Tekstboekje
‘Robocop’ rollout in city malls

1 A fleet of crime-fighting robots will soon patrol malls in New York City – pushing the buttons of security guards who fear they will one day be replaced by the soulless gadgets.

2 The tech start-up Knightscope will roll out the rent-a-cops at shopping centers, college campuses and sports arenas in 16 cities, including Manhattan, by the end of the year, company co-founder Stacy Dean Stephens said. “Just their presence lowers crime. They have a commanding physical appearance and a psychological effect on people who are breaking the law,” he said.

3 The 5-foot-tall watchmen on wheels weigh 300 pounds, come equipped with multiple sensors and a 360-degree camera, along with license-plate recognition technology.

4 But the robots lack one important feature, say city security guards – a winning personality. “Shoppers like to interact with people and socialize. People come over to me and tell me how nice I am. Robots aren’t comforting,” said Michelle, a security guard at the Manhattan Mall.

5 The bots are potentially attractive to malls because they cost less per hour to ‘hire’ than humans. They can be had, via subscription, for $7 an hour.

*New York Post, 2017*
Nike's response to Serena Williams’ catsuit ban

by Chelsea Howard

Nike responded to Serena Williams’ catsuit ban after the French Open introduced a new dress code for players’ outfits, which will make the competitors dress more conservatively at the tournament.

The apparel company tweeted a photo Saturday of Williams wearing the tight black suit at Roland Garros earlier this year with a motivational message. “You can take the superhero out of her costume, but you can never take away her superpowers. #justdoit,” the tweet read.

French Tennis Federation president Bernard Giudicelli said earlier this week Williams will no longer be allowed to wear the catsuit at the French Open in the future. “I believe we have sometimes gone too far,” Giudicelli told Tennis Magazine. “Serena’s outfit this year, for example, would no longer be accepted. You have to respect the game and the place.”

Williams compared her outfit at Roland Garros to something from Marvel's Black Panther and said in May the new look made her “feel like a superhero.” Williams also explained she felt like it was “an opportunity to inspire a whole different group of amazing women and kids.”

The outfit Williams wore wasn’t just a fashion statement, though, as it was designed to protect against blood clots. Williams struggled with a swelling of clotted blood after giving birth to her daughter, Olympia.

*sportingnews.com, 2018*
Goats in Brooklyn

Ya herd?

Everyone’s favorite grassmunching goats are coming to Prospect Park next month.

The small herd, which was brought to the park last year to help clear vegetation near the green space’s famous Vale of Cashmere, has returned for another summer.

Last year, the six-goat crew was so good at their gig that they ate themselves out of a job and had to return to their upstate New York home. But they came back in August for a second round, as well as to provide nature-starved New Yorkers a great excuse to visit the park.

The Prospect Park Alliance is hosting a special “Fun on the Farm” day to welcome the goats back to the park on May 21. Attendees can take a tour of the goats’ work area in the park’s woodlands, learn how sheep’s fleece is turned into wool at the Lefferts History House, and see a sheeplearning demonstration at the Prospect Park Zoo.

The event is free and open to the public.

AM New York, 2017
Favela Painting

“I’ve never been to a museum in my life, and now I’m living in one,” said one of Brazil's poorest of her Vila Cruzeiro favela neighborhood. Dutch artists Jeroen Koolhaas and Dre Urhahn perform a vibrant form of communal art they call “Favela Painting”. A favela is a Brazilian shanty town that houses the city’s poorest citizens, those who cannot find gainful work or a proper home. Where others have forgotten Brazil’s favelas, Koolhaas and Urhahn have aimed to instill pride in the poor by giving these neighborhoods an entirely new, entirely artful appearance.

The team at Favela Painting travel to Brazil’s favelas, live there among the poor, propose paint pieces that re-invent the neighborhood and produce them hand-in-hand with the locals. The results are absolutely stunning, a colorful mix of geometric patterns that turn the ignored, the ugly into living works of art. Those who live in these Favela neighborhoods can take pride in their homes and their communities, thanks to the charitable work of the Favela Painting team.

thecoolist.com, 2019
I was a video game sceptic, but now I'm a fan

adapted from an article by Jessica Furseth

1 Gaming is a surprisingly “love it, or just don’t get it” kind of activity. I’ve tried video games a few times over the years, as people seemed to be having so much fun with them. But I never got into it. Last year, though, my curiosity was piqued again as I watched my partner Luke play the newest Mario game with his children. One slow Sunday, I picked up the Nintendo Switch. No one was more surprised than me when I kept coming back to the game.

2 Video games often get a bad rep – however unjustified – for being violent, and bad for attention and literacy. But according to Celia Hodent, a game user-experience consultant with a doctorate in psychology, gaming can add many positive things to people’s lives. “A good game can put you into a flow state,” says Hodent – that feeling when you’re fully immersed in an activity, and time flies because you’re enjoying yourself. “When you’re watching a film or listening to the radio you may eventually check your phone. But when you play a game, you have your hands on the controller. You’re not getting distracted. You have to pay more attention, and you’re more immersed in the task,” says Hodent.

3 Mario Odyssey was especially soothing when I felt tired and restless – perhaps because it was an absorbing environment where I was in control. In other words, I was enjoying playing Mario because I was getting better at it. Things made their own kind of sense in the Mushroom Kingdom, and figuring out how that world worked was rewarding. But I won’t be jumping over fire rings to punch a giant turtle in the real world. Do the skills I have been gaining translate into other walks of life?

4 There are many examples of how purpose-built computer games can be effective at teaching things, ranging from how kids can confront bullies to innovative thought for corporate problem-solving. “Recent research projects have applied computer game technologies to police armed-response training, cancer cell modelling and the virtualisation of historic keyboard instruments,” says Kenny McAlpine, an academic at Abertay University, Dundee, who specialises in gaming.
5 But when it comes to games designed for entertainment, it’s harder to tell exactly what real-world benefits they can have. Some specific evidence has been discovered: researchers in Sweden found that playing *Tetris* immediately after a traumatic event reduces the likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, probably because the game interrupts memory consolidation. In addition, cognitive neuroscientist Daphne Bavelier found that playing an action game such as *Call of Duty* for 10 hours will improve a person’s detail vision and multitasking skills, and almost double their capacity for tracking moving objects even five months later.

6 I picked up *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* over the festive holidays. I knew it would be more frustrating than playing *Mario* on assist mode. **12**, Luke says it’s the best game he’s ever played, so I figured that it might be worth some initial hardship. I know now that the further into the game I get, the better it will be – and that figuring things out and learning is what makes video games so rewarding, and ultimately, so much fun.

*theguardian.com*, 2018
A refuge for orangutans?

1 In the lush rainforests of central Borneo, a group of young orangutans, endangered refugees from human development and now released here, swing from branch to branch in an unspoiled, 5,200-acre tract of Salat Island, acquired last year by the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation. The foundation is working towards the relocation of hundreds of orangutans currently housed in cages in a nearby rescue shelter.

2 The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation called Salat Island a "major breakthrough" in helping to save the species. For the last decade, the foundation has eyed the island as a potential orangutan haven: fertile with fruit trees, guarded from poachers by rivers and with no indigenous orangutan population to compete with for territory. But acquiring it was no easy feat: the sums involved were immense, and buying it from the local government presented a major administrative challenge that involved lots of paperwork.

3 Until early last year, when a major Indonesian palm oil company, PT Sawit Sumbermas Sarana (PT S.S.S.), swooped in and purchased part of the island for orangutan rehabilitation. The company even agreed to pay some of the foundation's costs for monitoring and maintaining the island. "We believe we could coexist," the company's chief executive, Vallauthan Subraminam, said.

4 But the foundation's partnership with a palm oil company worries some environmentalists, who are concerned that it provides a flawed company an easy cloak of respectability. The huge expansion of palm oil plantations is widely acknowledged to be a key driver of rainforest destruction in Indonesia, which deprives the orangutans of habitat.
“Isolated acts of kindness by bad actors like PT S.S.S. don’t erase that history and current pattern of destructive behavior, and they won’t save the Borneo orangutan from destruction,” said Gemma Tillack, the agribusiness campaign director at the Rainforest Action Network, an environmental organization. “If the company was serious about protecting the species,” she added, “it would make a binding commitment to end deforestation on its plantations.”

Concerns over deforestation have led some major palm oil buyers to halt purchases from the company. But for the orangutan foundation, the chance to release as many as 200 orangutans from cages was difficult to pass up. “If you say you don’t want to use their support, O.K., where do you get your support for the orangutan?” said Jamartin Sihite, the foundation’s chief executive. He said the foundation was also working with the company to protect wild orangutans currently on its plantations. “You cannot save orangutans if you work alone. No one can do that,” he added. “We must cooperate.”

Nearly every week government agencies and locals notify the foundation of baby orangutans that were taken as pets by villagers, usually after their mothers were killed as pests. The organization spends years rehabilitating the often-traumatized young orangutans. At the foundation’s forest school, local women working as surrogate orangutan mothers train the youngsters in survival skills, from identifying predators to learning which foods are safe to eat. But after a few years of ‘forest school’, many orangutans left their cages because suitable release sites are increasingly hard to find. But this year, the group hopes to release around 150 orangutans, thanks largely to Salat Island.

Some conservationists consider rehabilitation programs counterproductive, an expensive distraction from the critical mission of habitat protection. “Rehabilitation centers may even make the deforestation process worse,” said Erik Meijaard, director of Borneo Futures, a conservation group. “It goes full circle: Palm oil companies get rid of the forests, send in their orangutans along with some money. That’s just not how things can be if we’re serious about saving orangutans and other wildlife.”

Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation officials said that, unfortunately, their services were not in demand. The day after the release on Salat, phones rang at the center. People in a village a few hours away had taken in a young orangutan, its mother nowhere to be found. The foundation sent a team to fetch the orangutan and bring it to the center.

The New York Times, 2017
Why marketeers are trying to offend you

adapted from an article by Amelia Tait

1 Barely a day goes by without people shouting on social media about something that offends them. Last week, it was Snapchat’s anime filter. The lens distorted users’ faces into gross, undeniably racist caricatures. It was offensive. It was also introduced a week after Snapchat’s biggest rival, Instagram, dominated the headlines with a new feature. “It wasn’t our intention to offend anyone,” a Snapchat spokesperson said last Wednesday. After a social media backlash to an advertising campaign or ill-considered tweet this is often the first reaction of a brand. It’s an easy enough excuse but the trouble is that it’s not always true.

2 “Marketeers use these shocking techniques in order to break through the clutter and be noticed,” says Kathleen Mortimer, a professor of marketing and entrepreneurship. “Social media has encouraged companies to produce something controversial which may appeal to the younger audience who may then be happy to share the material online.” Numerous brands have used what has now been dubbed outrage marketing to their benefit. Most infamous is Protein World, the little known fitness brand that soared to notoriety after their “Beach Body Ready” adverts. Protesters vandalised the adverts – which were considered sexist body-shaming – and they were promptly scrapped after a social media campaign. But that didn’t matter. Thanks to the viral backlash, millions of people worldwide saw the adverts and Protein World made £1m in four days.

3 But just because angry retweets are cheaper than buying a billboard in every major city doesn’t mean that being offensive doesn’t cost a brand. It is clearly a 23 strategy. “It is recognised that unethical behaviour can lead to a lack of trust and consequently customers end up not believing anything that companies say in their advertising,” says Mortimer. Ryan Holiday, a former marketing director, agrees. “Almost every day I get an inquiry from someone saying, ‘I want you to do something crazy’. The reality is that they don’t. They want the media attention but they aren’t willing to take any risks. In some ways, only the crazy people do.”

4 Yet the risks aren’t as large as they’d first appear. Although people on social media frequently threaten to boycott brands, marketeers have long since called their bluff. “Social media amplifies the illusion of outrage,
making it seem more dangerous and risky than it is,” according to Americus Reed, a marketing professor. “If you have a million people expressing outrage, there may be a hundred who do something that has any serious effect. Memory fades.” Countless examples prove this. Although Abercrombie and Fitch’s sales initially plummeted after the CEO said he didn’t want “fat” people wearing their clothes, their sales figures have recently returned to growth. Abercrombie and Fitch and Snapchat are still incredibly popular brands.

5 All of this is something social media users need to bear in mind next time they see an offensive advert. It is obviously important to call out sexism, racism, and other prejudice when you see it, but it’s also important to question what your outrage will achieve. Sometimes, it might be better to silently stop buying a product and spread the message by private message or word of mouth rather than unintentionally promote a brand. “What we need to ask ourselves when we read something with outrage in the headline is ‘Who profits?’,” says Holiday.

*newstatesman.com, 2016*
The Earth’s Smartest Birds

1 Until the 21st century, birds were largely dismissed as simpletons. How smart can you be with a brain the size of a nut? And yet the more we study bird intelligence, the more those theories are breaking down. Birds make good use of the allotted space for their tiny brains by packing in lots of neurons.

2 But what actually qualifies a bird as smart? The definition of intelligence should be broader than it is, scientists say. “We’ve restricted the playing field to things we think only we can do,” says Kevin McGowan, an expert on crows at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York, “so being able to fly to Argentina, come back, and land in the same bush is not valued as intelligence. If we’re talking about standard intelligence – i.e. mimicking human speech or solving problems – it always comes down to parrots and corvids.”

3 Members of the corvid family (songbirds including ravens, crows, jays, and magpies, to name a few) are among the most intelligent birds. A study published in 2017 in the journal *Science* revealed that ravens even pre-plan tasks – a behavior long believed unique to humans and apes. In the simple experiment, scientists taught the birds how a tool can help them access a piece of food. When offered a selection of objects almost 24 hours later, the ravens selected that specific tool again – and performed the task to get their treat. “Monkeys have not been able to solve tasks like this,” Mathias Osvath, a researcher at Sweden’s Lund University, said in a previous interview.

4 While crows do nearly as well as ravens solving intelligence tests, McGowan stresses that crows have an uncanny memory for human faces – and can remember if that particular person is a threat. “They seem to have a good sense that every person is different and that they need to approach them differently.” For instance, crows are warier of new people than ravens are – but conversely are more comfortable with humans they had interacted with before, according to a study published in 2015 in the journal *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*. “The crows around here, they know my face,” says McGowan. While at first the birds living near the lab seemed to dislike McGowan for approaching their nests, they love him.
now that he’s started leaving the birds healthy treats. “They know my car, they know my walk, they know me 10 miles away from where they’ve ever encountered me before. They’re just amazing that way.”

“There’s also a lot going on in the little walnut brains of parrots,” says McGowan. “And they live so long that they can amass a lot of intelligence and a lot of memories.”

many species of parrots have a penchant for human speech, the African grey parrot is the most accomplished. In the 1950s, Harvard comparative psychologist Irene Pepperberg began teaching an African grey parrot, Alex, English sounds. Before he died prematurely in 2007, Alex mastered roughly a hundred words, could use them in context, and even grasped the concepts of same, different, and zero.

nationalgeographic.com, 2018
We need to fix the plastic problem

adapted from an article by John Vidal

1 Environment secretary Michael Gove has pledged to stem the tide of plastic debris by announcing a consultation on a plastic bottle return scheme for England, which aims to get people to recycle more. Gove’s initiative is welcome, but minimal, and will have zero impact on the vast and growing scale of the plastic problem.

2 Plastic may have profound societal benefits, but this most successful of all manmade materials doesn’t biodegrade but simply fragments into smaller and smaller bits, until microscopic or nano-sized particles enter the food chain, the air, the soil and the water we drink. We cannot get rid of it. Plastic is in what we eat, drink and breathe.

3 If we can breathe in these micro- and nano-sized particles and fibres, the scientists conjecture, they are likely to get into the human bloodstream, lung tissue and breast milk, or become lodged in the gut and respiratory systems. Some microparticles may pass through the body without causing harm, others may lodge there dangerously. Many are suspected to be carcinogenic or to have hormone-disrupting properties.

4 We don’t know the concentrations that are safe for adults, let alone infants. Although we have known for years that some of the additives used to make plastics flexible, transparent or durable are chemically dangerous, few have been tested on humans.

5 It is not enough to single out plastic bottles, coffee cups, or the microbeads found in cosmetics. Banning all plastic bags and single-use packaging would be a good start, but we need to go way beyond that. Plastic production has to be reduced, just as alternatives should be encouraged. Regulators must think about phasing out whole groups of chemicals of concern, rather than slowly restricting individual chemicals one at a time, and consumers must be helped to understand what they are being exposed to, and to navigate the difficulty of what can be recycled, composted or burned.

6 In the 1950s the world made about 2m tonnes of plastic a year. Now that figure is 330m tonnes a year – and it is set to treble again by 2050.

The Guardian, 2018
Anti-bird spikes

Wealthy residents have attached ‘anti-bird spikes’ to trees located in the front gardens of privately owned flats in the Clifton area of Bristol. One resident, who asked to remain anonymous, said: “The spikes are solely to protect the cars, there is no other reason. There is a big problem with bird droppings around here. They can really make a mess of cars, and for some reason the birds do seem to congregate around this area. Now that is over. We did try other methods to scare off the birds. I think we had a wooden bird of prey in the branches, but that didn’t seem to do anything.”

Green Party councillor Paula O’Rourke, who represents the area, said: “I’m aware that the landowners might be legally within their rights to do this to the trees as they seem to be on private land. I will be looking into this at the council. Whether allowed or not, it looks awful and it’s a shame to see trees being literally made uninhabitable to birds for the sake of car parking. Sometimes it’s too easy to lose sight of the benefit that we all gain from trees and green spaces and from the presence of wildlife around us in the city.”

independent.co.uk, 2017
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**40-1**
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**40-2**
Food that's purchased and consumed around the time that it is harvested, tastes better and is often cheaper too. Plus, by eating it you'll be supporting British producers. For more information, see the ‘Time to taste’ chart in the May/June edition of our digi mag at coop.co.uk/foodmagazine.

**40-3**
Organise a British Food gathering in your home, street or at a local venue. Invite your neighbours, friends and family for a tea party or meal, and ask everyone to bring a British dish to share. It’s a great way to meet people living in your local community. If you want to enter your event into the Love British Food competition, visit lovebritishfood.co.uk/british-food-fortnight. You could win a trophy, a case of champagne and £250 in Co-op vouchers.

*The Co-operative Food Magazine, 2017*