

Quarterly evaluation report

Y3Q1: October-December 2013



open briefing
the civil society intelligence agency

Highlights

- Open Briefing secured two grants worth £4,000 in total.
- Open Briefing published the most publications in any quarter since we launched (21).
- Open Briefing received coverage in five international media outlets.
- We reached our first intelligence and capacity-sharing agreement with an intelligence and risk consultancy.
- We launched the Open Briefing blog.
- We reversed the declining trend in website visitor numbers, with a significant increase on the previous quarter.
- The Open Briefing marketing strategy and action plan were completed, ready for implementation over 2014.
- Progress was made on six out of 10 objectives in the last quarter, and overall we are on target with six of our objectives.

Table 1. Summary of progress achieved to date against each stage 2 objective.

Objective	% of target achieved	Progress over last quarter	On target?
Respond to 100 intelligence requirements from civil society organisations	19%	-	X
Make six significant interventions in key peace and security debates	33%	-	X
Attain 3,000 subscribers in total	59%	▲	✓
Attract 4,000 unique visitors a month to the Open Briefing website	49%	▲	✓
Receive 12 media mentions	92%	▲	✓
Achieve an average online influence score of 60/100	85%	▲	✓
Publish 90 Open Briefing publications	57%	▲	✓
Expand the team to 35 members in total	69%	▼	✓
Raise £190,000	31%	▲	X
Generate 9.5% of income from sources other than trusts and foundations	22%	-	X

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1. Respond to **100** intelligence requirements from civil society organisations

Open Briefing has so far responded to **19** intelligence requests from civil society organisations during stage 2 (19% of target). There has been no change in this since last quarter.

2. Make **six** significant interventions in key peace and security debates

Open Briefing has so far made **two** significant interventions in a key security debate during stage 2 (33% of target). There has been no change in this since last quarter.

3. Attain **3,000** subscribers in total

Open Briefing has a total of **1,775** subscribers to its e-bulletin, social networks, podcast and other outputs (59% of target). This is up from 1,444 subscribers at the end of the last quarter. Our e-bulletin still has the most subscribers (761), followed by Twitter (431).

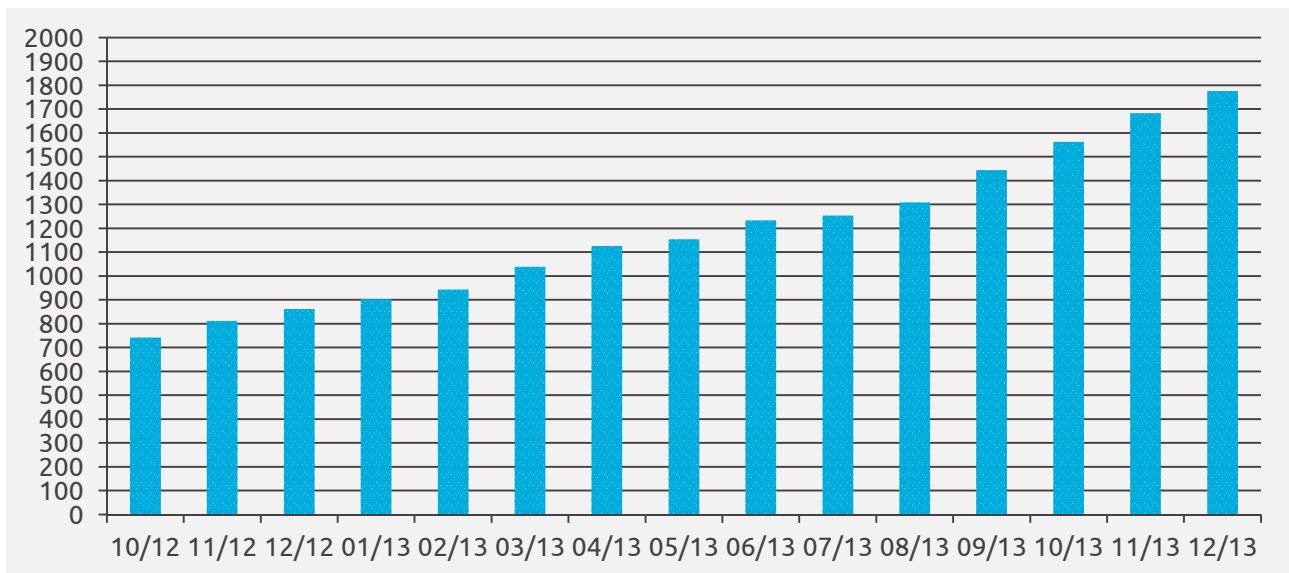


Figure 1. Number of subscribers to the Open Briefing e-bulletin, social networks, podcast and other outputs.

4. Attract **4,000** unique visitors a month to the Open Briefing website

There were an average 1,784 unique monthly visitors to the Open Briefing website during this quarter; up from an average 1,579 visitors during the previous quarter. The average unique monthly visitors over stage 2 so far is **1,971** (49% of target).

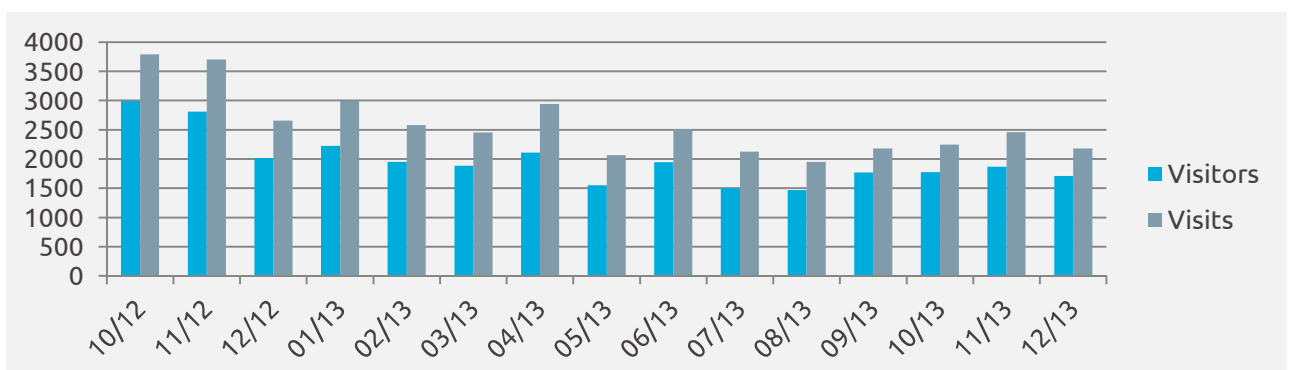


Figure 2. Number of unique visitors and visits to the Open Briefing website.

The previous three quarters had seen the number of visitors drop each quarter, so this reversal of the trend is very welcome. Although significantly lower than the high figures achieved at the end of 2012 (a final quarter average of 2,606 visitors), it is hoped that our new marketing strategy and action plan will further increase the number of website visitors. Central to this strategy is producing more original content and enhancing our social networks, activities which seem to be already driving more traffic to our website.

5. Receive 12 media mentions

Open Briefing received five media mentions in this quarter, bringing the total during stage 2 to **11** (92% of target):

- 'Interview with Chris Abbott of Open Briefing', TZM Global Radio, 18 December 2013 (international).
- 'West Cornwall think tank's global impressions', *The Cornishman*, 31 October 2013 (United Kingdom).
- 'Russia's next generation stealth UCAVs loom large', *Defence Report*, 22 October 2013 (United Kingdom).
- 'The proliferation of armed drones in six case studies: China, India, Iran, Israel, Russia and Turkey', *Radio Radicale*, 7 October 2013 (Italy).
- 'The threat from unmanned aircraft', *Tin Tức*, 5 October 2013 (Vietnam).

This included an hour long interview with our Executive Director, Chris Abbott, on TZM Global Radio and an article in the Vietnamese official newspaper, *Tin Tức*, on our armed drones report.

Part of our new marketing strategy includes actions designed to increase our profile generally and with key journalists and bloggers specifically.

6. Achieve an average online influence score of 60/100

Open Briefing uses a basket of online metrics to measure social media influence and relative website importance. Using these, our average online influence score across this quarter was 51/100, including a Google PageRank of 5/10. This was up from 47/100 during the previous quarter, though part of this increase was due to the exclusion of metric that had been keeping the figure artificially low following changes to their service in September 2013. Our current online influence score is **51/100** (85% of target).

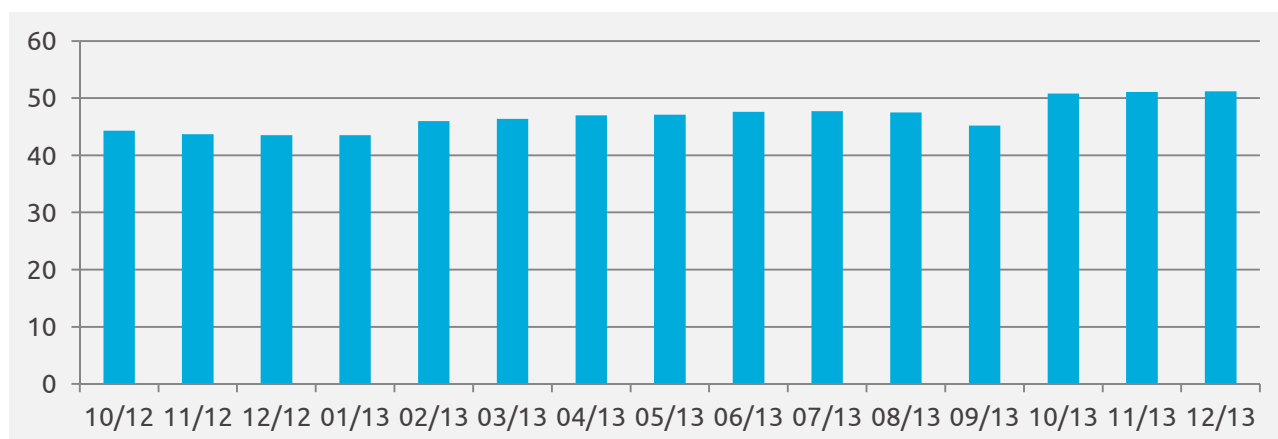


Figure 3. Open Briefing's average online influence score.

7. Publish **90** Open Briefing publications

We launched two new initiatives this quarter designed to increase the output of original Open Briefing material. The first of these was our intelligence sponsor programme, which involves intelligence and capacity-sharing agreements with carefully vetted private intelligence and risk consultancies. Our first sponsor is Bradburys Global Risk Partners and with them we are producing *The Weekly Briefing*, a free weekly political and security risk update. We intend to expand this programme to a dozen partners eventually. The second initiative was the launch of the Open Briefing blog in November 2013, which provides our users with the latest news from Open Briefing and occasional comment from our analysts.

These changes resulted in the highest quarterly output since Open Briefing was launched, with 21 publications during this quarter. We published three intelligence briefs, three articles, 11 weekly briefings and four comment pieces. The issues covered included:

- Iranian cyber warfare
- Political and security risk in Greece
- US drones strikes in Pakistan
- Violent extremism in Nigeria
- The Iran-P5+1 nuclear deal
- Australia and the Five Eyes intelligence agreement
- Sustainable peace on Bougainville

We have now published **51** publications in total during stage 2 (57% of target).

8. Expand the team to **35** members in total

There are currently **24** members of the Open Briefing team, including staff, volunteers and advisers (69% of target). Two members of the team left Open Briefing to pursue other interests this quarter.

9. Raise **£190,000**

Open Briefing secured grants this quarter of £1,000 and £3,000 from the Philamonic Trust and Marmot Charitable Trust respectively. We have so far raised **£59,690** towards our 2012-15 budget (31% of target).

10. Generate **9.5%** of income from sources other than trusts and foundations

2.1% of our income over stage 2 has so far come from non-grant sources (22% of target). There has been no change in this since last quarter.

Please note, in October 2013 we took the decision to stop filing open source intelligence from other vetted sources on our website and only publish our own original content. Up until that point, the Open Briefing intelligence desks had filed 369 items as part of our objective to file 1,000 items under the regional and issue intelligence desks (achieving 37% of target). This objective is no longer relevant and has been removed from this and future evaluations. Material from other sources will still be filed in our digital library and disseminated through our social networks.

Summary of planned work

- Intelligence brief on Qatari aid to Sudan.
- Briefing paper on Burma/Myanmar.
- Forecasts for insecurity and conflict in Africa.
- Brief on key developments for 2014.
- Weekly political and security risk briefings.
- Intelligence analysis handbook.
- Implementation of marketing action plan.
- Open Briefing style guide.
- iOS Open Briefing app.
- Links with private sector intelligence and risk companies.

Chris Abbott, Founder & Executive Director

21 January 2014