

Aerlines from Past to Present

“Sharing International Air Transportation Research: The Short Haul Between Academics, Students and Professionals”

To celebrate the 50th Issue of Aerlines Magazine, the editorial team has decided to give you a glimpse behind the scene of the development of Aerlines since its foundation in 1994. This article consists of three elements, sketching our scene behind the screen. One about the history, the second about our missions and goals and the third is about three small interviews with people important to Aerlines.



by: Willem-Jan Zondag, Hubert Croes and Bram du Saar

ing the magazine to the members and other relatives of Aerijs. Right from Issue 1, Aerlines was published in the English language, although the primary readership was by then located in the Netherlands.

Aerlines Foundation 1994

Aerlines was founded back in 1994 as in-house magazine of student’s association Aerijs, which was also started that year at the University of Amsterdam. In these early years, Aerlines predominantly served as an information and communication channel for members of the student’s society offering articles about study trips, internships and the various other activities organized by Aerijs.

On 22 February 1995, the first official issue of Aerlines was published. The editorial team primarily consisted of students and recent graduates while the magazine was sponsored by some aviation companies.

The Printed Magazine Period Until 2003

During the printed magazine period, Aerlines was printed four times per year on average with around 800 copies per issue. The magazine was distributed amongst members and other relatives of Aerijs. Right from the beginning, Aerlines was published in the English language, although the primary readership was by then located in the Netherlands.



The monthly reports of January and February 1995 say: “Compared to the pilot issue much has changed. The size has grown to A4, from now on, the text will appear in English. For the first time we included advertisements, we started a number of columns to be continued in the next issues and the activities agenda of other associations has been included (VSV Leonardo da Vinci and Euroavia).” The report goes on saying that the board received many positive reactions. “People were astonished because such a young association like Aerijs already managed to publish such a magazine.”

Our pilot edition (“Issue #0”) was published in Dutch on A5 format introduc-

Aerlines evolved with time. Back in 1995 Aerlines Issue 1 paid attention➡

➡ to the new phenomenon of 'Internet'. At that time, the Internet was in its earlier days; many have not even heard of its existence, the word 'online' was about to be invented and internet air travel bookings were not yet common. Sixteen years ago such an article explaining what the Internet was had an educational value.

In the initial years the magazine also served a more social role in the study organization Aerius. Several articles and regular features reflected the personal engagement of our editorial staff with the aviation industry. A regular feature as "Thank You for Flying..." was both fun to read as well as informative for that era as internet sites on aviation where people could share their flying experiences were not as common as they are today. With the rise of Internet air travellers had new possibilities for sharing their experiences. Hence the focus was laid on more descriptive features as "Airlines of the World" and "Airport of the Word". Many of these were initially based on personal visits and study trips undertaken by our readers as well as staff members. Some major projects (at that time still on the drawing board) as the new Berlin-Brandenburg Airport and the construction of Terminal 5 at London Heathrow were discussed as part of study trips reports by our editors.

Right from the first issue Aerlines published a mix of (semi)scientific articles and essays, interviews, 'field reports' and various distinctive Aerius / Aerlines columns / regulars bringing the academic and professional world together.

The Aerlines design / layout also evolved with time. The early Aerlines issues were layout in early versions of WordPerfect/ MS Word. We never exactly knew in advance how the magazine would look when printed as ➡

Aerlines and its Mission

Established in 1994 as the magazine of a student's association at the University of Amsterdam, Aerlines served as a relationship magazine for the association, informing its members and other relatives about the association, its activities combined with the publication of easily readable 'scientific' articles.

Between 1994 en 2002, Aerlines was a traditional printed magazine. During the '90s, the magazine professionalized and got a more serious, a mature look and feel. In line with the scope of Aerius, the magazine was distributed internationally. Both suffering financial circumstances in the aftermath of 9-11 as well as strong opportunities that the internet offers for publishing and distributing content were drivers for Aerlines to evaluate its way of publishing. Moreover, the popularity of the Aviation Economics courses at the University of Amsterdam deteriorated which directly impacted the necessary pool of volunteers that Aerius depended on.

After some brainstorm sessions within the editorial team and Aerius board during 2003, it was decided to continue Aerlines as an e-magazine with a dedicated website. Distributing Aerlines via the internet proved highly successful, as recipient numbers soared from 800 during print

Reinier Evers, one of the founding fathers of Aerlines Magazine



What kind of vision did the first editor have for Aerlines Magazine at its start in February 1995?

In 1995, our main goal was to somehow unite students interested in business and aviation in the Netherlands and Europe at large, as nothing in that field really existed. The magazine aimed to bring its readers articles about business-related aviation topics with an academic twist, and interviews with leading aviation experts and senior managements. And while knowledge dissemination was definitely high on the list, it was also Aerlines' 'business card', something we could hand out and send out. In the end, having one's own magazine made it all very 'real' ;-)

In 1995 you wrote a short and progressive article about the potentials of internet for Aerlines? What would you write right now?

Obviously, 1995 was early days, but even then it was easy to see the appeal of a global bulletin board to match any kind of demand and supply, in this case information, and internships for our students. If we would write something about the web and Aerlines, it would probably be about social media, about crowd-sourced content... in general, I think the online space makes it possible to carry out every idea we had at the beginning at low or no cost at all. Quite cool.

publication to over 10.000 online. Meanwhile, Aerlines continued to improve the quality of its content. Mostly by attracting talented contributors and sophisticating the editorial process.

In the autumn of 2006 a taskforce was created to explore the possibility to continue Aerlines as an independent entity. Aerius faced a continuing decline in member numbers and financial difficulties and by 2006 was obstructing rather than facilitating the growth of Aerlines. Early 2007, Aerius members voted for the enactment of the Aerlines Magazine Foundation (AMF) and transfer of ownership of Aerlines Magazine to this new entity. Six months later, with the foundation in full swing operation, the remaining Aerius members voted to disband Aerius. An act executed by the Aerius Board in October 2007.

The Aerlines Magazine Foundation is a non profit publisher of professional and academic aviation related content, with strong links to student, business and academic communities worldwide. Aerlines Magazine is our core brand: a free internet journal on academic air transport matters. The publication of papers written by students has been a primary focus area. It sets Aerlines apart from other journals on air transport as well as business magazines. With their independent, young and bright attitude, stu-

➡we only had photos prints that were cut in the correct size and delivered to our copier separately. The first digital photos were used Aerlines Issue 9 in the series 'Airline of the World'. That was quite something in those days!

The 'Mediamorphosis' as of 2003

The aftermath of 9/11 had direct consequences for the balance sheet of Aerlines as well. Aviation companies that previously sponsored were no longer able to supply necessary finances to publish a printed magazine. Moreover, the future was not really bright for our sponsoring needs. The question was raised whether Aerlines had to stop publishing its magazine or whether it had to do something really new?

After some intense brainstorming sessions, the Board and editorial team agreed to continue doing something new. The new thing became an electronic magazine (e-zine), which was in an early development stage in the publishing market. We decided to commence publishing articles in PDF format enabling readers to download it for their own reference.

It saved several thousands of euro's in printing and distribution costs per Issue, while we were able to distribute the magazine to all contacts from the Aerlines database - also abroad. This readership was by then around ten times as high as the number of copies that were previously printed.

The mediamorphosis made also clear that Aerlines has a unique positioning amongst all available aviation publications, such as journals, trade magazines, hobby magazines and magazines published by other organizations. ➡

dents often unleash interesting views on contemporary aviation issues.

Aerlines has a mission. During its establishment, the Aerlines Magazine Foundation formulated the following Mission Statement of Aerlines: "To publish and make available academic research about strategic and operational air transport topics through a high quality e-journal for a broad international reading public (the industry, academia and public authorities). Within this framework, we want to publish articles that are predominantly written by students on a graduate level (M.A. / MS.c.) as well as academic researchers about their research".

To fulfil its mission, Aerlines aims to build bridges between educational and academic institutions on the one hand and the aviation industry, its individual actors, professionals and all who share the same interest in aviation on the other hand. The foundation aims to run a medium that offers high-quality information of predominantly academic quality for a large reading public. By means of the Internet, Aerlines offers an independent platform where students, researchers and businessmen can come together to share knowledge and competencies, to read and submit relevant information and to actively use other related services as offered on our website.

Angela Cheng-Jui Lu, member of the Aerlines Editorial Review Board



The first editors had a vision for Aerlines Aerlines Magazine that aims to bridge the gap between students, researchers and business professionals as it was founded at an university.

Along the years Aerlines has become a distinct journal. Is the initial mix in contributions still up-to-date?

Although it is nice to provide interesting parties in the aviation world with a place to publish their thoughts, the final answers to this question depends on the direction that Aerlines is going in the future and what type of readers that Aerlines would like to attract and keep. If Aerlines is interested in attracting readers from both academic and business world, it would be beneficial for Aerlines to remain such mix in contributions.

Aerlines publishes on a wide array of subjects; economics, planning, air law, etc . Do you think this - in the age of Internet and search engines - (still) suites the reader of tomorrow?

Since the world has become more dynamic than ever, it is important for interesting parties in various sectors of aviation to be aware of wide array of subjects. The dynamic focuses that Aerlines has will be suitable for the readers of tomorrow. In particular for aviation managers, such awareness is a must.

Target Market & Readership

Our visitor numbers vary from modest to good according to popular internet standards; our real strength lies in the background and interest of those visitors.

Different readers of Aerlines Magazine can be identified:

1. Aviation business representatives;
2. Aviation Policy makers and governmental representatives;
3. Students (mainly on Bachelor and Masters level with various educational backgrounds);
4. Aviation researchers;
5. General visitors (belonging to none of the above).

Voluntary and Not for profit

All of our online services are available on a no-charge basis. Aerlines Magazine a non-profit initiative. Editors and managerial staff work on a voluntary basis and all income is used to cover publication costs. This is an important differentiator compared to competing magazines that publish articles related to those published in Aerlines Magazine.

As a network organization, Aerlines Magazine fully depends on the input of volunteers. Aerlines cannot function properly without the invaluable assistance of many other volunteers in its network. The most important volunteer groups are highlighted hereafter.

➔ Within this publishing landscape, Aerlines has positioned itself as a popular-scientific ‘special interest’ magazine focused on students, graduates and researchers from the academic world as well as from companies. Our aim is to primarily publish articles based on ongoing or finished research with a focus on practical implications.

The Disconnection from Aeri-us

During the course of the 2005-2006, it became clear that the student’s base necessary to run a student’s association was declining below critical mass. Ultimately, it was decided to discontinue student’s association Aeri-us but to simultaneously start-up a new association with the sole purpose of publishing Aerlines Magazine.

Going Online

Going online was a kind of pioneering step back in 2003. Possibilities were quite limited; experience with building and maintaining websites was not widespread amongst the editorial team. The first site was simply build in HTML style with limited pictures and just text. All article were only downloadable in PDF. The site was build and maintained with Microsoft Frontpage.

Simply uploading articles to our new website was not the only means of distributing the content to our readership. We also want to regularly sent e-mailings with new Issues. Back in 2003, these mailings were sent with good-old Microsoft Outlook. We had no mailinglist management software at hand. All new registrations, e-mail address changes and unsubscribe requests were manually processed. Quite a lot of ‘back-office’ work indeed!

After experimenting a year or so, we evaluated and concluded that our website was a good means of shar- ➔

Hans Heerkens, member of the Aerlines Editorial Review Board



What makes Aerlines special?

What sets Aerlines apart from other publications are its accessibility and its breadth. There are no complicated procedures for submitting articles and the editors are easy to reach for assistance. This is important for people who have never written trade or scientific publications before, but also for busy executives who want to share their knowledge and experience. The articles are short and concise, making them very accessible for readers with a superficial interest in a subject, while providing enough information for further exploration if desired. The scope of subjects ensures that in every issue there is something for everyone, and I know of no other journal in which scientific, trade and viewpoint articles come together so naturally.

What milestones should Aerlines strive for?

Perhaps Aerlines could engage more in ongoing discussions about both topics that are – or should be - ‘hot’ at the moment and about longer-term issues. In that way, the journal could become more of an ‘opinion leader’ or ‘opinion inducer’. I am not referring primarily to scientific articles but to viewpoints aimed at starting the debate in the industry on topics that are not yet broadly recognized as important, and bringing new viewpoints to ongoing debates in the industry.

Editorial Team

The editorial Team is responsible for the whole editorial process of acquiring, writing, reviewing, editing and publishing articles. Currently, six persons are a member of the editorial Team. Although the editorial Team members irregularly write articles themselves, most activities have a coordinating and executing character.

Editorial Review Board

The editorial review board has been established to assist the editorial team in reviewing incoming manuscripts. This Board primarily consists of researchers working at universities around the world. The review board contains of six members.

Content

The content of Aerlines Magazine is an appealing mix of semi-scientific articles. The journal focuses on fields of expertise like Airline Economics, Airport Economics, Spatial planning & environment, Aviation Policymaking, Air Law, Aviation Psychology, Aeropolitical Matters, Aviation Education, Aircraft Manufacturing, Engineering & Maintenance, Air Cargo, Human Factors and Air Safety.

Editorial Process

The process follows an input-throughput-output model:

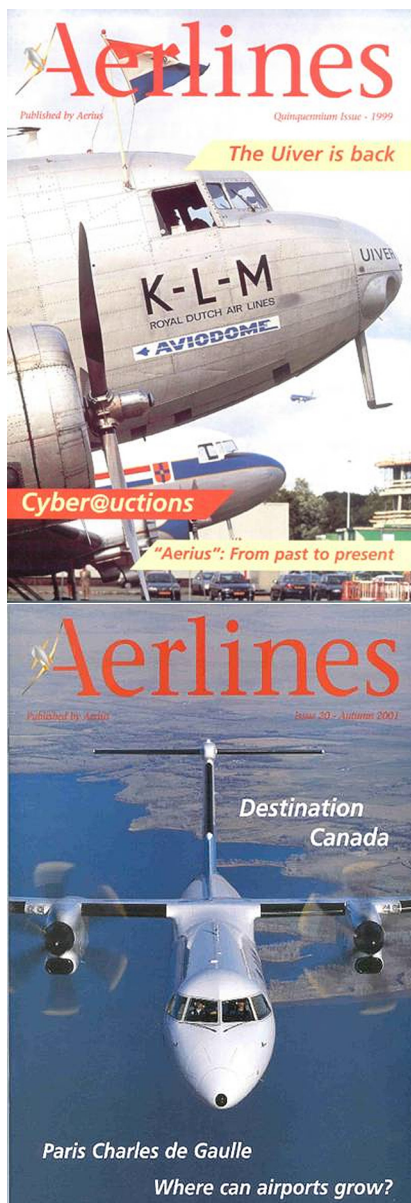
Input: From an editorial viewpoint, manuscripts are the primary input variable. Manuscripts are sometimes submitted spontaneously by authors, but in most cases, the Chief Editor approaches the author of a paper with a request to write an article based on her / his paper or thesis. The selection criterion for a paper is: (1) it is about a topic that fits our domains of interest, (2) has an academic research hypothesis, (3) is relevant for a broad reading public. Generally speaking, authors of papers are approached if their paper is about topic, relevant for a large part of our readership. Authors are seldom asked to write about a certain subject; in most cases the request refers to a paper that has already been written.

Throughput: When the articles are collected, the editorial team coordinates the review of the manuscripts. This is either done by one of the editors or by a member of the Editorial Review Board, depending on the topic of the paper and the available expertise of editors and members of the Review Board. The review process is conducted according to clear guidelines culminating in comments which are shared with the author. When the author has changed his manuscript and this change has been approved by the responsible editor, the articles is checked on grammar and then will undergo a lay-out process. The

ing the Airlines story. As time progressed, new content management systems (CMS) became available for free. Thanks to our Internet editor Frank van Soldt, we adopted this new content management system. The system (Land Downunder for geeks) enabled us to take advantage of innovative features; users were able to register, log-in and create profiles for example. It was also more easier to upload articles and maintain the site.

Time had also come to make a more professional move to a mailinglist management system that fully automatically processes subscriptions and unsubscribe requests. The chosen mailinglist manager (YMLP) also provided us with better insight in statistics and the readership on article level for each issue published (sent by mail).

Reaching 2009, the editorial team became aware that the CMS in use was old-fashioned, the creator didn't make any improvements on it while we were unable to use modern internet features like tagging. So we decided to change to a new CMS again... This time we choose Wordpress, one of the world's most popular and free content management systems. Transferring all content from the old to the new CMS was quite a hell of a job. But in the end, we we're able to present our readers a state-of-the art website full of readable articles.



Digitizing History

As we only started publishing online as of Issue 23, we have around 9 years of historical articles available. Unfortunately, not all articles are available online yet. However, we are in the process of digitizing our archives which will be made available online as this digitizing process continues...

The Bright Future

After being eight years online, Aerlines has settled itself amongst the air transport journals available online with offering our readers new articles frequently. Aerlines persists in not publishing stories for the sake of publishing but to review evaluate each contribution prior to publishing it. In order to better get in touch with its readership, Aerlines has also started its own Linkedin group as well as Twitter channel. Combined with a state-of-art website, Aerlines is in pole-position to offer its readers high quality articles about air transport in the foreseeable future. We hope you enjoy reading it! ■

Covers of back issues of Aerlines Magazine

outcome is an article that is ready for publication.

Output: The output is clear and simple: the publication of an article in the issue of our e-magazine.

Magazine ormat

Aerlines Magazine is published four times per year and distributed electronically to all members in the database. Every issue contains eight articles; 5-6 have scientific background and 2 others are book reviews.

The scientific articles are attracted from researchers and students from all around the world. A main differentiator of Aerlines Magazine compared with other periodicals on air transport is the publication of articles about MSc / PhD theses. For this reason, we try to attract articles written by students who have finished their research.

The Website

Visitors of www.aerlines.nl reach the web site for the greater part by direct request. This is a good indication for the brand awareness of the trade name "Aerlines" and "Aerlines Magazine". Despite this year's calibration of Google' PageRank1 system, which led to lower rankings for many site worldwide, Aerlines maintained its website

popularity ranking of 4 on a scale to 10. This ranking is considered average on a worldwide scale.

The name "Aerlines" was the most frequent used keyword or tag. As the AMF is a network organization we are also often hit via keywords and tags of other (partnering) organizations. This also positively influences our rating.

