

**Day 1, Panel 4 - Research Panel: Interactivity, Blogs and the UGC — What are the current trends?**

---

**Moderator/Chair:**

**Shayla Thiel Stern**, University of Minnesota

**Panelists:**

**Ingrid Bachmann, Teresa Correra, and Homero Gil de Zuñiga**, University of Texas at Austin, *Outlining New Paths to Democracy: A Profile of Online Content Creators and Its Effects on Political and Civic Participation*

**Robert Bergland, Lisa Crawford, Sarah Noe, and David Hon**, Missouri Western State University, *Multimedia and Interactivity on Newspaper Websites: A Multi-Study Analysis of Seven English-Speaking Countries*

**Joshua A. Braun**, Cornell University, *Models of Restraint: The Adoption of Blogging Software by the U.S. Broadcast News Networks*

**Perrin Ogun Emre**, Marmara University (Turkey) and **Pinar Gurleyen**, Simon Fraser University (Canada), *Exploring New Journalistic Platforms: Experiences of Turkish Journalist Bloggers*

**Nagwa Abdel Salam Fahmy**, Ain Shams University (Egypt), *Revealing the Cutting Agenda Through Egyptian Blogs: An Empirical Study*

**Arne Krumsvik**, University of Oslo (Norway), *Professional Journalism, UGC, and Freedom of Expression*

---

**[Note: The first presentation by Ingrid Bachmann, Teresa Correra, and Homero Gil de Zuñiga is not recorded.]**

**Robert Bergland:** First of all, I want to thank my co-authors who helped me code over 20,000 units of data. And also, this is about a 25-minute presentation that's going to masquerade as a 10-minute one, so I'll be going very fast. And with that, as Rosental would say, let's rock and roll! [laughter]

OK. Essentially, our goal was to analyze to compare the presence of multimedia and interactivity across different countries. There's really a shortage of studies which really do cross-country comparisons. There's

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

numerous studies which analyze multimedia and interactivity on newspaper websites within a particular country, but again, not as much comparison. And it's especially a problem because a lot of these individual country studies use different methodologies and so it's hard to do an apples to apples comparison. So that was our goal with this study is to look at these six countries. Just a very brief literature overview. There had been such studies for the past decade. Most notably, Peng, Greer and Mensing, Bivings Group, and Russia's study of U.S. papers, and Hashim's study of Australian newspapers, and most notably, Sparks, Young, and Darnell's study of Canadian newspapers.

Going in, we had several research questions. The main one, of course, was "What are the levels of interactivity? How likely is it that these newspapers have multimedia and interactivity on their websites? Both within the country and then, of course, comparison [of], how does it stack up with other countries? We also wanted to look at the impact of circulation size with the hypothesis, of course, that the larger the newspaper it is, the more readers it has, the more resources it has, the more likely it is to have multimedia and interactivity on its website. And then last, we wanted to look and see if there was a connection between these rates of interactivity and multimedia with computer ownership and broadband capabilities within that country.

Essentially, being English speakers, we stuck to the top six countries where English was the first or dominant language. Those being the U.S., UK, Canada, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand.

We looked at doing a survey methodology, but we were very concerned about having a high response rate. And so what we did is we instead used the method employed by the Bivings Group and Darnell, Sparks, and Young in which we analyzed the sites. So that essentially ensured a 100% response rate. The disadvantages is it's a one-pass system, so we looked at it for just one day. Did it have RSS feeds? Did it have blogs? Did it have reader polls? Did it have video? Etcetera.

The process. Basically, we looked at tons of websites, we reviewed the literature, [and] came up with 25 of those multimedia and interactivity features. We wanted to use the same kind of bible to look at the newspapers to be studied so we compiled the list from Editor and Publisher. The thought of looking at 1,437 U.S. daily newspapers was a little bit daunting. So we used a random sampling looking at every fourth one and then we conducted — because we had a team, we made sure to conduct inter-rater reliability tests, achieving high rates, to make sure we were coding and entering the data in the same way. Altogether, we looked at over 600 different newspapers. Again, 360 in the U.S., 117 in the UK, 100 in Canada, 9 in Ireland, 24 in New Zealand. And I do want to note that in Australia during the time period—we looked at them over a one-month period—we'd only looked at 12 of the Australian papers, so as a result, there's a higher margin

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

of error with the Australian papers. So keep that in mind as we go through the results.

So here is just a quick list of the categories. Actually, Facebook and Twitter are not on those. We're looking at some other countries right now where we have added that, but we looked at those features within there. Unfortunately, I only have time to go over about ten of those features in the time we have, so I'll go fairly quickly.

So, we used Excel, again, coding in the name of the newspaper, the circulation size, and then the presence. Did they have this feature on that day or not? As I said, one of the things that I wanted to look at was the impact of size on the newspapers. And we looked... I'm just going to show you audio, because it was pretty representative of the multimedia features, especially with the smaller newspapers, as we expected, having less likelihood of having these multimedia items. So for the UK and Ireland papers, for those under 25,000 circulation, again, about a quarter of them had audio. Again, at the largest newspapers, those 100,000 and up, it was about three times as much. And the same was true across the other countries as well. Just so you can see, for example, the newspapers in the U.S. under 10,000, 35% had audio on their sites. Twice that number at the largest newspapers—over 100,000. So similar to Canada as well. The break there was really between those under and over 50,000, which those over 50,000 again being about twice as likely to have audio.

We broke down our results into, again, multimedia, interactivity, and distribution features. Again, I'm just going to cover some of the highlights. One of those, of course, was newspaper-produced video, so not video that was produced by the AP that they put on their site or through joint ownership with a TV station, but newspaper-produced video. As you see, one of the things that surprised us was UK papers almost 90% had newspaper-produced video. One thing to keep in mind with this, we looked at the U.S. in 2007, July of 2007. The other countries we looked at in July of 2008. So for some of the U.S. numbers, if you were doing a complete apples to apples comparison, those numbers would probably be between 5 and 10 or 15% higher in many cases.

As you can see here, the U.S., UK, and Australia are the most likely ones to have newspaper-produced video. And these trends carry throughout with Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand being significantly lower in many cases. Audio, again, highest in the U.S. and UK and Australian newspapers, with Canadian newspapers being about half as much. And New Zealand, as you'll see in many of these cases, really did not have much in the way of multimedia and interactivity in many of the categories.

Audio slideshows, 6 of the 12 Australian newspapers had audio slideshows, but really outside of that, the predominance was in the U.S. Perhaps because of the ubiquity of sound slides, and especially in 2007 most of the ones that

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

we saw on the U.S. sites were indeed created using sound slides. Much less common in the UK and in Canada. Again, photo galleries, perhaps because they are a little bit less time and knowledge intensive to upload, this was one of the highest levels across the board, again, with the UK being the highest at about 90%.

Interactive graphics. Again, these are most always flash that we saw. Don't be fooled by the high bars. As you can see, all these were still below 10%. So in part because of their time intensive nature, the amount of learning curve with flash, this was one of the least common multimedia and interactive features.

Interactivity. Some other characteristics here. As you can see, reader polls. A lot of these, of course, are built into the CMS, so these were a little bit less size dependent, but again, most common in the U.S., UK, and Australia. Less common in Canada and Ireland. Writing comments after articles, again, largely the same way, with the U.S., UK, and Australia being the highest. Again, Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand below that.

One of the interesting features we found was the email link for the reporter. So either having an email link or the reporter's email address, either at the very beginning or the end of the article, [is] definitely a U.S. phenomenon. So you can see there over two-thirds of the U.S. papers had this feature. Much, much less common with all of the other countries.

Running out of time here, so I'll go very quickly. Newspaper reader blogs. The blue bars being the ones being produced by reporters or editors, with the red bars being ones that are produced by readers that are hosted on the newspaper website. PDF, those that included a link to a PDF of their front page, you can see there usually range in between about 20 and 25%.

Just very briefly, one of the things that we wanted to look at was the connection between computer ownership and broadband capabilities and the presence of these features. The most drastic example you can see here [is] I did a study with a colleague in Ukraine where the broadband penetration is below 2%. And as you can guess, the newspapers there, only fewer than 2% of the newspapers there had video on their websites, of course, because of that. We didn't see quite as much connection. One of the things that surprised us was that Canada—I'll show you the chart here—you can see Canada actually in the 2006 study ranked second in terms of computer ownership. And also in terms of worldwide broadband penetration, Canada was also higher than the U.S., but its rate of its likelihood of its newspapers having audio and video and a lot of the other features [was] much less common. We weren't quite sure why that was. The one connection that we did make was that New Zealand, which had the lowest levels of broadband, lowest levels of computer ownership, did have the lowest levels of multimedia and interactivity on their website.

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

So, what explains the difference? Could be many things. Again, ours is more of a content analysis as opposed to survey or a wider study that would help answer some of these questions. Just to speculate, some of them might be, again, obviously, ownership things, expectations of the readers, of the users, [and] perhaps the journalism education and training within that country.

So a couple of limitations. One of them, of course, being that we did do a one-pass system. So the study was more an examination of, did they have multimedia on any given day? As opposed to, did they ever have it on their site?

One of the things we hope to do is, one, look at other countries. We're in the process of also looking at Spain, Mexico, and France, and redoing the study looking at all these countries in 2011 kind of now that we have a baseline established to see what has changed over the course of three or four years.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** And our next presenter is Joshua Braun. Is it Brown? Is it Braun?

**Joshua A. Braun:** Braun.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** All right. Good.

**Joshua A. Braun:** OK. So, I hope... Luckily, for everybody involved, I gave up on the idea of squeezing a 40-page paper into a 10-minute talk a long time ago. So you're not getting the full paper today, but hopefully there are some interesting things in here. And if you want to talk more about what else is under the hood, I'm more than happy to do that during the common session in the hallway. Something along those lines.

So my study was on the adoption of blogging software by the major U.S. broadcast networks or their news division's digital component. So like ABCNews.com, CBSNews.com, MSNBC.com. And so I did a collection of about ten interviews with web producers, developers, bloggers at the different networks' digital divisions. And this is not because I think blogs are the new and up-and-coming technology. That's obviously not the case. Rather, I think they are an interesting case study and a nice model problem. We've seen how they've stabilized, and it's an interesting way to sort of look at how the networks approach new web technologies.

So the first blogs at the network news sites started around 2002. This is The Note from ABCNews.com. It was not a blog when it started, but it was seen as the forerunner to blogs. It played a big role in sort of the Dan Rather — or actually not Dan Rather, but the Trent Lott scandal. And this is Cosmic Log,

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

which is an early experimental blogging effort that still goes on today by MSNBC.com. And today, of course, we have all the major broadcast properties of the major news divisions have blogs now. Correspondents have blogs dedicated to them. And we have a lot of topic-based blogs that aren't necessarily affiliated with a specific broadcast.

And so all this started around 2005, 2006. And around that time, there were a lot of really interesting sort of promises made about what blogging would do for the networks. And so it's nice to step back in time and revisit some of these. This is from the Public Eye, which is sort of a blog started by CBS News after Dan Rather's fall from grace. And it was supposed to bring us unprecedented transparency, where journalists would sort of explain and answer questions of their audience in a public forum. Brian Williams said that his blog, the Daily Nightly, would let you know what was going into the news decisions at the network. We would finally get an explanation of the behind the scenes working of broadcasts, and that blogs would make journalism more of a conversation. You would have a personal relationship with anchors and correspondents, and audience feedback would advise the coverage of the networks. Sort of blogs would give anchors a chance to talk directly to viewers and it would be informal. I think this is my personal favorite: Blogs would give personal intimate contact with news consumers. I like this because it's so suggestive. [laughter]

So if you sort of sum all of these things up, I think you can make out sort of two major promises that the networks were making at the time about what blogs would do for them. And those are transparency on the one hand and interactivity on the other. And so I get the privilege of talking to you one more time tomorrow, and I'll go into a lot more detail about sort of the interactivity of — or how the networks have approached this promise of interactivity.

So today I want to talk mostly about transparency. So the question is sort of, do we really get the transparency that was promised now that we've sort of seen how these blogs have turned out? And there are some important exceptions, and I'd love to talk with you about them later, but I would say for the most part the answer is probably no. So a good example is Dateline's blog and MSNBC. So it promises you right here in the sidebar, if you could read it, that you would get "a personal behind the scenes look at how we bring you our stories." And yet, most of the entries look like this one. They are basically like almost transcripts of the promotional material that goes on commercials and networks. They are telling you to tune into the broadcast that night. So there's really no sort of lifting of the veil going on. There are lots of blog entries of the networks that are basically just new venues for web video, but basically video that's already been broadcast over the air on the networks. So again, this is not necessarily new [and] it's not necessarily behind the scenes. But, of course, there are also blogs that are not necessarily — or blog entries in blogs that are not necessarily associated with a broadcast in particular.

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

And one of the interesting things that came up in my interviews is that there was also sort of an attempt to distance themselves from blogs more generally, so blogs have taken on sort of all of these cultural connotations. And what they wanted to make sure we knew was that what broadcast journalists do with blogs is different from what the rest of us do with our blogs. So this is one of my sources who chose to remain anonymous, but he says, "You know, I don't know what a blog is anymore. A blog to me now, if you can really say what a blog is, is just someone being goofy and posting pictures of their friends drunk." But Marc Ambinder has a blog, and his blog has incredible facts and incredible reporting. And so one of the trends we see is that a lot of news blogs on the networks are actually used as an easier way of pushing out sort of content, traditional news content, the sort that you would see on the AP Wire, in a newspaper, and this sort of thing.

Similarly, this is Michelle Levi, and she's a very talented producer at CBS Interactive. She's a blogger for *Political Hotsheet*, which is the Washington Bureau's news blog — or a politics blog, and she also does a webcast called Washington Unplugged. She says that she thinks it's interesting that they call *Political Hotsheet* a blog in some ways, because for the most part every story that she's written is something along the lines of "Sarah Palin announced today she would step down as governor," and it's a story [they] put in blog form to keep up. And so this notion of keeping up is an interesting one, because as it turns out, the sort of major CMS's—the Content Management Systems—of the networks were designed years ago, and they are widely considered to be a little bit sluggish and hard to use, so they are not necessarily in tune with the way people publish now. Meanwhile, blogs are very easy to deploy, they're very easy to post to, [and] they are regularly upgraded. And so you get a situation where you see the network CMS's, the traditional ones aren't necessarily in tune; whereas, blogs are simple to create, and this obviously creates an interesting tension. Blogs can be deployed alongside a network's sort of main content management system. They can be an easy workaround for publishing lots of material more quickly and more easily.

So what do we sort of make about this sort of lack of transparency or the way that these things are handled? There's a theorist I'd like to talk a little bit about—Stephen Hilgartner. He gives us a nice tool for examining these things. He's from Science and Technology Studies. He doesn't look at journalism per se; although, he has in the past. He talked about the national academies, which produces documents that are to advise the U.S. government on the science behind policy decisions. And what they do is they restrict access to all the deliberations in their policy reports. Those things are secret. They are not sort of available to the public. And this is to protect the committees that do the deliberation from political influence, but it also at the same time gives the reports an appearance of larger authority, because it appears that the scientific community is speaking with a single voice when you don't see any of the messy deliberations but see a finished public

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

product. But what they do do when you want information about sort of what it is that went into the procedures, they point you back to sort of their idealized public version of their policies and procedures. And even the reports themselves will point you to this. It's sort of like a nice flow chart with explanation about, sort of, "This is the idealized public procedure by which we deliberate and how you would have seen us deliberate had you had access to that." Journalistic institutions do, I argue, much the same thing.

So if we sort of scale down Hilgartner's book to three points, which is a dangerous thing to do, but we could say that sort of this notion of the performance of authority of keeping some things front stage and some things back stage — he adapts the language of golf in here — is that you have a publicly presented finished product, a partial or total enclosure of the production process, and often an idealized sort of procedural description to which the public is directed of what went on behind the scenes.

Juries are a similar example of this. Because one of my points here is that this is not unique to journalism. So [with] jury deliberations, you'll be directed to the verdict, but you have very limited access to what went on behind the scenes. At the same time, you are pointed continuously sort of back to this idealized procedure.

Admissions decisions are another great example, where no individual student knows why they got into a university or not, but there's always a public version of how an individual's [admission] is conducted.

So one interesting way to look at sort of blogs and Twitter, which is now being used in very much the same way that blogs were adopted, is we do get sort of a peek at what goes on in the day of correspondents and this sort of thing to an extent, but it's also still a managed product, and so it actually takes on maybe some of the role of this sort of idealized public procedure.

And in the same way that the networks do this with the content that they publish, so the second half of the paper looks at basically the fact that they also manage to do this with sort of comment moderation [and] that type of thing. I think Amanda Ash put it very well earlier when she talked about the tension between being responsible for what users publish to your site and at the same time wanting to let users interact. So there's this sort of stage management. You never know exactly why a particular comment is moderated, but there's a public procedure for doing so. The paper gets into a lot more detail about this.

But basically to wrap up here, I'd say I have three concluding points. One is the Pablo Boczkowski point, which is that new technologies get adopted in the context of existing institutional needs and practices. The second is that many types of groups and organizations, network news agencies included, maintain their sort of authority credibility via stage management and this notion of the performance of authority. And the last one is sort of a question,



## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

because I think there's a tendency when we're talking about news organizations as sort of needing to progress, there's a lot of people like to talk about the notion of "open source news" and that we need access to the process. But, of course, part of enclosure is sort of protecting the integrity of the process. So if a journalist wants to investigate a popular politician or something along these lines, you know, then maybe there is sort of a pro-social positive role for enclosure. I want to balance this. I don't want this to come off as a negative analysis of the networks. There may be a role for enclosure in journalism, and I think it's time to think about what that is. And that's it. Thanks very much.

[Applause.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** And our next presenters are Perrin Ogun Emre and Pinar Gur—I said I was going to do it right this time—Gurleyen.

**Pinar Gurleyen:** So, hello. I'm the one with the difficult last name. [laughter] My name is Pinar Gurleyen and this is my friend, Perrin Ogun Emre. We are very happy to be here to share the results of our study. But before that, we would like to say a few words about the context of the research actually. You cannot see it, but our title actually indicates that our research has been conducted in Turkey. Turkish media is currently dominated or controlled by four major groups. And this has been the case since 1990's, late 1990's, when the state monopoly on broadcasting has ended. The same four groups actually also control the press, so we are talking about a quite concentrated ownership structure. In terms of online journalism, 2001 actually can be considered as a turning point for Turkey, because in that year the country went under a major economic crisis and thousands of journalists had been laid off. And these laid off journalists actually tried to find new platforms to publish their news either individually or collectively. And the first platforms they used were mainly websites, but these are later followed by the blogs. When we were doing our research, we actually came across a shortage of academic research concerning the journalist bloggers and the national contacts, and also we couldn't find any data concerning the exact number of j-bloggers, but we know that there are approximately one million bloggers in Turkey, but we don't know how many of them are journalists yet.

So moving on to our study, our theoretical background is based on the critical scholarship that point out to a democratic deficit in media in general and conventional forms of journalism in particular. And this body of literature actually suggests that this democratic deficit mainly stands from the ownership structures, but also they found some problems about certain journalistic norms and practices, such as gatekeeping or objectivity. And they most of the time advocate a paradigm shift in journalism which would allow us to rethink the relationship between the journalists and the audience or readers. So in this sense, they suggest that new technological forms actually allow journalistic reformers an ideal opening to try new ideas. And in this

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

sense, blogs actually constitute a very fertile ground, because they not only allow non-professionals and professionals to bypass the constraining structures of mainstream media, but also they bring with them new forms of journalism, which is marked by audience participation in the content creation and more subjective talk in the narrative style.

So we do believe that blogs can be used as a means for a paradigm shift in journalism, but our question is, how do bloggers/journalists actually use this potential, or in other words, how do they negotiate the conventional norms of journalism with the characteristics of this new format? So previous research that asks similar questions have actually focused on professional blogs mainly produced within the media, and they have conducted content analysis. And instead of this, we preferred to look at the journalist blogs produced outside media organizations to see whether their conclusions or the patterns they have seen are also valid. They have found that journalist bloggers usually tend to, in Jane Singer's terms, "normalize" this new platform by essentially maintaining the gatekeeping role, and they continue the norms such as objectivity and dependence on elite sources.

So Perrin is going to talk about our research process, our methods in detail, and then I will rush into the findings and the conclusion.

**Perrin Ogun Emre:** Hi. We used the same structure and in-depth interviews as the main data collection method. Our sample consists of nine journalist bloggers who have minimum five years of experience as a professional journalist. Of the nine j-bloggers, two have a background in independent alternative media in addition to their academic careers on journalism. The remaining seven work in mainstream media, besides blogging, and write on diversity issues ranging from politics to art and fashion. Although they aim for a larger sample, they were restricted by the reality of the bloggers in Istanbul that meet the criteria of the research. All the interviews have been conducted by me between February and May 2009. Four of these interviews were face-to-face, four j-bloggers prefer email interview, and one was made by phone. They have question about their motivation to start the blog, the liberating potential of the blog, their opinions about the liberating potential of blogs, and finally, we asked them to compare their works between print and online [news work].

**Pinar Gurleyen:** So we have seen that our journalists bloggers usually use their blogs as an online platform to use their existing material originally produced for the mainstream media. They see their blogs as an extension of their columns and their news work in the institutional media, and they recycle the material. In terms of liberating potentials, the major potential they have mentioned was the lack of editorial control for them. And they actually said that because of this lack of editorial control they can be engaged in the whole process of news making, and this is a less alienating process for them. Most of them actually allow reader content, so they have a better relationship between their readers and themselves as journalists. But

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

still, the most important finding we reached was they prefer to identify themselves as professionals rather than being a member of the blogging community, and they use this professional identity to differentiate themselves from the readers and the other members. And they also like to see themselves as journalists and they reject to use informal language and even sometimes user content, because they think that the former clashes with the normal objectivity. And they don't see or perceive blogging as a completely different form of journalism. It only constitutes for them an available platform to build their personal archive or portfolio. They maintain journalistic authority most of the time.

And to complete, we will refer to O'Sullivan and Heinonen's words, "We can say that the social institution called journalism is still hesitant in abandoning its conventions both at organizational and professional levels even in the age of the net." So our findings basically matches with the previous findings that suggests journalists normalize these live platforms when they use new characteristics of the blogs. So thank you.

[Applause.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Our next presenter is Nagwa Abdel Salam Fahmy.

**Nagwa Abdel Salam Fahmy:** Good afternoon. First of all, I want to express how much I enjoy [this symposium], and it's an amazing event to participate in it. For several years, I follow your event through the Internet and it's inspired me and a lot of my students with ideas about doing research on online journalism in [the] Arabic world. And I want to tell you that this is my first time to have a paper in English and also to present it in English. So I try to speak in a clear mode so we can understand each other.

My paper is about revealing the cutting agenda through Egyptian blogs. It's an empirical study. Blogging in Egypt is an evolving phenomenon and it is considered a weapon against a restricted flow of information enforced by the government. [The] blogging movement in Egypt has been growing since 2004 when [an] active political group began to express their opposition to government reform. They organized a demonstration and boycott as well [as] criticizing the government policies and corruption.

I will tell you some fact about information communication technology in Egypt. 16% of the population in Egypt choose the Internet. It's a lot of number, about 14 million Egyptian go to Internet. We have about 160,000 blogs in Egypt. 48% of them are active blog, political active blogs. Most of them are from the age segment between 20 and 35 years old. Egypt in 2009 was labeled as one of the enemy of the Internet because many of the bloggers has been sent to jail for their posts that they write on their blogs. So blogs represent an alternative public space and act as a bridge between event in the street and the Internet users. The main aim of this study is to understand Egyptian bloggers and then as their role in a authoritarian regime

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

and also to explore the role in reporting cutting stories from the mainstream media. We also investigate the comments put on this story to see if they trust the story or they perceive it as a credible story or not.

The process of cutting agenda has been raised by few scholars. And the first time I see this concept in 2008, it inspired me that we can apply that in Egypt and we can find a very amazing fact about cutting story from the mainstream media. And through what I see on the media, I found that blogs [are] the main source of telling those sort of stories, so I decided to do this research about cutting agenda that will reveal through the blogging movement in Egypt.

Here are some facts about blogging in Egypt. We don't have any laws that govern bloggers in Egypt, so they can tell every kind of story. No one can control the story they are telling. New social movement activists are moving their opposition online and not providing a detailed description of street protests and post-video footage of the incident that happened during this protest. Egyptian blogs are sometimes used to feed story to the mainstream media and bloggers spread the culture of disobedience in Egypt. Bloggers promote their idea for political change and reform in Egypt. Activists rely on blogs to find out the time and place of such demonstration. Bloggers in Egypt are subject to police harassment and detention. Many of them are sent to jail for what they say in their blogs.

The research question here [is] about if Egyptian blogs can tell those cutting stories from the mainstream media and the tools they use to tell those stories and the comments they have on this story so we can see if the commenter trusts them or not. I did a qualitative analysis of selected news stories that were posted during 2009. Those stories were chosen because they are about domestic issues, and they were posted exclusively in the blogs that I analyzed. It's Al Wa'y Al Masri blogs. So I have analyzed about seven stories. The frame on those stories were about torture and police abuse. Four of those stories were about this frame. They show how Egyptian police torture some jailed person in the police station. And those stories were posted exclusively in this blog.

The second frame was about the state of chaos. The state of chaos was about an attack between the cadets of the military academy in Egypt and a police station, as the chief of this police station abused one of those cadets, so his colleague tried to take revenge of what happened and it was a state of chaos. And no one in Egypt had the right to tell this story. This [was] the only blog could tell this story to the Egyptians. Other news media outside Egypt—BBC and many news agencies—report this story, but not in Egypt.

The third frame I found in 2009 was interesting also. It was [phone] tapping the key Egyptian political figure in Egypt—their phone, their mobile and landline phone. The three persons they mentioned there are tapping the phone are the three persons who showed their interest or their intention to

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

participate in the presidential election that will happen in 2011, next year, in [41:29]. So they have the older two tape them and the discussion about this—could anyone penetrate in the interior minister and take this document and show it to the people? The interior minister say they will investigate this happening or this event, but they never show up what they found from this investigation.

Those news stories demonstrate how Internet blogs counteract the agenda cutting of mainstream media by reporting stories not reported elsewhere. The comment on the blog on Al Wa'y Al Masri would be seen as end of it, but it used very vulgar language on the comment.

Demonstrating the role of the blog in supporting public concern to our domestic issue is one of the findings here. Unfiltered Egyptian blogs could be considered a platform for free discussion about domestic issue and they also facilitate information disclosure. Blogs use many strategies to vouch for the credibility of the news they publish. They use video clips sometimes recorded on mobile phone and they provide links to other sources that confirm their story.

Political drug blogs are a battlefield where blogger and blogger users tend to utilize a vulgar language style when they argue and defend their idea. They influence public opinion framing issues related to government abuse. The blogs are considered the main source of such information. Blogs seem to hold an uncertain level of credibility among the reader as reflected in their comment. Blogs represent an alternative media that blog users rely [on] for information about real life in their community. This shows how blogs counteract the cutting of story from the mainstream media in Egypt.

I want to thank you as I finish my presentation. I hope you understand.

[Applause.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** And our final presenter is Arne Krumsvik from the University of Oslo.

**Arne Krumsvik:** First off, I thank you for having me back. I was here two years ago presenting my PhD project. It was a case study of the strategy, structure, and process of online news production at CNN and Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation. And you inspired me to complete the PhD. Also, thanks to David Domingo my strict opponent. He let me pass.

So today, I would like to present something from a project I have been doing alongside. I used to be a journalist and an online news executive for many years. It was quite interesting and rewarding to come back to [the] university. I started right away doing surveys of online newspapers in Norway when I came back to [the] university. So for five, six years I have been surveying users and producers, both the readers of online newspapers

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

and journalists and the executives publishing these newspapers. So some of these findings I would like to share with you today.

Let me give you a crash course in Norwegian media. There are only three things you need to know. [laughter] There's a very high newspaper consumption. I think it's the second largest in the world, off of Japan. At the same time, we have a very high online penetration. Some people say it's the highest in the world. Depends on how you measure, but 90% have access and 74% use it daily. From 50 and under, 90% use it daily. From 30 and under, 90% use mobile online devices daily. So it's a very sophisticated online news market.

It's also a very competitive online news market, because already in 1996 the first serious attempt of starting an online newspaper happened in Norway. It was profile journalists from some of the big media houses in Norway that broke out and started this online newspaper funded by venture people. So that led to traditional media in Norway spending more money earlier than in most other markets on that use. That also led to, if you look at Norwegian language sites in Norway, they are dominant in the newspapers. So newspapers are market leaders in the national online market. That's the three things.

There's only one more thing you need to know since you are Americans most of you—government. It's also involved in media in different ways. The main object of Norwegian media policy is to facilitate freedom of expression and public debate in society. Freedom of expression and public debate in society. And there have three ways of doing this. Three also again. That's price subsidies, and like most European countries have, we have zero rate VAT and also direct production support for small newspapers, and then we have public service demand for broadcasting licenses and media ownership regulations.

So when we talk about the three parts of this title, we could talk about media, users, and the government. So let me share some of the findings with you. I'll reflect swiftly on them. The debate in newspapers are quite important for why newspapers have privileges [and] openness for people to express their opinions. Now that people can do this both online and in the paper edition, so what is most important? What we see is that this is users and journalists. We see that journalists, not surprisingly, think that the paper edition is the most important arena for debate. But users are saying — more users are saying that the online edition is more important for freedom of expression. And you might say, well, this might be because we have all these young people online that think differently, and so did I think until I got this answer up. So we see that across all age groups users are saying that the online edition, the debate, the online forums now are not comparing the Internet from the newspaper. They're talking about online newspapers and paper editions. They are comparing...[coughs] Sorry, it's just some volcanic ash. [laughter]

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

So across all age groups and of course quite significant in the younger age groups, the online edition are more important for freedom of expression. Now why is this significant? Well, if privileges of the press are based on this role of society of being able to facilitate the debate, then you might say, well, this might challenge the special privileges of the newspaper when the online edition already got the job in the eye of the public. Then we have not asked what other online sites can do for this role of society.

But in the media, if there [is] one thing that [is] keeping editors awake at night, it's not really the financial crisis, it's all about moderation of user activities. So I was also asking, should the online debate be pre-moderated? And we see that both users and producers think that pre-moderation is a good idea. However, if you look into those who are more positive to the online newspaper as playing this role, you see that there's a clear majority that thinks pre-moderation is not a positive thing. So I guess we have two groups here. We have those that believe in the paper edition, and we have those need to be saved for the online edition. Those believing that the online edition [is] more important do not want pre-moderation.

There has been a big debate about this in Norway under order of the Press Council on, should there be this self-regulating body [that has] rules for this and should everybody follow this rule about pre-moderation? You can read about that in the paper, but let's just zoom out a little bit and look at how we see the online newspaper as a total product.

An important object with any newspapers are to make people spend more time on the product or on the brand. When I ask people, how long a time do you feel that you are spending now on two platforms compared to what you did earlier before you had the online edition, young people can't even remember, but most people can remember there was a time when you didn't have that online edition. And this is not actually measuring what is happening; it's actually measuring how you feel or your perception of it. That's quite important for if you're willing to pay for something if you feel that you're actually using it.

But the most important thing here is the number two newspapers in the market, they are performing not as good as number one. There could be two reasons for this. One is that, of course, you need resources, and the biggest newspaper has more resources. It's also about cash subsidies. Because cash subsidies, production, support for number two newspapers are based on circulation. So if your circulation drops because of cannibalization from online, you are doubled — you have this double problem. You have less income from circulation and you also have less press subsidies. So there are no reason for those number two newspapers really to develop an online edition.

Journalists are more content with the traditional channel and so are the users. I think it's quite interesting to see that if you are spending more

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

resources online, people get more skeptical towards the product. So more online journalism means a more skeptical audience. And this has developed from 14 to 23% from 2005 to 2008. So as the traditional media are using more resources online, people are getting more skeptical, but not as skeptical as the journalists. You see that just about no journalists think that the online product has any value, while the users are a little bit more nuanced.

Just two more pictures. Why do we publish the online newspaper? Newspapers used to be newspapers in newspaper house and they had newspaper people making a newspaper. But suddenly you have a product portfolio, so you have to start developing thoughts about why you do stuff. You know, when you only had a newspaper, you could have just one speech about why you did things. Now you have to have two stories. This could be hard for most editors. So what we see is that the small newspapers, they say that marketing and image is rather important for why they are publishing an online newspaper. It makes them look good. Some newspaper owners have newspapers because it makes them look good, but the editors and publishers of these smaller papers [are] saying that the main reason why we have the online newspaper is it makes us look good. I think it's a little bit surprising. But the larger papers are more interested in this development and exploring opportunities. Then when they explore the opportunities, the public gets more skeptical.

So here we have a slight problem. [coughs] This ash — one of them delayed us for five hours. That [is] not nothing. I think we have a situation where there [is] a disconnect between users and producers, and I think it's necessary for media people to relate to the people formerly known as the audience in new ways. Thank you.

[Applause.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** OK. Thank you to each of our panelists. Each of these papers in a general sense and on an international scale exemplified to me as I was reading them that although we live in an era with a lot of potential to deliver transparency and enact democracy through interactivity, through user-generated content, and all of these technologies, there are so many constraints. Individual, institutional constraints, financial, organizational, legal, governmental, cultural, and technical constraints within the news industry and its attempts to deliver journalism on a daily basis, on an hourly basis. I was struck by how many have the same issues. For example, the problem of taking readers to an entirely different website to conduct discussions, or concern about who participates in forums and what they could potentially say, or what to invest in, in the first place, in terms of technology. They are the exact same issues that mainstream news organizations were facing ten years ago. And they are the exact same issues that scholars present at this conference every year. That really struck me. So also recycled seem to be the same fears that alternative news sources online. such as



## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

citizen-produced blogs, might become the most trusted or followed form of information or news. In other words, the more we've changed, the more we've stayed the same.

However, each paper raises very important questions about the role of interactivity within democracy, within culture, whether one fosters the other at all, and the relationship between news sources and the audience, and these two things becoming increasingly blurred, as our last presenter was talking about.

So keeping in mind all of this, I would like to open up questions to the audience. I also really wanted to encourage those who have been talking on Twitter through the day, I've seen a lot of great comments and questions and perhaps some confusion, to please come up to the microphone and share it with the room. [laughs/laughter] Bring us all into the discussion on this. So please step on up. And we have a question right away. Chris.

**Chris:** Sort of following up on your general summary, which I completely — that was what I heard also. So to the purpose of maybe causing a little trouble and, maybe in better words, getting a dialogue started between the people who are presenting in the morning session and the people who were presenting now, you know, in the morning sessions, we heard a lot of, you know, optimism. "We get it. We're here. We figured it out. We are online. We are social. We are, you know, rockin' and rollin'." And then just now we heard the scholars basically say, "Well, no, you don't link. You don't know what blogs are. Sorry." So, so, you know, perhaps there are several possibilities here, and I'd be curious to hear what the panel thinks and then what anyone else would think about it, so one of the options is, you know academic research moves slowly and the industry moves very fast and we are just behind. And if we were going to do this a couple of years from now we'll find that, you know, they'll figure it out. Another option is that the people who were speaking today were sort of the people on the fringes, the vanguards, you know, that they were the leaders and that's sort of — those are the people we want to bring to a conference like this. The third option, which is sort of interesting is, you know, that maybe newspapers didn't get blogs and they didn't get links, but maybe they'll get Facebook and the "like" button. So maybe we're in sort of a new web where, you know, they didn't understand the web from like 2000 to 2010, but maybe there's a new web that's more amenable to what they do. So I'm just curious to hear what anybody thinks about that.

**Arne Krumsvik:** The online curse does not mean that you're actually ready to open the toolbox. I think inefficiency is number one in most traditional media companies. And that online is the perfect channel for distribution doesn't mean that you really want to take all the possibilities and actually use them.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Anybody else want to address that?

**Joshua Braun:** I mean, there is an extent to which basically we're seeing newer technologies adopted by networks in the same way that we saw blogs. So for instance, Twitter is a nice example. I mean, if you go and follow a smattering of Twitter accounts, you'll see basically a lot of promotional material. You'll see a lot of linking to the web video and that nature. And also, one of the more interesting things that happens [is], I think it was Terry Moran, ABC News correspondent, tweeted that President Obama had called Connie West a jackass before the President had a chance to say that that was off the record. And so obviously access to the White House is a very important arena for a news organization and ABC News kind of came down on him, laid down the law. It ended up they didn't really, you know, censor him, but they released this great statement that talked about sort of like what things should be public and vetted versus what things should be sort of like off the record and behind the scenes. Those sorts of breaches and controversies show the same sort of lack of stage management practices that we saw with — that we've seen for quite a while are still alive and well with newer technologies. So I think that there's a pattern in how news organizations adopt the technologies. It will be interesting to see if that changes and sort of how interactivity and these other things complicate it.

**Robert Bergland:** Part of it, too, could be just a matter of resources as well. I mean, in the last two years there's been incredible downsizing, so when you have to pick up extra beats or cover extra things, your ability to keep your blog updated and put together this multimedia package or whatever is severely hindered. I think especially these last two years that's really been the case.

**Ingrid Bachmann:** Yeah. Sometimes you have all these options of things to do and another is to have somebody to actually do them and afford that guy or that girl actually going, "I'm going to be Tweetering. I'm going to be—I don't know—managing that Facebook page or engaging readers."

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Next question. Bill.

**Bill:** Well, since I won't be here tomorrow, I'm going to ask a question that will give everybody something to think about. [laughter] I have my iPad and I was also there the first day when it was released, and I love technology, but I'm old enough to remember the value of a good story. And here in the United States—at least not yet—we don't have to worry about going to jail for writing about what we think is important. So what I'd like to ask the panel to respond to and for everyone else in the room to think about it is the value of that good story. I remember Watergate, and I remember Woodward and Bernstein, and I really miss those guys. [laughter] And I don't like having to wait three years for the next Michael Moore documentary. [laughter] There was a documentary that was — it's a few years old now, but I just recently saw it — called Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room. And I almost fell out of my chair, because that was only 2001 and 2002, and it was

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

the same Wall Street players, the same banks that are getting us in trouble today. And so regardless of whether you use Twitter, Facebook, blogs, iPads or flip cameras, don't let the editor slow you down, don't let the corporation slow you down, don't let the government slow you down. Tell us what's going on with the fraud on Wall Street. We want to know! [some laughter and applause]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** I think increasingly that might happen as journalists lose their jobs at institutions that might be slowing them down. Anybody else want to respond or just something to think about? Thank you. [laughs] OK. Next question.

**Man:** That was well said. I have another comment. It goes back to the first question that the gentleman asked about, are academics and business people on the same wavelength? I'd like a show of hands. How many people here are business people? There you go. They are not here. [some laughter] Secondly, you know, some of us, we hear all these gloom and doom things and here we are trying to propose the right way, but when you have people like the guy from — I forget whether it was the Journal Register Company or the Canadian guy saying, "We should be cutting things by 50%." They are not interested in what *will* work. They want something that will be profitable now. And I think that's part of the whole problem. They, the industry, is all great if you want to — they'll share data if you want to show them how to make money off it in six to ten weeks, but if you want to show them how to eventually be profitable without displeasing the stockholders, forget it. That's my two cents.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Anybody want to comment? OK. I have lots of comments, but I'm the moderator, so I won't. [laughs/laughter] Sorry.

**Male Panelist:** [Inaudible.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Yes, I do. Thank you.

**Arne Krumsvik:** I'm pretty cooperative. That's fine. Maybe everything was not as before. I've [been] working for the newspaper since I was 15 years [old], and I've seen so much waste of money. I mean, there have been so many editions. There have been monopolies, some that have really wasted money. So to a certain degree, I don't think there's a road too long between cost cuts and the journalistic profession, but then, of course, there's a middle to have...[inaudible]. [some laughter]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** OK. Let's move onto our next question.

**Jesse Heath:** Hi. My name's Jesse Heath, and I'm a web developer. Really the only reason this question is kind of pertinent is because I've developed — here in the last year, I've developed at least two or three websites for what you would consider freelance journalists. And my question is for Mr. Braun

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

here. I was encouraged to ask this by some other Twitterers in the room.  
[laughter]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Good job.

**Jesse Heath:** I was just curious if — you know, in your research, you said that the media networks that you had kind of looked at [and] how they used content management systems or blogs to get what's supposed to be behind the scenes out there — have you noticed or did you notice in your research that maybe they were developing their own content management system or were they using stuff like WordPress? And the reason why I ask that is because I know *The New York Times*, CNN, Fox News, and Reuters, they all use WordPress.

**Joshua Braun:** So, yeah, they are using both third-party blogging tools, which are easy to get and to update. So ABC News uses Type Pad, and MSNBC uses Telligent software, and they are currently in the process of upgrading to a really cool—I won't get into it—system by Newsline. And CBS News actually, though, manages its blogs through its content management system, and not coincidentally, or at least I don't think it's a coincidence that they have fewer blogs than any of the other networks. And so as for the actually CMS they use, MSNBC sort of built its own. It takes them a long time to sort of improve it and upgrade it. At this point, it's massive. It's more like a subway system or a system of public works where it's constantly under construction and needs improvement and there's like, you know, upgrading to the latest version of Microsoft Word or something. And CBS is an interesting case, because they purchased CNET, and they actually sort of merged their in-house content system with CNET's content management system. And so it's created something that's—it's complicated—[laughs]—for everybody involved right now. And then ABC also uses a proprietary in-house content management system for managing the same thing. And interestingly, they went with Type Pad because you actually can't — unless you're using like a VPN, you can't actually log into their content management system to blog remotely. You have to be sort of in the CBS location, which has been sort of awkward for them. So all three networks have these sort of bulky content management systems. Some of which are better than others, but all of which are sort of difficult to be nimble with.

**Jesse Heath:** So maybe the ones that seem to take forever maybe need to go open source.

**Joshua Braun:** Yeah. I know *The New York Times* and some of the other examples are interesting or have interesting approaches to that. So, I mean, it's an open question. I'll leave it at that.

**Jesse Heath:** Cool. Thank you.

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Jesse, can I ask you a question? Are you a journalist as well as an entrepreneur.

**Jesse Heath:** No, no.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** OK.

**Jesse Heath:** [Inaudible.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** All right.

**Jesse Heath:** Just a thought-provoking question.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** No, I think it's good. I was just going to say I think that we should be seeing more journalists, journal entrepreneurs in the future. We want to see the progress we're calling for. Yes, next question.

**Man:** Yeah. Ahem. Excuse me. I have a sore throat. I'm not a journalist either. I'm an entrepreneur. I'm here to learn about journalism some more. I just started a Facebook app company three years ago and then sold that, and I'm starting another company now that is a new CMS for crowd-sourcing content or opening it up to your readers and your users to submit content. And it's interesting to hear this, because I've been listening all day to different comments, and it seems like there is a revenue system around journalism and newspapers and magazines, and that revenue system is fundamentally changing, and some people are embracing it and other people want to keep the structure as it is even though the revenue models change. I guess my question is back to the panel. Through the system we're creating where users can contribute and they are not employees, they are doing it for free and they want reputation, do you see that — you know, what do you see are the pros and cons of that? Do you see journalism suffering for that? Some people think, "Well, you'll never get stories like Watergate." Other people say, "Yeah, but you'll get more, and you'll get better stories, because everyone can now contribute." I'd love to get your opinion on that.

**Man:** We'll have to come to you now.

[Laughter.]

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** Somebody say something. Arne.

**Arne Krumsvik:** Another thing you said you have a need for is especially for remote papers. Remote papers have done it for years. They've had their crowd things. We don't have to take the standard...[inaudible @ 1:11:45]. I think there are, you know, more normal things that we're doing, and what they get from it is more comfort. Increase the comfort and more happy readers, because more people feel that their interests and their activities are

## 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010

addressed [REDACTED]. I think that they're quite good at it. As for the small newspapers, the conflict with the professionals are [REDACTED].

**Ingrid Bachmann:** Personally, I think it's the more, the merrier. It's as simple as that. I mean, as journalists, we cannot be everywhere. We cannot know everything. So if there's anybody out there who's willing to help, I welcome him.

**Female Panelist:** Yeah. So we have seen actually in our case a difference between the political bloggers and the bloggers who essentially blog about things like professional technology. The political bloggers are journalist bloggers who write about politics. They don't welcome the content from the contributors because of the lack of editorial control. They still have a suspicion. But in terms of technology, they actually consider the readers as having more expertise than them, so they welcome the contributions in that sense. Or, the profession bloggers, for example, they want to hold onto the trends, so they are welcoming reader comments more than the political bloggers of professionals.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** OK. Next question, please.

**Angela Lee:** My name is Angela Lee. I'm from U-Penn. I have a question for Doctor Bergland. It sounds like in your research multimedia and interactivity are used as the dependent variable, where popularity may dictate how websites use interactivity and multimedia. I was wondering how you explain for the possible reverse or recurs of causation within that.

**Robert Bergland:** I'm sorry. I didn't catch the last part of what you were saying.

**Angela Lee:** How do you explain for the possible reverse or recurs of causation, where interactivity and multimedia dictate popularity on the Internet?

**Robert Bergland:** I guess I'm not understanding your question.

**Angela Lee:** Well, it sounds to me like your hypothesis is saying that the more popular websites have more interactivity.

**Robert Bergland:** The higher the circulation.

**Angela Lee:** Right, but what about the reverse possibility of where maybe it's because they have interactivity and multimedia that makes them more popular on the Internet. Have you guys explained for that in the paper?

**Robert Bergland:** The circulation was based on their print, on their print circulation, as opposed to their hit counts.

## **11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Online Journalism: April 2010**

**Angela Lee:** So you don't... What about the difference between offline circulation and online popularity with the website?

**Robert Bergland:** We did not look at that. And that would be a very nice thing to add into our studies is the number of unique visitors per month —

**Angela Lee:** Right.

**Robert Bergland:** — as it relates to their print circulation numbers as it relates to the amount of multimedia and interactivity on the site. It's a very good question.

**Angela Lee:** Thank you.

**Shayla Thiel Stern:** OK, great. I think that we will wrap it up then. And I wanted to thank you all for coming to this panel and sticking around and asking great questions. And thank you to our terrific presenters for their enlightening research.

[Applause.]