

## Tutorial – Specialized Reporting

### UNIT 1 Introduction to Specialised Reporting

#### 1. Introduction

**Beat reporting**, also known as **specialized reporting**, is a genre of journalism that can be described as the craft of in-depth reporting on a particular issue, sector, organization or institution over time.

#### 2. Objectives

Beat reporters build up a base of knowledge on and gain familiarity with the topic, allowing them to provide insight and commentary in addition to reporting straight facts. Generally, beat reporters will also build up a rapport with sources that they visit again and again, allowing for trust to build between the journalist and his/her source of information. This distinguishes them from other journalists who might cover similar stories from time to time.

Journalists become invested in the beats they are reporting for, and become passionate about mastering that beat. Beat reporters often deal with the same sources day after day, and must return to those sources regardless of their relationship with them. Those sources may or may not be pleased with the reporting of the reporters. It is pertinent that beat reporters contact their sources quickly, obtain all necessary information, and write on deadline.

According to media sociologists, beat reporting occurs because of the limited time reporters are given to cover stories. For big scoops, beats are not necessarily as useful as other journalism types. Some of the best inside stories, for example Bay of Pigs and Watergate, did not come from beat reporting.

Beat reporters collect information from each person they meet while reporting. They routinely call, visit, and e-mail sources to obtain any new information for articles. When reporters have experience on a specific beat, they are able to gain both knowledge and sources to lead them to new stories relating to that beat. Beats are able to help reporters define their roles as journalists, and also avoid overlap of stories within the newsroom.

#### 3. a. What is Specialised Reporting?

The term comes from the noun *beat* in the sense of an assigned regular route or habitual path, as for a policeman. By analogy, the beat of a reporter is the topic they have been assigned for reporting.<sup>[6]</sup> Similarly, a beat reporter will follow the same routes or habitual paths in collecting new information on a specified topic.

b. Who is a Specialised Reporter?

A **journalist** is a person who collects, writes, or distributes news or other current information to the public. A journalist's work is called journalism. A journalist can work with general issues or specialize in certain issues. However, most journalists tend to specialize, and by cooperating with other journalists, produce journals that span many topics.<sup>[1]</sup> For example, a sports journalist covers news within the world of sports, but this journalist may be a part of a newspaper that covers many different topics.

- i. Academic Qualification
- ii Professional Qualification and Experience
- iii Personal Qualities

### c. How to Identify Specialised Reports

A **reporter** is a type of journalist who researches, writes, and reports on information in order to present in sources, conduct interviews, engage in research, and make reports. The information-gathering part of a journalist's job is sometimes called *reporting*, in contrast to the production part of the job such as writing articles. Reporters may split their time between working in a newsroom and going out to witness events or interviewing people. Reporters may be assigned a specific beat or area of coverage.

Depending on the context, the term *journalist* may include various types of editors, editorial writers, columnists, and visual journalists, such as photojournalists (journalists who use the medium of photography).

Journalism has developed a variety of ethics and standards. While objectivity and a lack of bias are of primary concern and importance, more liberal types of journalism, such as advocacy journalism and activism, intentionally adopt a non-objective viewpoint. This has become more prevalent with the advent of social media and blogs, as well as other platforms that are used to manipulate or sway social and political opinions and policies. These platforms often project extreme bias, as "sources" are not always held accountable or considered necessary in order to produce a written, televised or otherwise "published" end product.

Matthew C. Nisbet, who has written on science communication, has defined a "knowledge journalist" as a public intellectual who, like Walter Lippmann, David Brooks, Fareed Zakaria, Naomi Klein, Michael Pollan, Thomas Friedman, and Andrew Revkin, sees their role as researching complicated issues of fact or science which most laymen would not have the time or access to information to research themselves, then communicating an accurate and understandable version to the public as a teacher and policy advisor.

## **UNIT 2 Reporting from the Beats**

**Beat reporting**, also known as **specialized reporting**, is a genre of journalism that can be described as the craft of in-depth reporting on a particular issue, sector, organization or institution over time.

Types of Beats

### **GENERAL REPORTING**

Reporting means gathering facts and presenting them objectively with all news writing skills. It is an active, creative, long and tough process of news, gathering, ideas and opinion collection, fact finding in order to serve the general public by informing them and enabling them to make judgment of the issues of the time.

The reporter either he/she is general assignment reporter, beat reporter or specialized reporter wants to know at all costs, what is going on and why, what has happened and why and who is involved in what manner. He/she reports it to satisfy the curiosity of the public by giving due coverage to 5Ws & 1H which the people want to know.

News is not planted and cultivated in neat row for efficient harvesting and not necessarily in the tidy news offices. They are not developed in a vacuum. News is more likely to be found among the people, institutions, organizations, history etc. By the reporting of short news stories the reader can receive the information about the citizens, social, cultural and religious groups. Conducting interview is another part of reporting. Through interview news, personal ideas and opinions can be reported. Without reporting process there can be little business in news, and without news there can be no newspaper.

### **Political Reporting**

Generally the coverage of a political campaign of a political personality is not sufficient. Much time and coverage needs to be given in following a candidate around and listening to the political speeches over and over again. Most of the political reporter's time is spent while covering the purely political aspects of government and personalities who run the government. He/she goes beneath the surface of routine political events and comes up with stories of great importance. For political reporting the broad knowledge of election laws, system and organizational setup of different political parties, political organizations, precampaign activities, campaigns, election practices, polling laws and techniques and way of result coverage and their proper interpretation are required by the political reporter. He/she has to interview candidates, write biographical sketches and evaluate the candidates' position on major issues during a political campaign.

### **Education and Research Reporting**

Research and education go together. Through research one can add new knowledge which is necessary for educating the nation and also for national development. The research programmes of different institutions and their findings and achievements should be reported. The education system, its merits and demerits are the main sphere of education reporting. Public and private schooling and what is happening in universities and colleges regarding academic activities and developments, teachers and students training facilities, co-curricular activities, unions and associations should be highlighted in the news stories. The budget allocated for education and its utilisation, literacy rate and programmes to increase literacy rate, adults education are the topics about which public has some curiosity to know. Trends in classrooms teaching and dozens of other significant problems can also be reported. The education and research reporter is normally expected to cover activities at all levels of the research and schooling system from policy making to the teachers in the classrooms. The research and education beat offers the opportunity for many routine stories as well as major news breaks, features and interpretative pieces.

### **Environment Reporting**

The environment affects everyday life. People, sensitive about it, demand the due coverage of environment and the factors causing pollution, etc. Therefore the environment reporting can become a human service reporting. What are the government measurements for the prevention of pollution and what is public part in creating and preventing the pollution. Nowadays environmental protection has become a political movement and a sensitive reporter uses the techniques of all kinds in environmental reporting. It merited attention, with most of the early focus being on water pollution, air pollution, sanitation and urban sprawl, etc. The reporter has to cover the horror stories about the possible diseases and destruction of the planet. The reporter has to point out particularly the development of what he/she considers dangerous system for producing energy and importance of energy for national development. Through environmental reporting the public can be well aware about the rate at which natural fuels are being consumed and pollution caused by the burning of these fuels. He/she has to inform the readers about present happenings and future impact on human life.

### **Religious Reporting**

Religious news are also part of the newspaper contents. It is one of the most sensitive beats, and demands great care and responsibility on the part of the reporter covering various religious events. However, impartiality is the only effective means to deal with this beat. The reporter has to report in fair, factual, impartial and unbiased way and maintain objectivity. The religious reporter must have clear understanding of religious sects, groups, organisations, institutions and worship services in the country and particularly in the city where he/she is working. The reporter uses simple way of explaining the news events for general readers by interpreting the religious voiding, terminologies. In religious reporting political motives of the local and national

leaders must be covered. Incorrect use of titles in religious reporting discourages the public's interest while their correct use builds confidence in the reliability of the news. A reporter has to be cautious in religious reporting and should always keep in view the highly sensitive nature of religious ideologies, conflicts and controversies.

### **Speech Reporting**

Speeches are the basis for sound stories published daily in the press. All those speeches taking place from time to time in the city are important to the participants but few are worthy of news coverage. Advance stories are also being written about speeches through which the readers are informed about the person to be delivering the speech, venue and topic, etc. The reporter in speech reporting must be well aware of the ways of covering an event, and how to get, write, arrange and structure the facts of speech in a news form. The additional information can be gathered at the end of the speech or to clarify some points which is a good practice.

The most significant criteria in speech reporting are to include all the positive **as well as** negative aspects of various speeches. The reporter takes only the essential **parts** of the speech and reports these points in a concise way. The main points of the speech go into the lead or intro while quotes go into the body of the story.

### **Cultural Reporting**

Cultural reporting requires a reporter to cover not only individuals i.e. artists, craftsmen etc. but also to cover different cultural organisations, institutions and other events by upholding public interest. For this he/she has to dig out that how many cultural organisational setups exist in the city. The cultural reporter is actually a cultural promoter. The reporter has a great responsibility to stimulate interest and participation in various cultural functions. He/she has to get ideas, opinions and news about culture from different materials printed by these organizations. When actually covering culture, it is preferable to visit the scene of cultural activity personally. Familiarity with cultural heritage and history is a special qualification of cultural reporter. He/she must be conscious about manipulation by the artists. The cultural news story writing style and contents must be based on information, entertainment and of general public interest. Music world-cinema, theatre, television literature, fairs etc. have great newsworthy material of public interest.

### **SPORTS REPORTING**

Sports reporting field is broad and interesting enough to challenge the finest talent. The sports coverage remains the life blood of most sports pages. More opinions and news analyses appear on these pages. Sports reports are read mostly due to their contents and style. Sports reporter should take into account all the compulsory elements of the sports news item while reporting a news event. Sports reporting requires qualities of background knowledge and judgement,

critical evaluation of sports besides sound general knowledge about games and their rules & regulations. The performance of the teams should be covered fairly, impartially and in an unbiased way. The quality of a written sports item depends on the quality of its reporting. The sports reporter who, among other things, knows the players well, the strategy they use during game, key incidents, crowd behaviour and the game which he/she is covering, is able to write an interesting sports story. But while writing a sports story or its advance story the reporter must follow the regular news writing and reporting principles in building the story and other requirements of sports writing. Sports reporting ranges from straight news reporting through all degrees of interpretation and feature writing and the editorialised column. A sports event may be treated in any one of these degrees or in all of them combined. For an important sports event, an advance story, a straight story, similarly background, prediction, follow-up types of stories may be used.

### **PARLIAMENT REPORTING**

Parliament and its proceedings have always been the main interest of newspaper readers. Parliamentary reporting offers opportunities to the reporter to conduct first hand study of the practical working procedure, responsibilities, role and functions of parliament, their members, different officials, the offices which they hold and their biographies besides the working of government.

He/she remains in touch with the parliamentarians who may become an important source of news. In parliamentary reporting, all the techniques, proceedings and requirements of political and court reporting are involved because it is highly technical and sensitive. It needs professional skills and there are chances that even an experienced reporter may misinterpret the arguments and the proceedings. He/she must, have access to legal parliamentary literature, reports, periodicals to improve his/her knowledge and skill. A parliamentary reporter should be well acquainted with the legislative procedure in both the Houses of parliament and could write reports of adjournment and privilege motions, as well as of questions hour, tea break discussions on private bills and proceedings of the Senate. A lot of information can be obtained through private dealings with the members of the parliament. Parliamentary report has to be composed in prevalent parliamentary terminology.

### **COURT/CRIME REPORTING**

Reporting crime news can be a demanding task and at times, if properly done, it even amounts to public service that perhaps can even be deterrent to certain types of crimes. However, crime news reporting needs technical care on the part of reporter while covering his beat. A crime reporter should know what is meant by crime. A breach of law is a crime and may be either felony or a misdemeanour. The basic principle of crime/court reporting is that NOTHING is permitted which may prejudice the right of any accused to a completely FAIR and IMPARTIAL trial. Crime and court reporting may be completed in four steps, i.e. the crime, the arrest, the trial, the verdict. In the selection of facts for crime/ court news story, the reporter must be well-alert and these facts should be carefully

handled by observing the ethics of crime/court reporting. The length, the headline size and lead formation of a court/crime story is determined by the seriousness of the crime and court proceedings.

## **WAR REPORTING**

The coverage of war imposes major responsibilities on reporters. On the one hand, they must exercise the greatest care not to spread rumours and on the other hand, they must expose themselves to danger if necessary to determine the magnitude of war event. But whatever they do, they must always be conscious that careless war reporting can cause untold harm in a tense situation. The greatest care must be taken in reporting killings, injuries, prisoners, property loss and the area captured etc. The kind of weapons being used in the war can also be reported. The position of armies on land, in the air or oceans, bombing on different areas and types of bombing can be explained. The ISPR in Pakistan also releases information about war situation.

The cause of war, beginning of war, major areas of war and who is at fault must be covered in war reporting. The fundamental precautions regarding war should be followed. Different news story types can be used in war reporting to give full coverage of war.

### Principles of Reporters on a Beat

#### **1.) Be aware and be around.**

The best beat cops are in diners and on street corners meeting people and, in this case, perhaps discovering a runaway. If he were out in his car, or back at the station house, he might not have seen this kid. Or looked close enough to recognize the pack on the floor. This kid might have gotten away.

#### **2.) Be organized.**

Efficiency is key in beat reporting. Knowing who to call — and how to reach them — is so valuable over the long term. Know your sources, close and not, and make sure you can reach them anytime you need them. It's important to keep an archive like a Google doc for the string you collect on the beat. And a data library of contacts and story tips.

#### **3.) Be curious.**

Any good beat reporter cares as much about the subject matter as the people he or she is covering. They're curious and dig for information. They know the insider language and publications that their sources use and read. They know enough to make sources want to talk to them to keep up on the latest gossip. When Stiles covered City Hall, the mayor's chief of staff would call him routinely to see what he was working on, what people were talking about and what other reporters were writing. Use those opportunities to gather intel for your coverage.

#### **4.) Approach your coverage with a sense of purpose.**

You have to know how you want to cover the beat. Are you focused on day-to-day news or longer-term enterprise? Do you have a master narrative? At StateImpact, we narrow our

focus to specific issues, but it's always something to think about. Once you know your focus, you have to dig for stories. Ask more questions. Request documents and data. The best beat reporters are relentless but also friendly and respectful to sources.

### **5.) Strong sources are your lifeblood.**

The most important thing about beat reporting is sources: All the data or documents in the world is useless without sources. Sources — both friendly and formal — are the lifeblood of any beat. Good beat reporters work hard to build relationships with sources. These relationships can weather negative stories, or mistakes, or stories they wanted that you didn't have time to do. That's because you're always honest with them about story ideas, quotes, timing, etc. Covering a beat isn't about today's story, no matter how big or juicy. It's about facing your sources the next day. It also helps to have a diversity of sources. That includes elected officials but also secretaries. Knowing a lowly data specialist in a state agency is as important as knowing the director in many cases.

## **UNIT 3 Online Reporting**

### **1. Qualities of Online Reporters**

#### **Ethics and Integrity**

A solid ethical core characterizes a good journalist. Fairness, objectivity and honesty matter when reporting everything from local referendums and proposed state tax increases to presidential elections. Professional journalists abhor fake news based on rumor, innuendo and unverifiable anonymous tips. Reporters should only share opinions in newspaper editorial pieces. They step aside if covering that story would be a conflict of interest, such as writing a feature article about a family member's new bistro. **Courage and Boldness**

Good journalists push themselves to dig deeper and ask tough questions. They put personal feelings aside to boldly unearth the truth about newsworthy people, places and events. Courage is vital to investigating what is happening at the scene. They are not satisfied making phone calls from a comfortable desk in the newsroom when covering major happenings. For example, newspaper journalists may travel to the scene of dangerous floodwaters in their community and talk to volunteers who are helping sandbag a faltering dam.

#### **Expert Communication Skills**

Along with impeccable character, newspaper journalists must be skilled communicators to interview sources and write in-depth stories. Unlike radio, television or online journalists, they go far beyond sound bytes and superficial coverage of a situation. Newspaper journalists include background information and needed detail to give context to a more nuanced understanding of the issue by the reader. Typically, journalists have a bachelor's degree in communication or journalism and relevant undergraduate experience, such as writing for



their college newspaper. You must be highly proficient in English grammar, technical writing and proper attribution of sources to be a good newspaper journalist and not lose your job.

### Knowledge of Technology

As part of their job, newspaper journalists follow and use social media appropriately to provide immediate and transparent coverage of happening events. They know how to use the internet to research stories and access public records when engaging in investigative journalism. Technology, such as Facebook and LinkedIn help them contact potential sources to request information or an interview. They also maximize use of technology to instantly inform the public about matters that may directly affect their health and safety, such as a food recall. **Investigative Skills**

Good newspaper journalists have an analytical mind and base stories on evidence and facts, not emotion. They are astute observers and instinctively sense when there is much more to a story than what is being shared at a news conference, for example. Critical thinking skills are crucial when weighing conflicting accounts of an incident and assessing the credibility of sources. They exercise sound judgment when blogging or writing yet unverified information on the newspaper's website during a breaking story. Even when faced with looming deadlines, good newspaper journalists take time to get a balanced accounting of the subject.

## 2. Online Websites Related to News Reporting and Journalism

**Digital journalism** also known as **online journalism** is a contemporary form of journalism where editorial content is distributed via the Internet as opposed to publishing via print or broadcast. What constitutes 'digital journalism' is debated by scholars. However the primary product of journalism, which is news and features on current affairs, is presented solely or in combination as text, audio, video, or some interactive forms like newsgames, and disseminated through digital media technology.

Fewer barriers to entry, lowered distribution costs, and diverse computer networking technologies have led to the widespread practice of digital journalism. It has democratized the flow of information that was previously controlled by traditional media including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

Some have asserted that a greater degree of creativity can be exercised with digital journalism when compared to traditional journalism and traditional media.<sup>[5]</sup> The digital aspect may be central to the journalistic message and remains, to some extent, within the creative control of the writer, editor, and/or publisher

# Impact on readers

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Digital journalism allows for connection and discussion at levels that print does not offer on its own. People can comment on articles and start discussion boards to discuss articles. Before the Internet, spontaneous discussion between readers who had never met was impossible. The process of discussing a news item is a big portion of what makes for digital journalism. People add to the story and connect with other people who want to discuss the topic.

Digital journalism creates an opportunity for niche audiences, allowing people to have more options as to what to view and read.

Digital journalism opens up new ways of storytelling; through the technical components of the new medium, digital journalists can provide a variety of media, such as audio, video, and digital photography.

Digital journalism represents a revolution of how news is consumed by society. Online sources are able to provide quick, efficient, and accurate reporting of breaking news in a matter of seconds, providing society with a synopsis of events as they occur. Throughout the development of the event, journalists are able to feed online sources the information keeping readers up-to-date in mere seconds. The speed in which a story can be posted can affect the accuracy of the reporting in a way that doesn't usually happen in print journalism. Before the emergence of digital journalism the printing process took much more time, allowing for the discovery and correction of errors.

News consumers must become Web literate and use critical thinking to evaluate the credibility of sources. Because it is possible for anyone to write articles and post them on the Internet, the definition of journalism is changing. Because it is becoming increasingly simple for the average person to have an impact in the news world through tools like blogs and even comments on news stories on reputable news websites, it becomes increasingly difficult to sift through the massive amount of information coming in from the digital area of journalism.

There are great advantages with digital journalism and the new blogging evolution that people are becoming accustomed to, but there are disadvantages. For instance, people are used to what they already know and can't always catch up quickly with the new technologies in the 21st century. The goals of print and digital journalism are the same, although different tools are needed to function.

The interaction between the writer and consumer is new, and this can be credited to digital journalism. There are many ways to get personal thoughts on the Web. There are some

disadvantages to this, however, the main one being factual information. There is a pressing need for accuracy in digital journalism, and until they find a way to press accuracy, they will still face some criticism.

One major dispute regards the credibility of these online news websites. A digital journalism credibility study performed by the Online News Association compares the online public credibility ratings to actual media respondent credibility ratings. Looking at a variety of online media sources, the study found that overall the public saw online media as more credible than it actually is.

The effects of digital journalism are evident worldwide. This form of journalism has pushed journalists to reform and evolve. Older journalists who are not tech savvy have felt the blunt force of this. In recent months, a number of older journalists have been pushed out and younger journalists brought in because of their lower cost and ability to work in advanced technology settings.

## Impact on publishers

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Many newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, have created online sites to remain competitive and have taken advantage of audio, video, and text linking to remain at the top of news consumers' lists as most of the news enthusiasm now reach their base through hand held devices such as smart phones, tables etc. Hence audio or video backing is definite advantage.

Newspapers rarely break news stories any more, with most websites reporting on breaking news before the cable news channels. Digital journalism allows for reports to start out vague and generalized, and progress to a better story. Newspapers and TV cable are at a disadvantage because they generally can only put together stories when an ample amount of detail and information are available. Often, newspapers have to wait for the next day, or even two days later if it is a late-breaking story, before being able to publish it. Newspapers lose a lot of ground to their online counterparts, with ad revenue shifting to the Internet, and subscription to the printed paper decreasing. People are now able to find the news they want, when they want, without having to leave their homes or pay to receive the news.

Because of this, many people have viewed digital journalism as the death of journalism. According to communication scholar Nicole Cohen, "four practices stand out as putting pressure on traditional journalism production: outsourcing, unpaid labour, metrics and measurement, and automation". Free advertising on websites such as Craigs list has transformed how people publicize; the Internet has created a faster, cheaper way for people to get news out, thus creating the shift in ad sales from standard newspapers to the Internet.

There has been a substantial effect of digital journalism and media on the newspaper industry, with the creation of new business models. It is now possible to contemplate a time in the near future when major towns will no longer have a newspaper and when magazines and network news operations will employ no more than a handful of reporters. Many newspapers and individual print journalists have been forced out of business because of the popularity of digital journalism. The newspapers that have not been willing to be forced out of business have attempted to survive by saving money, laying off staff, shrinking the size of the publications, eliminating editions, as well as partnering with other businesses to share coverage and content. In 2009, one study concluded that most journalists are ready to compete in a digital world and that these journalists believe the transition from print to digital journalism in their newsroom is moving too slowly. Some highly specialized positions in the publishing industry have become obsolete. The growth in digital journalism and the near collapse of the economy has also led to downsizing for those in the industry.

Students wishing to become journalists now need to be familiar with digital journalism in order to be able to contribute and develop journalism skills. Not only must a journalist analyze their audience and focus on effective communication with them, they have to be quick; news websites are able to update their stories within minutes of the news event.

Critics believe digital journalism has made it easier for individuals who are not qualified journalists to misinform the general public. Many believe that this form of journalism has created a number of sites that do not have credible information. Sites such as PerezHilton.com have been criticized for blurring the lines between journalism and opinionated writing.

Some critics believe that newspapers should not switch to a solely Internet-based format, but instead keep a component of print as well as digital.

Digital journalism allows citizens and readers the opportunity to join in on threaded discussions relating to a news article that has been read by the public. This offers an excellent source for writers and reporters to decide what is important and what should be omitted in the future. These threads can provide useful information to writers of digital journalism so that future articles can be pruned and improved to possibly create a better article the next time around.

### 3. Tools for Today's New Media Journalist

## Implications on traditional Journalism

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Digitization is currently causing many changes to traditional journalistic practice. The labour of journalists in general is becoming increasingly dependant on digital journalism. Scholars outline that this is actually a change to the execution of journalism and not the conception part of the labour process. They also contend that this is simply the de-skilling of some skills and the up-skilling of others. This theory is in contention to the notion that technological determinism is negatively effecting journalism, as it should be understood that it is just changing the traditional skill set. Communication scholar Nicole Cohen believes there are several trends putting pressure on this traditional skill set. Some of which being outsourcing, algorithms, and automation. Although she believes that technology could be used to improve Journalism, she feels the current trends in digital journalism are so far affecting the practice in a negative way.

There is also the impact that digital journalism is facing due to citizen journalism. Because digital journalism takes place online and is contributed mostly by citizens on user generated content sites, there is competition growing between the two. Citizen journalism allows anyone to post anything, and because of that, journalists are being forced by their employers to publish more news content than before, which often means rushing news stories and failing to confirm information.

## Work outside traditional press

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The Internet has also given rise to more participation by people who are not normally journalists, such as with Indy Media (Max Perez).

Bloggers write on web logs or blogs. Traditional journalists often do not consider bloggers to automatically be journalists. This has more to do with standards and professional practices than the medium. For instance, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding journalism attracts amateur journalists, as well as ambitious professionals that are restrained by the boundaries set by traditional press. However, the implication of these types of journalism is that it disregards the professional norms of journalistic practices that ensures accuracy and impartiality of the content.<sup>[42]</sup> But, as of 2005, blogging has generally gained at least more attention and has led to some effects on mainstream journalism, such as exposing problems related to a television piece about President George W. Bush's National Guard Service.

Recent legal judgements have determined that bloggers are entitled to the same protections as other journalists subject to the same responsibilities. In the United States, the Electronic Frontier Foundation has been instrumental in advocating for the rights of journalist bloggers.

In Canada, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that:" A second preliminary question is what the new defence should be called. In arguments before us, the defence was referred to as

the responsible journalism test. This has the value of capturing the essence of the defence in succinct style. However, the traditional media are rapidly being complemented by new ways of communicating on matters of public interest, many of them online, which do not involve journalists. These new disseminators of news and information should, absent good reasons for exclusion, be subject to the same laws as established media outlets. I agree with Lord Hoffmann that the new defence is "available to anyone who publishes material of public interest in any medium": Jameel,

Other significant tools of on-line journalism are Internet forums, discussion boards and chats, especially those representing the Internet version of official media. The widespread use of the Internet all over the world created a unique opportunity to create a meeting place for both sides in many conflicts, such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the First and Second Chechen Wars. Often this gives a unique chance to find new, alternative solutions to the conflict, but often the Internet is turned into the battlefield by contradicting parties creating endless "online battles."

Internet radio and podcasts are other growing independent media based on the Internet.

## Blogs

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With the rise of digital media, there is a move from the traditional journalist to the blogger or amateur journalist. Blogs can be seen as a new genre of journalism because of their "narrative style of news characterized by personalization" that moves away from traditional journalism's approach, changing journalism into a more conversational and decentralized type of news. Blogging has become a large part of the transmitting of news and ideas across cities, states, and countries, and bloggers argue that blogs themselves are now breaking stories. Even online news publications have blogs that are written by their affiliated journalists or other respected writers. Blogging allows readers and journalists to be opinionated about the news and talk about it in an open environment. Blogs allow comments where some news outlets do not, due to the need to constantly monitor what is posted. By allowing comments, the reader can interact with a story instead of just absorbing the words on the screen. According to one 2007 study, 15% of those who read blogs read them for news.

However, many blogs are highly opinionated and have a bias. Some are not verified to be true. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) established guidelines mandating that bloggers disclose any free goods or services they receive from third parties in 2009 in response to a question of the integrity of product and service reviews in the online community.

# Citizen journalism

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Digital journalism's lack of a traditional "editor" has given rise to citizen journalism. The early advances that the digital age offered journalism were faster research, easier editing, conveniences, and a faster delivery time for articles. The Internet has broadened the effect that the digital age has on journalism. Because of the popularity of the Internet, most people have access, and can add their forms of journalism to the information network. This allows anyone who wants to share something they deem important that has happened in their community. Individuals who are not professional journalists who present news through their blogs or websites are often referred to as citizen journalists. One does not need a degree to be a citizen journalist. Citizen journalists are able to publish information that may not be reported otherwise, and the public has a greater opportunity to be informed. Some companies use the information that a citizen journalist relays when they themselves can not access certain situations, for example, in countries where freedom of the press is limited. Anyone can record events happening and send it anywhere they wish, or put it on their website. Non-profit and grass roots digital journalism sites may have far fewer resources than their corporate counterparts, yet due to digital media are able to have websites that are technically comparable. Other media outlets can then pick up their story and run with it as they please, thus allowing information to reach wider audiences.

For citizen journalism to be effective and successful, there needs to be citizen editors, their role being to solicit other people to provide accurate information and to mediate interactivity among users. An example can be found in the start up of the South Korean online daily newspaper, OhMyNews, where the founder recruited several hundred volunteer "citizen reporters" to write news articles which were edited and processed by four professional journalists.