



Blogging and Journalism in the Philippines

Journalistic Blogging
for the People

Complementation not competition

- Blogging AND journalism, not VERSUS
- Both part of public domain; contents for public consumption
- Out with the OLD, in the NEW?
 - 1979: Video DID not kill the radio star
 - 1984: All we hear is NOT JUST radio ga ga
 - 1990s: Same situation, this time against the "old trio" – print, radio, television

Tempered excitement?

- Reality of limited reach of the Internet
- Blogging does not reach majority of the people
- Lessons from journalists
 - Need to straddle different forms of media, especially television to reach out to more audiences
 - Take seriously what you're doing, not just a passing fancy

Terms of engagement

- Journalism – providing relevant information to shape public opinion; adheres to professional, ethical guidelines
- Blogging – entails use of CMS (e.g., WP) to write articles and upload graphics and other media files

Comparison

	Journalism	Blogging
Gatekeepers?	Yes	No
Pressures?	Owners, advertisers, interest groups, etc.	None, unless...
Cost of production?	Expensive (for print, radio, TV)	Minimal, even free
Assaults on free expression?	Yes (legal and extra-legal)	Yes (mainly legal, e.g., libel)

Blogging as journalism et al.

- Mass media's three major fields
 - Journalism
 - Advertising and public relations
 - Entertainment
- Blog contents may also be classified according to three major fields
- Journalism, advertising and PR, and entertainment have their own codes of ethics that tend to clash with each other

Bloggers' Code of Ethics

- “Responsible bloggers should recognize that they are publishing words publicly, and they have certain ethical obligations to their readers, the people they write about and society in general”
(CyberJournalist.net)

Crucial to blogging

- Adherence to standards and conscious effort to be responsible for the media content that bloggers write and produce
- Journalism ethics – used as basis because this is the oldest and most developed in the field of media ethics
 - Bloggers Code of Ethics actually based on SPJ Code of Ethics
 - Healthcare Blogger Code of Ethics has elements of journalistic practice

PLEASE note...

- Repeated invocation of journalism standards not an imposition as to how writing and production of blog entries should be done
- *Non-sequitur* for bloggers to raise problems in media organizations for refusing to adhere to journalism-based code of ethics like CyberJournalists.net's

Need for “journalistic blogging”

- Given the national situation, there is need for bloggers to have bias for providing relevant information towards shaping public opinion
- Need to regularly provide “fair commentary” to what is happening; encourage others to follow suit

Forms of journalistic blogging

- Actual coverage of events
- Personal reflections – may be considered journalistic outputs as long as proper context is provided, factual bases of commentaries are provided
 - Objective: To avoid subjective tendencies in writing
- Blog Action Day 2008, anyone?

Things to watch out for

- Observance of proper use of English or Filipino language
 - e.g., grammar, syntax and diction
- Avoid name-calling, mudslinging
- Do not use rumors, unverified information as bases for blog entries
- Do not depend on “blog content providers” like unscientific surveys, tests

Towards relevance




- Relevant blogging – can make difference in society, limited reach of the Internet notwithstanding
 - Case study: Salam Pax's blog (reporting from Baghdad)
- Relevant blog entries can be picked up by print, radio, TV and other online publications

Bottomline



- Blogging and journalism are part of public domain, hence the need to adhere to professional and ethical standards
- No need to reinvent the wheel: There exists CyberJournalist.net's A Bloggers' Code of Ethics
- You'll never run out of things to write about!

Some issues in blogging

- Plagiarism
 - Blog monetization
 - Sponsored posts
 - Paid links
 - Ad placements interfering with content
 - Blogs as purely aggregators; splogs
 - Content determined mainly by SEO tactics like keyword density
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Some recommendations

- WordCamp to take the lead in recommending ethical and professional standards for Filipino bloggers using WP as platform
- Adhere to self-regulation, say no to legislation of ethical and professional standards
 - Gov't imposition could result in abuse, particularly censorship

Pinoy BlogWatch?

A good project...

- Independent blog monitoring as a way to self-regulate blogosphere
 - Function: Cite responsible and irresponsible cases of blogging, particularly among blogs that enjoy high traffic and popularity
- Evaluation based on recommended standards in which bloggers show adherence either by posting disclosure or installing badge or widget

Advantages

- Helpful for newbies to know which practices are worth emulating and rejecting
- Established bloggers can be motivated to serve as good examples

Parting shots

- There is much that bloggers can learn from the responsible practice of the journalism profession, in the same way that journalists should use blogs as an integral part of disseminating their intended message by maximizing the convergence that is characteristic of the new media.

Parting shots

- Blogs must not be dismissed as a simple personal journal.
- In the right hands, they can be powerful tools in the shaping of public opinion.



Thank you!

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