Notes
on Citizen Journalism

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Discussion outline

- What is citizen journalism?
- Overview of citizen journalism
- Case studies
- What does it take to be a citizen journalist?
What is citizen journalism?

- Giving audiences the opportunity to practice the journalism profession
- Mechanism for empowering the public by making them
  - aware of the workings of the press; and
  - part of the press
Nature of audience involvement

- **Not** confined to giving feedback
- **Not** confined to being source of information

**Bottomline:** Actual practice of the profession
Overview

- Citizen journalism – NOTHING NEW
- Remember taxi drivers who had been mobilized by some radio programs to report on traffic updates? Probably YES.
- Remember “barefoot journalism” or “peryodistang yapak”? Probably NOT.
Vestiges of citizen journalism

La Solidaridad, Kalayaan and other underground publications – written, edited and produced by people who are neither full-time nor professional journalists
Citizen journalism & new media

- Useful tools of the trade
  - Digital camera or camera phone (for taking pictures)
  - Digital video camera (for recording events)
  - Cellular phone (for sending reports via SMS or MMS)
  - Music player with recording capacity (for recording interviews)
Citizen journalism & new media

- Other useful tools
  - Blogs (for posting text, photos, videos)
  - Interactive “citizen journalism” websites
  - Social networking sites (esp. photo and video sharing ones like Flickr, YouTube)
Case studies

- Global Voices (globalvoicesonline.org)
- OhmyNews (english.ohmynews.com)
- NowPublic (nowpublic.com)
Mainstream goes citizen journ?

- *Philippine Daily Inquirer* – Metro Citizen’s Call
- *TV Patrol* (ABS-CBN) – Citizen Patrol; Boto Mo, i-Patrol Mo
- *GMA News.TV* - YouScoop
- *Sun.Star Network* – Citizen Watch
To be a citizen journalist...

- Having a blog NOT enough
- Training indispensable, despite what others may say
  - Know the workings of the press
  - Know the skills in writing and production of media content
  - Know the professional standards
  - Know the ethical standards
WHY?

- Empowerment means a person writes and produces media content
  - He or she not reduced to “talking head” (in the case of TV)
  - He or she neither just a source of information nor mere feedback provider

- Same standards apply
  - Professional and citizen journalists adhere to the same ethical and professional standards
For example...

- If you’re a blogger and you want to engage in citizen journalism, read the **Bloggers’ Code of Ethics** based on Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics
  - Be honest and fair
  - Minimize harm
  - Be accountable

Source: CyberJournalist.net
(www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php)
What does it take?

- Understanding the role of journalism in society
  - Provide relevant information in order to help shape public opinion
- Knowledge of journalistic skills and standards
- Commitment to serve the people, particularly the marginalized
Parting shots

- Developments in new media make it easier to write and produce media content

- Standards cannot and should not be adjusted (i.e., lowered) just to accommodate citizens engaging in journalism

- Citizen journalism part of developing audiences’ media literacy
Thank you!

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