

Telecommunications innovation and the shape of the British news market

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Innovations in telecommunications shape the market for news. To understand how, history provides useful examples from which entrepreneurs, policy-makers, and publishers may benefit. This paper explains how telecommunications innovations affected the British news market and locates long-term trends in the formation of news organizations such as the Press Association and the BBC. The role of monopoly and industrial and telecommunications policy in shaping the marketplace of ideas are analyzed. This analysis raises questions about whether or not the rise of the news industry was supply or demand driven. If it was supply driven then perhaps the history of the media is in need of reassessment.

1 Introduction

To speak of innovation – technological or otherwise – is to speak of markets and vice versa. The responsorial and cyclical nature of this relationship is the major theme of this paper. The conjuncture of telecommunications and journalism is the specific example used to explore this broader relationship. The intersection of telecommunications and journalism is highly politicized. This is partly because of the impact that technological change in telecommunications may have on the structure of the marketplace for ideas. Advancements in telecommunications tend to reduce the costs, and may lower the barriers to entry, of collecting and distributing information. This is all rather commonsensical, although perhaps insufficiently appreciated, for further investigation of the nexus of technological innovation, journalism, and politics promises to reveal fresh insights.

The following is an exercise in connect-the-dots. The setting is Britain and the imposed limits of knowledge are the years 1832 and 1926, being the year of the first Reform Acts and the incorporation of the BBC respectively. The intervening principal points of technological interest are telegraphy, telephony, and wireless broadcasting. Also of note are a number of incremental technological changes, such as quadruplex technology, which increased telegraph bandwidth fourfold and allowed for the erection of private, leased telegraph networks. Also in the dot-matrix are a series of political decisions, from the creation of the penny post, the repeal of the Stamp Taxes, and the nationalization of telegraphy, to the incorporation of the BBC. The motivating idea here is that once these dots are connected it

will become easier to connect dots in the more recent past and perhaps in the present as well.

The thesis used to connect these dots comes in two parts: 1) innovations in telecommunications reduce the costs of news collection and distribution, and so facilitate competition by disrupting established market hierarchies. 2) Attempts to legislate or otherwise effect the establishment of a free marketplace for ideas are utopian and misguided. Some combination of cooperation, collusion, and monopoly appears to be inevitable and conducive to the distribution of news capable of informing a democratic citizenry.

In applying this thesis to connect the dots, I grapple with four principal questions: 1) what has been the relationship between government and the market in the context of the mass media; 2) what has been, or should be, the role of monopoly, and other forms of 'anti-competitive' behavior, in the media industry; 3) what is the relationship between telecommunications innovation and market structure in the media industry; 4) what lessons may be derived from the historical record and applied to the current problems now facing the newspaper press.

2 Telegraphy and telephony¹

Passage of the Reform Acts, creation of the penny post, repeal of the Stamp Acts, and the nationalization of telegraphy may be linked together when understood as part of a process of deregulation and attempt to create a national market for the collection and distribution of news. This story is similar to the creation of a national market for theatrical entertainment in England during the nineteenth century.² During this period of deregulation, censorial restrictions on the press were removed, but attempts to establish a free market for competition in the collection and distribution of news throughout the country failed. Instead, a system of price discrimination predicated upon cartel agreements and collusion emerged, yet this market structure protected the provincial press from competition with the London newspapers and so protected plurality among newspapers and increased the distribution of news throughout the country.

The marketplace for ideas, although not referred to as such by contemporaries, was itself a product of ideas, namely *laissez faire*, market capitalism. Polanyi explained how the ideas of Adam Smith and the members of the Political Economy Club were applied to establish a market-based capitalist society in Britain.³ These ideas were likewise applied to the press. The social changes that led to agitation for

¹ The following relies extensively on J. Silberstein-Loeb, 'Business, politics, technology, and the international supply of news, 1850-1945', unpublished PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 2009.

² G. Bakker, *Entertainment industrialised: the emergence of the international film industry, 1890-1940* (Cambridge, 2009).

³ K. Polanyi, *The great transformation* (London, 1944).

reform of the franchise, and which culminated in 1832, created a national market, if not demand, for news. In 1840, it was the combination of this political movement and free-market ideology, as well as the growing network of railways, that led to the establishment of a penny postal system. Roland Hill, the postal reformer, claimed that a penny post would generate a flood of intelligence in even the far-off corners of the British Isles that would wash away rural ignorance. This potent combination of ideas and politics also gradually led to the repeal of the Stamp Taxes in the 1850s and 1860s.

The nationalization of telegraphy in 1870 was a part of this process. Contemporaries understood Post Office control of telegraphy to be an extension of postal reform. Proponents of telegraph nationalization iterated the desire, prevalent among postal reformers, to facilitate the inexpensive dissemination of information to the provinces. The introduction of telegraphy during the 1850s and 1860s disrupted competitive relationships in the news market because it dramatically increased the quantity of news available to provincial editors, as well as the speed with which it was transmitted to them. In turn, the number of daily provincial newspapers grew rapidly and competed more effectively with the national circulation of the papers published at London.

These provincial sheets were hamstrung, however, by the telegraph cartel that controlled access to the news. Part of the rationale for nationalization was to establish equal access to the means of news transmission, for private ownership had led to cartelization and control of the news flow to and from London. Provincial publishers contended that prior to nationalization the telegraph company cartel 'prevented Free Trade in news'. Nationalization was intended to liberalize the trade in news, but the result was a tripartite market arrangement consisting of the Press Association (PA), an organization of the provincial press, London press, and Reuters, a joint-stock news agency that acted as the principal provider of foreign news to the British Isles. This relationship, reinforced by collusive agreements, allowed for a system of price discrimination that benefitted the provincial press so that it was better able to compete with the London papers.

Equal access to telegraphy through nationalization was intended to create free competition among provincial newspapers, insofar as they were all placed on a level playing field, but, paradoxically, it quickly became apparent that to maintain a level playing field among provincial newspapers required the creation of a monopoly. Nationalization threatened to increase competition and the costs incurred by individual newspapers in gathering the news. Larger, wealthier provincial city newspapers were therefore advantaged over their smaller peers. So, nationalization liberalized trade in news, but a single news organization promised a reduction in costs to individual newspapers and to facilitate increased and equal access to the news.

A single dominant organization threatened to reduce the plurality of news sources at the news agency level, but to protect smaller newspapers by providing them with an inexpensive news report. Editorial demands for unique content resolved this impasse only slightly. Despite the potential advantages obtained from unique content, the existence of alternative sources necessitated increased newspaper editorial

work, and therefore larger salaries to compare different news reports, although often the majority of the secondary service ended up in the wastepaper basket. This was because the dispatches of the PA, and its few minor competitors, comprised succinct statements of fact that more or less constituted a news commodity, so there was consequently little room for product differentiation. Newspapers realized the advantages of unified control and so did the Post Office, which equally desired a monopoly to reduce expenditures and the quantity of work required of it by the press. Curiously, publishers and post office officials perceived in cooperation among all provincial newspapers a mechanism for the avoidance of monopoly.

Equal access to telegraphy protected provincial publishers because it enabled them to compete more effectively with the London press. The development of other British network industries, such as railways, exhibited a similar tendency to protect small business.⁴ The purpose of the PA – to facilitate the telegraphic distribution of news to the provinces – conflicted with the objectives of the London press, which circulated nationally. By uniting the provincial press and reducing the cost to individual newspapers of a necessary news commodity, the PA improved the bargaining position of the provincial press vis-à-vis the London newspapers. Control over national news gathered outside the metropolis enabled the PA to profit from any use that the London papers made of such news. The PA charged London publishers high rates for use of its news, profits from which were used to subsidize the news-gathering of the provincial papers.

The PA had greater need for foreign news from Reuters than the London press, which could rely on its numerous correspondents abroad. Consequently, the operations of the PA and Reuters became increasingly intertwined. From 1870, the PA and Reuters entered into a long-term exclusive relationship. The contract then signed between the two organizations was the first in a series of ten-year agreements that lasted, with few amendments, until 1925. The PA gained exclusive rights to Reuters's news outside London and agreed not to gather foreign news independently or to support other foreign news providers. Requests from competitors of the PA for access to Reuters news were declined. Reuters retained control over the London market. The PA paid Reuters £3,000 per annum for foreign news and provided Reuters with its news report, which the agency controlled exclusively outside the British Isles. This arrangement saved Reuters from domestic competition and freed it to exploit the international field, but it also ceded substantial power to the PA. The ascendancy of the PA was assured if Reuters remained the dominant foreign news provider, and any newspaper that sought an ample supply of foreign news had to join the association. A disadvantage of this agreement was that the PA could not exercise control over the way in which its money was spent in the collection of news. The benefits, but also the problems, associated with such joint-operation led gradually to closer working between the PA and Reuters and culminated in 1925 with purchase by the PA of Reuters.

⁴ F. Dobbin, *Forging industrial policy: the United States, Britain, and France in the railway age* (Cambridge, 1997).

The tri-partite market arrangement based on collusion and price discrimination was a consequence of nationalization. Post Office control of telecommunications technology, and its deployment of it, perpetuated this arrangement. Although opinion varied somewhat, Post Office officials perceived in nationalization a responsibility to provide equal access to the means of communication. It was for this reason that the duty of conveying news from town to town was expressly assigned by parliament to the postmaster general in 1868, and that it could not be handed over to any particular agency. Post Office officials had refused to allow publishers to operate their own wires because permitting them to do so would have violated 'the strict impartiality and the absence of undue preference and priority contemplated in the Telegraph Acts'.

The remit of the Post Office under nationalization constrained its willingness to surrender certain functions to the private sector, which delayed the implementation of, and reduced incentives to develop, new technology and limited the news report provided by the PA. This was especially the case with the use of private leased networks of telegraph lines. Private networks greatly increased productivity, in terms of number of words transmitted per hour, and generated significant economies of scale. By the 1890s, the Associated Press in the United States made extensive use of leased lines. Western Union agreed to provide such facilities as it reduced company costs and increased revenues. The extensive use of leased lines required considerable initial expenditure and so raised barriers to entry that protected the Associated Press's monopoly position. A commitment to equality in Britain also perpetuated the tripartite market arrangement and system of price discrimination that had evolved after nationalization because equal access to telegraphy was tantamount to protection for the provincial press from their London competitors.

Equal access to the means of communication also mitigated competition among provincial newspapers. This was the case because so long as the majority of news travelled through the Post Office, and was collected and distributed by the PA, the larger provincial newspapers paid for the news provided to the smaller regional provincial newspapers. In addition, no provincial newspaper could scoop its peers because all papers received like dispatches simultaneously from the Post Office. Due to unproductive labor, the Post Office telegram department was lamentably slow in dispatching press telegrams, yet so long as the majority of provincial newspapers received their telegrams through the Post Office, they each suffered alike.

During the 1890s, use by newspaper editors of the telephone, which initially was not under Post Office control, disrupted the established competitive order in the British news market and demanded that the Post Office depart from its tradition of neutrality. The phone was suited to the quick dispatch of results from sports events, which grew in popularity during the 1890s, and it facilitated more rapid news collection than was possible through the Post Office. Sometimes nearly an hour elapsed between the receipt of the same news by telephone and by telegraph. The disparity generated by the telephone in the time of news distribution created inequality among different newspapers and dissatisfaction with the Post Office. Owing to the time disparity between telephones and telegraphs, publishers demanded that the Post Office grant facilities for private telegraph wires. Newspapers with

private wires could circumvent the Post Office telegraph department, which was lamentably slow. Private wires enabled transmission rates 80 per cent faster than at the Post Office.

Inequality among newspapers threatened to undermine the cooperation necessary to maintain the PA. It was for this reason that the PA made abortive attempts to prevent the transmission of news via telephone by arguing that it was prohibited under the Telegraph Acts. Publishers wanted private wires to circumvent the Post Office. Officials at the Post Office were fearful that failure to meet this demand would cause publishers to employ private telegraph providers⁵ and result in a loss of revenue on press telegram traffic. Financial concerns caused the Post Office to reverse its policy of limiting inequality among the press and to grant a greater number of private wires to select newspapers.⁶ This advantage upset the competitive balance achieved among the provincial press.

By granting private wires, the Post Office altered the nature of competition. Publishers of smaller newspapers and the PA complained that to grant private wires to wealthy publishers actively manipulated the market. The advantage to newspapers with private wires was so great that, by the aid of rapid train services, they were able to sell editions in neighboring towns that contained news not yet transmitted over the public wires. The Boer and Russo-Japanese wars, which increased demand for news from Reuters and the PA, exacerbated the disadvantage felt by those newspapers without private wires. This led to an increased incidence of PA members pilfering the news from the London press and wiring it to their provincial offices independently.

The licensing of private wires also affected competition between the London and provincial press. In 1900, the London *Daily Mail* established a provincial edition published at Manchester. Viscount Northcliffe, née Alfred Harmsworth, publisher of the *Daily Mail*, maintained that one cause of his newspaper's success was 'its free use of cable and private wire'.⁷ The contents of the standard edition published at London were sent bodily via private wire so that the paper printed at Manchester was an exact replica of the one printed in the metropolis. The PA attempted to prohibit this development, but with little success. The number of London papers that published 'northern' editions increased and the PA became fearful it might lose the metropolitan newspapers as a source of revenue. If the London papers managed to unite and strike off independently, the PA stood to lose considerably. In 1906, the London press combined under the auspices of the Newspaper Proprietors Association.

⁵ Before nationalization and afterwards, newspapers were permitted to hire wires for a few hours at night. Such wires, provided they were used between agents of the same business, could be constructed and maintained by private telegraph companies. Only the wealthy provincial papers of the major cities could afford to rent wires. Smaller provincial papers protested for years against the rental of private lines. The smaller papers claimed that this privilege granted an unfair advantage to wealthy papers although the Post Office was obliged to treat all alike.

⁶ The first such wire was granted to the Manchester *Guardian* at the end of 1887.

⁷ C. Kaul, 'Popular Press and Empire: Northcliffe, India and the *Daily Mail*', in P. Catterall et al., *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996* (London, 2000), pp. 45-69

tion, and the PA began to raise a fighting fund lest the London press established a competing news service.

Use of the telephone in newsgathering also facilitated the emergence of new competitors, which challenged the PA. The Exchange Telegraph Company, although it was established in 1870, had not actively competed with the PA, but it quickly developed a profitable service of sport results and other news distributed by telephone. This service forestalled that provided by the PA, which was transmitted via government telegraph. In 1906, competition between the two organizations led to the formation of a pooling agreement to create a joint service. The length of the agreement, which was twenty-five years with five-years' notice of termination, was subsequently extended until the 1960s. This made it tantamount to horizontal integration. Profits from this joint service, in conjunction with those derived from the London press, helped to cover the cost of the news services provided by the PA to its members until the Second World War.

Three points should be emphasized at this stage: 1) technological innovation in telecommunications had a disruptive effect on market relationships; 2) paradoxically, the protection of competition in the news market required the erection of a monopoly; and 3) monopoly, collusion, and price discrimination helped to protect plurality among newspapers.

3 Broadcasting

These themes appear again in the formation of the British Broadcasting Company (BBCo), the predecessor to the corporation. Indeed, the similarities between the establishment of the PA in 1870 and the BBCo in 1922 are remarkable considering the fifty-odd years that separated both events. In his history of the formation of the BBCo, Ronald Coase explained how the Post Office favored the creation of a broadcasting monopoly to avoid undue preference for a particular radio manufacturer.⁸ As with the creation of the PA, maintaining competition among a variety of companies paradoxically required the creation of a single, monopolistic organization. The creation of a monopoly did not have so much to do with concerns about electro-magnetic interference,⁹ as much as it had to do with the maintenance of competition, and the protection of smaller firms. E.H. Shaughnessy, engineer in charge of the wireless section of the Post Office, explained that the necessity for monopoly derived from an inability to adjudicate among applicants for licenses to broadcast. 'The Post Office', he said, 'would be bound to be accused of favouring certain firms.'¹⁰ According to Coase, the proposals put forward by the postmaster general for the establishment of the BBCo, '...seem to have had as their aim the

⁸ R. Coase, *British broadcasting: a study in monopoly* (London, 1950), p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

¹⁰ As quoted in Coase, p. 21.

protection of interests of smaller firms.’¹¹ Similarly, the unwillingness of the Post Office to permit the BBCo to broadcast advertisements also protected small firms. This was because limited airtime meant that advertising on the radio would be expensive and therefore disadvantage smaller businesses.¹² Coase was unaware of the similarities between the history of the PA and the BBCo, but they are obvious now.

It is this paradox – the creation of a monopoly to protect competition – that created so many difficulties in determining competition policy vis-à-vis the PA, but even more so vis-à-vis the BBCo and its successor, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The Post Office and government found it expedient to create monopolies to protect small businesses, and so to perpetuate a modicum of competition among them, but in doing so it became extraordinarily difficult to contend with external threats to the preservation of the created monopoly. This was apparent with the advent of the telephone and private telegraph wires with respect to the PA. It first became a problem for the BBCo when relay exchanges¹³ for broadcasting were widely used. This conflict led to a series of contradictory policy decisions that neither entirely favored the BBCo nor facilitated the development of relay exchanges.¹⁴ While it was allegedly against precedent for a government appointed enterprise to compete with private enterprise, to permit private enterprise to gain an advantage over the BBCo would have undermined its existence. Interestingly, during the 1920s wire broadcasting was perceived by some to be the way of the future as it promised to alleviate restrictions in electromagnetic spectrum. The curtailing effect that the BBCo had on development of relay exchanges may be compared with current debates over the relationship between the BBC and digital broadcasting.

There is another parallel between the PA and the BBCo. It is that both organizations were formed by capitalists – in the first instance, newspaper publishers; in the second instance, radio manufacturers – to take advantage of an innovation in telecommunications technology. It is for this reason that Coase argued that the development of broadcasting in Britain was supply driven. By this Coase meant that the uses of broadcasting were unknown and largely unforeseen, and it was the promise of money, not demand among the public, that led to the development of radio in Britain. As P.P. Eckersley, chief engineer of the BBCo, explained, broadcasting came about because British corporations observed the vast sums of money that American companies were making. According to Eckersley, the establishment of broadcasting in Britain ‘had nothing to do with the then unhonoured and unsung transmissions, attracting no notice in the ordinary Press, and of which the general public was wholly ignorant.’¹⁵ It was similarly so with publishers’ use of telegra-

¹¹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹² Ibid., p. 36.

¹³ Wire-based networks that linked up subscribers to a central receiver.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 71-2.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

phy. The uses of telegraphy, like broadcasting, were initially uncertain, and it was publishers, more than the public, that lobbied for the nationalization of telegraphy.

It would appear that usage of telegraphy to generate sufficient news for the publication of daily newspapers was similarly supply driven. It does seem likely that the process of deregulation and the creation of a national market conducted during the first half of the nineteenth century generated increased demand for news among the public. It may be that improved printing technology alleviated a bottleneck in supply and enabled publishers to meet a growing desire for daily publication. Alternatively, the daily supply of inexpensive newspapers may have generated demand where little previously existed. Publishers may have perceived that increased throughput, combined with efficient manufacture, and supplemented by advertising revenue presented an opportunity to make money. Consumers, rather than requiring daily news, excluding commercial information, may have felt obliged to purchase a daily newspaper to keep abreast of their fellows. Newspaper consumption exhibits network externalities, and it may have been that the cost of not purchasing the paper was higher than the penny it cost to buy.¹⁶

Another way in which to think about whether supply or demand drives a particular industry is the price elasticity of demand. A supply-driven industry is one in which supply is the main determining factor of price. This is typically the case when the price elasticity of demand is inelastic, as with heroin, for example. Although allegiance to a particular news medium changes according to time and preference, evidence suggests that the BBC license fee is inelastic. Evidence also suggests that the price elasticity of demand for newspapers is highly inelastic.¹⁷

If the development of the mass media was more supply- than demand-driven then a reassessment of its history is required. For example, if suppliers more than consumers were responsible for the establishment of daily mass circulation newspapers, what does this say about the democratic function of the Fourth Estate? More topically, should we lament the loss of the modern newspaper if its production was stimulated more by supply than demand? The ability of publishers, in the first instance, and radio manufacturers in the second, to influence the uses of telecommunications innovations suggests that regulatory capture may have frequently been at play in the history of the mass media. To a certain extent, such arguments overlook the complementary nature of government policy and business interests and the strange relationship between monopolistic news organizations and the preservation of competition in the marketplace for ideas. Nonetheless, a more candid and realistic assessment, as opposed to the traditional kneejerk antagonism of most scholars, of the business of the mass media may offer a way in which to begin assessing the value of the modern newspaper and to consider what effects the radical change currently underway in the world's press may have.

¹⁶ This would suggest that once a newspaper has declined in importance among a certain readership its circulation is likely to decline precipitously.

¹⁷ G.L. Grotta and M.L. Taylor, 'Circulation price elasticity in the daily newspaper industry', *Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism* (1976); W.D. Reekie, 'The price elasticity of demand for evening newspapers', *Applied Economics*, 8 (1976), pp. 69-79.

4 Conclusion

This exercise of connect the dots raises a number of important issues. Here are four:

1) Why were the formation of the PA and BBC so similar? There is a wealth of literature about the rise of the welfare state in Britain, but little effort to situate the press in this important, and presumably pivotal (generally and in terms of the media), development. The examples of the PA and the BBC suggest that long-standing approaches to the relationship between government and the market applied also to the press.¹⁸ The medium is only part of the message, for the evolution of the media industry was both technologically and socially constructed.

2) What has been, or should be, the role of monopoly in the media industry? The history of the PA and the BBC suggests that in certain circumstances these traditionally anathema 'anti-competitive' business practices may be welcome in the marketplace for ideas. It is not the case that a media monopolist would offer a mixture of products different from, or inferior to, that which a competitive industry might supply.¹⁹ The concern is that monopoly makes the consequences of a seller indulging preference for non-pecuniary profits more serious than they would be in a competitive setting. Several cranks may pose few difficulties because they are likely to be cranky in different ways, but 'problems of a different order of magnitude are presented if the same crank controls all of the media outlets in a market.'²⁰ The critical component in policy decisions is not to prevent cooperation, collusion, and monopoly at all costs, but to ensure that certain mechanisms are in place to mitigate the adverse effects of these practices while sustaining their positive effects. Cooperation among firms party to an 'associative monopoly' is an effective solution.

3) What is the relationship between telecommunications innovation and market structure in the mass media? The development of the British news market adhered less to a model of free market competition imagined by classical economists, and co-opted by proponents of a free press, and more to the model of capitalist competition put forward by Schumpeter.²¹ Restraints of trade in the form of cooperation and collusion facilitated a modicum of stability without impinging upon the long-term growth of the mass media. The perennial gale of creative destruction, in this case typically caused by the invention of telecommunications technology, was

¹⁸ Dobbin, *Forging*, passim.

¹⁹ R.A. Posner, 'Monopoly in the marketplace of ideas', *The Yale Law Journal*, 86:3 (1977), p. 571.

²⁰ The degree of concern is likely to change with the size of the firm in question seeing as a small firm owned and run by an individual is more likely to reflect that person's opinions than a large media conglomerate owned and operated by many different people. R.A. Posner, 'The appropriate scope of regulation in the cable television industry', *The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science*, 3:1 (1972), p. 107.

²¹ J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, socialism, and democracy* (New York, 1976 [1942]).

sufficiently disruptive to facilitate a reordering of market relationships that undermined the potential for abuses associated with collusion and the formation of associations for the provision of news.

4) What lessons may be derived from the historical record and applied to the current problems now facing the newspaper press? Cooperation is, and has always been, the way forward. Before the widespread use of telegraphy, newspapers exchanged news by post. When the telegraph was invented, newspaper publishers formed news associations. The Internet offers great possibilities for increased collaboration. The model of the PA (or the American Associated Press) – an association of newspapers sharing content – should be reinforced and exported by encouraging greater cooperation among newspapers around the world. Newspapers should form a world-wide associated press using the Internet to share information and news. A vast network of newspapers exchanging news would greatly reduce costs and ensure the widespread distribution of information.

This might be achieved through exchange agreements among the world's national news agencies, many of which are similar in organization. Imagine an associated press of associated presses. There is historical precedent for this as well. From the 1860s to the 1930s, the news agencies and associations of Europe and the United States actively cooperated. Between the world wars, the principal news agencies of Europe formed a collective organization of Allied Agencies. The news organizations in these cartels exchanged their respective news reports, which reduced the costs to each and facilitated the distribution of international news.²² An international cooperative arrangement along these lines would aggregate news from throughout the world and redistribute it to the world's press. The news report could be shared among newspapers and the association could post it directly online. This is more or less what Internet news aggregators do now, except they do not provide the content, they simply gather it from around the web. An international organization of this sort could serve as an online news aggregator by and for the press and could compete effectively with Google and like news services.

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²² Silberstein-Loeb, 'Business, politics...', ch. 6.