Rapport Kennis Delen

Waarom de schrijver eigenlijk de uitgever moet betalen

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Landsmeer 21 november 2011

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In oktober 2011 hield ik een speech voor Eurojuris International. De speech voor zover die over kennisdelen gaat is bijgevoegd. De conclusies en onderzoeken die ik heb gebruikt zijn ook van belang voor professionals als advocaten en anderen die menen dat zij ook zelfstandig kunnen gaan publiceren.

De belangrijkste conclusie komt uit een onderzoek uit Maastricht. Ik voeg het bij als bijlage.

Stijn Driessen kwam tot een belangrijke conclusie. Publiceren van kennis op een extern weblog heeft een significant beter effect op de factoren vertrouwen en reputatie dan publiceren op een eigen weblog. Daarbij komt dat deze twee factoren dan een beter effect hebben op de bereidheid tot aanbevelen.


Neem een eenvoudig voorbeeld dat ik al jaren aanvoelde. De publicatie van een column door een managementconsultant op Advocatie.nl heeft een significant effect op haar betrouwbaarheid en reputatie. De columns worden immers gepubliceerd op een extern kanaal. Zou zij de columns gewoon op haar eigen site plaatsen dan zou dat effect veel minder optreden. Ik heb met haar een gesprek gehad en zij zegt het letterlijk zelf zo: “het is niet zo dat ik geen acquisitie hoef te doen, maar de columns geven mij wel een ingang op een niveau waar ik anders niet zo makkelijk binnen zou komen”. Bovendien stelt zij dat ze (mede door de column) veel minder voorwerk en introductie over zichzelf hoeft te doen.

Trekken we dit door dan is dus het publiceren op een site of in een tijdschrift van een externe uitgever een duidelijke aanbeveling voor degene die kan publiceren. In de door mij in mijn speech opgenomen cases kan je ook duidelijk zien hoeveel meer werk dit oplevert. Van een 15-20% bij Dirkzwager tot zelfs 60% bij Diana Simons.

Kortom: als we kijken naar wie het meest profiteert van een (online) publicatie dan is dat vaak de schrijver. Het zou dan ook logisch zijn als die zou betalen.
Sharing Knowledge

Now let’s have a closer look on knowledge sharing and the benefits that you can have from it. In 2010 a Dutch student Stijn Driessen wrote his Master Thesis “Sharing knowledge online” A comparison of the effects of internal and external blogging”. He did a very nice survey. They made an experimental company and made real weblogs. Then they questioned people who did not know the company or blogs were fake. In the survey they tried to find out if and how sharing knowledge is good for a company’s Trust and Reputation.

The whole thing is about sharing tacit knowledge. For the non English, Tacit Knowledge means knowledge that is more than just facts. Knowledge that includes your personal know how. The survey found out that sharing knowledge on the internet results in: a significant higher trust in the sender. It also resulted in a significant higher reputation of the sender.

The survey also showed a big difference between publishing your knowledge on your own publications or websites or on others (external websites). So if you write an article for a magazine or website that is not your own, it will have a higher effect on your Trustworthy and Reputation.

It also has a slight positive effect on the willingness to recommend the sender/sharer. I don’t know if you are familiar with the NetPromotorScore, NPS, it’s a method to measure the willingness of your clients to recommend your firm to other people.

So what can we learn from this? In theory you can benefit from sharing knowledge. Finding a lawyer is very much based on values like trust and reputation.

Traditional
Now I worked with hundreds of lawyers so I know you have a lot against my notion. What is there against sharing knowledge?
The first and most traditional answer is: that you are giving away your competitive advantage.
Your knowledge is your main asset. I already explained to you that is not the issue. Your main assets are:
1. solving your clients problems
2. interpreting and using your knowledge in new manners
You supply the hole in the wall, not the drill. As Susskind clearly stated.

Liability
As was to be expected from a good lawyer, they will question this idea because of their worries concerning liability. If you share information with the public and you simplify that information in such a way that it is understandable for “normal people” then you can’t use phrases with your normal exemptions. But nobody is expecting that your information is complete and accurate. They expect the information to be clear and helpful. Everybody will understand that free information found on the internet is not the same as an advice from a real lawyer. But be aware, the more individual you advice will be, the more you run a risk. From all people that I spoke about publishing legal information, none had any experience with liability issues. All sites and publishers use a liability waiver/disclaimer.

Case 1 Mediareport http://www.mediareport.nl/nl/
A couple of years ago a group of lawyers decided to start a weblog. They were working at Kennedy Van de Laan. The nr 18 in the Dutch Legal 50. They wanted to write a weblog on Media Law for non lawyers. So they wrote about advertisement, press law etc. They wanted to
write from their own experiences. It became a huge success. And they moved the weblog more
towards Kennedy van der Laan. As in Powered by Kennedy van der Laan.
The results are good. If you type in a question in Google about a recent case about a commercial,
The mediareport will be on the first Google result page.
That by itself has a good effect on publicity. Journalists tend to search by Google for specialists
on certain topics. So after a blog about deep linking to photographs of the Dutch Royal family on
Mediareport the lawyer who wrote it was next’s day’s guest specialist on the commercial Dutch
show news.
The Mediareport helped Kennedy Van der Laan to become one of the best known Law firms on
media law.

Case 2 Magriet Koedoode (http://mkoedooder.devos.eu/)
She works in a 20 lawyer firm. She is the most traditional one in my cases. She publishes a
handbook for Artist Law. She writes articles and yes she blogs and send tweets into the world.
Important in her opinion also: win
your cases.
But I can tell you, the handbook and all the knowledge that she spreads is really tacit knowledge.
It is knowledge that people and even colleagues would be willing to pay for. But instead she
spreads it around. Does it hearts? No she is one of the best known lawyers in Holland for artist
law.

Case 3 Diana Simons Intermediair (http://www.intermediair.nl/overzicht/advies/juridisch-
advies/9500/juridisch-advies.html)
Not all blogs and knowledge sharing is done by big firms. Diana is a friend of mine. She started
to write for a Dutch website Planet.nl in 1999, one year before the internet bubble came to its
highest point.
She switched to Intermediair a couple of years ago. Intermediair is a well-known Dutch weekly
for high educated people up to 40 years. Diana writes about employment law. Every two weeks
she writes an article. Readers are invited to ask their personal questions. The publishers pay
Diana a (very low) amount of money to answer all these questions. She gets paid for 1 morning.
There are tens of questions every week. The more questions she answered, the more answers she
has in here database. She tries to use as much standard parts in her answers.
SO she is giving away a tremendous amount of knowledge. Every week. Any idea how this pays
out? More than 60% of all her work comes out of the Intermediair blog. Can you imagine? More
than 60%. And she gets paid for it also. That is what I would call a win win situation.

Case 4 Dirkzwager Partner in Kennis (www.partnerinkennis.nl or www.dirkzwager.nl)
The last example. Dirkzwager is the number 17 in Hollands Top 50 law firms. It is middle sized
firm in the eastern part of Holland. It is much like your firms, not a big one, not top off mind.

Last year they won two prices for the new way that they are sharing information. So what do they
do? They centralized their whole information flow.
In the middle they put themselves. They write articles, information and so on. They publish that
trough traditional media, newsletters, client conferences and so on. But they also made a
complete new website called partner in knowledge. On that website they publish almost daily
information on different legal causes. The same information is published on Ipad, Iphone and
several other media. I have the Blackberry app on my phone right here. They have daily
automatic newsfeeds for some of their large clients.

So does it work? The app has been downloaded more than 10.000 times! Can you imagine a way
to reach that many people?
They had an increase of business in the next year on the topics they are giving away information of 15%. They get business from companies they normally never had, from all over Holland. Because the internet doesn’t stop in the eastern part of Holland. They are being called by radio and newspapers to comment on legal issues. And people from large firms in Amsterdam suddenly realized there is such a firm as Dirkzwager.

And what did it cost? In the old days they published a lot of brochures and unreadable newsletters. After this project they had half of the marketing budget then before the project.

They really got the taste of their success. So they are building a new office and the ground floor will be a coffee shop (no not like you know them from Amsterdam) and a library. They will be open for their clients and students. The full library and free coffee.