

**The effects of a new citizen journalism:
models of participation**

by

Paulo Rogério Rebêlo

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Supervisor: Dr. Catherine Noelle-Coyer

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Abstract

This thesis explains what is citizen journalism according to several authors and by the own experience of the author. With textual analysis from three case studies considered to be unique in their own model, we assert the effectiveness of citizen journalism and, moreover, we study how far this effectiveness can be applied in traditional journalism publications, such as newspapers and magazines. What are the differences between citizen journalism and what we consider to be traditional journalism? Are there different models of people's participation in this "new" type of journalism practice? This thesis seeks to answer these questions and raise new debates about the need for new concepts around what many consider to be familiar journalistic practices and traditions.

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1. Introduction

By 1997, I was working as a journalist in Brazil at the same time the Internet was starting to flourish in the country and in most parts of Latin America. Before that, one could only log into cyberspace within public universities or by paying a significant amount of money to the government due to the public monopoly of the telecommunication system, which became fully privatized only in 1998.

Only one year after that, not only I was working almost full time as a journalist using the Internet to research - after a couple of years as a computer technician and programmer - but I was taking part, without knowing, of what later it would be called "online journalism". As of today, I still find myself struggling to understand why so many scholars and journalists dedicate so much time and put such great effort to give us new concepts and definitions of what should simply be journalism that you read online on your computer while drinking a Diet Coke, instead of journalism that you read holding a piece of dirty newspaper while having your orange juice during breakfast.

By the early 2000s, I had focused most of my time in writing several contributions to established newspapers, online publications and independent websites. With no time to think academically about what I was doing writing all those stories and reports, I finally figured out why I had a minor advantage in comparison to other journalists working alongside me. While most journalists in my country had made their careers in the news desk or behind the camera, and by then were eager to discover the new possibilities brought by the Internet and the online journalism frenzy, I was doing exactly the opposite: going to the news desk after a long time working in the roots of the journalism made for the Internet only. By then, I was still trying to link these two realities and bringing what non-journalists have taught me along the way.

Because, in the end, those who were not journalists in the traditional way, or did not have a degree in Journalism or any communication field, were the ones running the most useful and informative websites by the late 1990s. And when those people read the newspapers and magazines, they are what we

- professional journalists, from the top of our vanity - say they are: readers.

By the mid 2000s, while I usually found myself lost trying to bring to newspapers what scholars were saying was online journalism, some inspired fellows come out and started to shout about collaborative journalism, where everyone could and should be a reporter no matter what degree they have, no matter if an institution would consider them professional or not. And all from a sudden, we had the citizen journalism frenzy instead of the online journalism frenzy that we had until early 2000s.

So what happened to online journalism now? Online journalism was apparently past dead, because it was only journalism on the Internet after all. Citizen journalism was the big thing, the different topic that everyone should embrace. What is citizen journalism after all? What are the differences between citizen journalism and what we consider to be traditional journalism? Are there different models of people's participation in this "new" type of journalism practice? Is there a rule to define what is and what is not citizen journalism?

The purpose of this thesis is to try to answer these questions but, most importantly, to raise newer question marks regarding what can be considered an ideal model of citizen journalism - in case there is such a thing to begin with. For most authors cited in this work, citizen journalism should be the apex of the well known "power to the people" axiom. In this conception of citizen journalism, the emphasis is on the participation of individual 'amateur' producers acting as everyday citizens, with access and the means to publish their stories.

However, as we will see in this paper, there are very interesting models of citizen journalism that are highly attached to traditional media outlets. At the same time, other initiatives (although not related to traditional media) are willing to replicate and reproduce the same model of reporting and publishing that we see in traditional newspapers and magazines. Citizen journalism, then, acts as more of a tactic, or is co-opted by incumbent, traditional media with the motivation to help sell more papers and make more relevant their online presence rather than a more ideological goal of increasing citizen participation and innovation, even if that might be an outcome. So the question is: does this practice alone make them citizen journalism publications?

My methodology includes three case studies. Their importance is clear to this work because each represent a different model of what is considered to be citizen journalism by authors and by professional journalists that I have interviewed along the way. These three case studies will be analyzed and their role explained. From their experience, I try to achieve a more suitable model of my own to work on traditional media, based on their best practices and on my own experience working in both sides of the field. In the end, what I propose is a simple model of citizen journalism that can be applied in any traditional print media outlet, such as a local or regional newspaper, following the concepts of citizen reporting but without losing the grip about the need of financial support and corporate infra-structure in order to target even more readers than before.

2. What is citizen journalism

More than one billion people are online in North America, 70% are engaged in some kind of internet activity, according to a 2007 report from Miniwatts Marketing Group. According to that same report, it is in Asia, however, that we have the most active Internet penetration of the world, where 410 million people are online, representing 36% of the world usage, where South Korea is an example to look at, with the highest penetration per capita in the world. And last but not least, it is in Africa, a continent known for its extreme poverty (World Bank 2007), where we can find the higher growth in usage. From 2000 to 2007, we had a 640% increase, according to Miniwatts Marketing Group, with data collected from the Nielsen/Netratings institute and the International Telecommunications Union. All the collected data show us only one single truth: Internet usage is growing wildly and faster than anyone could think.

Hence, to mention the so-called *digital revolution* has fallen into common knowledge, almost an outdated term by now. This on-going process is changing the way people accept and share knowledge and information, in a way that authors such as Castells (1999) name this period of transformation as the Information Revolution, in comparison to the Industrial Revolution, the major shift of technological, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions that occurred in the late 18th century and early 19th century in Western countries.

With the increased role online, there is increased pressure for more content. It is no longer enough for companies to ‘just’ put their offline content online. One major challenge is how to take advantage of the possibilities for interactivity and convergence. For the past years, media professionals, researchers and scholars have been struggling to come up with definitions and understandings regarding the concept of citizen journalism. But what is citizen journalism? The general principle is based in the idea of breaking down the barrier between audiences and producers.

Also known as "participatory journalism", Bowman and Willis (2003) defines it as the “act of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news

and information". For Rosen (2006), citizen journalists are "the people formerly known as the audience, who were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another— and who today are not in a situation like that at all".

It is my belief that, not only in democratic societies, but also in less democratic nations, the power of citizen journalism may find no boundaries in the act of encouraging people to speak, to question the established power of the traditional media and to demand more opportunities to share their own opinions about events. However, the full participation of citizens in the news producing raises many questions among media professionals and scholars. Questions about credibility, sources, fairness, skill and approach, are big issues to be wrestled.

Is citizen journalism changing the face of traditional journalism? Can – and should – citizen journalism replace traditional journalism? Or, does citizen journalism represent the need for a more pluralistic approach to journalism – the current professional model has its limitations, just like citizen journalism. Newspapers were very late to adopt the online profile and very resistant to launch new models of interaction and participation. But now, we should make no mistake: at risk of extinction, they are thinking differently. It is a fact that traditional media is embracing as far as they can this new phenomena and trying to adopt new ways of producing content based on citizen journalism experiences around the world.

Citizen journalism may not – and should not – represent a threat to traditional media outlets or a sort of competitor for reader's attention. To the contrary, when objectively applied and managed, a citizen journalism project can unite both worlds in a very straight-forward manner, encouraging people's participation and increasing factors so keen to all kinds of journalism, such as credibility, reliability and news value.

In this sense, Gillmor (2003) argues that it's a great opportunity and not a threat. For him, when journalists ask for help and knowledge from readers, they [the readers] are willing to share it and we could all benefit from that. Bowman and Willis (2003) also add that "the intent of this participation is to

provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires".

At the same time, citizen journalism should not be confused or mislabeled as civic Journalism. According to the Pew Center for civic journalism, the practice "is both a philosophy and a set of values supported by some evolving techniques to reflect both of those in journalism. At its heart is a belief that journalism has an obligation to public life – an obligation that goes beyond just telling the news or unloading lots of facts." In other words, we can describe civic journalism as an attempt to treat readers and community as participants, but not as active participants writing stories and reporting.

Especially in the United States, in the early 1990s the idea of civic journalism started to take place among magazines and newspapers publishers. It is a different concept from the citizen journalism we are dealing for the past few years, as Bowman and Willis and many other authors and journalists, such as Dan Gillmor and Dale Peskin, and even the citizen journalists themselves. Newspapers experimented the idea of civic journalism through participation from readers and communities in the form of focus groups, polls and reaction to daily news, usually related to local events such as election coverage.

A report from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism states that at least 20% of the 1,500 daily U.S. newspapers practiced some form of civic journalism between 1994 and 2001. For Bowman and Willis (2003) the basic difference between civic journalism and citizen journalism is that "the news organization maintains a high degree of control by setting the agenda, choosing the participants and moderating the conversation when they use civic journalism", which does not happen in citizen journalism. The authors also state the differences between citizen journalism and traditional journalism, arguing that the most obvious difference is the different structure and organization that produce them.

Lasica (2003) classifies citizen journalism into the following types:

- 1) Audience participation (such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photos or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, or local news written by residents of a community);
- 2) Independent news and information websites;
- 3) Full-fledged participatory news sites;
- 4) Collaborative and contributory media sites;
- 5) Other kinds of "thin media." (mailing lists, email newsletters);

6) Personal broadcasting sites;

One additional issue is that, for most media companies, the rise of citizen journalism always represented a danger to their commercial revenues. In the earliest days of the Web, there was a general belief among media executives and directors that people browsing the net for news would kill journalism entirely because everyone would be able to access and read the raw and background material that journalists usually rely to write many stories (Grossman 2005).

Grossman states that nowadays many media executives have realized that most people do not have enough time (or the will) to wade through acres of background material in order to get informed about specific issues. In 2003, the effect of the internet on newspapers could be seen by a report published by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN). According to their study, newspaper circulation in 208 countries had fallen only 0.12% when compared to 2002. At the same time, advertisement revenues had grown by 2%. The 2003 WAN report also pointed that the number of online versions of traditional newspapers has doubled since 1999.

One clear impact of citizen journalism in the media sector is that it has forced newspapers and broadcasters to think about their business model and how they might rely on people's content right now. After the terrorists attack of July 7, 2005 in London, newspapers around the world struggled to publish good pictures to describe the terror. Around the world, several newspapers went to the streets on the morning of July 8 with front-page photographs made by amateurs using digital cameras and mobile phones.

The most known newspapers in the world, actually, didn't have a single picture made by their professional journalists. Citizen's photos triggered an effect that replicated worldwide and it's being more and more adopted nowadays, not only in special events such as those in London, but even in social events that happens every day in your country, your city, your neighborhood. The specific phenomena of photographs made by citizens went to such a level after the terrorists attacks that a picture taken moments after a bomb exploded on a number 30 bus in London's Tavistock Square won the first citizen journalism

award set up by Nokia and the UK Press Gazette (BBC 2006). The photograph was widely publicized in newspapers and on the BBC; judges of the award were unanimous in picking it up as the grand winner of the contest.

Castells (1999) already showed us that the increase in technology also divides regions of the world (developed / under-developed) to a certain point that there is a "triangle of richness, power and technology" owned by the United States, Japan and Europe, leaving behind the countries from Latin America, Asia and Africa (Rebêlo 2000). Reports such as the one from WAN and several studies about citizen journalism are proving that, when it comes to media development and citizen journalism itself, there is no such thing as dividing power or "rich" and "poor". Most countries are able to compete practically equally with the "triangle" described by Castells, as long as they adopt or support public policies towards the democratization of people's access to information.

If we are able to reach an axis of power without limits or boundaries to people's freedom and without corporate attachments, we might just reach a point where a reasonable share of the notion we have about legitimizing power shall be revised and, therefore, questioned once again. As we have described in the previous topic, the internet used to represent a potential danger to newspapers and media outlets in general. But as Zaffore (1990) states, the transmission of informational elements is indispensable to the human condition as a whole. And so citizen journalism has achieved such a level that practically every media organization has started a citizen journalism initiative or, at least, is trying to do so.

3. The legitimacy of citizen journalism

In 1999, the first Independent Media Center (IMC) was created in Seattle, USA, supposedly in response to the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting held there in that year. According to IMC reports, many people understood the only way they could get into the news made by the traditional media groups was by blocking the streets, in order to gain coverage. By that time, the first IMC supporters realized they had to create an alternative media model. Since then, the Indymedia movement has experienced a considerable growth and IMCs have been created in several countries.

By that same time, journalism made by ordinary people, otherwise known as the reader, had begun to win users attention in cyberspace. Thanks to the blogging phenomena and the high increase of internet usage in the early 2000s (Miniwatts Marketing Group), it had never been so easy to set up an account and start writing your thoughts and opinions about everything you could think of. Networking technologies, such as blogs, message boards and wikis, were being used to allow editorials and opinions from people who would have never dreamt of reporting specific events.

Glaser (2004) explains that "the idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others." He exemplifies this notion using a city council meeting, when you could write by yourself on your blog or in an online forum and, by doing that, you could even fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias. Or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online. Or you might videotape a similar event and post it on a site (such as YouTube).

At first glance, the effects of citizen journalism could be underestimated by the average reader or even be considered radical at the point that everyone could be a reporter without formal training in a news desk or in a University. However, looking back to History, we can realize that reader engagement not only has long time history in continents like North America and Asia, but even in less developed regions

as Latin America, its need has been discussed for quite some time.

For instance, Sobrinho (1923) remembers that journalism itself was born from practices that were developed by people in slow motion, when people in different communities and cities were communicating with each other through signs and billboards in cities markets. Most importantly, Sobrinho (1923) agrees that "it was only the development of the public opinion to detach the press from the ruling and censorship of absolutist's regimes and government restrictions. When the press found in the people an ally, instead of an enemy, journalism started to gain influence in the public sphere direction".

And now, almost one hundred years later, Papandrea (2007) notes that when the First Amendment was adopted (in the United States), "freedom of the press" referred quite literally to the freedom to publish using a printing press, rather than the freedom of organized entities engaged in the publishing business.

The passage of the term "journalism" into common usage in the 1830s occurred at roughly the same time that newspapers, using high speed rotary steam presses, began mass circulation throughout the eastern United States. Using the printing press, newspapers could distribute exact copies to large numbers of readers at a low incremental cost. In addition, the rapidly increasing demand for advertising for brand- name products fueled the creation of publications subsidized in large part by advertising revenue. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the concept of the "press" morphed into a description of individuals and companies engaged in an often competitive commercial media enterprise.

What has changed, points Papandrea (2007) is that with technology available today, any ordinary person can capture and generate news and distribute it globally. This very notion of distributing it globally surpass any idea of censorship or corporate restrains, as we usually have in a traditional publication – no matter if it is a commercial or editorial restraint, it is some sort of block that many times prevents the journalist of doing his work as he wishes. Even it is not a government censorship, but a sort of corporative censorship, in the last mile the result would be similar in terms of freedom that citizen journalism advocates.

Back in the 19th Century, Constant (1874) already predicted that every aspiration of the press towards freedom of speech would be objectively related to run away from censorships and restraints. In order to support his view, Constant (1874) defended that freedom of speech was of valuable interest not

only to society, but also to governments and politicians:

I intend to demonstrate that relies in government's interest to allow, even in newspapers, complete freedom; I understand these words as the conceived ability towards writers to print their works without any prior censorship. This ability does not exclude the repression of faults or crimes, the laws must articulate sanctions against defamation, rebellion provocation, in resume, against every abuse that could result from the opinions manifestation. Such laws cannot harm freedom: they guarantee it. Without them freedom could not exist. (*free translation from us*)

The importance and credibility of the information generated by a free society can be easily explained in Delafosse (1901) words: "the moral of a nation depends primarily on what they read. Books and newspapers are educators; they cherish your feelings, awake your ideas and model your consciousness".

For Sobrinho (1923), Delafosse's thought is the very basis of the power of journalism itself as the activity of being witness and reporting events as they happen. It is clear that the growth of people's participation in the news making process might raise questions regarding legal and ethical issues, besides credibility itself.

After all, if citizen journalism is the people formerly known as the audience (Rosen 2006), who would filter what is trustworthy or not? In addition to this notion of power from people, Rosen (2006) says about them:

they were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another— and who today are not in a situation like that at all. The people formerly known as the audience are simply the public made reader, less fictional, more able, and less predictable.

One of the most intriguing questions related to citizen journalism is the acceptance of the concept in professional standards of reporting and, therefore, the admission of citizen journalists as professionals reliable to the same laws, rules and restrictions applied to their professional counterparts. Citizen journalism itself questions the notion of “professional” journalism and “amateur journalism”. In some instances, this jeopardizes some of the topics from the code of ethics of the Society for Professional Journalists (SPJ), for example, and sometimes it encourages it even more.

The code of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) is an excellent example of comparison, due to the fact that SPJ is one of the most credible associations of working journalists. It exists since 1909 and its code of ethics is also followed worldwide – 100% translated or with minor changes according to the country's own culture and work beliefs. SPJ's code of ethics is a considerable big set of rules and procedures based in four main principles:

- Seek truth and report it
- Minimize harm
- Act Independently
- Be accountable

The four principles can be related to citizen journalism when it comes to news reporting, however, for the purpose of this work we shall focus on the last two: “act independently” and “be accountable”. The reason is because these two principles are exactly and directly related to what most scholars and researchers discuss about citizen journalism when we compare it to professional journalism in the established media scenario.

Traditional media is reacting to the citizen journalism phenomena and scholars might think if there is really such a need for all citizen journalism initiatives currently taking place. Gillmor (2006) goes further, saying that professional journalists cannot compete in the "media-sphere" of the future.

We're entering a world of ubiquitous media creation and access. When the tools of creation and access are so profoundly democratized, and when updated business models connect the best creators with potential customers, many if not most of the pros will fight a losing battle to save their careers. In a world of ubiquitous media tools, which is almost here, someone will be on the spot every time.

When it comes to media and news making, it is imperative to think about one of the most basic principles of journalism: the news is always more credible and worthy of belief as much closer as it is to the actual source of happenings. Burke (2004) easily defines this principle when he compares information to water: as closer to the source, as more credible it is. Peskin (2003) explain us that there are three ways to look at how society is informed. The first is that people are gullible and will read, listen to, or watch just about anything.

The second is that most people require an informed intermediary to tell them what is good,

important or meaningful. The third is that people are pretty smart; given the means, they can sort things out for themselves; find their own version of the truth. The means have arrived. From these standpoints, it would be easy to accept that citizen journalists should not differ from their professional counterparts.

3.1 – The power of journalism

It is believed that society is changing in a faster way that no one could have predicted. Giddens (2002) argues that we are being pushed towards a global agenda that no one truly understands, but the effects can be easily felt over all of us. The nations have lost a huge deal of their power over its citizens and borders; politicians lost most part of their capacity in having influence towards social events. "The era of the Nation State is over", says Giddens (2002).

If power is not self-evident as Beetham (1991) states, so are its legitimacy and the concerns about the exercise of power. Or, as Riker (1964) argues, the conceptual clarification of the notion of power has been undertaken only in the past generation. Riker's statement is easily noticed in the literature related to power if we go even further in the past, but these outskirts the purpose of this work. What should be taken in consideration when we talk about journalism is: if a user/blogger can generate content and publish it worldwide, is he a journalist? But what makes a journalist, in fact?

If power and freedom are closely related without being identical concepts (Beetham 1991), so is the concept of media and journalism when we talk about the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech and, now, freedom of generating content. An independent media could not only help, but encourage, the public attention of threats to society and democracy, helping agencies or providing them with information. Beetham (1991) and other authors agree that the legitimacy of ideas that makes our society of today is the erosion of belief in any sort of supreme value.

In this notion, if the media can help and encourage democracy, we should have a standpoint to understand that it [the media] is also not – and should not be taken as – a supreme value of information. In

this sense, if there is a supreme value or institution to say who can be and who cannot be a journalist, what will be the point of defending new technologies of content generation and networking to fact-check and report a city council meeting as exemplified by Glaser (2004)?

If legitimate governments are questioned by notions of power and legitimacy, why would the same not apply to the media? As legitimate governments have their procedures analyzed and sometimes inquired, so does the media sector when it comes to their own procedures, such as the operatives of the news making process, the legal boundaries of a media outlet and the ethics and boundaries of professional journalists.

In the past, Thomas Hobbes already assumed that the power of every man is opposed to the power of every other man. Within the questioning of the media sector by citizen journalism and citizen reporters, come different ideas, different players and different concepts. Ribstein (2006) goes further and emphasize that this model started to change due to the popularization of the internet and especially of the Web, making journalism no longer an exclusivity of professional journalists. Anyone with a computer and an internet connection became able to launch a website, even a "news" website and potentially attracting a large audience. "The technology of amateur journalism has continued to develop. Amateur journalists now not only can post their thoughts cheaply on the Web, but also can get the attention of significant numbers of readers", says Ribstein.

And when we think how citizen journalism changes it all over again – letting people decide what news is and what is not, decide not what they should read, but what they can write, than we might be only cherishing – or condemning – something that we do not understand. When we think of reflecting something we do not understand, we can follow King (1991) when he says that this understanding of power transforming man's nature is usually neglected, he recalls that Hobbes materialism derives very much from the scientific revolution inaugurated by Kepler and Galileo. And I recall that Kepler and Galileo are in an even further generation in the past of Hobbes. Scientific revolution, nowadays more adopted as technology revolution in society, is everywhere.

If nations have lost a great share of their power, if politicians are failing to influence society as they

used to, what keeps the media standing as concrete in this global and networked society described by Giddens, Castells, Ribstein and others? The answer to this question is plain and simple: nothing. Absolutely nothing. The media as we know it, including the very core of mass media communication, is changing as fast as the global society of Giddens (2002) and the network society of Castells (1999). The main problem within these changes is the lack of open and public debate with regards to the power of new media environments and how new ways of dealing with the media and new ways of making journalism are able to improve power awareness and legitimacy of power in democratic societies.

3.2 – Information Society and public need

When it comes to new technology, society always has to learn and adapt to new terms and definitions. With our current technical progress and the set of changes in the way people deal with information and knowledge, many scholars and professionals have come up with new models to manage this so-called new era of the digital nation (Wilhelm 2004). To provide information to society is one of the main roles – if not the main one – of the media sector. Peskin (2003) explain us that there are three ways to look at how society is informed.

The first is that people are gullible and will read, listen to, or watch just about anything. The second is that most people require an informed intermediary to tell them what is good, important or meaningful. The third is that people are pretty smart; given the means, they can sort things out for themselves; find their own version of the truth. The means have arrived. The truth is out there.

Is the truth really out there? But what if one's truth is not a real truth for those reading what he writes? After all, there is no absolute truth and value as Beetham (1991) eager recalls that legitimacy of ideas that makes our society of today is the erosion of belief in any sort of supreme value. The same apply to the media and its revising of traditional journalism by the emerging power of citizen journalism in societies.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) argue that high-tech interaction (therefore, the main support of

citizen journalism) is a journalism that resembles conversation much like the original journalism at coffeehouses hundred years ago. Seen in this light, journalism's function is not fundamentally changed by the digital age or any new sort of nomenclature we might give to it. The techniques may be different sometimes or may not be different, but the underlying principles are the same. And this is what most citizen journalists strongly try to achieve: to share a credible and worthy of belief news experience from their own thoughts and work, considered "amateur" for many professional journalists. If this truly works out or not, it will not be up to us to decide. Instead, it will be the future readers and consumers of media – in all possible forms and interactions – that will decide the role of citizen media in general.

Media organizations are already in a stance of rethinking their role in society. Many media outlets are actually being reshaped by people's thoughts towards fact-checking and fact-gathering, because now they are currently playing the role that once were exclusive to people they did not even know about their existence in the first place.

With a long-term and strong presence in the internet, CNN has embraced citizen journalism through its website and television channels in such a way that ordinary citizens can film and send their amateur videos to a special section of CNN's website. Many of these videos are published in CNN's main website alongside the traditional headlines. Taken as a surprisingly move in the beginning, CNN's initiative is only one single one among many.

Yahoo and Reuters are currently teaming up to launch a new user-generated content web site, called You Witness News. Users will be able to upload pictures and video and, once downloaded, editors from Yahoo and Reuters will distribute clips and photos to relevant online articles. Users will not be paid for content that is used on Yahoo and Reuters sites but will be paid if their videos are further distributed to Reuters' clients. Photo editors at Reuters will be checking all images to make sure they haven't been retouched or tampered with. Yahoo alone already has a special section on its website for content created by ordinary citizens.

In 2006, BBC News 24 launched a news program based entirely on user-generated material. Your News, which began a pilot run in early December 2006, features stories and videos proving most popular

with viewers on TV and the internet. Kevin Bakhurst, controller of BBC News 24, said: "Your News will make use of the huge range of material being sent to the BBC by the public, some of which has already provided real newsgathering value. Your News will reflect the stories catching our audience's eye and talk to them directly about the issues they feel really matter."

BBC News website receives around 10,000 emails a day with story suggestions, comments and pictures from the public. Presented by Richard Bilton and Laura Jones, the show contains weekly features that will look at news reports covering issues raised by members of the public (called Your Story) and a section where reporters try to find answers to questions sent in to the BBC by the public (Your Questions).

The New York Times has already confirmed that their website and newspaper will include content produced by ordinary citizens, such as stories, photos and amateurs videos. According to the NYT president, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., who is also the newspaper publisher, there will be "more and more citizen journalism in the New York Times from now on". In a web conference in November 2006, Sulzberger said that it is very hard to find a balance between amateur contributions and to maintain the paper's standards in quality and credibility, but the New York Times is willing to work with some of the so-called citizen journalists who are worthy enough.

As of today, no one truly knows how far citizen journalism will get to. As a matter of fact, no one seems to clearly understand if citizen journalism is a new type of journalism, perhaps a new orientation of journalism, or if it is only a momentary fashion that will disappear or perish in the future. For journalists like Vincent Maher (2006), for example, "citizen journalism is dead".

[...] in fact, citizen journalism never lived; it was the hardening of a momentary ideal, puffed up with self-importance and glazed with a sweet optimism that kept us interested beyond its shelf life. But let me repeat, for the sake of clarity: Citizen Journalism, as a concept is dead, a dry bone to be tossed over the back fence [...]

For Maher (2006), such events as terrorist attacks and natural disasters are indeed a cherish way to embrace citizen journalism, but are just glitches. "Bloggers got there first; citizens got better video than

the TV crews, and so on. But does that really mean the people want to be like journalists? That they see recording events as some sort of civic duty or action? Why would they want to?" he asks.

Castells (2006) notices a similar question in a different scope, which he calls "mass self communication". Arguing that information and communication always were vectors from the dominant powers, alternative powers, resistance and social changes, Castells believes that only the power of influence over people's thoughts is a fundamental tool. And this power (over people's thoughts) is only practiced by communication, no matter what type. It is only by the power of influence over people's minds that makes powers constitute themselves in societies; and that societies evolve and change.

this does not mean that power relies unconditionally on the hands of the media, not that the public takes position according to what the media suggests. Researches in communication have shown for long a time to which point the public is active, and not passive. [...] Most people still insist to believe that they can have some influence on those who represent those (politicians) in a democratic society. Most people believe that they can act in the world through their own willpower and using their own methods and ways. These people are probably starting to introduce, in communication, the extraordinary advances of what I call the mass self communication

4. Case studies

For decades, scholars have been writing about an “alternative” to the traditional media. In the 1970s, researchers were already highly interested in programs such as UNESCO’s New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in its hope to balance the flow of information and communication in the world, not relying in only a few sources of mass media for society worldwide. Rodriguez (2001) recalls that, since that time, projects such as NWICO had the goal to put electronic media in the hands of citizens and communities who traditionally had been denied access to producing and distributing news and messages. Sparks and Roach (1990) usually say that it is not in the corridors of power that the new order [of media and communication] will be consolidated, but in experiments from citizens and communities that find new ways of transmitting media messages.

Rodriguez (2001) proposes to abandon the term alternative media and establish a new standard, called citizen media. In this sense, she demands and definitions of citizen media are closely related to other authors’ definitions and concepts of citizen journalism, as one of its strongest arms within people’s participation in a process that, for a long time, had been exclusively possible to elite in society. Rodriguez (2001) finishes her request saying:

[...] the label alternative media pre-determines the type of oppositional thinking that limits the potential of these media to their ability to resist the alienating power of mainstream media. This approach blinds our understanding of all other instances of change and transformation brought about by these media. I propose we abandon the term alternative media and coin a new marker: citizens’ media. Because alternative media rests on the assumption that these media are alternative to something, this definition will easily entrap us into binary thinking: mainstream media and their alternative. [...]

4.1 – *FotoRepórter*

This is an innovative project of citizen journalism within a traditional media outlet – a print newspaper in Brazil – that might be one of the finest examples to date of citizens’ media as not a threat,

but also – and not only – as a supportive role to traditional journalism, with the clear possibility of surpassing its awareness in society. In order to provide a better scope of analysis, we present and explain how a particular newspaper in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, called “O Estado de São Paulo” opted to open itself to citizen media through the usage of photographs shot by what they call citizen photographers.

The newspaper Estado de S. Paulo is one of the most important newspapers in Brazil and the fourth biggest in daily circulation, according to a 2005 report from the Brazilian National Association of Newspapers (ANJ 2005). The Estado de S. Paulo, also known as Estadão, was the first one in Brazil to formally adopt the concept of citizen journalism, with a team of professional and experienced journalists managing the submissions by the citizens to FotoRepórter archive.

In FotoRepórter, the system collects photographs made by ordinary citizens. These pictures can be made through an amateur digital camera or even from a camera embedded in a mobile phone handset. Photographs sent to FotoRepórter are not automatically used or published. The newspaper, through its directors and the photo department, has established a team to analyze and filter the content of all the photos, prior to any sort of usage in the published paper.

Photographs sent by citizens can be used not only in the print newspaper, but also in different media outlets owned by the same group who controls the newspaper, such as Agência Estado (a news agency which provides content to several smaller newspapers and online media groups) and the regional newspaper Jornal da Tarde. Authors are paid by the same amount as professional photographers when their photos are published in a traditional media outlet, such as the newspaper or publicity agency, but do not get paid if photos are published online only.

FotoRepórter was launched a few months after the terrorist attacks of July 7, 2005 in London. Due to the seriousness of the attacks and the unexpected scenario, newspapers around the world struggled to publish good pictures to describe the terror.

According to Juca Varela, who is FotoRepórter's coordinator, at that moment the board of executives in Estadão realized that a new era of publishing photographs from ordinary citizens was taking place. Around the world, several media outlets went to the streets on July 8 with front-page photographers

made by amateurs using digital cameras and mobile phones. The phenomena of photographs made by citizens went to such a level after the terrorists attacks that a picture taken moments after a bomb exploded on a number 30 bus in London's Tavistock Square won the first citizen journalism award set up by Nokia and the UK Press Gazette (BBC 2006).

The photograph was widely publicized in newspapers and on the BBC; judges of the award were unanimous in picking it up as the grand winner of the contest. In addition of being the first formal citizen journalism project in Brazil from a traditional media group, the credibility achieved by FotoRepórter led competitors to launch similar services. For instance, national newspaper "O Globo" launched in 2006 the project called "Vc Repórter" (in a free translation, "U Reporter") to collect, analyze and eventually publish photographs and small stories written by ordinary citizens. Online Web portal "Terra Brasil" also launched "Eu Repórter" (Me, Reporter). FotoRepórter's has also achieved a high level of credibility worldwide, since users in different parts of the world are usually contributing with photographs.

4.1.1 – Citizen or traditional journalism?

Even though FotoRepórter represents the core of citizen media when we think that ordinary citizens from all over the country are encouraged to send their pictures and participate in the news production process, we should re-think if this model should be considered or not as citizen journalism in the descriptions of Rosen (2006), Bowman and Willis (2003), Lasica (2003) and Gillmor (2003).

FotoRepórter is announced as a user-generated content production but, as we have read in its description in the previous chapter, it is carnally attached to one of Brazil's leading traditional newspapers, coming from a very traditional media group who owns radios, news agencies and different newspapers.

It is imperative to mention that FotoRepórter's infra-structure is, essentially, traditional. In other words, the editing and filtering process follows the same procedures as a traditional news desk. Following

this pattern of traditional media, FotoRepórter has to deal with the same legality and bureaucracy issues as any traditional counterpart, no matter if it is a newspaper, magazine or any different media outlet.

Factors such as copyright, contracts, legal support, bylines and others are all embraced by FotoRepórter's term of use and fairness. According to Juca Varella, who is the main coordinator of the project, the team behind FotoRepórter joined forces with the Legal Department of the print newspaper and realized it would be easier and safer to maintain the same copyright license already used in the traditional media for professional photographers. The same goes for other legal issues, such as contracts and the proper usage of a byline (credits) every time citizen photography is published online or in print.

Prior to becoming a member suitable to send pictures to FotoRepórter, the citizen must complete a small registration form online, stating personal and social information such as the National Registry Number, mobile phone and address. The candidate can also choose a name or nickname to apply to his pictures, as long as his real name gets officially verified. Before finishing up the form, the citizen must read and comply with the copyright contract.

According to Juca Varella, maintaining the "traditional way" of dealing with copyright was the most suitable option for the project, due to its credibility and its practical functionality. It was also an option to encourage the seriousness in the submitting process of pictures and digital images to the system. Citizen journalists for FotoRepórter must obey the same law restrictions as their professional counterparts, including employees and freelancers. The copyright management in FotoRepórter's particular case is a contract of "Concession of rights over photographic material" and can be read and signed online. The concession contract maintains the author as the copyright owner and, at the same time, allows Estadão to use the photographs in the newspaper and on its website.

Quoting Juca Varella's own words about the mix between citizen journalism and professional journalism, he states that:

we did not want to launch this innovative project without a legal support behind us, especially due to the seriousness of our work. We have citizen photographers not only in Brazil, but also in many countries around the world. Having these amateur photographers in places we cannot reach is crucial to the reader, interesting in a market point of view and provides us with a highly aggregated value. In order to provide security to the

authors, we must follow the law and apply the same professional rules and ethics that run in our traditional media outlets. The results could not be better, we are impressed.

The contract of FotoRepórter follows the same traditional model of a concession contract. It is a two-page contract defining the nature of FotoRepórter's business and defines the concession of rights and exclusivity. The citizen journalism agrees to let Estadão decide the best use for the photograph without restrictions on the number of times the picture can be published, for example. The author of the picture assigns Estadão the right to exclusivity for 90 days. In this time period, the pictures sent to FotoRepórter's may not be used by the author in any way without a prior permission by Estadão. After the 90-day time period, the author may use his photograph as he wishes, including trying to sell it for a different media company.

For us, again, FotoRepórter is a good example of how citizen journalism concepts can be successfully applied in traditional media. In this specific case, FotoRepórter is, basically, one of many tools that the newspaper already have. On one hand, it is not independent in the citizen journalism concept sense as explained by Ribstein (2006) but it not included in any of the six examples of citizen journalism classified by Lasica (2003) when commenting about different types of independent news creation and reporting. On the other hand, FotoRepórter has already shown and proved to be one of the most innovative citizen's participation in the media, not only in Brazil but also worldwide.

The struggle between defining it as citizen journalism or alternative media, or perhaps only an additional tool of traditional media to gather more audience, seem outdated in present time when people are looking for more and better ways to share their points of view and report on events and facts. Most importantly to our research in citizen journalism, is the adoption by FotoRepórter of non-professional journalists as active reporters.

4.2 – Ohmynews

The idea of a mass self communication described by Castells (2006) perhaps is the most suitable definition of a truly citizen journalism initiative that took place in South Korea by Ohmynews, which led a series of citizen journalism websites and what all the media companies actually adopt as a standard model when it comes to publishing the so-called "amateur content" using professional and traditional standards.

In South Korea, Ohmynews became popular and commercially successful with the motto, "Every Citizen is a Reporter." Founded by Korean journalist Oh Yeon-ho on February 22, 2000, it has a staff of more than 80 traditional reporters and editors who write about 20% of its content, with the rest coming from other freelance contributors who are mostly ordinary citizens. Among many journalists with experience in online reporting, practically all the citizen journalism websites in the Western world took as granted the model initiated and adopted by Ohmynews in South Korea.

The starting point was the single possibilities of letting the Korean people produce their own news. In less than a year, Ohmynews had 40 thousand contributions and launched its English website in 2004, called Ohmynews International. For Yeon Ho, the concept of citizen journalism is associated to an active behavior towards the social problems faced by people, being a strict idea of community. In his opinion, knowing the problems in your community is not enough; you have to look for solutions.

Currently, Ohmynews International has a team of 60-80 professional journalists for managing and editing the stories sent by the citizen journalists from all over the world. In 2003, the website had achieved more than 1 million daily visits, establishing a credible and trustworthy image. In 2005, Time Magazine published a report about the "50 Coolest Websites" and Ohmynews got to the 4th place in the News and Information section.

In May 2005, more than 300 citizen journalists outside South Korea were contributing to Ohmynews International. In 2006, more than a thousand people outside Korea had sign-up to become a citizen journalist. Currently, there are more than 5,000 citizen journalists in Korea and worldwide contributing with stories and photographs to Ohmynews. Since 2004 – with the launch of Ohmynews International – many websites and media organizations have tried to follow the Korean model, which is

basically the same model adopted in the traditional journalism: editors and reporters. The only difference is that now the reporters are everywhere and on every spot, they are citizens as anyone and as everyone at the same time.

That is the "grassroots reporting" stated by Bowman and Willis (2003), when the user/citizen takes the form of an eyewitness or first-hand accounts, participating in the fact-gathering and reporting process and even conveying breaking news where no staff member of a newspaper would ever dream of be. A.J. Liebling once said, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." Now, in the opinion of Bowman and Willis, and many other authors covering the convergence of journalism and new technologies, millions of people do own a press.

News organizations have spent much time and efforts trying to position their journalists as more than impartial observers have. They have in many ways tried to present them as experts in a field or interpreters of events. This approach in a print or broadcast model makes perfect sense. Online, the world of opinion and expert commentary is not restricted to the privileged. But forward-looking media companies don't view that development as a threat. News organizations still have the resources to become known as the definitive authority on various subjects. They will have to make way, however, for readers who want pick up the tools of journalism to contribute to a more informed citizenry and a more robust democracy.

What happens in Korea with Ohmynews is what Bowman and Willis describes of audience becoming stakeholders. Rather than passively accepting news coverage decided, filtered and written by a handful of editors, people are sending e-mails, complaining and questioning what they are reading – because many times, what they read is not actually what they think it is a fact.

According to a USA Today/CNN survey in June 2003, only 36% of the respondents believe the news media generally get the facts straight. And these new perceptions of facts and opinions are what made Ohmynews so popular and credible in most of the Asian continent and in many countries worldwide, becoming a trustworthy medium for divergent voices, such as those related to fragile topics like the North Korean relationship with South Korea, the terrorism activity in the Middle East and so on.

4.2.1 – Payment and professionalism

Many websites tried and still tries to replicate Ohmynews model, especially in the rest of the Asian continent and in the United States. Basically, what they reproduce is the professional way of dealing with citizen journalism. Professional journalists helping and filtering the stories sent by hundreds or thousands of people, checking the facts and gathering more in-depth content about specific issues.

One of the downsides of Ohmynews is the payment process. Differently from FotoRepórter in Brazil, where citizens who get their pictures published in the newspaper get paid by the same amount of professional photographers, Ohmynews pay its contributors by a minor amount only, usually with two different models: main stories and side stories. As of 2007, Ohmynews was paying USD 20 for a main story and USD 10 for a side story. The basic set of rules states that you may send them an article up to ten pages, for which you are held personally and legally responsible in terms of veracity. If it's acceptable, they edit it and pay you for it through a unique monetary system of their own, later converted in Korean money or American dollars.

Brambilla (2006) who pursuit an extensive research solely on Ohmynews for her Master Degree thesis in Brazil, argues that Ohmynews should not be compared to other paying publications, because it is the exception of the rule. According to her research, most citizen journalism websites does not pay contributors.

In this sense, the activity of the citizen reporter is similar to the freelance journalist. Hence, it is the citizen reporter himself who choose his pitches and story ideas, writing as he will. In Ohmynews, there will be situations where the editor suggests story pitches to specific contributors, but it does not mean they have to follow the suggestion nor it is a guarantee of publication. It should be pointed that Ohmynews is an exception among open source journalism projects. Usually, there is no payment to contributions.

As of 2007, Ohmynews had no intentions to change its policies towards a higher remuneration to contributors.

4.3 – Sou+Eu (+ signal pronounced as "mais")

Another unique initiative launched in Brazil in late 2006, Sou+Eu is a print magazine that, at first glance, has nothing to do with citizen journalism. It follows the exact same model as any other print magazine, with lots of pictures, stories, graphs, sections and forth. But the uniqueness of Sou+Eu is the content: it is solely written by readers.

Sou+Eu resemble FotoRepórter is one particular factor: it is not an independent publication nor it comes from a new established media outlet such as the case in Ohmynews. Instead, Sou+Eu is made from Editora Abril, one of Brazil majors publishing house with dozens of magazines and different sorts of publication within the country. For instance, Editora Abril owns Veja magazine, which is Brazil's most famous and best selling weekly magazine, according to International Data Corporation (IDC). Actually, according to IDC reports, Editora Abril is the leader in magazine selling in the country, owning 65,7% of the country's market share (2000 database), with more titles than any other publishing house. Veja magazine, for instance, currently sells around 2 million units each week.

As of 2007, less than six months after the official launch, Sou+Eu has a staff of 12 people, including journalists and computer-related employees. From these 12, only 6 are reporters and their role is to fact-check the stories sent by the readers. The process of publishing your story is very simple, just like Ohmynews and FotoRepórter. The reader may send by e-mail his story and, every month, Sou+Eu editors will select the best ones, copydesk it and publish it. Every week, the magazine is sold in traditional news stands on the streets, bringing stories from many readers' life and work. In the website, the reader can also select stories based on the subject, such as social life, relationships, work, comedy, romance, diets, animal life and so on. Most of the content is related to every day issues faced by ordinary people.

According to Carlos Palhano, editor-in-chief of Sou+Eu, the project started back in 2004 when Editora Abril started to study citizen journalism initiatives in the British market. He explains:

By that time, we identified two tendencies in the communications market: the increasing interest of stories made for and from ordinary and anonymous people; the increasing need of people to interact and generate content, they are not fully satisfied in being only a passive reader anymore. They want to share their thoughts, produce their videos and stories. Based on these tendencies, we started to develop the project and in two years the magazine was out there. People's interest in people's stories is everywhere, just look at TV shows such as Big Brother and The Apprentice, for example.

Palhano believes that the citizen journalism frenzy is not really a new need or interest from society, the only difference is that now they have the necessary tools – and easy enough to operate – to produce and publish their own content. For him, it is an "irreversible tendency and, in the specific case of Sou+Eu, readers buy the magazine because they want to laugh, they want to identify themselves with those people who are writing, know more about other people's lives and learn from them."

One remarkable singularity of Sou+Eu is that practically all contributions come from women. According to Palhano, this was already predicted, since the magazine publishes a lot of gastronomy recipes, stories about romances and housewives, making the publication very popular in Brazil. Sou+Eu pays each published contribution, in a similar rate as FotoRepórter, but using a different model to pay.

A three-pages story that gets published equals to R\$ 500 (USD 250), two-pages gets R\$ 300 (USD 150) and one page goes for R\$ 200 (USD 100). Also, the magazine pays between USD 25 and USD 50 to different contributions, such as the recipes, occasional pictures, questions etc. For Brazilian standards, the payment is only a little bit below the average amount suggested by most syndicates of journalists in the country for freelance work.

5. Against all odds: for a citizen journalism within traditional journalism

The three models chosen by this work – FotoRepórter, Ohmynews, Sou+Eu – represent what I believe to be reliable models to exemplify the union between citizen journalism and traditional journalism. Even though they are citizen journalism representatives, with content produced by readers, they are attached to some kind of traditional journalism strings. In some cases, such as Sou+Eu, they are exactly the same as their traditional counterparts.

It is unknown what happens if all from sudden citizen journalism becomes a sort of public sweetheart worldwide, with different traditional media outlets embracing this new type of journalism made from ordinary people. What we propose is to pay more attention to public need towards a broader access of information instead of encouraging and debating about a "new" type of journalism. Such debates usually use words we are all aware of, especially the 'revolutionary' word. And as we have seen in our initial chapters, the public need of expressing themselves and the freedom of the press necessity have nothing new, much on the contrary.

Our three case studies are unique examples of how new technologies and new ways of innovation in the media sector can be united with traditional media, without struggle to define or contextualize what is revolutionary or not. Instead, these examples are using what we have right now in terms of technology and networking to provide what we had never dreamt of ten years ago, when terms like "online journalism" started to become popular. As we have seen in beginning, many authors talk about citizen journalism considering it as an independent model aside the traditional media outlets. The best reference would be Lasica (2003) classification:

- 1) Audience participation (such as user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photos or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, or local news written by residents of a community)
- 2) Independent news and information websites
- 3) Full-fledged participatory news sites
- 4) Collaborative and contributory media sites
- 5) Other kinds of "thin media." (mailing lists, email newsletters),
- 6) Personal broadcasting sites

In the above, we can realize there is plenty of room for people's participation, but apparently no room for the traditional media participation or its role in the process of practicing citizen journalism. It is my belief that, even though there is great need for independent bloggers and independent citizen journalism publications, society can also have a great benefit from citizen journalism projects within traditional newspapers and magazines, no matter if it is considered a new section in the paper or a new magazine/newspaper with a corporative group supporting it.

As long as the citizen journalism concepts and approaches, as stated by Bowman and Willis (2003), Gillmor (2004) and others, and also with freedom of speech and no censorship as Sobrinho (1924), Papandrea (2007) and Constant (1974) argues in journalism History, we should not have any fear of losing the grip of citizen reporting only because there is a financial support from a well established media group. It is exactly the case of Sou+Eu and FotoRepórter, it was not the case of Ohmynews in the beginning, but now due to its popularity and increase in number of contributors, Ohmynews is also considered a big media group, especially in Asian countries which try to replicate their model of citizen participation in the news producing.

After years of active participation in citizen journalism and, at the same time, working as professional journalist, the only concluding remark is that there is no such thing as a perfect model of citizen journalism, but there is also no supreme value that we should take in consideration when talking about independent reporting, no matter if it comes from a citizen reporter or a professional reporter working in a news desk.

Our proposal of a citizen journalism model unites what we believe is the best of these two worlds. On one hand, we have the financial support and infra-structure of a established media group (in our model, a newspaper) and, on the other hand, we have this new trend of active participation from people who are finally identifying themselves in a newspaper or magazine, considering themselves as part of the big process of generating content and reporting facts and events. This new model of citizen journalism within traditional journalism could have the following structure, considering it is a newspaper, with slightly adaptations for magazines or any other print publication.

5.1 – Model to suggest

- Implementation of a new section in the current newspaper

- o Four weekly pages + 1 editorial piece every week
- o Attached to the Urban Life section (or similar)
- o Published on the least selling day of the newspaper, in order to attract more occasional readers
- o A small team of one editor and one reporter for fact-checking and suggesting

- Objectives (not currently covered by traditional journalism)

- o direct channel with no intermediary between reader and newspaper
- o publish the reader perception about his city or neighborhood
- o the best that Internet can offer: pictures, graphs, articles and reader's memories.
- o reaches a point where the professional journalist cannot reach nowadays

- Expected results in the short range

- o Increase in the number of readers, including the occasional reader
- o Increase in the low-income participation of readers, now able to identify themselves
- o Indirect creation of an ombudsman, currently a rare position in newspapers worldwide
- o More credibility among readers if they identify themselves with stories written by their neighbors

- Expected results in the long range

- o Encouragement of the reading habit among children and teenagers, with citizen reporting in public schools that can be published in the newspaper
- o Creation of a huge archive of memories from the city or region, due to the contribution of senior readers who are eager to write but have no space to publish nor know how to handle new technologies

- o Space for those who do not have space: poor people who would never publish an article, seniors, housewives, unemployed etc.
- o Discovery of new talents, especially among teenagers, who could become skilled writers and reporters in the near future, but would not have the same opportunity without a citizen journalism space within a traditional newspaper
- o More credibility of the newspaper among high-income readers, due to the extension of voices in their favorite paper, double checking events and facts covered by the professional reporters.
- o Direct contact with no restraints between journalists and citizens.
- o More fairness during the investigation for a story, before publishing it, since the citizen reporters will always be able to question and fact-check if the event happens in their neighborhood, for example.

- Practical implementation

- o Articles and pictures are paid, as an incentive to credibility and participation.
- o Payment follows the same rate established by each State's labor union
- o Only published material gets paid, including a simple copyright agreement between newspaper and citizen reporter
- o The active reader is not treated as a reader anymore; instead, he is a contributor to the newspaper.
- o Database generation with facts and events in the neighborhood/region.
- o The editor is still responsible for filtering (gate keeping) the stories
- o Editor and reporter must fact-check stories and suggestions, it is journalism after all
- o Fixed weekly sections: an editorial column (from the editor), three pictures from readers, one memory of your city/region, one opinion piece about your neighborhood, one book review, one consumer-rights panel, one box for standard news from contributors), one Internet sections (blogs and excerpts), one bigger box for a leading story from selected contributors.

The model above is only a leading basis of what could be done when we apply citizen journalism concepts in a traditional newspaper, without too much expenses and hassle from professional journalists. At the same time, as an example of implementation in a newspaper, its subsequent application can and should be altered depending of the size of the newspaper, number of inhabitants of the city and other factors, such as literacy rate and conditions of public schools in regard to Internet infra-structure.

6. Conclusion

The impact of this new type of people's participation in the media called citizen journalism is loud and clear, but yet to be fully explained and analyzed in the present time or the near future. Although it can be seen on every single layer and scope of the news production, scholars and journalists themselves still need time to understand what will be the future and results from the struggle between a different media approach from private citizens who now take role as the news producers.

What is widely known, tough, is that citizen journalism is not only a concept anymore. The benefits of people's participation in covering news and events are increasingly credible not only in an amateur layer, but also at the professional and corporate scheme, even though the purpose of this paper was not to present or prove that at this time.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) argue that high-tech interaction (therefore, the main support of citizen journalism) is a journalism that resembles conversation much like the original journalism at coffeehouses hundred years ago. Seen in this light, journalism's function is not fundamentally changed by the digital age or any new sort of nomenclature we might give to it.

As a matter of fact, as we have studied in this work, the need for freedom in the press and the need of laws to prevent censorship in the news producing are not new, much on the contrary, authors such as Sobrinho (1923) and Constant (1874) were already heavily focusing on these factors in their analysis of journalism and how society is politically structured.

The techniques may be different sometimes or may not be different, but the underlying principles are the same. And this is what most citizen journalists strongly try to achieve: to share a credible and worthy of belief news experience from their own thoughts and work, considered "amateur" for many professional journalists. If this truly works out or not, it will not be up to us to decide. Instead, it will be the future readers and consumers of media – in all possible forms and interactions – that will decide the role of citizen media in general.

Media organizations are already in a stance of rethinking their role in society. Many media outlets are actually being reshaped by people's thoughts towards fact-checking and fact-gathering, because now they are currently playing the role that once were exclusive to people they did not even know about their existence in the first place.

But the outcomes of our case studies - FotoRepórter, Ohmynews, Sou+Eu – in particular, is more than enough to make most media professionals believe that there is more to citizen journalism than scholars usually agree. FotoRepórter's level of credibility and usage in Brazil, including citizens from different countries trying to participate in the project, lead us to truly believe that traditional media and citizen media can be bonded to each other in a mutual beneficial way, not as a competition, not as a matter of defining who is a journalist and who is not.

These outcomes are more than enough to show us that not only journalism, but the whole idea of accepting and sharing knowledge about facts and events, have changed for good and affect every single layer of society, from the top to bottom.

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