UNCOVERING THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN CITIZEN JOURNALISM AND

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the conditions in which a citizen journalism site may be more or less likely to adopt aspects of development communication, a field that applies communication to socioeconomic betterment. As a participatory media form, citizen journalism overlaps with certain aspects of development theory. Due to various reasons, citizen journalism is increasing in the United States, and several mainstream media institutions are partnering with these outlets. Given the historical tension between the mainstream media and development communication, it was predicted that the more a citizen journalism site was aligned with institutional journalism, the less it would demonstrate traits of development communication. A content analysis was conducted to analyze a random sample of citizen journalism sites. Results from a regression analysis and t-tests showed that, rather than diminishing the presence of development communication, mainstream media alignment increased the likelihood of development communication. Despite low efforts toward development overall, when it was present, there was more openness to it from the mainstream than predicted.

LIST OF ABBREVIAITONS AND SYMBOLS

df   Degrees of freedom: number of values free to vary in a test

M   Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set

N   Total number in a set

p   Probability of obtaining statistical significance at a certain level

R^2 Calculated square of the coefficient in a regression analysis

s.d.   Standard Deviation: square root of the variance

t   Calculated value of *t* test

<   Less than

=   Equal to

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

December 17, 2010 began like any other day for Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26-year-old

fruit merchant in Sidi Bouazid, Tunisia. It would not be the first time his $100 scale was

confiscated by a municipal official—reclaimable under a bribe—but it would be the last. After

being physically assaulted by the official, Bouazizi stood in front of the government building and

committed self-immolation, a single act that would change his country (Simon, 2011).

Later that day, a video was posted online showing Bouazizi's mother leading a peaceful

protest near the building. "We could protest for two years here, but without videos no one would

take any notice of us," said relative Rochdi Horchani (Ryan, 2011, para. 8). Protestors arrived

with "a rock in one hand, a cell phone in the other" (para. 2). The Tunisian government was

unable to shut down Internet communication before the viral images spread to Egypt's own

disenfranchised class. In Egypt, the rally point became a Facebook page honoring Khaled Saeed,

who died after a disputed arrested. More than 470,000 protestors mobilized with help from

social media, unified under the banner: "We are all Khaled Saeed" (Mainwaring, 2011). In the

months following, both Tunisia and Egypt would undergo a regime change, and national protests

against state control spread to Syria, Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, China and Libya, where the U.S.

military aided in the defense of civilian forces.

The debate over what role social media is playing in the Middle East has sparked a range

of opinions from Google's Wael Ghonim hailing the "Facebook Revolution" (Cohen, 2011) to

others, led by Jeff Jarvis and Malcolm Gladwell, who insist "the revolution will not be tweeted"

(2010). As professional journalists began downplaying the social media factor, Jay Rosen,

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media critic and journalism professor at NYU, criticized their reaction and started organizing the articles into a *Twitter Can't Topple Dictators* genre (2011). "Revolutionary hype is social change analysis on the cheap," Rosen told the Huffington Post, describing the tendency to romanticize social media. "[On the other hand] Debunking is techno-realism on the cheap. Neither one tells us much about our world" (Vargas, 2011). Stephens (2011) put both in historical perspective by pointing out that most revolutions have benefited from some new media form: "You need a form of communication that is, for the moment, yours—a form with which the Old Regime is not, for the moment, comfortable."

Sindhuri Nandhakumar (2011) credits the empowering qualities of citizen journalism with a role in the Middle East, saying, "While social media in itself may not be revolutionary, citizen journalism has endowed many people with a voice that they didn't have before, enabling them to be important tools of information and change" (para. 8).

"Citizen journalism is always going to be advocacy," says Lise LePage, cofounder of a leading citizen media news group in Vermont (Schaffer, 2007, p. 60). This perceived lack of objectivity is a primary reason why institutional journalists and editors have philosophical problems with the citizen movement (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010).

While media have been used to empower citizens around the world, are these same forces relevant to more stable and affluent Western nations, which have wider avenues for democratic change? Current conditions in the West, and in the United States in particular, suggest the time may be ripe for media to play a similar role—to facilitate empowerment and development, if not revolution. This thesis explores the role that "development communication"—a perspective that communication improves living conditions and empowers individuals to pursue social justice (Manyozo, 2005)—may be playing in the West through the citizen journalism movement.

Historically, the perspective of development communication has been applied in underdeveloped regions and used to advocate programs for improving living conditions at the individual and community levels (Srampickal, 2006). There has been a perceived bias in the West against development communication as a legitimate practice and, more broadly, a belief that the United States, "the one that was to serve as the model for development for all others, had no development needs of its own" (Griswold & Swenson, 1992, p. 581; Ogan, 1982). But have perceptions of the United States, as a "first world power" that is above development, changed? For most Americans, there is no memory of a time when the United States was in greater need of development. The country's economy has yet to recover from the financial crisis of 2008, and most citizens still feel the country is in recession (Jones, 2011). The physical infrastructure in the United States has deteriorated to the point of declining in world classification from first to 23rd since 1995 (Straub, 2011). Young adults entering the workforce face the lowest employment rates since World War II (Yen, 2011). And as the economy continues to struggle, public skepticism of the government increases (Kohut, 2010; Pew, 2010), fueling a growing sentiment of disenfranchisement in communities (Putnam, 2000; Costello, 2010). Perhaps more than ever, the United States is positioned to benefit from development communication and its emphasis on community building and individual betterment. Traditionally, such efforts have been primarily limited to developing countries.

While institutional distrust spreads at the local level, so does the citizen journalism movement. It embraces many of the norms, values and goals that are inherent in development communication. Declines in the mainstream media have contributed to the growth of citizen media outlets and the blurring distinction between who is and isn't a journalist. Most research has taken a limited view of citizen journalism, only discussing it in terms of its position relative

to legacy media. This study argues that citizen journalism may be better understood from the alternative perspective of development communication, which brings decades of valuable experience with participatory methodology and empowerment theory to a conversation that has reduced citizen journalism to a debate between journalists and bloggers. Given the socio-economic climate of the United States, the development communication framework is extremely relevant and may illuminate the nature of citizen journalism in a way that reveals how it functions within a democracy.

Could the feeling of disenfranchisement and apathy at the local level be fueling the citizen journalism movement? Are individuals using social networks, blogs and digital media outlets to empower citizens in ways traditional media have neglected? In order to answer these questions, I intend to measure the degree to which development communication is evident in citizen sites.

The research uses development communication as a lens with which to analyze citizen journalism and to explore the following question: How much overlap is there between the precepts and norms of citizen journalism and those of development communication in today's evolving world of online journalism? The purpose of this study is to build an understanding of the conditions in which a citizen journalism site may be more or less likely to adopt aspects of development communication.

The study has theoretical, social and heuristic implications for discussing the relationship between the press and the public. For scholars, it may demonstrate that development communication theory has more in common with Western journalism than previously thought. For practitioners of citizen media, the research could show that development communication practices are, in fact, somewhat prevalent among online journalists. The heuristic objective is to

reveal uncommon ground between development and institutional journalism in the United States, which hopefully leads others to continue mapping out this relationship. For those researching pro-am experiments, discovering that citizen journalism has strong development communication impulses may indicate that the collaborations between professional and amateurs will not be sustained unless mainstream media values are compromised and become more tolerant of citizen agendas.

No known attempts have been made to systematically look at citizen journalism from the perspective of development communication. Traditionally, there has been some reluctance in the West to explore parallels between institutional media and alternative forms of journalism (Shafer, 1998). Recent efforts to measure the civic purpose of citizen sites (Networked Neighborhoods, 2010) and discuss the tension with institutional media (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010) have been steps in the right direction. Some researchers have begun asking the important questions of why citizens get involved in pro-am projects (Rosen, 2011b) and why some journalists oppose or support their participation (Hermida, 2011).

Findings in this study may strengthen arguments that the Internet is loosening the traditional values of journalism (News Leaders and the Future, 2010) or support claims that citizen journalists are actually developing an institutional mindset (State of the Media, 2010; Lowrey, 2006) and less open to interactivity than imagined (Lacy, Duffy, Riffe, Thorson & Fleming, 2010; Domingo, 2007).

Prior to presenting study variables, there will be a review of the literature on development communication, its history, methods and core concepts, and an outline of the field of citizen journalism as it exists today.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the United States, citizen journalism is a form of alternative media with roots in both development communication and the community theories of the Chicago School, James Carey and, more recently, Jay Rosen (Shafer, 1998; Deuze, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2007; Atton, 2009). It has been popularly defined as "when the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another" (Rosen, 2008), but Quandt's definition, though actually for the related term of 'participatory journalism,' comes closer to the citizen concept: "a form of communication by the public for the public" (2011, p. 160). Multiple economic, technological, theoretical and cultural forces converged to bring citizen journalism to its current place in conversation on the future of journalism. Technologically speaking, the Internet has eroded the "privileged position of the media to interpose itself between source and user" (Berger, 2010), allowing the public to mirror the social function of the press (Domingo et al., 2008) and bypass its role as a gatekeeper (Cohn, 2010). Similarly disruptive, the worst recession since the Great Depression has contributed to newsroom decreases by 30% since 2000 and threatened to leave many cities without daily newspapers (State of the News Media, 2011). Though sensationalist headlines abound on "The Death of the Newspaper," it is unlikely that newspapers will regain their former dominant market position when the economy improves (Smolkin, 2009).

It is in this climate of digitization and economic downsizing that mainstream journalism lost touch with civic society (McLellan, 2009). "The result has been that journalism is, from the

point of the public, an institution somewhere out there with no real ties to its constituency"
(Domingo & Heinonen, 2008).

Coupled with the 21st century's so-called "pro-am revolution" between professionals and amateurs, citizens have self-organized into prominent players in the media landscape (Demos, 2004). Individuals like Matt Lepacek are not journalists in the traditional sense, but according to Jeff Fruit, director of Kent State University's journalism program, they have "changed the traditional sender-receiver model of reporting" (Davis, 2009). Lepacek is a freelance reporter for Infowars.com and was arrested for trespassing while trying to cover a Rudy Giuliani campaign debate without a press pass. Outlets like Infowars.com admittedly combine media presence and physical activism, making it increasingly difficult for law enforcement to deal with the press.

Rather than using the term 'journalist,' Korea's *Ohmynews* often prefers "news guerillas" for describing its reform-oriented netizens, of which there are more than 60,000 publishing 150 articles a day (Woo-Young, 2005). Around the world, online media outlets like *Ohmynews* are providing tools for participatory democracy (p. 934). Many professional journalists who now find work in online community and citizen journalism, considered the "new traditionals," are re-embracing the democratic and civil service functions of journalism. Michele McLellan (2010d) of the Reynolds Journalism Institute spoke to this trend by saying:

> [Old traditionals] used to talk about serving the community.
> But with the advertising dollars following, we didn't really
> depend on our communities and as a result, we didn't always
> know them or reflect them accurately. So it's refreshing and
> inspiring that the leaders of these "new traditionals" see community
> engagement as a vital component of their future sustainability. (para. 3)

As ideologically oppositional as citizen journalism and the institutional press appear, collaboration between the two is considered essential to the future of newspapers (McKie, 2009). Pro-am partnerships are happening in multiple fields (Demos 2004), but in journalism, it will

require finding middle ground "between an elitist position that says only trained journalists have value to offer and a free-for-all that says everything stated is worth listening to" (Tilley & Cokley, 2009, p. 111). The Knight Foundation is currently experimenting with such partnerships in the Networked Journalism project, which has been successful in areas such as Seattle, where surveys show 84% value the partnership for supporting improvements in community journalism (J-Lab, 2011). At the 2011 South by Southwest conference, CNN announced a new citizen-professional hybrid initiative called "Open Stories." Expanding on its iReport network, which has more than 750,000 active citizen reporters, Open Stories will crowdsource topics through both citizens and professionals, allowing them to share bylines and create multifaceted accounts of a single story. "What we're working toward here is a true collaboration among a news organization and the many people who experience an event first-hand," announced the CNN iReport blog (iReport blog qtd. in Kieck, 2011, para. 3). In mirroring his definition of citizen journalism, Rosen has identified "the journalists formerly known as the media," and advocates for their partnerships with "a public, empowered to make media themselves" (2010).

Sustaining partnerships between citizen journalism and institutional journalism poses a problem: The traditional press has been at ideological odds with many of the development communication principles apparent in online citizen journalism. Yet, the mergers continue. Some see the partnerships as a dirty attempt by corporate media powers to co-opt citizen efforts, but the partnerships may also lead to the emergence of alternative, 'emancipatory' journalism within the corporate partner (Kperogi, 2011, p. 326). McLellan (2010c) speculated as to which side's values will be compromised first:

> …Citizen-led operations are employing journalists displaced
> from the legacy news industry to manage their projects and
> produce content. It will be interesting to see how these partnerships

affect the partners: Will the journalists become authentic and community-oriented? Will they renegotiate a blanket standard of "objectivity" that distances them from a passion for community…? (para. 21)

Mainstream outlets continue to exist in tension between opening up the journalistic process to citizens, primarily for financial gain, and the urge to limit citizen involvement out of protecting the profession's integrity (Hermida, 2011). In this tug-of-war, the "journalistic traditionalists" see citizen journalism as a threat while the so-called "participatory evangelists" see it as a solution (Quandt, 2011, p. 168).

Citizen Journalism in the Development Context

As it pertains to communication, development's goal is the realization of human potential (Cadiz, 2006). Today's development efforts are characterized as being decentralized, user-oriented, environmentally sensitive and, above all, participatory (Quebral, 2006). The term "development communication," often used interchangeably with communication for development or shortened to "devcom," emerged in the Philippines in the 1950s in an effort to use communication for addressing problems in rural agriculture (Manyozo, 2006). The 11th United Nations Round Table on Communication for Development (C4D) defined it as "a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change" (2009, p. 3).

As a form of journalism, development communication values direct advocacy of community and individual-level betterment over objectivity, which places it at ideological odds with institutional journalism (Musa & Domatob, 2007). Its reliance on indigenous, participatory media challenges the philosophy behind traditional information flows of mass communication (Lewis, Kaufhold and Lasora, 2010). Many development journalism initiatives partner with

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government agencies or advocacy groups (Freedman, Rendahl & Shafer, 2009). Some

acknowledge that certain Western concepts such a press freedom may "loosen" in order to

contextualize to the community needs (Quebral, 2006, p. 104).

There are areas of overlap between development communication and citizen journalism,

which also challenges institutional journalism through participatory practice, community

activism and non-traditional revenue models (Berger, 2010). Beyond community building, some

say citizen journalism develops human capacity through empowerment and creates opportunities

for self-actualization (We Media, 2003). Citizen journalism can be advocacy-focused (Li, 2008)

and considered, like the Indymedia network, as a form of alternative media. Alternative media is

characterized as being "agents of developmental power" (Downing, 2001, p. 45), "produced by

the same people whose concerns it represents" (Haas, 2004, p. 116) and "facilitators of social

communication," not just "sources of information" (Tomaselli & Louw, 1990, p. 213).

The concept of development communication and its historical context will now be

explored in greater depth.

Development Communication

Development communication (devcom) is both a theory of why media should exist and

methods of how media should operate. In theoretical terms, it views communication as a process

to "improve livelihoods and promote social justice" (Manyozo, 2005). Its underlying

assumptions are that development does not occur without communication (Suresh, 2003), all

people are entitled to explore the limits of their capabilities and, through participation, develop

themselves (Quebral, 1985). It is an interdisciplinary field that draws from anthropology,

economics and multimedia (Vargas, 1998) and continues to evolve along with the changing

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nature of development (Cadiz, 2006; Quebral, 2006). "Such [theoretical] convergence produced a rich analytical vocabulary but also conceptual confusion" (Rockefeller Foundation, 2001, p. 1).

In trying to conceptualize development news, Ogan (1987) pointed out that "the basic problem in the research is that few scholars can agree on the definition of development" (p. 80). Even Nora Quebral, pioneer of the field, attempted to differentiate between its forms by asking: "Will the real development communication please stand up?" (Quebral, 1985, p. 1). As Waisbord explained, "the field has not experienced a unilinear evolution" (Rockefeller, 2011, p. 1); thus, synthesizing the various perspectives, schools and concepts of development communication will be challenging.

Development Perspectives

During the expansion of U.S. foreign aid following World War II, early scholars Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, David McClellend and Everett Rogers approached development in terms of economic growth, capital-intensive technology and Western democracy (Vargas, 1998, p. 183; Rogers, 1976). The modernization theory posited that "third world" countries could "catch up" with the developed world if the right information was diffused (Rockefeller Foundation, 2001). Progress was framed in quantifiable terms, often relating to mass media. For example, a country was deemed "modern" if it had 10 newspapers, two televisions, at least five radios and two cinema seats for every 100 citizens (Vargas, 1998, p. 183). In the 1970s, the modernization approach was seen to have failed and became widely criticized as being paternalistic, ethnocentric and, in some cases, present in areas where poverty had increased (Dare, 2003; Rockefeller Foundation, 2001; Srampickal, 2006).

In the strong reaction against modernization, the dependency perspective emerged, based on beliefs that modern technologies actually hindered progress by creating an unhealthy

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dependence on wealthy countries. Although the dependency arguments helped scholars

deconstruct and rethink development, it was difficult to empirically prove (Rogers, 1976).

New, or "another," development took shape based on grassroots participation and the

belief that people must define culture and development for themselves. Whereas the

modernization perspective had seen indigenous cultures as development obstacles, they were

now seen as integral for sustaining development (Vargas, 1998). The participation principle was

a form of liberation (Tandon, 1983) that placed the act of listening at the heart of bottom-up

development. The listening process subverts the dominant structures (Archarya & Dutta, 2009)

and helps enforce the belief that "the rural poor are voiceless not because they have nothing to

say, but because nobody cares to listen to them" (Scrampickal, 2006, p. 23). Utilizing

participation may allow people to express themselves in conceptualizing, implementing and

evaluating projects, along with directly benefitting from the project in their community (Uphoff,

1986). Participatory communication is described by Huesca (2003) as a means and an end (pp.

214-216), which supports the idea that development's processes are just as important as its

products (Quebral, 2006).

If active listening is step one in new development, then empowerment is its desired

effect. Combining elements that ensure "people are able to help themselves" (Serveas, 1999, p.

194) and share their own stories (Melkote & Steeves, 2001), empowerment seeks to erase

marginalized structures for new perspectives to emerge (Acharya & Dutta, 2009).

Since the adoption of participatory practices in the 1970s and 80s, a multiplicity

perspective has come to integrate both top-down and bottom-up approaches (Rockefeller

Foundation, 2001). "Participatory communication processes are not a panacea for development,"

according to Servaes (2007). "Such processes are not suitable for solving all problems in all

contexts or time frames" (p. 14). The multiplicity perspective assumes development to be culturally oriented, multidimensional and understood to vary depending on its context (Servaes, 2007b, p. 485). Communication for Social Change (CFSC) has led recent efforts for using a "tool-kit" approach of multiple strategies for bringing about a more *holistic* development that acknowledges social, ethical, cultural and spiritual dimensions (Rockefeller, 2001; Vargas, 1998).

Development Schools

Manyozo (2006) critiqued the Westernization of development communication history and, instead, explains its nonlinear growth through various "global schools" over the past 60 years, including: Bretton Woods, Latin American, Lon Baños, Anglophone Africa, Indian and the Participatory Development Communication School. The Bretton Woods School related to the modernization perspective in the 1950s and Marshal Plan economics, as it partnered with groups like UNESCO, the Ford Foundation and USAID. The Latin American School can be traced to earlier community-based radio programs in the 1940s (Gumucio, 2001) and Paulo Freire's theories on critical pedagogy that helped to move development communication into the participatory perspective (Manyozo, 2006, p. 81). The African and Indian Schools both developed in the 1960s, partially out of communist movements, and were early testing grounds for indigenous resource projects.

Nora Quebral officially coined "development communication" while at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños. Her early definition of devcom was that it is "human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential" (Quebral, 2006). The Participatory Development

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Communication School would later draw from the other schools' traditions and incorporate the idea of human capacity, people-centered development in the 1980s.

The people-centered, or human development, approach is fundamental to today's multiplicity perspective. Much of its theoretical foundation was laid in strategic organizational and management theory. Korten (1984) described the concept this way:

> To achieve the desired improvement in human well-being, development would need to become not simply people-*oriented*. It would need to become truly people-*centered*, a creation of peoples' initiatives, and based on the resources which they controlled. Development performance would be judged by its direct contributions to the enhancement of human well-being in its social and psychic, as well as its physical and economic dimensions." (p. 342)

Within this framework on development, Quebral has reflected on the early years of development communication and argued that, essentially, they were always pursuing human-level development (Cadiz, 2006).

Development Concepts

In reviewing the literature, four concepts or objectives were extracted based on their placement at the foundation of the field's theory and methods:

- Human-level development: That which equips the individual with appropriate resources to improve aspects of one's well-being (Freire, 1970; Korten, 1984; Serveas, 1999; Li, 2008)

- Community-level development: That which enables individuals to build networks at the group level for addressing a range of concrete to abstract goals (Uphoff, 1986; Paull, 2002; Li, 2008, Catalani, 2009)

- Horizontal-communication: That which empowers individuals to participate in peer-to-peer dialogue (Vargas, 1998; Catalani, 2009; Heinonon, 2011)

- Advocacy: That which takes an active role in promoting interests on behalf of an individual or group (Ogan, 1982; Lee, 2008; Catalani, 2009)

Development Applications

Organizers have applied these concepts of the multiplicity perspective to government aid initiatives, university curricula, NGO community programs, corporate business models and news media efforts around the world, and at varying degrees of success, for decades. Today, development communication can be observed in three main project types: development support communication, information and communication technologies (ICT), and citizen media (Sramipickal, 2006). Most projects are funded by interest groups and government agencies (Vargas, 1998)—though development communication is not a "lapdog for the government," despite what critics say (Quebral, 1985). Various research methodologies are used to analyze the impacts of development communication, including the qualitative Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) and quantitative content analysis studies (Servaes, 2007).

Development support communication. Development support communication, often overly broadened to "development communication," refers to messages that are potentially funded or approved by the government or interest groups in support of development issues (Ogan, 1982, p. 10). Practitioners vary in degree of objectivity and independence from the state, but fundamentally, these communicators, often referring to themselves as journalists, believe the media has a "social responsibility to promote development" (Edeani, 1993, p. 126).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Although technological dependence was criticized in the modernization paradigm, its importance in the process of "informatization," using communication technology to develop an information society, has increased with the Internet (Singhal & Rogers, 2001). The current emphasis on ICTs has left

mass media, according to Ogan et al., "mostly go[ing] out of fashion" (p. 665) as a primary tool

for development communication. Unlike some technology-based development in the past,

however, projects that use ICTs for development aim to borrow beliefs from the multiplicity

perspective in bringing about sustainable socioeconomic (Ogan et al., 2009).

      Citizen Media. Citizen media provides the most direct focus on participation and

empowerment in development communication. With the tools to "investigate their own reality"

(Li, 2008, p. 12), citizens are encouraged to assess their environment and propose action through

channels such as journalism or multimedia storytelling, which poses a "real potential for

community building" (Paull, 2002, p. 230). Empowerment projects are generally either therapy-

based, oriented toward internal processes such as confidence, or advocacy-based, focused on a

product to gain public awareness (Li, 2008, pp. 12-13).

      Because mass media is primarily dedicated to entertainment and information content,

small media—local, cultural, low-cost—is considered "better suited for education, awareness,

and development" (Srampickal, 2006, p. 9; Attton, 2002). Citizen media, or journalism, becomes

especially relevant "when the mass media seem unproductive" (Rodriguez as cited in Wilkins,

2000, p. 149). It may include indigenous forms of storytelling, dance, singing and acting. White

(2004) effectively summarized the roles of this type of media by saying, "Citizen media imply

that collectivities are *enacting* citizenship by transforming the mediascape, contesting

legitimized identities and introducing new communication practices contrary to the mass,

homogenized, uniform cultural categories" (p. 16).

      Citizen media has been widely used in underdeveloped contexts through diverse

mediums, including community radio in South America (Sposata & Smith, 2005), televised

soap-operas with public health messages in Latin America (Srampickal, 2006), community

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theater skits in sub-Sahara Africa (Epskamp & Swart, 1991), newsletters written by child

reporters in India (Acharya & Dutta, 2009) and participatory video advocating better health

policy in post-Katrina New Orleans (Catalani, 2009). Though these efforts span platforms and

continents, they each combine entertainment mediums and educational messages to start public

conversations from under-represented perspectives (Ogan 1989). With the groundwork laid for

placing citizen journalism within the broader context of development communication, its status

within the American media landscape will now be discussed.

Citizen Journalism

The broader term of "citizen media" will be used to introduce three relating, but not

identical, manifestations: participatory journalism (a development movement), public journalism

(an academic movement) and citizen journalism (a grassroots movement). "Citizen journalism"

has become a catchall descriptor (Tilley & Cokley, 2008, p. 96), although some believe that not

all of it is journalism (J-Lab, 2007). Citizen media can serve as an effective umbrella term over

the three movements because it is already common in development communication literature

(Scrampickal, 2006) and avoids comment on what is and isn't journalism.

As it is practiced today, participatory journalism appears to have roots in both traditions

of development communication and the American press. Within the American press,

participatory practices might have appeared earlier given a different outcome of a "debate" that

occurred in the 1920s between political commentator Walter Lippmann and philosopher John

Dewey from the University of Chicago (Haas & Steiner, 2006). While Dewey advocated for the

public's role in information exchange and for the press to encourage civic participation,

Lippmann's view put journalists in an authoritarian role over determining what information to

share with the public (Carpenter, 2008). The authoritarian view became the dominant

perspective and has been used to explain the modern disconnection between the press and public (Merritt & McCombs, 2004).

It would not be until media scholars addressed journalism's growing disconnection from civic life in the late 1980s that the early ideas of John Dewey and participatory journalism would fuse into a public movement. Jay Rosen of New York University is considered the guiding light of public, or civic, journalism, although there were other pioneers such as W. Davis Merritt Jr., former editor of the *Wichita Eagle* (Shafer, 1998, p. 32). The objectives of public journalism were to frame news as a conversation with citizens and to actively promote their participation in democratic processes, including the press (Haas & Steiner, 2006). Emerging from within journalism, it was both a critique and a social movement (Schudson, 1999) sharing the heritage of reform movements such as muckraking and development journalism (Haas & Steiner, 2006). Because it stepped beyond the traditional role of the press as a detached observer and actively promoted civic engagement, public journalism is also considered a social interventionist model, serving similar idealistic ends as the Soviet model and development communication (Shafer & Freedman, 2007). The models were similar in that they sought to empower locals to change socioeconomic circumstances, placed the common good above standards of objectivity and were implemented from the top-down (Shafer & Freedman, 2007).

Motivated by growing detachment between citizens and public life, public journalism sought to narrow the gaps between government and citizens, the press and public (Haas and Steiner, 2006). It valued marginalized groups and addressed a non-elite audience in ways that facilitated public deliberation (Nip, 2008). Many felt its promotion of civic participation blurred the line between reporters and advocates (Haas and Steiner, 2006). Some executives valued

social responsibility more than generating profits (p. 244) and would advocate for community initiatives (Nip, 2008, p. 191).

Perhaps more than dissolve, certain aspects of public journalism morphed into "the public's journalism," most commonly referred to as citizen journalism (Witt, 2004). Its practitioners became citizen journalists, like Jeremy Iggers who left the *Minneanapolis Star Tribune* (J-Lab, 2010). One of public journalism's top foundation directors, Jan Schaffer, moved to the Institute for Interactive Journalism, J-Lab, and began funding citizen projects (Nip, 2006). Because of these crossover players, the goals of public journalism were embedded in citizen journalism, leading some to label it "the second phase" of public journalism (p. 230).

Types

Participatory methods of journalism have been thought to emerge from social origins, such as "deficits in the current state of institutional journalism" (Domingo et al., 2008, p. 331). While this might apply to coverage gaps and deficits, many citizens-turned-journalists seem to be reacting to the character of the modern press, as indicated by one citizen journalist who said: "It seems that mainstream journalists resent our use of the privileged term 'journalist.' But…if, by calling ourselves journalists, we can bug mainstream journalists into some much-needed self-examination of their own profession, that can only be a good thing" (Grotke & LePage, in Grubisich, 2006, para. 7).

From 2007 to 2009, economic recession contributed to 30,000 newsroom jobs being cut (Kurpius et. al, 2010). Even major dailies such as the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, each with a century-and-a-half of experience facing industry ups and downs, closed in 2009 (Serant, 2009). Some communities became paperless, and thus marginalized

regional coverage, prompting concerned citizens in places like Collinwood, Ohio to form online news sites and a weekly print newspaper, the *Collinwood Observer* (p. 13).

Defining these citizen journalists is difficult because, often, they don't possess the traditional distinctions of either "citizens" or "journalists" (Tilley & Cokley, 2008, p. 104). Without the licensing and legislative backing shared by lawyers, engineers and media professionals, the "new journalists" are allowed to name themselves (p. 105).

Although there are a variety of ways that citizens can involve themselves in "journalism," broken down by the "11 Layers of Citizen Journalism" from message boards to wiki sites (Outling, 2005), a typology that needs updating, there are three broad organizational structures: legacy media-hosted citizen journalism (*MySun.co.uk*), legacy-citizen partnerships (*OhmyNews*) and independent citizen journalism (NewWest). Many qualifications to these structures deserve to be made, but their on-going evolutions limit the ability for a complete mapping. Efforts by legacy media to host citizen journalism might include in-house sites created for citizen feedback or direct-sponsorship of a freestanding citizen site. Often, these efforts are profit-driven, leading some to criticize their intentions for entering the citizen journalism arena. "The most important thing is to keep your eye on the ball—the community process and building a strong community," said Steve Yelvington of Bluffton Today. "If you do this for the wrong reasons (to build site traffic or raise circulation), you'll have the wrong impact…" (J-Lab, 2007, p. 44). There may be walls of separation between the citizen and regular news site, with any citizen content that crosses over being filtered and edited to fit professional standards (Hermida & Thurman, 2008).

Currently, the legacy-citizen partnership structures are undergoing the most development and have the most potential to sustain the movement. In 2005, the convergence model was mainly theoretical, leaving spectators to "imagine…a news Web site comprised of reports by

professional journalists directly alongside submissions from everyday citizens" (Outing, 2005). Converging on equal terms "under one roof," as Outing described (2005), would be to achieve democratic dialogue in the true sense. "We've been moving down this track already, but much too slowly," said David Boardman, executive editor of the *Seattle Times*, which is currently partnering with citizen journalists in J-Lab's Networked News pilot project (J-Lab, 2009).

Independent citizen journalism might be supported by foundations, universities, readers, advertisers or receive no financial support, but are generally grassroots organizations, unlike public journalism (Shafer, 2007), varying in presentation, style and adherence to journalistic norms (J-Lab, 2007).

Characteristics

Characteristics of citizen journalism will be presented in terms of three objectives of journalism—societal (the press), professional (the craft) and economical (the industry)— followed by a summary of its effectiveness, motivations and relationships with development communication and the institutional press.

Societal. The societal or ideological objectives of citizen journalism begin with providing information not found elsewhere (J-Lab, 2007) in an attempt to reconnect what became disenfranchised by traditional outlets (Leonard, 2007, p. 59). Newsrooms stretched thin by reporter cutbacks are frequently unable to match their depth of coverage (Potts, 2007, p. 66). Their task is "not just covering community, but *building* it as well," (J-Lab, 2010, p. 29). The process of community building may have both abstract and concrete objectives, such as developing local pride or saving a historic building from being torn down (Potts, 2007, p. 66). As projects mature and accrue resources, some believe that more sophisticated watchdog reporting will increase (p. 67). One survey found that 61% of select citizen journalism groups

served a watchdog function of local government (J-Lab, 2007, p. 11). Declines in mainstream state-based coverage have also given way to a rise in online non-profit investigative journalism (Stverak, 2010), some of which are being picked up by the mainstream (J-Lab, 2007). Topics have ranged from an award-winning six-part series on methamphetamines and prostitution in Montana (NewWest) to an exposure of open-meeting violations (J-Lab, 2007, p. 12).

Actively promoting community engagement is one of public journalism's lasting traits. Because of its openness to publishing mobilizing information, information that equips people for action such as meeting times and contact information, citizen journalism has been considered more effective at empowering readers to engage locally than mainstream online news (Carpenter, 2008).

Still, there are utopian notions to be debunked regarding citizens journalism. Tilley and Cokley (2008) outline three pervasive myths: the citizen journalist is independent from external pressures (p.108); the citizen journalist is true, while commercial media is not (p. 109); the citizen journalist tells "the whole story" (p. 109). Such naivety is more likely to surface when the conversation on citizens and the mainstream devolves into "us vs. them."

Professional. As a craft, too few studies have presented the daily routines and growing practices of citizen journalism (Atton, 2009). The movement's most widely accepted definition focuses primarily on its technical, rather than ideological processes: "The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information" (Gilmore, 2006). The degree to which such practices adhere to objectivity divides many journalists, both technically and ideologically. Alternative traditions of journalism, in which the citizen journalism movement can be plotted, believe that authority and credibility do not solely come from institutions, but may be "derived from accounts

of lived experience, not only from objectively detached reporting" (Atton, 2009, p. 284). Rosen

shared this alternative mode in the philosophy of public journalism, as well, calling traditional

objectivity part of the "architecture of professional denial" (Shafer, 1998, p. 34). To many

online journalists, adherence to transparency has become the new objectivity (Michel, 2009).

Transparency retains the ultimate value of reporting truthfully, but disregards the notion of a

detached account (Cohn, 2010). Likewise, there are examples of citizen journalism providing

greater transparency than mainstream coverage of the same issues (Tilley & Cokley, 2008).

"Citizen journalism is always going to be advocacy….but that doesn't mean their coverage is

going to be inaccurate," said iBrattleboro cofounded Lise LePage (Schaffer, 2007, p. 60). Along

with such advocacy also comes a departure from enforced standards of inverted pyramids or

summary leads (Serant, 2009). Surprisingly, the lack of certain institutional structures and the

open forum for user-generated content (UGC) has led to few recorded abuses (Potts, 2007). Still,

it is important to note that many citizen journalism sites oppose advocacy, mirror traditional

behavior and have begun adopting institutional characteristics (J-Lab, 2010).

    Economic. Citizen journalism has media industry objectives, but currently no

sustainable economic or business model has been widely adopted. One complexity that comes

with revenue is its potential to disrupt organizational dynamics (J-Lab, 2010). "I don't know

what we would do if we made money," said Maureen Mann. "Who would we decide to pay?" (p.

15). Still, others have established pay models where citizens who are assigned specific stories

receive $150 per article (p. 15). The business model with the greatest potential is the hybrid

citizen-mainstream partnership. Many workflow issues remain to be operationalized, including

the extent to which citizen work will be edited or filtered when hosted on a mainstream platform

(Leonard, 2007). Overall, it is still too early for most sites, citizen or mainstream, to take advantage of such partnerships (J-Lab, 2010).

Effectiveness

The current status of citizen journalism may be broken down into its impacts, sustainability, level of participation and financial stability, although overlap occurs. The desired impacts of citizen journalism range from the abstract—empowerment (Leung, 2009) to the concrete—increasing voter turnout (J-Lab, 2007). Traditional metrics of measuring success are not used (J-Lab, 2007), often displaced by abstract markers such as "having a public impact" and "making a difference" (p. 41). Some have noted the importance of establishing differences between the online and the offline world—online activism might not necessarily translate into the separate logic of "offline civic participation" (Nip, 2006).

In 2007, the Ford Foundation explored whether citizen media was a "fad or future of news." While it identified aspects that would likely become permanent features, it found it was too early to conclude whether or not projects were sustainable (J-Lab, 2007, p. 7). Three years later, over 80% of leading participants in citizen journalism considered their sites sustainable, successful and revenue earning (J-Lab, 2010, p. 21). Perceptions aside, finding an economic model will be key for long-term sustainability (Kurpius et. al, 2010). Many sites continue to run on the passion of the projects' founders (J-Lab, 2010, p. 7), which will be difficult to sustain (State of the Media, 2010).

Most citizen journalism sites are pursuing funds from one or more of the following channels: advertising, small business ventures, foundation grants or member support. Ad revenues are declining across sectors of journalism, and online revenue is not matching former offline gains (Tilley & Cokley, 2008). For many citizen journalism sites, they see enough ad

revenue to cover print and mailing costs (J-Lab, 2010). Citizen journalism appears to be betting

its future on the development of an ad-driven business model, though it remains nonexistent

(Kurpius et. al, 2010).

Foundation grants like J-Lab's New Voices program has awarded 55 micro-grants to

citizen startups since 2005 (J-Lab, 2010). Its program review in 2010 found that projects had

leveraged the $833,000 in original grant funding into $1.44 million in additional advertising,

member donations and grants (p. 9). Many citizen projects are legal non-profits or have formed

small businesses to financially support the project owners through means such as conferences

series, custom publishing, ad work, online auctions and fee-based real estate listings (J-Lab,

2007).

What are the motivations for the participants in citizen journalism? How closely do those

motivations relate to the objectives of the project? "Volunteers will write or report if they are

getting something in return," acknowledged Schaffer (2007, p. 60). "What motivates them?

They might want to learn technical skills or get a job as a journalist, make a difference in their

community or solve a problem." In this list, Schaffer effectively represents both concrete and

abstract motivations that might be present. When asked in a recent Pew Research Center survey

why they launched citizen journalism sites, individuals listed to "provide community

information" as the most important and to "make money" as the least important. "Improving

community quality of life" was listed as number three of seven (State of the Media, 2010). Potts

(2007) assumed that participants would also value abstract benefits over money, saying,

"…Citizen journalists get different kinds of rewards—the sense that they're 'experts' in their

community, a chance to have their voices heard—that make them happy to share what they know

without expecting compensation" (p. 67).

Citizen journalism's inherent activism displays a strong developmental impulse when it openly aspires to "build community," more than report on it (J-Lab, 2007, p. 7). The holistic posture towards community development emerged in its present sense during the earlier mentioned paradigm shift from modernity to multiplicity (Rogers, 1976). Modernization brought social development, with a bias towards objective and quantitative measurements that neglected "qualitative changes that occur in the nature of the system" (Park, 1984, pp. 14-18). The absence of human development was considered the source of development's problems (p. 260). Stiglitz (1998) defined the new paradigm of development in terms of a process:

> Change is not an end in itself, but a means to other objectives. The changes that are associated with development provide individuals and societies more control over their own destiny. Development enriches the lives of individuals by widening their horizons and reducing their sense of isolation. It reduces the afflictions brought on by disease and poverty, not only in increasing lifespans, but improving the vitality of life. (p. 3)

Development communication has applied this perspective to the self-development of local communities (Servaes, 2007) and individual empowerment. Empowerment was defined as "a process through which people gain mastery or control over their lives, improve their strengths and competences and develop proactive behaviors to manage their social affairs," (Katz, 1984). Leung (2009) found that empowerment was enhanced by user-generated content (p. 1328).

With a public capable of mirroring, and thus challenging, the social function of the press, many observe a new relationship forming between traditional journalists and their audience based on reciprocality where "news [is] a conversation rather than a lecture" (Gillmor, 2004; Domingo et al., 2008, p. 327). The case made by advocates of citizen journalism resembles those of development communication theorists in the 1970s who reacted against top-down modernization by calling for a decentralized, participatory dialogue between developers and

locals (Rogers, 1976). For improving community outreach, the media shifted "to becoming a facilitator of horizontal communication" with participatory methods as its catalyst (Vargas, 1998, p. 183). Without knowing the previous sentence is referring to devcom in the 1980s, one might assume it was discussing a current struggle in journalism.

Much of online citizen journalism already exists within a frame of development rhetoric, such as the citizen site NewWest.net. Its mission statement says: "…[We] believe that citizen engagement will be instrumental in the development of the region" (J-Lab, 2007, p. 25). In a sustainability study of hyperlocal journalism, Schaffer found that citizen media sites often define success as community impact and that citizen journalism may form a bridge between traditional media and civic participation (J-Lab, 2007). "While [citizen journalism] aspires to report on community, it aspires even more to *build* community" (p. 7). Such aspirations are consistent with holistic development concepts (Rockefeller Foundation, 2001).

Despite pro-am partnerships or "multualisation" being considered essential to journalism's future (McKie, 2009, p. 15; Hermida, 2011), it's moving too slowly (Rosen, 2011b) and leaving some to conclude that "the egalitarian promises of Web 2.0 for citizen journalists have not panned out" (Murthy, 2011, p. 779; Rebillard & Toubol, 2010). This is partly due to mainstream media outlets, even those experimenting with participatory journalism, keeping citizens at "arm's length" (Hermida, 2011, p. 29) and preventing them from becoming active creators in the process (p. 178).

Researchers believe that citizen journalism can complement, rather than replace, the mainstream media, (Lacy, Duffy, Riffe, Thorson, Fleming, 2010) and "the more people who participate in the press, the stronger it will be" (Rosen, 2011b). Within the actual sites, most practice advocacy (J-Lab, 2011), are mission-driven (Mayer, 2011) and feel they solve

community-level problems (Carpenter, 2008). In advising a former print journalist in how to succeed online, Robert Niles, previously of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Rocky Mountain News*, told him to become a community organizer by building his own audience and "when your reporting leads you to a solution to one of the community's problems, you can't allow journalistic fears about 'objectivity' keep you from advocating it" (Niles, 2010, para. 15).

As the climate for advocacy journalism improves in the United States, important questions arise about the role of the press online. This study is an effort to determine if claims of citizen journalism's development impulses can actually be observed in the sites themselves.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Thus far, citizen journalism has been presented with a spotlight on its principles aligning with development communication processes. User-generated content is likely to increase in the current participatory media environment and become further embedded into the mainstream via partnerships; it is likely that certain developmental characteristics will come into conflict with the partner's institutional orientation. And it is also the case that current socio-economic and cultural conditions in the United States may lend themselves to a communication approach that encourages development and individual empowerment. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

> **RQ1**: To what degree does citizen journalism in the United States reflect development
>
> communication?

To the extent that citizen journalism *does* reflect devcom, the second research question looks to uncover what factors might explain the varying degrees of values:

> **RQ2**: Why are some citizen journalism sites more oriented toward development
>
> communication than others?

The purpose of this study is to build an understanding of the conditions in which a citizen journalism site may be more or less likely to adopt aspects of development communication.

In analyzing a citizen journalism outlet, what would indicate alignment with development communication principles and practices? The previously mentioned core concepts of the field will be used, and the study will predict factors that may explain the presence, or absence, of the following aspects:

- Emphasis on human-level development: Measured by the inclusion of content or subject matter, information and resources focused on individual betterment. Example: California Watch held community health screenings to educate on unsafe lead levels in jewelry (Mayer, 2011).

- Emphasis on community-level development: Measured by the inclusion of content, information and resources focused on community betterment. Example: Portland's Neighborhood Notes announces event for local emergency preparedness workshop (Neighborhood Notes, 2011).

- Degree to which site facilitates horizontal communication among community members: Measured by the inclusion of avenues for users to openly participate in creating, sharing and commenting on the site. Example: Belgium's Gazet van Antwerpen offers training and information sessions on how to do basic journalism (Singer, 2011); Neighborhood Notes includes a community forum page for users to interact (Neighborhood Notes, 2011).

- Level of advocacy in the site: Measured by the use of language containing mobilizing information (Lemert, J.B. Mitzman, B.N., Seither, M.A., Cook, R.H., & Hackett, R., 1977), holistic development rhetoric, and advocacy language.

Example: After a city custodian was inappropriately fired, the New Haven

Independent posted the boss's phone number and urged readers to call and

protest—the custodian got her job back immediately (Bass as cited in J-Lab,

2011b, p. 37).

After reviewing citizen journalism sites, four independent variables were selected to

predict the variability of these devcom concepts. The initial three variables relate to a site's

proximity to broad institutional journalism characteristics. The rationale for these predicted

inverse relationships was based on the ideological tension between traditionalists and 1) citizen

journalists' lack of objectivity, (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010), 2) horizontal

communication's social networks (Heinonen, 2011), and 3) mobilizing information's advocacy

element (Lemert, J.B. et al., 1977; Carpenter, 2008).

The first independent variable is orientation to institutional journalism. The basis for

predicting that orientation to institutional journalism will inversely affect development

communication is that traditionalists oppose the conversational tone of citizens (Leonard, 2007,

p. 57) and development journalism's overall lack of "objectivity" (Musa and Domatob, 2007).

The second independent variable is the degree of dependence on a traditional media

outlet. As mentioned, there are three broad organizational structures: legacy media-hosted

citizen journalism, legacy-citizen partnerships, and independent citizen journalism. The various

partnerships between citizens and the mainstream media are increasing (J-Lab, 2009). Based on

the mainstream's opposition to user-participation and advocacy, the study contends that citizen

sites with structural dependence on traditional outlets (e.g. citizen site hosted by a local

newspaper; mainstream outlet featuring collaborative content between citizens and professionals)

will be required to conform to the normative behavior of the institutional host.

The third independent variable is the use of traditional media revenue channels. Development communication often relies on financial support from agencies and advocacy groups (Vargas, 1998). Many citizen journalism sites have also embraced non-traditional revenue streams, including interest group support (Wasserman, 2008), but traditional news executives remain skeptical. "Outside funding [non-advertising] options are a bad idea overall," said one broadcast executive who was part of a study that showed 78% of news executives oppose any financing from interest groups (News Leaders and the Future, 2010). Among the types of interest groups that are supporting citizen journalism initiatives are education, public and foundational affiliates (KCNN; Metzgar, Kurpius, Rowley, 2011). For over 200 years, advertising has been a primary revenue stream for legacy media, which has reinforced commitments to stay objective and financially detached from interest groups so as not to alienate potential business. In development communication, government groups or community organizations are often sponsors with both financial and ideological investments in the message. Citizen journalism outlets that uphold traditional revenue models are predicted to be more institutional and less likely to reflect development values.

The final independent variable of interest does not relate to institutionalism: the socioeconomic status of the site's physical community. In addition to abstract objectives like building community identity and empowering individuals, development communication commonly advocates and disseminates information relating to concrete objectives, such as improving public health, local economics, and city infrastructure (Quebral, 2006, Mayer, 2011). With development communication most commonly being applied in underdeveloped areas (Srampickal, 2006), it is hypothesized that areas with higher socioeconomic levels would be less likely to have citizen journalism that advocates development.

Hypotheses

Each of the dependent and independent variables are hypothesized to have an inverse relationship. Hypotheses are presented below based on the dependent variables of development communication:

Emphasis on human-level development (Dependent Variable 1)

H_{1a}: The greater the orientation to institutional journalism, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize human-level development

H_{1b}: The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize human-level development

H_{1c}: The greater the use of traditional media revenue channels, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize human-level development

H_{1d}: The stronger the socioeconomic status of the community, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize human-level development

Emphasis on community-level development (Dependent Variable 2)

H_{2a}: The greater the orientation to institutional journalism, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize community-level development

H_{2b}: The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site emphasize community-level development

H_{2c}: The greater the use of traditional media revenue channels, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize community-level development

H_{2d}: The stronger the socioeconomic status of the community, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize community-level development

Degree to which site facilitates horizontal communication among community members (Dependent Variable 3)

H_{3a}: The greater the orientation to institutional journalism, the less a citizen journalism site will facilitate horizontal communication among community members

H3b: The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site will facilitate horizontal communication among community members

H3c: The greater the use of traditional media revenue channels, the less a citizen journalism site will facilitate horizontal communication among community members

H3d: The stronger the socioeconomic status of the community, the less a citizen journalism site will facilitate horizontal communication among community members
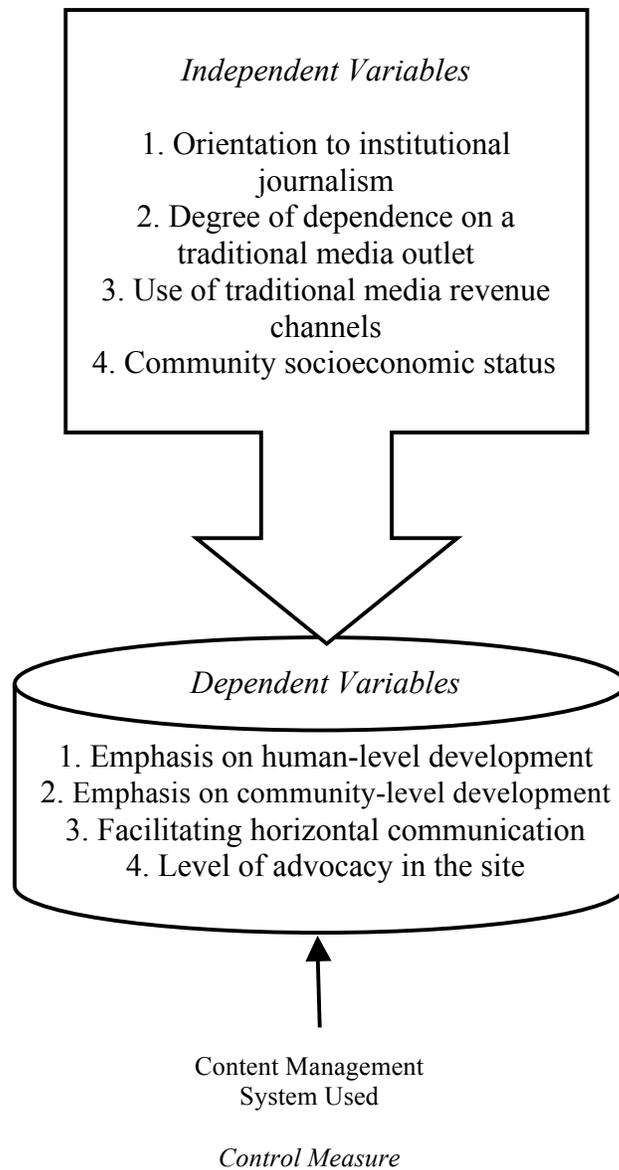
Level of advocacy in the site (Dependent Variable 4)

H4a: The greater the orientation to institutional journalism, the less a citizen journalism site will feature a level of advocacy

H4b: The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site will feature a level of advocacy

H4c: The greater the use of traditional media revenue channels, the less a citizen journalism site will feature a level of advocacy

H4d: The stronger the socioeconomic status of the community, the less a citizen journalism site will feature a level of advocacy

Figure 1 depicts forces by which the degree of development communication values may be explained. Stepping back from the variable relationships, establishing what constitutes a citizen journalism site will be an important task in order to collect a sample. As citizens become less distinguishable from professionals, and vice versa (J-Lab, 2007), the "citizen journalism" descriptor will likely fade, as will the term "hyperlocal" (Kirchner, 2011), to be replaced by a broader term such as "online community journalism." Until then, the "citizen journalism" label will be used in this study as it remains a culturally familiar category (Singer, 2011).

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Independent Variables        │
│                                      │
│     1. Orientation to institutional  │
│              journalism              │
│     2. Degree of dependence on a     │
│          traditional media outlet    │
│     3. Use of traditional media      │
│          revenue channels            │
│     4. Community socioeconomic status│
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
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Dependent Variables

1. Emphasis on human-level development
2. Emphasis on community-level development
3. Facilitating horizontal communication
4. Level of advocacy in the site

Content Management
System Used

Control Measure

Figure 1. Factors influencing development communication orientation on citizen journalism sites.

Several taxonomies are useful for conceptually outlining the population of citizen journalism sites (Alexander, 2011; Networked Neighborhoods, 2010; Outling, 2005), but operational definitions are less common. A recent conceptual definition of online citizen journalism was a website that addressed a specific geographic area with original content provided in most part by community members, as indicated by the site's informational sections

(Lacy, Duffy, Riffe, Thorson & Fleming, 2010). This conceptual definition will be used to establish an operational definition—i.e., to establish parameters for gathering a sample population.

The global networked technology of the 21st century continues to empower audiences and communities worldwide while it simultaneously threatens traditionalists entrenched in dominant media. Tweeted revolutions in Tahrir Square can symbolize as much a disruption of power aimed at corporate media as they do to a totalitarian government.

"Journalists, who long have cultivated a professional distance from their readers and sources, find themselves integrated into a network in which the distances have collapsed," said Singer (2011, p. 7). It is in this environment of collapsed networks that 44% of news users feel journalists are inadequately representing their communities (Harris Poll, 2007), and citizens are filling a democratic void left by traditional outlets (J-Lab, 2007).

Despite institutional declines, some outlets are collaborating with citizens and encouraging their participation in the press, especially less traditional, more "populist" outlets (Domingo, 2011, p. 93). Operators of these outlets believe the media have a fundamental role in democracy that goes beyond simply informing the public (Dewey 1927; Habermas 1989).

The literature reveals that the institutional press can learn a lot from devcom's previous experience with participatory practices. This study looks to demonstrate that the field of development communication is useful for mapping citizen journalism efforts and can benefit practitioners as a press model that adapted to its own democratization movement in the 1960s.

The next chapter explains the sampling process and procedures of the content analysis, and will operationalize the measures.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Research questions asked: (1) To what degree does citizen journalism in the United States reflect development communication? And (2) Why are some citizen journalism sites more oriented towards development communication than others? To answer these and to test hypotheses derived from RQ2, websites were analyzed for development communication characteristics in order to make predictions about the conditions in which these characteristics appear. The sites underwent a content analysis, the preferred data collection technique when a text is being investigated for characteristics in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner (Walizer & Wiernir, 1978; Krippendorf, 1980). The purpose of a content analysis is to observe recorded information in a way that could be easily replicated by someone else and generate the same results (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). For this study, the need to analyze websites for certain institutional and development characteristics made the content analysis method a logical choice.

Before inferences can be made based on the analysis, information on the study's sample, protocol and measures will be provided.

Sample

The Knight Citizen News Network (KCNN) database of community media sites was chosen as the sample population. It is the most comprehensive database available and has precedence as a sampling frame (Lacy, Duffy, Riffe, Thorson & Fleming, 2010; Chung & Nah, 2010).

The database defines citizen media as websites with "any original reporting, analysis, commentary, reviews, photos, audio, video or other content on local news, events or issues, created by individuals not employed by professional news organizations" (J-Lab Resources, 2007). A blend of content from amateur and professional journalists may be provided on the citizen site, which is consistent with the criteria set by Lacy et al. (2010) in their national study of hyperlocal citizen news sites. Websites in the KCNN database came from several sources: existing lists from the Center for Citizen Media, Placeblogger.com and I, Reporter; survey information that J-Lab administrators collected from potential sites; and the citizen site operators themselves, using an "add a site" form on www.kcnn.org (Glenn, 2007).

At the time sampling began, the directory included 1,218 sites. A stratified random sample was taken to eliminate the possibility of sampling error due to a geographical bias. The sampling process involved numbering citizen media sites within each U.S. state, and then calculating a number of sites from each state that is 20% of the total number of sites in the state. For example, the state of Alabama had 14 total number of sites—20% of this number was 2.8, and so a set of 3 numbers was randomly generated for Alabama, and sites were selected that corresponded to these random numbers (random.org). Sites were skipped if they were no longer accessible due to server disconnection or domain expiration. In those cases, the next site on the sampling list was selected. The final sample included 242 citizen media sites, representing 20% of the KCNN database.

<div align="center">**Protocol**</div>

A content analysis protocol (Appendix A) was created to outline research parameters using *a priori* coding, where categories are constructed based on a theoretical framework prior to data collection (Weber, R.P. 1990; Stemler, 2001). For this study, categories were drawn from

<div align="center">37</div>

development communication theory and institutional journalism concepts, as discussed in the literature review.

To ensure that the protocol rather than the researcher was guiding the content analysis, an intercoder reliability test was conducted. The test demonstrates reliability by requiring multiple coders to use the protocol with a certain percentage of agreement. The researcher and co-coder had a training session and did informal pretesting to clarify any questions. Test sites came from outside the master sample list and adhered to the guideline of equaling 10% of the overall sample (Neuendorf, 2002). Using Cohen's kappa statistical measure, the reliability coefficients were .80 or greater, which meets the common standard for reliability (Cohen, 1960; Fleiss, 1971).

Measures

Each variable had multiple measures, which were operationalized with coding instructions in the protocol. Answers were recorded on a separate coding sheet (Appendix B), consisting mainly of nominal data where "0" was negative and "1" was positive. These numbers were added together to create indices, rather than scales. An index was chosen over a scale because it allows for a more diverse set of measures to be analyzed (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). Many of the measures were exploratory, reflecting the exploratory nature of the study; however, existing measures were used when available and when judged to be valid. Measures will be described for each dependent and independent variable, along with the mean (M) and standard deviation (*s.d.*) for each index variable.

Dependent variables. The dependent variables related to key concepts of development communication and were predicted to vary based on the presence of institutional journalism factors and the community's socioeconomic status. Dependent variables were summed into individual index variables.

The first dependent variable was the degree of the site's emphasis on human-level development ($M = .33$, *s.d.* $= .60$), measured by the amount of content that focused on individual betterment and the presence of resources for individual betterment. Content that focused on individual betterment was indicated by stories that emphasized personal resources for empowering individuals to help themselves (e.g. advice related to health, finance or safety). The unit of analysis was the five most recent postings, as was the case with all measures throughout the protocol that analyzed postings, and ratio level data were collected (i.e. these were coded 0 to 5 based on the number of postings that focused on individual betterment). A second measure, website resources for individual betterment, was at the nominal level, so that "0" meant the site did not feature resources and "1" meant the site did include resources. If the site had any advertisements, press releases, forums or events that emphasized individual betterment, the site was coded as "1." The second measure was included only in the descriptive analysis, and not in the assessment of hypotheses.

The second dependent variable was the degree of emphasis on community-level development ($M = .67$, *s.d.* $= .79$), measured by the amount of content that focused on community betterment and the presence of resources for community betterment. Measures were operationalized in a similar way to the previous measure (five most recent postings, coded 0 to 5), with a broadened definition of betterment that focused on improvement that is accessible to a collective such as a community (e.g. "Restoring the abandoned theater will give our town a new sense of pride;" "Attend the town meeting to discuss how our jail system should be reformed").

The third dependent variable was the degree to which the site facilitated horizontal communication among community members ($M = 1.25$, *s.d.* $= 98$). This was measured by coding for the following: commenters being required to provide full names; user-participation

allowed via content submissions; media training resources provided for site participants; the presence of forums or message boards for community conversation; and links provided to social media outlets. Each of these measures was coded as "0" if the feature did not exist on the site or "1" if the feature did exist. The final index variable was created by summing results for each of these six measures.

The final dependent variable was the level of advocacy in the site ($M = .60$, *s.d.* $= .77$) measured by the inclusion of mobilizing information, the presence of development rhetoric in the mission statement, advocacy language within site content and existence of site-sponsored advocacy events. The operational definition of mobilizing information was consistent with that used by Lemert, J.B. et al. (1977): It included contact information for community events or individuals, time and place descriptions for community events and instructions on how to carry out an activity (e.g. "This is how to check on your voter status"). Development rhetoric was indicated by language in the site's mission statement that emphasized human-level or community-level betterment as a specific goal of the site. Advocacy language within site content required the coder to evaluate the five most recent postings for goal-oriented language that called for action, not simply expressions of opinion (e.g. "Come to the wellness clinic this Saturday for a free flu shot" would be coded as "1" for advocacy language). Site-sponsored advocacy events were operationalized as the existence of additional pages labeled "events" or "calendar" where any announcements were posted indicating that the site itself was sponsoring an advocacy event (e.g. "Prairie Village Post is hosting a short film festival to raise awareness for immigration issues"). As with the other advocacy measures, this was coded as "1" if a site had sponsored an advocacy event, with these values summed for the final index variable.

Independent variables. The independent variables related to characteristics of

institutional journalism and community socioeconomic status and each was predicted to have an

inverse affect on development communication.

The first independent variable was orientation to institutional journalism ($M = 1.33$, *s.d.*

$= 1.03$) and was measured by evidence that a staff person on the site had a legacy media

background, evidence of separation between editorial and news content, use of first person in

posts, grammatical errors and the use of neutral attribution to quote sources. Each measure was

coded as "0" or "1" and the site's five most recent postings served as the unit of analysis, with

the exception of the measure of staff background, which was to be found in site sections labeled

"about," bio" or "staff."

The second independent variable was degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet

($M = .2$, *s.d.* $= .48$) and was measured in three ways: evidence of a site's partnership with a

traditional media outlet, publishing content from a traditional media partner and aggregated

content from traditional media. Partnering with a traditional media outlet was indicated by a site

having structural or financial dependence on a traditional media outlet's server, network or

company brand. If partnership information was found, it would be coded as "1" and the

researcher proceeded to the next measure: investigating whether any content was posted by the

traditional media partner (also coded as yes = 1, no = 0). Aggregated content from traditional

media, the final measure, was defined as existence of content that had been reposted from a non-

partnering traditional media outlet (yes = 1, no = 0).

The third independent variable was the use of traditional media revenue channels ($M =$

1.41, *s.d.* $= .63$) and was measured by counting the number of ads on the homepage and by

documenting the existence of foundation support. Ads were tallied and totaled on the coding

sheet, but these did not include ads for products or services offered by the site itself (e.g. "Click here for our iPhone app"). To measure foundation support, the coder evaluated the homepage and "about" page for information on financial support for the site from groups advocating a particular cause or representing a political, religious, humanitarian or educational interest (e.g. Knight Foundation; Habitat for Humanity; County Democratic Leaders Association). The foundation support variable was included only in the descriptive analysis, and not in the assessment of hypotheses.

The final independent variable was community socioeconomic status (M = -.0002, $s.d.$ = 2.52). Socioeconomic status measures an individual's or community's "differential access (realized and potential) to desired resources" (Oakes & Rossi, 2003, p. 775). Although the specific resources that make up socioeconomic status are debated, there is precedence for using multiple measures, including unemployment, income and education (Robert, 1999; Robert & Li, 2001).

For this study, an index was created based on municipal-level data from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey (ACS). The survey is conducted annually to provide information on community socioeconomics. The most reliable data for the largest range of population sizes is the five-year estimates currently available in the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (Guidance for Data Users, 2011).

The location for each citizen journalism site was gathered from the site's profile page within the KCNN citizen media directory, which is often submitted by the citizen journalists themselves. An index was created using the following municipal-level data: Unemployment rate, median household income, and percent high school graduate or higher. Within the American Factfinder website, the data selection criteria was the 2010 ACS 5-year estimates

(dataset), data profiles 03 and 02 (topics for social and economic characteristics) and the location of the citizen journalism site (place).

Based on the expectation that development communication efforts are usually initiated in areas of low socioeconomic activity, it was predicted that communities with stronger socioeconomic statuses would be less likely to reflect development concepts and practices in the site.

Control measure. In order to account for any potential effects from a site's technological limits, the study controlled for the content management system used to host the site. The researcher selected from five options correlating to popular systems (e.g. WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger) or coded "6" for a custom-built platform.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The study asked two questions about the nature of citizen journalism. A content analysis was used to answer these questions. Results are presented in this chapter for research question one, in the form of descriptive data, and question two, in the form of a regression analysis. Based on the regression findings, a post-hoc analysis was conducted to test differences in the development variables (dependent variables) between the "yes" and "no" values in the independent measures using t-tests.

Before hypothesis testing is presented, the following general research question is asked:

RQ1: To what degree does citizen journalism in the United States reflect development communication?

Citizen journalism sites were analyzed for the presence of four concepts of development communication: emphasis on human-level development, emphasis on community-level development, facilitating horizontal communication, and advocacy. These concepts became the dependent variables.

Descriptive Statistics

Each of the dependent variables was measured in multiple ways. For example, the degree to which a site showed advocacy was measured by (1) Includes mobilizing information; (2) Development rhetoric in mission statement; (3) Advocacy language within content; and (4) Site-sponsored advocacy events. Most of the measures were similar in that they generated categorical data, which corresponded to a specific category (e.g. "Yes," the site included mobilizing

information, coded as '1,' or "no," coded as '0'). Measures that did not fall into dichotomous

categories were counted, as was the case with the first dependent measure that totaled the

number of posts featuring individual betterment.

Table 4.1 presents both the continuous data measures and the frequency data for the

dependent measures.

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Measures (N=242)

Measures	Means or Percentages
Dependent Variable 1	
Emphasis on human-level development	
Content focuses on individual betterment	*Mean* = .19
(Range: 1-5)	*Standard Deviation* = .47
Site features resources for individual betterment	16.9%
Dependent Variable 2	
Emphasis on community-level development	
Content focuses on community betterment	*M* = .59
(Range: 1-5)	*s.d.* = .92
Site features resources for community betterment	29.3%
Dependent Variable 3	
Facilitates Horizontal Communication	
Commenters are required to provide full names	12.4%
Users can submit content	28.9%
Provides media training resources	5%
Provides forums or message boards	9.9%
Links to social media	64.9%
Dependent Variable 4	
Level of advocacy in the site	
Includes mobilizing information	35.1%
Development rhetoric in mission statement	16.5%
Advocacy language within content	6.2 %
Site-sponsored advocacy events	1.7%

The first two dependent variables measured a site's emphasis on development, both at the

human level and the community level. To measure these variables, the five most recent postings

for each site were counted to see if they focused on either individual betterment or community

betterment as defined by the protocol. With low means for both human-level development (*M* =

.19) and community-level development (*M* = .59), these findings indicate that the average number of posts per site emphasizing development was less than one.

Additionally, most of the sites did not feature resources for individual betterment (16.9%) or community betterment (29.3%). Site "resources" included announcements or displays of development resources, including advertisements, press releases, forums or events.

Percentages varied for the horizontal communication variable from most sites linking to social media (64.9%) to very few sites providing media training resources for participants (5%). Commenters were required to provide names in 12.4% of the sites, while 14% did not allow commenting at all. Although nearly a third of the sites allowed users to submit content, 90.1% did not offer forums or message boards for user interaction.

Few sites showed evidence of advocacy, although 35.1% included some mobilizing information in the five most recent postings. Additionally, 16.5% of sites that had mission statements included development rhetoric in a mission statement (21.8% of sites had no mission statement). Fewer than 2% of the sites appeared to have sponsored an advocacy event.

In regards to RQ1, the descriptive data showed that most citizen journalism sites in the United States do not reflect development communication. Still, all of the development communication concepts and measures were observed to some degree. Sites were more likely to emphasize community-level development than human-level development. Approximately a third of the sample allowed users to submit content and had postings that included mobilizing information for readers. Sites were the least open to using direct advocacy language or affiliating with advocacy events.

Frequency and mean data was also collected for the independent measures, presented in Table 4.2. Each site was analyzed for the following independent variables: orientation to

institutional journalism, degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, use of traditional

media revenue channels, and the community's socioeconomic status.

Table 4.2
Descriptive Statistics of Independent Measures (N=242)

Measures	Means or Percentages
Independent Variable 1	
Orientation to institutional journalism	
Staff person with legacy media background	26.9%
Separation between editorial and news content on site	20.7%
No writings in grammatical first person	57.4%
No grammatical errors	61.2 %
Postings use neutral attribution	76.4 %
Independent Variable 2	
Degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet	
Partnership with traditional media outlet	12.4%
Content from traditional media partner	2.9%
Aggregated content from traditional media	5%
Independent Variable 3	
Use of traditional media revenue channels	
Number of ads on the homepage	*Mean* = 2.6
(Range: 0-29)	*Standard Deviation* = 4.24
Do not accept foundation support	82.6%
Independent Variable 4	
Community Socioeconomic Status	
Employment rate	M = 92.15
	$s.d.$ = 2.91
Median household income (dollars)	M = 53322.02
	$s.d.$ = 20433.12
Percent high school graduate or higher	M = 86.69
	$s.d.$ = 7.06

Percentages from the first variable showed that most sites were somewhat oriented

toward institutional journalism, especially in using neutral attribution (76.4%).

Certain measures had more than two response options. In the case of a staff person's

background, it was found that 26.9% had a legacy background, 24.4% did not have a background

in legacy media, and 47.7% of the sites did not include background information. The lowest

frequency was for sites that distinguished between editorial (opinion) and news content, totaled at 20.7%. Over half of the sites did not use grammatical first person (57.4%) or have grammatical errors (61.2%).

There was a low frequency of sites with dependence on a traditional media outlet. Of the sites that partnered with a traditional media outlet (12.4%), almost none of the sites used content from the partner. General aggregation from traditional media was also low, at 5%.

For the third independent variable, the number of ads appearing on the homepage was counted and recorded. The number of ads was one measure for traditional media revenue channel, and it was theorized that the more advertising a site had, the less development-oriented or activist a site would be due to greater accountability to multiple community shareholders. It was found that the average site had 2.6 advertisements.

The categorical data measure from the third independent variable was related to foundation support. Results showed that 82.3% of the sites accepted no form of foundation support from groups advocating a particular cause. Almost 20% did accept some support from foundations.

The final independent variable measured community socioeconomic status. The justification and method for acquiring the socioeconomic statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau were discussed in the previous chapter. After determining the location for each site, the statistical data profile for the location was retrieved from the American Community Survey.

Measures included rate of unemployment, which was then subtracted from 100 to create a positive measure for employment ($M = 92.15\%$), median household income ($M = \$53,322.02$), and percent of individuals with a high school diploma or higher

(M = 86.69%). These figures were slightly higher than the national averages for employment (M

= 92.1%), median household income (M = \$51,914), and educational attainment (M = 85%).

To eliminate any influence the site's web platform might have on the dependent

variables, especially in terms of limiting user participation, a measure was created to control for

variability in content management systems. Table 4.3 shows the frequencies of the content

management systems used. Beyond the 10% of sites that used the Blogger platform, the largest

percentage of sites was hosted by custom-built or third-party websites (78.5%).

Table 4.3
Descriptive Statistics of Control Measure (N=242)

Measures	Value
Independent Control Variable	
Content Management System (CMS)	
WordPress	6.6%
Blogger	9.5%
Typepad	2.5%
Mainstream media partner's CMS	2.9%
Custom-built site or third-party CMS	78.5%

Hypothesis Testing

The second research question sought to reveal predictors for varying degrees of

development communication:

RQ2: Why are some citizen journalism sites more oriented toward development

communication than others?

Hypotheses were created to help answer this question, and because there were multiple

independent variables to examine, a multiple linear regression was conducted. This technique

finds relationships between multiple independent (predictor) variables and a single dependent

variable. A regression model's overall fit, meaning the amount of variance in the dependent

variable that all the independent variables account for, is reflected in the R^2 value. When the

other predictors are held constant, the contribution that each individual predictor makes to the R^2 is shown by a *beta* coefficient value. A linear regression was chosen for this study because it allowed for this individual testing of independent variables; therefore, actual predictions could be made about relationships. In this study, each of the four dependent variables was regressed on all four independent variables, corresponding with the 16 proposed relationships or hypotheses. Each variable had its measures summed prior to the relationship testing. The regression model is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Development communication variables regressed on three dimensions of institutional journalism, and on community socioeconomic variables

	Dependent Variable 1: Emphasis on human-level development R-sq = .08	**Dependent Variable 2:** Emphasis on community-level development R-sq = .04	**Dependent Variable 3:** Facilitates horizontal communication R-sq = .05	**Dependent Variable 4:** Level of advocacy R-sq = .03
Independent Variable 1: Orientation to institutional journalism	.02 (.02)	-.04 (-.04)	.1 (.11)	.08 (.08)
Independent Variable 2: Degree of dependence on traditional media outlet	.28** (.27)	.14 (.14)	.16* (.16)	.12 (.12)
Independent Variable 3: Use of traditional media revenue channels	.02 (.02)	-.06 (-.06)	.02 (.02)	-.05 (-.05)
Independent Variable 4: Community socioeconomic status	.05 (.05)	.1 (.1)	-.11 (-.12)	-.02 (-.02)

Standardized regression coefficients (partial correlation coefficients)
**p < 0.01 / *p < 0.05

The first dependent variable column represented the emphasis on human-level development ($R^2 = .08$), and it was regressed on all four independent variables to test the first four hypotheses. From this series, significance was found relating to the second proposed relationship:

> **H$_{1b}$** = The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site will emphasize human-level development.

However, rather than finding an inverse relationship, the regression showed that dependence on a traditional outlet was a positive predictor of human-level development (*beta* = .28, p < 0.01). This suggests that alignment with a mainstream partner actually *encourages* certain development impulses.

The second hypothesis set looked at predictors of community-level development, which resulted in no statistical significance.

In testing predictors of the third dependent variable regarding horizontal communication ($R^2 = .05$), significance was found relating to the following hypothesis:

> **H$_{3b}$** = The greater the degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet, the less a citizen journalism site will facilitate horizontal communication among community members.

Again, the opposite relationship was discovered. Dependence on a traditional media outlet was a significant predictor of horizontal communication (*beta* = .16, p < 0.05), suggesting that the alignment with a mainstream partner results in higher levels of development communication values such as horizontal communication.

The final set of hypotheses relating to advocacy ($R^2 = .03$) showed no statistical significance, positive or negative, in being predicted by any independent variables.

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Also, each dependent variable was regressed against the independent variables and the control variables (content management system), but the control did not affect results significantly, and so it was removed from the final analyses that are shown in Table 4.4 above.

Given that development communication efforts are typically initiated in response to socioeconomic decline, it is interesting to find that community socioeconomic status, independent variable four, was not a predictor of any development communication characteristics.

Overall, the regression model showed no support of the hypotheses. On the contrary, there were positive relationships between dependence on a traditional media outlet and a site's emphasis on human-level development and use of horizontal communication.

Post-hoc Analysis

It could have been that summing the measures for each of the four independent variables obscured effects from each individual measure. Thus, the decision was made to look at each independent measure individually. For this post-hoc analysis, independent sample t-tests were used to compare the mean scores of each dichotomous measure. This method reveals whether there is a significant difference within measures in terms of a given dependent variable. For example, a t-test might answer the following: "Is there a significant difference in the level of website advocacy between a site that has no grammatical errors and a site that has grammatical errors?" While this method doesn't allow for actual predictive correlations to be made (it's not possible to control for the other independent variables), it can show useful statistical differences.

After running each independent measure through t-tests, there were 11 new statistically significant differences. These results further support the regression analysis findings that institutional media practices—like partnering with traditional news organizations, and having a

traditional journalism background—and development communication characteristics are
positively related in citizen journalism sites.

The five independent measures responsible for the significant differences are presented in
the following tables.

Table 4.5
Dependent variables means for staff person with legacy media background

Dependent Variables	Staff person without legacy media background mean	Staff person with legacy media background mean	*t*	*df*	*p value*
Emphasis on human-level development	.30	.43	-1.57	240	.12
Emphasis on community-level development	.59	.87	-2.47	240	.01*
Facilitates horizontal communication	1.13	1.54	-2.66	99.21	.01*
Level of advocacy in the site	.58	.63	-.34	240	.69

* p value (2-tailed) significance at < .05

Table 4.5 showed that, in terms of community-level development, there was a statistical
difference, t(240) = -2.47, p = .01, between sites having a staff person with a legacy media
background and sites having no staff person with a legacy media background. A site that has a
staff person with a legacy media background is *more* likely to emphasize community-level
development. In terms of horizontal communication, results were also statistically significant,
t(99.21) = -2.66, p = .01. A site that has a staff person with a legacy media background is also
more likely to practice horizontal communication and advocacy.

When looking for a difference between sites that separate editorial and news content and
sites that do not, significance was found for both horizontal communication, t(206) = -2.69, p =

.01, and level of advocacy, t(240) = -3.65, p = .00 (Table 4.6). This suggests that sites that do

separate opinion from editorial content (as do traditional news organizations) were more likely to

demonstrate horizontal communication and a level of advocacy.

Table 4.6
Dependent variable means for separation between editorial and news content

Dependent Variables	No separation between editorial and news mean	Separation between editorial and news mean	t	df	p value
Emphasis on human-level development	.29	.5	-2	68.65	.05
Emphasis on community-level development	.63	.8	-1.36	240	.18
Facilitates horizontal communication	1.15	1.59	-2.69	206	.01*
Level of advocacy in the site	.51	.94	-3.65	240	.0*

* p value (2-tailed) significance at < .05

Three statistically significant differences were found when comparing the means of sites

without a traditional media partnership and sites with a partnership. Emphasis on human-level

development showed a significant difference, t(34.80) = -3.44, p = .0, horizontal communication

showed a significant difference, t(206) = -3.19, p = .0, and the site's level of advocacy showed a

significant difference, t(39.85) = -2.82, p = .01 (Table 4.7). So a site with a traditional media

partnership is more likely to demonstrate the following development traits: emphasizing human-

level development, facilitating horizontal communication, and featuring a level of advocacy in

the site.

Table 4.7

Dependent variable means for traditional media partnership

Dependent Variables	No partnership with traditional media out mean	Partnership with traditional media outlet mean	*t*	*df*	*p value*
Emphasis on human-level development	.28	.73	-3.44	34.80	.0*
Emphasis on community-level development	.63	.9	-2.02	42.02	.05
Facilitates horizontal communication	1.17	1.79	-3.19	206	.0*
Level of advocacy in the site	.55	.93	-2.82	39.85	.01*

* p value (2-tailed) significance at < .05

When testing the difference between sites with advertising and sites without advertising, significance was found in relation to only one dependent variable: horizontal communication. Sites with no advertising yielded a mean of .98 and sites with advertising yielded a mean of 1.45, which is statistically significant, t(206) = -3.52, p = .0 (Table 4.8). A citizen journalism site with advertising is more likely to facilitate horizontal communication than a site without advertising.

Table 4.8
Dependent variable means for sites with advertising

Dependent Variables	No advertising mean	Advertising mean	t	df	p value
Emphasis on human-level development	.25	.39	-1.8	235.18	.07
Emphasis on community-level development	.66	.67	-1.4	240	.89
Facilitates horizontal communication	.98	1.45	-3.52	206	.0*
Level of advocacy in the site	.63	.57	.56	240	.58

* p value (2-tailed) significance at < .05

The final independent measure that had any statistical significance was the presence or absence of foundation support. This was the only significant independent measure that was not a characteristic of institutional journalism, meaning its findings are consistent with the original hypotheses. Significant mean differences were found for three of the dependent variables, including community-level development, t(240) = -2.63, p = .01, horizontal communication, t(206) = -5.17, p = .0, and level of advocacy, t(240) = -2.16, p = .03 (Table 4.9). It can be said that sites with foundation support are more likely to emphasize these development communication attributes.

Table 4.9
Dependent variable means for foundation support

Dependent Variables	No foundation support mean	Foundation support mean	*t*	*df*	*p value*
Emphasis on human-level development	.30	.52	-1.89	51.49	.06
Emphasis on community-level development	.61	.95	-2.63	240	.01*
Facilitates horizontal communication	1.09	1.95	-5.17	206	.0*
Level of advocacy in the site	.55	.83	-2.16	240	.03*

* p value (2-tailed) significance at < .05

The t-test results confirmed the findings and offered a possible answer to RQ2: Some citizen journalism sites are more oriented towards development communication because they align with traditional media behaviors and norms. Specifically, development communication characteristics were more likely to be present if the citizen journalism site displayed one of the following institutional characteristics: having a staff person with a legacy media background, separating editorial and news content, partnering with a traditional media outlet, and relying on advertising revenue.

What does the presence, or lack thereof, of relationships between citizen journalism sites and development theory reveal about the participatory media movement in the United States?

Despite historical tension between the traditional Western press and development communication, this study found that, within a given population of citizen journalism sites, traditional media practices have no negative affect on the variance of development communication characteristics

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In the analysis of nearly 250 citizen journalism sites, sentiments like this one from
Harstville Today (2009), appearing on its "Welcome" page, were rare, but still occurred:

> Now, we've avoided using that word, "journalism," a lot because, well,
> it gets in the way. People think you have to be somehow different to be
> "a journalist." And so some folks think "I can't do that." We like to call
> ourselves community storytellers. (para. 2)

Although many sites weren't as direct in stating their alternative posture toward the
mainstream media, this mindset, along with many traces of development communication, was
observed across the country.

At Oakland Local, a nonprofit news outlet, one of their objectives was to serve as "a
capacity-building tool to help low-income and under-served communities make their voices
heard online through the hands-on media training we provide" ("What is Oakland Local?" 2009).
This mission statement is full of development rhetoric, and the site had high counts of
development measures.

Sites like the Seattle Transit Blog emphasized community betterment in a post where
readers were encouraged to attend a public ideas session on how to improve a local bus service
(Nourish, 2012). There were also examples of journalism workshops provided for citizens (Twin
Cities Daily Planet), financial support from foundations like environmental agencies (Great
Lakes Echo), and individual betterment resources, such as an event listing for a caregiver support
group (Fresno Famous).

While finding these development characteristics was anticipated, it was *not* expected that each of the previously mentioned sites would also display many characteristics of institutional media: being staffed by former legacy media journalists (Oakland Local), separating news and editorial sections (Twin Cities Daily Planet), relying on advertising revenue (California Watch) and partnering with traditional media outlets (The Bay Citizen). Even Hartsville Today, the site that avoids calling itself "journalism," is associated with traditional media in the sense that it was created by the University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and was the brainchild of a longtime mainstream journalist.

What do these findings suggest about the relationships between development communication, citizen journalism and the traditional press? This chapter will reflect on the statistical findings in light of development communication theory and draw some final conclusions about the nature of participatory media in the United States.

First, it should be emphasized that the nature of this study was exploratory. The study sought to build an understanding of the conditions in which a citizen journalism site may be more or less likely to adopt aspects of development communication.

As the literature review outlined, the study was conceptualized because citizen journalism is growing. It embraces many of the norms, values and goals that are inherent in development communication (e.g. capacity-building, empowerment, grassroots organization). Despite a historical tension between the field of development communication and the Western press, many traditional news organizations are partnering with hyperlocal and citizen media outlets. As the newspaper industry and the country's economic conditions have recently been on the decline, conditions seem to have become riper for development communication methods like

participatory media. There is also evidence of a development agenda in citizen journalism. Many sites are "not just covering community, but *building* it as well," (J-Lab, 2010, p. 29).

There has been no known systematic analysis of citizen journalism from the development perspective. The study used this lens to find a new angle on the study of citizen journalism, a research area that has previously been focused heavily on the bloggers vs. journalists question (Rosen, 2005).

For these reasons, it was hypothesized that strong institutional alignment and high levels of community socioeconomics should predict lower degrees of development communication within a citizen journalism site.

After conducting a content analysis of randomly selected sites from the KCNN citizen media directory, it was discovered that the majority of sites made little development effort. Hypothesis testing showed that traditional media practices and socioeconomic conditions of communities had little or no significant affect on the variance of development communication. A variety of possible explanations for these null and weak effects are discussed in this section, from the possibility that low variance in some of the variables could have affected results, to more conceptual reasons.

Interestingly, where regression results were significant, findings were opposite to expectations. It seemed some citizen journalism sites were oriented towards development communication *because* they aligned with traditional media partners and practices. A possible explanation for this overall finding has to do with the way a site manager's background influenced his or her objectives. In some instances, typical roles reversed between a citizen and a "professional" journalist. Citizens without legacy media experience acted according to institutional norms, perhaps to establish credibility, while many legacy media journalists, often

with an intellectual awareness of the mainstream's shortcomings, were exploring more alternative, development forms of journalism. For example, the Caldwell Guardian, published by a citizen with a manufacturing background, is a factual, informative community news site with almost no development orientation. Go Green Nation, on the other hand, advocates for jobs and innovations that create a more environment-friendly community, and it is published and written by many professional journalists.

The descriptive data in this study (answering Research Question 1) showed that most citizen journalist sites do no reflect development communication. Still, development communication was evident to at least a small degree, and media foundations like J-Lab at the American University School of Communication were often supporting these experimental efforts. Approximately 30% of the sites featured resources for community betterment, allowed users to submit content, and included mobilizing information in postings.

Why were there not higher levels of development communication? Traditional journalism ideals are deeply engrained, and advocacy in journalism is still threatening (less than 7% of the sites featured any advocacy language). Another possibility is that the mainstream media has declined in its local coverage to the point that, as was previously mentioned, citizens are stepping into the informer role and mimicking the traditional press and its values. Citizens who are not socialized to the latest thinking about the "future of journalism" but who grew up taking a newspaper or watching traditional TV news would probably be more likely to model their site content after traditional journalism.

The linear regression analysis showed no support for the hypotheses. On the contrary, dependence on a traditional media outlet predicted the emphasis on human-level development and the use of horizontal communication. Dependence on traditional media was conceptualized

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as a partnership with an outlet, or the use of a traditional partner or outlet's content. In the case of human-level development, the positive significance may be understood by considering a partnership from the perspective of the traditional outlet. Any mainstream outlet that would formally associate with a citizen journalism site is likely to hold a more progressive, forward-thinking view of the press and be open to more alternative forms of journalism (e.g. *The Charlotte Observer, The Oregonian, The Seattle Times* and other outlets in the J-Lab Networked Journalism project). A possible reason that partnership with these more progressive outlets didn't predict community-level development is because the community variable was measured broadly in ways that most sites, whether associated with a traditional news organization or not, have adopted (e.g. community calendar page announcing local blood drives).

The second positive relationship from the regression model was between traditional media partnership and horizontal communication, which was measured when a site allowed content submissions, provided forums or linked to social media. Again, a traditional outlet that sees the value in partnering with citizens is likely to incorporate ways for citizens to share their view (content submissions) or engage in dialogue (social media, message boards). These traditional media partners also have the resources to invest in more specialized features for allowing user-generated content, and their staff may be more in touch with the latest thinking about journalism's digital, participatory future.

The post-hoc analysis looked for differences within certain measures and found that development communication characteristics were more likely to occur if the site displayed the following traits: having a staff person with a legacy media background, separating editorial and news content, partnering with a traditional media outlet, and relying on advertising revenue.

These differences may also be understood by considering the type of mainstream partner or former legacy media journalist that would be drawn to citizen journalism. Results showed that a site with advertising was more likely to facilitate horizontal communication. It may be that a citizen journalist site that has decided to actively pursue revenue through means of advertising is most likely interested in building an audience through horizontal measures of social media, content submissions and reader dialogue. The impetus to offer horizontal avenues of communication may therefore have more to do with commercial gain than altruism.

It was not surprising to find that sites with foundation support were more likely to demonstrate a level of advocacy. Foundations have an interest in seeing their agendas furthered and, presumably, would not prevent a site from using development rhetoric or hosting an advocacy event. Many foundations also have charitable missions as part of their 501(c)(3) special tax status, and development-oriented efforts would be consistent with this.

Noticeably missing from any statistical significance was the citizen journalism site's community socioeconomic status. At least for this sample, citizen journalism projects are not being intentionally applied in lower socioeconomic areas, contrary to development communication theory. This raises the question of whether citizen journalism could be more effective if applied in marginalized areas in need of human empowerment and socioeconomic growth. Despite the lack of a relationship between community socioeconomics and development communication, the United States remains in need of a strategic development agenda and the latest census shows that one in two people are poor (Yen, 2011b).

Was the development perspective useful for analyzing citizen journalism? The data was useful for speculating on the likelihood of sustaining pro-am partnerships. There was some overlap between citizen journalism sites in the sample and development communication, but not

enough to argue that the overall movement has a development agenda embedded within its practices. The study did not expose the predicted tensions points between the mainstream press and the citizen journalists. There are two reasons that seem likely. First, measures for "orientation to institutional journalism" were generic and practiced by most citizen journalists (e.g. neutral attribution, no grammatical errors, no grammatical first person). Secondly, most of the development variables would not cause an ideological conflict to a legacy media outlet that has decided to partner with a citizen media outlet (with the possible exception of the advocacy variable). Consequently, traditional outlets that might oppose citizen media, resulting in a negative relationship with development communication, are already choosing to avoid citizen journalism.

Despite low efforts toward development overall, when it was present, there was more openness to it from the mainstream than predicted. This may be the result of the media outlets gradually institutionalizing their citizen partners, or the acceptance that an inevitable response to mainstream decline is to embrace citizen participation. Either way, it seems likely that the resources offered by a news organization are an important reason why greater development-oriented efforts can be made in partnerships. Most of the development communication measures are bolstered by mainstream connections (e.g. horizontal communication) and expertise (e.g. community-building). Access to institutional support offers citizen journalism sites, which often burn out with the site manager's savings account, a greater shot at sustainability.

Because this is a new approach to analyzing citizen journalism, one major limitation is that some measures were exploratory, and this could have had an effect on the low variance found in some of the variables. While measures drew from existing literature and theory where possible, more work needs to be done on construction of measures.

Also related to the newness of this research area, no previous data is available for knowing whether the frequency of development characteristics is increasing. Therefore, it is difficult to comment on any trend that these findings may represent. In terms of measurements, another limitation is that socioeconomic information was not available at the hyperlocal level where many of these sites operate. Statistics for a large city like Chicago would shield any correlation between a citizen outlet and an underdeveloped neighborhood that it was serving. There was also low variability in several measures (e.g. advocacy), and a limitation in terms of statistical analysis was that the t-test only compared means within the independent variables, not the dependent. In measuring traditional revenue, advertisements were counted because it was theorized that relying on ads would increase accountability to community shareholders and possibly limit a site's advocacy or development impulses. However, the study counted all ads and didn't consider that many online advertising models, such as Google Ads, randomly generate the types of ads that appear, meaning that site managers may have little to no contact with the actual advertisers and thus wouldn't feel beholden in the traditional sense that was being measured.

The next step in continuing this study would be to conduct interviews to gain a better sense from site managers, those with a legacy media background and those without, as to how they conceptualize their role as a community news source. Another next step could be to analyze the partnerships and see if and where points of compromise or adaptation occur between the citizen outlet and the traditional source. It would also be useful to compare purely citizen-run sites (Glendale Daily Planet) and traditional-only sites (*Dallas Morning News*) to try and isolate the characteristics that differ in their story coverage. Because low levels of direct advocacy were observed in the traditional blog format, it would be interesting to see if stronger development

initiatives were occurring in the more recent networked forms of citizen media like microblogging (Twitter), social networks (Facebook) and user-generated content platforms (YouTube).

Although development communication does not provide the clearest view of citizen journalism as it exists today, applying its theory is an attempt to bring the citizen journalism conversation out of the "uncertain future of news" chatter and into a discussion of its relationship to community and individual betterment, and how it actually functions within a democracy.

Some researchers have already declared the egalitarian potential of citizen journalism a failure, but residents in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya might disagree. Whether it's a collective response from social media to prevent the Stop Online Privacy Act (SOPA) in the United States or a viral video to spark a national protest in the Middle East, the power of media in the hands of citizens cannot be disregarded.

This thesis found that many former journalists were not opposed to embracing citizen journalism and, likewise, that many citizen journalists were open to institutional alignment, especially if they could partner with a mainstream outlet.

As technology evolves, so does the relationship between the press and the public. Regardless of how the information flows tomorrow, it seems apparent that citizens will play an important role in making their personal opinions and community needs known.

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APPENDIX A: PROTOCOL

A. General guidelines

    1. Code sites in the order they appear on the sample list. Sites may be
accessed through a Internet browser search for the site name or by
finding the site link in the KCNN directory.

    2. When coding the sites for specific elements, if there is uncertainty about
the presence of the element, code it as a "no = 0"

    3. Certain sites may be disqualified from the sample if they meet any of
the following criteria:

        a. The site is unavailable (i.e. will not load) due to server access

        b. The site's domain has expired and is no longer available

        c. The site is not in the correct state's sample group (i.e. an site
based in Alaska was miscategorized in the Alabama section). Site
location should be apparent by scanning the coverage in its
postings or the "About" section of the site

        d. The site does not comply with the KCNN database's definition
for citizen media, which is a site with "any original reporting,
analysis, commentary, reviews, photos, audio, video or other
content on local news, events or issues, created by individuals not
employed by professional news organizations" (J-Lab Resources,
2007). This disqualifies the following sites:

            i. Sites with no original content (e.g. aggregator-only
sites)

            ii. Sites with direct evidence that all content contributors
are employed by a professional news organization. Such
evidence could be found by scanning the "about" or "staff"
pages and also by analyzing the author bylines for
references to a mainstream news organization. Some
qualifying sites, however, may be hosted by a professional
news organization or feature a percentage of content by
individuals employed by a professional news organization.

            iii. Sites with no local coverage (e.g. content devoted solely
to abstract issue, such as a blog that serves as a forum for
adoption conversations; content devoted solely to national
or international issues, such as a presidential race). Sites
will qualify, however, if they provide content on local
implications of abstract issues (e.g. adoption) or national/
international issues (e.g. how national legislation affects a
community issue).

    4. In the event that a site is disqualified, the next qualified site in the

"state listings" document will be selected.

5. The following coding instructions will be responded to by the coder in an excel document

6. If it is unclear what constitutes the "five most recent postings" due to an alternative presentation format that makes the time of postings unclear, select the five posts with the most recent time stamp (often closest to the top of the page). Also, some sites present information by category (e.g. "news," "opinion," "weather"). When coding the "five most recent postings," reference the news section (often labeled "latest news" or "general news")

B. Protocol

1. Record your name
2. Record name of site
3. Record URL of site
4. Record date on which blog is coded (i.e. 11/15/11)
5. Date of most recent post (i.e. 11/15/11)

6. Site activity
Code as follows:
0 = Content has not been posted in previous 6 months
1 = Content has been posted at least once in the previous 6 months

Coding instructions:
a. "Content" includes any stories, events, multimedia or forum topics published in the 6 months prior to the date of coding

7. Site began
Coding instruction: Code the year the site began. This information may be found in the "About" section or by looking at the site's article archive. If the site does not have an archive and the year is not published, check the site's profile on the KCNN directory page. If the survey doesn't record the year the site was founded, code as '0.'

8. State
Coding instruction: Code the site based on its state location. Use 1-51 based on alphabetic state listing in the KCNN directory. Include Washington D.C. as #9.

9. Location
Coding instruction: Code the site based on its city, town or community location. Enter the full location name. Visually scan the site or keyword search for "about," "contact" or "profile" sections for site location. The location may also be evident from the site's title, mission statement or a scan of the recent postings. If there is uncertainty, code as '0'

10. Staff person with legacy media background
Code as follows:
0 = Professional background information is not included
1 = Site manager does not have a background in legacy media
2 = Site manager has a background in legacy media (whether with a news outlet
or having earned a journalism education)
3 = Site manager is currently working in legacy media

Coding instructions:
a. Visually scan the site for an "about," "bio" or "staff" section that may
include information on site manger's history
b. If you do not find a link, do a browser find for the words "about," "bio" and
"staff"
c. "Staff person" includes at least one person on staff or in a permanent
leadership position
d. "Legacy media" includes professional news organizations in radio, magazine,
television and newspaper industries; also, code as '2' if biographical information
indicates that a staff person earned a journalism degree
e. "Background" indicates that individuals have previously been employed by a
professional news organization
f. Code as "2" if biographical information indicates that a staff person earned a
journalism degree

11. Separation between editorial and news content
Code as follows:
0 = Site makes no distinction between editorial (opinion) and news content
1 = Site distinguishes between editorial (opinion) and news content

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings for any indication that the *presentation* of this
content makes a distinction between editorial (opinion) and news content
b. Visually scan for "distinction" indicators, which may include:
-Sub-heading within the post labeling "news" or "opinion"
-Posting tag for "news" or "opinion" content; tags often appear at the end of a post or
on the sidebar of the site
-Separate tab for "news" or "opinion" and "editorial;" tabs often appear as links along
the top or sidebar of the site

12. Use of first person in posts
Code as follows:
0 = Postings do not include writing in the grammatical first person
1 = Postings include writing in the grammatical first person

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent posts for any use of first person
b. This is only for posts by the blogger, staff person or regular contributor; it does not include the use of first person in quotes or in comment by readers of the post
c. "Grammatical first person" includes the words "I, me, mine, myself, us, we, our, ourselves"

13. Grammatical errors
Code as follows:
0 = Postings do not contain grammatical errors
1 = Postings contain grammatical errors

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent posts for grammatical errors
b. "Errors" include <u>at least one mistake</u> in sentence structure, grammar or punctuation. So if any of the five posts contains one or more errors, code as '1'
c. Copy and paste the five most recent postings into Microsoft Word and perform a spelling/grammar check on the document

14. Use of neutral attribution to quote sources
Code as follows:
0 = Postings use only neutral attribution to quote sources
1 = Postings use non-neutral attribution to quote sources
2 = Not applicable (no quotes used)

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings for the use of neutral attribution when the writing is quoting sources; if any non-neutral attribution occurs, in any of the postings, code as '1'
b. "Neutral attribution" includes objective descriptions of the source, and includes <u>no</u> word or phrase that suggests the writer is making a value judgment about the news source
c. Read sentences in each post where quotes occur, including sentences prior to and following the quote, where quotes occur and notice if and how the quote's source is attributed
d. Example: "'President Obama is preparing for the re-election campaign,' said analyst John Scott" (Code as 0). "President Obama is preparing for the re-election campaign, said expert analyst John Scott" (Code as '1' because of the word "expert")

Independent Variable 2: Degree of dependence on a traditional media outlet

15. Partnership with traditional media outlet
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not have a partnership with a traditional media outlet
1 = Site does have a partnership with a traditional media outlet

Coding instructions:
a. Record existence of any evidence of structural or financial dependence on a traditional media outlet's server, network or company brand
b. "Partnership" indicates that a site is being hosted by a traditional media outlet's server (e.g. a newspaper that has created a separate citizen-led site for a certain neighborhood) or is receiving financial support from a mainstream media sponsor (e.g. "brought to you by," "hosted by," "sponsored by").
c. "Traditional media" include newspapers, magazines, broadcast television and radio
d. Look for partnership information, which should be explicitly stated, in the "about," "partners," "contact," sidebar sections or along the very bottom of the homepage in fine print. There may also be a link on the site's homepage back to the partnering organization, often a click-through on the partner's logo

16. Content from traditional media partner
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not include content from traditional media partner
1 = Site includes content from traditional media partner

Coding instructions:
a. If the previous #15 was coded as '1,' evaluate the five most recent posting for evidence that content is posted from the traditional media partner
b. "Content" includes stories written or produced by a contributor
c. "Traditional media partners" indicates that the citizen media site has a structural of financial dependence on a mainstream newspaper, magazine, broadcast television station or radio
d. When evaluating the postings, notice if the author is given a byline that names him or her as being associated with the mainstream partner; if not, a post may also have a headline or a post-article caption that indicates the source originated from the mainstream partner
e. Do a browser find on a key word in the partner's name

17. Aggregated content from traditional media
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not aggregate content from traditional media
1 = Site does aggregate content from traditional media

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings for content that is posted from traditional media sources

b. "Aggregated content" includes articles or multimedia that have be reposted ("copy and pasted") from a traditional outlet where the article originally appeared

c. "Aggregated content" does not include content supplied by a site's traditional media partner or an official contribution from a mainstream media professional; does not include simply posting links to articles found on other traditional sites, must have full article posted

d. When evaluating the postings, notice if the author is given a byline that names him or her as being associated with a mainstream outlet; if not, a post may also have a headline or a post-article caption that indicates the source originated from a mainstream outlet

Independent Variable 3: Use of traditional media revenue channels

18. Number of ads on the homepage
Code as follows:
Count the total number of ads that appear on the homepage

Coding instructions:
a. Visually scan the entire homepage from top to bottom and record the number of ads

b. "Ads" include paid messages not originating from the site that promote products, events or services

c. "Ads" do no include social media icons, site award notices, partnership listings or ads for products or services that are offered by the site itself (e.g. "Click here for our iPhone app")

d. Rotating "Ads by Google" should be counted once, regardless of the number of times it appears on the homepage

e. Ads are most often found in boxes along the top, bottom or sidebar of the site

19. Foundation support
Code as follows:
0 = Site does accept foundation support
1 = Site does not accept foundation support

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the site's homepage and about pages for information on any support given by foundations

b. "Foundation" includes any group advocating a particular cause or representing a political, religious, humanitarian or educational interest (e.g. Knight Foundation; Habitat for Humanity; Lauderdale County Democratic Leaders Association)

c. "Foundation" support does not include having a partnership with traditional media

d. "Support" indicates a sharing of resources between the interest group and the citizen journalism site

e. Look for foundation support information in the "about," "partners,"

"contact" or sidebar sections. There may also be a link on the site's homepage back to the partnering organization with browser find search "support"

Independent Variable 4: Community socioeconomic status

Note: Socioeconomic information will be gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey data. The process for collecting the data will be outlined in the method's chapter and corresponds to 35-37 in this protocol.

Dependent Variable 1: Emphasis on human-level development

20. Content focuses on individual betterment
Code as follows:
0 – 5 = Number of postings that focus on individual betterment

Coding instructions:
a. Scan the five most recent postings and record the number of posts that focus on themes of individual betterment
b. "Content" includes stories by the author
c. "Focuses" means the content goes beyond casual mentioning of development information, but actually *emphasizes* individual betterment
d. "Individual betterment" means that personal resources are shared that can potentially improve or empower individuals from within themselves (e.g. personal advice or helpful information related to health, finance, safety or information about events that share such resources)
e. Examples: "Advice on selling your home in today's market;" "Shopping healthy at new organic grocery story may increase your life expectancy;" "Workshop to be held Friday on making your home energy efficient"

21. Site features resources for individual betterment
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not feature resources for individual betterment
1 = Site does feature resources for individual betterment

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate site features for the announcement or presentation of resources for individual betterment that are not found in stories and postings
b. "Resources" include advertisements, press releases, user forums or events
c. Examples: "Click here to buy a personal finance tutorial;" "Attend a panel by local psychologist discussing how to parent a teenager"

Dependent Variable 2: Emphasis on community-level development

22. Content focuses on community betterment
Code as follows:

0 – 5 = Number of postings that focus on community betterment

Coding instructions:
a. Scan the five most recent postings and record the number of posts that focus on themes of community betterment
b. "Content" includes stories by the author
c. "Focuses" includes content that goes beyond casual mentioning of development information, but actually *emphasizes* community betterment
d. "Community betterment" means improvement that is accessible to a collective such as the community
e. Examples: "Restoring the abandoned theater will give our town something to proud of;" "Vote to oppose the local tax because we must stop irresponsible government spending"

23. Site features resources for community betterment
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not feature resources for community betterment
1 = Site does feature resources for community betterment

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate site features for the announcement or presentation of resources for community betterment that are not found in stories and postings
b. "Resources" include advertisements, press releases, community forums or events
c. Examples: "Attend the documentary exposing the mishandling of tax dollars for the failed airport project;" "Town meeting with the governor on how our prison system will improve in the next term"

Dependent Variable 3: Degree to which site facilitates horizontal communication among community members

24. Commenters are required to provide full names
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not require commenters to provide full names
1 = Site requires commenters to use provide names
2 = Site does not allow commenting
3 = Unknown

Coding instructions:
a. Record the existence of full name usage in user comment sections in the ten most recent postings
b. "Commenters" include citizens who comment on posts or stories
c. Clicking on a single post or stories should reveal a user comment section at the bottom of the article: are comments anonymous with usernames or are *all* comments from full-name users
d. If this information is unavailable in the ten most recent postings, attempt to

submit a comment on a post and see if full name information is required
e. If it is unclear whether or not the ten most recent postings require full names from commenters, and to post a comment it requires you register as a member, code as '3' (unknown)

25. User-participation via content submissions
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not allow users to submit content
1 = Site allows users to submit content

Coding instructions:
a. Record the existence of avenues for users to submit content
b. This feature is often included in sidebar sections with keyword "submit," "contribute," "share," "join"
c. Often users may be required to "register" in order to submit content
d. "Content" includes articles, news, events, photos or videos to the site for public view
e. "Content" does not include comments or feedback submission on posts; or "letters to the editor" section

26. Provides media training resources for site participants
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not provide media training resources for site participants
1 = Site does provide media training resources for site participants

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the site offerings for announcements, website links and events designed to educate users on how to provide content
b. "Media training" includes information such as how to write stories, how to create multimedia, how to become a citizen journalist and other material designed to educate the audience in ways to take part in site processes
c. "Media training" does not include information on how to use or access the site and its content
d. "Resources" include tutorials, workshops, classes, articles, books, videos, or links to other sites or postings that focus on media training for users participation

27. Distinction between user-generated content and staff content
*Note: This measure was removed after statistical analysis
Code as follows:
0 = Site makes no distinction between user-generated content and staff content
1 = Site makes a distinction between user-generated content and staff content
2 = Site does not allow users to submit content

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings for indicators of the source of content as being from either citizens or regular contributing staff
b. "User-generated content" includes articles, stories, posts or multimedia submitted from the citizen audience
c. "Distinction" indicates an attempt to label or separate content that is provided by the citizen audience from the primary content from site executives
d. Such distinctions may be found in a post's subhead with the keywords "your voice," "reader contribution," "citizen." Some sites may have a separate tab along the top or sidebar for user-generated content

28. Forums or message boards for community conversation
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not offer forums or message boards for user interaction
1 = Site offers forums or message boards for user interaction

Coding instructions:
a. Record the existence of forums or message boards in the site structure, usually indicated by a separate page link along the top or sidebar with keywords (using browser find) "forum," "message boards," "conversation," "thread"
b. "Forums" include designated spaces of a site where users can post and respond to general topics or questions; responses can then be made to other users' responses, often forming a vertical stack or "thread" of comments
c. "Forums" do not include a commercial listing (e.g. real estate) or event listing section, unless users can take part in a virtual dialogue about the listings via a message board

29. Links to social media outlets
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not link to social media outlets
1 = Site links to social media outlets

Coding instructions:
a. Scan the homepage for direct, one-click links to social media outlets
b. "Links" include click-through access to the site's profile on a social network platform or the ability to "like," "post," "share," "tweet" the site's content on the user's personal profile on a social network platform (these options often appear at the end of a post)
c. "Links" often appear on the top, bottom or sidebar of the home pages
d. "Social media outlets" include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other third-party networking platforms where users can view and comment on the site's profile

30. Inclusion of mobilizing information
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not include mobilizing information
1 = Site includes mobilizing information

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings for mobilizing information, which goes beyond
simply reporting facts on an issue, but provides resources on how to act on the
information
b. "Mobilizing information" includes contact information for community events;   listing
time and place of community events; listing instructions on how to carry
out an activity, such as "this is how to check on your voter status,"—code '1'
for yes if any of these types of mobilizing information appear

31. Development rhetoric in mission statement
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not include development rhetoric in mission statement
1 = Site includes development rhetoric in mission statement
2 = Site does not have a mission statement

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the about statement for language that reflects a development value or
mission
b. "Mission statement" includes a written description where the site's objectives
are presented
c. "Development rhetoric" includes language or concepts that emphasize
human-level and/or community-level betterment as a central function or goal of the site
d. Visually scan the sidebar for sections with keyword "find" command for
potential terms such as "about" or "mission;" mission statements do not include short
slogans or a sub-title in association with the site name (e.g. Boulder Safe News: The
Blog for Improving Our Neighborhood's Security)
e. Examples: "Here at Athens Online, we value your voice and want to hear it;"
"Due to the closing of our local daily paper, the Our Town blog will equip our
neighborhoods with information you need to stay civically engaged;" "Our goal
is not just to provide news and events, we are in the business of community-
building"

32. Advocacy language within site content
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not include advocacy language within site content
1 = Site includes advocacy language within site content

Coding instructions:
a. Evaluate the five most recent postings, captions and headlines for language that advocates for citizens to *do* something locally
b. "Advocacy language" includes goal-oriented calls to action, not simply opinionated claim0s (e.g. language that is not advocacy: "President Obama is not deserving of another term;" "City cleanup effort is without volunteers")
c. Examples: "Come to the wellness clinic this Saturday for a free flu shot;" "10 reasons you should vote for Mayor Sandlin;" "The neighborhood needs your help to ensure that our streets stay clean"

33. Site-sponsored advocacy events
Code as follows:
0 = Site does not sponsor advocacy events
1 = Site sponsors advocacy events

Coding instructions:
a. Record the existence of advocacy events sponsored by the site itself
b. Events will often be posted in separate pages under keywords "events," "calendar," "get involved," "happenings"
c. Event sponsors will often be listed in the posted announcement
d. "Site-sponsored" indicates that the citizen journalism site is providing some resources to make the event possible (e.g. money, space, volunteers); however, even though a site may publicize an advocacy event, the event listing must mention the site's involvement (e.g. "fundraising;" "donate support here;" "sponsored by," "in partnership with") in order for it to be coded as '1'
e. "Advocacy events" include public gatherings themed around individual or community-level development (see definitions of these terms above)
f. Examples: local debate between third party candidates; short film festival raising awareness for environmentalism; walk-a-thon to fundraise for breast cancer research

Control Measure

34. Content management system used
Code as follows:
1 = Site uses a WordPress content management system
2 = Site uses a Tumblr content management system
3 = Site uses a Blogger content management system
4 = Site uses a Typepad content management system
5 = Site uses a mainstream media partner's content management system
6 = Site uses a custom-built or third-party content management system

Coding instructions:
a. Record the existence of what content management system (CMS) is used by the citizen journalism site by looking for a CMS trademark, logo or registered license at the bottom or sidebar of the homepage (e.g. "Powered by WordPress")

b. "Content management system" refers to the site's hosting platform and/or software used to create the site

Independent Variable 4: Community socioeconomic status

Note: Socioeconomic information will be gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey data. The dataset is discussed in the method's chapter

35. Unemployment
Coding Instruction: Within the American Factfinder database of the U.S. Census Bureau website (http://factfinder2.census.gov), create a search criteria using the 2010 ACS 5-year estimates dataset and "Quick Table" product type. Then select "Geographies" and input the citizen journalism site's most specific geographic location (e.g. Franklin, TN). Once the location is selected, choose DP03 (Data Profile 03 - Selected Economic Characteristics) and record the 'Percent Unemployed' as a percentage in the coding sheet.
Note: This was changed to employment (100 – Unemployment) when presenting statistics

36. Median Income
Coding Instruction: Using the same search criteria and data profile for the previous unemployment statistic, select the location's DP03 and record the median household income (dollars) estimate.

37. Education
Coding Instruction: Education information is located in the DP02 (Selected Social Characteristics in the United States) dataset from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Beneath the Educational Attainment heading in the dataset, record the percent high school graduate or higher.

APPENDIX B: CODING SHEET

Adapted from Excel Sheet; numbers correlate to protocol measure

1. Coder's Name	2. Site Name	3. URL	4. Date Coded	5. Most Recent Post
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

6. Activity	7. Site Began	8. State	9. Location	10. Background
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

11. Editorial/News	12. First Person	13. Grammar	14. Attribution	15. Partnership
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

16. Content Partner	17. Aggregator	18. Ads	19. Foundation	20. Individual+
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

21. Individual+ Resources	22. Community+	23. Community+ Resources	24. Full names	25. Submissions
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

26. Training	27. User/Staff	28. Forums	29. Social Media	30. Mobilizing
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

31. Rhetoric	32. Advocacy	33. Advocacy Events	34. CMS	35. Unemployment
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

36. Median Income	37. Education
x	x
x	x