



Paul Greenway

their content to the type of stories that generate high levels of ad revenue and they can get away with it because there is no editor and no editorial independence from economic influence. It's like having the same person as business manager and editor at a newspaper.

A further temptation is to begin linking to things like books, DVDs, movie rentals and second-hand toys on amazon.com because money trickles in every time a transaction is referred successfully.

One can see from the three categories of citizen journalist and the blogonomics of content production in this new medium, there are degrees of journalistic

integrity. A minority of bloggers fall into a truly journalistic category and even less of them fall into the category of trustworthy and consistent journalism.

This debate will also become less relevant as the traditional media begin assimilating these new media techniques, as Gillmor urges them to do in his book *We The Media*.

Good examples of this are the Guardian NewsBlog and Vaughan Ververs, the CBS TV News Public-Eye. Ververs is a blogger installed at CBS to write about the news in a way that is going to be, in his own words, “un-opinionated” – is that even possible? ■

Ask the right question, stupid

by Mark Comerford

“Is blogging journalism?” is a stupid question. It's like asking “Are telephones journalism?” Both are types of technology.

What we need to talk about is what's **in** it. The stories we have to tell. The most important tool is what's between the ears.

How can mainstream media use new forms and methods of production and distribution to do journalism, which will create new forms of journalism and can also resuscitate old forms of journalism such as storytelling.

One of the crisis issues in journalism right now is the global phenomenon of trust in journalism and the transparency of journalism.

Journalism is not just about getting facts, it's about the interpretation and analysis of those facts.

The public must be given enough detail in order to follow the journalist's trail, and to examine that same data. That's the only way that their right to make up their own minds can be facilitated and informed.

The model cannot be paternalistic or patronising. The mirror is not the right metaphor (you can angle a mirror), but rather the open window.

Journalism should not be a megaphone, but a conversation. Technology is a vehicle.

And new media processes allow for transparency. This can lead to some excellent things – when both disagreeing (with the journalist) and trust (in the journalism) are possible.

The cellphone is going to become central to new media operations.

This will allow for many people to be empowered to get information, but don't forget capitalism will incorporate this technology too. We need a plan and a strategy: don't let the money people take control of the distribution systems.

Lots of local communities have the same problems but the solutions don't get spread around. Cellphone technology and radio can distribute information cheaply.

The system is there and it's possible to use a phone to make a report, send it to a blog and then subscribe and get it delivered to another cellphone or to use community radio to reach an entire community.

Journalism now?

Blogging

With the destruction of hurricane Katrina in New Orleans the *New York Times* ran a story focusing on the very large impact blogs had on people's understanding of the story. http://www.nytimes.com/cnet/CNET_2100-1028_3-5844419.html

- There was heavy reliance on non-journalists for the “reporting” of this disaster.
- In Saudi Arabia a blogger called “Saudi Girl” is required reading for the Saudi royal family to keep in touch with their citizens. <http://saudigirl.blogspot.com>
- The Egyptian election was covered by the Big Pharaoh, an Egyptian blogger, again this blog is required reading for the rulers of this country. <http://bigpharaoh.blogspot.com/>
- The Online Journalism Review at USC pays extensive attention to blogs in the Arab world see <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050830glaser/>

- Soldiers in Iraq started their own blogs see http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/newsroom/worldcast_detail/050906_sgt_lizzie_s_army/

Help for non-journalists!

A journalism site offering help to non-journalists <http://www.j-learning.org/>. This is “how-to site for community journalism” and offers information on topics from planning websites through to ethics.

Wikis

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikinews> and OJR wikis <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050721gupta/>

Smart mobs

http://www.trendbuero.de/trendtag/index.php?f_CatgoryId=6&=en, <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050609Ulmanu/>

Robots do news

Another new trend which has become apparent is semi-automated news which has become totally automated news. This is not a blog and there are no journalists compiling this information.

It is a robotic site done by software and automatic programs. See: <http://www.topix.net/> and OJR on robot journalism at <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/050802glaser/>

Experiential journalism

What Integrated Media Systems Centre is already doing. We can already experience three senses across the Internet, and the other two (taste and touch) – not yet. But my centre is working on remote media immersion.

So for example, if a human being cannot physically be near the launch of the space shuttle, it is possible to create a virtual digital experience. <http://imsc.usc.edu/research/> offers some examples of this.

Immersipresence

We call it “immersipresence” – you are there, but is it journalism? <http://imsc.usc.edu/rmi/>

- Immersipresence and the musicians who aren't really there, http://imsc.usc.edu/news/releases/i2_040929.html
- Immersipresence and “walking” through 3D models, <http://imsc.usc.edu/research/project/virtcamp/index.html>

Two-way haptics

You can feel it, but is it journalism? <http://imsc.usc.edu/research/project/haptics/>

Two-way haptics: already a reality in health care – in this instance a therapist at a terminal can reach through space to help a stroke patient at another location do physical therapy, and the patient can actually feel the therapist's help. http://imsc.usc.edu/news/releases/050526_haptics.html