

Fading dots, disappearing lines

Post-Snowden journalism in Norway

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What was the point of (publishing) the leaks?

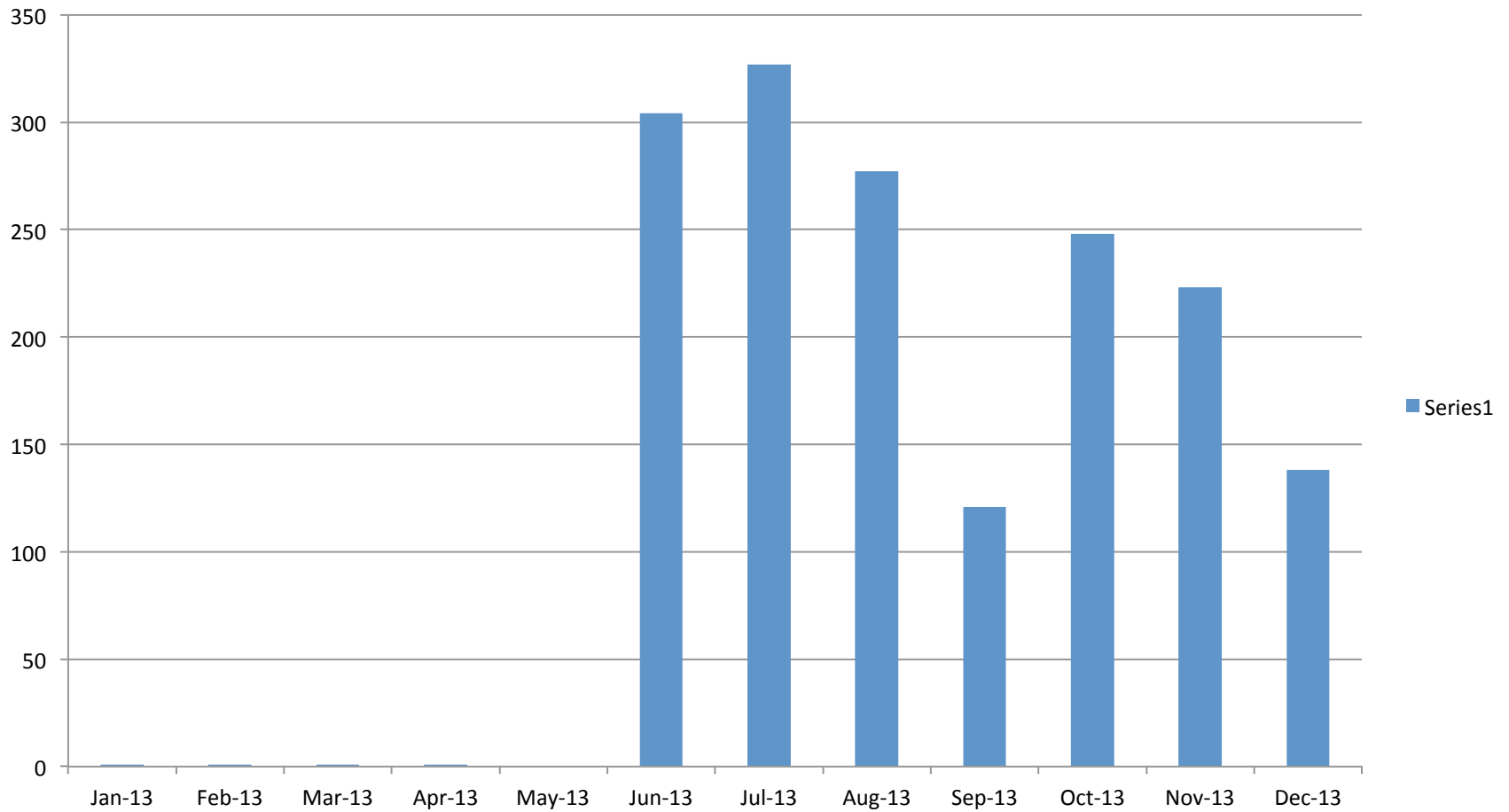
Rusbridger @ UiO honorary doctorate lecture:

- 1) The nature of consent
- 2) The role of parliaments
- 3) Legality across technologies
- 4) The role of the private sector
- 5) Encryption and web integrity
- 6) Risks to digital economy
- 7) International relations
- 8) Truthfulness
- 9) Privacy
- 10) Confidentiality
- 11) Proportionality
- 12) Information security

Looking for these themes in Norwegian news media

- A-tekst/Retriever search 2013-2015
- Search terms: «Snowden» OR «NSA»
- June each of those years: looked for themes mentioned, modalities towards mass surveillance and/or Snowden
- Similar search through 1-week sample of print newspapers from NO, SE, DK looking for texts on «trust», «surveill*», synonyms for surveillance, implicitly about surveillance.

Raw numbers 2013



June 2013: N=275

Rusbridger's issues mentioned

1 Consent	2 Parliament	3 Legality	4 Priv. Sector	5 Web integr.	6 Digital Econ
37	20	49	61	-	12

7 Internatl Relations	8 Truth	9 Privacy	10 Confi- dentiality	11 Effective- ness	12 Info security
64	22	78	7	32	18

June 2013 – complexity

- Numbers of Rusbridger points mentioned:
 - 0: 120 (of which 88 about Snowden's person)
 - 1: 45
 - 2: 43
 - 3: 26
 - 4: 19
 - 5: 14
 - 6: 5
 - 7: 1
 - 8: 2

Complexity or «complexity»

President Barack Obama used the press conference and his speech in Berlin to attempt to calm criticisms of the USA's surveillance of telephone and internet traffic. But so far, he has not succeeded [foreign relations]. According to the recent Congress hearings [role of Congress] with the leadership of the National Security Agency (NSA), it has been stated that a number of terrorist actions have been averted as a result of this surveillance [effectiveness]. In that connection it was supposedly the internet traffic, rather than surveillance of telephone traffic, that was helpful. But not so much help that it averted the Boston terrorism, The Economist notes [effectiveness]. The NSA leadership demands to be believed when they say that terrorist actions have been averted, but they couldn't say anything about specifics [truth]. It's a matter of confidential documents. Congress is more concerned with surveillance of American citizens than of what the USA does to the rest of us in the world [foreign relations] who use Twitter or Google [role of private sector]. Merkel and other European leaders see that their citizens are free prey for American surveillance since they are customers of American multinational companies. This is obviously a matter for concern. What long-term effects this may have on trust in American companies, everything from Apple to Facebook, is unknown. So far, their stock values don't seem to have been impacted by the furor. But European competitors may start using as a sales argument that they are outside the reach of American intelligence [risks to digital economy]. (Aftenposten, "Kommer storebror til å lære?" [Will Big Brother ever learn?], 21 June 2013: 3)

June 2013 - modalities

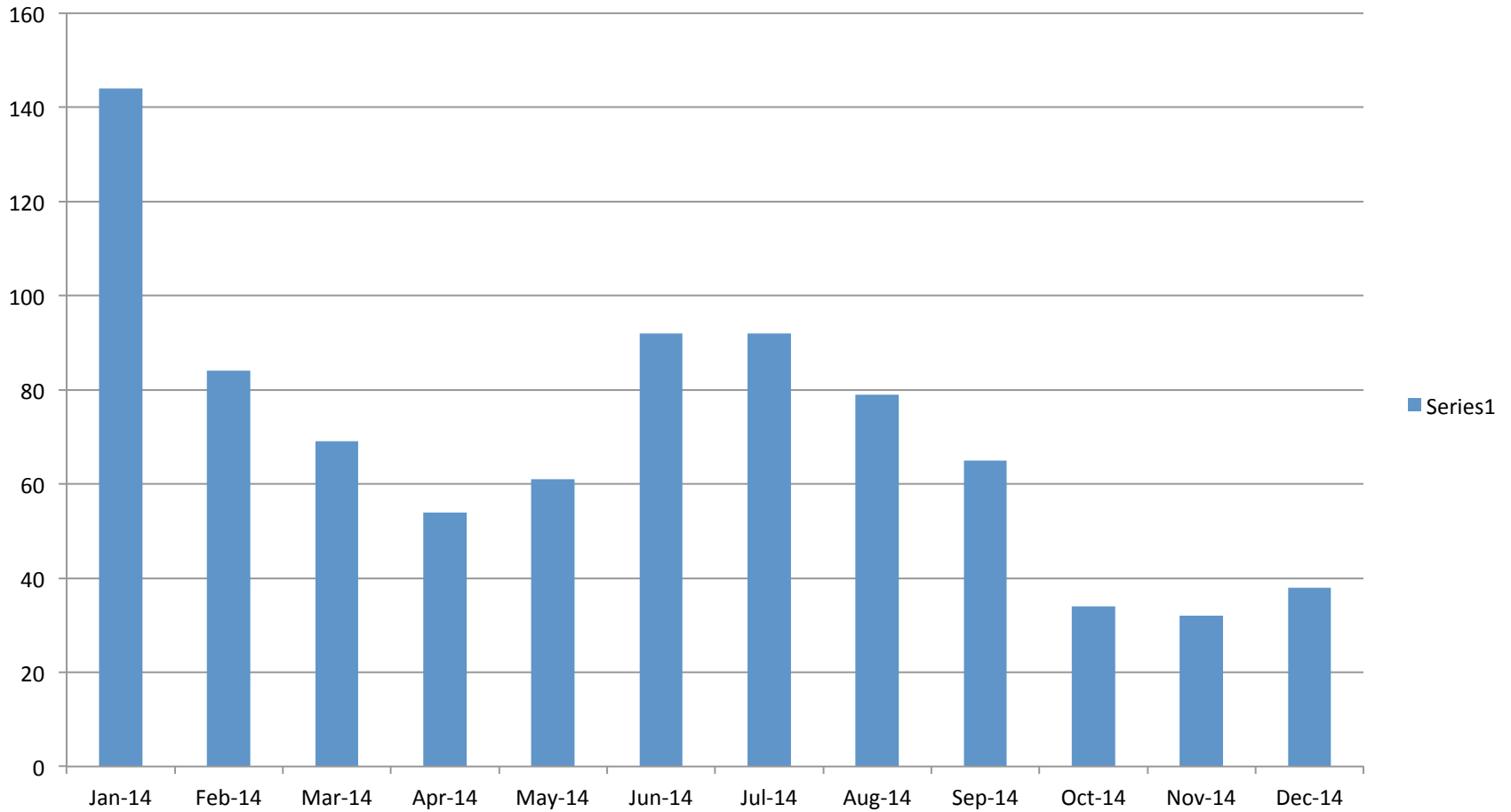
- Modalities re: Snowden

Positive	Neutral	Negative	
31	230	8	

- Modalities re: Surveillance

Positive	Neutral	Negative	
11	180	78	

Raw numbers 2014



June 2014 (N = 74): Rusbridger's issues mentioned

1 Consent	2 Parliament	3 Legality	4 Priv. Sector	5 Web integr.	6 Digital Econ
1	-	3	2	1	-

7 Internatl	8 Truth	9 Privacy	10 Confidentialit y	11 Effectivene ss	12 Info security
9	2	6	-	-	1

June 2014 – complexity

- Numbers of Rusbridger points mentioned:
 - 0: 58 (of which 48 are about Snowden as person)
 - 1: 9
 - 2: 8

June 2014 - modalities

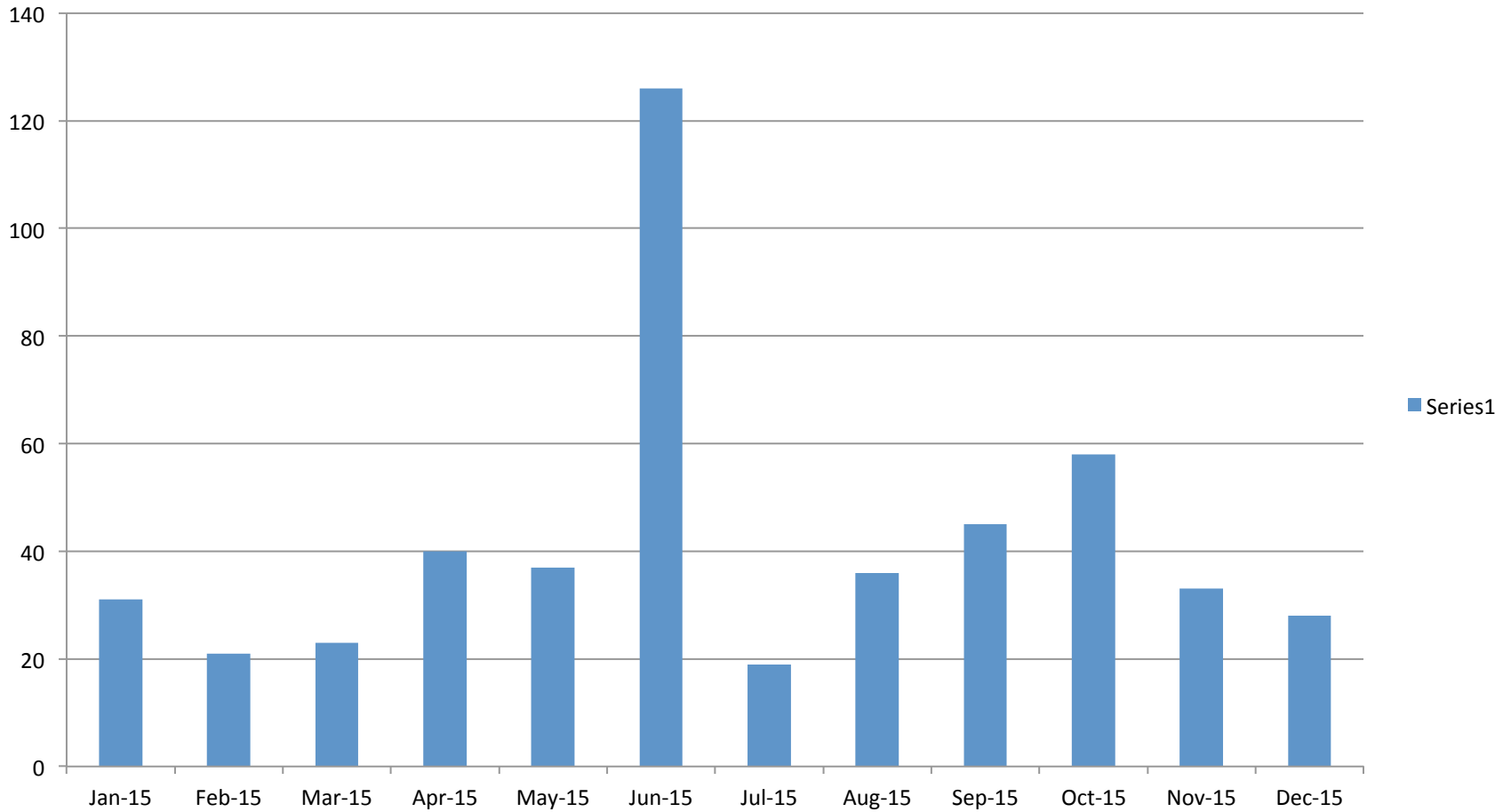
- Modalities re: Snowden

Positive	Neutral	Negative	
12	61	2	

- Modalities re: Surveillance

Positive	Neutral	Negative	
1	45	29	

Raw numbers 2015



June 2015 (N = 115): Rusbridger's issues mentioned

1 Consent	2 Parliament	3 Legality	4 Priv. Sector	5 Web integr.	6 Digital Econ
7	7	24	6	3	1

7 Internatl	8 Truth	9 Privacy	10 Confidentialit y	11 Effectivene ss	12 Info security
16	6	40	5	6	10

June 2015 – complexity

- Numbers of Rusbridger points mentioned:
 - 0: 43 (of which 37 about Snowden as person)
 - 1: 45
 - 2: 10
 - 3: 8
 - 4: 3
 - 5: 6

June 2015 - modalities

- Modalities re: Snowden

Positive	Neutral	Negative	None
12	42	2	19

- Modalities re: Surveillance

Positive	Neutral	Negative	None
0	28	19	27

What gets lost as discourse fades?

- 2013
 - All themes mentioned aside from encryption
 - Most articles short and single-themed, but many linked multiple themes, showing complexity of issues
 - Most articles critical of mass surveillance
- 2014-2015
 - Encryption theme completes list
 - Theme of Snowden as person grows
 - Many themes fade, complexity fades fast, but reappears when events reactualize them
 - Critique of mass surveillance remains

Effectiveness of leaks and publication strategy

- Far more effective than earlier leaks
 - But would not have happened without those
- And yet needs constant revival
 - Simplification sets in
 - Dulling of senses/familiarity/resignation set in
- Practices remain unchanged
 - Increasingly dangerous with onset of fascism
- Superheroes never enough – we all need to take responsibility