

Inclusive Management and Citizen journalism: journalists supported by citizens

Excerpt from the Methodology of Inclusive Management Intellectual Output, currently being designed and tested as part of the [Erasmus+ project RTV - Key Competences in Media production for Radio, Film and Television](#)

By summarizing up the best definitions identified (“inclusive as the action or state of including, or of being included, within a group or structure in a constant exchange - among participants - of competences, skills, experiences, etc.” and “management as a guide to a group of people working in the organization and coordinating their efforts, towards the attainment of the common objective”), it is possible to define inclusive management as **“a guide to a group of people working in the organization and coordinating their efforts, towards the attainment of the common objective. This guide is achieved also through the inclusion, within the mentioned group, of new people providing the group itself with their competences, skills, experiences and – above all – their personal perspective”¹.**

The context in which the inclusive management’ methodology is well exploited is the labour world, where inclusive management becomes a pattern of practices by public managers that facilitate the inclusion of public employees, experts, the public, and politicians in collaboratively addressing public problems or concerns of public interest. Applying the inclusive management’ approach within the mass media industry means listing different approaches: collaborative learning: teachers involving learners; participation of experts: schools involving professional journalists; Citizen journalism: journalists supported by citizens.

One way in which Inclusive management is adjusted to the mass media industry is represented by the citizen journalism (also renamed after open source journalism, street journalism, grassroots journalism, participatory journalism and democratic journalism). This last version is perfectly in line with the starting definition of inclusive management as a process in which emerges the necessity of a diversity of perspectives to promote civic discovery and capacity of the public to participate in the policy process.

Citizen journalism is based upon public citizens *“playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information”²*. Similarly, Courtney C. Radsch defines citizen journalism *“as an alternative and activist form of news gathering and reporting that functions outside mainstream media institutions, often as a response to shortcomings in the professional journalistic field that uses similar journalistic practices but is driven by different objectives and ideals and relies on alternative sources of legitimacy than traditional or mainstream journalism”³*. Jay Rosen offers a simpler definition: *“When the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another”⁴*.

The underlying principle of citizen journalism is that ordinary people, not professional journalists, can be the main creators and distributors of news. Citizen journalism should not be confused with: community journalism or civic journalism, both of which are practiced by professional journalists; collaborative journalism, which is the practice of professional and non-professional journalists working together; and social journalism, which denotes a digital publication with a hybrid of professional and non-professional journalism.

¹ Feldman, M.S., A.M. Khademian, and K.S. Quick. 2009. Ways of knowing, inclusive management, and promoting democratic engagement: An introduction to the special issue. *International Public Management Journal* 12 (2): 123-13

² Bowman, S. and Willis, C. “We Media: How Audiences Are Shaping the Future of News and Information”, 2003, The Media Center at the American Press Institute.

³ Radsch, Courtney C. *The Revolutions will be Blogged: Cyberactivism and the 4th Estate in Egypt*. Doctoral Dissertation, American University, 2013.

⁴ Jay Rosen (July 14, 2008). “A Most Useful Definition of Citizen Journalism”. PressThink. Retrieved May 21, 2012.

Citizen journalism is a specific form of both citizen media and user-generated content (UGC). By juxtaposing the term "citizen", with its attendant qualities of civic-mindedness and social responsibility, with that of "journalism", which refers to a particular profession, Courtney C. Radsch argues that *"this term best describes this particular form of online and digital journalism conducted by amateurs, because it underscores the link between the practice of journalism and its relation to the political and public sphere"*⁵.

The advent of the Internet, new technologies, social platforms and grass-roots media has heralded a significant shift in collecting, disseminating and sharing information. Citizen journalism can be considered as the offspring of this evolution - an alternative form of news gathering and reporting, taking place outside of the traditional media structures and which can involve anyone. The birth of citizen journalism is often attributed to South Korea where the first platform of amateur generated information, OhMyNews, was created. The principle was simple: anyone can take part in the process of creating information, as the notion of citizen journalism implies. From reader to participant, citizens have now changed their status as a mere recipients of information, to providers. It is not necessarily something new, however. When Abraham Zapruder took his amateur film-camera and decided to go and record John F. Kennedy's rally in Dallas, he inadvertently captured images of his assassination, which could be considered a proto-form of citizen journalism⁶, as what really defines it is its inexpert nature. Zapruder supplied his film to the Secret Service to assist in their investigation. Whilst it was not the only film of the event, it was the most complete.

From those proto-forms of citizen journalism to the most recent developments of this phenomenon, as new media technologies, such as social networking and media-sharing websites, in addition to the increasing prevalence of cellular telephones, have made citizen journalism more accessible to people worldwide. Recent advances in new media have started to have a profound political impact. Due to the availability of technology, citizens often can report breaking news more quickly than traditional media reporters. Notable examples of citizen journalism reporting from major world events are: the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the 2013 protests in Turkey, the Euromaidan events in Ukraine, and Syrian Civil War, the 2014 Ferguson unrest and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Traditional news media, while battling declining readership and viewership, leapt into the fray with their own Web sites and blogs by their own journalists, and many newspapers invited readers to contribute community news to their Web sites. Some groups started their own "hyperlocal" online news sites to cover happenings in their neighbourhoods or specialized topics of interest that were not reported by larger media organizations.

But if citizen reporting has reshaped collective action and mobilization, it can also be a new space of control and governmental interference. When citizen reporting flourished in Hong-Kong during the last year's pro-democracy demonstrations, the Chinese government intimidated bloggers by threatening them with a 3-year sentence. In Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government has increased censorship of the internet and went as far as temporarily blocking access to certain social platforms such as Twitter and YouTube used by the Turkish youth to critique and denounce politicians and gather for protests. In Iran, smart filtering systems allow the authorities to control some online content while in other places; citizen journalism has remained a way to hijack censorship protocols in conventional media.

⁵ Deutsch Karlekar, Karin; Radsch, Courtney C. (July 1, 2012). "Adapting Concepts of Media Freedom to a Changing Media Environment: Incorporating New Media and Citizen Journalism into the Freedom of the Press Index". *ESSACHESS Journal for Communication Studies*. 5 (1, 2012) – via SSRN.

⁶ Micha Barban Dangerfield. "Power to the People: The rise and rise of Citizen Journalism", <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photojournalism/power-people>



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History has shown the capacity of governments to control the production and distribution of information. Artists have long been entrusted to illustrate historically significant moments, though of course many were commissioned by victors with a story to preserve. War artists throughout history have been officially sanctioned by governments to faithfully record conflict and battle, but what do we know about the elements that were omitted? Can reporting ever be truly impartial? Citizen journalists are certainly not devoid of an agenda. How, then, can being both participant and reporter allow journalistic objectivity and neutrality?

Being that citizen journalism is yet to develop a conceptual framework and guiding principles, it can be heavily opinionated and subjective, making it more supplemental than primary in terms of forming public opinion. Critics of the phenomenon, including professional journalists and news organizations, claim that citizen journalism is unregulated, amateur, and haphazard in quality and coverage. Furthermore, citizen journalists, due to their lack of professional affiliation, are thought to lack resources as well as focus on how best to serve the public. It is now important for the potential and limitations of this new type of journalism to be highlighted and acknowledged.

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