



## ABOUT “WATCHINGAMERICA.COM”

An ebullient British entrepreneur and a dispassionate American journalist have come together in New York City, aiming to set in motion what may be the next information revolution. How? By performing the simple act of giving 300 million Americans access to information they have never before been able to read. They are the creators of “WatchingAmerica.com”—a relative newcomer to the Internet, but one which may prove a valuable manifestation of that much loved, but oft-forgot being, the Anglo-American alliance.

Watchingamerica.com is a free resource for both American and global citizens who are curious about how non-Americans view Americans, American politics, and American policies. The site provides access to news articles and editorials about the United States, which are written all over the world and translated into English wherever necessary. At the click of a single button, Americans can read—in English—what Mexicans, Iranians, Iraqis, French and Russians, and numerous other nationalities, are saying in their own languages about the most powerful country in the world. Many of the articles are available nowhere else in English.

“I’ve long been fascinated by the United States’ relationship with the rest of the world,” says Robin Koerner, the British half of the equation, “and so much of that depends on perceptions... which are created by what is read, heard and seen. I realized that what we as English speakers think is ‘the spectrum of opinion’ is, in truth, just a very small part of the global spectrum of opinion. With WatchingAmerica.com, we hope to break down the barrier that none of the media giants has yet been able to eliminate—the language barrier.”

According to Koerner, journalists, educators, researchers, and all others with an interest in America’s place in the world are sitting up and taking note of the new kid on the block. “WatchingAmerica.com is being linked to by some of the Web’s most prestigious media sites,” says Koerner, “and newspapers and radio stations have also been picking up on us. I think what makes it interesting is that WatchingAmerica.com has no political agenda. It merely represents, as fairly as possible, the whole



range of global views about the U.S., updating content continually. We want to help Americans understand the reactions of those outside their borders.”

Although a free public service, governmental and non-governmental institutions have also seen the special value of the site. WatchingAmerica.com gets regular visits from the CIA, the U. S. Department of State and even the United Nations—perhaps because it provides, in English, many articles on the same day they appear in the local press in Israel, the Lebanon, China... and all over the world.

WatchingAmerica.com fulfills its mission by continually scanning the world’s online press, and translating it where possible using translation technology and professional human editing. Users can choose to read the original language version of each article, its machine translation on its original homepage, or the professionally edited text version—all with a single click of the mouse.

Will Kern, the site’s Editor-in-Chief, is a former staffer at the *International Herald Tribune*, who has won awards for his news design expertise. Having worked on three continents, he has an aptitude for presenting multimedia content from all over the world to illustrate the written stories, giving the site an unusual richness for something that is so simple to use.

Launched in early 2005, the site regularly tops daily page impressions of 25,000, and continues to grow fast. It seems that thousands of Americans agree with Koerner, who said in a recent radio interview, “The Western world is affected by views outside it. Those views may be based on prejudice; they may be based on envy; they may be based on all kinds of things, but it helps us to know what they are.”

Koerner and Kern receive no outside funding and are not affiliated with any other organization. Their hope is that a large flow of traffic to the site will soon make it financially self-supporting. Until then, it will continue to be funded by its founders. For further information, Robin Koerner can be contacted on (310) 703-3033, and at [robink@watchingamerica.com](mailto:robink@watchingamerica.com).

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## *Watching America Biographies*

### **Robin Koerner**



Robin Koerner, 30, is a Briton who was educated at Cambridge University in England, where he took degrees in Physics and Philosophy.

He is a qualified teacher, and has experience in teaching subjects as diverse as English, Mathematics and Investing.

His first salaried job was as a corporate strategy consultant for a California-based firm, for which he worked in Europe. It was around that time that he discovered his interest in real estate, in which he has successfully invested. It is this success, along with other business experience, that supports *Watching America* in its nascent phase, and underlies the

seminars he gives to the would-be affluent who hope to follow in his entrepreneurial footsteps.

In the midst of this wide-ranging past, he has traveled extensively, living on-and-off in Taiwan, where he studied Mandarin. He is an occasional writer, especially on U.S. and international affairs.

Robin is resident in the United States as the Executive Manager of his company, Fellows Property Inc.



## William Kern

William Kern has been a newspaper editor on three continents. Most recently he was with the International Herald Tribune in Paris, and before that, was part of the copy/design desk of the World's Best Designed newspaper for 2000, the Taipei Times.



A 42-year-old son of Brooklyn, Mr. Kern's career has been guided by a strong interest in international affairs and an appreciation for history. With a resume that includes work as a deckhand on an Alaskan cruise ship, interning at the United Nations, English teaching in Asia and working at newspapers around the world, William Kern is now dedicated to overcoming the language barrier to provide the American People with news sources that have never in history been available.





## WATCHINGAMERICA.COM

### Frequently Asked Questions

*What is the purpose of Watching America?*

To represent accurately in English the full spectrum of publicly presented global views about the United States.

*How do you select articles?*

Every day, we scan the global online media. We will link to or translate any interesting story that fulfills the following conditions:

- a) It is directly or indirectly about the United States, its policies or its actions;
- b) It is written by someone who is not a citizen of the United States;
- c) It is originally published outside the United States; and
- d) It is not available on the newswires.

*Does Watching America have any political perspective or agenda?*

No. We seek only to represent non-American views of America. We try to present views from all over the political spectrum.

*Why do the articles sometimes seem so one-sided?*

At the time of writing, the global press about the United States is, as an estimate, no more than 5% favorable, and some issues attract almost entirely negative copy. We will present what is out there, whatever its perspective. Any biases are those of the articles we find—not our own.

*Come on. The other day there was no pro-U.S. article on your site. Are you seriously telling us you couldn't find one favorable article about the U.S. today?*

Yes. That regrettably is the case. It sometimes happens. When it does, we work extra hard to hunt down the pro-U.S. material, often by spending disproportionate time scanning media in such countries as Israel, Kuwait, Poland etc.

*The United States is not America, but part of America. So why do you call the site WatchingAmerica.com?*



We struggled over the name, and even took the domain names WatchingUS.com and WatchingUSA.com etc. However, we felt that WatchingAmerica was more memorable. Also, our primary audience is the citizens of the United States, who colloquially refer to their country as America.

*Why should we care what anyone else thinks about us anyway?*

Watching America does not say that you should or should not care. We just make this information available for those that are interested.

*How do you translate articles?*

For the romance languages and some other languages, such as Russian, we use freely available computer-based translation software, as supplied by Google, Babelfish and others. We run the material through a number of such translators and cross-reference the results. The output is checked by a professional editor, who checks various facts (especially quotations, etc.) against available English sources. When we encounter very difficult translations, we go directly to human volunteers who are fluent in the language in question.

To translate Arabic, we use the **Johaina** product, which is a database of translated Arabic media. This is an offering of **Sakhr**, which is the world's leader in Arabic to English translation technology. Having selected stories from their Johaina database, we edit them professionally, as with all other languages

Some languages cannot yet be translated technologically. Human volunteers, many of whom are in the countries of origin of the material, find and translate the articles that we post from their countries. We edit any such translations we receive.

*How many staff do you have?*

The two full-timers are the co-founders. A professional web designer is the third major contributor. Currently over 20 other volunteers help with translations and proofing.

*How are you funded?*

The founders fund the project. In time, increased traffic will enable us to become self-sustaining through advertising. We also accept donations. We have no sponsor or grants.

*Are you affiliated with any organizations?*



No.

*Where are you based?*

New York, NY.

*When did you begin?*

We launched the site on January 1, 2005.

*How did a British businessman come to be working with an American journalist?*

We met in 1999 in Taipei, where we were housemates for a while, and have remained friends since then.

*Aren't there copyright issues?*

The pictures are linked from other servers, as is the content. The only content on our own (our host's) servers is translations of material that was originally in other languages. This material therefore does not have an English-speaking audience. By translating that material, we make it available to a part of the world's population that otherwise would not have been able to access the content, increasing the authors' readership. Through linking, we drive traffic to the originator's site. We would take down a translation if an author objected, but this has not occurred, nor would we expect it to. In any case, there is no copyright issue here since this is fair use (making available part of a publication that is already freely available and in the public domain), and we are not charging for originally free content.

Therefore, we believe we stand in relation to copyright issues in the same position as all other news aggregators on the web, and our work is covered by "fair use" laws.

*Does any other site do what you do?*

No. There are sites that translate news if you already have found the news you want to translate, but this takes time and is quite difficult to do. There are also many aggregators of news—but none that cover exclusively foreign news about the U.S., and in various languages. The State Department does publish a foreign news round up concerning the U.S., but it has a time lag of about a week, while Watching America typically has no lag or a lag of no more than a day. Watching America is thus unique in bringing the convenience of a typical news aggregator to foreign-language content.

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