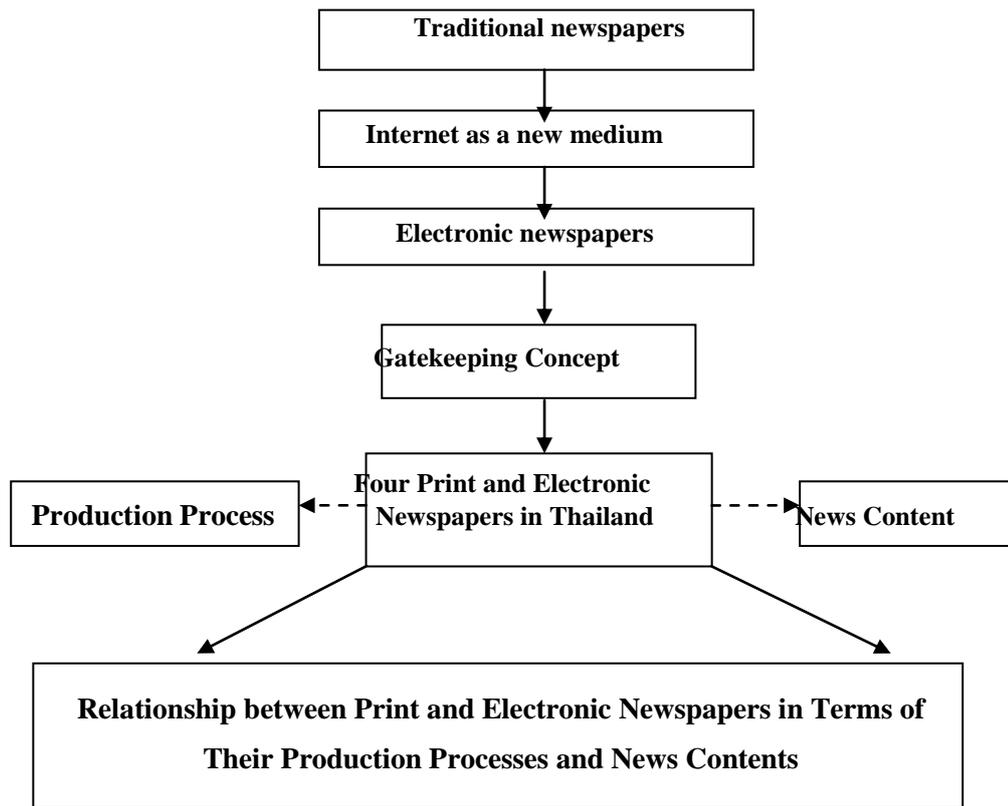


Figure 1.5: Model of Conceptual Framework of the study

Figure 1.5 illustrates the conceptual framework applied in this study to examine the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news content. The study will analyse the relationship between print newspapers and their electronic versions using the concept of gatekeeping as a major framework, in following areas: production process in terms of news selection and news policy; news content in terms of the quantity, location, newsworthiness, priority of news lead stories and topics; and the use of interactive elements in electronic versions. This conceptual framework will eventually help to explore the relationship between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news selection and news content, which will also answer the research questions of this thesis.

1.6 Chapter Summary: Conceptual Framework of the Study

This chapter has reviewed the concepts, literature and studies that relate to new information technology, traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers, including newspapers' gatekeeping function in the new-media environment and in relation to the news production process. The particular concept of a traditional newspaper in terms of content, presentation and production process was observed and compared with the application in electronic newspapers. Also, the conventions of electronic or Internet newspapers were cited from several sources, including research articles, textbooks, and websites, to offer a framework for the electronic newspaper as a new concept in communication theory. The effects of the changes brought about by how electronic newspapers present and convey news content messages were also discussed. These changes also affect information retrieval and this was also covered. This concept of electronic newspapers is useful to understand the development of traditional newspapers, which has been linked with the advancement of communication technology. As Li (2006) mentions, the Internet has brought about a new era for newspapers. The introduction of new technology in the communication process has been studied by several academics. For instance, Li (2006) says that the growth of the new medium offers great opportunities to examine existing media theory and explore relationships between the old and the new media. It also allows us to explain and predict what the new medium brings to the media industry as well as the whole of society.

The gatekeeping concept within the communication process, as discussed by Shoemaker (1991), was revealed as the primary concept of this study. In this chapter, the original gatekeeping model by White (1950) was displayed and discussed. Moreover, Shoemaker's (1991) concept of the gatekeeping process in the study of

newspaper's production process was used as the main conceptual framework of the study. The concept of gatekeeping will enable us to investigate the similarities and differences in news selection processes and news content. The analysis of the gatekeeping process in the news selection of print and electronic newspaper provides further understanding of the ways in which news content is created in the online environment. Conversely, the similarities and differences in news production processes and news content reflect the variety of gatekeeping processes in these two media. It is important to note that this thesis analyses gatekeeping in a specific way by applying the gatekeeping concept not only in the study of news selection process but also in analysing the messages. The study has overlooked other antecedents of traditional gatekeeping study, which, however, could be a further approach.

The results of the study will answer the research questions and also confirm two arguments of the study: that new communication technology flow is the main influence on introducing an electronic newspaper to Thai society; and that the news content of electronic newspapers in Thailand is the same as those in the print products, while the news production processes of electronic newspapers vary from their print editions. Moreover, it will expand knowledge of applying the gatekeeping concept in the study of news selection and production processes of electronic newspapers in non-western countries.

In summary, the contextual information about the development of communication technologies and newspapers will help this study to understand why and how traditional newspapers go online. The related examinations of traditional and electronic newspapers have been applied to obtain the relationship between these two media in terms of the gatekeeping function. The concept of gatekeeping leads to an understanding of the similarities and differences between traditional and new

newspapers in terms of their news selection and production processes, which implicitly underline all of the research questions. It is hoped that the information from the literature reviewed offers a broad understanding of the context and history of mass media and traditional newspapers in Thailand at the beginning of the Internet era in Thailand and reflects the need to study gatekeeping in electronic newspapers in non-western countries. The related background to the case study of Thailand will be revealed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE STUDY: NEWSPAPERS IN THAILAND IN THE INTERNET AGE

This chapter focuses on the context of traditional and electronic newspapers in Thailand at the beginning of the 21st century (2000). It aims to examine the broad context of, and relevant information about, newspapers in Thailand, which includes the background of the Thai mass media as well as the history and development of Thai newspapers at the beginning of the information technology era in Thailand. The advantage for this new-media study of collecting its data in the year 2000 in Thailand is that this was the year that Thailand began to emerge and develop as a nation in the information age. As Koanantakool and Thuvasethakul (2000) pointed out, 'If the year 1999 was the rainy Thailand, the year 2000 is probably Thailand's first sunshine in economic and information technologies'. It is also significant in the study of gatekeeping in the news production process as Thai mass media, particularly newspapers, are still under the censorship system (Bowra, 1996), which means that the news selection process is essential for the media industry and Thai society. It is important to provide the relevant background of Thailand in 2000, since this research is based on the case study of Thailand at this specific time. In addition, before discovering the relationship between print newspapers and their electronic versions in Thailand in terms of their news content and production process, discussing both the broad and specific contexts of newspapers and the Internet at its early stage in Thailand helps to provide a better understanding of the case study and the empirical component of this study.

The development and use of the Internet in Thailand are also addressed to reveal the Internet's role as a new medium in newspaper production and the dissemination process. Importantly, it also provides specific information about the emergence of electronic newspapers in Thailand, to understand the birth of traditional Thai newspapers on the Internet. The list of fifteen national newspapers and their websites in Thailand in 2000 are displayed at this point. The profiles of four newspaper organisations in Thailand are also present in order to show brief information about the case study. At the end of the chapter, the relevant Thai studies in electronic newspapers are presented to show the lack of research in this area.

The chapter is divided into six sections: Mass Media of Thailand; Thailand Newspapers; The Internet in Thailand; The Introduction of Electronic Newspapers in Thailand; The Profiles of Four Newspaper Samples; and Relevant Thai Studies in Electronic Newspapers.

2.1 Mass Media of Thailand

Being the main focus of the case study, this section reviews Thailand's mass media as a whole before looking exclusively at the history and development of newspaper industries in Thailand in the next section. This information will offer a macro-picture of the Thai mass media system, which will aid the understanding of the development and changes in traditional newspapers in Thailand.

Thailand has a well-developed media sector with a high degree of access among the population, especially by Southeast Asian standards. Compared to other countries in the region, the Thai media is considered relatively free, although the government continues to exercise considerable control, especially over broadcast media. There are a

variety of mass media ranging from printed newspapers to satellite-delivered television channels. Thailand is also a hub for foreign media, with many establishing their regional presences in Bangkok (Gray et al, 2002: 16). However, all Thai mass media are under the broad supervision of the Public Relations Department in the Office of the Prime Minister. This department serves as the principal source of news and information about the government and its policies. It issues daily news bulletins on domestic and foreign affairs for use by the print and electronic media. News bulletins are also distributed by other government agencies, including the Thai News Agency, established in 1976 under the Mass Communications Organization of Thailand, a state enterprise under the Office of the Prime Minister. The Thai News Agency concentrates mostly on domestic affairs, whilst foreign news is gathered from international wire services, which maintain offices or representatives in Bangkok (US Library of Congress, 2000).

As reported by the U.S. Library of Congress (2000), the Thai mass media has played an important role as a principal source of local and global news and as a source of public entertainment since the mid-1980s. It also draws attention to the fact that there is a difference in ownership between print and electronic media in Thailand as all major daily newspapers are privately owned, but radio broadcasting and television stations are controlled by the government and operated as commercial enterprises. Therefore, newspapers or print media are generally regarded as more credible than the government-controlled broadcast media in Thai society (U.S. Library of Congress, 2000).

In 2000, Thailand had six major TV networks based in Bangkok and relayed to all parts of the country through repeaters. Thailand has two groups of television channels, which are 'free TV' and 'pay TV'. Free TV includes channel 5, 7, 9, 11, and ITV while Pay TV comprises IBC, Thai Sky, and UTV. The statistics reported from the

National Identity Office, Office of the Prime Minister, Royal Thai Government (National Identity Office, 1995) have shown that among the free TV channels, channel 3, 9 and 11 are run by the government while channel 5 and 7 are run by the Army, leaving Channel ITV as the only channel partly run by government and private enterprise.

Almost all radio stations in Thailand are controlled and owned by state entities and government allies. The government owns and controls 524 officially registered regular AM and FM stations, while the military and police services retain ownership of 230 radio stations, for national security purposes (U.S. Congress Library, 2000).

In contrast to television and radio broadcasting, newspapers in Thailand are not subject to close government supervision. Thailand's press is one of the freest in Asia (Bowra, 1996: 72-73). Readers have a choice of numerous papers, ranging from sensational mass-circulation dailies to newspapers that specialise in coverage of political and business news. Almost all newspapers are printed in broadsheet format, although there are several exceptions to this. So, even though the popular mass-circulation newspapers are often referred to as 'tabloids', labelling them as such would be a misnomer. All national daily newspapers are published in Bangkok and distributed in all parts of the country. There are over 20 Thai dailies in Bangkok. Some of the leading Thai newspapers include Thairath, Daily News, Matichon, Siamrath, Naew Na and Poochadkarn (the Manager). Two major English-language dailies are the Bangkok Post and the Nation.

The context of newspapers in Thailand will now be highlighted to show the development and changes that have taken place because of the new communication technology.

2.2 Thai Newspapers

The Thai Constitution guarantees freedom of the press, which may not be curbed except by law "for the purpose of maintaining the security of state or safeguarding the liberties, dignity or reputation of other persons or maintaining public order or good morals or preventing deterioration of the mind or health of the public." Most observers agree that the Thai press enjoy considerable freedom. In the 1980s, nevertheless, editorial writers and reporters continued to exercise self-censorship, mindful that there were unwritten but real government constraints, especially on coverage relating to the monarchy, government affairs, internal security matters, and Thailand's international image. The existing statutes gave broad powers to the director general of the Thailand National Police Department, including the authority to revoke or suspend the licence of an offending publication. The severity of penalties varied, depending on the political climate and the sensitivity of an issue. In 1987 a new press bill was pending before the National Assembly, the intent of which was to give the press as much autonomy as possible. The exception of this was in time of war or in a state of emergency, in which case the press officer would be allowed to exercise censorship (US Library of Congress, 2000).

Daily newspapers are heavily concentrated in Bangkok, where at least 65% of adults read a daily paper, compared to about 10% of adults in rural areas. Newspapers are generally independent, and many were financially solvent, deriving their income from sales and advertising. The government is forbidden by law from subsidising private newspapers. Foreign ownership of newspapers is also banned as a safeguard against undue foreign or subversive influence (US Library of Congress, 2000). The mainstream print media are represented by *Thairath* and *Daily News*, which together

account for one-half of Thailand's newspaper sales. Because both papers were founded before the democracy movement, while the country was still under military rule, by necessity, they had to cultivate good relationships with the army and elite bureaucracy. This has led them to develop an editorial outlook that tends to lean in favour of the status-quo. Thus, these publications are viewed as 'conservative' within the Thai political context. On the other hand, newspapers that grew out of the student movement of the 1970s, such as *Matichon*, *The Nation* and *Thai Post*, tend to adopt an anti-establishment outlook. Therefore, within the Thai political spectrum, their political line can be loosely characterised as 'progressive.'

At this stage, it is important to address the circumstances of freedom of the press in Thai society, and to point out that the gatekeeping or news selection process has played an important role in the production process of Thailand's print newspapers. According to Bowra (1996: 72-73), although the Thai press is freer in comparison to radio and television in airing political issues and criticising the performance of the government, this does not mean that it is completely free from government control and interference. As with other sectors of the media, the government issued specific regulations to keep the performance of the press in tight check. As a result, Thailand's mass media, particularly newspapers, need to give priority to their selection processes in terms of what and what not to publish in both their paper and online editions in order for their businesses to survive. According to this perspective, the application of the gatekeeping concept is a practical way of studying news selection in print newspapers. It will also be a good way to learn about Thai newspapers' systems and the arrival of new newspapers in Thai society.

The history, development and current status of Thai newspapers will now be addressed.

2.2.1 The History of Thai Print Newspapers

The “Thai movable-metal type,” an example of the modern printing press, was first created in Burma (Myanmar) in 1816. Twenty years later, it was brought into Thailand by Ann Judson, the wife of an American missionary (Padmatin, 1970, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 431-435). She designed the Thai movable-metal type with the cooperation of George H. Hough, a printer of the Baptist mission. Judson also used her invention to spread Christianity among Thai hostages.

In 1826, the Baptist mission moved the Thai press machine to Calcutta. Then in 1828 Captain James Low, a British soldier who learned the Thai language in Bangkok in the reign of King Rama II, printed the first Thai book, *A Grammar of Thai or Siamese language*. In 1832, the press was sold to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by the London Missionary Society, which later established the Thai movable-metal type press in Singapore. A couple of years later, Thai printing was moved back to Thailand by Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, an American medical missionary, when he assumed his position in Bangkok. This press machine printed 9,000 handbills of the royal proclamation banning opium smoking and trade in 1839 (Teeravanich, 1977, quoted in Ekachai, 2000).

On July 4, 1844, during the reign of King Rama III, Dr. Bradley began publishing Thailand’s first newspaper, the *Bangkok Recorder* (Teeravanich, 1983, quoted in Ekachai, 2000). The eight-page monthly paper lasted only a year because of low sales, and Dr. Bradley returned to the United States with his three sons after his wife’s death. In 1850, he returned to Thailand and resurrected the paper as a fortnightly in 1864. But this venture also folded after two years because of various pressures, including the kingdom’s first libel suit. The kingdom’s second newspaper was *Bangkok Calendar*, published by Dr Chandler from 1847-50. Another newspaper, the *Siam*

Weekly Monitor, appeared on May 22, 1867, but closed in September 1868 (Mitchell, 1971, quoted in Ekachai, 2000). The first newspaper was owned and edited by *Thai Rajakijjanubeksa* (Royal Gazette), which came out in 1858 in the reign of the King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-68). It was revived as a government weekly in 1874 (Padmatin, 1984, quoted in Ekachai, 2000). Seven newspapers, mostly in English, appeared during this period (Teeravich, 1977, quoted in Ekachai, 2000).

In 1868, the first daily in Thailand, the English-language *Bangkok Daily Advertiser*, a single-sheet paper that printed shipping announcements and advertisements, was published by Samuel John Smith, a missionary. Later, it expanded to four pages and carried obituaries, as well as news about foreign visitors, but folded after 10 years (Teeravich, 1977, quoted in Ekachai, 2000). However, in 1869, Smith started the English-language *Siam Weekly Advertiser* and the tri-monthly *Siam Repository*, in which he wrote about religion, freedom of the press and women's rights.

Thai print newspapers during the formative period were foreign-owned, and its readership was confined to a few hundred people – foreigners, the Thai Royal Family, high-ranking government officials, well-educated people and exclusive groups of Thai, most of whom were young members of the royal family who had been educated abroad. The weekly *Darunnowat* (Instruction for Youngsters) was the first Thai-language newspaper, which was published by Thai people, the Thai royal family. This newspaper appeared in 1874 but failed within a year. It contained government news, foreign news, academic articles, entertainment, and advertisements. Its readership was still confined to the court circle, and journalism was no more than a hobby for a few young members of the royal family. The first Thai-language daily was the *Daily Court* (Thai, 1875-76). Other newspapers included the daily *Siam Observer* (English, 1893-

1932), the daily *China-Siam Varasup* (Chinese, 1907-30), and the daily *Thai* (Thai, 1908-32) (Padmatin, 1984, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432).

Several factors contributed to a greater interest in newspaper publishing and consumption during the Chulalongkorn era: higher literacy and education among commoners; growth of international trading with foreign countries that required trade news; and changes in the political climate that sparked greater interest in the Western concept of free expression. People had become more enthusiastic about expressing their ideas and opinions in newspapers (Padmatin, 1984, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432). Some 59 publications, including five dailies in Thai, Chinese, and English, appeared during this era. Unusually, a Western observer (Mitchell, 1971, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432) has commented on the Thai press that it was freest under the absolute monarchy.

The Golden Age of Thai journalism came during the absolute monarchy of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1910-25), when the press enjoyed much freedom. Even though the Newspaper Act of 1919 imposed the first formal censorship, its application was mild (Chirasopone, 1989, Mitchell, 1971, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432). The King reached his people, especially through the opinion columns of the daily *Thai*. To show what a good newspaper should be, he founded the Dusitsmit in Dusit Thani (Dusit City), the model municipal city that he created (Teeravanich, 1977, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432).

Newspapers became a popular forum where writers and journalists expressed their political views freely. Some even went as far as to make personal attacks on the king. During this period, 22 new dailies and 127 periodicals appeared. However, many radical groups used the press as a propaganda tool, as was the case during World War I, when newspapers became propaganda mouthpieces. Because the press became so

sensational and irresponsible, the king acted to define the rights, duties, and scope of publishing establishments with the promulgation of the 1992 Documents and Newspapers Law, which required every publication to obtain a permit before release (Padmatin, 1984; Teeravanich, 1977, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 432).

Some 60 daily newspapers and 160 periodicals appeared during the absolute reign of King Prachadhipok (Rama VII, 1925-32). As democracy was spreading throughout the Western world, the king recognised the importance of freedom of expression and the foundation of democracy for the Thai. But the Khana Rassadawn (People's Party) coup d'état of June 24, 1932, ended the absolute monarchy and halted press freedom. The authorities closed down several newspapers and arrested many journalists. Ironically, the "democratic" regime enacted more press laws and restrictions than the absolute monarchy. The new Press Act of 1934 formalised censorship and prohibited the publication of news by unapproved sources (Mitchell, 1971, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 433). It required editors to have an educational level no lower than high school. Some 30 newspapers closed down because of a shortage of paper. The Press Act of 1941, under Prime Minister Pibul Songkram, imposed stiff restrictions and gave the interior minister wide power of censorship (Mitchell, *ibid*). The law, however, allowed newspapers to be established legally, except for those in a foreign language, merely by informing the authorities (Padmatin, 1984 and Pickerell, 1960, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 433).

In the 1980s, Thai journalistic standards steadily improved, as reflected in the print media's growing emphasis on political and economic issues, as well as on major foreign news events. This could be attributed to the emergence of a more discriminating readership. On the negative side, sensational coverage and insufficient

professional training continued to mark the reputation of Thai newspapers (US Library of Congress, 2000).

There were about 150 newspapers, including 30 dailies in Bangkok and 120 provincial papers, in 1985. Some Bangkok dailies were considered to be national newspapers because of their countrywide distribution. Most provincial papers appeared every two, five, seven or ten days. In Bangkok, twenty-one dailies appeared in Thai, six in Chinese, and three in English. Of an estimated daily circulation of 1.6 million for all Bangkok dailies in 1985, *Thairath* (800,000 circulation) and the *Daily News* (400,000 circulation) together claimed about 75 percent of the total circulation. These two newspapers were reportedly popular among white-collar groups. The most successful among the remaining newspapers were *Ban Muang*, *Matichon*, *Siamrath* and *Naewna*. The English-language dailies were the *Bangkok Post*, *The Nation*, and the *Bangkok World*, which were popular among the well-educated and influential members of Thai society and were regarded by many as more reliable than the Thai dailies. Some of the editorial positions on the *Bangkok Post* and the *Bangkok World* were held by foreigners, mostly British; *The Nation*, on the other hand, was almost entirely staffed by Thai and tended to view the world from a Thai perspective (US Library of Congress, 2000).

Unlike the English-language dailies, whose circulation was increasing in the early 1980s, Chinese-language dailies were declining in readership. Their total circulation was probably around 70,000. Two leading Chinese-language dailies were *Sing Sian Yit Pao* and *Tong Hua Yit Pao*. These dailies were noted for responsible coverage of domestic and international affairs, but they refrained from taking strong stands on local political questions (U.S. Library of Congress, 2000)

2.2.2 The Development of the Newspaper Industry in Thailand

Between 1977 and 1998, the number of Thai print media fell rapidly. The dailies decreased from 44 to 33, and the number of magazines fell from 237 to 216. The number of Thai-language newspapers dropped from 34 to 25, and the number of English-language newspapers went down from 4 to 3, while the Chinese-language newspapers remained unchanged at 6 (Wan, 1999, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 439). According to the Reporters Association of Thailand, in June 1999, the country had 25 daily newspapers: 15 in Thai, 2 in English, 5 in Chinese and 3 in Japanese. Non-dailies included 6 monthly news magazines, 12 biweekly newspapers and 205 provincial newspapers (Ekachai, 2000: 440). The total claimed daily circulation was 4.46 million – a penetration of 7.2 per 100 people.

The economic and financial crisis caused by the devaluation of the Thai baht in 1997 clearly hurt the newspaper industry in Thailand. It increased the price of newsprint and decreased the advertising revenues. More than 3,000 journalists and other media employees lost their jobs, and 12 out of 25 daily and weekly newspapers closed. Moreover, several newspapers were forced to down-size, lay off employees, cut down their number of staff, cut salaries and benefits, reduce their number of pages, and allow foreign interests to buy their company shares (Ekachai, 2000: 441). The newspaper business struggled to survive. It is reported in the Reporter Association of Thailand journal (1999, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 441) that many strategies were launched to overcome the crisis, such as: 1) reduce cost by cutting the salaries and welfare of the reporters; 2) product adjustment by decreasing the number of pages, no weekend editions, reducing the quality of papers, etc; 3) lower the status of the employees and 4) reduce the advertising rate but increase the retail price for readers.

2.2.3 The State of the Thai Newspaper Industry in 2000

In 2000, Thailand had 19 national daily and 8 non-daily print newspapers in Thai and English. The newspapers circulating every day were *Thairath*, *Daily News*, *Kaosod*, *Matichon*, *Naewna*, *Siamrath*, *Banmuang*, *Krungthep Turakjt*, *Poojadkarn Daily*, *Thai Post*, *Komchadluek*, *Kao Hun (Stock Market News)*, *Siamkeela (Siam sport)*, *Kickoff (Thailand Sport)*, *Muay Siam Daily (Thai Boxing Daily)*, *Post Today (Thai)*, *The Nation (English)*, *Bangkok Post (English)* and *Business Day (English)*. The non-daily newspapers were – *Prachachad Thurakij (3 days)*, *Thansettakij (3 days)*, *Sentang (3 days)*, *Poochatkarn Weekly (7 days)*, *Dokbia Thurakij (7 days)*, *Siam Thurakij (7 days)*, *Telecom Journal (7 days)* and *Transport Journal (7 days)*.

Quality and popular press are the two kinds of print newspaper in Thailand which are categorised by the characteristics of their news content. There are a handful of quality Thai-language dailies. Ekachai (2000: 442) reports that a Thai daily named *Matichon* had a long-held reputation as a serious newspaper read by the educated elite. She also comments that due to the increasing competition from other tabloids, the paper has loosened up its coverage, adding more soft news stories to attract a wider audience, and has established a sister newspaper called *Khaosod (Fresh News)* to compete with other sensational, popular papers. *Siamrath* is mentioned as the other quality Thai newspaper, but *Siamrath* lost its reputation for high-quality coverage and analytical reporting when it was sold to a politician (Ekachai, 2000). *Thairath* and *Daily News*, the two big popular Thai dailies, are synonymous with their brash headlines, use of colour and unabashedly sensational reporting (Heuvel and Dennis, 1993, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 442). The coverage consists of crime, sex, scandal, and sport, along with summaries of popular television soap drama, semi-nude pictures, and entertainment news reported almost verbatim from press releases. However, because of

the recent competition *Thairath* has been forced to report political and economic news as well. Ekachai (2000) also notes that other popular newspapers include *Naewna*, *Khao Sod*, and *Banmueng*.

It is reported in the *Bangkok Post Internet* (2000) that well-educated and influential members of Thai society read the three English-language dailies, the *Bangkok Post*, the *Nation*, and the *Business Day*, which they regard as more reliable than the Thai dailies. Its survey found that the *Post's* readers are highly educated (84 percent with university degrees), young (typically between 24 and 44 years old), and predominantly male (73 percent).

Ekachai (2000: 443) add that some Bangkok dailies are considered to be national newspapers because of their countrywide distribution. Most of them, for example *Thairath*, *Matichon* and *Daily News*, publish at least two editions each day. Although most dailies are morning papers, readers can buy the first edition of the next day's papers in the afternoon. *Thairath* has a sophisticated distribution system that gets the 40-page daily to the provinces with great speed. Its newest presses are able to print 80,000 copies per hour. English dailies drew attention to the introduction of new technologies to their news production. The *Business Day*, for example, is the leader in posting its coverage on the Internet. The *Bangkok Post* has installed a new computer pagination system for the editorial and advertising departments, and has launched its Internet edition. At the same time, the *Nation* has expanded its business to electronic media, radio and television broadcasting, as well as publishing its Internet version (Ekachai, 2000: 443).

National newspapers in Thailand are categorised into groups: mass-circulation dailies, quality dailies, business dailies, English-language dailies, semi-weekly business newspapers, weekly business newspapers and weekly news magazines. As Thai

newspapers do not have their circulation figures audited, precise circulation figures are not available. The circulation figures provided below are based on the newspapers' claimed average daily circulation figures, which are likely to be exaggerated.

Mass-circulation dailies

Thairath – Claiming a circulation of approximately 1 million, this is Thailand's most influential newspaper. Prominently features sensationalist stories on crime and accidents. Its political stance is moderate populist. High circulation is due to its popular stance, hence its acceptance by the general population, in particular the majority rural market.

Daily News – Circulation is claimed to be as high as 900,000. It is very similar in style and substance to *Thairath*, somewhat less successful than *Thairath*, usually due to news content being less than that of *Thairath*.

Khaosod – The third-highest circulation among Thai newspapers behind *Thairath* and *Daily News*. *Khaosod* is a part of Matichon PCL, a publishing group. Editorial line is moderate to liberal. Keen on crime news, and also concentrates on environment and ordinary people's rights.

Komchadluek – Claimed a circulation of approximately 850,000. It is owned by the Nation Multimedia Group. Political stance is conservative, non-populist, and moderately anti-government. Hence most of its sales are concentrated toward the business and upper-to-middle-income group, who generally support a non-populist conservative stance, but are well educated.

Quality dailies

Matichon – Claims circulation of approximately 600,000. The flagship publication of Matichon PLC, this paper is considered essential reading for Thailand's educated classes. Editorial line is moderate to progressive.

Thai Post – Circulation in 2000 is estimated to average approximately 30,000. Its political stance is considered the most progressive of all Thai dailies.

Naew Na – Estimated daily circulation is claimed to average 300,000. Editorial line is progressive.

Business dailies

Krungthep Turakij – Circulation is in the 80,000-100,000 range. It is owned by the Nation Multimedia Group. This paper is also popular with Thai intellectuals. Political stance is progressive.

Post Today – Has a circulation of approximately 100,000. It is owned by Post Publishing PCL, publishers of the *Bangkok Post*.

Phoojadkarn Daily – Circulation is around 100,000. It is owned by the Manager Media Group.

English-language dailies

Bangkok Post – Circulation is approximately 75,000. Its major shareholders include the Chirathivat family (owners of Central Group), the *South China Morning Post* of Hong Kong and GMM Grammy PCL, a local media and entertainment firm.

The Nation – Circulation is in the 60,000-80,000 range. It is the flagship publication of the Nation Multimedia Group and maintains a progressive editorial line.

Semi-weekly business newspapers

Prachachart Turakij – is owned by Matichon PCL.

Siam Turakij and *Than Settakij*

Weekly business newspapers

Krungthep Turakij Biz Week – is part of Nation Multimedia Group.

Phujatkarn Weekly – is owned by the Manager Media Group.

Weekly news magazines

Matichon Weekly – is part of Matichon PCL. Average circulation is 300,000.

Nation Weekend – is owned by Nation Multimedia Group. According to FIPP, circulation in 1999-2000 is 150,000.

Due to their reputation for popularity, reliability and quality, as shown above, this study has chosen four national daily newspapers as the study samples: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

Moreover, following the launch of the first Thai satellite ‘ThaiCom’ in 1994, it can clearly be noticed that by 2000 the Internet played an important role as a new channel for the newspaper industry in Thailand. This new technology became the essential tool in developing the Thai communication system, such as linking all Thai television stations in the Television Pool to report important events immediately, or printing newspapers via satellite (Department of Mass Communication, 1994: 32). Therefore, the next section will address the development of the Internet in Thailand.

2.3 The Internet in Thailand

An understanding of the context of Internet use in Thailand will pave the way for a consideration of why and how traditional newspapers in Thailand launch their electronic editions. Currently, it is unquestionable that Thailand has to face the forces of globalisation and Internet technology as key resources of the communication system. The following section will illustrate a macro picture of the uptake of new technologies and the Internet in Thailand.

Thailand has been importing technologies for industrial production for more than 60 years from major countries such as the U.S.A., Japan, Great Britain, the Federal

Republic of Germany, France, Italy, etc. In the past, such transfer was arbitrary and any company was free to purchase equipment and technological know-how, which were considered profitable. This resulted in unnecessary loss of money as the technology purchased did not necessarily fit the desired technological growth. Therefore, the government established a Technology Transfer Division within the Ministry of Science, Technology and Energy to help promote more effective transfer and provide guidelines on how one could get better profit through suitable technological transfer (The National Identity Board, 2000: 278). The Thai communication system had advanced rapidly towards new communication media such as mobile telephones, cable TV, satellite communication, newspaper printing via satellite, and computer networks. The introduction of new communication technologies to Thai society has gradually changed the culture of Thai social life. Mobile phones, computers, and the Internet began to become a part of the Thai way of life at the end of the last century (Department of Mass Communication, 1994: 32). The following subsections will discuss the history and development of the Internet in Thailand including the use of the Internet network in newspaper industries in Thailand.

2.3.1 The Beginning of the Internet in Thailand

The Internet in Thailand was first adopted in 1987. It was originally used as a communication tool for academics. It developed slowly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the use of the Internet at that time was mostly limited to academics, researchers, engineers and computer professionals. Until the beginning of commercialisation in 1995, the Internet did not really spread to non-academic users (Suriyasarn, 2001a).

The early Internet users were the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), the Prince Songkhla University, Chulalongkorn University and the National Electronic and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC). Meanwhile, NECTEC, a government agency newly established to promote the development of computer technology, ran its own network, called the Inter-University Network. In 1995 commercial Internet was introduced into the country, when Internet Thailand was established as the first Internet Service Provider (ISP). Other commercial ISPs joined the market in the following years (NECTEC, Internet Information Research, 2000b).

The rapid growth of the Internet community in Thailand began in the mid 1990s. After the commercialisation in 1995, commercial Internet usage in terms of individual users and corporate node connection was estimated to grow at a rate of 23 percent per month in early 1995. By the end of 1995, there were at least 60 corporate nodes with independent Internet domains connected to commercial ISPs. The total number of Internet users in Thailand was estimated at 100,000 persons, the majority of which had access via their corporate nodes. About half of the total estimated users were associated with research or academic institutions and only 10 percent (10,000) were found to be individual users served by commercial ISPs (Suriyasarn, 2001a).

2.3.2 Expansion of the Internet and E-Commerce in Thailand

Whilst the Internet in Thailand was expanding rapidly in the educational and research community in the early 1990s, there were no such growing demands in the private sector. It was not until early 1995 that Thai Internet was used in the business sector. The slow emergence of commercialisation was partly due to the state's monopolistic regulations in the telecommunications industry (Ekachai, 2000).

The early growth prediction proved to be optimistic. The Thai IT industry registered at only 11 percent, instead of the 23 percent forecast in 1996. The beginning of an economic slowdown and political uncertainty in 1995 and 1996, and the slow rate of private investment in particular, were blamed for the lower-than-expected growth. Personal computer sales were far from satisfactory in 1996. PC sales were at the level of some 300,000 units – 50,000 units fewer than the projected figure. In terms of Internet users, the 1996 figures indicated an increase in commercial Internet subscription – 40,000 from 10,000 in 1995 (Waltham and Borisuthiboun, 1996, quoted in Suriyasarn, 2001c).

However, as the commercial Internet industry expanded, Internet use in Thailand enjoyed an average of 50 percent growth annually in the late 1990s (Winn, June 2000, quoted in Suriyasarn et al, 2001c). Total commercial Internet revenue increased from 522 million baht in 1997 to 900 million baht in 1998 (a 72 percent increase) and 1.3 billion baht in 1999 (a 35 percent increase). The number of Internet users grew from 600,000 in 1998 to 1 million by 2000. The number of users was expected to have doubled from 1 million by mid-2000 (Winn, 2000, quoted in Suriyasarn, 2001c).

2.3.3 State of Thai Internet in the year 2000

Koanantakool and Thuvasethakul (2000) point out that ‘If the year 1999 was the rainy Thailand, the year 2000 is probably Thailand’s first sunshine in economic and information technologies’. As a result of the countless hours of hard work by many organisations fighting against the millennium bug, Thailand went through the Y2K ordeal with great success. Having gone through both the economic crisis and Y2K problems, Thailand was on course for recovery. The country was in search of self

reliance and sustainable recovery. As the whole world was dominated by globalised businesses and industries, information and communication technologies (IT) played a tremendous role in the issues of long-term recovery and sustainability.

In 2000, Thailand had two domestic Internet exchanges (NECTEC's IIR and CAT's NIX or National Internet Exchange), one (monopolistic) International Internet gateway run by CAT, four non-commercial Internet hubs (including *PubNet*, *ThaiSarn*, *SchoolNet* and *UniNet*, all provided by NECTEC), and eighteen operating commercial ISPs in Thailand (NECTEC, Internet Information Research Center, 2000a). NECTEC's Internet Information Research Center reported that, in 2000, Thailand had 6,282 domains under .th (the Internet country code for Thailand), 71,995 hosts under the .th top-level domain, and an estimate of one million Internet users, just fewer than 2 percent of the population. There were also 18 providers operating as Commercial Internet service providers (ISPs), and 4 as non-commercial Internet hubs (public service providers) in 2000 (NECTEC, Internet Information Research, 2000a).

The number of Internet users in Thailand in 2000 was ranked third-highest among nine countries in South East Asia. Leading countries were Singapore and Malaysia (Minges, 2001) as shown in Figure 2.1 below:

The SE Asia Digital Divide II

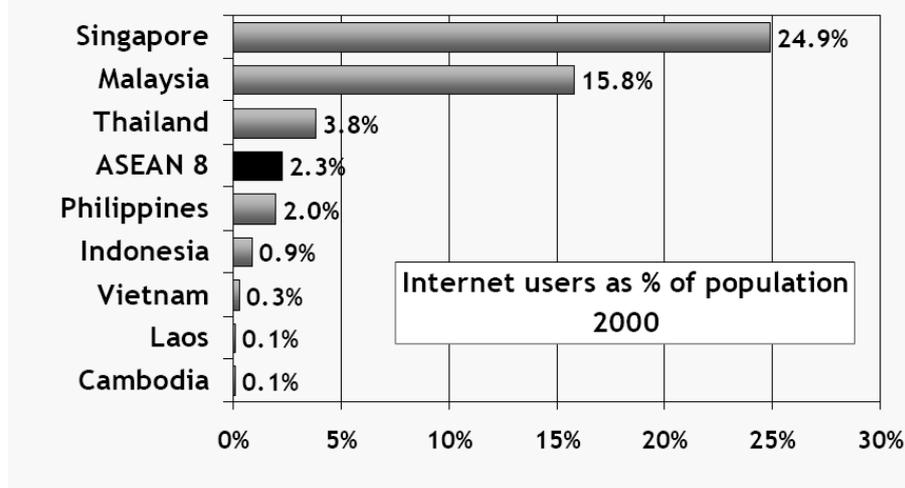


Figure 2.1: Ranking of the Number of Internet users in nine countries of the South East Asia region in 2000

Source: ITU (Michael.Minges@itu.int)

Figure 2.1 illustrates that in the year 2000, 3.8 percent of the Thai population were rated as Internet users, which was the third-highest ranking among South East Asia countries. Thailand grew rapidly as a new-technology society between 1990 and 2000. This can be seen from the statistics of the growing number of Thai Internet users from 1991, when the first Internet network could be accessed, to 2000, as shown in Table 2.1.

Year	Total	Source
2000	2,300,000	ISP Club/NECTEC
1999	1,500,000	ISP Club/NECTEC
1998	670,000	NECTEC/Internet Thailand
1997	220,000	NECTEC/Internet Thailand
1996	70,000	NECTEC
1995	45,000	NECTEC
1994	23,000	NECTEC
1993	8,000	NECTEC
1992	200	NECTEC
1991	30	NECTEC

Table 2.1: Internet Users and Statistics in Thailand from 1991-2000

Source: NECTEC (2001), Internet Information Research

Table 2.1 presents the growing number of Internet users in Thailand, from 30 users in 1991 to 2,300,000 users in 2000. This figure shows the high rate of Internet growth in Thailand by 2000. The statistics given in the previous two tables – showing the widespread use of the Internet in Thailand by the year 2000 – support the fact that research into the study of newspapers on the Internet in Thailand, as conducted in this thesis, is of considerable interest.

2.3.4 The use of the Internet in Thailand in 2000

In 1999, Koanantakool pointed out that the primary use of the information super highway in Thailand is to deliver hundreds of TV channels to the home, but there are various other uses that will not be as expensive. One of the other major uses will be to expand existing data networks like the ThaiSarn-Internet network, which is the Internet Network established by the government to promote and support academics' work and research. The total transmission capacity of all the communication lines now being used by the ThaiSarn-Internet network is much less than is possible through a single fibre cable. Hence, a fibre-based highway could do wonders for a data network like the Internet. The Internet uses a very small percentage of resources compared to an entertainment network, which means it is feasible to grow the Internet through a fibre backbone, which would also provide other services. This data superhighway will be accessible by phone, TV, and dedicated computer-like terminals. Then, users will be able to send electronic mail messages to anywhere in the world at the cost of about one baht per message. This will all be possible through a technology known as "ISDN" or Integrated Service Digital Network. However, this is still a vision in Thailand and ISDN has yet to be adopted (Koanantakool, 1999).

It is said that Thai people appear to have the ability to adopt the skills required to use new technology very rapidly. In addition, the country's geographical location is good, being in the centre of the region with neighbouring countries such as Vietnam and Burma as potential markets. Indeed, with a population of 60 million in 2000, the domestic market here offers economies of scale and provides a big consumption base for localised software (Waltham, 2000). Thailand also has a committed government agency working to promote IT use: the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC). NECTEC, which is under the Ministry of Science and Technology, has many international IT firms investing in it. Senior officials of the agency have also been actively involved in the National IT Committee and have been responsible for drafting the "IT 2000" National IT Policy. Unfortunately, NECTEC does not have the elevated status of an agency such as the Board of Investment and, while it can contribute to national policy statements, it is up to the relevant ministries involved and the Cabinet to follow through on proposals (Koanantakool, 1999).

Taking a closer look at the challenges that Thailand faces in becoming a serious player in the global technology marketplace, the problem areas can be broken down into: telecommunications and Internet/network access; shortcomings in the Thai education system; the Government's failure to embrace IT as a user; and legal problems caused by both outdated laws or regulations and a lack of laws for electronic commerce. Without a national commitment to information technology that recognises its importance for national development and national competitiveness, Thailand is unlikely to resolve the many fundamental obstacles that slow down its uptake of technology or make it too expensive for most people to afford (Koanantakool, 1999). However, the Internet of Thailand received its operating licence from CAT in 1995, when it started accepting applications for commercial use of the Internet.

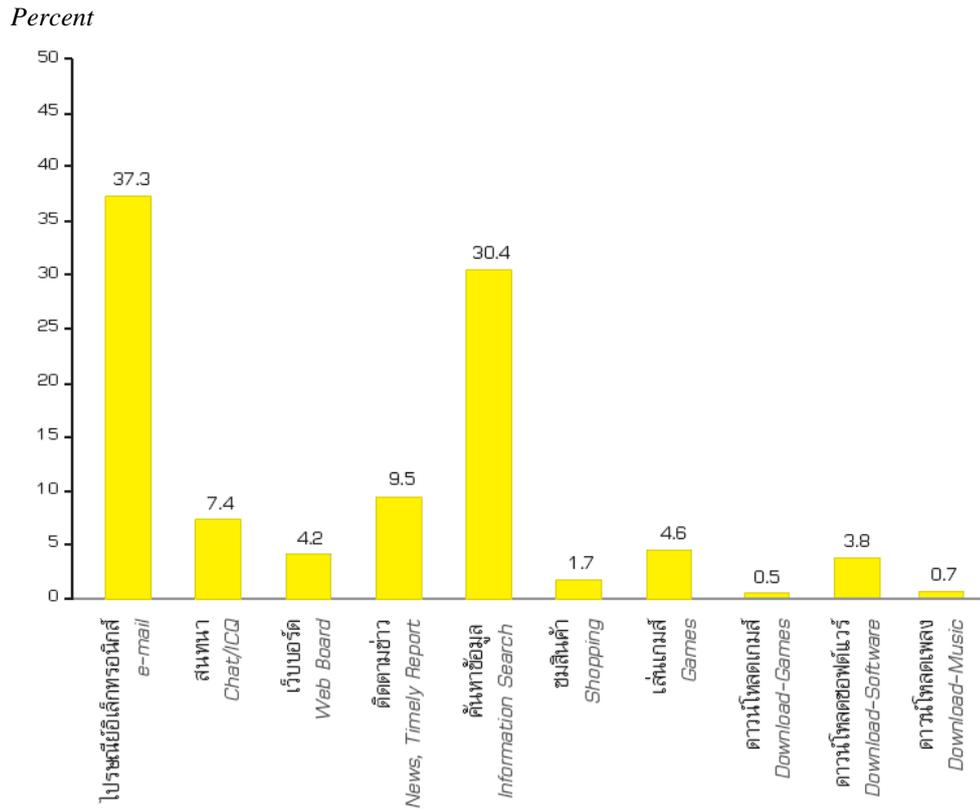


Figure 2.2: Top Activities of Thai Internet Users in 2000

Source: NSDTA: Internet User Profile of Thailand 2000

(<http://www.nstda.or.th/index.php/nstda-knowledge/613-internet-user-profile-2000>)

Figure 2.2 displays eight main activities of Thai Internet users reported in the Internet Survey 2000 by NSDTA (2000). The top-ranked activities were: Email (37.3 percent), Searching Information (30.4 percent), Reading News, Timely Report (9.5 percent), Chat (7.4 percent), Playing Games (4.6 percent), Web Board (4.2 percent), Downloading Software (3.8 percent), Shopping (1.2 percent), Downloading Music (0.7 percent) and Downloading Games (0.5 percent). It is noticed that reading or watching news was the third-ranked activity of Thai Internet users in 2000. This data confirmed the popularity of online newspapers among Thai Internet users.

2.3.5 Thai Mass Media and the Internet

According to the report of TrueHits.net, in 2000 about 8,000 websites had been launched on the Thai Internet network, but just about 5,000 websites were popular. On the whole, these websites were launched in six web categories: non-profit organisations or government offices, individuals, entertainment services, commercial services, company services and mass media organisations.

Thai traditional mass media find the Internet is a new and effective channel to distribute their messages. Media industries in Thailand have realised the potential of Internet technology (Kumvijitra, 1998). However, Thai mass media has not been using the full potential of this new technology. According to Doungmanee's (1996) study, the three main purposes of Thai mass media's use of the World Wide Web are: to support the organisation's image, to increase channels of information delivery, and to promote sales and marketing. It can be seen that Thai mass media use the World Wide Web to support a particular image of modernity and to progress in new technology use. They believe that this image will build the credibility and good reputation of their organisations. The study concludes that most Thai mass media websites are launched to support their company image. A great amount of the contents are devoted to company information and activities. They also provide links to the pages that contain specific information about their core products and additional businesses or services.

Newspapers were the first Thai mass media to publish their publications on the WWW. Newspaper industries in Thailand jumped on the bandwagon of this new technology quickly, beginning with the *Business Day* newspaper (www.biz-day.com), which launched its Internet version in 1995, followed by the *Bangkok Post* (www.bangkokpost.com) in 1996. In 1997, Thailand's first commercial radio station launched live broadcasts on the Internet with the cooperation of several media and

telecommunication groups. Since then, several radio stations in Bangkok have commenced their websites. In 1998, the government set up the *School Net Thailand* (SchoolNet"1509), a nationwide access service, to offer Internet access to more people, especially the youth. This new network allows secondary schools nationwide to use the local access number 1509 to connect to the Internet free of charge. Moreover, today all of the Thai government agencies have websites featuring up-to-date information (NECTEC, 2000a) (Ekachai, 2000: 448-449). The following section will reveal information about the merging of Thailand newspapers and the Internet.

2.3.6 Thai Newspapers and the Internet

The years 1980 to 1993 were a golden era for the Thai newspaper industry as advanced communication technologies were introduced in newspapers' production processes. This was the biggest change ever to occur in Thai print media history. The newspaper production and delivery process in Thailand nowadays is unlike the letterpress printing which had been used for the previous 25 years. Computer technology is now widely used in newsrooms in Bangkok and the whole country.

The introduction of new technology in the newspaper production system and the expansion to other media business has also enlarged the profit and power of the print industry. Print newspapers have taken advantage of the ability of the Internet network by using this new technology as a supplementary channel to distribute news and information to their readers. This is a new distributed channel in which news can be delivered onto a computer screen at the same time as onto paper (Chartprasert and Inkotcharn, 1997: 179). It is a so-called "Electronic Newspaper" or "Online Newspaper". Thai newspaper industries had to adopt the new-media technology

primarily to maintain their leadership, effectiveness, good image and business competition (Kaewthep, 1998, quoted in Ekachai, 2000: 449).

2.4 The Introduction of Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The Internet was first established in Thailand in mid-1987 and slowly developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The use of the Internet at that time was mostly limited to academics, researchers, engineers and computer professionals. It was not until the beginning of commercialisation in 1995 that the Internet began to spread to non-academic users (Suriyasarn, 2001a). And it was in this year that mass media in Thailand also started to be attracted to this new medium. Among Thai mass media, newspapers were the first to adopt this new communication technology by posting their print news content on the Internet (Kumvijit, 1998). However, because of the economic crisis in Thailand from 1997 to 2000, some newspaper organisations decided to delay or abolish their plans to launch their electronic versions and some were closed down. Between 1995, when the first electronic newspaper in Thailand was introduced on the WWW, and 2000, 15 national newspapers published electronic versions of their print editions on the WWW.

The contents of national electronic newspapers in Thailand are applied in two languages, Thai and English. There are 12 titles published in the Thai language: *Banmuang*, *Daily News*, *Khaosod*, *Thairath*, *Krungthep Turakij*, *Thannews*, *Thai Post*, *Siamturakij*, *Phoochatkarn (The Manager)*, *Prachachart Business*, *Matichon*, *Siamkeela (Siam Sport)*. The 3 titles in the English language are *Business Day*, *Bangkok Post*, and *Nation*. Table 2.3 presents information on 15 national electronic newspapers in Thailand in 2000 taken in their year of launch. The information includes: name of

newspaper, name of website, language of publishing, period of publishing, news update time, type of print newspaper, year of launch, and name of publisher.

Newspaper Name	Website name	Language	Period	Update	Type	Launch Date
Business Day	www.biz-day.com/	English	Daily	daily	Business	1995
Bangkok Post	www.bangkokpost.com	English	Daily	daily	Business	1996
Nation	www.nationmultimedia.com/	English	Daily	daily	Mass	1996
Daily News	www.dailynews.co.th	Thai	Daily	daily	Mass	1997
Krungthep Turakij	www.bangkokbiznews.com/	Thai	Daily	daily	Business	1998
Thairath	www.thairath.com	Thai	Daily	daily	Mass	1998
Thansettakij	www.thannews.th.com	Thai	3-Day	3 days	Business	1999
Thai Post	www.thaipost.net	Thai	Daily	daily	Mass	1999
Phoochatkarn	www.manager.co.th	Thai	3-Day	3 days	Business	1999
Maticchon	www.maticchon.co.th	Thai	Daily	Daily	Mass	2000
Prachachart Turakij	www.maticchon.co.th/prachachart/	Thai	3-Day	3 days	Business	2000
Khaosod	www.maticchon.co.th/khaosod	Thai	Daily	daily	Mass	2000
Siamturakij	www.siamturakij.com	Thai	Weekly	weekly	Business	2000
Siamkeela	www.siamsport.co.th	Thai	Daily	daily	Sport	2000
Banmuang	www.banmuang.co.th	Thai	Daily	daily	Mass	2000

Table 2.2: List of 15 National Newspapers' Websites in Thailand (2000)

It can be noticed from the list in Table 2.2 that eight out of twenty-one electronic newspapers in Thailand were introduced in 1999 and 2000, which is the beginning of the information technology age in Thailand (NECTEC, 2000b).

2.5 Profiles of Four Thai Newspapers and Their Websites: The Study Samples

It is useful to present brief profiles of four Thailand newspaper organisations in order to understand the background of the case study. The information will be presented respectively for: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

2.5.1 The Profile of the *Bangkok Post* and *Bangkok Post Internet*

The Post Publishing Public Company Limited

Address: *Bangkok Post* Building, 136 Na Ranong Road, Klongtoey, Bangkok 10110, Thailand, Tel: 0066-2-2403700, Fax: 0066-2-2403666

Website: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/>

Post Publishing is a publisher of the *Bangkok Post* newspaper, an English-language daily in Thailand, and a number of other publications. The *Bangkok Post* newspaper was first published in 1946 after the Second World War. It was established by an American sailor, Lieutenant Commander Alexander William McDonald. The first issue of the *Bangkok Post* was published on 1st August 1946, with a circulation of 500 issues each day. In its first month, the *Bangkok Post* had a readership of 200. As the newspaper business progressed, *Post* publishing expanded to incorporate the printing business Allied Printers Company Limited, which runs other publications aside from the *Bangkok Post* newspaper. Furthermore, it began a joint venture with *Cross Nation* investment to produce a number of magazines such as the fashion magazine *Elle*, the decoration magazine *Elle Decor*, and a magazine for teenagers, *Cleo*. The *Bangkok Post* newspaper celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1st August 1996, and is the oldest

English-language daily newspaper in Thailand. The target audience of *Bangkok Post* is the middle-class and businessmen in Thailand (The *Post Publishing Public Company Limited, Annual Reports 1999*).

The *Bangkok Post*'s website, *www.bangkokpost.net*, entered cyberspace for the first time on 27 March 1996, and the event was marked with a great deal of enthusiasm. At the very beginning, the site boasted approximately 60 local and business news stories each day. Since then, the *Post* has steadily increased its web content to include all of each day's local and business news, as well as features. *Post Electronic Publishing* has also become more active in including special publications on the Internet. Another publication featured on the Web is the *Post*'s *Year-End Economic Review*. The *Post*'s website was completely redesigned in 2000. *Post Electronic Publishing* aims to make the *Post*'s Internet site more dynamic and offer more information on a variety of topics, such as local news, tourism, upcoming events, books online, etc. (The *Post Publishing Public Company Limited, Annual Reports 1999*).

2.5.2 The Profile of the *Nation* and *Nation Online*

The Nation Multimedia Group Public Company Limited

Address: 1854 Bangna-Trat Road, Bangna District, Bangkok 10260, Thailand.

Tel: 0066-2-338-3000 (Call Centre), 0066-2-338-3333, Fax: 0066-2-338-3334

Website: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/>

The *Nation Multimedia Group Plc* was established in 1971 under 'The *Nation Ltd*' by a group of Thai journalists to publish an English-language newspaper under the name '*Voice of the Nation*' (Kraisornvit, 1997: 2). It started with a newspaper business and has expanded to a multimedia business incorporating a Radio network in 1992 and Broadcasting (Television) in 1995 (Wijitjammaree, 1995).

The website *nationgroup.com* is used by Internet surfers nationwide and worldwide. It offers news from the *Nation* newspaper and information on the business, finance and marketing world from *Krungthep Turakij* newspaper. In addition, visitors can follow up information and entertainment on all NMG media at *nationgroup.com*, including checking classified ads, listening to radio programmes in FM 90.5 MHz live, following broadcasts via the internet, applying for *Nation Group* publications or products, participating in an editorial chat room, or expressing opinions. Moreover, *Nation Group* has an Internet alliance with pantip.com, one of the most popular websites in Thailand. The media in the group include: *The Nation Daily*; *Krungthep Turakij Daily (Bangkok Biznews)*; *Kom Chad Luek Daily*; *Nation Weekend magazine*, *NJ Connex Online*; *BizWeek magazine*; *BizBook*; *Nation Channel* and *Nation Radio*.

Launched in 1996, the *Nation's* online edition has improved its interactive content and user-friendly design extensively while maintaining high-quality news and analysis. The website offers breaking news, Live Chat, a Real Audio link to a local radio station, a comprehensive search engine, a poll, message boards open to the public and a daily information technology (IT) news section sponsored by Dell computers. In addition to daily news, the website aims at becoming interactive with users. A daily news update is uploaded between GMT 24.30 and 01.00 every day of the week. The *Nation Online* is a multimedia newspaper website with audio (*Nation Radio*) and video (*Nation TV*) interactivities.

2.5.3 The Profile of the *Thairath Daily* and *Thairath Daily Online*

The Vacharaphol Company Limited

Address: 1 Viphavadirangsit Rd; Bangkok 10900, Thailand, Tel.: 00662-2721030

Fax: 00662-2721324 , Website: <http://www.thairath.co.th>

Thairath Daily has a long history of establishment over three main eras. The first era began when it was founded by Mr Komphon Vacharaphol and the team on January 1, 1950, under the name *Khaophap Raiwan (The Weekly Pictorial)*. Within two years of launching on a weekly basis, it changed to being published daily. The second era began after it was shut down by the Thai government in 1958. He then ran *Siang Ang Thong (Ang-thong Voice)* from 1 May 1959 to 25 December 1962. The third and most recent era started in 1962, when *Seang Ang-thong* was closed down due to the unstable political situation in Thailand at the time. *Thairath (Thai State)* is the new name of the newspaper and since then it has been one of the fastest-growing Thai-language newspapers in terms of business and technology. (Translated from ‘*About Thairath*’ at <http://www.thairath.com/about/history/history.htm>.)

Thairath is a Thai-language daily newspaper published in Bangkok and distributed nationwide. The paper is a broadsheet published with two sections. The first section is devoted to news. Although the news section is best-known for its sensationalist coverage of crime and accidents, it also includes stories on Thai politics, the Thai economy and society. The second section features coverage of sport and entertainment. *Thairath* is the oldest and best-selling newspaper in Thailand, claiming a circulation in excess of 1 million copies daily. *Thairath* has become a popular newspaper which focuses on reporting mass news and entertainment. It now ranks as the premier national Thai mass-market newspaper in terms of circulation. However, it should be noted that *Thairath* is the only newspaper sample of this study that has no interest in expanding its newspaper business to another media business and is still owned by a family business, *Vacharaphol Co. Ltd.* (Translated from ‘*About Thairath*’ at <http://www.thairath.com/about/history/history.htm>.)

The only route for the *Thairath* to expand its core business is through *Thairath* online. The *Thairath* first launched its Internet version in 1998. The *Thairath Online* is part of the *Thairath Information Center*. These two sections share information sources and human resources.

2.5.4 The Profile of the *Matichon Daily* and *Matichon Daily Online*

The Matichon Public Company Limited

Address: 12 Tethsabannarumarn Road, Prachanivate 1, Ladyao, Bangkok 10900, Thailand, Tel.: 00662-5800020 Fax. : 00662-5899112

Website: <http://www.matichon.co.th>

The company was established on 18th January 1978 under the name *Matichon Co. Ltd*, with a registered capital of one million baht, its business being publishing and advertising. It was registered with the Securities Exchange of Thailand on 15th December 1989, and became a Public company on 2nd December 1993. (*Matichon Annual Report 2005, Business Structure, <http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>*).

Matichon Public Co. Ltd is a group of publishing companies; its core business consists of daily & semi-weekly newspapers, magazines, pocket books and special publications. Matichon Plc has two subsidiary companies: Khao-sod Co. Ltd, the publisher of Khao-sod daily and several other publications; and Ngandee Co. Ltd, in charge of the distributing service for the publications of Matichon Group. Matichon Plc comprises three newspapers – Matichon Daily, Khao-Sod Daily and Prachachart Turakij – and four magazines: Matichon Weekly, Art & Culture, Technology Chaobaan (Folk Technology), and Senthang Setthi (The Road to Becoming a Millionaire). (Matichon

Annual Report 2005, Business Structure,
<http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>).

Matichon Daily Newspaper is Thailand's quality daily newspaper and widely accepted by a large number of readers across the nation. It aims to offer the most recent, accurate and reliable coverage relating to Thai society, which has been widely accepted and referred to by both Thai and international communities. *Matichon* was also the award-winning newspaper of the Journalists' Association of Thailand, the highly regarded national journalists' organisation, for 7 years; it has also obtained various honourable awards upon several reports such as environment, women & children, education, etc. Its editorial content covers politics, economics, social issues, education, art, culture, crime, information technology, etc. Letters from readers is one of the most popular columns; readers can contribute their opinions and criticism to the editor on a variety of topics from legal problems to social problems (Matichon Annual Report 2005, Business Structure, <http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>). *Matichon* aims to highlight the quality of content and improve the ability of editorial staff consistently to ensure that *Matichon* will be the preferred choice of newspaper for Thai people.

Matichon launched its full online edition in 2000, after testing it in 1999. *Matichon Online* is part of *Matichon Information Center* and uses the same resources of information and staff. The website provides information online of all publications in the group. Recently, *Matichon Online* was greatly improved by providing video clips on major headline news and special events.

This brief information on four Thailand print and electronic newspapers provides the initial information about the samples used in this study.

2.6 Relevant Thai Studies on Electronic Newspapers

It can be noticed from the evidence of the studies of electronic newspapers (as defined earlier in chapter one) that the studies on the rapid diffusion of information technology and electronic newspapers have been conducted principally in western countries. Although several non-western countries are also starting to show the key traits of an information society and are producing electronic newspapers, minimal data on electronic newspapers in those nations are recorded. The more online newspapers in non-western countries are studied, the more we will know about how electronic newspapers as new information technology are operated and presented.

Since electronic newspapers were first introduced in Thailand, a number of studies on electronic newspapers have appeared. Most of them are academic studies to fulfil the graduation of higher-education students in Thai universities. However, of the studies conducted recently, none have been concerned with the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers. The Thai studies presented below are only the studies that relate to the development and future trends of Thai print and electronic newspapers.

Beginning with the studies about the development and future trends of Thai newspapers, Wongwan (1991) studies the trends of Thai newspapers and finds five trends of Thai newspapers, as follows: the directions and policies of Thai newspapers in the future will depend on various factors, such as the communication technology system, the investment in the newspaper industry, the education of the population, the professional quality of journalists, the freedom of the press, etc. In addition, the content of Thai newspapers in the future will be presented in various types, while some newspapers will become more specific in terms of their content; the freedom and responsibility of Thai newspapers will increase; and newspaper industries in Thailand

will be run by chain ownership instead of family businesses. The final trend is that professional journalists and newspaper readers will be higher educated.

Wijitjammaree's study (1995) explores the development and trends of the media industry in Thailand. The findings of Wijitjammaree's study indicate that the Thai newspaper industry in the information society will change its contents to more investigative and more foreign news. Newspaper organisations will become part of chain ownership generating their own databases, expanding to radio and television media cooperating with foreign countries. In the last aspect, newspaper organisations in Thailand will set up training institutions to prevent a shortage of human resources.

Some studies about mass media and the Internet in Thailand have also appeared. DOUNGMANEE (1996) studies the information diffusion of the Thai media through the World Wide Web. The results demonstrate that Thai media businesses mainly use the WWW as a new transmission channel to improve their images. Furthermore, the study finds that Internet technology is also an alternative channel to increase the opportunity for Thai media to become worldwide news services.

Following DOUNGMANEE's study there were a number of studies relating to electronic newspapers. Firstly, INKOCASARN (1996) studied the reading of newspapers compared to the reading of online newspapers. The study found that the study participants ranked pictures and graphics as the most important factors contributing to the attractiveness of print newspapers.

Also, PHOERMSAP (1997) studied the adoption of the Internet by the newspaper industry and the adaptation of organisations to the new technology. The research found that the use of modern Internet technology in Thailand has been adopted from western countries. Thai newspaper organisations then apply this technology to their production processes. The level of adoption and adaptation in each organisation study sample is

different. Moreover, the Internet technology is suitable for the newspaper industry to use as a tool to distribute the information worldwide.

Research by Lertpiriyaprasert in 1997 focused on opinions, attitudes and social structure factors relating to the development of the Internet in Thailand. The study revealed that the economy is a major contributing factor to the growth of the Internet in Thailand, due to the need to stay or become competitive, locally and internationally. Social and cultural factors only affect the development of the Internet in Thailand. Meanwhile, politics has been the biggest obstacle to the growth of the Internet, despite the fact that it can play the most direct and influential role in the evolution of the technology in Thailand. Other obstacles include the relatively high service fees, education, and communication infrastructures.

Another two examples of the studies on electronic newspapers include a survey study of two Thai online newspapers by Kumvijitra (1998). He finds that most newspaper websites in Thailand give more priority to information messages than attractive design. Kumvijitra concludes that electronic newspapers in Thailand need to develop their production technology and creative ideas. Also, Thongrin (1999) studies the concepts, processes, and trends in Thai-language online newspapers. The study reports that the Thai-language online newspapers have originated from the development of the Internet technology. The online newspapers can also be viewed as positive images of the newspapers and of the development of the businesses. Thongrin (1999) also finds that the Thai-language online newspapers have the same sources and contents as their print editions. However, the online newspapers can serve wider audiences than their print editions because their content is precise, rapidly presented and more widely developed. On the other hand, a lack of personnel having sufficient knowledge about computer technology and Internet skills is still problematic. The study concludes that

the Thai-language online newspapers are likely to be privatised in order to work more efficiently and effectively.

Thawechothicharoen (2000) argues in his study about the trends of online newspapers in Thailand that online newspapers' readers will expand to a wide range of people because of the growth in the number of Internet users and the progression of online newspapers. Moreover, online newspapers have to compete with new and traditional media. The study adds that advertising will be the main revenue of online newspapers. In addition, the ability to manage and adapt data as suitable content for each media is a key skill. The study, however, suggests that the government is a hindrance to the development of online newspapers in Thailand.

Although the above examples of Thai studies in electronic newspapers have shown the attention of Thai scholars to the development of this new medium, none of them have been concerned with analysing the production processes and news content in electronic newspapers through the gatekeeping concept, which is the principal aim of this thesis. However, there are some studies of production processes and news selection in traditional newspapers in Thailand in the 1990's that are worth mentioning here. For instance, in 1993, Lamnirath found that there are certain factors that influence the selection of foreign news in four print newspapers in Thailand. These include: the value of news, policies and goals of the organisations and the attitudes of the gatekeepers. Also Meelhom (1995) conducted a comparison study of the factors influencing the selection of front-page news in two Thai daily newspapers. The study found that news value and readers' interests are two of the main factors that influence the selection process.

The presentation of related studies in Thailand regarding newspapers on the Internet and the study of production processes in newspapers show a lack of studies

related to the news selection or gatekeeping process in Thailand. Therefore, the study of “The relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in 2000 in terms of their production processes and news content” is an attempt to partially fill this gap and support the notion that there are distinctions and similarities in news production processes and news content between traditional print newspapers and electronic newspapers.

2.7 Chapter Summary: Thai Newspapers in the Internet Age

This thesis is an attempt to explore the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news selection processes and news content by applying the gatekeeping concept as the framework of the study. Therefore, it is important to reveal the context of Thai mass media along with the introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand to gain an understanding of the background to this case study.

This chapter focused on the case study of Thailand and Thai newspapers. It addressed the background with respect to the historical context and development of Thai mass media, particularly newspapers, IT and technology within Thai society, the development of the Internet in Thailand and the use of the Internet as a new medium of newspapers in Thailand. The introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand as a whole was analysed to generate and understand the related picture of the development of new technology and traditional newspapers in Thailand. The related studies on electronic newspapers in Thailand since the introduction of newspapers on the Internet have been examined in order to show the lack of study in this area in Thailand. At the

end of this chapter, the brief profiles of four newspaper organisations were presented to highlight the general picture of the study samples.

This is a case study of Thailand, where the mass media is confronted with the issue of freedom of the press. Thai newspapers have realised the important role of the gatekeeping or selection process in their news production and in Thai society. Thailand's mass media, particularly newspapers, have been paying serious attention to their selection processes in terms of what and what not to publish in both their paper and online editions. Consequently, the study of news selection in print and electronic newspapers by applying the gatekeeping concept is practical and also a significant way to learn about the Thai newspaper industry and the arrival of electronic newspapers in Thai society. In addition, the year 2000 in Thailand was a golden year for information technology, and this has provided useful data for studying newspapers in the new technology age.

At this point, in order to examine the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news content in relation to the gatekeeping concept, this study conducted three research approaches in two stages in Thailand. Participant observation and interviews were carried out in Thailand in 1999, and then newspaper content was analysed in 2000, in order to explore the arguments of the study and answer the research questions. The details of the study design will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This chapter is designed to examine the research methodology utilised in order to explore the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news production processes and news content. The research methodology conducted in this thesis was a multiple research design. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994, quoted in Wimmer & Dominick, 2000), one of the four factors that help build credibility in a qualitative research project is ‘multiple methods of data collection’. Also, as suggested by several studies – such as Fishman (1980), Van Dijk (1988), Ericson et al (1989), and Tarabay (1994). (All quoted in Al-Hasani, 2003: 83) – a multiple-method of social science research techniques, including observation, interviews, examination of organisation documents and systematic analysis of organisational products, is needed for a full insight into a news organisation (Al-Hasani, 2003: 83).

This research project, therefore, collected information on the production processes and news content of four Thai print newspapers and their electronic editions (websites) in 1999 and 2000. As mentioned in chapter two, the year 2000 was a good time to research new communication technologies in Thailand as it was the year in which Thailand began to recover from the economic crisis and become an information society. The study involved participant observations, interviews and analysis of the content of four Thai national daily newspapers located in Bangkok, Thailand. The four newspaper samples of the study were: The *Bangkok Post*, the *Nation*, the *Thairath* and the *Matichon*, all of which were selected by purposive sampling in order to study the

specific case of newspapers in Thailand. The research methodology was conducted over three different time periods. The participant observations and interviews took place on two separate occasions: the first period was from 1st to 31st July 1999 and the second was from 19th to 21st January 2000. The analysis of newspapers' content was conducted in September 2000.

The research was conducted at three different periods because content analysis partly relied on the information from observation and interviews to help with designing the content recording forms. Furthermore, although participant observation and interviews are useful methods in gathering in-depth information from newspaper organisations about their production processes, these two methods cannot help in analysing the quantity and quality of newspapers' content. At this point, the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of the quantity and quality of their news content are an indication of the consequences of the news selection processes of these two mediums, which is the core of this study. In essence, the findings from participant observation and interviews provide data on how the news selection process operates in each newspaper organisation, while content analysis helps to analyse a large quantity of data and study newspapers' contents systematically and to verify similarities and differences in news policy as well as news production processes. Consequently, a combination of three research approaches is an essential tool in exploring the production process and the way in which news content is shaped and presented in four Thai print and electronic newspapers.

This chapter firstly discusses how the research questions of the study were formulated. The chapter addresses how the qualitative and quantitative methods were approached and then moves on to describe the rationale of the research design for this thesis. Finally, three research methods conducted in this study, which included

participant observation, interviewing and content analysis, will be discussed in terms of rationale and purposes, research sites, samples of the study, and data collection and data analysis procedures including the issues of the validity, reliability and ethics of the study.

3.1 Research Questions

In an attempt to examine the operation of news selection within production processes, including the way in which news stories are shaped, timed and presented in print and electronic newspapers in Thailand, five research questions were developed for this research.

‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their production process and news policy compared to their print counterparts?’

The first research question will help to examine the effects of the differences in newsroom routines and news policies on news selection within the production processes of print and electronic newspaper samples.

‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’

‘Does the electronic newspapers’ news content provide more or less home news than their print editions?’

‘Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics during the study period?’

These three research questions will together help to discover the character and location of news content, which provides insights into the way content is shaped, presented and passed through the news gates of print and electronic newspapers in

Thailand. News content or news items are the completed products at the end of news production and news selection that reflect the form and type of messages that pass through the news gates of print and electronic newspapers.

‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections, in the study period?’

The final research question will identify the level of potential of new communication technology that has been utilised in electronic newspapers in Thailand. The outcome will reflect the services of electronic newspapers in Thailand at the time of the study, which will lead to suggestions about their present roles in their products’ development.

These five research questions helped in investigating the relationships and differences between the print and electronic edition samples of the study in terms of the processes of news selection as well as the ways in which news content is shaped and presented, including the use of interactive elements.

The combination of three research methods was designed to investigate the research questions of the study. Qualitative participant observation, including newsroom observation and interviews, was used to explore the relationships and differences in production processes, news selection and news policies. Quantitative and qualitative content analyses of print and electronic newspaper samples were also conducted to examine the quantity (amount of news messages) and quality (characteristics, location, news priority, newsworthiness) of news content presented in print and electronic newspapers including the interactive elements used in electronic editions.

The qualitative and quantitative research paradigm, the rationale of the research methodology including details of the three research methods, and the four newspaper samples are discussed in the following sections.

3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

This thesis examines four Thai print newspapers and their websites as the case study into their relationship in terms of production processes and news content. In media studies, qualitative method tend to answer questions such as why and how, rather than what, which only quantitative study can help to answer. However, Jensen (2002: 207) indicates that ‘this does not imply that one research method is better than the other’. Nevertheless, the multiple research techniques tend to strengthen each other in order to yield greater reliability. According to Jensen (2002), qualitative and quantitative research are characterised by their forms of data collection and the resulting types of evidence. Jensen (2002: 207) also proposes six different prototypical empirical methods for conducting research. Interviewing, observation and discourse analysis are categorised as qualitative methodology, while surveys, experiments and content analysis study are classified as quantitative methodology, as laid out in Table 3.1 below:

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Speech/ Verbal language	Interviewing	Survey
Action/Behaviour	Observation	Experiment
Texts/Documents	Discourse analysis	Content analysis

Table 3.1: Six Prototypical Empirical Methods

Source: Jensen (2002: 207)

Jensen (2002: 207) explains the quantitative and qualitative approaches as follows: ‘quantitative studies are covered both in terms of their basic categories and operations, and with reference to the different relevance of survey, experiments and content analysis; qualitative studies are presented, similarly, in terms of the systematics of interviewing, observation and textual research, including issues of data collection and data analysis’. In conclusion, the way in which qualitative and quantitative research complement each other is examined with reference both to concrete examples and to classic problems in the philosophy of science.

Having considered the implications and advantages of quantitative and qualitative research methods, this thesis, therefore, employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine the newspapers’ production processes including the character and quantity of news content presented in four Thai print and electronic newspaper samples. This followed the concept of the complementary use of qualitative and quantitative research methods in media and communication research proposed by Jensen (2002: 254-272). As a result, three research methods – qualitative participant observations and interviews, combined with quantitative and qualitative content analysis – have been utilised for this study. However, before discussing the details of each research method, it is helpful to examine the rationale behind, and relationship between, these three research methods.

3.3 Research Methodology Design

In order to investigate the relationships and differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their production processes and news content, the study needs to go further than the description of the manifest content of the news organisation

(McQuail, 1994). According to Halloran (1981, quoted in Al-Hasani, 2003: 83), a comprehensive analysis of the communication process and examination of the messages of news organisations needs to be combined with an examination of communication in news organisations and the context in which they operate.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994, quoted in Wimmer & Dominick, 2000) suggest that one of the four factors that help build credibility in a qualitative research project is 'multiple methods of data collection'. However, this is not to suggest that one research method is better than the other. The multiple research methods rather strengthen one another in order to yield superior reliability. This thesis, therefore, has utilised a combination of three research methods – participant observation; interviews; and content analysis – to help increase the credibility of the study's findings. The research design of this study directly relied upon answering the research questions, which were formulated with the concern that there are similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news production processes and news content.

The study investigates not only the production processes and news policies but also the quantity and characteristics of the content that has been produced by these four Thai newspaper samples. This is because participant observation gathers the data from production processes about how news selection takes place in newsroom practices/routines and how newspaper content is created and shaped through the selection process, while interviews provide perspectives on news policy and the roles and trends of the four newspaper samples. Nevertheless, participant observation and interviews cannot assist in exploring the similarities and differences in the quantity and character of the contents that reflect the process of news selection of print and electronic newspaper samples. Therefore, newspaper content analysis has been conducted to

strengthen the findings from participant observation and interviews by investigating the contents of print and electronic newspapers in terms of the quantity of news content, the location and character of local news and international news, the character of lead news stories and lead news topics, and the emphasis given to headlines, as well as the use of interactive elements in electronic newspapers in Thailand.

On the whole, these three research methods were combined to enable the examination of the research questions and to generate debates about the gatekeeping concept and the study of production processes in print and electronic newspapers in Thailand. The rest of this chapter will discuss the use of the chosen research methods, which were observation, interviews and newspaper content analysis.

3.4 Participant Observation

As this thesis studies the newspaper production process and news content, participant observation was conducted to investigate how the news messages of print newspapers and their electronic versions in Thailand were produced. Most importantly, the participant observation method will explore the research question, ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand operate similar or different production processes compared to their print counterparts?’

As a result, participant observation is an efficient method for studying the day-to-day operation of newspapers as it involves studying the media content and production processes that have an effect on the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers. Direct observation and listening, including being involved in newsroom production processes and being able to ask questions, allowed the researcher to get nearer to the perspectives of editors and webmasters including newsroom staff because

the researcher was sharing the same situations. Conducting participant observation for this thesis helped the researcher to gather information on the processes of news production and news selection, which reflect the gatekeeping operation in four Thai print and electronic newspaper samples. Participant observation provided information on the newsroom production process, news production process, news selection policy and some information about the newspaper industry in Thailand.

It is worth noting here that, while conducting newsroom observations, the relationship between print and electronic newspaper newsrooms was studied in terms of their news routines, news selection processes and news policies. This process is similar to the gatekeeping model; therefore, the gatekeeping concept has been employed to study the relationship between print and electronic newspaper samples.

The following sub-sections will discuss the observation method. These include rationale and purposes, advantages and disadvantages, samples and units of the study, research sites and dates, the methods of data collection, observation topics, data analysis procedure, and the validity and reliability of the methods, including research ethics issues.

3.4.1 Rationale and Purpose of Participant Observation

Mason (1996: 60) refers to participant observation as a method of generating data which involves the researchers submerging themselves into a research setting and systematically observing dimensions of that setting including interactions, relationships, actions and events. The study made by Hansen *et al* (1998: 44) suggests that participant observation is a significant research method for studying how media content is produced, as they mention that:

‘Participant observation goes behind the scenes of media output to help reveal the complex of forces, constraints and conventions that inform the shape, selections and silences of media output’ (Hansen *et al*, 1998: 44).

In addition, an effective way to study how newspapers’ contents are produced and interpreted is to carry out an observation together with interviews with the newspapers’ workers (Hansen *et al*, 1998: 44).

Hansen *et al* (1998: 44) also note that participant observation typically deploys a number of methods, such as observation, talk and informal interviews, including attending to documentary sources. Participant observation is the method most often used in studies of media organisations and production, which provides findings and insights that are simply not available by other means, for example by a survey study, experiment study, etc. (Hansen *et al*, 1998). Moreover, data from observation undertaken in real contexts is likely to be of better quality and to reflect a closer view of what actually happens than data gathered from the artificially created and controlled environments of interviews or questionnaires.

Another reason for choosing to conduct participant observation for this study is that, as a former journalist who is familiar with newsroom practices, the researcher recognises the enormous advantages of conducting newsroom observation in order to achieve the aim and purpose of the study.

As a consequence, participant observation in this study was conducted by various methods including newsroom observation, discussions with newsroom staff and scrutiny of documents. However, the involvement of the researcher in newsroom observations was only a partial participation with some activities of news routine. The purpose of participant observation in this study was to find out what goes on in the

organisations. It aimed to provide information about and insight into the news production process and news policy in the newsroom of each different Thai newspaper organisation sample.

3.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Participant Observation

Like other research methods, participant observation research has its strengths and weaknesses. Hansen *et al* (1998: 46) indicate a number of strengths of participant observation: 1) records and makes the invisible visible; 2) counters the problem of inference; 3) improves upon other methods through triangulation; 4) qualifies or corrects speculative theoretical claims; 5) reminds us of the contingent nature of cultural production; and 6) provides evidence for the dynamic as well as embedded nature of cultural production. Nason and Golding (1998, in Symon and Cassel, 1998: 234) also point out three main advantages of participant observation methods. Firstly, the data being collected by observation are less obtrusive because they are less likely to be influenced by researchers. Secondly, the data being collected from the client system can lead to greater depth of sensitive variations and nuances of meaning. Finally, participant observation methods are suitable for longitudinal studies, which can examine changes taking place in the host culture or subculture.

In addition, Wimmer and Dominick (2000) indicate that participant observation study has several unique advantages. For instance, observation study, sometimes, is the only appropriate approach, especially when quantification is difficult. Participant observation is particularly suitable for a study of the gatekeeping process in network news because it is difficult to measure gatekeeping. Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 112) also note that the greatest advantage of participant observation study is that the study takes place in the natural setting of the activity being observed and thus can

provide data rich in detail and subtlety. Finally, participant observation study is usually inexpensive (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000: 113).

In contrast, several scholars have addressed the weaknesses of participant observation. As Brewer and Hunter (1989: 45-46) point out, the small scale of the sample can lead to doubts about whether the sample and the observation's findings are representative. The participant observation study apparently has its limitations but Brewer and Hunter (1989: 45-46) argue that it sometimes leads to extremely interesting insights about the members of the groups being observed. Hansen *et al* (1998: 62) also address the weaknesses of participant observation study, suggesting that if the researcher occasionally steps outside the immediate production domain and researches the surrounding institutional context, hierarchy and decision-making, the method can also accommodate the influence of wider corporate culture, the context, and forces of change.

Participant observation in this study has the advantage of taking place in the natural setting of four print and electronic newspapers' newsrooms in Thailand, and gathered data on the day-to-day activities in the production processes from the observations. It also gathered information from discussions and informal interviews with the newspapers' staff which helped enrich the information from newsroom observations. In addition, as an experienced former journalist, the researcher comprehends the advantages of observing newsroom practices for this study, as observation is a useful tool in investigating newspapers' production processes and newsroom practices.

3.4.3 Participant Observation Samples and Units

Four national daily newspapers published in Bangkok, Thailand – *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon* – were chosen for newsroom observation by purposive sampling. The samples were chosen for three reasons. Firstly, they are the major and most famous national daily Thai- and English-language newspapers in Thailand and appear within the top ten circulations (Truehits.net, 2000). Secondly, they each have an Internet version that includes news updated regularly. Finally, there are different aspects of policy implementation to investigate between Thai- and English-language newspapers.

The units of observation were the production processes of the newsrooms of four newspaper organisation samples in Bangkok, Thailand, as detailed in Table 3.2 below:

Newspaper Title	Website Address	Language	Newspaper Type	Period	Year of Launch	Publisher
Bangkok Post	www.bangkokpost.com	English	Quality National	Daily	1996	The Post Publishing Public Co. Ltd.
Nation	www.nationmultimedia.com	English	Quality National	Daily	1996	The Nation Multimedia Group
Thairath	www.thairath.com	Thai	Mass National	Daily	1998	Vacharaphol Co. Ltd.
Matichon	www.matichon.co.th	Thai	Quality National	Daily	2000	Matichon Public Co. Ltd.

Table 3.2 : Profile of Four Newspaper Samples

While observing the working routines in the newsrooms of four newspaper samples by partial participation, informal interviews and conversations were conducted with newsroom staff, such as the sub-editor, layout desk staff, graphic designer and computer

operator, to find out more information about the production processes of their print and Internet versions.

3.4.4 Participant Observation Sites and Dates

The participant observations took place at the main newsrooms of each of the four newspaper organisations in Bangkok, Thailand, which were the same samples used in the content analysis. The participant observation was conducted in two stages: the first stage was from 12th to 28th July 1999 and the second stage was from 19th to 20th January 2000 at the newsrooms of four newspaper organisations in Bangkok, Thailand. The details of research sites, including the location of the research sites, date of conducting participant observation and activities of the study, are shown in Table 3.3 below:

Research sites	Address	Date/ Time slot	Activities
Main Print and Online Newsroom of the <i>Nation</i>	1854 Bangna-Trat Road, Bangna, Bangkok 10260, Thailand. Tel: 0066-2-338-3000	12 th –13 th July 1999 9.00 am to 5.00 pm	-Newsroom observation and informal interviewing
Main Print and Online Newsroom of the <i>Bangkok Post</i>	136 Na Ranong Road Klong Toey, Bangkok 10110, Thailand. Tel: 00662-2403700	15 th –16 th July 1999 9.00 am to 5.00 pm	-Newsroom observation and informal interviewing
Main Print and Online Newsroom of the <i>Thairath</i>	1 Viphavadirangsit Road Bangkok 10900, Thailand. Tel: 00662-2721030	27 th –28 th July 1999 9.00 am to 5.00 pm	-Newsroom observation and informal interviewing
Main Print and Online Newsroom of the <i>Matichon</i>	12 Tethsabannarumarn Road, Prachanivate 1, Ladyao, Bangkok 10900, Thailand Tel. : 00662-5800021	19 th –20 th January 2000 9.00 am to 5.00 pm	-Newsroom observation and informal interviewing

Table 3.3: List of Research Sites and Dates of Participant Observation

However, it should be noted that participant observations in this thesis were conducted in two stages; this was because of the change in one of the newspaper samples in the middle of the data collection process. At the first stage of the study, the researcher

chose two mass circulation newspapers, *Thairath* and *Daily News*, as Thai-language newspaper samples. Nevertheless, after reconsideration, the researcher became aware of the similarity in the Thai-language newspaper samples and the significance of the comparative aspect to the research. This led to the decision to keep only one mass-circulation Thai-language newspaper, *Thairath*, and to change the other one, *Daily News*, to a quality newspaper, *Matichon*. The researcher took five months to reschedule and one month to go back to Thailand to conduct the data collection at the *Matichon* newspaper.

The results from participant observation provided the relevant records of the relationships between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news production and news selection processes, which helped to explain whether and how the gatekeeping process in electronic newspapers varies from their traditional counterparts.

The following sections examine the participant observation method conducted in this thesis including the research instrument design, data collection and analysis procedures and research ethics issues. It also discusses the letter of request for co-operation and participant observation topics.

3.4.5 Methods of Data Collection for Participant Observation

As discussed earlier, participant observation has been utilised in this study, which involved several techniques of data collection, including newsroom observation and talks with the newsrooms' staff as well as scrutiny of company profile documents (Hansen *et al*, 1998). It is important to note here that the participant observation in this research was at a partial level. The researcher participated in the newsroom observation by attending only some newsroom activities (such as the morning news meeting and

online version webpage layout) as an observer. Informal interviews and conversations were used throughout the observing period.

Before conducting the newsroom observations, the following protocols were classified to guide the record scheme. The aim of the observational record was to find out as much information as possible about the news policy and news selection of print and electronic newspaper samples with regard to their production process; nine main topics were planned for recording the information as detailed below.

Newsroom Observation Topics

- The history and current state of the organisation.
- The development of both print and electronic editions.
- The news policy of print and electronic versions.
- The type and target group of print and online versions.
- The use of new technologies in the production system of print and online versions' production processes.
- The concern of an organisation for the use of new communication technologies in its production process.
- The production system of print and electronic editions.
- Newsrooms' working relationships and environment.
- The gatekeeping and selection process in print and electronic versions.

The researcher undertook the participant observation of this study by being introduced as a research observer and as such was allowed to partake in some newsroom routines. This included attending (without any participation) news meetings and sitting with the production team while they were working. While directly observing the routine work of newsroom staff, the researcher conducted informal interviews and conversations with the staff about the details of the operations. The production processes were explained and demonstrated step-by-step by newsroom staff who were involved with the production processes. The researcher spent three full days (9am to 5 pm) at each

newsroom of the four newspaper samples to observe the production processes of both print and electronic editions. The topics in the protocol were used as the guideline for observing and interviewing. Note-taking and tape-recording were used to record the information. The profile of the company was given in document format. The data collected from participant observations were analysed by qualitative aspects as detailed in the next section.

3.4.6 Data Analysis of Participant Observation

The data collected from the participant observation of the newsrooms' routines and from talking with the editors and webmasters as well as editorial staff was analysed by qualitative methods such as generating, grouping, summarising and discussing to explore the final results. This study undertook seven data-analysis stages as set out by Marshall and Rossman (2006): 1) organising the data; 2) immersion in the data; 3) generating categories and themes; 4) coding the data; 5) offering interpretations; 6) searching for alternative understandings; and 7) writing the findings. The process of data analysis is non-linear, time-consuming, and complex, and the approach adopted for each stage is explained further below:

Firstly, newsroom observation data were generated, grouped and summarised. All data from field notes and tape recorders were then translated from Thai to English by the researcher. The data from observation field notes (particularly the production processes) were converted into diagrams and descriptions. The information and perspectives gathered from conversations were summarised and grouped into the topics that had been set. Finally, the data was analysed in qualitative terms to provide the foundational information for conducting newspaper content analysis.

3.4.7 Validity and Reliability of Participant Observation

As Berger (1998: 106) points out, there are still concerns that face the observer, such as: “How do you obtain focus?” “What is to be observed?” “How do you record your observation without changing the natural dynamics of what you are observing?” “How do you make sure your notes and records are accurate?” “How do you relate to those being observed and still maintain objectivity?” “How much can you generalise from your observation?” and “How do you need to qualify your generalisations?”

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of participant observations, before carrying out the observation and informal talks the researcher sent out the topics of observation via electronic mail to the editors and webmasters of the *Bangkok Post*, *Nation* and *Thairath* on 1st of June 1999 and to the editors and webmasters of the *Matichon* on 1st of December 2000. The researcher asked the participants to give feedback on the topics of participant observation. The feedback from the editors and webmasters was used to build the final topics and conduct the newsroom observation.

Participant observations were conducted after contacting three editors and four webmasters of four newspaper samples via email, informally requesting their co-operation. This was followed by sending letters to representatives of each newspaper explaining the purposes of the study and giving details of the periods of participant observation, including the specific issues to be observed and discussed during the study. Informal interviews and conversations were conducted in the newsroom while observation was undertaken by the researcher. The information gathered from observing newsrooms’ production processes and information gathered from interviews with the newsrooms’ staff were recorded by short notes and tape recorders (with the permission of the participants).

3.4.8 Ethical Issues in Observation

Participant observation in this study involved the researcher being open about the research role to the editors, webmasters and those in the newsrooms of four newspaper samples and being open about what was to be researched, why it was being researched and how the findings would be used by informing them via email and letter as detailed in Section 3.3.6. Moreover, the researcher's participation was only at a partial level in order not to distract the staff from their work routines. A general problem for all research is that research participants may alter their behaviour or not express their true opinions in the presence of the researcher. It is particularly important that the researcher reassures the participants about why the research is taking place, what the research is about and how the research findings will be used. This is a matter of ethical research practice and is also likely to help build rapport and trust between the researcher and participants involved in the study.

The researcher as an observer is also aware of research issues and conduct that may lead to bias. Whilst needing to become involved with the people and production processes in the newsrooms, the researcher also tried to remain detached and to guard against the possibility of over-identifying with the participants who were observed and interviewed. The key aim of participant observation was to try to get as close as possible to the perspectives of the editors and webmasters and to try to interpret situations in the same way as the participants being studied. The skills and experiences the researcher gained from working in a journalistic environment were factors in choosing to observe newspaper newsrooms. This ensured that the quality of the data gathered by participant observation in this study was reliable. The researcher was also concerned about what should be included and excluded in the research and the reasons for doing so, and how these values and choices might affect the research.

During the period of conducting participant observations for this research, semi-structured interviews were also carried out in order to gain more information to support the findings from participant observation and to gather inside information about the roles and future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. A discussion of the interview methods will be presented in the next section.

3.5 Interviews

In order to gather information about production processes and news policies including additional information on the uses, trends and roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted. The findings from interviews helped to enrich the information gathered from newsroom observations. Interviews in this research were divided into two parts. The first part was conducted with three print editors and four webmasters of the four newspaper samples at the same place as participant observation. This part aimed to explore deeper information about the newspapers' production processes, news policies and organisational development, which also supported the findings from participant observation. The second part was carried out with a group of media professionals in Thailand. The data from the interviews with the second participant group provided information about the uses, roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. Although the second set of interview data might not relate to the gatekeeping framework, it helps to provide a fuller picture of Thailand's electronic newspapers in 2000, which was their beginning stage, and could be used to predict future trends of electronic newspapers in Thai society. The details of how interviews were conducted will be divided into eight topics: rationale and purposes, advantages and disadvantages, samples and units of the study, research sites

and dates, methods of data collection, data analysis procedure, validity and reliability of the method, and research ethics issues.

3.5.1 Rationale and Purpose of Interviews

This study chose to utilise interviews as one of the three research methods as consideration of the definition of interviews indicated that this method was suitable for the study. Guion (2001) defines the goal of an interview as being to explore as deeply as possible the respondent's feelings, perspectives and points of view. There are key characteristics that differentiate a qualitative research interview from a regular interview. Some key characteristics of qualitative interviews include: open-ended questions so that respondents cannot answer only yes or no, semi-structured interviews to allow questions to flow naturally, seeking understanding and interpretations from the respondent throughout the interview, being conversational so that the interview will have smooth transitions from one topic to the next, recording responses typically with audiotape and written notes, recording observations of non-verbal behaviours on the field notes as they occur, and recording reflections immediately after the interview. Guion (2001) also adds that interviewing often requires repeated interview sessions with the target audience under study. However, unlike focus group interviews, interviews occur with one individual at a time to provide a more involving experience (Guion, 2001).

According to Krippendorff (2004: 39), interview study is a way to come to know other persons – their beliefs, attitudes, and expectations – including understanding the cognitive models that shape their world-views. Krippendorff (2004: 39) points out that, in practice, interviewing is limited to people who are available to answer questions. In essence, interviews involve not only asking questions, but also the systematic recording

and documenting of responses coupled with intense probing for deeper meaning and understanding of the responses.

Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 135) also define interviewing as essentially a hybrid of the one-on-one interview approach. Interviewing is unique for several reasons – for instance, it generally uses smaller samples, it is usually very long and it can be customised to individual respondents.

From the rationale revealed above, interviews have been conducted with two groups of Thai people for two purposes. Firstly, the interviews with a group of editors and webmasters of four newspaper samples aimed to investigate the similarities and differences between print and electronic versions in terms of their news policy and news selection process. Secondly, the interviews with a group of Thai media professionals aimed to gather additional information about the roles and future trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand, which would be of benefit to Thai newspaper businesses as a whole. In this sense, the face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study to yield the relevant information and perspectives from these two groups of participants, which were intended to strengthen the findings from newsroom observations. The findings from interviews are useful for this research in terms of gaining an understanding of the roles and future trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand, which reflect the image of these two mediums in Thai society and the flow of global information technology.

3.5.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Interviews

Before conducting formal interviews for the study, the researcher was concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of this research method. According to Cluett and Bluff (2006: 226), in the process of face-to-face interviews the researcher is the research

tool, which may have an effect on the participants of the interview study and hence on the data that is collected and analysed. Therefore, there are advantages and disadvantages to face-to-face interviews that should be considered when doing the interview study. Cluett and Bluff (2006: 226) indicate that the advantages of face-to-face interviews are: participant's perspective obtained, views can be clarified, eye contact can be maintained which facilitates development of a relationship with participants, non-verbal communication can be witnessed and interpreted, discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal communication can be identified and challenged, and, finally, interviews can be combined with other forms of data collection. The disadvantages of face-to-face interviews are also mentioned: they can be time-consuming, labour intensive, generate large amounts of data, and the researcher may have an impact on the participant/data collection (Cluett and Bluff, 2006: 226).

Moreover, Wimmer and Dominick (2000) point out that the most important advantage of interviews is the wealth of detail that they provide. Another advantage of interviews is that they provide more accurate responses on sensitive issues than traditional survey methods. On the negative side, interviews are typically done with a non-random sample, as interviews are usually non-standardised, and each respondent may answer a slightly different version of a question (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). Another disadvantage of interviews mentioned by Wimmer and Dominick (2000) is that they are especially sensitive to interviewer bias.

After considering the rationale and purposes, including the advantages and disadvantages, of the interview method, this study decided to include face-to-face interviews in the research methodology. The reason for this decision was that face-to-face interviews were considered to be suitable for studying a small group of participants. In addition, the findings from interviews were intended to enhance the

information from participant observations. The interview data gained from editors and webmasters provided details on news policies and the processes of news production that surround, select and shape news diffusion in print and electronic editions. Although some interview questions for the media-professionals group were not related to the gatekeeping process, they helped to obtain information on the trends and roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand. This information reflected the role of print and electronic newspapers at the time of this study which could be useful for further study of the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand. This thesis, therefore, conducted face-to-face semi-structured qualitative interviews by using open-ended questions with two groups of Thai participants as detailed below.

3.5.3 Participants of Interviews

Whilst three print editors and four webmasters were chosen by purposive sampling based on their roles as decision makers in the news selection process, a group of five Thai media professionals were also selected for interview study by purposive sampling because of their important roles in media businesses or as academics. Their opinions and information were, therefore, more relevant to the policy and news production process of both print and electronic newspapers in society with regard to information about the development and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. Lists of names, dates and time slots of interviews will be shown in Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7. The researcher decided to mention only the first name and job title of the interview participants for ethical reasons as will be discussed in sub-section 3.5.8.

The first and main group of interview participants consisted of three print editors and four webmasters of four newspaper samples. There was normally one print editor

and one webmaster of each newspaper sample interviewed; the exception to this was *Thairath*, for which the webmaster also acted as the editor, as shown in Table 3.4.

Name of Interviewee	Job Title/Newspaper
<i>Mr. Yingyord</i>	Webmaster and Editor, <i>Nation Online</i> (1999)
<i>Mr. Tulsathit</i>	Deputy Editor, <i>Nation</i> (1999)
<i>Mrs. Deborah</i>	Manager and Webmaster, <i>Bangkok Post Internet</i> (1999)
<i>Mr. Pichai</i>	Printer, Publisher and Editor, <i>Bangkok Post</i>
<i>Mr. Chavarong</i>	Director of Information Centre and Webmaster <i>Thairath Internet</i>
<i>Ms. Sumittra</i>	Director of Information Centre, <i>Matichon</i>
<i>Mr. Chawakit</i>	Webmaster, <i>Matichon Online</i>

Table 3.4: List of the First Group of Interview Participants

Five Thai media professionals were also asked for their opinions on the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. The following are the names of the five media professionals listed in the order in which the interviews took place.

Name of Interviewee	Job Title
Mr. Narong	Media academic
Assoc. Prof. Malee	Media academic
Assoc. Prof. Karnjana	Media academic
Prof. Sukanya	Media academic
Mr. Sommai	Professional journalist

Table 3.5: List of the Second Group of Interview Participants (Media Professionals)

3.5.4 Interview Sites and Dates

The interviews were conducted at the same locations as the participant observations from 14th to 29th July 1999 and from 19th to 21st January 2000. The interviews took place at the four newspaper samples in Bangkok, Thailand, as detailed in Table 3.6.

The first group of interview participants were the Editors and Webmasters:

Name of participant	Interview site	Date / Time slot of interview
<i>Mr. Yingyord</i>	The <i>Nation</i> 1854 Bangna-Trat Road, Bangna, Bangkok 10260, Thailand	14 th July 1999 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
<i>Mr. Tulsathit</i>	The <i>Nation</i> 1854 Bangna-Trat Road, Bangna, Bangkok 10260, Thailand	14 th July 1999 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm
<i>Mrs. Deborah</i>	The <i>Bangkok Post</i> 136 Na Ranong Road Klong Toey, Bangkok 10110, Thailand	17 th July 1999 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
<i>Mr. Pichai</i>	The <i>Bangkok Post</i> 136 Na Ranong Road Klong Toey, Bangkok 10110, Thailand	17 th July 1999 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm
<i>Mr. Chavarong</i>	Thairath Daily 1 Viphavadirangsit Road Bangkok 10900, Thailand	29 th July 1999 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
<i>Ms. Sumittra</i>	Matichon Daily 12 Tethsabannarumarn Road, Prachanivate 1, Ladyao Bangkok 10900, Thailand	21 st January 2000 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
<i>Mr. Chawakit</i>	Matichon Daily 12 Tethsabannarumarn Road, Prachanivate 1, Ladyao Bangkok 10900, Thailand	21 st January 2000 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm

Table 3.6: List of the First Group of Participants with Research Sites and Dates of Interviews

The second group of interview participants were the Media Professionals:

Name of participant	Occupation	Date / Time slot of interviewed
Mr. Narong	Media academic	19 th July 1999 9.00 am to 11.00 am
Assoc. Prof. Malee	Media academic	20 th July 1999 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm
Assoc. Prof. Karnjana	Media academic	24 th July 1999 9.00 am to 11.30 am
Prof. Sukanya	Media academic	26 th July 1999 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm
Mr. Sommai	Professional journalist	31 st July 1999 9.00 am to 12.00 pm

Table 3.7: List of the Second Group of Participants (Media Professionals) with Dates of Interviews

3.5.5 Methods of Data Collection for Interviews

The purpose of interviews was to establish more details of the newspaper samples' production processes, including opinions about their roles and trends. This thesis performed three stages of data collection for interviews, which included designing, interviewing and transcribing/translating. The following will examine each step with strategies for the implementation of interviews.

Designing

Before conducting interviews, the following questions were designed to guide the interview scheme. The aim of the interviews was to find out as much information as possible about the news policy and news selection of print and electronic newspaper samples, including opinions on the factors, trends and roles of electronic newspapers in

Thailand. A key part of the process was designing an interview guide. A list of questions was designed to guide the researcher through the interview. The interview guide helped the researcher to stay on track and covered the important issues/topics that were addressed; provided a framework and sequence for the questions; and helped maintain some consistency across interviews when different responses were given.

Nine open-ended questions were designed for the interviews with editors and webmasters, as detailed below:

List of Interview Questions for Editors and Webmasters

- What are the factors of changing from print to electronic newspapers in Thailand?
- What are the policy and purpose of launching an electronic version?
- What are the factors and news policies in news selection in print and online news production processes including prioritising news headlines?
- Are there any differences between print and electronic versions in terms of their news selection or gatekeeping processes?
- Who are the target groups of the print and online versions?
- How could the contents of print and electronic newspapers be developed?
- Are there any impacts of online newspapers to the journalism profession and the print newspaper industry in Thailand?
- Are there any differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their role in society? Please give details.
- What are the future trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand?

The interview questions for editors and webmasters in this research were mainly designed to gain more details about their news production process. However, two kinds of questions were designed. The first set consisted of questions related to gatekeeping in the production process, such as questions about news policies and the process of news selection. The second set consisted of questions about their perspectives on the

launching of their online version and the impact and future trends of electronic newspapers in Thai society and so on.

Six open-ended questions were designed for the interviews with the group of media professionals, as detailed below:

List of Interview Questions for Media Professionals

- What are the factors of introducing electronic newspapers to Thai society?
- How do you see the role of gatekeeping in print and electronic newspapers?
- What are the impacts of online newspapers to the journalism profession, print newspaper industry, the readers and Thai society?
- In your opinion, what should the roles of print and electronic newspapers have in Thai society?
- Are there any differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their role in society? Please give details.
- What do you think about the future trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand?

The interview questions for media professionals in this research were mainly designed to find out their perspectives on the introduction and the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thai society. Although most of the questions might not have related to news selection or the gatekeeping framework, they have provided additional information about electronic newspapers in Thailand at the time the research was conducted, which is also significant for this thesis and may benefit further studies undertaken in this study area.

The interviews were conducted after two groups of interview participants were contacted via an electronic mail informally asking for their co-operation. The letters requesting co-operation had been electronically sent to the two groups of interview samples for pre-interview contact for ethical reasons. Letters were then sent explaining

the purposes of the study, the periods of interviewing and the specific issues to be discussed during the study, including two sets of open-ended questions. The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews face-to-face with the participants in Bangkok, Thailand, using tape recorders and short notes to record the conversations with the permission of the interview participants.

Interviewing

The actual face-to-face interviews consisted of three main parts. The beginning of each interview involved introducing the researcher and the study to establish a good relationship with the participant. During the interviewing, the main responsibility of the researcher was to listen and observe while guiding the participant through a conversation, until all of the interview questions had been explored. The final part of the interview process was ending the interviews by asking the participants if there was anything else they would like to say or add in relation to the study. At the end of the interviews, the interview participants were thanked verbally.

The audiotape recorder was used in the interview for later reference and increased accuracy, after receiving the interview participant's permission.

Transcribing and Translating

After interviewing, transcripts of the interviews were created. This step involved bringing together all the information gathered from the interviews into written form. It consisted of writing out each question and response from the interviews word-for-word using recorded audiotape and notes. Then, the transcription was studied and reviewed, which included indicating and grouping the important information related to the study. This thesis, however, was also involved with translating the interview transcripts from

Thai language to English language, as the field study was conducted in Thailand and the original language used in the study was Thai. Both the original Thai and English transcriptions had been returned to interview participants for checking, giving them the opportunity to verify the interpretation of interview data.

3.5.6 Validity and Reliability of Interviews

Verifying involves checking the credibility and validity of the information gathered. A method called triangulation is used as a means of checks and balances. Basically, one type of triangulation would be to use multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of information. The trustworthiness of the data is the main concern of qualitative researchers. This can be enhanced by undertaking member checks (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, quoted in Cluett and Bluff, 2006: 239). Holloway and Fulbrook (2001, quoted in Cluett and Bluff, 2006: 239) indicate that ideally this means returning for a minimum of a second interview to provide participants with an opportunity to confirm the interpretation of interview data. This also suggests that researchers are acting ethically when they do this because it provides participants with an opportunity to remove anything they do not want included in the study (Nunkoosing, 2005, quoted in Cluett and Bluff, 2006: 239).

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of interviews, the interview questions were sent to the participants beforehand via electronic mail for pre-consideration. In addition, this study was concerned with the trustworthiness and credibility of interview data. Both original Thai and English transcriptions were returned to each interview participant for checking, giving them the opportunity to verify the interpretation of interview data.

3.5.7 Data Analysis of Interviews

This important step involved determining the meaning in the information gathered from interviews in relation to the purpose of the study. After the transcripts of interview data were created and verified, the data-analysis process involved the qualitative method by reviewing, indicating, summarising and grouping the important information related to the study and the answers to the research questions. Seven topics had been set to analyse the interview findings in order to answer the research questions. These topics were: the factors of changing from print newspapers to electronic newspapers in Thailand; the problems of changing from print newspapers to electronic newspapers; the rationale of launching electronic versions of four newspaper samples; news policy and news selection; the impacts of electronic newspapers; and the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

3.5.8 Ethical Issues in Interviews

Regarding the ethical issues of the study, contact was made before the interviews were conducted. The researcher sent emails to two groups of interview samples to introduce the researcher and the study and to obtain their consent to participate and to the use of a tape recorder. After receiving replies, letters explaining the purposes of the research and the interviews, why the participant had been chosen, the periods of interviewing, and the specific issues to be discussed during the interviews, including two sets of open-ended questions, were formally sent to the interview participants by post.

The ethical issue of respecting the interview participants' privacy was also considered. The researcher decided to indicate only the first name of participants in the interview findings report, although the data gathered from interviews were actual facts rather than criticisms.

After gathering the data from observations and interviews, newspaper content analysis of four newspaper samples was carried out. The next section describes the third and main research method of the study: newspaper content analysis.

3.6 Newspaper Content Analysis

This study is a new-media study about electronic newspapers and involves studying technology that is constantly moving forward. Content analysis was employed to analyse the character and location of news content that is shaped and presented by the production process, as it is an efficient way to keep up with the technology (Li, 2006). However, this study does not aim to study the technology itself but aims instead to look at the context of technology by comparing traditional print newspapers and electronic newspapers. It aims to analyse the character and location of news content in both print editions and their websites, which reflects the way news content is created, shaped and passed through the news gate in their production processes. Therefore, content analysis is conducted to explore the differences and similarities between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their contents. According to White (1950, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 5), the gatekeeping concept not only offers a framework for evaluating how selection occurs and why some items are selected and others are rejected, but also provides a structure for the study of how content is shaped, structured, positioned and timed. It is therefore useful to carry out content analysis in order to investigate the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their news and their news production process.

Stempel (2003) argues that the stable research technique of content analysis can be applied in the dynamic environment of the World Wide Web, but that there are

potential problems for researchers. Additionally, Wimmer and Dominick (2006: 150) indicate that content analysis is a specific research approach used frequently in all areas of the media because it is an efficient way to investigate the content of the media.

Examples of new-media studies conducting content analysis include Singer's (2001) study about the changes in the newspapers' gatekeeping role online by conducting content analysis of six newspapers and their websites in Colorado, USA, and Li's (1998) study of webpage design and news-retrieval efficiency which analyses the content of five U.S. Internet newspapers.

This research, therefore, conducted content analysis in both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The quantitative analysis will explore the amount and proportions of news and non-news content in print and electronic newspaper samples. The qualitative content analysis, on the other hand, will investigate the type, location, priority and newsworthiness of news content samples by classifying aspects of print and electronic version news content into predetermined categories and counting the frequency with which different types, locations and characteristics of news content occur.

The details of newspaper content analysis will be outlined in nine topics: rationale and purposes, quantitative content analysis aspects, qualitative content analysis aspects, samples and the selection scheme, units of analysis, periods of the study, design of content analysis instruments, method of data collection, and data analysis procedure.

3.6.1 The Rationale and Purposes of Newspaper Content Analysis

Hansen *et al* (1998: 94) indicate that the classic and most-quoted definition of content analysis comes from the first major review of this research method by Bernard Berelson:

“Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, in Hansen *et al*, 1998: 94)

The content analysis method is by definition a quantitative approach. As Hansen *et al* (1998: 95) also explain, the purpose of content analysis is to identify and count the occurrence of specific characteristics or dimensions of text in order to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance. Stempel (2003: 210) also concludes that the key to understanding content analysis and performing it competently lies in understanding the meaning of objective, systematic, quantitative and manifest content. Stempel (2003: 209-210) also suggests that communication research can reach its full potential only if it can relate content to communicator, audience and effect. It cannot do that without definitive information about content, and thus content analysis has been used frequently in mass-communication research. According to Gunter (2003: 65), the key differences between print and electronic newspapers can be found in relation to seven features: amount of content; format and design; access and customisation; immediacy; hyperlinking; interactivity; and cost. The analysis of newspaper content in this study explored four of those seven features: the amount of content; format and design; immediacy; and interactivity. This is because this study focuses on media study, and is concerned with investigating media products (newspaper content) but not the audience and business issues.

The content analysis method was suitable for this study as it aimed to examine the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of the content of newspaper samples and their websites, which involves news selection and production processes. The use of content analysis in this thesis was intended,

firstly, to explore newspaper coverage of news and non-news stories in both the print and electronic versions of four newspaper samples by counting overall items in number and by category; secondly, to provide information about what kinds of news stories and news topics are put through the news gates of print and electronic newspapers; and, finally, to examine the number of interactive elements being used on the homepages of electronic newspapers in Thailand. It is hoped that content analysis can lead to an understanding of whether and how the gatekeeping function varies in print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of the similarities and differences in their news content and news selection processes.

Newspaper content analysis in this research was conducted in both quantitative and qualitative aspects. According to Altheide (1996: 14-15), quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis differ in their approaches to data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Table 3.8 shows an overview of several dimensions of these two aspects of analysis by Altheide (1996: 15).

	Quantitative content analysis	Qualitative content analysis
Research goal	Verification	Discovery; verification
Reflexive research design	Seldom	Always
Emphasis	Reliability	Validity
Progression from data collection, analysis, interpretation	Serial	Reflective; circular
Primary research involvement	Data analysis and interpretation	All phases
Sample	Random or stratified	Purposive and theoretical
Pre-structured categories	All	Some
Training required to collect data	Little	Substantial
Type of data	Numbers	Numbers; narrative
Data entry points	Once	Multiple
Narrative description and comments	Seldom	Always
Concepts emerge during research	Seldom	Always
Data analysis	Statistical	Textual; statistical
Data presentation	Tables	Tables and text

*Table 3.8: An Overview of Quantitative and Qualitative Content Analysis
by Altheide (1996: 15)*

This thesis, therefore, used content analysis to investigate the content of print and electronic newspapers in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The reason for this is that quantitative content analysis can provide this study with the quantity of stories presented in newspaper samples, whereas qualitative analysis will offer a descriptive account of what print newspapers contain (Gunter, 2000) compared with what electronic newspapers contain. The selected contents of newspaper samples were subjected to quantitative and qualitative content analysis and will be discussed in both aspects below.

3.6.2 Quantitative Content Analysis

According to Berelson (1966, quoted in Altheide, 1996: 15), quantitative content analysis provided a way of obtaining data to measure the frequency and extent, if not the meaning, of messages. Also, McCormack (1982, quoted in Altheide, 1996: 15) explained that quantitative content analysis has been used as a method to determine the objective content of messages of written and electronic documents by collecting quantitative data about predefined and usually pre-coded categories or variables.

Quantitative content analysis was utilised in this study in order to investigate the quantity and proportions of news and non-news content in print and electronic newspaper samples. The quantitative analysis provided the amount of news stories presented in print and electronic newspaper samples. Quantitative content analysis was processed by classifying aspects of the content of each print and electronic version into predetermined categories and counting the frequency with which different types of content occurred.

Most importantly, the quantitative content analysis will help to find out the answers to these research questions:

‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’

‘Are the electronic newspapers’ news contents more or less local in focus than their print editions?’

‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections, in the study period?’

Advantages and Disadvantages of Quantitative Content Analysis

Wimmer and Dominick (1994, quoted in Gunter, 2000: 61) specify five uses of content analysis: 1) describing patterns or trends in media portrayals; 2) testing hypotheses about the policies or aims of media procedures; 3) comparing media content with the real world; 4) assessing the representation of particular groups in society; and 5) drawing inferences about media effects. Hansen *et al* (1998:95) also point out the advantages of quantitative content analysis: ‘content analysis can help provide some indication of relative prominences and absences of key characteristics in media texts, but the inferences that can be drawn from such indications depend on the context and framework of interpretation by which the text analyses are circumscribed’. The main point is the extent to which the quantitative indicators are read or interpreted in relation to questions about text meanings, social impact, or the relationship between the text and the realities which they reflect (Hansen *et al*, 1998:95).

However, the limitations of content analysis are reported by Wimmer and Dominick (1997: 115), the first being that content analysis alone cannot serve as the basis for making statements about the effects of content on an audience. Also, the findings of a particular content analysis are limited to the framework of the categories and the definitions used in that analysis. Finally, content analysis is normally time consuming and expensive. However, despite the debate about the efficiency of

descriptive content analysis per se, it continues to be widely used as a research technique crossing a range of contexts (Gunter, 2000:61).

Samples and Units of Quantitative Content Analysis

Four national daily newspapers were selected from a population of twenty national newspapers in Thailand by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is applied for the samples selection scheme because this thesis aims to analyse the specific case of national newspapers that launch electronic editions along with their print versions and that vary in language and type for comparison purposes. These samples are chosen based on three factors:

- First, they present the most famous national dailies in Thai and English in the country.
- Second, they have an electronic version that is completed and updated daily.
- Finally, they are in the top five of the seven favourite newspaper websites in Thailand (a survey study of the favourite online newspaper in Thailand, in www.thairath.com/itdigest/scope/19-6-2000 and Truenet.com, 2006).

Two of these samples are published in the Thai language: *Thairath* and *Matichon*. The other two titles are in English: *Bangkok Post* and *Nation*.

Paper copies of the national editions of these four newspaper samples in Thailand were obtained every weekday and weekend during the study period. The data collection period consisted of 14 days or 56 data collection points, as two versions of the newspaper samples were investigated for each title.

The unit of analysis for quantitative content analysis in this study was one-day's content of each print and electronic newspaper. According to Schultz (1999, quoted in Zeng and Li, 2006:147), one-day's content of an electronic newspaper should be

sufficient to catch the interactivity level of the site, as the interactive features of newspaper websites are fairly constant. The variables examined include major page contents: news stories, non-news stories, type of news, characteristics of news, news topics, news-related stories, news links, and additional information and services. However, the advertisement content was excluded from the analysis as this study focuses on news production only.

A news story refers to the complete content of a news item. A non-news story refers to the complete content of a non-news item. A news link was defined as a hyperlinked headline or a combination of words and phrases which directed readers to the content of information represented by the headline activation (Li *et al*, 1998: 358). The additional information and services referred to the hyperlinked headline or a combination of words or phrases and graphics which led readers directly or indirectly to the content of information or services of a company or any Internet network resources represented by the headline activation.

News stories and non-news stories in fourteen issues of each print and electronic edition of four newspaper samples from 4th September to 17th September 2000 were the units of content analysis study. Examination was made of 56 issues of print newspapers and 56 issues of electronic webpages overall. There were a total of 10,451 stories (5,371 news stories and 1,817 non-news stories of print editions including 2,284 news stories and 979 non-news stories of electronic versions) investigated in this content analysis.

Limitations of Quantitative Content Analysis

The main limitation found when doing quantitative content analysis in this study was that the method could only provide quantitative data on how many items appeared in newspaper samples. It failed to catch the context within which a media text becomes

meaningful. Therefore, qualitative analysis was required to explore the meanings of texts within the news content of print and electronic newspaper samples in order to explore the similarities and differences between them.

3.6.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

As Altheide (1996: 16) suggests, the aim of qualitative content analysis is to document and understand the communication of meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships. Altheide (1996: 16) indicates that, unlike in quantitative aspects, in which the protocol is the instrument, the investigator is continually central in qualitative content analysis. As with all qualitative research, the meaning of a message is assumed to be reflected in various modes of information exchange, format, rhythm and style (Altheide, 1996: 16). Altheide (1996: 26-27) also adds that the main emphasis of the qualitative content analysis method is on capturing definitions, meaning, processes and types. Consequently, the qualitative aspect relies a good deal on text, narrative and descriptions.

Qualitative content analysis was used in this study to identify the characteristics of the text messages of news content in each of the print and electronic newspaper samples. The qualitative aspect was applied by classifying news content studied in this research into specifics of type (headline, lead and body), news location (home and international) and characteristics of news (news topics and news values). However, quantitative analysis was also used at this stage in order to count the frequency with which different types, characteristics and locations of content occurred.

The qualitative analysis method examined the similarities and differences in news content text including comparing the priority of lead news stories and topics as well as newsworthiness in print and electronic newspaper samples. This method would

help to answer the research question: ‘Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics during the study period?’

Samples and Units of Qualitative Content Analysis

Using the same print and electronic newspaper samples as the quantitative analysis method, Table 3.9 below shows the units of qualitative content analysis. These included three headlines and three lead news stories on the front page and homepage of each print and electronic newspaper sample, which identified the character and type of the news texts in order to investigate the similarities and differences between them.

Newspaper Name/	Number of Headlines		Number of Lead News Stories & Lead News Topics		Total
	<i>Print</i>	<i>Electronic</i>	Print	Electronic	
<i>Bangkok Post</i>	3	3	3	3	12
<i>Nation</i>	3	3	3	3	12
<i>Thairath</i>	3	3	3	3	12
<i>Matichon</i>	3	3	3	3	12
TOTAL	12	12	12	12	48

Table 3.9: Number of Headlines and Lead News Stories and Topics in Print and Electronic Versions of Newspaper Samples

The qualitative aspect analysed news stories in terms of the characteristics of news by newsworthiness (news value), the location of news stories by section, the emphasis of lead stories, and the topics of news content of each print and electronic newspaper sample.

Limitations of Qualitative Content Analysis

Firstly, as in the quantitative measurement of this study, lead news stories within news topic categories of analysis were occasionally overlapping. Some of the selected lead news stories could be placed into more than one topic. This study, therefore, identified the principal concept in each story and categorised them as appropriately as possible.

In addition, the amount of news headlines and lead news stories investigated in the qualitative method was limited by the study timing. This study, therefore, decided to analyse three of each, which were the majority of news headlines and lead news stories published on the front page and homepage of four print and four electronic newspaper samples.

Finally, the characteristics of texts within news headlines and news stories were categorised in broad dimensions as only the similarities and differences between the news stories of print and electronic editions, and not the meanings of the context of the stories, were to be explored.

3.6.4 Periods of Recording Contents of Print and Electronic Newspapers

The content analysis began at 12 a.m. on 4th September 2000 and ended at noon on 17th September 2000. Two consecutive weeks were used for conducting newspaper content analysis, with every day purposively selected to construct the combination. The content of both print and electronic versions of each of the four Thai newspapers was coded on each of the fourteen days of these two consecutive weeks. The analysis included all current stories in the national and international news sections and in the economic/business news and sports news sections for both print and electronic editions. Other news sections – for instance, politics, education, entertainment, society and women, technology and sciences, travel, weather and regional sections – were counted

by categorising into their location (national or international news section). The analysis also counted the number of non-news stories, for example: columns; articles; features; cartoons; and news photos. However, this study excluded all advertising content. The following table shows the time slots of newspapers' and websites' content analysis.

Week	Print edition	Electronic version	Date
1	<i>Bangkok Post</i>	<i>Bangkok Post Internet</i>	4 th – 10 th September 2000
1	<i>Nation</i>	<i>Nation Online</i>	4 th – 10 th September 2000
1	<i>Thairath</i>	<i>Thairath Online</i>	4 th – 10 th September 2000
1	<i>Matichon</i>	<i>Matichon Internet</i>	4 th – 10 th September 2000
2	<i>Bangkok Post</i>	<i>Bangkok Post Internet</i>	11 th – 17 th September 2000
2	<i>Nation</i>	<i>Nation Online</i>	11 th – 17 th September 2000
2	<i>Thairath</i>	<i>Thairath Online</i>	11 th – 17 th September 2000
2	<i>Matichon</i>	<i>Matichon Internet</i>	11 th – 17 th September 2000

Table 3.10: The Time Slots in which Content Analysis of Print and Electronic Newspapers was Conducted

3.6.5 The Design of the Newspaper Content Analysis Recording Forms

Before conducting content analysis, five recording forms were designed as instruments to record the data from newspaper content. These recording forms provided the data that measured the quantity, location and character of news and non-news stories in print and electronic newspaper samples including the use of new technology functionality on the websites.

Five recording forms were designed to measure the quantity and quality of the content by looking at the proportion, location and type of the news and non-news content in each print and online version. The details of the five recording forms are as follows.

1) The amount of content recording form (see the sample recording form in Appendix A).

This data recording form was created to investigate the quantities and locations of news and non-news content, which were analysed for each print and electronic newspaper sample. This form aimed to examine the amount of all coverage for fourteen issues of the print and electronic editions of four newspaper samples over fourteen consecutive days. It also compared the print and online versions in terms of the proportions of the total amount of coverage for each section and examined the proportions of the republished coverage and additional coverage on the online versions.

The 'type' part examined the different kinds of message presented by each online edition. The types of messages were categorised into three groups: news; non-news; and additional information and services. Each group was categorised into sub sections. News contents were grouped into four types: national news; international news; economic/business news; and sports news. Non-news content was grouped together in one category as column and articles. The additional information and services explored all web services on electronic versions. The results from this form allowed the study to compare each print and electronic version in terms of the amount and proportions of news and non-news content, national and international news, economic/business news and sports news.

2) The characteristics of news topics of three top news stories recording form (see the sample recording form in Appendix B).

This form consisted of a list of ten news topics which was designed to investigate the characteristics of the three lead news stories of each print and electronic version. This form is helpful in examining the overall differences among the three lead news stories in terms of their topics. These ten topics (developed from the news topics

in print and electronic samples' sections) were General News, Politics, Crime/Accident, Economics, Entertainment, International, Education, Sports, Health, and Government News.

3) The characteristics of news value of three top news stories recording form (see the sample recording form in Appendix C).

This form consisted of a list of seven news values or factors of newsworthiness designed to investigate the characteristics of the three lead news stories and topics of each print and electronic version. This would explore what kinds of information were most newsworthy in terms of what had been put through the news gate. These seven factors were: Human Interest, Importance of Events, Impact, Conflict, Knowledge, Proximity, and Sensational (Shoemaker, 1991: 21).

4) The three lead news stories & lead news topics recording form (see the sample recording form in Appendix D).

This form represented the data about the way the news stories were prioritised on each day. These new stories were the three lead news stories on the front page of each print newspaper and on the homepage of its electronic version. The findings provided information on the similarities and differences between print and electronic editions in terms of the selection of their lead stories each day. This also led to the findings on the differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of the gatekeeping process.

5) The use of interactive elements recording form (see the sample recording form in Appendix E).

This form was designed to measure the quantity of interactive elements offered by each electronic newspaper sample. It showed how many interactive elements were

used by each electronic newspaper to provide a two-way communication process and to attract users. The index used to measure the interactivities was based on the study of Zeng and Li (2006: 146) along with the actual interactive services offered on the homepages of the four electronic newspaper samples. The components of interactive elements defined in this study included: E-mail, which measures the availability of e-mail and the responsiveness of the newspapers; Online Forum, which is the amount of forums, bulletin boards and live chat; Links, including section links on the homepage, related stories and links to other websites; Search Engine; Archive and Databases; Breaking News; Flashing Images; Audio; and Video. The more interactive elements the electronic version had, the more new media it was. The ability to use interactive features on their webpages is one of the more attractive and beneficial aspects of online editions compared to print editions. Moreover, the elements of interactivity which were used on webpages could be one-way or two-way communication.

3.6.6 Method of Recording Content of Print and Electronic Newspapers

The study took place every day for two weeks from Monday to Sunday to examine the particular differences in the amount and characteristics of news messages and in the use of interactive elements each day. The data collection was based on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis of five units:

1. The amount and proportion of news and non-news content by news location and by sections in print and electronic versions, including the additional information/services content in the electronic editions. This was to compare print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of the number and proportion of stories.

2. The character of news stories by the type of stories to measure the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news content.
3. The character of news stories by news value (newsworthiness) to measure the news selection process.
4. The matches of lead news stories and topics to measure the news selection process.
5. The amount of interactive elements provided by each electronic newspaper sample to measure the use of Internet technology by electronic newspapers in Thailand.

Quantitative content analysis was used to measure the amount of news content, while qualitative analysis was used to identify characteristics, locations and types of news messages. In detail, the proportion of news and non-news content, the type of news (national and international), news topics (crime, political, economics, etc.), news characteristics (news value/newsworthiness), news headlines, and lead news stories/topics, as well as interactive elements appearing on the homepages of electronic versions, were investigated. The content observed referred to the page contents, which made up the front pages of print editions, the homepages of electronic versions, and the news story pages of both versions, including the additional information and services on the homepages of electronic newspaper samples.

Fourteen issues of four selected national daily newspapers in Thailand were collected by purchasing on a day-by-day basis, whilst electronic versions of the selected newspapers for the same fourteen days were downloaded every morning on a computer terminal. The data recording processes started after the last day of the content analysis data collection and lasted from 18th September to 18th October 2000 as described below.

3.6.7 Content Recording Procedure

Four steps of recording were used in the content analysis coding process: 1) Two coders, Thai undergraduate students in a Thai university, were employed and trained for the coding procedure; 2) the instruction session of all relevant sections of four recording forms were given to the two recorders; 3) the pilot sessions of coding of one-day's content of both print and electronic newspaper samples were conducted by all recorders and checked by each other for the reliability of the coding; and, finally, 4) the actual coding procedure started once the researcher, who was the first recorder, was satisfied with the reliability of the coding. The details of the coding procedure follow.

Recording process of electronic newspaper samples

The webpages of four Thai electronic newspaper titles were downloaded in Thailand every day at noon. This time represented the point in the production process when the electronic sites were most likely to resemble the print products. The researcher as a main coder, together with two other coders, identified the three lead news stories and topics on the homepage based on their proximity to the top of the page, font size and placement.

Recording process of proportion of contents

A set of five recording forms were filled out daily for each newspaper sample title for the fourteen days of the recording process. News stories and non-news stories were counted by item. The front pages of print newspapers and the homepages of electronic versions were coded for number of news items by content type and section. Non-news contents were counted as an overall figure by category, news links, additional information and services, format of page organisation, and textual information

presentation. The news stories within the front pages were coded for the number of news items, news links, additional information and services.

Recording process of matches of three lead news stories and topics

For print editions, the three lead news stories were determined by the size of font, with the largest font ranked as the top story for the day. If two stories had the same font size, the story in the far right corner of the page was chosen as the lead story. For the second and third lead stories coders identified them by their proximity to the top story and font size. Normally, print front pages only have three lead stories with headlines “above the fold” (Mensing and Greer, 2006: 290). For the electronic versions, the headline of the lead news story was in the largest font on the first screen. In cases where the font sizes were equal, the story closest to the top of the screen was ranked as the first lead news story. Second and third lead stories were determined by examining font size and proximity to the top story.

Once the top three lead news stories were identified coders recorded their headlines and resolved the story topic from a list of ten topic categories (general news, political news, crime/accident, business news, international news, entertainment, etc.). The three lead news stories for each print front page and each electronic homepage were compared to analyse their text meaning for matches in story, story topic and story type. The matches were made by comparing the lead news stories in the print product with the lead news stories in the electronic version on the same day. Stories and topics were counted as a match if they were about the same news event. Coders recorded whether the print lead news stories matched the electronic version, or whether no matches were present. Since the variables of this content analysis were coded as nominal data, only frequency calculations were used for data analysis.

3.6.8 Recording Reliability Assessment

According to Hansen *et al* (1998:118), ‘Before embarking on a full-scale content analysis, it is crucial to try out the coding schedule on a small sub-sample’. Each variable in the recording forms of this study was trailed by two recorders. The pilot study was conducted on one issue of the print editions and one-day’s-worth of webpages of the electronic versions. Three recorders, the first being the researcher and the other two being trained recorders, participated in the recording procedure. After that all recorders came together to check the results that had been found. The outcome of agreement between three recorders was checked by a simple check on the percentage of coding decisions on which coders agreed (Hansen *et al*, 1998: 121) because the data from this content analysis was recorded in the simple system of counting in number and percentage. The results showed that there was an agreement of 90% in the coding for the first two forms, which involved counting the quantity of the stories of both print and electronic samples. The two forms which dealt with the characteristics and quality of the text in the contents of both print and electronic samples had an agreement of 88% in their coding decisions. The results of the agreements in the coding test showed the better agreement would be occurred in the actual coding session by all coders and reliability measured.

3.6.9 Data Analysis for Newspaper Content Analysis

The quantitative data was analysed by coding and counting the numbers and frequency of newspaper samples’ contents. Hansen *et al* (1998:121) indicate that where content analysis is extremely simple and rudimentary, it may be possible to analyse the results ‘by hand’. The frequency with which different specified dimensions occur can be determined by looking through the completed coding schedules and counting up the

number of times each dimension has been coded. Since the analysis of this study does not involve any complex results, the main aim of the study is to explore the proportion and characteristics of news content that are selected to be published in print and electronic newspapers. The processing of the data analysis from the content analysis in this study took place through simple mathematics to compare print newspapers and their electronic editions in terms of the quantities and proportions of the characteristics, lead news stories and topics of their news content.

The qualitative data analysis consisted of extensive reading, sorting, comparison and summarising of the materials. Qualitative analysis can be based on seven features that relate to the differences between print and electronic newspapers: amount of content; format and design; access and customisation; immediacy; hyperlinking; interactivity; and cost (Gunter, 2003: 65). However, the analysis of newspaper content in this study explored only four of those seven features: the amount of content, format and design, immediacy, and interactivity. This is because this study focuses on media study and is only concerned with investigating the media products (newspaper content), and not the audience and business issues. The quantitative and qualitative content analysis data of newspaper samples were displayed in tables and described in texts. The results from both content analysis aspects reflected the way news stories were selected and published in print and electronic newspapers in Thailand.

3.7 Chapter Summary of Research Methodology Design

This research project was conducted by utilising a multiple-method of research design to help increase the confidence of the study's findings. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994, quoted in Wimmer & Dominick, 2000), one of the four factors that

help build credibility in a qualitative research project is ‘multiple methods of data collection’. The newsroom observations provided information on the print and electronic newspapers’ production processes, news selection processes and company profiles. In addition, the interviews with four webmasters and three editors of newspaper samples provided data on the organisation policy, the news policy, and the purposes of going online, as well as opinions on the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. Whereas the results of content analysis helped to address the differences between electronic newspapers and their print counterparts in terms of their contents and the gatekeeping function, the observation and interviews sought a more accurate content analysis conclusion and more specific information about the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

Newsroom observations, interviews and content analysis were conducted at three different periods because content analysis design was partly based on the information from newsroom observations and interviews, in addition to the limitations in terms of the distance of the field study location and time. The research methods were conducted over three different time periods. Observations and interviews took place over two time periods, from 12th to 29th July 1999 and from 19th to 21st January 2000. The final method was conducted in September 2000 through the analysis of newspapers’ content. The samples of participant observation study were the newsrooms of four newspaper samples. The interview samples consisted of two groups of participants: three editors and four webmasters; and five media professionals. The units of content analysis study were news stories and non-news stories in fourteen consecutive issues of each print and electronic edition of four newspaper samples from 4th to 17th September 2000.

As outlined by Hansen *et al* (1998: 61), doing production observation together with interviewing the editors and webmasters was a suitable method for this study. The observations of their production processes were conducted to provide information on the factors of changing to electronic newspapers including the similarities and differences in news production processes that lead to the differences between electronic versions and their hard copies in terms of formats and functions. At the same time, interviews were conducted to gather information from editors and webmasters as well as media professionals about news policy and the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in order to support the essential information for content analysis study. The results of observations and interviews reflected the changes in the gatekeeping process in newspapers and the features of electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes, news policies, and roles and trends. However, observation and interviews cannot help in exploring the quantity and character of newspaper content that provides information on the changes in the gatekeeping function in newspapers, which is the main argument of this study.

Therefore, the analysis of newspaper content in both quantitative and qualitative terms was conducted in order to explore the proportions, differences and similarities in their news contents. The findings from content analysis showed the characteristics of news messages and the proportions of home news and global news content of four electronic newspapers in Thailand, including the way they presented and generated their news content on their webpages. The comparison analysis of the contents of both print and electronic newspapers each day examined the similarities and differences between print and electronic editions in terms of their news selection processes. The results of content analysis were expected to identify the similarities and differences in news contents, which reflected the way news content was selected and produced through the

production processes of electronic newspapers and their print counterparts, whilst the participant observations and interviews sought a more accurate content analysis conclusion and more specific information on the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

The methodology structure has been outlined below in order to simplify the process and methods conducted in this research.

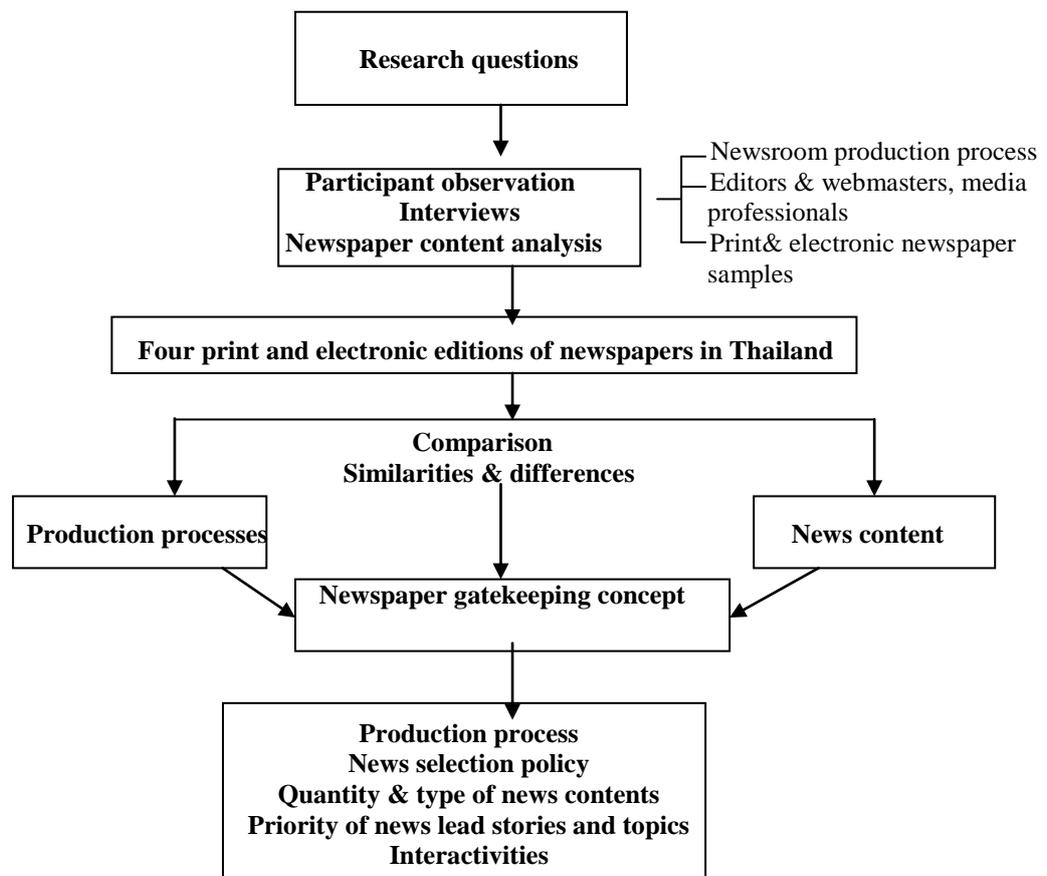


Figure 3.1: The Structure of Methodology of the Study

Figure 3.1 shows the structure of the methodology design to investigate the similarities and differences in Thailand's print and electronic newspapers by comparing their news production processes and news content. In order to analyse their relationships, this study conducted three research methods: 1) Observations of the newspaper newsrooms and production processes; 2) Interviews with editors and webmasters including media

professionals; and 3) Content analysis of news contents and news presentation in print newspapers and their electronic versions.

The combination of three research methods helped to provide different information on how the process of news selection operated in newspapers' newsrooms and confirmed the argument of this thesis that there are similarities and differences between print and electronic newspaper newsrooms in terms of their news production processes. Most importantly, conducting these three research methods was an attempt to support another argument of the study: that new communication technology flow is the main influence on introducing an electronic newspaper to Thai society. The findings of the study will be presented and analysed in the following three chapters.

PART TWO

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN TERMS OF THEIR PRODUCTION PROCESSES

The findings of two of the research approaches of the study – participant observations and interviews – will be presented and analysed in this chapter. Four Thai newspapers' newsrooms and production processes were observed, and three editors and four webmasters were interviewed, in order to explore the relationships between the print and electronic versions of each newspaper in terms of their news production processes. Significant similarities and differences between the print and electronic versions of the study samples, in terms of their working routines, news selection and news policies, emerged during the participant observation studies. It is worth noting that, although some of the information obtained from the interviews may not relate to the gatekeeping process, it does help to reflect the impact of global information flow and to represent the historical prominence of electronic newspapers in Thai society in 2000, during their earliest stages.

According to Ericson *et al* (1987), the newspaper production process starts with the reporters and writers collecting information and any other resources from the events, before sending the information to editorial staff in newspapers' newsrooms by communication technology, such as telephone, mobile phone, e-mail, fax or video link. At this point, the selection process will begin, as editorial staff will select the information to be published and not to be published in their daily newspaper. This

process, which involves the decision-making of the editor and webmaster, is similar to the process of gatekeeping, which McQuail (2005: 556) defines as an initial selection process and later editorial processing of event reports in news organisations.

At this stage, the findings from participant observations and interviews will be discussed in qualitative accounts in order to answer the following research question: ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in news production processes and news policies compared to their print counterparts?’ To help answer the question, this study applied the gatekeeping concept to analyse the process of news production and news selection of print and electronic newspaper samples.

The findings will be demonstrated and discussed in four topics: the development of the organisations and new technologies; the relationships in communication and newsroom working routines; the relationships in production processes; and the relationships in news selection and news policy.

It is important to mention that the findings in this thesis do not intend to explore any differences across the four newspaper samples. Although the results of participant observations, interviews and content analysis will be frequently presented in comparison aspect among the four newspaper samples, but this is not the key focus of this research. However, comparing the findings among the four newspapers help gaining the useful information, which could eventually represent the relationship between print and electronic version, even though that is not the main focus of the study. Therefore, it is practical to illustrate and discuss the findings on the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their production processes of each newspaper sample, as follows.

4.1 Development of Organisations and New Technologies

The development of newspapers is a good indicator of the changes in media technology. On the other hand, technology has played an important role in the development of the print newspaper production process since the newspaper was invented (Gunter, 2003). The development of print newspapers has been linked to the advancement in communication technologies, particularly in their production processes, from writing on paper and the invention of letterpress printing technology to the new print technologies via computer systems. During the late 20th century, Internet technology opened up new possibilities for the news delivery of newspapers (Gunter, 2003: 1). The perspectives on traditional newspapers in the Internet era will help this study to understand why and how traditional newspapers go online.

The usage of new communication technologies in each newspaper sample have been recorded by newsroom observations and documentary examination. The relevant data that were obtained will be described and illustrated to give information about the development of the newspaper organisations as well as the appearances of both the print and online editions of each of the four newspaper samples. This is necessary as it will indicate the organisational background to each edition and differences in the page layout design of print and online newspapers in Thailand. The scrutiny of documents from newsroom observations has offered an understanding of the backgrounds of the study samples. The company history and development of the four newspaper samples will lead to an understanding of the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand and the application of new communication technologies to their production processes. The findings will be presented in a comparative aspect between the four print newspaper samples and their websites respectively: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

4.1.1 Development of the *Bangkok Post* and *Bangkok Post Internet*

The scrutiny of documents obtained from each newsroom observation offered an understanding of the background of the study samples, which will relate to the advancement of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand as a whole. The following is information about the history and development of the *Bangkok Post* and the *Bangkok Post Internet*.

Post Publishing is a publisher of an English daily in Thailand, the *Bangkok Post* newspaper, and a number of other publications. The *Bangkok Post* newspaper was first published in 1946 after the Second World War. It was established by an American sailor, Lieutenant Commander Alexander William McDonald. The first issue of the *Bangkok Post* was published in 1st August 1946 with a circulation of 500 issues each day. In its first month, the *Bangkok Post* had a readership of 200. The newspaper business progressed dramatically, and *Post Publishing* has expanded to incorporate the printing business Allied Printers Company Limited, which runs other publications aside from the *Bangkok Post* newspaper. Furthermore, it began a joint venture with *Cross Nation* investment to produce a number of magazines, including the fashion magazine, *Elle*; the decoration magazine, *Elle Decor*; and a magazine for teenagers, *Cleo*. The *Bangkok Post* newspaper celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1st August 1996, and is the oldest English-language daily newspaper in Thailand. The target reader group of *Bangkok Post* is the middle-classes and businessmen in Thailand (The *Post Publishing Public Company Limited, Annual Reports 1999*).

The *Bangkok Post*'s website, www.bangkokpost.net, entered cyberspace for the first time on 27 March 1996, and the event was marked with a great deal of enthusiasm. At the very beginning, the site boasted approximately 60 local and business news stories each day. Since then, the *Post* has steadily increased its web content to include all of

each day's local and business news as well as features. *Post Electronic Publishing* has also become more active in including special publications on the Internet. Another publication featured on the Web is the *Post's Year-End Economic Review*. The *Post's* website was completely redesigned in 2000. *Post Electronic Publishing* aims to make the *Post's* Internet site more dynamic and offer more information on a variety of topics, such as local news, tourism, upcoming events, books online, etc. (*The Post Publishing Public Company Limited, Annual Reports 1999*).

4.1.2 Development of the *Nation* and *Nation Online*

The following information, obtained during observation of the newspaper's newsroom, provides the context of the history and development of the *Nation* and the *Nation Online*. It gives the relevant background and development of both the print and online editions of the *Nation* newspaper.

The *Nation Multimedia Group Plc* was established in 1971 under 'The *Nation Ltd*' by a group of Thai journalists who wanted to publish an English-language newspaper under the name *Voice of the Nation* (Kraisornvit, 1997: 2). It started with a newspaper business and expanded to a multimedia business with the introduction of a Radio network in 1992 and Broadcasting (Television) in 1995 (Wijitjammaree, 1995).

The *nationgroup.com* is used by Internet surfers nationwide and worldwide. It offers the news from the *Nation* newspaper and information on the business, finance and marketing world from the *Krungthep Turakij* newspaper. In addition, visitors can follow up information and entertainment from all NMG media at *nationgroup.com*, including checking classified ads, listening to radio programmes in FM 90.5 MHz live, broadcast via the internet, applying for *Nation Group* publications or products, participating in an editorial chat room, or expressing opinions. Moreover, *Nation Group*

has an Internet alliance with pantip.com, one of the most popular websites in Thailand. The media in the group include: the *Nation Daily*; *Krungthep Turakij Daily (Bangkok Biznews)*; *Kom Chad Luek Daily*; *Nation Weekend magazine*, *NJ Connex Online*; *BizWeek magazine*; *BizBook*; *Nation Channel*; and *Nation Radio*.

Launched in 1996, the *Nation's* online edition has improved its interactive content and user-friendly design extensively while maintaining high-quality news and analysis. The website offers breaking news, Live Chat, a Real Audio link to a local radio station, a comprehensive search engine, a poll, message boards open to the public, and a daily information technology (IT) news section sponsored by Dell computers. In addition to daily news, the website aims at becoming interactive with users. A daily news update is uploaded between GMT 00.30 and 01.00 every day of the week. The *Nation Online* is a multimedia newspaper website with audio (*Nation Radio*) and video (*Nation TV*) interactivities.

4.1.3 Development of the *Thairath Daily* and *Thairath Online*

The history and development of the *Thairath* and the *Thairath Online*, provided by the documents obtained while conducting newsroom observation, will be examined in this section. This information will offer the contextual background of the *Thairath*, which relates to the company's advancement.

Thairath Daily has a long history of establishment over three main eras. The first era began when it was founded by Mr Komphon Vacharaphol and his team on January 1 1950, under the name *Khaophap Raiwan (The Weekly Pictorial)*. Within two years of launching on a weekly basis, it became published daily. The second era started after it was shut down by the Thai government in 1958. Mr Komphon Vacharaphol then ran *Siang Ang Thong (Ang-thong Voice)* from 1 May 1959 to 25 December 1962.

The third and most recent era started in 1962, when *Seang Ang-thong* was closed down due to the unstable political situation in Thailand at the time. *Thairath (Thai State)* is the new name of the newspaper and since then it has been one of the Thai-language newspapers that has been the fastest growing in terms of business and technology. (translated from *About Thairath* at <http://www.thairath.com/about/history/history.htm>).

Thairath is a Thai-language daily newspaper published in Bangkok and distributed nationwide. The paper is a broadsheet published with two sections. The first section is devoted to news. Although the news section is best known for its sensationalist coverage of crime and accidents, it also includes stories on Thai politics, the economy and society. The second section features coverage of sport and entertainment. *Thairath* is the oldest and best-selling newspaper in Thailand, claiming a circulation in excess of 1 million copies daily. *Thairath Daily* has become a popular newspaper which focuses on reporting mass news and entertainment. It now ranks as the premier national Thai mass-market newspaper in terms of circulation. However, it should be noted that *Thairath Daily* is the only newspaper sample of this study that has no interest in expanding its newspaper business to another media business and that is still owned by a family business, *Vacharaphol Co. Ltd* (translated from *About Thairath* at <http://www.thairath.com/about/history/history.htm>).

The only route to expansion of its core business for the *Thairath* is through the *Thairath Online*. The *Thairath* first launched its Internet version in 1998. The *Thairath Online* is part of the *Thairath Information Center*. These two sections share information resources and human resources.

4.1.4 Development of Printed *Matichon* Daily and *Matichon* Online

Information about the background of the *Matichon* newspaper organisation was obtained during newsroom observation at the *Matichon* newspaper. This information provides details about the context and development of the company.

The company was established on 18 January 1978 under the name *Matichon Co. Ltd*, with a registered capital of one million baht, its business being publishing and advertising. It was registered with the Securities Exchange of Thailand on 15 December 1989, and became a public company on 2 December 1993 (*Matichon Annual Report 2005*, Business Structure, <http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>).

Matichon Plc is a group of publishing companies. Its core business consists of daily & semi-weekly newspapers, magazines, pocket books and special publications. Matichon Plc has two subsidiary companies: Khao-sod Co. Ltd, the publisher of Khao-sod Daily and several other publications, and Ngandee Co. Ltd, which is in charge of the distribution service for the publications of the Matichon Group. Matichon Plc comprises three newspapers – Matichon Daily, Khao-Sod Daily and Prachachart Turakij – and four magazines: Matichon Weekly, Art & Culture, Technology Chaobaan (Folk Technology), and Senthang Setthi (The Road to Becoming a Millionaire) (*Matichon Annual Report 2005*, Business Structure, <http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>).

Matichon Daily newspaper is Thailand's quality daily newspaper and is widely accepted by a large number of readers across the nation. It aims to offer the most recent, accurate and reliable coverage relating to Thai society, which has been widely accepted and referred to by both Thai and international communities. *Matichon* was also the award-winning newspaper for the Journalists' Association of Thailand, the highly recognised national journalists' organisation, for seven years; it has also obtained

various honourable awards for several reports on subjects such as the environment, women & children, education, etc. Its editorial content covers politics, economics, society, education, art, culture, crime, information technology, etc. Letters from readers is one of the most popular columns, in which readers can contribute their opinions and criticism to the editor on a wide variety of topics, from legal problems to social problems (*Matichon Annual Report 2005, Business Structure*, <http://www.matichon.co.th/report/2548/structure.php>). *Matichon Daily* newspaper attempts to highlight the quality of content and improve the ability of editorial staff consistently to ensure that *Matichon Daily* newspaper will be the newspaper of choice for Thai people (www.matichon.com profile of company, 2000).

Matichon launched its full online edition in 2000, after testing it in 1999. *Matichon Online* is part of the *Matichon Information Center* and uses the same resources of information and staff. The website provides information online about all publications in the group. Recently, *Matichon Online* greatly improved by providing video clips on major headline news and special events.

4.1.5 Summary of the Development of Four Thai Newspapers

The inspection of documents obtained from four Thai newspaper organisations has offered an understanding of the background of the study samples, which provide a basis for further study to go beyond their newsroom operations and production processes. The information presents the history and development of four Thai newspaper organisations and their websites, which not only reflects the progress of their organisations but also provides information about the growth and the future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand as a whole. The reason is that these four newspaper samples are the most representative of Thai national daily newspapers.

Importantly, this related information has obtained the factors involved in the four Thai newspaper samples moving into the online environment. These factors include: the company policy, the executive vision, the media marketing competition and the new technology.

The following section will display and discuss the information relating to the working routines in the four Thai newspapers' newsrooms.

4.2 The Relationships between Print and Online Newsrooms in Terms of Their Newsroom Communication Routines

According to Shoemaker (1991), one media function is to select and shape many pieces of information or events into a few before they are transmitted to mass receivers. This function is similar to the gatekeeping process, which is a movement through a channel from gate to gate and is controlled either by a gatekeeper or by a set of impartial rules (Lewin, 1951, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991: 48). Shoemaker (1991: 48) refers to a set of impartial rules as communication routines, which are 'patterned, routinized, repeated practices for forms that media workers use to do their jobs' (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, quoted in Shoemaker, 1991:48). Communication routines include news gathering, news processing and the transmission process in the newsroom. However, these activities are included in the production process of a media organisation. Therefore, the observation of the newsrooms of four print newspaper samples and their electronic counterparts in this study involved observing their communication working routines in order to investigate their impacts on the production processes of newspaper samples.

During the newsroom observations at the main print and online newsrooms of the four newspaper samples in Thailand, closed collaborative relationships were found

between the print and electronic editions in terms of their working routines. This noticeable process helped to explain the way news content is selected, shaped, produced and transmitted. The findings on the relationships between the print and online newsrooms of four Thai newspaper samples in terms of their working routines, presented in the form of both descriptions and diagrams, will be provided for each newspaper in turn: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

4.2.1 The *Bangkok Post*: Communication Routines

The *Bangkok Post* print and Internet edition newsrooms are in the same building but on different floors. The print newsroom is on the open-plan work space of the ground floor, while the Internet newsroom is on the third floor. There were five members of staff in the editorial department of the Internet version at the time of the study (1999). Although there is no exact physical contact between print editorial staff and Internet editorial staff in their working processes, there is a collaborative relationship in sharing news resources between the two newsrooms. The *Bangkok Post Internet* relies upon the contents from the print edition. The webmaster of the Internet version also attends the editorial news meeting in the morning.

The *Bangkok Post Internet* uses the contents from the print edition, which are transferred via the in-house computer network. The webmaster of the Internet version also attends the editorial news meeting in the morning. The communication routines in the print edition begin with journalists being sent to collect information from events or from regular resources (newsletters, news releases, press conferences, etc), whereas the electronic version's newsroom routine begins when materials are received from the print newsroom. The deadline for newsrooms to complete their work is a crucial factor for a newspaper's routines. The deadline of the *Bangkok Post* print edition is between

the afternoon and the evening, in order to complete the following day's edition, while the Internet version's deadline is in the early morning, after the print edition is out on the newspaper stands.

This information has shown the similarities and differences between the *Bangkok Post* print newsroom and its Internet version newsroom, indicating that the relationship in working routines is affected by the production processes of these two mediums within the same organisation.

4.2.2 The *Nation*: Communication Routines

The *Nation* print editorial staff and online editorial staff work in the same newsroom on the same floor but in different sections. There is a very close collaborative relationship between print and online staff in terms of both physical and network contact. The editorial staff of both editions share conversations and work resources with each other all the time. The *Nation* editorial staff have news meetings twice a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Both print and online editorial staff attend the news meetings to brainstorm about what information the editorial team need each day and what information is selected to be published in the print edition. At this stage, the online webmaster also plays a role in the news meetings by suggesting the stories that may make the headlines of the day. After the meeting, the online webmaster waits for the information from the print edition to be transferred to the online computer system to determine webpage layout and prepares these pages to be posted on the Internet server.

Although the working routine of the *Nation* online newsroom is to wait for materials from the print newsroom and then convert them before posting them on the website, the webmaster also plays the role of selecting the news of the day in the news meeting. This is because the members of the two newsrooms of the *Nation* have a very

close relationship in working routines. In addition, the deadlines of the print and online newsrooms of the *Nation* are similar to the deadline of the *Bangkok Post*. However, the *Nation* online updates the content of the day at midnight, which is earlier than the *Bangkok Post* Internet. The reason behind this is the competition between the two newspapers.

4.2.3 The *Thairath*: Communication Routines

The *Thairath* print and online newsrooms are in the same main building of the *Thairath* daily newspaper and on the same floor (second floor), but in opposite wings of the main company building. The newsroom of the *Thairath Online* edition is in the *Thairath Information Center* as it is part of the centre. The online webmaster is also the director of the Information Center.

There are six members of staff of *Thairath Online* who also work for the Information Center. It is noticeable that the *Thairath Online* newsroom is much smaller in size and has less space than the print newsroom. Online editorial staff also work in part of the Information Center room. However, the webmaster of the *Thairath Online* has a very close relationship with the print editorial team in terms of supplying information from the Information Center for the print editorial staff. Although the contents of *Thairath Online* are reproduced from the print edition, the *Thairath Online* is the only electronic newspaper studied here that has some of its contents edited.

The webmaster of the *Thairath Online* has a very close relationship with the print editorial team because the webmaster was a journalist for the print edition. The information above also shows the differences in the online newsroom's routine compared to the other samples' routines in terms of the news selection process. The webmaster of *Thairath Online* plays a different role from the other webmasters in

selecting and editing messages from its print. However, this process has put back the update time of the *Thairath Online* to midday. The details in this matter will be further discussed in section 4.4.3 – The *Thairath*: News Policy and News Selection.

4.2.4 The *Matichon*: Communication Routines

The *Matichon* print and online newsrooms are in the same main building of the *Matichon* daily newspaper and on the same floor, but in opposite wings of the building. The newsroom of the *Matichon* online edition is in the *Matichon Information Center* as it is part of the centre. The director of the Information Center also plays an important role in the online version. There are six members of staff of *Matichon Online* who also work for the Information Center.

The *Matichon* and *Matichon Online* newsrooms are open-plan newsrooms and are situated on different floors but in the main company building. Similar to the *Thairath Online*, the *Matichon Online* newsroom is also located in part of the *Matichon Information Center*. Although the print newsroom and online newsroom of the *Matichon* daily newspaper are situated apart from each other, they have a cooperative relationship in terms of sharing news resources. The online version relies upon the material from the print edition, whereas the print edition also draws on the data provided by the Information Center, which is part of the online version. The director of the Information Center (who also plays an important role in the online version) and the webmaster have a collaborative relationship with print editorial staff at the management and policy levels. The Information Center also supplies information for the print editorial staff. Chawakit explains the relationship between online and print editorial staff in relation to the newsroom environment:

“The *Matichon Online* has seven members in the team: webmaster, programmer, data officer and technician. The relationship between the print newsroom and the online team is very close. The webmaster is transferred from the print editorial staff and the rest of the team members are from the Information Center.” (Chawakit, *Matichon* Webmaster, 2000)

The information above explains the close relationship between the director and webmaster of *Matichon Online* and the print editorial team. The working routines of the print newsroom are similar to those of the other three newspaper samples. The working routine of the *Matichon Online* newsroom consists of converting information from the print edition into computer language and then posting the information online without any changes. This is due to its news policy and selection process, which will be discussed in section 4.4.4 – The *Matichon*: News Policy and News Selection. The update time of the *Matichon Online* is midday every day, after the print edition has reached the readers.

4.2.5 Summary of the Relationships in Newsroom Routines

Observing the newsroom practices and routines of four Thai print newspapers and their electronic versions provides information about the collaborative relationships between the two newsrooms. The electronic editions’ materials have mostly been supplied from their print newsrooms. The working routines of print newsrooms consist of a complete process, from collecting information from the events and formal resources to news production processes (writing, editing), selection processes, designing the pages, printing processes and eventually distributing the paper copies to the readers. The staff of electronic editions only work on a particular part of production processes by

receiving the selected and edited material from the print, then converting those materials to computer language and publishing them on the Internet. The online newsroom staff do not work on the news production. Although the webmasters of four electronic versions do join the news meeting to give the comment on what should be news of the day, they do not have to make decision on which contents should or should not be published on their websites. The webmasters follow the same news policy and news selection process as the print editions (as evidence will be discussed in section 4.4). The working routines in the print and online newsrooms of the four newspaper samples follow the same rules, news policies and work patterns of their organisations. However, the working routines in online versions' newsrooms are different to their print newsroom routines in terms of performing shorter production processes than their print processes. These findings also indicate that newsrooms' routines have an impact on the production processes and the news content that the processes create, which will be explored by content analysis in the next chapter.

The following section will demonstrate and analyse the findings gathered from examining production processes of four newspaper samples in comparative terms between print newspapers and electronic editions as follows.

4.3 The Relationships in Production Processes

During the last 30 years, computer systems have become integral to the news production processes of traditional newspapers. The widespread use of the Internet as a tool for gathering and disseminating information has been adopted into newspapers' production processes. It has raised serious questions for journalists and their readers about the process of reporting and producing information. Using vital sources and

publishing online is changing the way in which journalism takes place and its effect on the society it serves (Borden and Harvey, 1998).

The newsroom production processes of traditional newspapers in the year 2000 start with reporters sending or reporting their news information from outside events to newsrooms via mobile phone or email or fax; the editorial desk staff receive the information and type it into the computer and then transfer the news stories to the editor or sub-editor to do any rewriting or editing. The news that has been selected to be published by the editor will then be transferred to the pagination desk for layout by the computer network. The production processes of electronic newspapers are shorter than the processes of the print edition. The electronic editions' newsrooms receive materials that have been selected and edited by the print newsroom. The processes of production for the electronic versions will be displayed and discussed in the next section.

The newsroom observations of four different Thai newspaper samples have gained significant information about the relationships between the print and online editions' newsrooms in terms of their production processes. With reference to diagrams of traditional newspaper production processes by Ericson *et al* (1987) and a diagram of an electronic newspaper's production process by Mostrom *et al* (1995) (reviewed in chapter one), the following sections present and discuss the findings on the production processes of the four Thai print newspaper samples and their electronic editions for each newspaper in turn: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

4.3.1 The *Bangkok Post*: Production Process

The *Bangkok Post* improved its production process to a digital system for paginating and page layout in April 1999. It is an automatic system called "Cyber page" that can work on news writing, news editing and page layout at the same time in the same

programme. It can also set the standard format for all pages that suits a hard news newspaper such as the *Bangkok Post*. This system is PC and Windows based and has been specifically developed for newspaper production. It allows a reporter to complete all of his/her tasks in one programme. It has the capacity for searching writing editing → and layout. A reporter can search for the additional information on the Internet while he/she is writing his/her news or article and then finally can do editing and layout on that page at the same time. The *Bangkok Post* needs this new system to reduce the number of steps in the news production process.

“We are an English newspaper that employs Thai reporters who report and write the news in Thai. These news stories will then need to be translated into English by foreign translation staff. This process takes a longer time in the news production process than the Thai-language newspapers. Therefore, we needed a new technology system that had more potential than the old one to speed up the production process.” (Pichai, *Bangkok Post* Editor, 1999)

The *Bangkok Post* and the *Bangkok Post Internet* production processes are shown in the diagram in Figure 4.5 below.

Print edition

The Bangkok Post

Internet version

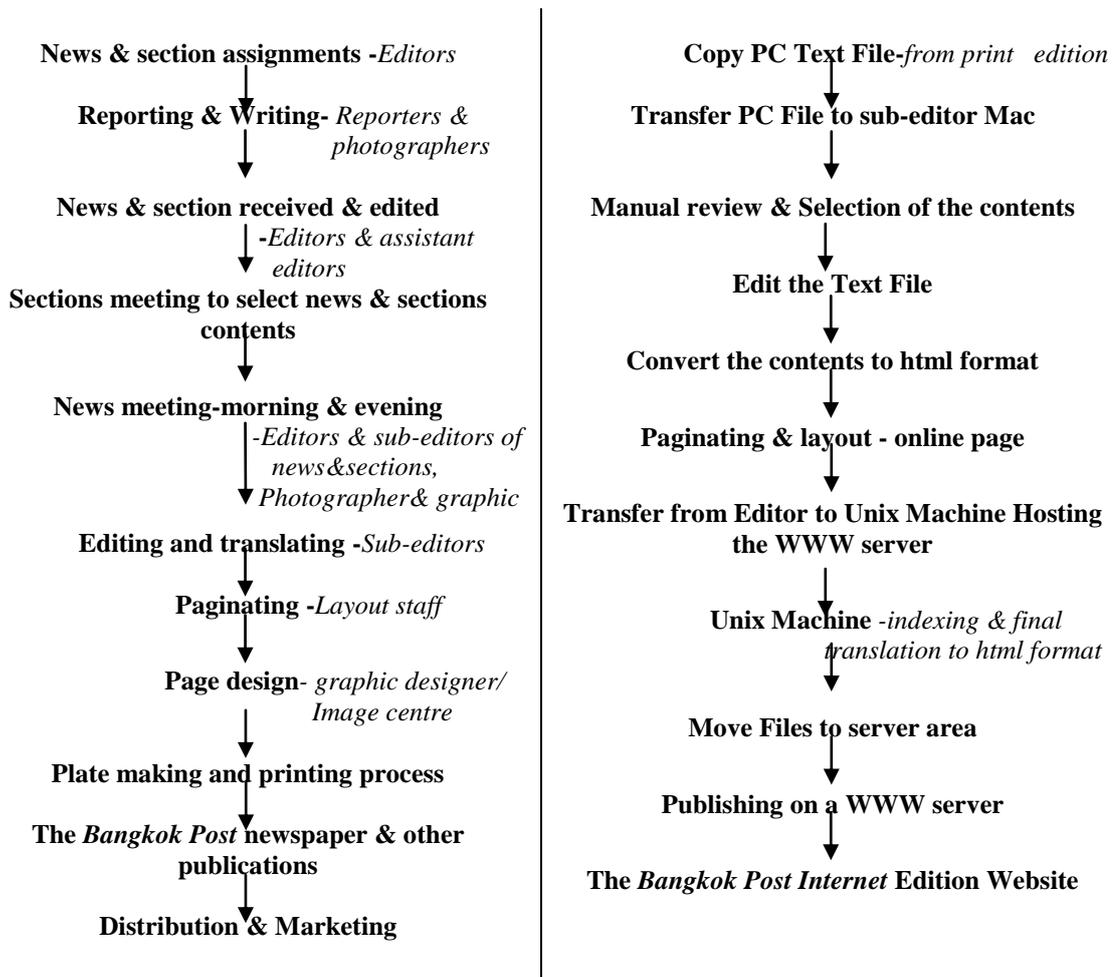


Figure 4.1: Diagram of the Bangkok Post Print and Bangkok Post Internet Production Processes

According to Deborah (*Bangkok Post* Webmaster, 1999), the production process of the *Bangkok Post Internet* starts each morning between 7.30 am and 8.30 am, to update a current issue once a day. The process begins with copying all PC text files of the print edition's contents to disk and then transferring them onto the Mac operating system. This is followed by the editor selecting the contents to be published from the QuarkXPress files and converting them to Microsoft Word where a number of macro files convert them to HTML format. These files, together with the pictures, are transferred to a UNIX machine where a Perl script creates all indexes and makes a few

other transformations. Then the results will be sent to the Web server in the USA and published on a Web server.

“As we rely on the paper copy stories, the website production process requires several steps and some manual because of the difference in computer operation systems between the print and Internet newsrooms. However, the operation system of the Internet edition production process will be upgraded to the same system as print shortly. Then we will have an automatic process system, which can shorten the production time to approximately 30-45 minutes so we will be able to update the website earlier.” (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* Webmaster, 1999)

The findings on the print and Internet edition production processes of the *Bangkok Post* in Figure 4.9 have shown the similarities and differences between them. This impact that these differences have on the news contents that have been produced by the processes will be investigated by content analysis in chapter five.

4.3.2 The *Nation*: Production Process

The newsroom observations of the *Nation* and *Nation Online* have obtained important information about their production processes, which will be presented and analysed in the diagram and description below.

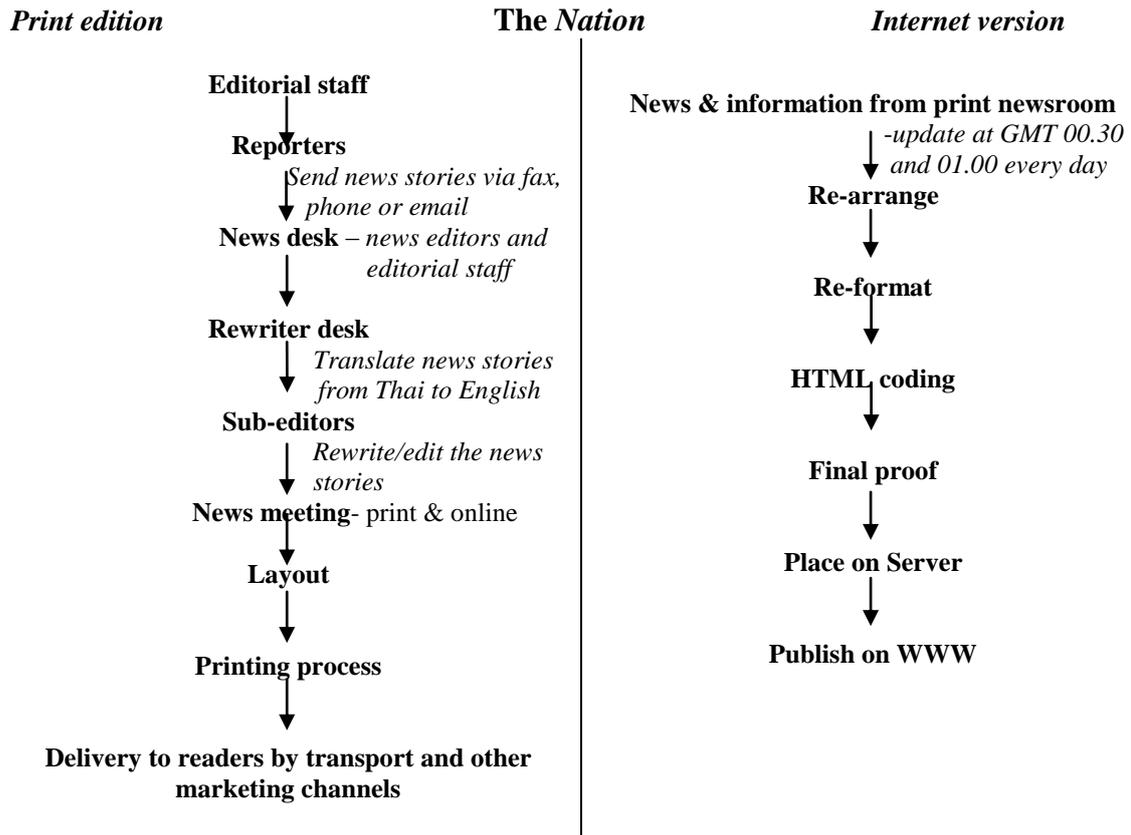


Figure 4.2: Diagram of the Nation Print and Nation Online Production Processes

The relationship between the newsrooms of the print and electronic versions of the *Nation* is that the electronic version’s contents rely on contents from the print newsroom. The online version’s staff work in the same newsroom as the print editorial staff and they have a cooperative relationship in news production.

“The *Nation Internet* version doesn’t have its own reporter. We think that there is no need for online editions to have their own reporters. However, the online staff consists of a webmaster, two editors, three computer designers and a marketing manager.” (Yingyord, *Nation Webmaster*, 1999)

The findings confirm that the slight differences between the two newsrooms of the *Nation* in terms of their working routines leads to differences in their production

processes. This relationship also affects the characteristics of news content that are the products of these processes.

4.3.3 The *Thairath*: Production Process

The findings from newsroom observations on the production processes of the *Thairath* and *Thairath Online* are demonstrated and discussed in the diagram and description below.

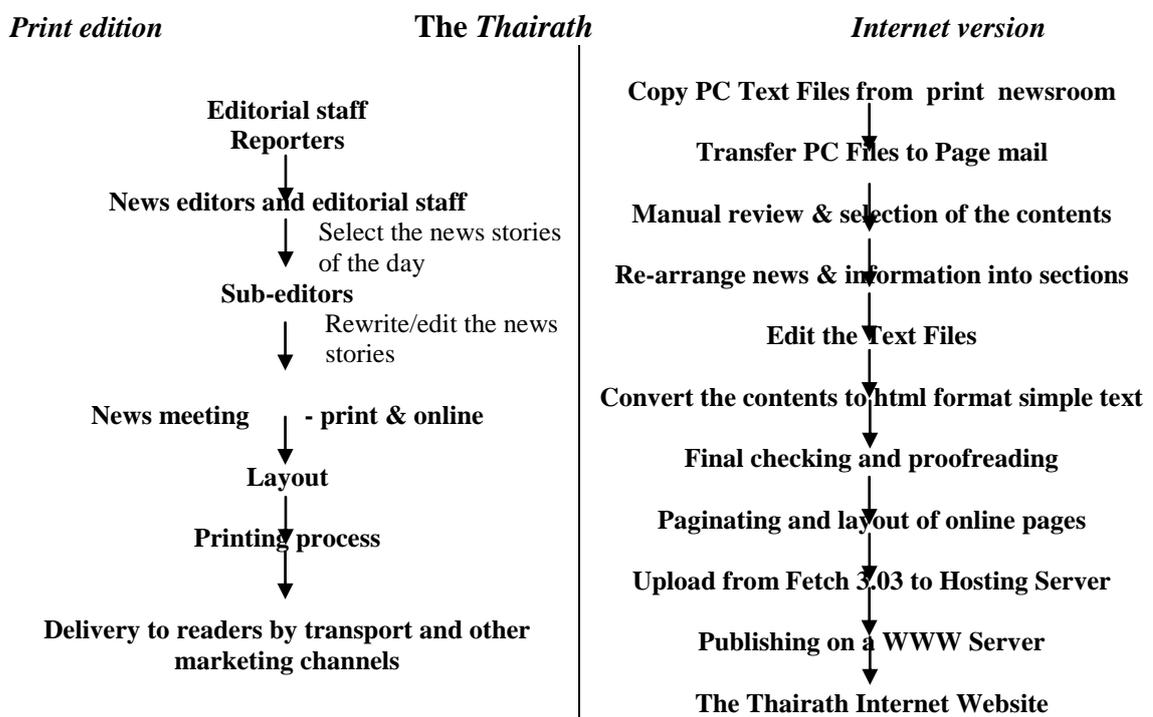


Figure 4.3: Diagram of *Thairath* Print and *Thairath* Online Production Processes

Figure 4.3 indicates the similarity of the production process of *Thairath Online* to that of the other four online newspaper samples. Chavarong (*Thairath* Webmaster, 1999) explains the production process of the online edition as follows:

“*Thairath Online* starts the process early in the morning, at 7am, and launches by 10am. The news is updated by 2pm every day. A webmaster will choose the contents from print to

post online. The online production room is part of the *Thairath Information Center*.”

It can be seen that the Thairath Online is the only electronic newspaper among the four online samples that operates the process of selection and editing of news content from its print edition. This can be explained by the news policy and the pattern of its organisation in section 4.4.2.

4.3.4 The *Matichon*: Production Process

The newsroom observations of the *Matichon* and *Matichon Online* have obtained the relevant information about their production processes, which will be presented and discussed in the diagram and description below:

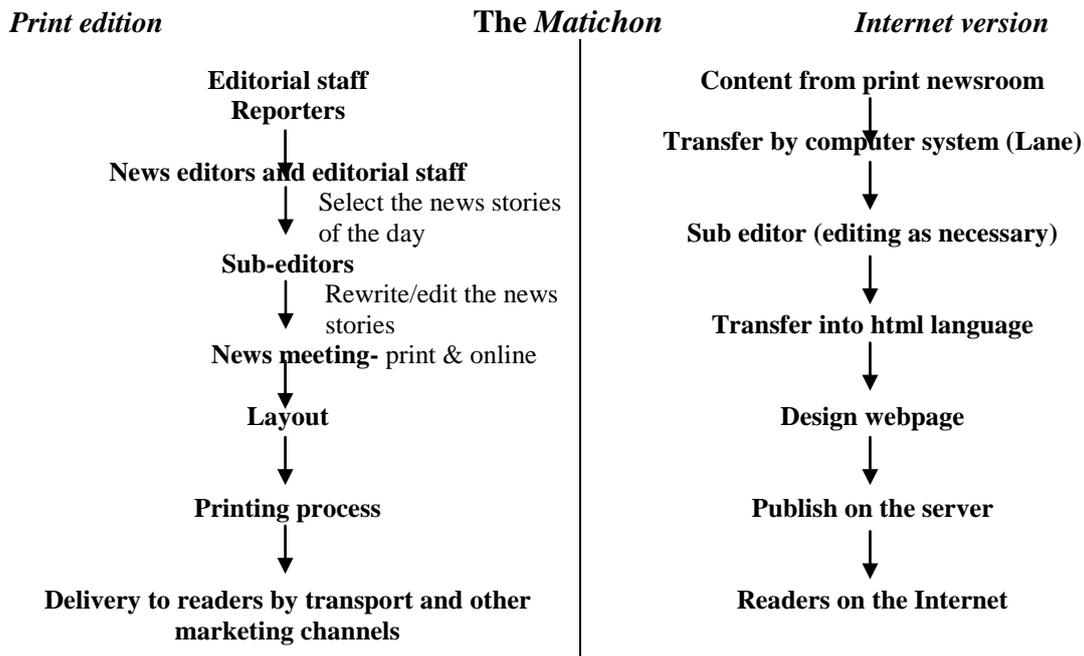


Figure 4.4: Diagram of *Matichon* Print and *Matichon* Online Production Processes

Figure 4.4 depicts the similarities and differences between the *Matichon* print and online editions’ newsrooms in terms of their production processes. The *Matichon* print and online editions’ production processes are similar to those of the other three

newspaper samples in this study (as mentioned above). However, as the *Matichon Online* is part of the Information Center, which supplies information sources for the print editorial staff, there is also a supportive relationship between the online and print editions' newsrooms.

4.3.5 Summary of the Relationships in Production Processes

The newsroom observations of four newspaper samples and their online editions obtained findings about the production processes of each newsroom. The relationship between the print and online newsrooms of the four newspaper samples is analysed by comparing and contrasting the production processes of the print and online versions in the below diagram.

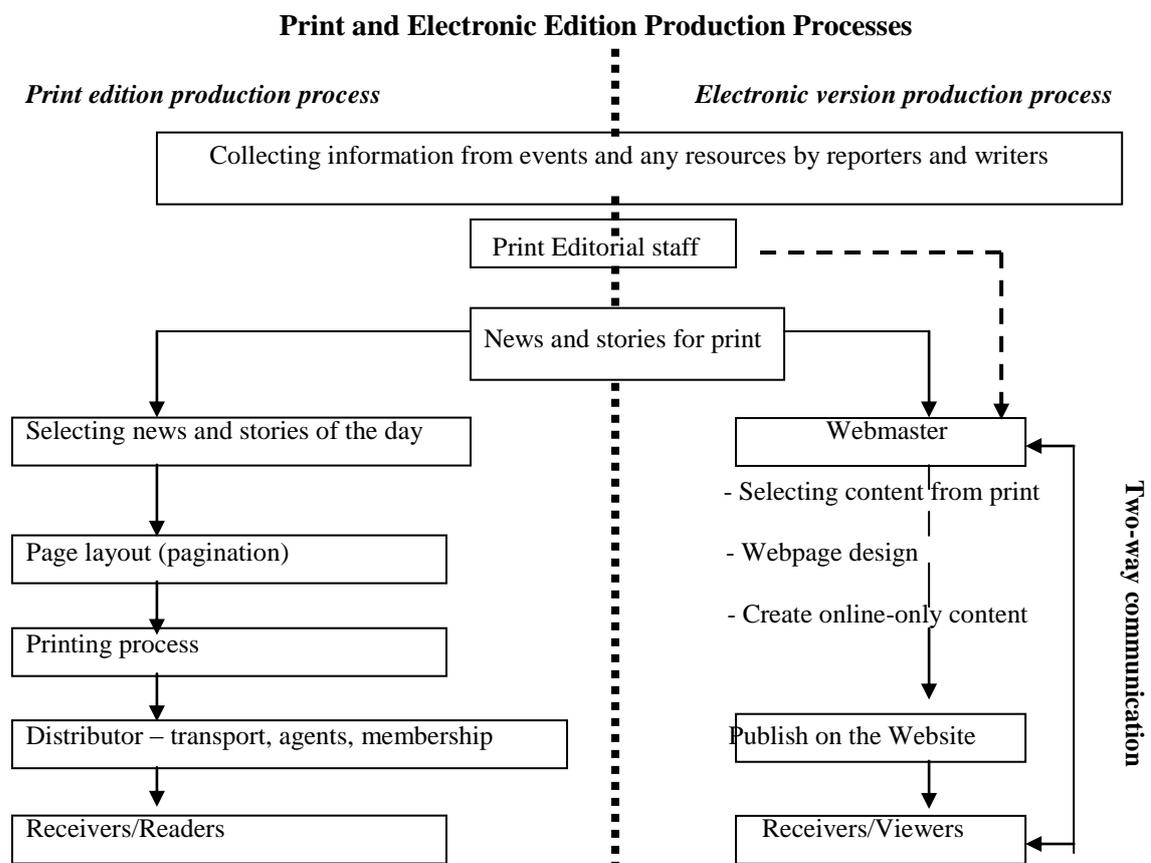


Figure 4.5: Comparison of the Production Processes of Print and Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

Figure 4.5 indicates the similarities and differences between Thai print and electronic newspapers when considering their production processes. The diagram compares the production process of the print and the electronic version side by side from the starting point of the process. It also shows that the content of the electronic version is provided by its print newsroom. Print and electronic edition newsrooms share resources of information and staff. Electronic newspapers use print contents which have been selected, shaped and put through the print news gate. The news production process does not occur in electronic newspapers' production processes. The selection process remains in operation, but in a different way and at a different level to the selection processes in print editions. Electronic versions receive the whole contents that are transferred from print editions' files. At this point, a news selection process is operated in online newspapers by selecting content from the content that is received from print editions. The significant difference between print and electronic newspapers' production processes is the delivery channel. Whilst print newspapers distribute their editions by transport to the newsstands, news agents and members, online versions disseminate their information on the Internet.

At this point, it can be concluded that electronic newspapers operate different production processes to their print counterparts. Electronic newspapers give up the processes of news production and operate a lower level of news selection processes. The electronic newspapers in Thailand are likely to reproduce most of the contents of their print counterparts.

The diagram also presents the collaborative relationships between the print and online newsrooms of all four Thai newspapers in terms of sharing staff and information resources in their news production processes. Despite this, print newspapers and their electronic versions have different production processes in regard to the technology

employed, but, as mentioned above, this does not affect the selection of news material or content for publishing on the Web as yet.

4.4 The Relationships in News Selection Process and News Policy

The investigation of the news selection, news editing and news policy of four newspaper samples plays the important part in exploring the relationship between print newspapers and their electronic versions in terms of their production processes. It suggests the similarities and differences in news policy which influence the process of news selection in print and electronic versions' newsrooms. In the following sections, the findings from informal interviews with three editors and four webmasters (while conducting newsroom observations of four newspaper samples in Thailand) will be presented and analysed for each newspaper in turn: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

4.4.1 The *Bangkok Post*: News Selection Process and News Policy

The findings on news policy and the news selection process of the *Bangkok Post* and *Bangkok Post Internet* obtained from face-to-face interviews with the editor and webmaster confirm that there is no specific news policy, in terms of news selection, for the Internet version. Deborah (*Bangkok Post* Webmaster, 1999) clarifies the news policy of the Internet version as follows:

“The news writing style for the Internet should be short and concise because people who use the Internet want it quickly; therefore, news on the Internet version could be shorter than news on the print. However, the Internet edition contains all

the material from the print edition. The content will not be edited or rewritten. This is a policy of the *Bangkok Post* newspaper and due to the lack of staff. The Internet version news writing style is creating a style whereby only the first and/or second lines of news lead stories are read at the beginning of each news story; then, if a user is interested in any news, he/she can click to read in detail.” (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* Webmaster, 1999)

However, Deborah (*Bangkok Post* Webmaster, 1999) comments that a newspaper website should not only present news but should have a variety of information. It needs variety in order to attract users to its website. Moreover, news agenda-setting does not work on the Internet because it is believed that Internet users can decide which news is important for them.

Pichai (*Bangkok Post* Editor, 1999), however, describes the news policy and news selection process of the *Bangkok Post* printed edition as follows:

“The *Bangkok Post* has the strongly restricted policy in news presentation that a news story must not be written by putting facts and critical ideas together. A news story and critical article have to be exactly separated in our newspaper. This is the identity of the *Bangkok Post* newspaper. It expects to introduce the most modern technology to its production process such as an information system that can search the archive on the homepage and link to the caption of all Post Publishing’s

publications and supplements. There is no policy of scanning and editing any contents from the print.”

As a result, it can be recognised that most of the contents of *Bangkok Post Internet* are from the print edition. All material from the print is published on the web without being edited. This reflects the fact that the same news policy and news selection is followed in both the print and the online version of the *Bangkok Post*.

4.4.2 The *Nation*: News Selection Process and News Policy

The *Nation Online* was first established as a teletext service, but has been developed as an electronic newspaper which contains multimedia functions. The contents of the online version are transferred from the print edition. They may edit the headlines; however, the news body is the same as the report in the print edition. The webmaster tries to post most contents from the print edition onto the online version. However, the online edition may also add some news or information that has not been included in the print edition (because of the limited space). Examples of the additional information on the *Nation Online* are: learn English from news, interactive web board, back issues, search machine, the link to another publication and the other media of its group.

The online version staff work in the same newsroom as the print editorial staff and they collaborate in the news production. There are no separate news reporting staff for the online version. Specific reporting staff for the online version are thought to be unnecessary at the *Nation Online*. Instead, the online staff consists of a webmaster, two editors, three computer designers and a marketing manager. In addition, the *Nation Online* production process has the simple technique of installing the contents from its print version onto the Internet system. Tulsathit and Yingyord (*Nation* Editor and Webmaster respectively, 1999) state that:

“There is no policy of selecting and editing any contents from the print. The *Nation Online* follows the same news policy as the print edition in selecting news content. The news policy of the *Nation* is to present the stories that are in the public interest and have an impact on our target reader group.” (Tulsathit, *Nation* Editor, 1999)

“The updated online version will be produced from 7pm and posted on the Web by midnight every day. The capacity of our online version is being improved all the time.” (Yingyord, *Nation* Webmaster, 1999)

4.4.3 The *Thairath*: News Selection Process and News Policy

The news contents of *Thairath Online* are transferred from its print edition and published on the Web by focusing on the interests of the web visitors. Most viewers of *Thairath Online* (93 per cent) live outside Thailand and 64 per cent of these users are in the USA (*Thairath* website, 2000). Although they cannot be identified, it is assumed from the emails they have sent to the webmaster that they are people who would like to know about Thailand. Therefore, the contents of *Thairath Online* focus on home news about Thailand. All the online version’s contents are provided by the print edition with some editing. The online version does not have a particular news policy but follows the policy of the print edition. As Chavarong (*Thairath* Webmaster, 1999) explains:

“The policy of selecting news to post on its website is publishing all local news, in other words the news about Thailand and the region that is written by our reporters. Foreign

news and news from wire services are not included, due to service copyright regulations. Moreover, foreign news can be read directly on their news website. However, *Thairath Online* has the policy of slightly editing news content from the print newsroom, and editors shorten and summarise the news stories before they are transferred to the website.” (Chavarong, *Thairath* Webmaster, 1999)

From this perspective, it can be seen that the *Thairath Online* follows the same news policy as the print edition but is slightly different in its news selection process. It is also the only online newspaper among the four electronic newspaper samples that edits the news before posting those news messages from the print on the web. This is because the news writing style of the *Thairath* print is too long and offers too much detail to post online.

4.4.4 The *Matichon*: News Selection Process and News Policy

As *Matichon* is one of the quality newspapers in Thailand, it has a short news writing style. Therefore, *Matichon Online* has a news policy of republishing all the contents from the print edition without editing. As Sumitra (*Matichon* Information Director, 2000) confirms, the *Matichon Online* follows the news policy of the *Matichon* print edition:

“*Matichon Online* does not have a different policy to the print edition in terms of selecting news content. Most content of the online version is transferred from the print edition. There is no policy of rewriting or editing the content from print because the

news writing style of the *Matichon* print edition is already brief and short, therefore it does not need to be shortened for online publication.”

Chawakit (*Matichon* Webmaster, 2000) suggests that online news should be written in a different style to the traditional newspaper style, but, at present, electronic newspapers in Thailand only republish news materials from print editions and do not have their own editorial staff.

4.4.5 Summary of the Relationships between the Print and Online Editions of Four Thai Newspapers in Terms of Their News Selection Processes and News Policies

The information acquired from three editors and four webmasters while conducting participant observations of four Thai newspaper samples indicates the similarities between the print and online editions in terms of their news policy and news selection processes. No differences were found between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of news policy and the selection of their news contents. However, electronic newspapers in Thailand focus on offering more home (Thailand) news and information about Thailand than international news compared to the print editions. The electronic newspapers also have a news policy of providing some additional information and interactive elements that do not appear on their print counterparts, such as Breaking News, and Polls.

These findings, which indicate the similarities between Thai print newspapers and their electronic versions in terms of news policy, news selection and news editing, confirm the fact that as print newspapers go online, they operate news selection and production processes in a different way to traditional newspapers.

4.5 Chapter Summary: The Relationship between Thai Print and Electronic Newspapers in Terms of Their Production Processes

The findings on newsrooms' practices, production processes and news policies obtained from participant observation and interviews conducted in the newsrooms of four Thai print and electronic newspapers have confirmed the changes in the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers. The development of the print and electronic versions of the four Thai newspaper samples indicate the changes from the print to the online environment in Thailand. There is evidence to suggest that this change is dependent on four main factors, which include the company policy, the executive vision, the media marketing competition and the new technologies. This information also shows the use of new communication technologies in their newsrooms, especially in the two English-language newspapers, the *Nation* and *Bangkok Post*. These two titles are the leaders in the adoption of computer software in their production processes. In addition, the findings of newsroom observations have shown the collaborative relationship between the print and online newsrooms of all four newspapers in terms of sharing staff and news resources.

There appears to be a cooperative working environment and routine between the print and online newsrooms of all four Thai newspaper samples. The *Nation's* print and online newsrooms are located in the same room. The print and online newsrooms of the other three newspapers are situated in separate rooms but in the same buildings, and work very closely together. It should be noted that the staff of the online version often come from the print editorial staff, particularly the reporter who used to work in the information technology section of the Information Center. The relationships between the print and online newsroom staff demonstrate that they work closely in terms of sharing news resources. The online versions publish all the documents of their print

counterparts. The online staff operates the production process but not the news production. This indicates the difference between print and electronic newspapers in terms of the gatekeeping role that occurs in their newsroom practices. The major role of webmasters and staff of the electronic versions is to convert unchanged contents, produced by the print edition, into webpages for the online edition.

The production processes of electronic newspapers in Thailand operate by a simple production system. However, print newspapers and their electronic editions have dissimilar production processes in terms of technology. Online editions join the print newsroom at the beginning of their production processes by computer-linked systems. The production times of the online versions are reliant on the deadline of the print newsroom because online versions use the content from the print editions. The working routines have an impact on the production processes of print and electronic editions by controlling and following the news policy including the patterns of the organisations.

Furthermore, the study also finds evidence from the observations of the production processes that the four Thai electronic newspapers are likely to reproduce most of the contents of their print counterparts by converting the original contents from print editions into webpages for the online version with little or no editing. The two English-language electronic newspapers, the *Nation Online* and *Bangkok Post Internet*, publish the same contents as those in the print editions, whereas the *Thairath Online*, in the Thai language, makes some changes in the contents for the online version. From the interviews with three editors and four webmasters, there is no valid indication of a difference in news policy between print newspapers and their electronic versions. The webmasters of the four electronic newspaper samples follow the same news policy as their print editions to select and publish the news content on their websites. The

participant observation and interview findings show that the news policies of electronic newspapers in Thailand follow their print counterparts' news policies. It suggests that the role of information selection or gatekeeping in the production process of electronic newspapers is different to the traditional one in print newspapers. New media such as electronic newspapers are giving up the major part of the traditional gatekeeping role in terms of information selection. Consequently, these outcomes have confirmed Boczkowski's (2000) notion that the role of gatekeeping in new media has changed. The results from participant observations also support Kawamoto's (1998) study finding that the role of a professional journalist in the new-media environment might have to change from being a selector, provider and allocutor to being only a consultant.

The participant observations in this study have provided the answer to the first research question: 'Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their production processes and news policies compared to their print counterparts?' The findings suggest that there are similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news selection. The rest of the research questions will be answered by the findings from newspaper content analysis, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN TERMS OF THEIR NEWS CONTENTS

The findings on the similarities and differences in the news contents of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand, which reflect the way in which news contents are created and selected in their news production processes, will be discussed in this chapter. The quantitative content analysis consists of comparing the amount of news stories and news story locations in each of the print and electronic editions of the four newspaper samples. The qualitative analysis examines the characteristics of news story locations (home news and international news) including the news priority in terms of the lead news stories/topics and the news values of news stories published in the print and electronic editions of the four newspapers studied here. The use of interactivity in electronic newspapers is also analysed to explore the capacity of new technology. Most importantly, newspaper content analysis will help to answer the following research questions: ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’ ‘Do the electronic newspapers’ news contents offer more or less home (Thailand) news than their print editions?’ And: ‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use the interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections?’

The discovery of similarities and differences between the print and electronic editions of the four Thai newspapers in terms of their news content reflects the changes

occurring in their production processes and news selection or gatekeeping process in electronic newspapers. The analysis of newspaper content, combined with the data gathered from participant observations and interviews, helps to answer the research questions. While newsroom observations and interviews provided relevant information on the similarities and differences in news policy and production processes, content analysis was conducted to explore the content of the products in more depth. In essence, this thesis requires the content analysis method because it is the most effective method to analyse the amount of content, the format and design, and the immediacy and interactivity of newspaper content, which have implications for the investigation of the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers. As indicated by Gunter (2003: 65), the key differences between print and electronic newspapers can be found in relation to seven features: amount of content; format and design; access and customisation; immediacy; hyperlinking; interactivity; and cost.

Therefore, newspaper content analysis in this thesis investigates in comparative terms the quantity of news stories by content, the characteristics of news by news value (newsworthiness), the locations of news stories by section, and the emphasis of news lead stories and topics of news content for each print and electronic version, including the use of interactive elements in electronic newspapers. However, it is significant bearing in mind that the content analysis of this study did not involve any complex results. The main aim of this analysis, as mentioned earlier, was to explore the characteristics of news content that were selected and put through the news gates for publishing in print and electronic newspaper samples. The qualitative aspect was employed to analyse the findings on the locations and characteristics of the contents of each print and electronic sample, while the quantitative aspect was involved with the volume and frequency of the content of each print and electronic sample.

The findings of this thesis also attempted to support the findings of several other studies (Shoemaker, 1991; Singer, 1998 and 2001; Li, 1998 and Boczkowski, 2000) which indicated that, as the contents of electronic newspapers are simply reproduced from printed editions' products, the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers is different from that of their traditional print counterparts. This thesis is also likely to suggest an awareness of the alteration in the processes of news selection or gatekeeping in electronic newspapers in Thailand for the newspaper industry in Thailand.

It is important to point out here that although much of the discussion of content analysis findings refers to similarities and differences between the four newspaper samples, it is not the main aim of this study to compare the relationships between these four newspapers. The discussion is an attempt to present the initial relevant findings from the print and electronic version of each newspaper sample, which therefore will be able to summarise the relationships between the print and electronic versions of the four Thai newspapers in terms of their news content.

The following discussions on five topics are designed to answer the research questions, which will reflect the similarities and differences occurring in the production processes and news selection or gatekeeping processes between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand. The five topics are: 1) The presentation of four newspaper samples; 2) The quantity of contents provided by print and electronic versions; 3) The similarities and differences in news content offered by prints and their electronic versions; 4) The similarities and differences between print and electronic versions in terms of emphasising lead stories and topics; and 5) The use of interactive elements in electronic newspapers in Thailand. Tables, graphics, images and texts are used in order to demonstrate and discuss the findings of the quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

5.1 The Presentation of Four Newspaper Samples and Their Websites

Before continuing to the major findings on the relationships between Thai print and electronic newspapers in terms of their news content, it is useful to demonstrate how the four Thai print newspapers and their websites present their content. These include images of the front-page of each print newspaper sample and the homepage of each electronic version in Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. This is intended to illustrate the format or page design of the study samples in order to explore the differences between these four print newspapers and their electronic versions in terms of their page layout and news positioning.

5.1.1 The Presentation of the *Bangkok Post* and *Bangkok Post Internet*



Figure 5.1: Illustrations of the Front-page (Print) and Homepage (Electronic) of the *Bangkok Post Daily* (08 September 2000)

Figure 5.1 illustrates the front-page of the *Bangkok Post* print edition and the homepage of the *Bangkok Post Internet* version, showing the differences and similarities between them in terms of page design and layout. It should be noticed that the layout of the website is similar to its print, which reflects McAdams's (1998) conclusion that newspapers still retain their traditional layout when they appear online. However, it is

important to note that this is the webpage of the *Bangkok Post* in 2000; by this point the website had dramatically changed in regard to its new-look design and interactive use.

5.1.2 The Presentation of the *Nation* and *Nation Online*



Figure 5.2: Illustrations of the Front-page (Print) and Homepage (Electronic) of the *Nation Daily* (04 September 2000)

Figure 5.2 illustrates the front-page of the *Nation* print edition and the homepage of the *Nation Online*, showing the differences and similarities between them in terms of page design and layout. The *Nation Online* has also significantly improved its website by becoming a multimedia newspaper website with audio and video interactivities.

5.1.3 The Presentation of the *Thairath* and *Thairath Online*



Figure 5.3: Illustrations of the Front-page (Print) and Homepage (Electronic) of the *Thairath Daily* (05 September 2000)

Figure 5.3 illustrates the front-page of the *Thairath* print edition and the homepage of the *Thairath Online*, showing the differences and similarities between them in terms of page design and layout. The layout of *Thairath Online* is different from its print design. While the *Thairath* daily's front-page uses many colour news photos to attract readers, its webpage has only one photo. *Thairath Online* is the only newspaper website in these study samples that has not yet provided multimedia interactivity on its website.

5.1.4 The Presentation of the *Matichon* and *Matichon Online*

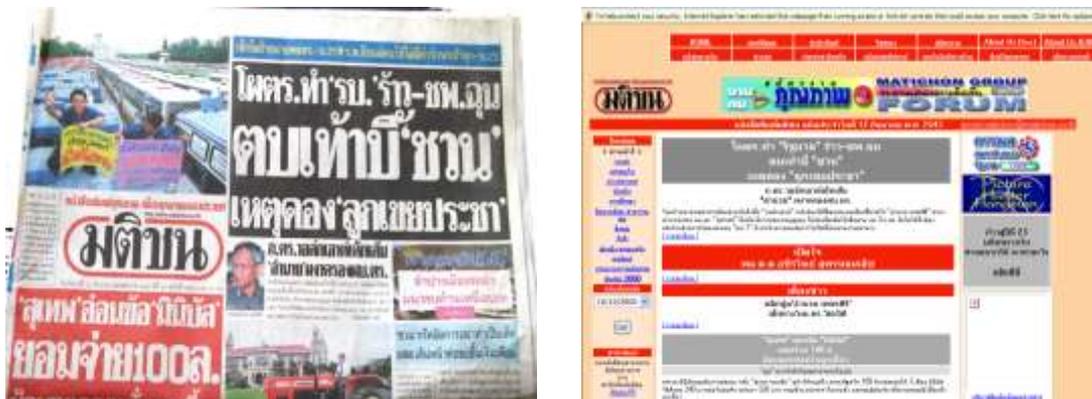


Figure 5.4: Illustrations of the Front-page (Print) and Homepage (Electronic) of *Matichon Daily* (12 September 2000)

Figure 5.4 illustrates the front-page of the *Matichon* print edition and the homepage of the *Matichon* Internet edition, showing the differences and similarities between them in terms of page design and layout. The *Matichon Online* webpage has a different layout from its print. Although *Matichon* is a quality Thai newspaper, its front-page is full of colour news photographs; on its online homepage, however, it does not have any news photographs.

In summary, Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 present the appearances of the print and electronic editions of each of the four newspaper samples. Differences can be seen between these two mediums in terms of format and design. In the above images it can

be seen that traditional print newspapers organise information vertically on large pages, whereas electronic versions post information on a small screen in a horizontal scrolling format. Furthermore, print newspapers prioritise news stories on their front-pages with the font size of news headlines (the biggest headline is the most important news story of the day), whereas news headlines on the homepages of electronic versions are prioritised by ordering from top to bottom (the top one is the most important news of the day and so on) due to the scrolling format. However, despite the differences in page layout and technique in terms of prioritising the news headlines, both electronic and print newspaper samples follow the same headline news and news priority of the day. From this it can be concluded that the differences in the nature of format and design, and the similarities in news content priority, reflect the way that contents have been selected and presented in print newspapers and their electronic versions.

It can be seen that the four newspaper samples' websites are similar in terms of their webpage layout. Their webpage designs also share similarities and differences compared to their print editions. According to McAdams' (1994) critique of newspapers on the web, 'although the Internet technology is rapidly growing, newspapers on the net still attach themselves to the model of traditional newspaper presentation...This probably stems from the old belief of traditional newspapers that design is fixed, it is content that changes' (McAdams, 1994).

It is interesting to note here that the similar positions of news headlines and photos on the front-page of print editions and on the homepage of their electronic counterparts indicates that electronic newspapers play a lesser role in news selection processes in terms of prioritising news content than traditional ones. The webmasters of the four electronic samples follow the same priority of headline positioning as their print edition.

5.2 The Quantity of Contents Provided by Prints and Electronic Newspapers

This section examines two of the research questions – ‘Do electronic newspapers provide less or more overall content than their print editions?’ and ‘Do the electronic newspapers’ news contents offer more or less home news than their print editions?’ – by measuring the quantity and location of news stories in the print and electronic versions of each newspaper sample. The findings on the total amount of content will measure the differences in the abilities of these two mediums to provide information. Measuring the number of news stories in different locations will explore whether and how electronic versions republish news stories from their print counterparts. These results help to address whether and how the process of news production and news selection, which is similar to the gatekeeping process, is operated in print and electronic newspaper samples.

The quantity of the content provided by print and electronic newspapers will be presented and discussed under two topics: the story totals and the story locations.

5.2.1 The Story Totals in Print and Electronic Newspapers

The overall totals of news and non-news stories offered in the print and electronic versions of four Thai newspaper samples are measured in order to find out whether the contents of electronic versions are the same as those of the print editions. The figures indicate that there was a difference in the total number of stories (news and non-news stories) that have been distributed in the print and electronic versions of the four Thai newspaper samples. The analysis of the figures for all four newspaper samples combined indicates that there were twice as many stories in the print products than in

their electronic counterparts (7188: 3263 or 68.7 per cent: 31.3 per cent). The evidence here also suggests that the print and electronic versions of the English-language and Thai-language newspapers offer slightly different proportions of overall stories between them – 5393: 5058 or 51.6 percent: 48.4 percent. The *Nation*, an English-language newspaper, offers the most stories in both its print (1923 or 18.4 per cent) and online version (970 or 9.3 per cent).

The figures also indicate that electronic newspapers in Thailand have fewer news stories overall than print newspapers (Online: Print, 2194:5461 or 28.7 percent: 71.3 percent; refer to Table 5.1). This may be explained by the fact that, although there is unlimited space available online, reading news on a computer screen is time-consuming and requires patience. Therefore, the webmasters of online versions may not post all their print materials online. This finding, therefore, reflects the news selection process in electronic newspapers, as webmasters select some or most of the contents provided by print editions to be published online, but may not publish all of them.

However, although the four Thai electronic newspapers largely republish the news content of their print counterparts, they often do so in a different context. This finding is discussed below.

5.2.2 The Story Locations and Content

The differing amounts of home news and international news items offered by the print and online editions of four Thai newspaper samples are evidence of the differences between them in terms of the news selection process. The following findings on the number of home and international news stories in prints and their electronic editions explore the research question: ‘Do the electronic newspapers offer more or less home

news than their print editions?’ The answer for this question will reflect the operation of news selection in electronic newspapers and also the differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of news priority.

In total, electronic versions offered 2,002 (or 26.2 per cent) national news stories and 192 (or 2.5 per cent) international news stories, while the print editions provided 3,147 (or 41.1 per cent) national news stories and 2,314 (or 30.2 per cent) international news stories. The proportions of national news to international news offered by print and electronic newspaper samples were 41.1:30.2 percent and 26.2:2.5 percent respectively. This demonstrates that electronic newspapers focus on distributing home (local) news more than international (global) news. The electronic versions published 2,002 home news stories out of 3,147 home news stories published in the print editions; while they only posted 192 of the 2,314 international news stories published in their print editions.

In the case of Thailand, it can be observed that electronic versions focus on offering more news and information about Thailand to serve Thai people who live abroad (including the global readers who are interested in Thailand), whereas traditional prints bring global news to the readers in the country. Singer (2001: 65) confirms that traditional print newspapers have brought selected information about the world to local readers’ doorsteps. At the same time, their online versions try to present more local news stories about what is happening in the country. This supports the findings of Singer’s (2001: 65) study that online products have a much stronger local orientation than prints, suggesting that online papers may be moving toward a reinterpretation of their role in connecting readers to the world beyond their horizons.

It is concluded here that the differences in story totals (total amount of news) and story locations (home news and international news) indicate what kind of news has

been put through the news gate. More importantly, this addresses the role and operation of news selection or the gatekeeping process in electronic newspapers, which happens in a different way and at a different level to this process in print editions. The online newspapers operate a different kind of news or information selection from the print editions by not publishing everything on the web that is provided by their print newsrooms. The different purposes in this process between print and electronic newspapers can be seen from the larger proportion of home news than international news offered in electronic newspapers compared with the print editions. The different proportions of home news and international news offered in print and electronic newspapers also reflect their different roles in serving readers. The four Thai print newspaper samples concentrate on bringing global news to locals (Thai people in the country), whereas electronic newspapers focus on offering home news and information about Thailand to serve Thai readers who live overseas and global communities who are interested in Thailand. These discoveries suggest that electronic newspapers in Thailand are more local in focus than their print counterparts. It can also be seen that electronic newspapers play the role of both a global (international) and a local (home) medium; their news information is distributed by a global channel but is often local in nature.

5.3 The Similarities and Differences in News Contents Offered in Print and Electronic Newspapers

The content analysis of the similarities and differences in news contents presented in print and electronic newspaper samples will investigate the research question: ‘Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their news content and news priority compared to their print counterparts?’ This investigation, therefore,

will help to indicate whether and how the content of electronic newspaper samples reproduces the content of print products. The data from content analysis for all 7,655 news stories of the print and electronic newspaper samples is broken down by newspaper categories to specify the locations of the news stories of electronic versions in Table 5.1 below.

Newspaper Title	News on Print only		News on Electronic only		News on Both (All or partial)		Totals Pieces
	Pieces	%	Pieces	%	Pieces	%	
Bangkok Post	1,112	67.7%	2	0.1%	528	32.2%	2,170
Nation	1,035	60%	220	12.8%	470	27.2%	2,195
Thairath	972	58.6%	70	4.2%	308	37.2%	1,658
Maticchon	496	45.4%	56	5.1%	540	49.5%	1,632
TOTALS	3,615	47.2%	348	4.6%	*3,692	48.2%	7,655
Totals news on four print editions = 5,461(71.3%)							
Totals news on four electronic versions = 2,194(28.7%)							

Table 5.1: The Amount of News Stories in Print and Electronic Newspapers

* Both the print and electronic editions of each story are included in this total.

From Table 5.1, it can be seen that 3,692 news stories (or 48.2 per cent) of the total of 7,655 news stories were offered in both the print and online versions of the four Thai newspapers studied in this thesis. The figures also indicate that 1,846 news stories (or 84.1 per cent) of the total of 2,194 news stories on the electronic newspaper samples were the same news stories as in the print editions. It shows that most of the news stories in the electronic newspaper samples were typically reproduced from their print products with no changes or with only minor alterations (such as excluding the lead from the news body of the *Thairath Online* news). Only 348 news stories (or 4.6 per cent) were created only for the online versions. On the other hand, 3,615 (or 47.2 per cent) of the total number of news stories appeared only in print editions. Looking at

these figures helped address the research question concerning the similarities and differences in the news content of the print and electronic editions of the four newspaper samples. These figures confirm that the four Thai electronic newspapers republished most of their print products.

The similarities and differences between the print and electronic editions of the four Thai newspaper samples in terms of their news content will be analysed in two categories: republished content and additional content, as follows.

5.3.1 Republished Content

The following discussion will endeavour to prove that the news content of each of the four Thai electronic newspapers is virtually the same as the content of their print products. The discoveries from this study will be addressed in the following order: *The Bangkok Post*, *The Nation*, *The Thairath* and *The Matichon*.

Figures 5.8 to 5.11 will illustrate the similarities in the news contents of the electronic and print newspaper samples. The information will endeavour to show that the content of Thai electronic newspapers reproduces the content of their print products. The figures will compare the samples of news stories in print editions to the ones in the electronic versions of each newspaper sample in the following order: *Bangkok Post*, *Nation*, *Thairath* and *Matichon*.

The Bangkok Post

There were a total of 2,170 news stories published in the *Bangkok Post Internet* and *Bangkok Post* print edition (refer to Table 5.1) during the period of this study. There were 528 news stories that appeared in both the printed and the electronic version of the

Bangkok Post, while there were only 2 news stories that only appeared in the electronic version (refer to Table 5.1).

This figure indicates that a large amount of news stories in the *Bangkok Post Internet* were reproduced from its print products. This can be explained by the news policy of the organisation; the *Bangkok Post* has the policy of publishing all content from its print edition unchanged online (Deborah, 1999).

The following figures show the same news story presented in the *Bangkok Post Internet* and the *Bangkok Post* print edition on 6th September 2000. (See sample of full news stories in Appendix F and G)



Figure 5.5: Comparison of the Same News Story in the Bangkok Post Internet and Bangkok Post Print Edition

Figure 5.5 illustrates that the news story on the front-page of the *Bangkok Post* print edition on the right is being reproduced on the homepage of the *Bangkok Post Internet*, shown on the left. This confirms the similarity in news content between the print and electronic versions of the *Bangkok Post*.

In conclusion, similarities have been found when investigating the news content of both editions. That is, most of the news contents in the electronic version of the *Bangkok Post* were reproduced from the print product. This is because the *Bangkok Post*, which is one of the quality (business) newspapers in Thailand, has a short and summarised news writing style. Therefore the *Bangkok Post Internet* will be able to transfer the whole unchanged news content from the print edition onto the web.

The Nation

These are the figures from the analysis of the totals of 2,195 news stories published in both the *Nation* and *Nation Online* (refer to Table 5.1) during this study. There were 470 news stories published in both the printed and electronic versions of the four newspaper samples. While there were 220 (or 12.8 percent) news stories that were seen only on the *Nation Online* (refer to Table 5.1), which were the biggest amount of news stories published on electronic version when compared with the other three electronic newspaper samples.

The following figures present the similarity of news text content in the *Nation Online* and the *Nation* print edition on 11th September 2000. (See sample of the full same news stories in Appendix H and I)

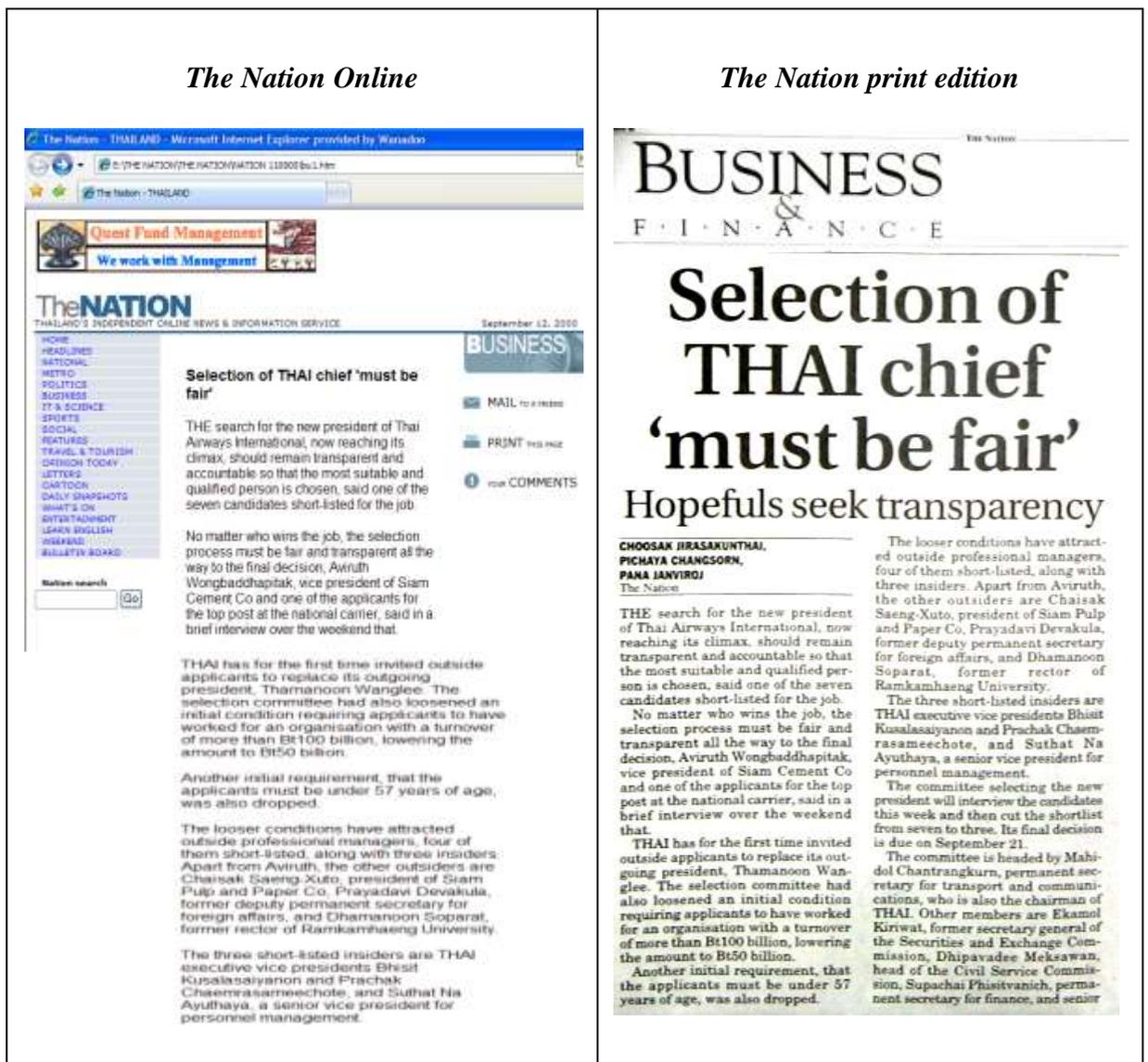


Figure 5.6: Comparison of the Same News Story in the Nation Online and Nation Print Edition

Figure 5.6 shows the homepage of the *Nation Online* and the front-page of the *Nation* print edition on 11th September 2000. The business news story on the homepage of the *Nation Online* is the same news story that appears on the front-page of the *Nation* print edition, as shown on the right.

Similarities have been found when analysing the news content of the two editions. That is, there is reproduction of news content from the print on the electronic version of the *Nation*. This is because the *Nation*, which is one of the quality (business)

newspapers in Thailand, has a short and summarised news writing style in its print newspaper and therefore the *Nation Online* is able to transfer the whole news content from the print to its online edition.

The Thairath

The content analysis indicates the similarity of news stories in the print and electronic versions of the *Thairath* newspaper. There were 308 news stories (or 37.2 percent) viewed in both editions of the *Thairath* (refer to Table 5.1). However, it can be noticed that the reproduced news content in the *Thairath Online* was initially edited news content from the print edition. For example, the news lead and the first paragraph of the news body were removed. The news headline and the rest of the online news contents were the same as those in the print. This is because news stories on the *Thairath* daily (which has a large circulation in Thailand) were written in a long style to give full details of news stories. Therefore, the *Thairath Online* is not able to place the whole news content from the print edition onto the website without editing.

At the same time, only 70 news stories (or 4.2 percent) were created for publishing on the *Thairath Online* (refer to Table 5.1). While there were 972 (or 58.6 percent) appeared only in the *Thairath* print edition (refer to Table 5.1).

The following figures indicate the differences and similarities in the same news text content presented in the *Thairath Online* and the *Thairath* print edition on 6th September 2000. (See sample of full news stories with English translations in Appendix J and K)

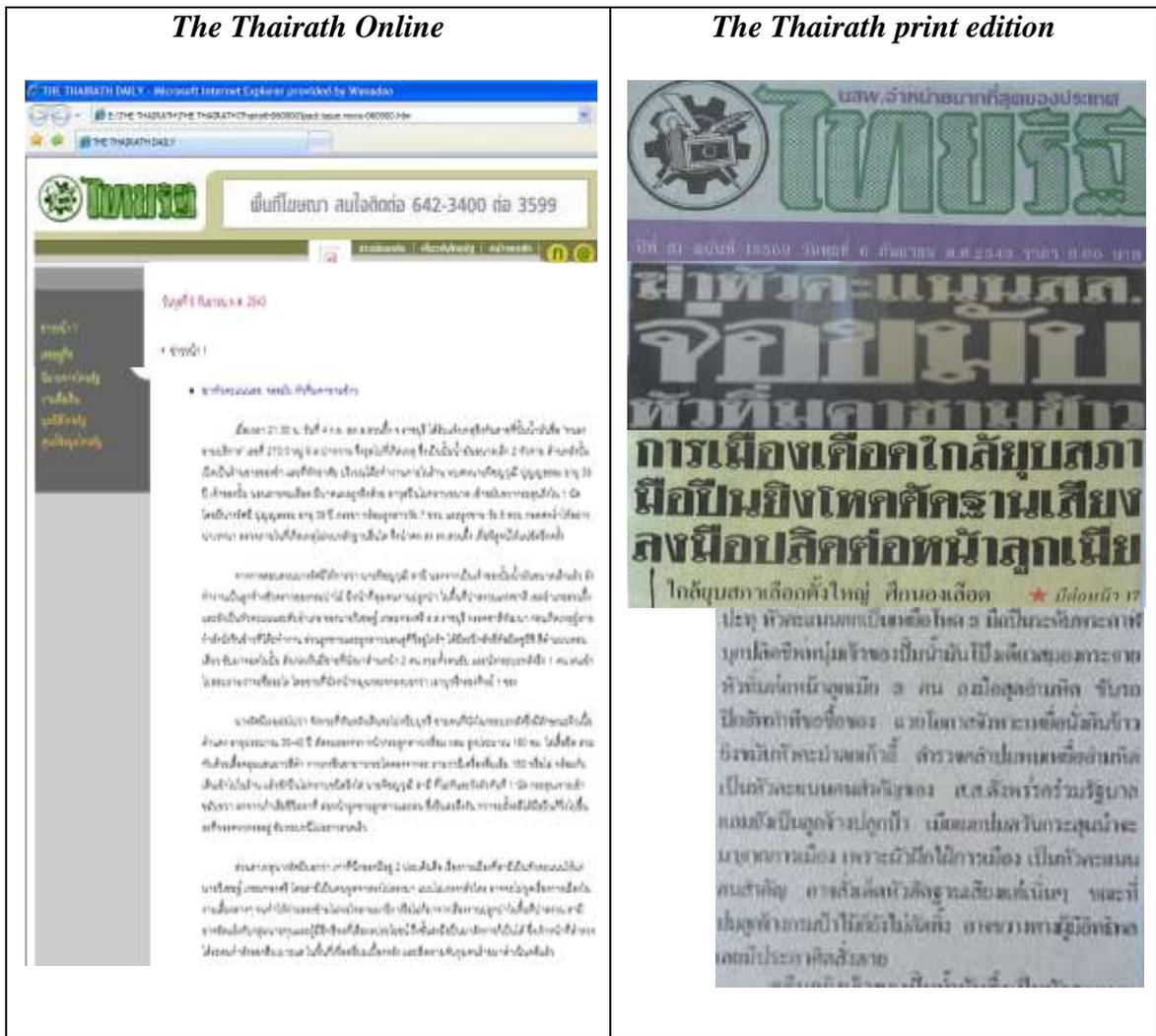


Figure 5.7: Comparison of the Same News Story in the Thairath Online and Thairath Print Edition in Thai

Figure 5.7 illustrates the samples of the news stories which were published on the homepage of the *Thairath Online* and on the front-page of the *Thairath* print edition on 6th September 2000. The news story on the homepage of the *Thairath Online* is the same news story that appears on the front-page of the print, with slight editing. Some of the news content of the news story in the *Thairath* print edition does not appear online. Differences and similarities have therefore been found when investigating the news content of the two editions. That is, there is some editing and reusing of news content on the electronic version of the *Thairath*.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Thairath Online</i> Wednesday 6 September 2000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KILLED MP ELECTION CANVASSER GUNNED DOWN AT HEAD WHILE HAVING HIS MEAL</p> <p>At 9.30 p.m. on 4th September it was reported at Ratchaburi's Suan Phung police station that there was a brutal shooting at a petrol station called "Nongkham Borikam" at 270/3, Moo 9, Pawai Sub-district. A group of police officers hurriedly visited the scene, which is a small petrol station with two fuel dispensers. Behind the station is a grocery store that is also used as a living quarter. The body of the victim, Mr. Pitchavut Poonyatham, a 38-year-old petrol station owner, was found lying in a pool of blood. A gunshot wound was found at the right temple of his head with a bullet embedded in the skull. Mrs. Russamee Poonyatham, 39, her 7-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son were found to be embracing the dead body and moaning restlessly. The investigation team had found no evidence to support the case. The corpse was later sent to Suan Phung Hospital for further examination.</p> <p>Questioned by a police officer, Mrs. Russamee said that apart from owning a small petrol station her husband, Mr. Pitchavut, also worked as a temporary employee for the Department of Forestry. According to Mrs. Russamee, her husband's main responsibility was supervising other reforestation workers in the Suan Phung National Conserved Forest. He also served as a district-level canvasser for Mr. Wished Kasemthongsri, Ratchaburi's member of the House of Representatives, the National Development Party. Before being shot dead, the victim was having his dinner at his office desk while his son and daughter were lying down watching TV nearby. Then, a black Mitsubishi standard cab pickup, with two men in the front seats and another man in the back of the pickup, pulled up in front of the victim's petrol station. Mrs. Russamee said that she walked to the truck to ask them what they were looking for. A guy in the front seat next to the driver replied that he wanted a pack of Krong Thip cigarettes.</p> <p>While Mrs. Russamee was walking back to the grocery store, the guy in the back of the pickup truck jumped off, asked for a bottle of an M-150 energy drink, and walked into the store. The guy was about 35-40 years old, 180 cm tall, and had tanned skin with a medium length male's hairstyle, a square chin and a bonny face. He wore a T-shirt with a black long-sleeved jacket and a long-legged pair of jeans. Suddenly, the guy shot Mr. Pitchavut, who was unaware of the stranger, at his right temple. Mr. Pitchavut was shot to sudden death with one bullet where the type of gun was still unknown. The victim's son and daughter witnessed the shooting of their father and were shocked by the scene. By the time they were conscious of what had happened, the gunman had already got into the pickup truck and quickly escaped.</p> <p>Mrs. Russamee reckoned that there were two possible causes of this incident. The first cause could be due to the fact that her husband was a canvasser for Mr. Wished Kasemthongsee. Her husband, as she described him, was the kind of person who said things straightforward. He may express his political opinion in some social gatherings, an opinion that may well displease the opposing political party. The other may be associated with his</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Thairath print edition</i> Wednesday 6 September 2000</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KILLED MP ELECTION CANVASSER GUNNED DOWN AT HEAD WHILE HAVING HIS MEAL</p> <p>Political tensions boil over as the termination of Parliament draws near. Gunmen shot dead a key election canvasser, who was killed in front of his wife and children.</p> <p>The pre-general elections to follow the upcoming dissolution of Parliament were marred by bloodshed. A petrol station owner serving as an election canvasser was shot dead with one bullet in the presence of his wife and two children. Three professional gunmen in a pickup truck approached the petrol station, and pretended to be grocery customers. While having his meal and unaware of the strangers, he was shot dead at the temple of his head by one of them. The police suspected that the trigger of the shooting case was due to the victim being a key canvasser for one of the well-known members of the House of Representatives in coalition government parties. Another possible cause leading to the incident was that the victim had worked under the reforestation project. The victim's wife believed that the case was related to political rivalry, as her husband was engrossed with political activities. Since her husband served as a major election canvasser, she also suspected that the murder entailed the political game aimed at suppressing the voter base of the party supported by her husband. Being employed by the Department of Forestry to work under the reforestation project that may hinder some benefits to be gained by certain authoritative figures could also set off this tragedy.</p> <p>The fatal shooting case of a petrol station owner and election canvasser of a national-level politician was revealed at 9.30 p.m. on 4th September. It was reported to Pol. Capt. Somsak Takoporn of Ratchaburi's Suan Phung police station that there was a brutal shooting at a petrol station called "Nongkham Borikam" at 270/3, Moo 9, Pawai Sub-district. After Pol. Capt. reported to his superior, Pol. Lt. Col. Chatchai Suasaming, a vice-superintendent; Pol. Lt. Col. Ittiphol Ritticharoen, a police inspector; Mr. Chatchai Thangtam, MD, Director of Suanphung Hospital; staff from the Prachanukul Foundation; and a group of police officers hurriedly visited the scene for further investigation.</p> <p>The spot where the incident happened is a small petrol station with two fuel dispensers. Behind the station is a grocery store that is also used as a living quarter. The body of the victim, Mr. Pitchavut Poonyatham, a 38-year-old petrol station owner, was found lying in a pool of blood. A gunshot wound was found at the right temple of his head with a bullet embedded in the skull. Mrs. Russamee Poonyatham, 39, her 7-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son were found to be embracing the dead body and moaning restlessly. The investigation team had found no evidence to support the case. The corpse was later sent to Suan Phung Hospital for further examination.</p> <p>Questioned by a police officer, Mrs. Russamee said that apart from owning a small petrol station her husband, Mr. Pitchavut, also worked as a temporary employee for the Department of Forestry. According to Mrs. Russamee, her husband's main responsibility was supervising other reforestation workers in the Suan Phung National Conserved Forest. He also served as a district-level canvasser for Mr. Wished Kasemthongsri, Ratchaburi's member of the House of Representatives, the</p>
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Figure 5.7a: Comparison of the Same News Story in the Thairath Online and Thairath Print Edition in English (translation)

Figure 5.7a presents the English translations of the same news contents from the *Thairath Online* and the *Thairath* print edition. The analysis found that the main difference in the news content online is that it has been edited by removing the lead and the first paragraph of the news body of the print edition. The second and third paragraph of the print edition have also been summarised and joined in the online version. The news headline and the rest of the online news contents are duplicated from the print. This is because the *Thairath* daily, which is one of the mass circulation newspapers in Thailand, has the news writing style of telling the story in depth and giving full details in its print newspaper and therefore the *Thairath Online* will not be able to place the whole news content from the print edition online.

The examples from these two news stories demonstrate that content from the *Thairath* print edition is duplicated in the *Thairath Online*, with some editing and summarising.

The Matichon

There were 540 news stories (or 49.5 percent) seen in both print and electronic editions of the *Matichon* newspaper (refer to Table 5.1), whereas 56 news stories (or 5.1 percent) were created to post only on the *Matichon Online* (refer to Table 5.1). Similarities have been found when investigating the news contents of both editions, indicating that news content from the print version is reproduced in the electronic version of the *Matichon*.

The investigation found similarities in the news content of online and print versions. The news content on the *Matichon Online* is transferred from the *Matichon* print without editing. The whole news content of the *Matichon Online* is duplicated from its print counterpart. The reason for this is that the *Matichon* daily, which is one of the quality newspapers in Thailand, has a short and concise news writing style in its

print newspaper. Therefore, the *Matchon Online* is able to publish the whole news content from the print edition online.

The following figures illustrate the similarity in the news content of the *Matchon Online* and *Matchon* print edition on 14th September 2000. (See sample of the full same news stories with English translations in Appendix L and M)

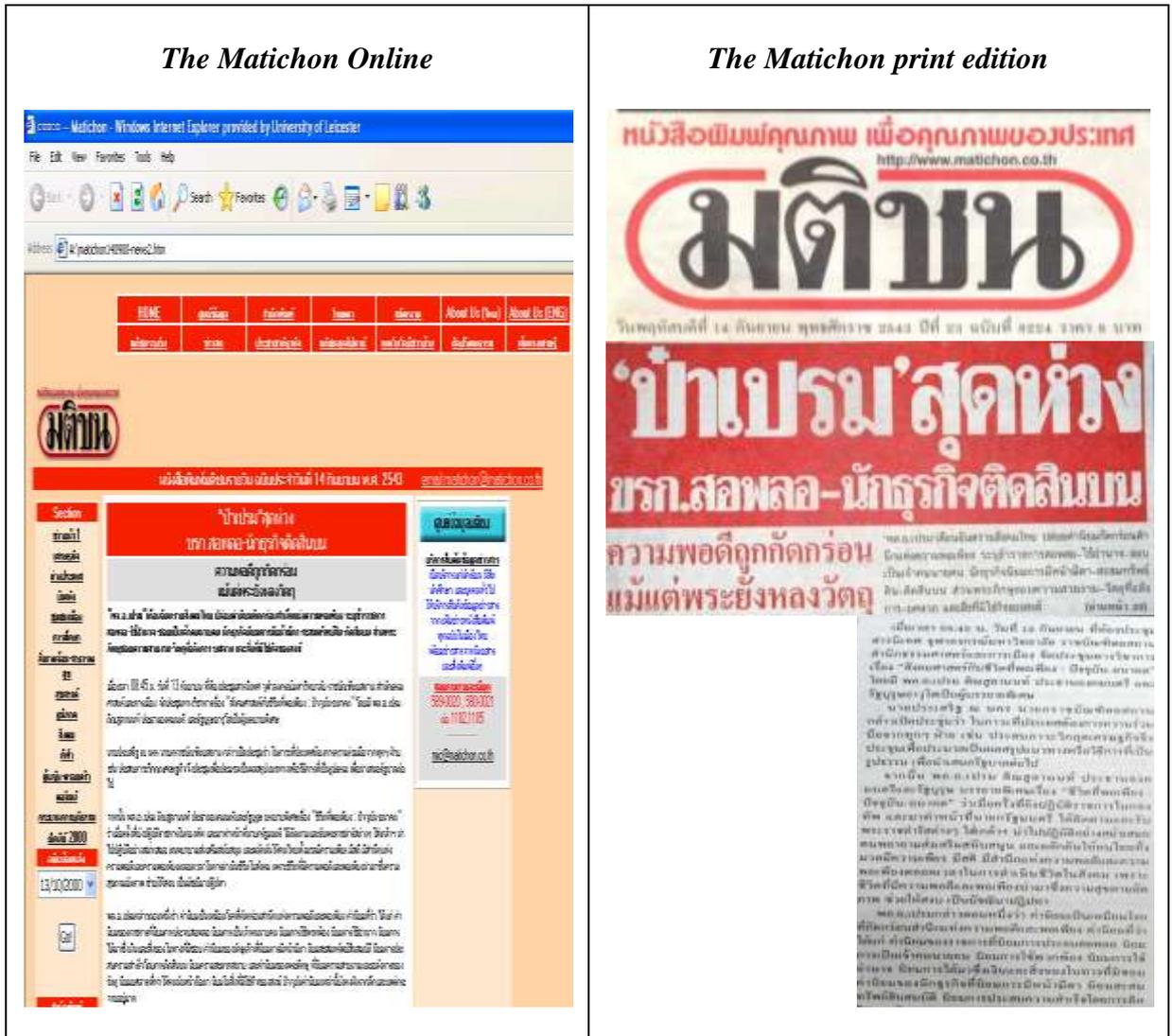


Figure 5.8: Comparison of the Same News Story in the *Matchon Online* and *Matchon Print Edition* in Thai

Figure 5.8 shows the news stories published on the homepage of the *Matchon Online* and on the front-page of the *Matchon* print edition on 14th September 2000. The news

story from the *Matichon* print edition has been reproduced in the *Matichon Online* edition. Similarities have therefore been found when investigating the news contents of the two editions. That is, there is reproduction of news content from the print edition on the electronic version of the *Matichon*.

<p><i>The Matichon Online edition</i></p> <p>14 September 2000</p> <p>PREM DEEPLY CONCERNS TWO-FACED GOV. OFFICIALS- BUSINESSMEN BRIBE</p> <p>Sufficiency is destroyed Even monks are fascinated with materials</p> <p>‘General Prem’ warned that Thai society is in danger as the awareness of sufficiency was being obliterated. He mentioned that government officials are sycophantic, authoritative and officious; businessmen are pleased with the reputation, collection of property, and bribery; and monks love beauty, extravagant objects, nobility, and other issues, which are not related to monks’ business.</p> <p>An academic meeting titled “Social Science and Self-Sufficiency: Present - Future” was arranged by the Royal Institute, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics at Saranitet Meeting Room, Chulalongkorn University on 13 September at 08.45 a.m. Its honourable keynote speaker was General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman.</p>	<p><i>The Matichon print edition</i></p> <p>14 September 2000</p> <p>PREM DEEPLY CONCERNS TWO-FACED GOV. OFFICIALS- BUSINESSMEN BRIBE</p> <p>Sufficiency is destroyed Even monks are fascinated with materials</p> <p>‘General Prem’ warned that Thai society is in danger as the awareness of sufficiency was being obliterated. He mentioned that government officials are sycophantic, authoritative and officious; businessmen are pleased with the reputation, collection of property, and bribery; and monks love beauty, extravagant objects, nobility, and other issues, which are not related to monks’ business.</p> <p>An academic meeting titled “Social Science and Self-Sufficiency: Present - Future” was arranged by the Royal Institute, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics at Saranitet Meeting Room, Chulalongkorn University on 13 September at 08.45 a.m. Its honourable keynote speaker was General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman.</p>
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Figure 5.8a: Comparison of the Same News Story in the Matichon Online and the Matichon Print Edition in English (translation)

Figure 5.8a shows the English translation of the news content on the homepage of the *Matichon Online* and the front-page of the *Matichon* print edition. The news story from the *Matichon* print edition has been reproduced on the *Matichon Online*.

The investigation found similarities in the news content in online and print versions. The news content on the *Matichon Online* is transferred from the *Matichon*

print without editing. The whole news contents of the *Matichon Online* are duplicated from its print counterpart (see full text of online and print news content with translation in Appendix Q and R). The reason for this is that the *Matichon* daily, which is one of the quality newspapers in Thailand, has a short and summarised news writing style in its print newspaper and therefore the *Matichon Online* will be able to publish the whole news content from the print edition online.

In conclusion, Figures 5.5 to 5.8 have demonstrated that all four electronic newspaper samples have republished the same news text contents that appear in their print editions without editing. Specifically, news content from the four Thai electronic versions is virtually republished from their print editions in between 15.1 per cent to 49.5 per cent of their news story totals (refer to table 5.1). Only the *Thairath Online* has reproduced news content with slight editing. It can be noticed that, among the four electronic version samples, the *Matichon Online* republished the most news content from its print edition.

The analysis of news content in four electronic newspaper samples supports the notion that the content of electronic newspapers simply reproduces that of their print products (Martin, 1998; Singer, 1998 and 2001, Boczkowski, 2000).

5.3.2 Additional Content

The four electronic newspaper samples not only published reproduced content from their print editions, but also offer new content that unique to the Internet medium. From Table 5.3, it can be seen that there were 528 news stories (23.1 per cent) that appeared only on the Web and not in print editions, which means that electronic newspapers have created a few additional news contents (for instance Breaking News) specifically for the Web. Among the four electronic newspapers studied here, the *Bangkok Post Internet*

seemed to provide the smallest proportion of stories for the Web by publishing just 2 (0.1 percent) stories. This was because, at the time this study was conducted, the *Bangkok Post Internet* did not offer ‘Breaking News’ on its website. However, all four Thai electronic newspaper samples have provided archives of current and previous stories. Some also offered special content packages online that were not available in print editions; an example was a column ‘Learn English with the *Bangkok Post*’ on the *Bangkok Post Internet*. In addition, some provided discussion boards on various topics, such as the *Nation*’s ‘Bulletin Board’.

However, although these interactive elements are potentially useful applications of the Internet, they are only standing features, and not special content that was created to tell a particular news story online.

Nevertheless, the four Thai electronic newspapers studied here also offer some additional or special content sections and services that are unique to the online medium. The following Figures 5.9 to 5.12 are samples of the additional contents and services provided on electronic newspaper samples, which do not appear in their print counterparts.

Bangkok Post
www.bangkokpost.com

WEATHER HIGH: 31 LOW: 24 (88/75F) [Weather link](#)

SET Index 298.31 -4.20 [SET link](#)

Baht/US\$ Bid/Ask: 41.40/41.46 (Reuters) [Exchange Rates](#)

Gold Bkk 5,300 -50

Fri, September 8, 2000

EDUCATION LOANS
Students prefer the good life
Money misspent on phones, cosmetics
Much of the 23 million baht loaned to students to further their education has been wasted.

THAI RAK THAI
Thaksin outlines strategies to notch up 7% growth
Pledge to axe costly but dubious projects
Thai Rak Thai says it will adopt policies to boost economic growth to 7% if it gets into government. Thaksin Shinawatra, party leader, said the Bank of Thailand's inflation-targeting system, adopted this year, was not the best approach. Policies had to be

would establish a national asset management company to buy bad loans from banks to revive loan growth and the economy.

OIL SUPPLIES
More price rises are in the pipeline
Two key nations 'recognise' impact
Global oil prices continued to hover around 10-year highs never around 10-year highs yesterday, with Brent crude trading as high as \$34.43 a barrel in London trade.

SCIB loans to be shifted
The Financial Institutions Development Fund has agreed to transfer 200 billion baht in bad loans from Siam City Bank to the bank's asset management company.

Entertainment & Lifestyle
What's on
Dining out
Recipe of the week
Movies
Music
Book Review
Beauty
Fitness
Nutrition

NEWS
Prominent Businesses in Thailand
Prominent Businesses
Travel Thailand & beyond

Special Publications
+ Current Issues in Thailand
+ Sign this up
+ Bangkok Post Year-end Economic Review
+ Post Database 10 years
+ Annual Report

Education
Learn English with the Bangkok Post

Society
+ We Care
+ Phudhona Laper Colony Foundation
+ Bangkok Post Newspaper Foundation

Past Issues
Calendar Page for recent issues
Bangkok Post Archives by Smart

Additional contents (Special Publications and Learn English) only on Bangkok Post Internet

Additional contents only on online version

Interactive elements used (Recent Issues, Archives) on Bangkok Post website

Figure 5.9: Sample of Additional Content and Interactive Elements Used on Bangkok Post Internet

This figure shows the additional content that was offered in the electronic version and not on the print edition of the *Bangkok Post* in 2000. The additional contents in the *Bangkok Post Internet* were in two forms of specific columns and web services that involved interactive elements. These included Special publications, Learn English online, Archives and Back.

The screenshot shows the homepage of The Nation Thailand website as of Monday, September 04, 2000. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like HEADLINES, NATIONAL, METRO, POLITICS, BUSINESS, IT & SCIENCE, SPORTS, SOCIAL, TRAVEL & TOURISM, OPINION TODAY, LETTERS, FEATURES, WHAT'S ON, ENTERTAINMENT, CARTOON, DAILY SNAPSHOTS, WEEKEND, BULLETIN BOARD, LIVE CHAT, and SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTS. The main content area includes a 'HIGHLIGHTS' section with a featured article 'Queen Suriyothai > History In The Making' accompanied by a photograph. To the right, there is a 'BREAKING NEWS' section with a placeholder for updates, an 'INSIDE TODAY' section with a link to 'Full coverage of Sydney 2000 OOO', and a 'SCOURGE of DRUGS' special report. Below the main content, there is a 'S.E.T. INDEX' table showing market data and a 'Stock' section. A search bar is located in the bottom left, and a 'BACK ISSUE' section is also visible. Two callout boxes provide additional context: one points to the 'BREAKING NEWS' section, and another points to the search and back issue features.

Additional content (Breaking News) on Electronic version only

Interactive elements used (Bulletin Board, Live Chat, Search, and Back Issue) on Nation online

Figure 5.10: Sample of Interactive Elements Used on Nation Online

Figure 5.10 presents several additional contents offered by the *Nation Online* in 2000. Most of them involved interactive services, for instance: Breaking news, Bulletin board, Live chat, Search engine and Back issues.

The Thairath Online



Figure 5.11: Sample of Additional Content and Interactive Elements Used on Thairath Online

Figure 5.11 shows the additional content provided in the *Thairath Online* in 2000. They also offered interactive services, including Breaking news, Back issues, and a Column about IT Digest, which is not available in the print.

The Maticchon



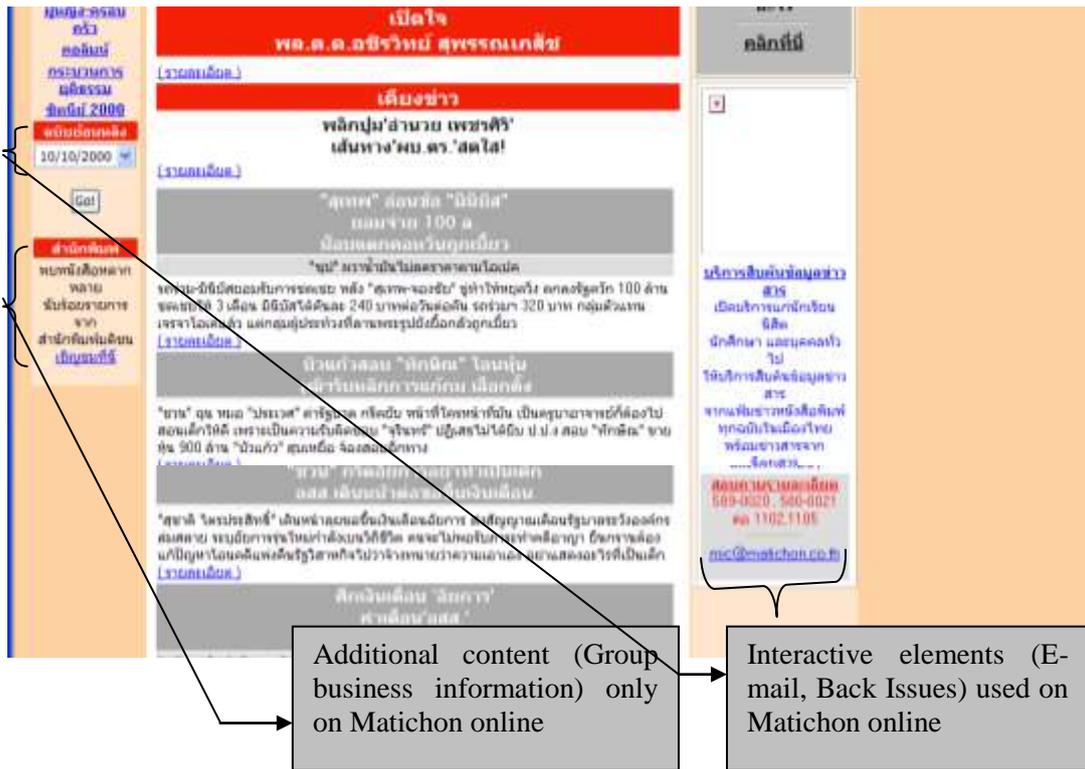


Figure 5.12: Sample of Additional Content and Interactive Elements Used on Matchon Online

Figure 5.12 illustrates the additional content in the *Matchon Online*. They also offered interactive services such as Email, Back issues and Information about its core business.

In sum, Figures 5.9 to 5.12 illustrate the additional contents provided in the four electronic newspaper samples that do not appear in their print editions. The additional contents mainly offered interactive services, which is an advantage of new communication technology.

It can be concluded here that the four newspaper samples' websites contained repurposed contents from their print editions, as well as new contents unique to the online medium. The additional contents in the electronic versions of four newspaper samples mainly offered interactive services, which is an advantage of new communication technology. This echoes that electronic newspapers in Thailand are endeavouring to utilise the capacity of the Internet for the benefit of the readers and to

make this new medium different to the traditional print medium. This may be a sign of a bright future for electronic newspapers in Thai society.

5.4 The Similarities and Differences between Print and Electronic Newspapers in Terms of Emphasising Lead News Stories and Topics

The following findings from content analysis investigate the research question: ‘Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics?’ This part of the analysis also examines the changes in the gatekeeping function in electronic newspapers by looking at the emphasis of news topic distribution and news value priority on the front-page of the print and the homepage of the electronic edition of the four newspaper samples studied here, as will be presented in Tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 on the following pages. News topics and news values were the two indicators that helped this study to measure the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in emphasising news stories. The figures will be displayed and analysed below.

NEWS TOPICS	Number of News Stories (% of Total)				
	Print	%	Electronic		Totals
*General News (2)	39	23.2%	37	22.0%	76
*Politics (1)	66	39.3%	69	41.0%	135
Crime/Accident	14	8.3%	14	6.3%	28
*Business/Economics (3)	14	8.3%	24	14.3%	38
Entertainment	3	1.8%	2	1.2%	5
International	10	6.0%	2	1.2%	12
Education	12	7.1%	10	6.0%	22
Sports	2	1.2%	12	1.2%	4
Health	5	3.0%	5	3.0%	10
Government News	3	1.8%	3	1.8%	6
TOTALS	168	100%	168	100%	336

Table 5.2: Number of News Stories for each News Topic in Print and Electronic Versions

Table 5.2 shows the quantities of ten news topics that were published in the print and electronic newspaper samples. The figures in the table present the top three news topics that were emphasised in the print and electronic versions of the four newspaper samples. It can be seen from Table 5.4 that 'Politics' was the most popular news topic published in both print and electronic editions of these four newspapers: 135 of 336 total stories (40.2 per cent) related to the topic of 'Politics'. 'General News' and 'Business/Economics' were the second and third most popular news topics across the four newspapers studied, with 37 stories (22 per cent) and 24 stories (14.3 per cent) respectively. Similarities can be observed between the print and electronic editions of the four newspaper samples in terms of emphasising the top three news topics (Politics, General News and Business/Economics).

These results indicate that the electronic versions studied in this thesis followed the same news policy in terms of emphasising news topics as their print editions. The findings demonstrate that the emphasis of lead news stories can vary between the print and electronic products produced by one newspaper organisation. In terms of matches in the lead stories, differences were found by newspaper language categories. For the two Thai-language newspapers, their print and electronic versions had more matches in the top three lead news topics than the two English-language newspapers by 77.1 per cent: 33.2 per cent. The results found here present similarities in the news policy operated in the print and electronic newspaper samples of this research.

The following section will discuss the emphasis of news values (newsworthiness). News values were used in this study as the other indicator in measuring the similarities and differences between print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of the emphasis of their news stories.

NEWS VALUES (Newsworthiness)	Number of News Value Characteristics		
	Print	Electronic	Totals
Human Interest	124	184	308
Conflict	4	4	8
Important	65	57	122
Impacts	19	23	42
Proximity	25	31	56
Knowledge	2	3	5
Sensational	13	14	27
TOTALS	252	316	568

Table 5.3: Comparison of the Characteristics of Three Top Lead News Stories by News Value(newsworthiness) in Print and Electronic Versions

Table 5.3 also indicates the similarities found in the news values of print and electronic editions. Both print and electronic newspapers in Thailand placed the highest priority on the news value of ‘Human Interest’, with 124 and 184 stories respectively. The second most significant news value was that of ‘Important’, with print and electronic editions featuring 65 and 57 ‘Important’ stories respectively. ‘Proximity’ was the third most important news value in print and electronic newspaper samples.

The results indicate the kinds of messages that are put through the news gates and then published in the print and electronic newspaper samples, which reflect the processes of their news selection and news policy. This process is similar to the gatekeeping concept which sees newsworthiness as a factor that determines whether and how messages come to the attention of communication workers. The more newsworthy a message is, the more likely it is to pass a news gate (Shoemaker, 1991: 21). Table 5.6 shows that the news contents of the print and electronic newspaper samples that have been put through the news gates were of similar newsworthiness. The most newsworthy factor that comes to the attention of the print and electronic newspaper workers of the four Thai newspaper samples is Human Interest. This confirmed the

findings from the newsroom observations which indicated that there are no differences between print and electronic newspaper samples in Thailand in terms of their news selection process and news policy.

In summary, the discoveries suggest that there are similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their emphasis of lead news stories. The two types of media tend to emphasise the same lead news topics and news values.

In addition, Figures 5.16 to 5.19 on the next pages are samples of news photos, news headlines and news topics presented on the homepages and the front-pages of the four newspaper samples, which will demonstrate the similarities and differences between the print and electronic editions in terms of the selection of lead news topics.

The Bangkok Post

The following figure shows samples of news photos and the top three lead news stories on the homepage of *Bangkok Post Internet* and the front-page of the *Bangkok Post* print edition. This finding again confirmed that electronic newspapers in Thailand published the same news contents and also followed the same news policy as their print editions.



Figure 5.13: Comparison of News Photos and Headlines in the Bangkok Post Internet and Print

Rank	Top Three Lead News Stories of the Bangkok Post	
	Electronic	Print
1	Tens of billions of baht in bribes	Tens of billions of baht in bribes
2	Shinawatra family values	Police given list of vendors' tormentors
3	Rulings reveal weaknesses	Rulings reveal weaknesses

Table 5.4: Comparison of Top Three Lead News Stories in the Bangkok Post Internet and Print

Figure 5.13 displays samples of news photos and news headlines on the homepage of the electronic version and on the front-page of the print edition of the *Bangkok Post*. While Table 5.4 presents samples of the headlines of the top three lead news stories of the *Bangkok Post Internet* and print editions. The findings present the similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news selection and

news emphasis. The homepage and front-page of the *Bangkok Post Internet* and the *Bangkok Post* offered the same news photos and top three lead news stories.

The Nation

The following are samples of news photos and the top three lead news stories on the homepage of *Nation Online* compared to the ones on the front-page of the *Nation*.



Figure 5.14: Comparison of News Photos and Headlines in the Nation Online and Print

Rank	Top Three Lead News Stories of the Nation	
	Electronic	Print
1	Democrats put hopes in outsider	Democrats put hopes in outsider
2	Oil prices soar beyond PTT control	Oil prices soar beyond PTT control
3	Seven on list to succeed Thai chief	Seven on list to succeed Thai chief

Table 5.5: Comparison of Top Three Lead News Stories in the Nation Online and Print

Figure 5.14 illustrates the similarities in the news photos and news headlines on the homepage of the *Nation Online* and on the front-page of the *Nation*. Table 5.5 also shows samples of the headlines of the top three lead news stories of the *Nation Online* and its print edition. The findings confirm the similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news selection and news emphasis. The homepage and front-page of the *Nation Online* and the *Nation* presented the same news photos and top three lead news stories.

The Thairath

The following are samples of the news photos and top three lead news stories in the *Thairath* and *Thairath Online*.



Figure 5.15: Comparison of News Photos and Headlines in the Thairath Online and Print

Rank	Top Three Lead News Stories of the <i>Thairath</i>	
	Electronic	Print
1 Translation	ฆ่าหัวคะแนนสส. จ่อขมับหัวที่มคชาวมข้าว Killed MP Election Canvasser Gunned at Head While Having His Meal	ฆ่าหัวคะแนนสส. จ่อขมับหัวที่มคชาวมข้าว Killed MP Election Canvasser Gunned at Head While Having His Meal
2 Translation	ด่ายับใน ครม. ตร.โจรชนวันจลาจล Big Scold in the Cabinet on Thief Police officers charged the Riot	ด่ายับใน ครม. ตร.โจรชนวันจลาจล Big Scold in the Cabinet on Thief Police officers charged the Riot
3 Translation	คนที่วีลุกฮือ ด้านกฤษฎีกา TV Workers Protesting New Decree	คนที่วีลุกฮือ ด้านกฤษฎีกา TV Workers Protesting New Decree

Table 5.6: Comparison of Top Three Lead News Stories in the *Thairath* Online and Print

Figure 5.15 displays samples of news photos and news headlines on the homepage of the electronic version and on the front-page of the print edition of the *Thairath*. Table 5.6 contains samples of the headlines of the top three lead news stories of the *Thairath Online* and *Thairath* printed edition with the English translations. The findings demonstrate the similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news selection and news emphasis. The homepage and front-page of the *Thairath Online* and the *Thairath* provided the same news photos and top three lead news stories.

The Matichon

The following are samples of the top three lead news stories in the *Matichon* print edition and the *Matichon Online*.

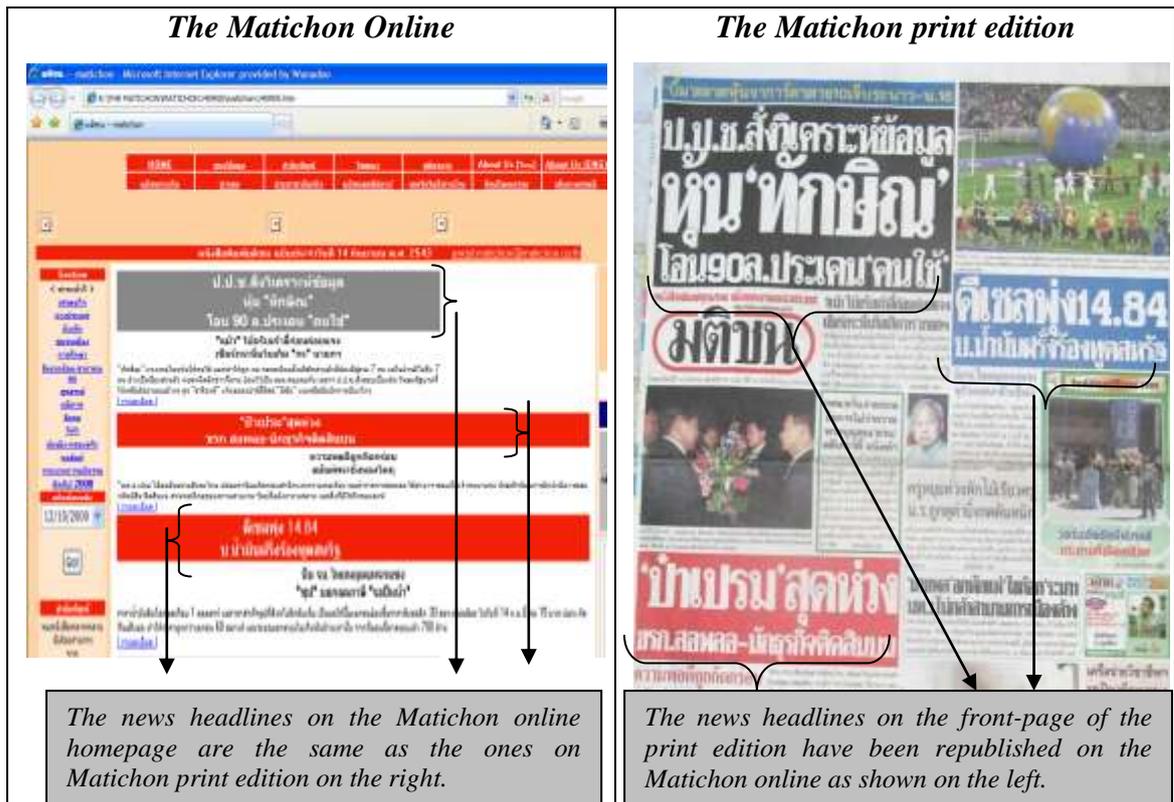


Figure 5.16: Comparison of News Photos and Headlines in the Matichon Online and Print

Rank	Top Three Lead News Stories of the Matichon	
	Electronic	Print
1	<p>ป.ป.ช.สั่งวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลหุ้นทักษิณโอน 90 ล้านประเด็น ‘คนใช้’</p> <p>ONAC analyses data of Thaksin’s share, transferred 90m. to his maid</p>	<p>ป.ป.ช.สั่งวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลหุ้นทักษิณโอน 90 ล้าน ประเด็น ‘คนใช้’</p> <p>ONAC analyses data of Thaksin’s share, transferred 90m. to his maid</p>
2	<p>‘ป้าเปรม’ สุดห่วง ขรก.สอพลอ-นักธุรกิจติดสินบน</p> <p>Pream deeply concern, two-faced gov officers – businessmen bribe</p>	<p>‘ป้าเปรม’ สุดห่วง ขรก.สอพลอ-นักธุรกิจติดสินบน</p> <p>Pream deeply concern, two-faced gov officers – businessmen bribe</p>
3	<p>ดีเซลพุ่ง 14.84 บ.น้ำมันฝรั่งร้องทูตสหรัฐ</p> <p>Diesel prices go up 14.84b. Foreign oil firms urge US Diplomatic</p>	<p>ดีเซลพุ่ง 14.84 บ.น้ำมันฝรั่งร้องทูตสหรัฐ</p> <p>Diesel prices go up 14.84b. Foreign oil firms urge US Diplomatic</p>

Table 5.7: Comparison of Top Three Lead News Stories the Matichon Online and Print

Figure 5.16 displays samples of the reproductions of news photos and news headlines on the homepage of the *Matichon Online* from those on the front-page of the *Matichon* printed edition. Table 5.7 contains samples of the headlines of the top three lead news

stories published on the *Matichon Online* and the *Matichon* with the English translations. The findings confirm the similarities between the *Matichon* and its electronic version in terms of their news selection and news emphasis. The homepage and front-page of the *Matichon Online* and the *Matichon* offered the same news photos and top three lead news stories.

Figures 5.13 to 5.16 including Tables 5.4 to 5.7 indicate that electronic newspaper samples offer the same news photos, news headlines and news lead stories as the ones presented on the front-pages of their print editions. This suggests that electronic newspaper samples emphasise the same news topics as their print counterparts. In addition, Tables 5.4 to 5.7 are samples of lead news stories offered on the homepages and front-pages of the four newspaper samples, which demonstrate the similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples studied here in terms of the selection process of their lead news topics priority.

It can be concluded that electronic newspapers follow the same news policies and news selection processes as their print counterparts. The findings also reflect the fact that electronic newspapers are giving up the major part of news selection and news emphasis in their production processes.

5.5 The Use of Interactive Elements in Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The exploration of the research question, ‘To what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections?’ will be discussed below.

Interactive Elements	Bangkok Post (English)	Nation (English)	Thairath (Thai)	Maticchon (Thai)	TOTAL
General Email	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Editorial Staff Email	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Email News to friends	-	yes	yes	-	2
Comment on News	-	yes	yes	-	2
Polls	-	yes	-	yes	2
Forums	yes	yes	-	yes	3
E-Letter to Editor	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
News Related Stories	yes	yes	yes	-	3
Archives	yes	-	-	-	1
Back Issues	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Information Centre	-	-	yes	yes	2
Links	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Databases	yes	-	-	-	1
Subscription	yes	-	-	-	1
E-Newsletter	-	-	-	-	0
Breaking News	-	yes	yes	-	2
Bulletin Board	-	yes	-	-	1
Live Chat	-	yes	-	-	1
Flashing Images	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Audio	-	yes	-	-	1
Video	-	yes	-	-	1
Search Engine	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
Other Web Services	yes	yes	yes	yes	4
TOTALS	13	16	13	11	

Table 5.8: The Quantity and Type of Interactive Elements on the Homepages of Electronic Versions

Table 5.11 displays the provision of interactive elements on the homepages of the four electronic newspaper samples studied in this thesis. ‘Yes’ was used to indicate the availability of each interactive element on each electronic newspaper sample. The components of Interactivity used in this thesis are based on the ones suggested by Li

(1998). This thesis, therefore, analysed twenty-three interactive elements to explore the interactive capabilities of the four Thai electronic newspaper samples. The content analysis study here found that the *Nation Online* offered the most interactive elements (16), while the *Bangkok Post Internet* and the *Thairath Online* provided the same number of interactive elements (13), and the *Matichon Online* provided the least, with 11 interactive elements. The study also found that the interactive elements offered by all four of the electronic newspapers studied are General Email, Editorial Staff Email, E-letter to Editor, Back Issues, Links, Flashing Images and Search Engine. Forums, News-related stories, Email to Friends, Comment to News, Polls, Information Centre and Breaking News are also offered by one or more of the electronic newspaper samples of this thesis. Certain interactive elements are uniquely used by individual electronic newspapers. These are archives (*Bangkok Post*), databases (*Bangkok Post*), Subscriptions (*Bangkok Post*), Live Chat (*Nation*), Audio (*Nation*) and Video (*Nation*). It can be noticed here that E-newsletters was the only interactive element that was not provided by any of the four electronic newspaper samples at the time of the study.

Finally, the content analysis of the interactive elements utilised by the four electronic newspaper samples suggest that electronic newspapers in Thailand (at the time of the study) have not yet utilised the potential of the Internet as fully as the technology allows. Only the *Nation Online* provides audio (*Nation Radio*) and video (*Nation TV*) on its website. This exploration supports McAdams' (1998) notion that 'although the Internet technology is rapidly growing, newspapers on the Internet still take the approach from their roots in traditional print'.

5.6 Chapter Summary: The Relationship between Print and Electronic Newspapers in Thailand in Terms of Their News Content

The findings from content analysis have indicated the characteristics of news messages and the proportions of home and global news content of four electronic newspapers in Thailand. This also included the way they present and generate the news content on their webpages. The comparison analysis of the news contents of print and electronic newspapers each day highlights the similarities and differences between them. The investigations of content analysis indicate that most of the contents of the electronic versions are duplicated from their print editions and confirm the notion that online versions are additional or supported media for their print counterparts. It is then confirmed by editors and webmasters of the four newspaper samples that most contents on their electronic versions are simply republished from the print editions without any process of selection and editing. Electronic versions follow the same news policy as the print editions. This initially suggests that although electronic newspapers still operate news selection it is done in a different way and not as frequently as in traditional newspapers.

The content analysis investigations have presented the quantity and particular topics of news content of four electronic newspapers in Thailand, indicating the way in which news content is produced and selected. The research also indicates the differences in amount, type and location of messages (home and international news, the news lead stories and topics, including news priority and newsworthiness) that were put through the news gates of the print and electronic newspaper samples. The findings from content analysis clearly show that electronic newspapers offer more national (local) news than their print counterparts. The proportions of national news and international news offered by print and electronic newspaper samples were 8.1:5.9 and

5.3:0.7 respectively. The findings demonstrate that electronic newspapers focus on distributing home news more than international news. This finding answers the research of whether electronic newspapers in Thailand are more local in focus than their print counterparts. It can also be confirmed that electronic newspapers play the role of both a global and a local (home) medium because their news information is disseminated by a global channel but is often local in nature.

In the case of Thailand, it may be discussed specifically that the four electronic versions studied in this thesis focus on offering more news and information about Thailand in order to serve Thai people who live abroad (including the global communities who are interested in Thailand). While traditional print newspapers bring global news to the readers in the country, their online versions try to present more home news stories about what is happening in the country. This supports the analysis of Singer (2001) who found that traditional print newspapers have brought selected information about the world to local readers' doorsteps. The findings of this thesis also answer the research question of whether the online products of the four Thai newspaper samples have a stronger local orientation than their print counterparts. It suggests that online newspapers may be moving toward a reinterpretation of their role in connecting readers to the world beyond their horizons (Singer, 2001).

The findings also indicate the use of interactivity in electronic versions, which have the ability as new media to offer two-way communication. At this point, it can be concluded that electronic newspapers in Thailand, at the time of the study in 2000, were not utilising the capacity of interactivity that was possible at the time.

Significantly, content analysis outcomes have supported the findings from participant observations and interviews that there are similarities and differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their production processes and

news selection. The evidence from content analysis has shown the different topics and priority of news content across print and electronic newspaper samples. Content analysis results also help to address whether and how news selection operates in electronic newspapers. Consequently, it is suggested that the news selection or gatekeeping process is still available online, but in a different way and at a different level to the gatekeeping process operated by traditional print newspapers.

The findings from content analysis also confirmed the findings from participant observations that electronic newspaper samples followed the same news policy, news selection process and news emphasis as their print counterparts. This conclusion has led to the assumption that electronic newspapers are giving up the major portion of news selection or gatekeeping role (Shoemaker, 1991). Interestingly, the analysis is evidence for the Thai electronic newspaper industry that the way that the news selection or gatekeeping process appears to operate in electronic newspapers is simply to open the news gate for the messages from the print edition to go through and be published on the Internet.

Finally, before reaching the research conclusion, the additional findings from detailed interviews are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ROLES AND TRENDS OF PRINT AND ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN THAILAND IN 2000

This chapter presents and analyses the additional findings from the interviews with Thai media professionals including the editors and webmasters of the newspaper samples. The aim of conducting interviews in this study was to explore the purposes and impacts of the introduction of electronic newspapers in Thai society, as well as the changes in the developing roles and trends of traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers. The interview results indicate that the main objective of launching an electronic newspaper in Thailand is to promote and support its print counterpart or company business. The other reasons are to catch up with new communication technology (the Internet network) and to expand its distribution channel in order to serve Thai readers living abroad, Thai readers who prefer an online version to the printed one and global readers who are interested in news about Thailand. Although the interview findings may not relate to the gatekeeping framework directly, the perspectives on the roles and future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand will help to improve understanding of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand and of how important the news selection process is for Thai society.

The following sections will present and discuss the aforementioned findings in five topics: the factors of changing from print newspapers to electronic newspapers in Thailand; the problems of changing from print newspapers to electronic newspapers; the rationale of launching electronic versions of the four newspaper samples; the impacts of electronic newspapers; and the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

6.1 The Factors Involved in Changing from Print to Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The interview participants mentioned several factors that are important in changing from print to electronic newspapers in Thailand. These include the global flow of technologies, competition in media business, and the economics issue, as will be explored in the following sections.

6.1.1 Technologies Flow

The global technologies flow is the biggest and most significant influence on the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand. Sukanya (media professional, 1999) suggests that:

“The introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand is not because of social need but the impact of the technologies flow from Western countries. Thai society is different from Western society. Eastern society is a social community where people love to go out seeing friends and having social activities. In contrast, Western people love privacy and prefer to stay at home. So, they want something that will be able to link them with the outside world. Communication technologies have occurred from this need in Western countries.”

This notion reflects the culture of technological consumption in developing societies; in other words, Thai society in general, and particularly Thai mass media, consumes technologies from western countries without adapting them to suit their own needs.

This is confirmed by Sommai (*Matichon* editor, 2000) who says that Thai printed newspapers launch their online versions in order to make themselves up-to-date in the new information society.

6.1.2 The Competition in Media Business

The other important factor in changing to electronic newspapers in Thailand is the competition in media business. According to Sommai (*Matichon* editor, 2000), the print newspaper industry not only competes against electronic media such as radio and television, but also has to compete with other print media, for instance magazines. The Internet system is an alternative channel for a print newspaper to distribute its message to its readers in a faster and fresher way.

6.1.3 Economics Issue

The economics issue is another main factor for print newspapers to invest in the Internet. Yingyord (*Nation* webmaster, 1999) mentions that:

“Although the first electronic newspapers in Thailand were established in 1995, most of Thailand’s electronic newspapers were launched in 2000. This is because the year 1995 was the golden year of economic growth in Thailand. However, since then, Thailand has faced a slowdown in the economy, until now (2000). This economic crisis stopped the other print newspapers from expanding online.”

This reflects the fact that the global and local economic situation is an important factor in newspaper businesses choosing to go online. However, the economics issue only slows down the change from print to online newspapers, rather than stopping it altogether. This can be seen from the fact that six Thai electronic newspapers were launched as soon as the economy began to recover in 2000 (refer to Table 2.2: The List of National Electronic Newspapers in Thailand in 2000). This confirmed that technologies flow is the most important factor in the introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

6.2 The Problems of Changing from Print to Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

According to Deborah (1999), the main obstacles in changing to electronic newspapers in Thailand were the low quality of the country's infrastructure and the low power of technological purchasing.

“This means both computer equipment and Internet technology have a high price in Thailand.” (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999)

Karnjana (Media professional, 1999) pointed out that another problem printed newspapers encountered as they tried to introduce electronic editions in Thailand was computer and technological literacy.

“The other concern is Thai people's literacy in using technology. Although there are an increasing number of computer owners in the country, they are still using computers

for simple functions such as typing. Furthermore, most of the Internet users are using the Internet for entertainment or personal purposes more than viewing online newspapers or any information website” (Karnjana, Media professional, 1999).

Karnjana (Media professional, 1999) adds that the greatest use of the Internet in Thailand is for electronic mail, to communicate with other academics in both Thailand and foreign countries. Another factor is that the content of electronic newspapers in Thailand does not provide more news content than its print edition; therefore, Thai people will read an online newspaper just in case they definitely cannot get a print newspaper.

“Thai society has not entered into the information society yet. The evidence is that most Thai people do not desperately need information for their daily life. The group of people who will need to access an online newspaper are the ones who run a business or deal with information such as shareholders or journalists. I believe that Thai people in other situations hardly read newspapers on the net.” (Karnjana, Media professional, 1999)

Moreover, the Internet in Thailand has been used by specific groups of people. Most Thai Internet users are the middle classes and well-educated people. The increase in the number of Internet users in Thai society obviously affects the growth of electronic newspapers.

Chavarong (*Thairath* webmaster, 1999) comments on the target audience of electronic newspapers that:

“The majority of readers of electronic newspapers are Thai people who live outside Thailand rather than those who live in Thailand. This is because of the ease of accessibility for Thais who live abroad as these newspapers may not be found in printed versions but are easy to access as electronic newspapers.”

The differences between print and electronic newspapers in terms of their target readership explains the way these two mediums select news content to publish. Print newspapers offer more global or international news than their electronic versions in order to bring the world to Thai readers, whereas electronic newspapers focus on home/Thai news more than international news in order to provide information about Thailand for Thai people living abroad and global communities who have an interest in Thailand and Thai news stories.

The quality of media online is of great concern, as mentioned by Malee (Media professional, 2000):

“Since electronic newspapers in Thailand have been established to support their print editions, Thai readers think that electronic newspapers in Thailand are not really online newspapers yet. Electronic newspapers are just the newspaper websites to promote their print edition’s title”.

The emergence of electronic newspapers also involves the issue of economics. Picard (1989) provides some standard principles of media economics, and three concepts seem germane to the discussion of electronic newspapers. Firstly, most of the newspapers remain free and should be examined in the context of non-public radio and television

rather than making a comparison with traditional newspapers, where subscription receipts can account for 30 per cent of gross income. Secondly, demand for advertiser access to audiences varies, depending on the medium. Thirdly, the amount of money spent on all media remains relatively constant at 3 per cent of total consumer spending.

6.3 The Rationale and Factors of Launching Electronic Versions of Four Newspaper Samples

The study finds a number of differences in the purposes behind launching electronic versions of the English-language and Thai-language newspaper samples in Thailand. The two English-language newspapers, *Bangkok Post* and *Nation*, began their Internet editions because of the influence of the modern vision of their executives. On the other hand, the Thai-language newspapers, *Thairath* and *Matichon*, were ideas proposed by the newspapers' print editorial staff.

The findings will initially be presented and discussed with reference to each newspaper respectively: the *Bangkok Post*, the *Nation*, the *Thairath*, and the *Matichon*. The analytical comparisons and conclusion will follow.

6.3.1 The *Bangkok Post*: The Rationale and Factors of Launching an Electronic Version

The *Bangkok Post* newspaper decided on the policy of launching an Internet version to fulfil its public services, not for business reasons. As Pichai (*Bangkok Post* Editor, 1999) mentioned:

“*Bangkok Post Internet* edition was launched as a result of the redesigning strategy of the *Bangkok Post Publishing Company*

in 1996. In other words, the Internet edition has been created by the significant technical improvements of the newspaper production process.”

Pichai (*Bangkok Post* editor, 1999) adds that the redesigning has assisted electronic publishing in having more sufficient production, more significant contents, and more attractive news photos and graphics on its homepage. Pichai also explained the purposes of launching online:

“The aims of launching an Internet edition of the *Bangkok Post* are to build the image of modernisation and globalisation of the media including preparation for the electronic business, which in the near future will provide benefit to the company by selling advertisement spaces. Moreover, this new technology provides a great opportunity to traditional newspapers to approach international readers.”

In summary, the *Bangkok Post* aims to develop its Internet version to be a valuable new-media product and to gain the image of a high-technology organisation. They were also expecting the online section to be self-sustaining in the future.

6.3.2 The *Nation*: The Rationale and Factors of Launching an Electronic Version

Yingyord (*Nation* webmaster, 1999) confirms that the policy of launching an online version of the *Nation* was to support the print edition:

“The *Nation Media Group* has stated clearly about the policy of launching an online version to support and promote the print

edition by serving international readers who cannot receive the print edition. As an English-language newspaper, the *Nation* not only serves Thai people living overseas but also attracts all nations around the world that use the English language. Therefore, the key advantage of launching an Internet version is approaching international readers.”

He adds that the objective of the *Nation Online* is to be the centre of readers’ opinions and suggestions. The *Nation* online also has the plan of developing its news digital databases.

6.3.3 The *Thairath*: The Rationale and Factors of Launching an Electronic Version

Chavarong (*Thairath* webmaster, 1999) indicates that the main purpose of launching *Thairath Online* was to expand its distribution channel to global readers:

“The *Thairath* Daily newspaper has the main policy of launching an Internet edition to serve the public with priority to Thai people living abroad, not to support its print business. It does not need to have the Internet version to promote or support its print business, as its circulation range is at the top of Thai mass newspapers. Besides, the main aim of the *Thairath Online* is to provide information services online and to widen the accessibility to information for the Internet users.”
(Chavarong, *Thairath* webmaster, 1999)

6.3.4 The *Matichon*: The Purposes and Factors of Launching an Electronic Version

Sumitra (*Matichon* Information Center director, 2000) addresses five main reasons for publishing *Matichon Online*:

“Firstly, to supply the increasing demand in reading newspapers on the Internet, as Internet use grows in Thailand; secondly, to prepare for the coming of new technology to Thai society; thirdly, to support the main business of the company by promoting its publishing business and the information centre services, including expanding the marketing channel of its company business and E-commerce; fourthly, to expand the online services business such as the E-library, and E-news clippings from registration and membership; and, finally, to support the in-house management system by the Intranet and Email network, which has created the more effective, faster and cheaper communication system in the news production process.”

In addition, Chawakit (*Matichon* webmaster, 2000) mentions that *Matichon Online* has the objective of gathering the information of the company business, and publicising the organisation’s services and activities. The website is developing to reach e-commercial potential.

At this point, it can be confirmed that the four newspaper samples all had the following two objectives when launching their electronic versions: to support their print edition and to extend their readership to global communities.

6.3.5 Summary of the Rationale and Factors of Launching Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The findings show that the main aim of launching electronic newspapers in Thailand is to promote their print counterparts. The other objective is to use new communication technology (the Internet network) to expand its news distribution channel to worldwide readers. One of the objectives for Thai-language online newspapers is to take advantage of this new technology to better serve Thai readers who live outside the country.

The findings also suggest that the other purposes of changing from print to electronic newspapers in Thailand are: being the centre of information and opinion exchange for the Internet community; providing an online search engine; and publicising and supporting its core print business and preparing for E-commerce. These outcomes are similar to those of Pansitha who suggests the same purposes of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

6.4 The Impacts of Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The introduction of electronic newspapers in Thailand is a reflection of the country transforming into an information society. This new media has an impact on society in general but specifically affects the print newspaper businesses, including professional journalists. This will be discussed in the following sections.

6.4.1 The Impacts on Print Newspapers

Deborah (1999) comments that there is no clear indication of the impact of electronic newspapers on print journalism as yet. However, print newspapers should contain the primary product of the newspaper, and the Internet version should have the print news.

“The Internet is more useful for selling classified advertisements because it can reach a much wider audience than print. So the classified ads in the newspaper might be disadvantaged. However, the online version of the print newspaper should not have its own editorial staff, because it would not be necessary to have its own reporters while there are print reporters to do that work. In some western countries, they have tried to separate online editorial from print, in order to save its print edition. Here in Thailand, print newspapers should not be concerned about this issue just yet as online newspapers are not likely to become as popular in Thai society. Ninety nine per cent of Thai people buy print newspapers while only seven per cent of Thai Internet users (in Thailand) read newspapers on the web.”

Although electronic newspapers in Thailand are a growing trend, they cannot replace print newspapers for several reasons. As Chavarong (*Thairath* webmaster, 1999) suggests:

“The nature and behaviour of this generation’s readers is to read from print format. The emotion and environment of

reading a print newspaper cannot be replaced by reading on a computer monitor. Moreover, the main objective of launching an electronic newspaper in Thailand is to support and promote its business, not to replace the print edition.”

This information supports the view that traditional newspapers will not be replaced by their electronic counterparts, posited by several researchers including Boulter, 1995 (quoted in Gunter, 2003: 42); Kwan, 1996 (quoted in Gunter, 2003: 42); and Orr, 1997 (quoted in Gunter, 2003: 42).

Finally, the print newspaper will not be disappearing in the near future because print will never stop competing with the electronic version. For example, the *Bangkok Post* newspaper is always looking for ways to increase its circulation by developing special sections devoted to particular social services like education services for students and teachers (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999).

6.4.2 The Impacts on Society and Readers

The findings from interviews suggest that there is no indication of the impact of electronic newspapers on reader behaviour, Thai society or the political and economic situation in Thailand. However, Kanjana (Media professional, 1999) mentions that:

“Electronic newspapers make some impacts on public political opinion via politics polls and chat boards provided by electronic newspapers on political and social issues. The popular topics on chat boards are Government, politics and the economic situation.”

Moreover, because most Thai Internet users are well educated, their opinions influence the politics in the country. Kanjana (Media professional, 1999) also suggests that electronic newspapers in Thailand will have more effect on Thai people in the new generation of the new technology era.

Importantly, Deborah (*Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999) indicates the positive impact of electronic newspapers on Thai society:

“The greatest positive impact would be on the education of Thai students. If Thailand can provide computers and access to the Internet at an affordable rate, with access for all people, students would be able to access news and information from any country in the world. This may broaden their minds and expand their way of thinking. The Internet will become the fastest and easiest source of useful and interesting information about the world. Thai students would also be able to give feedback to the webmaster via email, with access to an interactive tool.” (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999)

There is also the advantage of the increased choice of Thai newspapers available to readers, particularly Thai people who live in foreign countries. In addition, the coming of new technology has pushed professional journalists to improve their skills in using this technology, as will be indicated in the next section.

6.4.3 The Impacts on Professional Journalists

Yingyord (the *Nation* webmaster, 1999) suggests the impacts of electronic newspapers on professionals that, in general, journalists should be at an advantage as they can use

the Internet network as a tool for searching information to write news and articles. Moreover, the Internet is the easiest and fastest method of communication between local journalists and the global media professionals. The media organisations in Thailand should consider training their staff in new technology skills. Deborah (1999) also points out the impacts of electronic newspapers on their print counterparts that:

“The launch of the Internet version did nothing to print circulation, because we have a different target reader group. Most of the print readers are businessmen in Thailand who have their subscriptions paid for by the company. The Internet edition serves the reader outside the country because of the high cost of readership in a foreign country. Furthermore, print and electronic newspapers differ in their media nature. The traditional paper has limited space, but not the Internet.”
(Deborah, *Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999)

These perspectives echo the positive rather than the negative impacts of Thailand's electronic newspapers on the journalists and traditional newspaper businesses in Thailand. The webmasters see their electronic versions as a supplement channel to better serve a wider group of readers.

6.5 The Roles of Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

Deborah (*Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999) indicates that the role of electronic newspapers in Thailand is slightly different from that of the traditional ones. The Internet network is considered as a springboard that users can surf anywhere and at any

time. The online newspaper is not limited by time and space. Whilst reading one electronic newspaper, you can have access to several websites linked with the electronic newspapers' website information resources. Users can find everything they need, not just the news. Deborah also suggests that electronic newspapers' content should contain more information about travelling, the stock exchange and exchange rates, the weather, etc. Moreover, Yingyord (the *Nation* webmaster, 1999) mentions the positive point that news on the Internet can be updated throughout the day at any time, unlike the traditional newspaper which cannot be changed once it has been printed.

“The important role of the electronic newspaper that differs from the print version is the interactive capacity, which leads to two-way communication. By this new newspaper, users can give immediate feedback to the webmaster or print editor by email.” (Deborah, *Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999)

Two groups of interview participants also suggest the roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand, as follows: 1) to provide not only the news but also useful and critical information; 2) to take advantage of the new communication technology in distributing faster and more effective information to readers; 3) to create two-way communication that allows readers to send their immediate feedback to the newspaper via an interactive system; and 4) to use the Internet network to increase the access to information for both urban and rural readers. However, this is dependent on improving the infrastructure of the communication system in Thailand (Sumitra, *Matichon* Information Center Director, 1999).

6.6 The Trends in Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

Finally, the findings from in-depth interviews suggest the future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

Deborah (*Bangkok Post* webmaster, 1999) predicts that the trends of electronic newspapers will be as follows:

“Online might replace print, if the print newspaper does not offer different contents to those of its Internet version. This, however, will not happen that soon in Thailand as Internet accessibility is not yet widespread in this country. People still need print newspapers, as they have not got access to the net. Moreover, it is easier to read a paper than a screen, especially when downloading information on screen takes a long time.”

The print newspapers in Thailand publish their Internet version for the main purpose of promoting their positive image. Internet technology has challenged the future of traditional media. The question of what will happen to print newspapers if online newspapers succeed has woken up the newspaper industry. Therefore, they adopt this new communication technology to increase their chances of survival in the competitive media industry. Another issue is that of competition in the newspaper market (Narong, media professional, 1999). However, Sommai (*Matichon* editor, 1999) points out that the rapidly increasing use of the Internet in Thailand during the past two years indicates that the trends of electronic newspapers will be promising. Additionally, reductions in the price of computers will help the positive future of electronic newspapers in Thailand, as mentioned by Malee (media professional, 1999):

“The falling price of computers and Internet access in Thailand will be another trend that helps the progression of electronic newspapers in Thailand.”

At this stage, the trends in electronic newspaper publishing can be summarised. This study shows that there are different perspectives on the future trends of electronic newspapers among the two groups of interview participants. Some of them see a bright future, whilst others see no promise in the future of electronic newspapers in Thailand. This is because the future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand depend on several factors: the development of the Internet network, computer facilities, computer literacy and the development of the infrastructure of the country.

6.7 Chapter Summary: The Roles and Future Trends of Electronic Newspapers in Thailand

The interview findings do not intend to explore information related to the gatekeeping framework in this study. However, the perspectives on the roles and future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand support the findings from participant observations and newspaper content analysis. They help to improve understanding of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand and of how important the news selection process is for Thai society. The outcomes of interviews indicate that the key objective of launching an electronic newspaper in Thailand is to promote and support its print counterpart and company business. The other reasons are: to catch up with new communication technology (the Internet network); and to expand distribution channels in order to serve Thai readers living overseas, including global readers with an interest in Thailand and Thai news stories. Similar to the finding by Pansitha (2002), the five

main purposes of electronic newspapers in Thailand are: to expand the information distribution channel of the prints; to be the centre and exchange centre of information and comments with readers; to be the centre of information searching; to publicise and support its print business; and to prepare for electronic-commerce.

Interestingly, there are differences between the English-language and Thai-language newspapers in terms of the rationale behind launching an electronic newspaper in Thailand. The two English-language online newspapers began with the modern vision of their executives. On the other hand, both Thai-language online versions were suggested by editorial staff working on the print edition. As the information mentioned above suggests, the findings on the objectives of launching an online version have led to the suggestion that electronic newspapers in Thailand will not replace traditional ones, at least in the foreseeable future. This supports the arguments of several researchers who have suggested that traditional newspapers would not be replaced by their electronic counterparts. For instance, Boulter (1995, in Gunter, 2003) and Kwan (1996, in Gunter, 2003) argue that traditional, hard-copy publications will not be replaced by electronic newspapers at least in the foreseeable future. Also Orr (1997, in Gunter, 2003) confirms that many publishers treat their electronic newspapers as additional to, rather than replacements of, their print versions.

Two important factors of transforming traditional print newspapers into electronic newspapers in Thailand are the influence of global technologies flow and the new and fast-growing competition in media business. The print newspaper industry not only competes with electronic media such as radio and television but also has to compete with other print media. The Internet system is an alternative channel for print newspapers to distribute their message to readers faster and more effectively. The economic crisis in Thailand is another factor to consider. The economic crisis in

Thailand from 1997 to 1999 had prevented some Thai print newspapers from expanding online. However, most electronic newspapers in Thailand were launched in 2000, which was a golden year for global technologies, after Thailand began to recover from the downturn in the economy.

The study also finds that electronic newspapers in Thailand have not had a negative impact on print editions for several reasons. Firstly, the Internet editions in Thailand have been considered as separate entities and have been set to target different reader groups. The Internet editions in Thailand serve the main readers who live outside the country. The launch of the Internet version does not affect print newspaper circulation. However, print and electronic newspapers differ in their media nature. The traditional newspapers have limitations on printing space whereas the Internet does not.

In general, journalists should view the Internet as a benefit as it can be used as a tool for searching information to write their news and articles. Moreover, the Internet network is the easiest and fastest method for journalists in Thailand to communicate with other journalists and media professionals around the world. Therefore, media organisations should reap the benefits of this new media to improve their services by training their staff in new technology skills. The greatest positive impact would be on the education of Thai students. If Thailand can provide a sufficient amount of computers and affordable Internet access for all, students will be able to access news and information from any country in the world. This may broaden their minds and expand their way of thinking. The Internet will become the fastest and easiest source of useful and interesting information about the world. Thai students would also be able to give feedback to the webmaster via email, or with access to an interactive tool.

The findings of the study imply that the roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand differ from those of traditional newspapers. The Internet network is like a

springboard from which users can go anywhere at any time and access more than one place at the same time. The online newspaper is not limited by time and space; whilst reading one electronic newspaper, readers can access several different websites that are linked to it. The electronic newspaper website is an information resource where Internet users can find everything they want, not just the news. Therefore, electronic newspapers should contain all kinds of information, such as travel information, information on the stock exchange and exchange rates, and weather news. Moreover, news on the Internet can be updated throughout the day at any time, unlike traditional newspapers which cannot be changed once they have been printed. An important difference between electronic and print newspapers is that electronic versions have interactive elements that enable two-way communication. By using electronic newspapers, users can give immediate feedback to webmasters or print editors via email or a web board. Two groups of interview participants gave their perspectives on the roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand. The groups concluded that the roles are: 1) to provide not only the news but also useful and critical information; 2) to take advantage of new communication technology in distributing faster and more effective information to readers; 3) to create two-way communication that enables readers to send their immediate feedback to the newspaper via an interactive system; and 4) to use the Internet network to increase the access to information for both urban and rural readers.

The rapid increase in Internet use in Thailand indicates that electronic newspapers in Thailand should have a bright future. In addition to this, the falling price of computers also increases the likelihood of a boom in electronic newspapers in Thailand. However, the potential for Internet use in Thailand has been affected by the problems of the lack of infrastructure and the slow development of news communication technologies in the country. The result of fewer Internet facilities is

that the Thai population is restricted in its ability to embrace new technology. This lack of technological literacy also inhibits the increase of electronic newspapers in Thailand. It was therefore discovered in this study that, while both of the English-language newspaper samples see the future of electronic newspapers positively, the two Thai-language newspaper samples see no promise in the growth of electronic newspapers in Thailand.

In conclusion, it has been found in this study that although electronic newspapers in Thailand are a growing trend, they are unlikely to replace print newspapers, for several reasons. Firstly, we have to consider the nature and behaviour of readers who still prefer reading from the print format. Secondly, the main objective in launching electronic newspapers in Thailand is not to replace or compete with the print editions, but to support and promote the newspaper brand. Thirdly, the price of print newspapers in Thailand is cheaper than electronic ones due to the high cost of connection to the Internet. Finally, the progression of electronic newspapers in Thailand depends on the development of the country's infrastructure by the government and their ability to make the Internet accessible to all. It is worth noting here that although the information from the interviews was about Thai print and electronic newspapers in the year 2000, the lessons learnt from this information could provide data for further study of newspapers in Thailand.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINT AND

ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS

IN THAILAND IN 2000 IN TERMS OF THEIR

PRODUCTION PROCESSES AND NEWS CONTENTS

In this final chapter, the concluding remarks on the study of the relationship between traditional newspapers and electronic newspapers in terms of their news content and production processes will be given in six sections. These are: research design; the conceptual framework of the study; multiple research methods; the outcomes of the study; the limitations of the study; and finally the recommendations for further study.

The Design of the Study

This study aims to make a significant contribution to the study of the relationship between traditional and new newspapers in the 21st century. The research focuses on analysing four Thai national daily newspapers and their websites in 2000, and has the main objective to study the relationship between these two medium in terms of their production processes and news content. The study applied the gatekeeping concept to understand the similarities and differences that occur in the processes of newspaper production and news selection in these two mediums. The study aims at supporting two arguments: that new communication technology flow is the main influence when introducing an electronic newspaper to Thai society; and that there are similarities and

differences between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their news production processes and news content.

It also tries to answer five research questions: 1) Do electronic newspapers in Thailand offer similarities or differences in their production process and news policy compared to their print counterparts? 2) Do electronic newspapers offer similarities or differences in their news contents compared to their print counterparts? 3) Do the electronic newspapers' news contents offer more or less home news than their print editions? 4) Do the print and electronic versions emphasise the same lead stories and topics during the study period? And 5) to what extent do electronic newspapers in Thailand use interactive elements on their homepages, particularly in news sections? In order to achieve the objective and answer the research questions, the study conducted multiple research methods of participant observation, interviews and content analysis of four newspaper samples and their websites during 1999 and 2000. Utilising multiple research methods has helped to obtain answers for all the research questions of this study.

Moreover, the intention of this study is also to make a contribution to the understanding of the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand at their early stages, during 1999 and 2000. The findings of this study not only provide historical information on electronic newspapers in Thailand, but also suggest some new aspects of newspaper production processes and the role of newspapers in the new-media environment. This will give newspaper organisations in Thailand the opportunity to learn for their development in the future and may allow future trends in electronic newspapers in Thailand to better serve the public.

It is important to note here that while the year 2000 was the millennium year for countries around the world, it was also a golden year for information technology in

which Thailand began to enter the era of globalisation. This, therefore, has been beneficial for studying the emergence of new technologies in Thailand's newspapers. The information obtained from this research about the purposes of launching an electronic newspaper and the roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand at their inception will help to understand their roles in the present as well as predict their future trends. Finally, it is also hoped that the information and findings on print and electronic newspapers in Thailand at the time of the study period will offer some implications for further study in this area, which will be recommended later in this chapter.

The Main Conceptual Framework of the Study

The emergence of new communication technologies, such as the Internet, has shaken the traditional media, particularly the print media world. However, print media see this new technology in a positive light and realise that they can take advantage of its capabilities. Traditional print newspapers are the first mass media to appear online by launching newspaper websites. Print newspapers use the Internet as a supplemental channel to distribute their contents to a wider group of readers. Newspaper websites or electronic newspapers are the new phenomenon in the communication world. Studying the relationship between the old and new media is therefore a challenging topic for media scholars (Li, 1998). Study of old and new media can be conducted in several aspects. This thesis, however, focuses on studying the production processes and the news content created by the processes in these two mediums. The reason behind this was that one of the media functions in the production process is to select and shape the many pieces of information or events to a few before they are transmitted to mass receivers. This function is similar to the gatekeeping process, in which only a few

pieces of information from several information flows will be put through the news gates of news organisations. Shoemaker (1991) points out that gatekeeping studies have most often looked at the selection of news items within the mass media, but gatekeeping can involve more than just selection. The revisiting of the gatekeeping concept by Shoemaker (1991) is applicable to much more of communication research than just its original domain of news editing. It offers interesting insights into organisational communication and behaviour and is related to various theories ranging from the psychology of choice and decision-making to the macro dynamics of ideology and social change (Chaffee, 1991: vii).

This thesis, however, applies the concept of gatekeeping as the major conceptual framework for the study of the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news selection. As mentioned all the way through the study, this thesis analyses gatekeeping in a specific way, by looking at gatekeeping only in relation to the process of news production and news content. This was because the key focus of this thesis was to apply the gatekeeping concept to the study of newspapers' production processes and news contents, not to study gatekeeping itself. Therefore, other antecedents of the traditional gatekeeping process, such as factors influencing the entrance of items into the channel of media organisations, the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates and the individuals' personal attitudes, including the values of gatekeepers (Shoemaker, 1991), have not been included on this occasion. In other words, this research not only investigates operational aspects of news selection processes but also explores the way in which news contents are shaped, timed, positioned and presented in Thailand's print and electronic newspaper samples.

Utilising the gatekeeping concept as the main framework to study the relationship between print and electronic newspapers in Thailand in terms of their production processes and news contents have provided great advantages for this study.

The first advantage of applying the concept of gatekeeping for this study is that gatekeeping helps to construct the essential framework of the study of the production processes in the print and electronic newspaper samples. This is because the gatekeeping concept is one of the best-known constructs in communication research. The term has passed readily into both scientific and popular discussions of the way messages are selected, created and controlled (Chaffee, 1991, in Shoemaker, 1991: vii). In addition to Shoemaker's (1991: 16) notion that, 'the gatekeeping concept has proven to be popular with mass communication scholars, particularly in the study of news selection', the concept has given a foundation and guideline for conducting this research.

Secondly, although this thesis applies the gatekeeping concept only in the dimensions of communication routines and organisational communication and excluded the aspect of behaviour or of gatekeeping at an individual level, the concept remains helpful in improving understanding of the communication routines in organisations and the way news contents are selected, created and shaped in print and electronic newspaper samples.

As a consequence of that, the concept of gatekeeping has helped this study to identify the relationship between print and electronic newspaper samples in their production processes, news selection, news policy and news content.

The study has applied the gatekeeping concept to investigate production processes by observing the communication routines of four print and electronic newspapers' newsrooms. The findings indicate that the four Thai print newspapers and their

electronic editions have collaborative working relationships. Online editions join print newsrooms at the beginning of their production processes by a computer-linked network. The production time of online versions is reliant on the deadline of print newsrooms, because online newspapers use content from the print editions. Electronic newspapers in Thailand do not have a separate news policy in selecting and editing the content from print editions before posting online. The webmasters of the four electronic newspaper samples follow the same news policy as their print editions to select the news content to publish on the web. The relationship between the print and electronic editions in terms of the production process suggests that electronic newspapers operate the news selection or gatekeeping processes in different ways to their print counterparts. This finding reflected that webmasters of four electronic newspaper samples are not really involved in the news selection process in the same way that print editors are.

In terms of the exploration of the relationship between print and electronic editions' news content, the gatekeeping concept provided a structure for the study of how news content is shaped, structured, positioned and timed. The gatekeeping process determines not only which news content is selected, but also what kind of news messages will appear. It helped this study to identify that news contents on the four electronic newspaper samples are not significantly different from the contents of their print editions. However, slight changes are made in presentation, news priority, and technology on their web editions. The key difference between the traditional and electronic newspapers is the information delivery, which is how its information is structured and presented to the readers. The electronic newspapers deliver information through the World Wide Web, which is a medium with more features and more flexibility as well as more freedom in distributing news information than traditional print editions.

On the other hand, the similarities between the print and electronic newspaper samples in terms of their news content established the argument that the news selection or gatekeeping process in electronic newspapers evolved from traditional print newspapers by renouncing a major portion of the news selection and news priority role in their production processes.

Overall, obviously, the approach of gatekeeping applied for this thesis is narrowed, if it can be more generalised, even more complex results will be achieved for this area of study. This research analyses gatekeeping in a specific way, by looking at gatekeeping only in relation to the process of news production and news content. Other antecedents of the traditional gatekeeping process have been overlooked, such as factors influencing the entrance of items into the channel of media organisations, the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates and the individuals' personal attitudes, including the values of gatekeepers (Shoemaker, 1991). However, these dimensions of the original gatekeeping model could be a further approach.

The Multiple Research Methods Used for This Study

This research project conducted a multiple-method of three research methods, which helped increase the reliability of the study's findings. The newsroom observations obtained information on the print and electronic newspapers' production processes, news selection processes and each company's profile. In addition, the data from the interviews with four webmasters and three editors of newspaper samples presented the organisation policy, the news policy, the purposes of going online and opinions on the roles and trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand. The results of content analysis

helped to address the differences in news content, which reflected how news selection or gatekeeping processes operated in electronic newspapers and their print counterparts. Conducting three research methods for four Thai print and electronic newspaper samples in 2000 gained sufficient results to answer all the research questions and support the two arguments of the study. Although the results from interviewing a group of media professionals have obtained only the data about the roles and trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand, they are useful for supporting the argument of the study that the flow of new technologies from western countries is the main influence on the introduction of electronic newspapers to Thai society. At the same time, the results of content analysis helped to address the differences in news content, which reflected how news selection or gatekeeping processes operated in electronic newspapers and their print counterparts.

However, there were some concerns in relation to conducting these three research methods which will be discussed as follows.

One concern in relation to the research method of participant observations in this study is the limited amount of time spent on operating this method. The researcher had only three days to spend at each newsroom of the four newspaper samples to observe their communication activities and production processes including conducting the interviews. The participation in the communication routines was only partial in some activities and was conducted over a short period of time. Although the findings from participant observations in this study have provided sufficient data for this case, a lesson worth mentioning here is that if more time could have been spent on observation, a greater volume of data could have been obtained. However, the precise nature of participant observation also depends on the type of study and the aims of the study,

including the level of co-operation that the study samples are willing to allow for the study as well, and should be tailored towards that.

The other concern is the construction of interview questions to achieve the study goal. Some of the interview questions were not related to the precise research aims of the study, which meant that not all of the data collected from interviews could be analysed in relation to these aims. For example, most of the interview questions for media professionals in this research were mainly designed to find out their perspectives on the introduction, the impacts, the roles (at the time of the study) and the trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand. Although this set of questions might not be directly related to news selection or the gatekeeping framework, the results from these questions have gained additional information about electronic newspapers in Thailand at the time the research was conducted, which is also significant for this thesis and may benefit further studies undertaken in this study area.

Other than that the multiple research methods have obtained the significant outcomes of the study, which will be discussed in the next section.

The Outcomes of the Study

The research findings contribute to an understanding of the advent of Internet technology, which created a new form of relationship between newspapers and their readers. This new communication technology has forced traditional print newspapers to reconsider their role in the selection of news content or gatekeeping processes in their Internet versions. Although the findings of this thesis do not reveal any new idea or concept in communication theory relating to the gatekeeping model and the study of newspaper production processes and news content, the study has found evidence that

may support the findings from several valuable studies in print and online newspapers and the gatekeeping concept (such as Shoemaker, 1991; Singer, 1998; and Li, 1998).

Figure 1 shows the relationship between four Thai electronic newspapers and their print counterparts in terms of how the processes of production and news selection or gatekeeping operate, as found in this research.

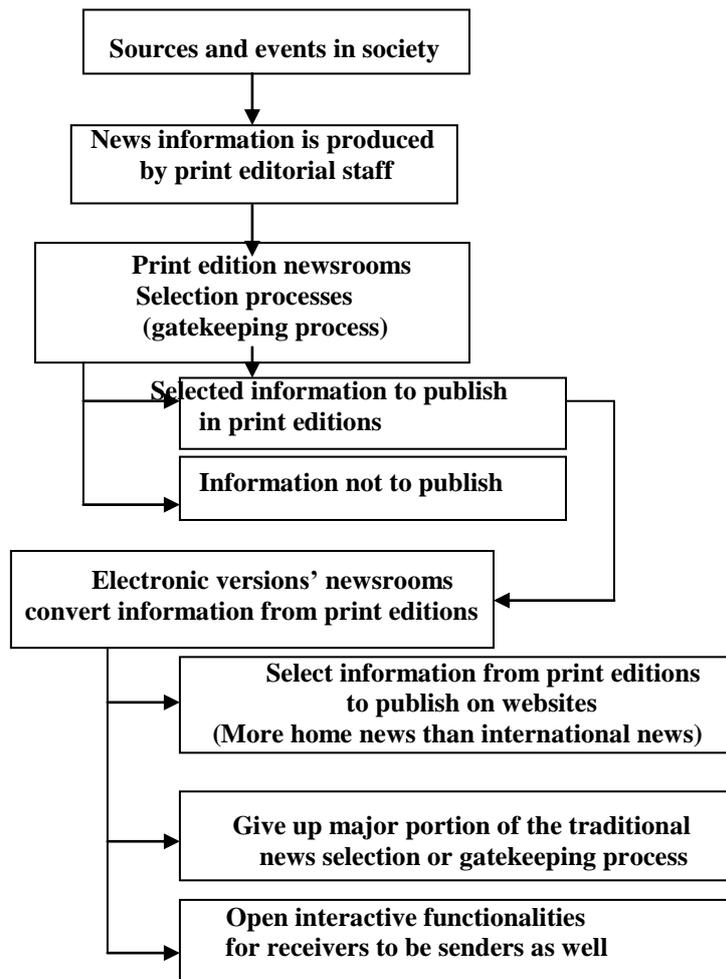


Figure 1: Comparison of the News Selection or Gatekeeping Operated in Four Thai Print and Electronic Newspapers

It can be seen from Figure 1 that print newsrooms operate news selection or gatekeeping processes from the starting point of news production in collecting information from resources outside the newsrooms and producing the news. That news

information is then selected to be published or not to be published in print editions. Electronic versions, in contrast, operate the news selection of information that is provided by print newsrooms via a computer network. Differences can be observed here: print newsrooms produce news messages for both print and electronic versions, while electronic versions' staff is waiting for news information from the print newsrooms, to transfer it onto their newspaper's websites. It can be noticed that news production does not occur in electronic editions' production processes. All materials that are transferred from print newsrooms will be converted by computer software to be published on the Internet. This is evidence that the content of the four Thai electronic newspapers studied here is virtually the same as those of their print counterparts. All four webmasters of the four electronic newspaper samples explained that this was because electronic newspapers have been created only as a supplement to their printed newspapers. However, electronic versions do not publish everything from print products online. At this point, the news selection or gatekeeping process is operated in electronic newspapers by selecting more home news than international news to be published on the Web. In addition, the evidence from newsroom observations proves that electronic newspapers in Thailand follow the same news policies as their print counterparts. The similarities in news content and news policy between print and electronic editions support the notion that electronic newspapers may give up a major portion of their role in news selection or gatekeeping.

In the case of Thailand, the news selection or gatekeeping process in Thai mass media, particularly newspapers, has played an important role in Thai society. Discussing the freedom-of-the-press issue in Thai society, Bowra (1996) states that although the press is freer in comparison to radio and television in airing political issues and criticising the performance of the government, this does not mean that it is

completely free from government control and interference. As with other sectors of the media, the government issues specific regulations to keep the performance of the press in tight check. As a result, Thailand's mass media, particularly newspapers, need to give priority to their selection processes in terms of what to publish and what not to publish in both their paper and their online editions in order to survive. Therefore, study of news selection processes through the gatekeeping concept in Thailand's print and electronic newspapers is a significant way to learn about the Thai mass media system and the arrival of new newspapers in Thai society.

It is also expected that analysing the press through the framework of gatekeeping in this thesis will offer a useful and enlightening approach that furthers understanding of the ways in which the process and methods of the creation of news content takes place in the online environment. This study partly aims to reflect the potential of electronic newspapers at their initial stage in 2000, which will be important data for future studies of the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand. This data includes the findings on the use of interactive functionality in Thailand's electronic newspapers in 2000, as well as the impacts of electronic newspapers and the challenging roles and future trends of print and electronic newspapers in Thailand.

The findings from content analysis of the use of interactive elements on the four newspaper websites have shown that electronic newspapers in Thailand in the year 2000 were not utilising the full potential of the online environment. Most electronic newspapers in Thailand adopted new technology to support their print edition in terms of image and readership. Only the *Nation Online* has provided audio (*Nation Radio*) and video (*Nation TV*) on its website. This supports McAdams's (1998) perspective that although the Internet technology is rapidly growing, newspapers on the Internet still take the approach from their roots in traditional print.

Regarding the revolution of print newspapers in Thailand by adopting the Internet network as their new delivery channel, most mainstream newspapers in Thailand have begun to publish their products online. However, Thailand's electronic newspapers at the time of this study in 2000 were still at the stage of developing their products. The findings of this study indicated that the use of interactivity in electronic versions offers two-way communication in new media. However, the study concludes that electronic newspapers in Thailand (at the time of the study) did not utilise the capacity of interactivity that was possible at that point. It is acknowledged that the four electronic newspaper samples of this study, at the present time, have been dramatically improving in their technology.

This finding on the use of interactive elements by four electronic newspapers in Thailand can be explained by several media scholars' studies. For instance, McGregor (1998) mentions that an online newspaper is usually a website created and maintained by a print media or organisation. As McGregor (1998) concluded, the large number of online newspaper variations represent the power and essence of multimedia convergence online – or, in plain English, the use of traditional media (text, still photographs, graphics, audio, and video) together with new media (hypertext, image maps and other interactive tools) in one multidimensional, digital environment. Li (1998) also confirmed that Internet newspapers give more priority to providing textual information than graphic information, and large graphics are more likely to appear on homepages than on front pages and pages featuring news articles.

However, the outcomes of the use of interactive elements on electronic newspaper samples indicate that the interactivities on electronic versions will give greater benefits to readers. As Li (1998) indicates, the news links and the multiple communication channels adopted by the Internet newspapers in webpage design have

created a new environment of communication, involving more than the host newspaper and the initial audience.

In addition, this study also suggested that the impact of electronic newspapers on print newspapers in Thailand has not been realised for several reasons. Firstly, Internet newspapers in Thailand have been considered as separate entities and have been set to target different reader groups. The Internet editions in Thailand serve the main target group of readers who live outside the country because of the high costs of purchasing hard copies of Thai newspapers abroad. The launching of the Internet versions does not affect print circulations. In contrast, they are supporting and promoting their core products. However, print and electronic newspapers differ in their media nature. The traditional newspapers have a limited amount of space but the Internet does not.

In general, journalists should view the Internet as a benefit as it can be used as a tool for searching information to write their news and articles. Moreover, the Internet is the easiest and fastest method for journalists in Thailand to communicate with journalists and media professions in global communities. Therefore, media organisations should consider training their staff in new technology skills to reap the benefits.

The greatest positive impact of the Internet could be on the education of Thai students. If Thailand can provide a sufficient amount of computer machines and access to the Internet at an affordable rate, students would be able to access news and information from any country in the world. This may broaden their minds and expand their way of thinking.

Finally, according to this study's findings, the four electronic newspapers in Thailand seem likely to play the roles of both home and international media. The four Thai electronic newspapers have offered more news and information about Thailand

than international news on their websites. On the other hand, they are applying global information technology systems to provide and deliver news and information to global audiences. Nonetheless, the full capabilities of Internet technology were not being utilised by the four Thai electronic newspaper samples at the time of the study.

In the case of Thailand, it can be concluded that electronic newspapers focus on offering more news and information about Thailand than their print counterparts, in order to serve Thai people who live outside the country as well as the global communities who are interested in Thailand. In contrast, traditional print newspapers are likely to bring more international news to the readers in the country than the electronic versions. As Singer (2001: 65) reports, 'traditional print newspapers have brought selected information about the world to local readers' doorsteps'. At the same time, their online versions try to present more local news stories about what is happening in the country. These study outcomes also support Singer's (2001: 65) study, which found that 'online products have a much stronger local orientation than prints, suggesting that online newspapers may be moving toward a reinterpretation of their role in connecting readers to the world beyond their horizons'.

In the end, the study has found a number of differences in the purposes behind launching online versions of the English-language and Thai-language newspaper samples. The English-language online versions seem likely to begin with executive visions, whilst the Thai-language electronic newspapers have been proposed by editorial staff. The findings of future trends analysis indicate the potential for a bright future for electronic newspapers in Thailand. The interview participants of this study gave their perspectives on the circumstances and potential use of electronic newspapers at the time of the study. The four main functions can be summarised thus: offering more precise and critical information; using new technology to provide faster and fresher news

reporting; creating two-way communication via interactive systems; and reducing the information gap between urban and rural readers. The additional findings also suggest that although electronic newspapers in Thailand are a growing trend, they are unlikely to replace print newspapers just yet, because the main objective of launching electronic newspapers in Thailand is to support and promote the core newspapers' businesses, not to replace or compete with the print editions.

The roles of electronic newspapers in Thailand, as indicated by the perspectives of the two groups of interview participants, are: 1) To provide not only the news but also useful and critical information, 2) To take advantage of communication technology in distributing faster and fresher information to readers, 3) To create a two-way-communication process that allows readers to send their immediate feedback to the newspaper via an interactive system, and 4) To use the Internet network to reduce the gap between urban and city readers in terms of the amount of information they receive. This depends on how well the infrastructure of the communication system in Thailand is developed.

The indication of future trends of electronic newspapers in Thailand is that although electronic newspapers in Thailand are a growing trend, they cannot replace print newspapers for several reasons. Firstly is the nature and behaviour of reading in this generation. People are still keen on reading from the print format. The emotion and environment of reading a print newspaper cannot be replaced by reading on a computer monitor. Secondly, the main objective of launching electronic newspapers in Thailand is not to compete and replace the print editions but to support and promote the core newspapers' businesses.

Conclusively, the outcomes of this study suggest four important factors that influence the similarities and differences in the production processes and news content

of traditional and new newspapers in Thailand in 2000. These include news selection processes, news policy of the company, newsworthiness (news value), target group of readers and E-commerce. The four Thai print newspaper samples concentrate on bringing global news to locals (Thai people in the country), whereas electronic newspapers focus on offering home news and information about Thailand to serve Thai readers who live overseas and global communities who are interested in Thailand. These discoveries suggest that electronic newspapers in Thailand are more local in focus than their print counterparts. It can also be seen that electronic newspapers play the role of both a global (international) and a local (home) medium; their news information is distributed by a global channel but is often local in nature.

The Limitations of the Study

It is important to note the limitations that the researcher faces when conducting new-media study. The most significant issue is the limitation of studying technology, because it is constantly changing. At the period the study was conducted (1999 to 2000) the four Thai electronic newspapers chosen for the study had not fully developed their content presentation and webpage design. So there is potential for further study of electronic newspapers and their changing gatekeeping role, which will be introduced in the next section.

The next concern of this study is that although there was an advantage to studying electronic newspapers at their earliest stage in terms of historical recommendations, the data collected might lack accurate details of the full potential of electronic newspapers. Conducting up-to-date study will be a solution for this limitation. Finally, in the academic sense, the research realised that this study could

have explored the concept or model of gatekeeping in the online environment in more detail.

However, the limitations of the study mentioned above have offered the opportunity to present some recommendations for further study in this area in the next section.

Recommendations for Further Study

As the electronic newspaper is a new phenomenon in Thai journalistic research, the evolution of this new medium is worth studying by a longitudinal content analysis. The reason for this is that the longitudinal approach allows for a more comprehensive examination of the changes occurring in electronic newspapers during the critical early years of electronic newspapers in Thailand. Moreover, it would also be useful to conduct a comparative study of the development of electronic newspapers in Thailand in the period following this study in order to look at the changes and improvement that may have occurred since this research was conducted in both general and specific aspects. The practices of journalists, who are involved with electronic newspapers, and their views on the prospect of working for online newspapers, as well as the changes in their roles in the online environment, are also interesting topics for further study. Lastly, a re-examination of other antecedents of the traditional gatekeeping process that have been overlooked by this thesis, such as factors influencing the entrance of items into the channel of media organisations, the nature of forces in front of and behind the gates and the individuals' personal attitudes including the values of gatekeepers, would be worth considering. In addition, a further study of gatekeeping theory in the online environment would be a challenging area for research. It is also hoped that this research

will attract further Thai scholars to the study of print and electronic newspapers and their production processes, including any changes that may occur in that process.

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It will be appreciated that websites and their addresses can be changed frequently. Some of the following online references may therefore have changed or no longer be available but are offered as a starting point for reference of this study.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A - SAMPLE OF AMOUNT OF CONTENT RECORDING FORM

Newspaper name _____																									
DATE	04/09/2000			05/09/2000			06/09/2000			07/09/2000			08/09/2000			09/09/2000			10/09/2000			TOTAL			
SECTIONS	AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES			AMOUNT/ISSUES						
	PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE		PRINT	ONLINE					
		DUP	CRE	TOTAL		DUP	CRE	TOTAL		DUP	CRE	TOTAL		DUP	CRE	TOTAL		DUP	CRE	TOTAL		DUP	CRE	TOTAL	
NEWS																									
TODAY HIGHLIGHT																									
BREAKING NEWS																									
WORLD HOT NEWS																									
HEADLINES																									
POLITICS																									
BUSINESS																									
REGIONAL																									
SPECIAL REPORT																									
SPORTS																									
TECHNOLOGY																									
COLUMN																									
OPINION																									
LETTER																									
CARTOON																									
ENTERTAINMENT																									
AROUND TOWN																									
AUTO																									
WEEKEND LEISURE																									
TRAVEL																									
YOUR CAMPUS																									
PHOTO IN THE NEWS																									
SUNDAY																									
OTHERS																									
WEB DIRECTORY																									
COMMUNITY																									
PDA FORMAT																									
DISCUSSION FORUMS																									
THE NATION POLL																									
BACK ISSUE																									
SEARCH ENGINE																									
JOB SEARCH																									
SHOPPING																									
WEB SPECIAL																									
ADVERTISEMENT																									
HOME NEWS																									
INTERNATIONAL NEWS																									
TOTAL																									

APPENDIX B - SAMPLE OF LEAD NEWS TOPICS PRIORITY RECORDING FORM

Newspaper Name _____ (News on front page & homepage only)

DATE	04/09/2000		05/09/2000		06/09/2000		07/09/2000		08/09/2000		09/09/2000		10/09/2000		TOTAL
News type	AMOUNT/ISSUE														
	PRINT	ONLINE													
GENERAL															
POLITICS															
CRIME/ACCIDENT															
ECONOMICS															
ENTERTAINMENT															
INTERNATIONAL															
EDUCATION															
SPORTS															
HEALTH															
GOVERNMENT NEWS															
TOTALS															

APPENDIX C- SAMPLE OF NEWS VALUE PRIORITY RECODING FORM

Newspaper Name _____

DATE	04/09/00		05/09/00		06/09/00		07/09/00		08/09/00		09/09/00		10/09/00		11/09/00		12/09/00		13/09/00		14/09/00		15/09/00		16/09/00		17/09/00		TOTAL
NEWS VALUE	ISSUE																												
	PRINT	ONL																											
Human Interest																													
Important																													
Impacts																													
Entertainment																													
Knowledge																													
Proximity																													
Sensational																													

APPENDIX D – SAMPLE OF TOP THREE LEAD NEWS STORIES & TOPICS PRIORITY

RECORDING FORM

Newspaper name _____

Date-----

Date_____

Rank	Lead News Stories Print	Topic code	Electronic	Topic code	Rank	Lead News Stories Print	Topic code	Electronic	Topic code

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF INTERACTIVE ELEMENTS USE

RECORDING FORM

Interactive Elements	Bangkok Post (English)	Nation (English)	Thairath (Thai)	Matichon (Thai)	TOTAL
General Email					
Editorial Staff Email					
Email News to friends					
Comment to News					
Polls					
Forums					
E-Letter to Editor					
News Related Stories					
Archives					
Back Issues					
Information Centre					
Links					
Databases					
Subscription					
E-Newsletter					
Breaking News					
Bulletin Board					
Live Chat					
Flashing Images					
Audio					
Video					
Search Engine					
Others Web Services					
TOTALS					

APPENDIX F

The Bangkok Post Internet News Story

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "Bangkok Post Sept 6, 2000 - Tens of billions of baht in...". The page header features the Bangkok Post logo, the website URL "www.bangkokpost.com", and the date "September 6, 2000". Navigation buttons for "News", "Business", and "Outlook" are visible. A banner for "EyeForAuto Asia 2001" is present. The main article is titled "CORRUPTION / STATE PROJECTS" and "Tens of billions of baht in bribes". The sub-headline reads "All parties involved, say industry heads". The author is "Amornrat Mahitthirook". The article text states that the state loses tens of billions of baht to corruption in construction projects. A quote from Mati Tangpanit, president of the Thai Construction Development Committee, is included. A list of factors enabling corruption is provided.

Bangkok Post
www.bangkokpost.com
September 6, 2000

News Business Outlook

EyeForAuto Asia 2001
E-Business Automotive strategy Conference & Exposition
February 20-22, Singapore 2001 [CLICK HERE](#)

CORRUPTION / STATE PROJECTS

Tens of billions of baht in bribes

All parties involved, say industry heads

Amornrat Mahitthirook

The state loses tens of billions of baht to corruption in construction projects as bribes are paid at almost every stage of the process, said Mati Tangpanit, president of the Thai Construction Development Committee.

"State projects are estimated at 200-300 billion baht annually. During the economic boom, they amounted to as much as 600-700 billion baht a year. About 10% of the sum is lost to corruption, meaning tens of billions of baht yearly," he said yesterday.

Mr Mati, also a director of the Architects Council, cited six factors which enable corruption to take place:

- State agencies and politicians that implement projects.
- Lenders that may favour some contractors.
- The delegation of architects, engineers, supervisors and consultants responsible for each project.

Fiction, History, C
BOO
Daily
Main Entrance
Local News
Business
Outlook
The amazing
406
Week
IT news
Horizons Trav
NiteOwl (Trin
Real Time
Motoring
Student Wee
Tha
Crafts M
c
Entertainm
Lifesty
What's on
Dining out

- Panels inspecting and accepting finished projects.
- Contractors who are ready to buy projects with bribes.
- Laws and regulations that can be misinterpreted to favour any parties.

"Bribes are demanded in almost every step of project implementation, from seeking approval for a project to a bidding contest and the payment of instalments of a project price.

"The graft occurs not due to any single party but is the collaboration of all parties concerned," Mr Mati said.

Four associations of engineers, architects and contractors say they will lift the lid on corruption next week.

The Engineering Institute, the Thai Contractors Association, the Association of Thai Engineering Consultants, and the Association of Siamese Architects will hold a seminar at the Escap building on Rajdamnoen Avenue on Sept 13-14.

Mr Mati denied the seminar was aimed at attacking any particular construction company, but at reducing irregularities in state projects.

"We will tell the public how corruption is going on so that people can help check project implementation.

"Although the problem cannot be wiped out, I believe the seminar will lead to embarrassment that may help reduce the corruption to a certain extent.

"At a time of economic crisis, corruption in state projects is compounding the national economy because it discourages foreigners from investing here," he said.

Charoon Chanchamratsaeng, president of the Thai Contractors Association, said four to five giant construction companies were joining forces to defeat smaller contractors in bidding contests for state projects. The practice was obvious in projects from the Transport and Communications Ministry, which had the biggest share of state projects.

The findings from next week's seminar will be forwarded to the National Counter Corruption Commission, he said.

A source at the Transport Ministry said that before the crisis, contractors had peacefully shared state projects from ministries.

However, as the number of state projects had dried up, giant contractors had teamed up to grab what little was available, in so doing forcing smaller rivals out, he said.

[Recipe of the Movies](#)
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[Book Review](#)
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[Fitness](#)
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NEW

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◊ [Bangkok Year-end Economic Review](#)

◊ [Post Data years](#)

◊ [Annual Report](#)

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◊ [We Care](#)

◊ [Phudhong Colony Four](#)

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"Small-scale contractors have few chances of obtaining state projects. They have to pay more to get a single project, maybe over 20% of a project price. This reduces the quality of the construction," the source said.

Srisook Chantrangsua, director-general of the Highways Department which enjoys the biggest share of the ministry's budget, yesterday denied corruption was plaguing highway projects.

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The sample of full text news story on the Bangkok Post Internet, 6th September 2000

APPENDIX G

The Bangkok Post Print Edition News Story

Bangkok Post
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2000 • 20 BAHT

CORRUPTION / STATE PROJECTS

Tens of billions of baht in bribes

All parties involved, say industry heads

Amornrat Mahithirook

The state loses tens of billions of baht to corruption in construction projects as bribes are paid at almost every stage of the process, said Mati Tangpanit, president of the Thai Construction Development Committee.

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- ◆ Lenders that may favour some contractors.
- ◆ The delegation of architects, engineers, supervisors and consultants responsible for each project.
- ◆ Panels inspecting and accepting finished projects.
- ◆ Contractors who are ready to buy projects with bribes.
- ◆ Laws and regulations that can be misinterpreted to favour any parties.

"Bribes are demanded in almost every step of project implementation, from seeking approval for a project to a bidding contest and the payment of instalments of a project price.

"The graft occurs not due to any



Srisook ... Highways chief denies charges

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"At a time of economic crisis, cor-

'Small-scale contractors have few chances of obtaining state projects.'

Unnamed source

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◆ *Analysis page 11*

The sample of full text news story on the Bangkok Post print Edition, 6th September 2000

APPENDIX H

The Nation Online News Story

The Nation - THAILAND - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Wanadoo

E:\THE NATION\THE NATION\NATION 110900\bu1.htm

Google

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Quest Fund Management
We work with Management

TheNATION
THAILAND'S INDEPENDENT ONLINE NEWS & INFORMATION SERVICE

September 12, 2000

BUSINESS

HOME
HEADLINES
NATIONAL
METRO
POLITICS
BUSINESS
IT & SCIENCE
SPORTS
SOCIAL
FEATURES
TRAVEL & TOURISM
OPINION TODAY
LETTERS
CARTOON
DAILY SNAPSHOTS
WHAT'S ON
ENTERTAINMENT
LEARN ENGLISH
WEEKEND
BULLETIN BOARD

Nation search

Selection of THAI chief 'must be fair'

THE search for the new president of Thai Airways International, now reaching its climax, should remain transparent and accountable so that the most suitable and qualified person is chosen, said one of the seven candidates short-listed for the job.

No matter who wins the job, the selection process must be fair and transparent all the way to the final decision, Aviruth Wongbaddhapitak, vice president of Siam Cement Co and one of the applicants for the top post at the national carrier, said in a brief interview over the weekend that.

THAI has for the first time invited outside applicants to replace its outgoing president, Thamanoon Wanglee. The selection committee had also loosened an initial condition requiring applicants to have worked for an organisation with a turnover of more than Bt100 billion, lowering the amount to Bt50 billion.

Another initial requirement, that the applicants must be under 57 years of age, was also dropped.

The looser conditions have attracted outside professional managers, four of them short-listed, along with three insiders. Apart from Aviruth, the other outsiders are Chaisak Saeng-Xuto, president of Siam Pulp and Paper Co, Prayadavi Devakula, former deputy permanent secretary for foreign affairs, and Dhamanoon Soparat, former rector of Ramkhamhaeng University.

MAIL TO A FRIEND
PRINT THIS PAGE
YOUR COMMENTS

The three short-listed insiders are THAI executive vice presidents Bhisit Kusalasaivanon and Prachak Chaemrasameechote, and Suthat Na Ayuthaya, a senior vice president for personnel management.

The committee selecting the new president will interview the candidates this week and then cut the shortlist from seven to three. Its final decision is due on September 21.

The committee is headed by Mahidol Chantrangkurn, permanent secretary for transport and communications, who is also the chairman of THAI. Other members are Ekamol Kiriwat, former secretary general of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Dhipavadee Meksawan, head of the Civil Service Commission, Supachai Phisitvanich, permanent secretary for finance, and senior Royal Thai Air Force chief of staff ACM Terdsak Sujjaruk.

Aviruth said he had applied for the job because he wants to support THAI's open selection process so that the "system can grow".

Aviruth, 52, who has worked for Siam Cement for 31 years and is currently one of its most senior executives (working beside SCC President Chumpol NaLamlieng in corporate restructuring and corporate governance), said it would not matter if he loses out in the race.

He added it is usual that an insider should be selected to head an organisation, while an outsider could provide something which may be missing and add a different perspective.

Aviruth said he had informed Chumpol of his decision to apply for THAI's top post. But until Thursday night, he had no knowledge that Chaisak, who heads a paper subsidiary of Siam Cement, had submitted an application as well.

Aviruth said the two independent applications from Siam Cement Group reinforce the group's reputation as an organisation that can produce a diverse array of managers.

He declined to comment on what he thinks of THAI or on what vision he has for the airline. The details are contained in the letter submitted to the selection committee due to interview him shortly. But he did say that corporate governance is one of the key elements that a public company must have to fulfil the aspirations of all the stakeholders.

Bhisit, in a separate interview, said the new chief would need to work together with neighbouring countries to promote regional tourism. However, he added he does not think that THAI is facing an overstaffing problem since the airline has been growing at a faster pace than the size of its staff.

THAI currently employs 23,000 people.

Outgoing THAI president Thamanoon said his successor would have to work swiftly to upgrade the airline's IT system, especially in the Internet booking area where THAI is lagging behind other airlines.

Thamanoon said during his tenure, much development had taken place in safety standards and making sure that THAI is an on-time airliner.

He added that THAI's CEO does not need to have aviation experience - something that can be learned on the job quite easily. But he did not say what kind of qualifications his successor should have.

Most analysts said the new president of THAI, scheduled to take up the post on October 1 under a four-year term, faces a number of challenges including the upcoming flotation of new shares to the public which may include a strategic partner.

The carrier also has to make decisions on its overstaffing problem, previous bad investments, and how to boost the confidence of passengers, particularly Thai customers, who said its services could stand much improvement.

THAI's financial performance has also tailed behind that of regional rivals such as Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific - a reality reflected in its low share price on the stock market.

THAI's international standing has eroded in recent years because of the continuing trend of consolidation in the airline industry.

THAI is a member of the Star Alliance that includes Lufthansa of Germany and United Airlines from the United States.

BY CHOOSAK JIRASAKUNTHAI,

PICHAYA CHANGSORN, and

PANA JANVIROJ

The Nation

LAST MODIFIED: Sunday, 10-Sep-00
09:09:06 EDT

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	Name	E-Mail Address
You	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Friend 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Your Message

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The Sample of Full Text News Story on the Nation Online, 12th September 2000

APPENDIX I

The Nation Print News Story

THE NATION Monday, September 11, 2006

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Siam Global Access
The ASEAN Corporate GP
www.sga.net.th

WELCOME TO THAILAND'S HIGHLIGHT
GATEWAY CITY
THAI AIRWAYS INTERNATIONAL
No. 333/334/335, Ph. 30-071-3333

Selection of THAI chief 'must be fair'

Hopefuls seek transparency

**CHOOSAK IIRASAKUNTHAI,
PICHAYA CHANGSORN,
PANA JANVIROJ**
The Nation

THE search for the new president of Thai Airways International, now reaching its climax, should remain transparent and accountable so that the most suitable and qualified person is chosen, said one of the seven candidates short-listed for the job.

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The three short-listed insiders are THAI executive vice presidents Bhisit Kusalanayasin and Prachak Chasemsameechote, and Sutbat Na Ayuthaya, a senior vice president for personnel management.

The committee selecting the new president will interview the candidates this week and then cut the shortlist from seven to three. Its final decision is due on September 21.

The committee is headed by Mahidol Chantrangkurn, permanent secretary for transport and communications, who is also the chairman of THAI. Other members are Ekamol Kiriwat, former secretary general of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Dhipavadee Mekssawan, head of the Civil Service Commission, Supachai Phasitvanich, permanent secretary for finance, and senior



AVIRUTH: Corporate governance is key

Royal Thai Air Force chief of staff ACM Terdsak Sojaruk.

Aviruth said he had applied for the job because he wants to support THAI's open selection process so that the "system can grow".

Aviruth, 52, who has worked for Siam Cement for 31 years and is currently one of its most senior executives (working beside SCC President Chumpol NaLamleng in corporate restructuring and corporate governance), said it would not matter if he loses out in the race.

He added it is usual that an insider should be selected to head an organisation, while an outsider could provide something which may be missing and add a different perspective.

Aviruth said he had informed Chumpol of his decision to apply for THAI's top post. But until Thursday



BHISIT: THAI not overstaffed

night, he had no knowledge that Chaisak, who heads a paper subsidiary of Siam Cement, had submitted an application as well.

Aviruth said the two independent applications from Siam Cement Group reinforce the group's reputation as an organisation that can produce a diverse array of managers.

He declined to comment on what he thinks of THAI or on what vision he has for the airline. The details are contained in the letter submitted to the selection committee due to interview him shortly. But he did say that corporate governance is one of the key elements that a public company must have to fulfil the aspirations of all the stakeholders.

Bhisit, in a separate interview, said the new chief would need to work together with neighbouring countries to promote regional tourism.

However, he added he does not think that THAI is facing an overstaffing problem since the airline has been growing at a faster pace than the size of its staff.

THAI currently employs 23,000 people.

Outgoing THAI president Thamanoon said his successor would have to work swiftly to upgrade the airline's IT system, especially in the Internet booking area where THAI is lagging behind other airlines.

Thamanoon said during his tenure, much development had taken place in safety standards and making sure that THAI is an on-time airliner.

He added that THAI's CEO does not need to have aviation experience - something that can be learned on the job quite easily. But he did not say what kind of qualifications his successor should have.

Most analysts said the new president of THAI, scheduled to take up the post on October 1 under a four-year term, faces a number of challenges including the upcoming flotation of new shares to the public which may include a strategic partner.

The carrier also has to make decisions on its overstaffing problem, previous bad investments, and how to boost the confidence of passengers, particularly Thai customers, who said its services could stand much improvement.

THAI's financial performance has also tailed behind that of regional rivals such as Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific - a reality reflected in its low share price on the stock market.

THAI's international standing has eroded in recent years because of the continuing trend of consolidation in the airline industry.

THAI is a member of the Star Alliance that includes Lufthansa of Germany and United Airlines from the United States.

APPENDIX J

The Thairath Online News Story

The screenshot shows a news article on the Thairath website. The header includes the Thairath logo, a search bar with the text "พื้นที่โฆษณา สนใจติดต่อ 642-3400 ต่อ 3599", and navigation links for "คอลัมน์", "ข่าวย้อนหลัง", "เกี่ยวกับไทยรัฐ", and "หน้าจอหลัก". There are also icons for "font" and "mail".

The article title is "ข่าวอุกฉวย" (News of a Fire). The date is "วันพุธที่ 6 กันยายน พ.ศ. 2543" (Wednesday, September 6, 2000).

The article content is as follows:

• ข่าวหน้า 1
• ข่าวภาคบ่าย
• ข่าวเศรษฐกิจ
• ข่าวต่างประเทศ
• ข่าวการศึกษา
• ข่าวกรม.
• ข่าววิทยาการ-การเกษตร
• ข่าวสังคม-สตรี
• ข่าวกีฬา
• ข่าวบันเทิง

- ข่าวหน้า 1
- ฝ่าหัวคะแนนสส. จ่อข่มขู่ หัวทีมคาซามชีว

เมื่อเวลา 21.30 น. วันที่ 4 ก.ย. สภ.อ.สวนผึ้ง จ.ราชบุรี ได้รับแจ้งเหตุยิงกันตายที่ปั๊มน้ำมันชื่อ "หนองขามบริการ" เลขที่ 270/3 หมู่ 9 ต.ป่าหวาย จึงรุดไปที่เกิดเหตุ ซึ่งเป็นปั๊มน้ำมันขนาดเล็ก 2 หัวจ่าย ด้านหลังปั๊มเปิดเป็นร้านขายของชำ และที่พักอาศัย บริเวณใต้ะทำงาน ภายในร้าน พบศพนายพิชญวุฒิ บุญญธรรม อายุ 38 ปี เจ้าของปั๊ม นอนตายจมเลือด มีบาดแผลถูกยิงด้วย อาวุธปืนไม่ทราบขนาด เข็มขัดขวากกระสุนฝังใน 1 นัด โดยมีนางรัศมี บุญญธรรม อายุ 39 ปี ภรรยา พร้อมลูกสาววัย 7 ขวบ และลูกชาย วัย 8 ขวบ กอดศพร่ำไห้อย่างน่าเวทนา ตรวจภายในที่เกิดเหตุไม่พบหลักฐานอื่นใด จึงนำศพ ส่ง รพ.สวนผึ้ง เพื่อพิสูจน์ให้แน่ชัดอีกครั้ง

จากการสอบสวนนางรัศมีให้การว่า นายพิชญวุฒิ สามี นอกจากเป็นเจ้าของปั๊มน้ำมันขนาดเล็กแล้ว ยังทำงานเป็นลูกจ้างชั่วคราวของกรมป่าไม้ มีหน้าที่คุมคนงานปลูกป่า ในพื้นที่ป่าสงวนแห่งชาติ เขตอำเภอสวนผึ้ง และยังเป็นหัวหน้าคณะระดับอำเภอ ของนายวิเชษฐ์ เกษมทองศรี ส.ส.ราชบุรี พรรคชาติพัฒนา ก่อนเกิดเหตุผู้ตาย กำลังนั่งกินข้าวที่โต๊ะทำงาน ส่วนลูกชายและลูกสาวนอนดูทีวีอยู่ใกล้ๆ ได้มีรถปิกอัพยี่ห้อมิตซูบิชิ สีดำแบบตอนเดียว ขับมาจอดในปั๊มน้ำมัน สังเกตเห็นมีชายที่นั่งมาด้านหน้า 2 คน รวมทั้งคนขับ และนั่งกระเบาะหลังอีก 1 คน ตนเข้าไปสอบถามว่าชื่ออะไร โดยชายที่นั่งหน้าหมุนกระบอกงบอกว่า เขาบุหรี่ปั๊กรองทิพย์ 1 ของ

นางรัศมีเผยต่อไปว่า จังหวะที่หันหลังเดินจะไปหยิบบุหรี่ ชายคนที่นั่งในกระเบาะหลังซึ่งมีลักษณะผิวเนื้อดำแดง อายุประมาณ 35-40 ปี ตัดผมรองทรง หน้ากระดุกคางเหลี่ยม ผอม สูงประมาณ 160 ซม. ใส่เสื้อยืด สวมทับด้วยเสื้อคลุมแขนยาวสีดำ กางเกงยีนขาวขาวกระโดดลงจากรถ ถ้ามองว่ามีเครื่องตีเอ็ม 150 หรือไม่ พร้อมกับเดินเข้าไปในร้าน แล้วชักปืนไม่ทราบชนิดยิงใส่ นายพิชญวุฒิ สามี ที่ไม่ทันระวังตัวทันที 1 นัด กระสุนเจาะเข้าขมับขวา ตกจากเก้าอี้เสียชีวิตคาที่ ต่อหน้าลูกชายลูกสาวและตน ซึ่งยืนตะลึงงัน กว่าจะตั้งสติได้มือปืนก็วิ่งไปขึ้นรถที่พรรคพวกรออยู่ ขับหลบหนีไปอย่างรวดเร็ว

ส่วนสาเหตุนางรัศมีบอกว่า เท่าที่นึกออกมีอยู่ 2 ประเด็นคือ เรื่องการเมืองที่สามีเป็นหัวหน้าคณะให้แก่ นายวิเชษฐ์ เกษมทองศรี โดยสามีเป็นคนพูดจาตรงไปตรงมา แบบไม่เกรงกลัวใคร อาจจะไปพูดเรื่องการเมืองในงานเลี้ยงต่างๆ จนทำให้ฝ่ายตรงข้ามไม่พอใจตามมายิง หรือไม่ก็มาจากเรื่องงานปลูกป่าในพื้นที่ป่าสงวน สามีอาจขัดแย้งกับกลุ่มนายทุนและผู้มีอิทธิพลที่เสียผลประโยชน์ ถึงขั้นส่งมือปืนมาสังหารก็เป็นได้ ซึ่งเจ้าหน้าที่ตำรวจได้ระดมกำลังออกสืบเบาะแส ในพื้นที่เพื่อคลี่ปมเบื้องหลัง และติดตามจับกุมคนร้ายมาดำเนินคดีแล้ว

The sample of full text news story on the Thairath Online, 6th September 2000

The Translation of the Thairath Online News Story

THAIRATH ONLINE

Wednesday 6, September 2000

Front-page news

Killed MP Election Canvasser Gunned at Head While Having His Meal

At 9.30 p.m. on 4th September it was reported at Ratchaburi's Suan Phung police station that there was a brutal shooting at a petrol station called "Nongkham Borikarn" at 270/3, Moo 9, Pawai Sub-district. A group of police officers hurriedly visited the scene, which is a small petrol station with two fuel dispensers. Behind the station is a grocery store that is also used as a living quarter. The body of the victim, Mr. Pitchavut Poonyatham, a 38-year-old petrol station owner, was found lying in a pool of blood. A gunshot wound was found at the right temple of his head with a bullet embedded in the skull. Mrs. Russamee Poonyatham, 39, her 7-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son were found to be embracing the dead body and moaning restlessly. The investigation team had found no evidence to support the case. The corpse was later sent to Suan Phung Hospital for further examination.

Questioned by a police officer, Mrs. Russamee said that apart from owning a small petrol station her husband, Mr. Pitchavut, also worked as a temporary employee for the Department of Forestry. According to Mrs. Russamee, her husband's main responsibility was supervising other reforestation workers in the Suan Phung National Conserved Forest. He also served as a district-level canvasser for Mr. Wished Kasemthongsri, Ratchaburi's member of the House of Representatives, the National Development Party. Before being shot dead, the victim was having his dinner at his office desk while his son and daughter were lying down watching TV nearby. Then, a black Mitsubishi standard cab pickup, with two men in the front seats and another man in the back of the pickup, pulled up in front of the victim's petrol station. Mrs. Russamee said that she walked to the truck to ask them what they were looking

for. A guy in the front seat next to the driver replied that he wanted a pack of Krong Thip cigarettes.

While Mrs. Russamee was walking back to the grocery store, the guy in the back of the pickup truck jumped off, asked for a bottle of an M-150 energy drink, and walked into the store. The guy was about 35-40 years old, 180 cm tall, and had tanned skin with a medium length male's hairstyle, a square chin and a bonny face. He wore a T-shirt with a black long-sleeved jacket and a long-legged pair of jeans. Suddenly, the guy shot Mr. Pitchavut, who was unaware of the stranger, at his right temple. Mr. Pitchavut was shot to sudden death with one bullet where the type of gun was still unknown. The victim's son and daughter witnessed the shooting of their father and were shocked by the scene. By the time they were conscious of what had happened, the gunman had already got into the pickup truck and quickly escaped.

Mrs. Russamee reckoned that there were two possible causes of this incident. The first cause could be due to the fact that her husband was a canvasser for Mr. Vished Kasemthongsee. Her husband, as she described him, was the kind of person who said things straightforward. He may express his political opinion in some social gatherings, an opinion that may well displease the opposing political party. The other may be associated with his work under the reforestation project at the National Conserved Forest. She suspected that there might have some conflicts between her husband and a group of investors or authoritative figures who may lose their benefits because of the undertaken reforestation project. It would be possible, as she suspected that the gunmen were hired by this group of people. Police officers have further investigated the case in the local area and made an effort to track down the gunmen.

The translation of full text news story on the Thairath Online, 6th September 2000

APPENDIX K

The Thairath Print Edition News Story



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The Translation of the Thairath Print News Story

The biggest circulation newspaper in the country

THAIRATH DAILY

Year 51st, Issue 15569, Wednesday 6, September 2000, 8 Baht

KILLED MP ELECTION CANVASSER GUNNED DOWN AT HEAD WHILE HAVING HIS MEAL

Political tensions boil over as the termination of Parliament draws near. Gunmen shot dead a key election canvasser, who was killed in front of his wife and children.

The pre-general elections to follow the upcoming dissolution of Parliament were marred by bloodshed. A petrol station owner serving as an election canvasser was shot dead with one bullet in the presence of his wife and two children. Three professional gunmen in a pickup truck approached the petrol station, and pretended to be grocery customers. While having his meal and unaware of the strangers, he was shot dead at the temple of his head by one of them. The police suspected that the trigger of the shooting case was due to the victim being a key canvasser for one of the well-known members of the House of Representatives in coalition government parties. Another possible cause leading to the incident was that the victim had worked under the reforestation project. The victim's wife believed that the case was related to political rivalry, as her husband was engrossed with political activities. Since her husband served as a major election canvasser, she also suspected that the murder entailed the political game aimed at suppressing the voter base of the party supported by her husband. Being employed by the Department of Forestry to work under the reforestation project that may hinder some benefits to be gained by certain authoritative figures could also set off this tragedy.

The fatal shooting case of a petrol station owner and election canvasser of a national-level politician was

revealed at 9.30 p.m. on 4th September. It was reported to Pol. Capt. Somsak Takoporn of Ratchaburi's Suan Phung police station that there was a brutal shooting at a petrol station called "Nongkham Borikarn" at 270/3, Moo 9, Pawai Sub-district. After Pol. Capt. reported to his superior, Pol. Lt. Col. Chatchai Suasaming, a vice-superintendent; Pol. Lt. Col. Ittiphol Ritticharoen, a police inspector; Mr. Chatchai Thangtam, MD, Director of Suanphung Hospital; staff from the Prachanukul Foundation; and a group of police officers hurriedly visited the scene for further investigation.

The spot where the incident happened is a small petrol station with two fuel dispensers. Behind the station is a grocery store that is also used as a living quarter. The body of the victim, Mr. Pitchavut Poonyatham, a 38-year-old petrol station owner, was found lying in a pool of blood. A gunshot wound was found at the right temple of his head with a bullet embedded in the skull. Mrs. Russamee Poonyatham, 39, her 7-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son were found to be embracing the dead body and moaning restlessly. The investigation team had found no evidence to support the case. The corpse was later sent to Suan Phung Hospital for further examination.

Questioned by a police officer, Mrs. Russamee said that apart from owning a small petrol station her husband, Mr. Pitchavut, also worked as a temporary employee for the Department of Forestry. According to Mrs. Russamee, her husband's main responsibility was supervising other reforestation workers in the Suan Phung National Conserved Forest. He also served as a district-level canvasser for Mr. Wiset Kasemthongsri, Ratchaburi's member of the House of Representatives, the National Development Party. Before being shot dead, the victim was having his dinner on his office desk while his son and daughter were lying down watching TV nearby. Then, a black Mitsubishi standard cab pickup, with two men in the front seats and another man in the back of the pickup, was pulled off in front of the victim's petrol station. Mrs. Russamee said that she walked to the truck to ask them what they were looking for. A guy in the front seat next to the driver replied that he wanted a pack of Krong Thip cigarettes.

While Mrs. Russamee was walking back to the grocery store, the guy in the back of the pickup truck jumped off, asked for a bottle of an M-150 energy drink, and walked into the store. The guy was about 35-

40 years old, 180 cm. tall, and had tanned skin with a medium length male's hairstyle, a square chin and a bonny face. He wore a T-shirt with a black long sleeve jacket and a long-legged pair of jeans. Suddenly, the guy shot Mr. Pitchavut, who was unaware of the stranger, at his right temple. Mr. Pitchavut was shot to sudden death with one bullet where the type of gun was still unknown. The victim's son and daughter witnessed the shooting of their father and were shocked by the scene. When they were conscious of what happened, the gunman had already got into the pickup truck and quickly escaped.

Mrs. Russamee reckoned that there were two possible causes of this incident. The first cause could be due to the fact that her husband was a canvasser for Mr. Vished Kasemthongsee. Her husband, as she described him, was the kind of person who said things straightforward. He may express his political opinion in some social gatherings, the opinion that may well displease the opposing political party. The other may be associated with his work under the reforestation project at the National Conserved Forest. She suspected that there might have some conflicts between her husband and a group of investors or authoritative figures who may lose their benefits because of the undertaken reforestation project. It would be possible, as she suspected that the gunmen were hired by this group of people. Police officers have further investigated the case in the local area and made an effort to track down the gunmen.

The translation of full ext news story on the Thairath Online, 6th September 2000

APPENDIX L

The Matichon Online News Story

HOME	ศูนย์ข้อมูล	สำนักพิมพ์	โฆษณา	สมัครงาน	About Us (ไทย)	About Us (ENG)
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หนังสือพิมพ์มติชนรายวัน ฉบับประจำวัน ที่ 14 กันยายน พ.ศ. 2543 email.matichon@matichon.co.th

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13/10/2000

สำนักพิมพ์

พบหนังสือหลากหลาย

นับร้อยรายการจากสำนักพิมพ์มติชน

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"ป่าเปรม" สุดห่วง

ขรก. สอพลอ-นักธุรกิจติดสินบน

ความพอดีถูกกีดกร้อน

แม่แต่พระยังหลงวัดฤ

"พล.อ.เปรม" เดือนอันตรายสิงคมไทย ปลอมคำนิยามกีดกร้อนสำนักแห่งความพอดีเพียง ระบุข้าราชการสอพลอ-ไซ้อานาจ-ชอบเป็นเจ้าคนนายคน นักธุรกิจนิยมการมีหน้ามีตา-สะสมทรัพย์สิน-ติดสินบน ส่วนพระภิกษุชอบความสวยงาม-วัตถุที่อลังการ-ยศลาภ และสิ่งที่มีใช้กิจของสงฆ์

เมื่อเวลา 08.45 น. วันที่ 13 กันยายน ที่ห้องประชุมสารนิเทศ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน สำนักธรรมศาสตร์และการเมือง จัดประชุมทางวิชาการเรื่อง "สังคมศาสตร์กับชีวิตที่พอดีเพียง : ปัจจุบัน-อนาคต" โดยมี พล.อ.เปรม ดิลกสุลานนท์ ประธานองคมนตรี และรัฐบุรุษอาวุโสเป็นผู้บรรยายพิเศษ

นายประเสริฐ ณ นคร นายกราชบัณฑิตยสถาน กล่าวเปิดประชุมว่า ในภาวะที่ประเทศต้องการความร่วมมือจากทุกๆ ฝ่าย เช่น ประสพภาวะวิกฤตเศรษฐกิจจึงประชุมเพื่อประมวลเป็นผลสรุปแนวทางหรือวิธีการที่เป็นรูปธรรม เพื่อนำเสนอรัฐบาลต่อไป

จากนั้น พล.อ.เปรม ดิลกสุลานนท์ ประธานองคมนตรีและรัฐบุรุษ บรรยายพิเศษเรื่อง "ชีวิตที่พอดีเพียง : ปัจจุบัน-อนาคต" ว่าเมื่อครั้งที่ยังปฏิบัติราชการในกองทัพ และมาทำหน้าที่นายกรัฐมนตรี ได้ติดตามและรับพระราชดำรัสต่างๆ ใส่เกล้าฯ นำไปปฏิบัติอย่างสม่ำเสมอ ดนพยายามส่งเสริมสนับสนุน และผลักดันให้คนไทยทั้งมวลมีความเพียร มีสติ มีสำนึกแห่งความพอดีและความพอดีตลอดเวลาในการดำเนินชีวิตในสังคม เพราะชีวิตที่มีความพอดีและพอดีเพียงนำมาซึ่งความสุขตามอัตภาพ ช่วยให้อิ่มเป็น มีชีวิตปฏิบัติ

พล.อ.เปรมกล่าวตอนหนึ่งว่า คำนิยามเป็นเหมือนโรคที่กีดกร้อนสำนักแห่งความพอดีและพอดีเพียง คำนิยามที่ว่า ได้แก่ คำนิยามของราชการที่นิยมการประจบสอพลอ นิยมการเป็นเจ้าคนนายคน นิยมการใช้พวกพ้อง นิยมการใช้อำนาจ นิยมการได้มาซึ่งเงินและสิ่งของในทางที่มีชอบ คำนิยามของนักธุรกิจที่นิยมการมีหน้ามีตา นิยมสะสมทรัพย์สินสมบัติ นิยมการประจบความพอดีสำเร็จโดยการติดสินบน นิยมความสะกดกลบ และคำนิยามของพระภิกษุ ที่นิยมความสวยงามและอลังการของวัตถุ นิยมยศลาภที่ทำให้คนนับหน้าถือตา นิยมในสิ่งที่มีใช้กิจของสงฆ์ ปัจจุบันคำนิยามเหล่านี้ยังคงฝังรากลึกและแพร่กระจายอยู่มาก

พล.อ.เปรมกล่าวอีกว่า ถ้าแก้ปัญหาความจนได้ก็จะแก้ปัญหาอื่นได้ทั้งหมด และถ้ามีคำนิยามความสำนึกพอดี พอดีเพียง เป็นที่ตั้ง ความอยากมีอยากได้จะลดลง เมื่อสานต่อด้วยความเพียร และมีสติแล้ว การต่อสู้เพื่อความยากจนก็จะเป็นไปได้ บัณฑิตผู้มีความรู้สูง นักศึกษาผู้มีการศึกษามาก มีแนวโน้มไม่ดำเนินชีวิตในอนาคตอย่างพอดีและพอดีเพียง และเริ่มกลายเป็นผู้ที่เห็นความสำคัญของตัวเองมากขึ้น

นายสมพร เทพสิทธา ประธานยุวทูตภิกษุสามัคคี หรือ ภาคีสมาชิก สำนักธรรมศาสตร์และการเมือง กล่าวอภิปรายว่า ถึงแม้ว่าพัฒนาประเทศจะบรรลุเป้าหมาย แต่กิจกรรมและความมั่งคั่งทางเศรษฐกิจยังคงกระจุกตัวอยู่ในภาคมหานครและปริมณฑล การพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคมจะสำเร็จตามเป้าหมายได้นั้นต้องอาศัยคนที่มีคุณภาพ ซึ่งประกอบด้วยความสมบูรณ์ทั้งร่างกาย ความรู้ สติปัญญา และจิตใจ แต่นโยบายการพัฒนาด้านของประเทศไทย มุ่งพัฒนาด้านร่างกายและสติปัญญาความรู้อย่างมาก ยังขาดการเสริมสร้างคุณธรรม ซึ่งเป็นส่วนสำคัญในการพัฒนาจิตใจ จึงทำให้เกิดปัญหาสังคมในปัจจุบัน

"รัฐธรรมนูญฉบับใหม่ส่งเสริมให้เด็กมีการศึกษาอย่างครบถ้วน อย่างไรก็ตามยังเกรงว่ารัฐธรรมนูญฉบับนี้จะปฏิรูปเฉพาะระบบแต่ไม่ปฏิรูปคน เพราะที่ผ่านมาการเมืองมักมองแคบไปแต่ไม่เคียดคิดไปสูงเพื่อบ้านเมือง คิดแต่กอบโกย ในด้านเศรษฐกิจเราก็เอามาใช้แต่โมเดิร์นในเซ็กซี่ แต่ไม่ใส่ใจการพัฒนาที่แท้จริง ฉะนั้นเราควรทำให้เป็น กรีน ฮีโรในนิมิกหมายถึงเศรษฐกิจสีเขียว คือ คำนี้ถึงประชาชนและนักเวทวิทยา" นายสมพรกล่าว

ศูนย์ข้อมูลมติชน

บริการสืบค้นข้อมูลข่าวสาร

เปิดบริการแก่นักเรียน นิสิต นักศึกษา และบุคคลทั่วไป

ให้บริการสืบค้นข้อมูลข่าวสาร จากแฟ้มข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์ทุกฉบับในเมืองไทย พร้อมข่าวสารจาก นิตยสาร และสิ่งพิมพ์อื่นๆ

สอบถามรายละเอียด

589-0020 , 580-0021

ต่อ 1102,1105

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นางโสภกา สนิลมันน์ อาจารย์ประจำคณะสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล กล่าวว่า คนไทยทุกวันนี้มีลักษณะ คือ 1.ตัวใครตัวมัน ทำทุกอย่างเพื่อความอยู่รอดของตัวเอง ขาดน้ำใจ ส่งผลต่อการดำรงอยู่ของประเทศไทยชาติ 2.มองโลกในแง่ร้าย ยอมรับและเห็นด้วยกับค่านิยมที่ว่า "ชื่อคือเขี้ยว" "ชื่อถูกกินหมด คดถึงจะรวย" 3.เอาर्डเอาเปรียบ ถือกติปลาใหญ่กินปลาเล็ก ซึ่งนำไปสู่ปัญหาอาชญากรรม 4.ขาดระเบียบวินัย ยึดคติ "ง่าย ๆ แล้วจะสบายเอง" "ทำอะไรก็ได้ตามอำเภอใจ" 5.เชื่อถือไม่ได้ มีการสร้างความรู้สึกด้านบวกต่อการยอมรับที่ว่า "คนเก่งเท่านั้นที่โกงไม่เป็น" หรือ "ทำอะไรก็ได้เพื่อให้ได้เงินมา" 6.ขาดความซื่อสัตย์สุจริตไม่ละอายต่อการทำชั่ว การจะลดวิกฤตของสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นได้ทางหนึ่ง คือ ช่วยกันทำให้สังคมไทยกลับไปสู่สภาพในอดีต มีความเป็นมิตร เอื้ออาทร มีคุณธรรม จริยธรรม

ด้านนายชัยยศ เหมะรัชตะ อาจารย์คณะนิติศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย กล่าวว่า เรื่องของกฎหมายมีความสำคัญในสังคมและการบังคับใช้ ทุกวันนี้มีความผิดพลาดในการบังคับใช้กฎหมาย เช่น เหตุการณ์จลาจลที่ จ.นครศรีธรรมราช เป็นเพราะตำรวจใช้กฎหมายเกินพอดี ทำแบบสุดโต่ง

"ปัจจุบันผู้ร้ายขึ้นเครื่องมัน แต่นักกฎหมายไทยยังขี้จักรยานคนจนอยู่ ทั้งนี้ก่อนจะทำอะไรควรมีการทำประชาพิจารณ์ด้วย อยากเน้นย้ำเรื่องที่ดินทำกิน ปัจจุบันมีชาวบ้านจำนวนมากไม่มีที่ทำกิน ในขณะที่คนอีกกลุ่มหนึ่งมีที่ดินเกินพอ ควรออกมาตราการจัดการกับกลุ่มคนเหล่านี้ เช่น จัดเก็บภาษีในราคาแพง ควรปรับเปลี่ยนวิกฤตให้เป็นโอกาส" นายไชยยศกล่าว

The sample of full text news story on the Matichon Online, 14th September 2000

The Translation of the Matichon Print News Story

The Quality Newspaper for the Country Quality

MATICHON

The Matichon Daily, 14th September 2000

‘Gen Prem’ Deeply Concerns Two-Faced Gov Officials - Businessmen Bribe Sufficiency is destroyed Even monks are materials fascinated

‘General Prem’ warned that Thai society is in danger as the awareness of sufficiency was being obliterated. He mentioned that government officials are sycophantic, authoritative and officious; businessmen are pleased with the reputation, collection of property, and bribery; and monks love beauty, extravagant objects, nobility, and other issues, which are not related to monks’ business.

An academic meeting titled “Social Science and Self-Sufficiency: Present - Future” was arranged by the Royal Institute, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics at Saranitet Meeting Room, Chulalongkorn University on 13 September at 08.45 a.m. Its honourable keynote speaker was General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman.

Mr. Prasoet Na Nakhon, Chairman, Royal Institute provided his opening speech that the meeting’s purpose is to find out the concrete solutions or strategies, which are later, presented to the government, especially during economic crisis.

Next, General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman gave a special talk on “Self-Sufficiency: Present – Future.” He said that when he worked in the armed forces and was the Prime Minister, he follows H.M. the King and respectively take his royal remarks for consideration and put them into regular practice. General Prem has attempted to encourage all Thai people to always have the effort, consciousness, awareness of sufficiency, and self-sufficiency for their living in society. This is because a sufficient life contributed to personal happiness and peace, which is the Middle Path in Buddhism.

General Prem further stated that values are regarded as the diseases that destroyed the awareness of sufficiency. Those values included that government officers like being sycophantic, officious, favourable one’s friend, authoritative, and illegally consuming. The fondness of businessmen are composed of the reputation, collection of property, bribery, and convenience. Also, the values of monks are the desires of beauty and extravaganza on subjects, nobility, and other issues, which are irrelevant to their business. Currently, those values still sank deep roots and are greatly and widely expanded.

General Prem additionally declared that if the problem of poverty can be solved, other difficulties could entirely be got rid of. Also, if there is the basis of self-sufficiency awareness, all desires could reduce. In relation to this and in the combination of the effort and consciousness, the fight against the poverty is feasible. The well-educated

graduate and students are unlikely to have a sufficient life in the future. Instead, they turn into more self-indulgent.

Mr. Somporn Thepsithar, Chair, Young Buddhists Association, or Fellows Association, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics discussed that although the development of the country could accomplish the perceived goals, economic activities and stability are clustered only in Bangkok and suburban. To reach the goals, economic and social development has to base upon the human's quality, which has the completion of physical condition, knowledge, consciousness, and mind. In contrast, the policy of human development in Thailand emphasises on physical and conscious maturity whereas there is the shortage of moral support that is the essential factor for the mind improvement. This causes to the emergence of today's social problems.

“The new constitution encourages integrated education among youth. Nonetheless, I am afraid that the constitution restructures only systems, but not humans as previously politicians had short version, behaved badly. They had never been ambitious for the country development; they had only made their own profits, instead. For economic issues, modernisation is employed, but it is not the actual development. Consequently, green economic which considers citizen and ecology should be utilised” Mr. Somporn said.

Mrs. Sopa Spielmann, a full-time lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University told that Thai people had unique characteristics as follows: 1. Selfishness: Thai people have done everything for their own survival, lacked the generosity impacting on the existence of the country; 2. Pessimism: Thai people accept and agreed with the value of “honesty is stupidity” i.e., the honesty is destroyed while the deception is the way for wealth; 3. Exploitation: Thai people regard that big fish eat small fish leading to criminal troubles; 4. Indiscipline: Thai people respect that “easiness makes [them] more comfortable” and “they can do everything as they like”; 5. Unreliability: the positive attitude towards “do everything for the sake of money only” is concerned; 6. Dishonesty: Thai people are not ashamed of committing a sin. Thus, one of the appropriate approaches to reduce social crises is to turn Thai society to the previous conditions of generosity, friendship, virtue, and morality.

Mr. Chaiyos Hemaratchata, a lecturer, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University said that law is important for its articles and enforcement. Nowadays, there are mistakes of law enforcement, for instance, the riot at Nakhon Si Thammarat had emerged as law is overused by policemen.

“Today a culprit rides a plane whereas a Thai lawyer rides a poor person's bicycle. Public opinion should be done before doing anything. I would like to emphasise on the land, as nowadays a lot of villagers do not have plots of land while the other groups own too many plots. An approach, for instance, high tax payment should be legitimated to control those groups' behaviour. The crisis ought to be turned to the opportunities,” Mr. Chaiyos said.

The translation of full text news story on the Matichon Online, 14th September 2000

APPENDIX M

The Matichon Print News Story

หนังสือพิมพ์คุณภาพ เพื่อคุณภาพของประเทศ
<http://www.matichon.co.th>

มติชน

วันพฤหัสบดีที่ 14 กันยายน พุทธศักราช 2543 ปีที่ 23 ฉบับที่ 8224 ราคา 8 บาท

‘ป่าเบรณ’สุดห่าง ชรก.สอพลอ-นักธุรกิจติดสินบน

ความพอดีถูกกั๊กกร้อน
แม้แต่พระยงหลงวัตถุ

*พล.อ.เปรมเตือนอินทรายสังคมไทย ปล่อยค่านิยมกั๊กกร้อนสำ
นึกแห่งความพอเพียง ระบุข้าราชการสอพลอ-ใช้อำนาจ-ชอบ
เป็นเจ้าของนายคน นักธุรกิจนิยมการมีหน้ามีตา-สะสมทรัพย์
สิน-ติดสินบน ส่วนพระภิกษุชอบความสวยงาม-วัตถุที่อลัง
การ-ขคลัง และสิ่งที่มีใช้กิจของสงฆ์ (อ่านหน้า 20)

เมื่อเวลา 08.45 น. วันที่ 13 กันยายน ที่ห้องประชุม
สวนนันทศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน
สำนักธรรมศาสตร์และการเมือง จัดประชุมทางวิชาการ
เรื่อง “สังคมศาสตร์กับชีวิตที่พอเพียง : ปัจจุบัน-อนาคต”
โดยมี พล.อ.เปรม ติณสูลานนท์ ประธานองคมนตรี และ
รัฐบุรุษอาวุโสเป็นผู้บรรยายพิเศษ

นายประเสริฐ ๗ นคร นายกราชบัณฑิตยสถาน
กล่าวเปิดประชุมว่า ในภาวะที่ประเทศต้องการความร่วมมือ
จากทุกๆ ฝ่าย เช่น ประสพภาวะวิกฤตเศรษฐกิจจึง
ประชุมเพื่อประมวลเป็นผลสรุปแนวทางหรือวิธีการที่เป็น
รูปธรรม เพื่อนำเสนอรัฐบาลต่อไป

จากนั้น พล.อ.เปรม ติณสูลานนท์ ประธานองค
มนตรีและรัฐบุรุษ บรรยายพิเศษเรื่อง “ชีวิตที่พอเพียง :
ปัจจุบัน-อนาคต” ว่าเมื่อครั้งที่ยังปฏิบัติราชการในกอง
ทัพ และมาทำหน้าที่นายกรัฐมนตรี ได้ติดตามและรับ
พระราชดำรัสต่างๆ ใต้ถุน นำไปปฏิบัติอย่างสม่ำเสมอ
ตนพยายามส่งเสริมสนับสนุน และผลักดันให้คนไทยทั้ง
มวลมีความเพียร มีสติ มีสำนึกแห่งความพอดีและความ
พอเพียงตลอดเวลาในการดำเนินชีวิตในสังคม เพราะ
ชีวิตที่มีความพอดีและพอนำมาซึ่งความสุขความอึด
ภาพ ช่วยให้สงบ เป็นมัจฉิมาปฏิบัติ

พล.อ.เปรมกล่าวตอนหนึ่งว่า ค่านิยมเป็นเหมือนโรค
ที่กัดกร่อนสำนึกแห่งความพอดีและพอนำมาซึ่ง ค่านิยมที่ว่า
ได้แก่ ค่านิยมของราชการที่นิยมการประจบสอพลอ นิยม
การเป็นเจ้าคนนายคน นิยมการใช้พวกพ้อง นิยมการใช้
อำนาจ นิยมการได้มาซึ่งเงินและสิ่งของในทางที่มีขอบ
ค่านิยมของนักธุรกิจที่นิยมการมีหน้ามีตา นิยมสะสม
ทรัพย์สินสมบัติ นิยมการประสบความสำเร็จโดยการคิด
สินบน นิยมความสะดวกสบาย และค่านิยมของพระภิกษุ
ที่นิยมความสวยงามและอสังการของวัตถุ นิยมยศลาภที่
ทำให้คนนับหน้าถือตา นิยมในสิ่งที่มีใช้กิจของสงฆ์ ปัจจุบัน
ค่านิยมเหล่านี้ยังคงฝังรากลึกและแพร่กระจายอยู่มาก

พล.อ.เปรมกล่าวอีกว่า ถ้าแก้ปัญหาความจนได้ก็จะ
แก้ปัญหาอื่นได้ทั้งหมด และถ้ามีค่านิยมความสำนึกพอดี
พอเพียง เป็นที่ตั้ง ความอยากมีอยากได้จะลดลง เมื่อสถาน
คือด้วยความเพียร และมีสติแล้ว การต่อสู้เพื่อความยาก
จนก็เป็นไปได้ บัณฑิตผู้มีความรู้สูง นักศึกษาผู้มีการศึก
ษามาก มีแนวโน้มไม่ดำเนินชีวิตในอนาคตอย่างพอดี
และพอนำมาซึ่ง และเริ่มกลายเป็นผู้ที่เห็นความสำคัญของ
ตัวเองมากขึ้น (อ่านรายละเอียดต่อหน้า 2)

นายสมพร เทพสิทธา ประธานยุทธทธิกสมาคม หรือ กาศีสมาธิกร สำนักธรรมศาสตร์และการเมือง กล่าวอภิปรายว่า ถึงแม้ว่าพัฒนาประเทศจะบรรลุเป้าหมาย แต่กิจกรรมและความมั่งคั่งทางเศรษฐกิจยังกระจุกตัวอยู่ในภาคมหานครและปริมณฑล การพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคมจะสำเร็จตามเป้าหมายได้นั้นต้องอาศัยคนที่มีคุณภาพ ซึ่งประกอบด้วยคุณสมบัติทั้งร่างกาย ความรู้สติปัญญา และจิตใจ แค้นนโยบายการพัฒนาคนของประเทศไทย มุ่งพัฒนาด้านร่างกายและสติปัญญาความรู้อย่างมาก ยังขาดการเสริมสร้างคุณธรรม ซึ่งเป็นส่วนสำคัญในการพัฒนาจิตใจ จึงทำให้เกิดปัญหาสังคมในปัจจุบัน

“รัฐธรรมนูญฉบับใหม่ส่งเสริมให้เด็กมีการศึกษาอย่างครบถ้วน อย่างไรก็ตามยังเกรงว่ารัฐธรรมนูญฉบับนี้จะปฏิรูปเฉพาะระบบแต่ไม่ปฏิรูปคน เพราะที่ผ่านมานักการเมืองมักมองแคบ ใฝ่ต่ำ ไม่เคยคิดใฝ่สูงเพื่อบ้านเมือง คิดแต่กอบโกย ในด้านเศรษฐกิจเราก็เอามาใช้แต่โมเดิร์นในซ้ชชั่น แต่นั่นไม่ใช่การพัฒนาที่แท้จริง ฉะนั้นเราควรทำให้เป็น กรีน อีโคโนมิก หมายถึงเศรษฐศาสตร์สีเขียว คือ คำนึงถึงประชาชนและนิเวศวิทยา” นายสมพรกล่าว

นางโสภา สปีลมันน์ อาจารย์ประจำคณะสังคมศาสตร์ และมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล กล่าวว่า คนไทยทุกวันนี้มีลักษณะ คือ 1.ตัวใครตัวมัน ทำทุกอย่างเพื่อความอยู่รอดของตัวเอง ขาดน้ำใจ ส่งผลต่อการดำรงอยู่ของประเทศชาติ 2.มองโลกในแง่ร้าย ขอมรับและเห็นด้วยกับคำนิยมที่ว่า “ซื้อคือเซ่อ” “ซื้อถูกกินหมด คดถึงจะรวย” 3.เอาर्डเอาเปรียบ ถือคติ ปลาใหญ่กินปลาเล็ก ซึ่งนำไปสู่ปัญหาอาชญากรรม 4.ขาดระเบียบวินัย ยึดคติ “ง่าย ๆ แล้วจะสบายเอง” “ทำอะไรก็ได้ตามอำเภอใจ” 5.เชื่อถือไม่ได้ มีการสร้างความรู้สึกค่านับถ่วงต่อการยอมรับที่ว่า “คนโง่เท่านั้นที่โง่งไม่เป็น” หรือ “ทำอะไรก็ได้เพื่อให้ได้เงินมา” 6.ขาดความซื่อสัตย์สุจริต ไม่ละอายต่อการทำชั่ว การจะลดวิกฤตของสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นได้ทางหนึ่ง คือ ช่วยกันทำให้สังคมไทยกลับไปสู่สภาพในอดีต มีความเป็นมิตร เอื้ออาทร มีคุณธรรม จริยธรรม

ด้านนายชัยยศ หเมะวิชตะ อาจารย์คณะนิติศาสตร์ จุฬาฯ กล่าวว่า เรื่องของกฎหมายมีความสำคัญในดับบท และการบังคับใช้ ทุกวันนี้มีความผิดพลาดในการบังคับใช้กฎหมาย เช่น เหตุการณ์จลาจลที่ จ.นครศรีธรรมราช เป็นเพราะตำรวจใช้กฎหมายเกินพอดี ทำแบบสุดโต่ง

“ปัจจุบันผู้ร้ายขึ้นเครื่องบิน แต่นักกฎหมายไทยยังขี้จักรยานคนจนอยู่ ทั้งนี้ก่อนจะทำอะไรควรมีการทำประชาพิจารณ์ด้วย อยากระบายน้ำเรื่องที่ดินทำกิน ปัจจุบันมีชาวบ้านจำนวนมากไม่มีที่ทำกิน ในขณะที่คนอีกกลุ่มหนึ่งมีที่ดินเกินพอ ควรออกมาตรการจัดการกับกลุ่มคนเหล่านี้ เช่น จัดเก็บภาษีในราคาแพง ควรปรับเปลี่ยนวิกฤตให้เป็นโอกาส” นายไชยชกล่าว

The Translation of the Matichon Print News Story

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‘Gen Prem’ Deeply Concerns Two-Faced Gov Officials- Businessmen Bribe

**Sufficiency is destroyed
Even monks are materials
fascinated**

‘General Prem’ warned that Thai society is in danger as the awareness of sufficiency was being obliterated. He mentioned that government officials are sycophantic, authoritative and officious; businessmen are pleased with the reputation, collection of property, and bribery; and monks love beauty, extravagant objects, nobility, and other issues, which are not related to monks’ business. (To be continued on page 20)

An academic meeting titled “Social Science and Self-Sufficiency: Present - Future” was arranged by the Royal Institute, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics at Saranitet Meeting Room, Chulalongkorn University on 13 September at 08.45 a.m. Its honourable keynote speaker was General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman.

Mr. Prasoet Na Nakhon, Chairman, Royal Institute provided his opening speech that the meeting’s purpose is to find out the concrete solutions or strategies, which are later, presented to the government, especially during economic crisis.

Next, General Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council and Statesman gave a special talk on “Self-Sufficiency: Present – Future.” He said that when he worked in the armed forces and was the Prime Minister, he follows H.M. the King and respectively take his royal remarks for consideration and put them into regular practice. General Prem has attempted to encourage all Thai people to

always have the effort, consciousness, awareness of sufficiency, and self-sufficiency for their living in society. This is because a sufficient life contributed to personal happiness and peace, which is the Middle Path in Buddhism.

General Prem further stated that values are regarded as the diseases that destroyed the awareness of sufficiency. Those values included that government officers like being sycophantic, officious, favourable one's friend, authoritative, and illegally consuming. The fondness of businessmen are composed of the reputation, collection of property, bribery, and convenience. Also, the values of monks are the desires of beauty and extravaganza on subjects, nobility, and other issues, which are irrelevant to their business. Currently, those values still sank deep roots and are greatly and widely expanded.

General Prem additionally declared that if the problem of poverty can be solved, other difficulties could entirely be got rid of. Also, if there is the basis of self-sufficiency awareness, all desires could reduce. In relation to this and in the combination of the effort and consciousness, the fight against the poverty is feasible. The well-educated graduate and students are unlikely to have a sufficient life in the future. Instead, they turn into more self-indulgent. (More details on page 2)

Mr. Somporn Thepsithar, Chair, Young Buddhists Association, or Fellows Association, Institute of Jurisprudence and Politics discussed that although the development of the country could accomplish the perceived goals, economic activities and stability are clustered only in Bangkok and suburban. To reach the goals, economic and social development has to base upon the human's quality, which has the completion of physical condition, knowledge, consciousness, and mind. In contrast, the policy of human development in Thailand emphasises on physical and conscious maturity whereas there is the shortage of moral support that is the essential factor for the mind improvement. This causes to the emergence of today's social problems.

“The new constitution encourages integrated education among youth. Nonetheless, I am afraid that the constitution restructures only systems, but not humans as previously politicians had short version, behaved badly. They had never been ambitious for the country development; they had only made their own profits, instead. For economic issues, modernisation is employed, but it is not the actual development. Consequently, green economic which considers citizen and ecology should be utilised” Mr. Somporn said.

Mrs. Sopa Spielmann, a full-time lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University told that Thai people had unique characteristics as follows: 1. Selfishness: Thai people have done everything for their own survival, lacked the generosity impacting on the existence of the country; 2. Pessimism: Thai people accept and agreed with the value of “honesty is stupidity” i.e., the honesty is destroyed while the deception is the way for wealth; 3. Exploitation: Thai people regard that big fish eat small fish leading to criminal troubles; 4. Indiscipline: Thai people respect that “easiness makes [them] more comfortable” and “they can do everything as they like”; 5. Unreliability: the positive attitude towards “do everything for the sake of money only” is concerned; 6. Dishonesty: Thai people are not ashamed of committing a sin. Thus, one of the appropriate approaches to reduce social crises is to turn Thai society to the previous conditions of generosity, friendship, virtue, and morality.

Mr. Chaiyos Hemaratchata, a lecturer, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University said that law is important for its articles and enforcement. Nowadays, there are mistakes of law enforcement, for instance, the riot at Nakhon Si Thammarat had emerged as law is overused by policemen.

“Today a culprit rides a plane whereas a Thai lawyer rides a poor person’s bicycle. Public opinion should be done before doing anything. I would like to emphasise on the land,

as nowadays a lot of villagers do not have plots of land while the other groups own too many plots. An approach, for instance, high tax payment should be legitimated to control those groups' behaviour. The crisis ought to be turned to the opportunities," Mr. Chaiyos said.

The translation of full text news story on the Matichon Print, 14th September 2000