

Evidence in journalistic writing: citizen journalism

Credibility, Honesty, Ethics, and Politeness in Academic and Journalistic
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Introduction

- Do you know anything about citizen journalism?
- Have you ever heard about citizen journalism?

- What do you think, who can create news in citizen journalism?
- Can citizen journalism be seen as a product of a professional journalist, or not?

Citizen journalism

- Type of journalism which is created by citizens can be named as „networked, open source, grassroots, participatory, amateur or citizen journalism“ (Mirvajová 2014: 150)
 - Bowman and Willis (2003) define citizen journalism as the act of non-professionals, playing an active role in the process of:
 - collecting,
 - reporting,
 - analyzing and
 - disseminating news and information.
- „The intent of this participation is to provide:
- independent,
 - reliable,
 - accurate,
 - wide-ranging and
 - relevant information that a democracy requires“ (Bowman and Willis 2003: 9).

History of citizen journalism

- Participation of citizens long before the emergence of the internet and Web 2.0[...]
- „In the 1740s, citizen journalism existed as citizen distributed political pamphlets in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.
- In the 1920s, free radio stations or pirate radio involved unauthorized community activists and political and cultural dissidents who broadcasted offshore in part of continental Europe or the United Kingdom.
- On November 22, 1963, Abraham Zapruder documented the assassination of the US president John E. Kennedy with his Bell & Howell camera [...]
- In 1991, from the balcony of his apartment, Georgy Holliday chronicled Rodney King being beaten by Los Angeles Police Department officers by filming it with his Sony-Handycam“ (Mansel 2015: 58)

Conditions for improvement of citizen journalism

- The rise of computer mediated communication, the internet and the Web 2.0 and ability of citizens to participate at key moments.
- Power of social media and mobile communication
- Can we recognize the role of citizens in creating news and behind that, possibilities for improvement?
- Citizens collect news and make information public using modern technology with the aim to:
 - 1) improve the situation in the society
 - 2) point to something interesting and important

- Who can be the creator of the news in citizen journalism in your country?
- Citizens? What type of citizens?
- Who is the sender of information? Who can be the receiver?
- Citizens as the sender and as the receiver of information. Can the receiver be everyone?

Citizen journalism: what can be the platform for sharing news?

- Social platforms like Facebook, My space, Twitter, different kind of forums and websites
- Citizen journalist with the aim to share information and express opinion
 - 1) creates profiles, group and whole pages on social platforms and/or
 - 2) writes blogs (different kind of news, from personal diary to comments on political situation)

Tools: photo and video material, using telephone or camera

Connection between language and rhetorical device and citizen journalism (Mare et al. 2018: 35)

- **Guidelines on ethical citizen journalism**

1. **Minimizing harm:** treat sources as human beings deserving respect.

2. **Present the facts:** offer observed or verified facts, without details or speculations. Decrease the usage of superlatives and adjectives.

3. **Avoid hearsay:** check facts from different sources. Verification of the claim before reporting. If the verification is not possible, use attribution - “According to ...” Avoid negative or irrelevant comments (“He was foolish to...”).

4. **Omit your opinion:** stick to the facts. Leave personal views out of the story.

- **5. Avoid plagiarism:** attribute material you are citing (**Web links**) and attribute your sources.
- **6. Always identify yourself:** make yourself visible and inform your sources about usage of information which you receive from them. Respect your sources.
- **7. Identify your sources:** Your sources' comments must be "on the record". Pay attention if your sources want to remain anonymous.
- **8. Fact checking:** Verify information from other sources. Use trusted news sources, documents and interviews. Eliminate errors and write a truthful story.
- **9. Integrity of photographs:** Never alter a photo so it could mislead or deceive a reader.
- **10. Spelling and grammar:** check for spelling and grammatical errors. Check proper names.

- **11. Be transparent and declare any potential conflicts of interest:** it is important to be transparent about prejudices, interests and standpoint.
- 12. Distinguish fact from opinion:** Pay attention to differences between hard and soft news.
- 13. If there is a source that backs up your thoughts, post a link to it:** Beef up your stories by posting links to them.

Citizen journalism vs. professional journalism

- A citizen journalist is everybody who judges by himself:
- the credibility,
- ethics and
- values of the news,
- who finds some news so interesting and posts information about that news on the internet.
- Vučenović (2011: 174) claimed that citizen journalist (amateur) is someone who is leaded by the internal push to inform the publicity about something which he judged as worth to be presented.
- Professional journalist is someone who bases his work on long practice or/and who is educated to be a journalist.
- Vučenović (2011: 174) claimed that professional journalist is someone who knows the rules to fortify the true of the facts and to present that facts in an interesting and convincing way.

- Can citizen journalism replace professional journalism?
- Citizen journalism can be seen as addition to the professional journalism. Why?
- What can be recognized as important in citizen journalism?
- Citizen journalists recognize the current topics
- Do they create a real and objective picture of the world? That must be imperative, but in some cases citizen journalists violate the real picture
- Accuracy of information must be imperative (Bogdanović 2013)
- How can we define citizen journalist based on this explanation? Someone who is in the right moment in the right place
- A citizen journalist first makes public the material than filters the material, while a professional journalist: filters the material, arranges material, makes public (Bogdanović 2013)
- A traditional journalist reaches the effect on credibility by checking the truth of information in a large number of sources. But, that can reduce efficiency.

Citizen journalism: positive examples from different kinds of fields

- Reportages about natural disasters and accidents
- 2004 – tsunami in Sri Lanka – in 24 hours tourists sent the pictures and videos taken by phones and cameras
- 2005 – coverage of hurricane Katrina – citizens post pictures on websites or search for missing relatives.
- After tsunami in Asia 2004 and after Katarina hurricane in America, citizens posted photos and wrote blogs which motivated people to collect humanitarian aid (Bogdanović 2013)
- 2006 – explosion in Paraćin, Serbia. Explosion in 3.45 and in 3.46 the news with the title on the internet local forum “Explosion on the hill“. The citizens reported about explosion posting news and pictures, while professional journalists shared the news after a few hours (Vučenović 2011: 178)

- Politics: 2009 – the Iranian elections – citizens used video sharing platforms and Twitter to disseminate news content and organized the protests. Citizen journalists had a crucial role in reporting in the moment when power wanted to stop the communication and journalists reporting (Bogdanović 2013: 74)
- Art: members of the musician group Darkwood Dub call the interested citizens to send video material recorded by mobile phone and to participate in creating the music video for song Robot. They give to the citizens the subject *Your world seen by robot eyes* (Vučenović 2011: 178).

Alexander Chadwick picture

The London bombing attacks. Passengers are evacuated from an underground train in a tunnel near Kings Cross station in London, Thursday, July 7, 2005.

Alexander Chadwick picture was the source of information for organizations such as BBC, The Times, The New York Times. Picture was taken on his mobile phone camera.



Salam Pax – the Bagdad blogger

Blog of Salam Pax who documented the events before and after invasion of Iraq in 2003. He reported about daily life and viewpoints of Iraqis.

January 31, 2003

a car ride to al-mansour to get sandwiches, late at night.

10 new sandbag protected trenches seen on the way. appetite totally ruined by thoughts of who will use them and what will happen along these roads.

maybe exploration journey tomorrow to see what else is being done to baghdad.

I am either angry or scared i can't make up my mind.

<https://salampax.wordpress.com/2003/01/>

Sohaib Athar posted information about the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011 on Twitter

Sohaib Athar

@ReallyVirtual

Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event).

12:58 PM - 1 May 2011

88 replies 5,274 retweets 5,058 likes

- Behind this examples, which characteristics can be added to the citizen journalism?
- Objectivity?
- Credibility?
- Ethics?
- Efficiency?

Negative aspects of citizen journalism

- Low quality of the news, without sources, without objectivity, personal views
- Possibilities to change the values of the news posting comments
- Citizen journalists can be activists of some political parties which can have influence in reporting, first of all on objectivity and credibility effects.
- Example – group on Facebook *We will not give the Niš airport*

What is important? Which effect can you recognize



Ne damo niški aerodrom is at **Skupština Grada Nisa.**

4 hrs · Niš, Serbia · 🌐

Uz poklanjanje niškog aerodroma ide i
LICEMERJE
Perišić, SNS.

Na bedžu piše: ne damo da niški aerodrom
propadne.



- Do you have any examples in your country?

Okpara 2015 – The Ethical Dimension of Citizen Journalism Practice: A Case Study of 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

- Citizen journalists have used social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and blogs in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.
- Okpara (2015) found positive and negative contribution of citizen journalists in the 2015 presidential elections.
- Positive: they fuelled the passion of the elections through the many updates that made the elections really worth following
- Negative: they attacked the personalities of certain individuals
- While citizen journalists helped to keep people abreast of the results through their updates, „the timing of these results was wrong as it was not ethical to have published these results before the official announcement by the electoral body (INEC)“ (Okpara 2015) .
- Okpara (2015) criticised the possibility that citizen journalism is used against political opponents.

Discussion

- Based on previous examples, what can be said about citizen journalism?
- Credible? Objective? True information? Is there any responsibility about shared information?
- What type of news can be presented in citizen journalism?
- Define the crucial parts of the news and the characteristics of the news in citizen journalism.

Connection between citizen journalism and media

- Protests against war in Iraq, 2003 – BBC encouraged citizens to send photos about demonstrations from all over the world (Bogdanović 2013)
- CNN in 2006. start up column *IReport* – citizens can send attachments which can be public on this media service (Vučenović 2011: 179)
- RTS had action *Viewer as a reporter* – they invited citizens to send them interesting photos. Srđan Vezmar photo *A chair in the bus on the line 611* win (Vučenović 2011: 179).

Examples in Serbia:

portal *Južne vesti*, part “Report the problem”

Landfill behind the hall Čair

A strong stench is felt



In Serbia, Project named Selfi gradjansko novinarstvo <http://www.caas.rs/blog/>



Više hiljada građana. Dve lokacije. Dva različita događaja. Više različitih motiva, stavova, opravdanja i izgovora. Ovako bi se najkraće mogla opisati sreda 25. aprila leta 2018, osvanula za građane Niša i drugih gradova. Full text on the <http://www.caas.rs/nislije-ponovo-na-ulicama-ne-damo-aerodrom/>

More thousands of citizens. Two locations. Two different events. More different motives, attitudes, justifications and excuses. This could be described briefly on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, for citizens of Niš and other cities.

Examples in Serbia: citizen journalists and blogs

- Project "Moj Nedeljnik - čitaoci reporteri" funded by the Republic of Serbia`s budget – Ministry of Culture and Information
<http://www.nedeljnik.rs/magazin/portalnews/gradansko-novinarstvo-izbor-tekstova-i-vesti-objavljenih-sa-platforme-moj-nedeljnik>
- Koliko su nam važne osnovne škole i šta da očekuju naši đaci: [Jedna priča sa lokala](#)
How important are primary schools and what should our students expect: One story from the locals.
- Author: [Danilo Spasojević](#)
- Zaboravljeno blago Srbije: [Putovanje u Đavolju Varoš](#) / 'Forgotten treasure of Serbia: Journey to Đavolja Varoš'
- Author: [Dalibor Janković](#)

Group on Facebook: We will not give the Niš airport

- Nikad više povezanih tekstova u Južne vesti :) / 'Never more collected news in the Južne vesti :)'
- Ko zna, možda do kraja razmotamo i klupko beogradske koncesije. / 'Who knows, maybe we can uncover the Belgrade consession.'
- Tag: #nedamoaerodrom Nacionalna koalicija za decentralizaciju
- Link: <https://www.juznevesti.com/Politika/Arapima-drzava-daje-zemljiste-Nislijama-ne.sr.html>

Title: Arapima država daje zemljište, Nišlijama ne. / 'The state gives the land to the Arabs, but not to the citizens of Nis.'

Examples in Serbia: citizens journalists in Facebook



Nothing smarter was expected unfortunately 😞 to save the BG airport and complied with the deal to the concessionaire, the Nis airport will settle the state 😞 and what some peasants in the south know there

Link to the news "Nish airport was given to the State for management"

Examples in Serbia: citizen journalists in Twitter

[Danijela Vujošević @Danie_Lela](#) Jun 16



Sednica Skupštine grada Niša u utorak?!



Nišlije, da li smo pripremili



pištaljke i transparente? [#nedamoerodrom](#) [#PROTEST](#)

1 reply 3 retweets 9 likes

[Danijela Vujošević @Danie_Lela](#) Jun 16



Meeting of the City Assembly of Nis on Tuesday?!



Citizens of Niš, have we prepared



whistles and banners? [#nedamoerodrom](#) [#PROTEST](#)

1 reply 3 retweets 9 likes

Discussion

- 1. Who can be the creator of the news in your country?
- 2. Explain the way of creating the news based on previous examples.
- 3. Explain the important characteristics of the news in citizen journalism.

Task 1: prepare news or a story

- Subject: movement in the eyes
- Platform: Facebook, Blog, Newspaper (part, Report the problem)
- Condition: professional or citizen journalists

- Which devices did you use to reach the effect of credibility and ethics?
- Lingual and non-lingual devices. Only photos or photos with explanations? Link? Tag?
- Which devices can be used for publishing the wrong news or the news with the wrong implications?
- Which devices will professional and citizen journalists use?

- I: Julinda Toska (Albania), Jelena (Serbia), Tijana P. (Macedonia), Milena (Macedonia)
- II: Elena (Macedonia), Ljiljana (Macedonia), Dušica (Serbia),
- III: Dijana (Macedonia), Tijana (Serbia), Jurgen (Albania), Iskra (Macedonia)
- IV: Ersenildo (Albania), Darko (Macedonia), Ina (Albania), Ivana P. (Macedonia)

Task 2

- Using criteria for defining and evaluating citizen journalism give a note for the news and stories

What is the criteria for judging citizen journalism?

What are the characteristics which must be valuable?

Type of evidence?

<http://edition.cnn.com/ireport-awards/excellence-on-the-web>

<http://edition.cnn.com/ireport-awards/>

- **Aftermath of Hurricane Sandy**

- By [crumpf77](#) | Posted November 19, 2012 | Union Beach, New Jersey

- CNN PRODUCER NOTE [crumpf77](#) photographed these striking images of the damage left behind from Hurricane Sandy in Union Beach, New Jersey, this weekend. 'There are no signs of rebuilding. The mood is somber but positive,' he said. Seeing the devastation in the area was so 'heartbreaking.' While photographing the area, he said each photo taken of the ravaged neighborhood was more shocking than the next. [See more stories from Sandy in our interactive map.](#)

- [Jamescia](#), CNN iReport producer



- **San Diego fireworks, loud and up close**
- Dan W. Roy | [YouTube](#) Dan W. Roy borrowed his church's DSLR camera to film San Diego's Fourth of July fireworks show and captured the now-infamous mishap in high-definition. This was a well-documented event, but Roy's clear and steady video of the spectacular explosion stood out from the rest. It was a perfect example of being in the right place at the right time
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=ndVhggq1yHdA

- **Batu Tara**
- By [marcszeglat](#) | Posted July 15, 2013 | Oberhausen, Germany
- CNN PRODUCER NOTE [marcszeglat](#) is a camera operator in Germany specializing in volcano footage. His image was featured as CNN's [Travel Photo of the Day](#) for February 6, 2014.
- [dsashin](#), CNN iReport producer
- In August 2011 I visited the remote volcano Batu Tara in the Sea of Flores, Indonesia. The unknown volcano is permanent active, like Stromboli in Italy. Our Group was the first who landed on a small Beach in front of the active Crater. Up to four times per hour Batu Tara send incredible lava fountains several hundred meters high. During night the fireworks were visible very well. Lava bombs rolled down to the sea and splashed in the water.



- CNN PRODUCER NOTE Chaos broke out after the president of the Philippines addressed frantic people seeking shelter and food in the wake of a flood disaster. iReporter Kristina Partsinevelos and her filming partner Alex Pritz documented the desperation. Partsinevelos and Pritz used their editor hats and picked a unique angle from which to tell the story of flooding in the Philippines. Not only did they tell you there was an aid shortage, but their video visually told the story as well. - [Anika3](#), CNN iReport producer
- Following the devastating floods in early August, many Filipinos are still struggling to put food on their tables. On Sunday August 12th, President Benigno Aquino traveled to Montalban Rizal to address thousands of evacuees about the solutions and challenges of severe flooding. Following his speech, the line for relief goods stretched around the block. Many were left unsatisfied with the President's brief appearance. With more rain expected in the coming weeks, tension is rising for those displaced by the floods.
- Shot and edited by: Alex Pritz and Kristina Partsinevelos



- **The Sound And the Fury - Occupy Wall Street Six Month Anniversary Ends In Arrests**
- By [shameel](#) | Posted March 18, 2012 | new york city, New York
- CNN PRODUCER NOTE [shameel](#) has been covering the Occupy Wall St. protests since they began last fall. He was at this six-month anniversary rally from around noon until past midnight on March 17. Police made 74 arrests as they removed protesters from the park. You can [read the CNN story](#) for more information about the protest and arrests.
- [rachel8](#), CNN iReport producer



- Citizen journalism sites
- <https://globalvoices.org/>
- <http://ww7.thirdreport.com/>
- <https://edition.cnn.com/specials/opinions/cnnireport>
- Guardian witness <https://witness.theguardian.com/>
- Wikinews https://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Demotix
<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.demotix.com%2F&ei=t4MNVZ-fOsnUasztgfAO&usg=AFQjCNEzq7wrF-o2tcGW8cR9PrtnZE7L-A&sig2=0aFTl6N-yHvGUQlX-kJfkg&bvm=bv.88528373,d.d2s>
- **The-Latest** <https://www.the-latest.com/tottenham-riot-there-can-be-no-peace-without-justice>

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