BLOGGING, JOURNALISM & CREDIBILITY:

Battleground and Common Ground

A conference

January 21-22, 2005 at Harvard University

Sponsored by:

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society (Harvard Law School)

The Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics & Public Policy (Harvard Kennedy School of Government)

and

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Executive Summary

"Blogging, Journalism, and Credibility: Battleground and Common Ground" was a conference held in late January at Harvard, at which a group of 50 journalists, bloggers, news executives, media scholars, and librarians sat down to try and make sense of the new emerging media environment. Since the conference, the resignation of CNN's Eason Jordan and the Jeff Gannon White House incident have shown how powerful weblogs can be as a new form of citizens' media. We are entering a new era in which professionals have lost control over information – not just the reporting of it, but also the framing of what's important for the public to know. To what extent have blogs chipped away at the credibility of mainstream media? Is credibility a zero-sum game – in which credibility gained by blogs is lost by mainstream media and vice versa?

Conference participants believed the answer, ultimately, is no. Bloggers and professional journalists alike share a common goal: a better informed public and a stronger democracy. So now what?

By the end of a day and a half of discussion, the following "take-aways" emerged:

- The new emerging media ecosystem has room for citizens' media like blogs as well as professional news organizations. There will be tensions, but they'll complement and feed off each other, often working together. *(See Session 1 and Jay Rosen's essay in Appendix A1)*

- The acts of "blogging" and "journalism" are different, although they do intersect. While some blogging is journalism, much of it isn't and doesn't aim to be. Both serve different and valuable functions within the new evolving media ecosystem. *(This theme recurred and was reinforced in all sessions.)*

- Ethics and credibility are key, but extremely hard to define. There are no clear answers about how credibility is won, lost, or retained – for mainstream media or bloggers. It's impossible and undesirable for anybody to set "ethical standards" for bloggers, but it's also clear that certain principles will make a blogger or journalist more likely to achieve high credibility. Transparency is key but isn't enough. Credibility also depends on a relationship of trust that is cultivated between the media organization or blog and the people it aims to serve. *(See Session 3 and Bill Mitchell's paper in Appendix A2)*

- Many media organizations now see blogging – or the use of some form of participatory citizens' media – as a way to build loyalty, trust, and preserve credibility. They are still experimenting with ways to do that. Examples include:

    - Relationships between local newspapers and local blogger communities One example is the close relationship between the Greensboro News & Record and community blogging site, "Greensboro 101" *(See Session 1)*

    - News organizations such as MSNBC are starting their own blogs within their own websites, some written by their own journalists and some by guest bloggers. *(See sessions 3 and 4)*

    - Some news organizations such as Minnesota Public Radio are working to build databases and communication systems in order to tap the expertise of audience members who do not blog, but who would like to help with stories.

- New experiments in citizens' journalism are emerging. They include:

    - Wikinews: an all-volunteer, distributed effort to build a new site. *(See Session 7)*

    - Dan Gillmor's grassroots journalism project: an effort – still under development – to harness the best of citizens' efforts with quality editing and reporting by experienced journalists. *(See Session 7)*

    - Jeff Jarvis' hyper-local citizens' media project: a news project that uses weblogs to target very specific local niche audiences. *(See Session 4)*

- Opening up online archives of news stories for free public access may make business sense in addition to bolstering credibility and audience loyalty. Right now, most newspapers and news agencies only make their content free on the web for a couple of weeks, and then it goes behind a paid firewall, lost to bloggers for linking. The predominant view at the conference was that by making archived content free, not only will news companies provide a tremendous social benefit and thus gain credibility, but the traffic they will receive through links to their archived material – and the ability to place advertising on that content – will likely make up for the lost archive access fees. *(See Sessions 4, 7, and 8)*

A number of questions remained unanswered, including:

- Are blogs (or wikis) the best way to distill and help people make sense of the grassroots conversation bubbling up or do we need to create new and better tools?

- What will the new business model be? Nobody knows yet. It's likely to emerge organically by media path breakers.

- How can we make the conversation more inclusive of socioeconomic groups that are not currently involved in blogging, have little internet access, or whose lives do not involve much internet use?

- How much of this conversation is relevant only to the US, and how much is relevant to the entire world?

Final conclusion:

Strengthening the public discourse, and strengthening democracy, is indeed the common ground shared by professional journalists, bloggers, wikipedians and others involved in the creation of grassroots media.

The conference established two important things: 1) that this common ground does indeed exist, and 2) that all are eager to work together. The goal is to create a better society and better means of giving citizens both the information they need and the forums of discourse required to hold their leaders truly accountable. Now we need to figure out how to achieve that goal. This conference has helped point us in the right direction, but the journey has only just begun.

Please check the conference weblog at: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred for more materials and updates.

The Idea

"Blogging, Journalism and Credibility: Battleground and Common Ground" was organized jointly by the Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society, the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and the American Library Association's Office of Information Technology Policy.[1] Alex Jones wrote in the invitation letter to attendees:

> Our shared motivation for convening such a conference is our conviction that the world of journalism is being transformed by blogging, and that - similarly - the blogosphere is evolving and being transformed in the process. There can be no question that the phenomenon of blogging, especially blogs focused on politics and public affairs, has changed the way information becomes front page news." The examples of Trent Lott, the Swiftboat allegations and the disputed CBS documents come immediately to mind. In each of these cases, bloggers shaped the news, and the influence of blogging will only increase.
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> To both journalism and blogging, credibility is essential. What are the areas of common ground shared by these very different approaches to handling news and information? Can journalists who also blog do their work without conflicting standards? Might bloggers adopt standards and a transparency that will elevate their credibility? Our purpose is to bring together a small group of smart and thoughtful people to ponder these and other related issues, which will result in a published report and - we hope - will mark the beginning of an on-going and very important dialogue.

A group of 50 people were invited. Organizers strove for a mix of professional journalists and editors, bloggers whose work has had an impact on news events, journalists who also blog, academics who study the media, heads of organizations dedicated to watchdogging or improving American journalism, and several others whose perspectives we thought would be valuable. We also felt strongly that with many bloggers participating, the conference proceedings should be made fully public via live audio webcast, with a live online chat for people listening remotely to discuss what was being said. The schedule and participants would also be publicized on an open weblog.

The conference planning weblog, at: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred was set up in November. The weblog served several functions: It was the main website where participants could go to check for schedule updates, the participant list, and other announcements.[2] (See Appendices B&C) The blog was meant to serve as a resource for participants, with links to articles, blog-posts and other resources useful to our discussion. Participants were also invited to post directly onto the conference blog if they wished in order to share their ideas and seek feedback as they prepared for the conference. Finally, the weblog was a way to take advantage of the wisdom and ideas of many other people

[1] Websites with more information about these three institutions: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/home/, http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/ and http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/oitp/oitpofficeinformation.htm

[2] The schedule at: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu:8080/webcred/index.php?p=3, participant list at: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu:8080/webcred/index.php?p=4

out in "the blogosphere" who we were unable to invite, but who might be interested in contributing their two cents.

As the date approached, Bill Mitchell of the Poynter Institute used the blog as a way to solicit ideas and feedback for the commissioned paper he and colleague Bob Steele would be writing and presenting at the conference: "Earn Your Own Trust, Roll Your Own Ethics: Transparency and Beyond."[3] (See Appendix 1b for the full paper.) Different drafts of the paper were also posted on the blog before the conference began.[4] Jay Rosen's paper – written in blog form and published on his own blog, Pressthink.org – was also announced and discussed on the conference blog.[5] Several of the other participants who are also bloggers, including Dan Gillmor and Jeff Jarvis, used their own blogs to generate discussion and feedback as they prepared for the conference.[6] Their blog posts were also linked-to and discussed on the conference blog.

The Blogosphere's Reaction and Pre-Conference Debates

The conference blog received its first spike in attention from "the blogosphere" after blogger and participant Dave Winer first linked to the list of participants (which was itself a blog post), on January 8th with the comment "for a conference about blogging, not too many bloggers."[7] In less than five days, a discussion thread of 78 comments grew in the "comments" section at the bottom of the participants' list. Nearly all comments were highly critical of the choice of participants: not enough bloggers, not the right kind, too many right-leaning bloggers, etc. Beginning on the same day, discussion threads emerged at the bottom of the "about the conference" post and elsewhere, questioning the conference's motivations and rationale.[8] Primary concerns were that members of the mainstream media – who in the view of many bloggers posting comments have lost all credibility – had no business determining standards for bloggers or judging credibility of blogs. There was great concern that the group would pronounce a set of standards which bloggers ought to follow, and also great concern that the conference was questioning the credibility of blogs – which journalists, of all people, had no right to do.

The "blog-storm" surrounding the conference blog grew after I wrote a post linking to a blog post by *Zephyr Teachout*, former internet strategist for Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign. Writing in preparation for issues she expected to bring up at the

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[3] The blog post soliciting comments, with over 30 responses, can be found at: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=10.

[4] See http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=26, http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=47, and http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=51

[5] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=24

[6] See Gillmor's post on the "End of Objectivity" at: http://dangillmor.typepad.com/dan_gillmor_on_grassroots/2005/01/the_end_of_obje.html and Jarvis' blog post on "The New Economics of News" here: http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/2005_01_17.html#008898 and here: http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/2005_01_17.html#008899

[7] http://archive.scripting.com/2005/01/08#When:9:14:51AM

[8] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu:8080/webcred/index.php?p=2

conference, she discussed the phenomenon of bloggers who get paid by political campaigns.[9] Linkage to this blog post unleashed a torrent of reaction, primarily from liberal bloggers, who felt that Teachout had unfairly slandered bloggers Markos Zuniga Moulistas of the popular liberal blog, Daily Kos, and blogger Jerome Armstrong. A number of people challenged the accuracy of Teachout's facts in her blog post, and accused me – and thus the conference – of bias because I had linked to her blog post. The view of some was that if you link to something, you are endorsing it. My response on the blog was that Zephyr had raised issues of blogging and financial disclosure that she wanted to discuss in the conference, and given that these issues were germane to the conference, I had linked to her post. Linking to a post, I said, did not necessarily equal endorsement of everything written in that post. This unleashed a debate in which I and other conference participants were accused of having no credibility, being biased, and not understanding blogging. This debate, however, also raised an important issue that was discussed at some length during the conference: what is the blogger's responsibility when it comes to linking? Many bloggers link to things they find interesting but which they may or may not agree with, or may or may not know to be true, but find worthwhile discussing. Is this irresponsible? There is a range of views on this subject, as the pre-conference online debate and the conference discussion showed. [10]

While there were a large number of comments posted to the conference blog that could only be called "flames" or personal attacks on the organizers, many comments raised important points about the relationship between blogging and journalism today. One commenter warned that to ignore the feedback is dangerous:

> "I don't know if you people get it, but we're the audience for journalism now. Other (normal) people are tuning you out. In other words, we're giving you a hard time because we think what you do actually matters. Silence is the sound of indifference."[11]

Some of the participants who do not blog or follow blogs closely expressed amazement and fascination with the blog-storm that had descended upon the conference. Here is one reaction expressed on the conference list-serv by Jane Singer of the University of Iowa:

> As for the explosion of, uh, commentary on the blog, does anyone else think that this kind of underscores the value of -- dare I say it -- "mainstream journalism"? Frankly, I've only had the time (and desire) to skim quickly through the vitriol, and I can't imagine that too many people other than the deeply impassioned would have any motivation to do more. Don't get me wrong, I think blogs are fabulous things, for all the reasons that everyone on this list knows...but this little adventure in conference planning clearly demonstrates the benefits of a little, gulp, gate-keeping and sense-making, no? (Yeah, yeah, Big-J journalism has plenty o'problems, but still...)

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[9] See http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=17 and http://zonkette.blogspot.com/2005/01/financially-interested-blogging.html

[10] More debate on the conference blog took place here: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=23 and here: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=25

[11] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=28#comment-627

Here is part of the response by Buzzmachine's Jeff Jarvis:

> There are two rants going on simultaneously, one more interesting than the other. One rant is a purely political defense of Deaniacs by Deaniacs. Been there, seen that plenty of times, eh?
> But the other rant is interesting: People in this world, in turns out, assume a right to openness and inclusion and that is manifest in their complaints about an event that is by invitation only; they are allergic to velvet ropes and press passes and privilege; they are the citizens and they demand an equal playing field. If you'd quizzed me a few weeks ago, I probably would have said that but in this interaction I've seen this now as the bloggers' view of their birthright and that's fascinating; it's also an object lesson for the business.

The dynamic of the online, pre-conference discussion is worth noting. We used the participant list-serv to ensure that participants were receiving updates and necessary conference information that was also being posted on the blog. All participants were urged to follow the conference blog and participate in the increasingly heated discussions there. However, the only participants who ended up participating on the blog in any way were those who have blogs themselves. The non-blogger participants did not appear comfortable, or did not feel that they had the time to engage in a direct conversation with the blogosphere – and instead limited their pre-conference discussions to the list-serv. Occasionally, I would try to post parts of the list-serv discussion onto the conference blog so that the non-blogger participants' perspectives could be shared more widely. I was not successful in getting non-blogger participants to post their thoughts directly onto the conference blog – either in the form of full blog posts or simply as comments. One result of this was that perceptions in cyberspace of the conference's purpose and nature were framed almost entirely by people who blog: the perspectives and views of non-bloggers were almost entirely absent from the mix.

In the days leading up to the conference, journalists who heard about the conference learned of it primarily through the blogs, and thus approached "the story" of the conference – at least initially – through the perspectives that had been most dominant in the blogosphere. Upon interviewing organizers and participants, and observing the conference, those perspectives changed. But the lesson in early story framing is an important one: a lesson that CNN's Eason Jordan was soon to learn, when bloggers seized upon comments he had made in a World Economic Forum session and helped bring about his resignation before the mainstream media even got around to reporting the story.

By having a conference blog that was being linked-to and talked about in the blogosphere, we also made it possible for people with interesting projects and ideas to "find us" – and to make us aware of things we would not have known about otherwise. Through the blog we were contacted by Martin Kuhn, a doctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communication, who unbeknownst to the organizers had written a "Proposed Code of Blogging Ethics," which was then

shared with the group, and which proved very useful to Bill Mitchell as he prepared his paper on ethics.[12]

David Berlind of ZDNet also found us through the blog. His new "transparency project" aims to make all raw materials that went into his stories – interview transcripts, notes, audio files – available openly online.[13] This idea was of great interest to participants and was discussed at some length throughout the conference.

Jon Garfunkel, of Civilities.net also contacted us through the blog and attended parts of the conference as an observer. He has written about a proposed system for peer recommendation and ranking of blog posts, which was something we hoped to hear more about at the conference.

We also heard – in the comments section, the day before the conference began – from a documentary maker named Kent Bye, whose project, EchoChamberProject.com, relies on the distributed work of volunteers online. The potential power of distributed volunteer work in participatory media was of great interest to many people at the conference.

[12] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=20
[13] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=40

The Conference

In the new evolving ecosystem that combines citizens' media with professional media, credibility can be won and lost more easily than ever. This stands for everyone, as Alex Jones, Director of the Shorenstein Center, pointed out in his welcoming remarks. "Credibility is something that's relatively fragile," he said. "It's something that mainstream journalism has lost an awful lot of in the last decades – something that mainstream journalism, traditional journalism is trying to get back." Bloggers, on the other hand, are in the early stages of figuring out how to win and lose credibility with their audiences. Jones pointed out that at this early stage, bloggers' credibility is "something that is yet to be attacked or undermined in the same way that mainstream journalism has by, you know, a century of use."

Carrie Lowe of the American Library Association's Office of Information Technology Policy reminded us to keep in mind the perspective of the non-journalist and non-blogger – i.e., the general public, who is trying to make sense of the rapidly shifting information landscape. "We would encourage you to keep the user in mind," she said. "After all, the user is the most important part of this equation."

Berkman Center Director John Palfrey reminded us that in the end, our conversation about blogging, journalism and credibility is really about strengthening democracy. "I think a lot of what this topic is about for me is about small "d" democratic values and principles that are playing out on the web," he said. He is excited by "a series of opportunities for more voices to be heard from more places in the world by more people, at less cost, and in very interesting connective ways." He hoped the conference would "make headway towards a common ground…in the name of a greater public interest."

Session 1: Jay Rosen: "Bloggers vs. Journalists" is over (Dave Winer and Bob Giles commenting)

In the conclusion of his essay written for the conference, "Bloggers vs. Journalists is Over,"[14] NYU professor and "Pressthink" blogger Jay Rosen enthused: "It's an exciting time in journalism. As the great social weave from which it arises changes form, the thing itself comes up for grabs."

Rosen's essay argues that a new ecosystem is developing in which blogging and journalism coexist, influence, and shape one another. Kicking off the first conference session, Rosen said that while "Bloggers vs. journalists" may be a dramatic peg for a news story, that is a fundamentally flawed description of what is really going on.

Rosen sees three main trends:

[14] http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/21/berk_essy.html

1. A power shift "from the producers of media to the people formerly known as the audience." He also pointed out the need for a new vocabulary: "terms like "audience" and "consumer" and "viewer" and "reader," which have become threaded into journalism aren't really that accurate for the people on the other end of the process." Why? Because the audience is now talking back on the web, in the weblogs, creating its own thread within the public discourse.

2. A loss of sovereignty, or in other words, "a loss of exclusive control. Areas that once were under the domain of the journalist are now not exclusively under the domain of the journalist." Now that it is so easy for anybody to create content on the web for little or no cost, journalists "no longer have exclusive title to the press." Professional news media must now share this space known as "the press" – the mass-dissemination of discourse on matters of public interest, which for the past century has been almost its exclusive domain – with activists, non-profits, and random individuals who have set up their own weblogs and websites.

3. Those first two factors have caused people (especially bloggers) to challenge mainstream journalism's key ideas and principles, particularly the principle of objectivity – a principle which, Rosen says is "faltering" as an "ethical touchstone" in mainstream journalism today.

Rosen makes a point we often forget: "Most of the leading ideas that we teach young journalists, that journalists learn on the job… weren't necessarily created to explain the kind of world we live in. They were created to limit liability among journalists; to provide a way of defending against the inevitable attacks and criticisms that come to journalists. Defensive ideas, which have worked very well for the mainstream press for about 40 or 50 years, are now working against journalists. It's making it harder for them to find out where they are."

The most influential bloggers (and thus one might argue – those with the most perceived credibility) are those who help their communities (no longer an "audience") make sense of the jumble of information out there on the web. To do this, they are expert in "the art of linking": pointing people to other sources of information on the web by hyper-linking chunks of text on their own blogs to the URL web addresses of other web pages and blog posts. "If we look at tapping distributed knowledge around the web, the people who know how to do that are bloggers. If we look at news as conversation, which is such an important metaphor today, the people putting that into practice are bloggers."

Thus, while bloggers depend upon the work of professional journalists that is available on the web as raw materials for their conversations and web of links, they have created new kinds of information flows, along with the and structures and norms to deal with them. "Bloggers are developing this platform that journalists will one day occupy and that is the reason people in the mainstream press should pay attention to them," Rosen concludes.

Dave Winer of Scripting News was invited to respond first. [15] He agrees that the "Bloggers vs. journalists" construct is not the reality. "We have never woken up one morning in our lives thinking about how we can get rid of the professional journalists," he says. "If anything, we have worked hard to bring them in." Winer hopes that journalists will adopt more of the principles and techniques of blogging, especially transparency: transparency about personal politics and biases, as well as transparency through the sharing of all original source materials that went into a story. It now costs virtually nothing to put transcripts and audio files on the web, and doing so would lend credibility to the final stories. He also pointed out that as we move away from a universe where professionals had near exclusive control over "the press," which made their claim to objectivity more believable, we are now in a world where the consumer of news – or, shall we say, the people who interact with the news – must triangulate between multiple points of view. People who read, write, and interact with weblogs have become much more adept than passive news consumers at triangulating information from different sources, making their own independent decisions about what to believe and what not to believe. "We can combine all of our points of view and do what we call embodiment triangulation, and get closer to understanding what real events are going on," he said. This is the new emerging world in which journalists must learn how to function – a world with which bloggers are already very comfortable.

Bob Giles, curator of the Nieman Foundation, pointed out that news organizations are by their very nature resistant to change. "The news industry's reluctance or inability to embrace new ideas is embedded in the sort of institutional culture of the newspapers and broadcast organizations for which we work," he said. "The question is always raised 'How soon will we make money on this venture?' Secondarily in the thinking is 'How can this serve our audiences? How does this help us connect with our communities? How can we better execute our obligation for public service and public trust by finding a way to use a new technology?""

He hopes that experiments like Greensboro 101 in North Carolina, in which a newspaper has embraced blogging in order to re-connect and become more relevant to its community, will help point the way for news organizations to change.

A number of issues emerged from the discussion, as follows:

New relationships forming between news media and the public:

Ed Cone on Greensboro 101:[16] Ed Cone, a columnist for the *Greensboro News & Record,* said professional journalists may think they understand blogs, but in his own experience, he really didn't understand blogging until he started doing it himself. (The *News & Record*'s editor-in-chief, John Robinson, was invited to the conference but was unable to attend. See Bill Mitchell's interview with Robinson.[17]) When Robinson started

[15] http://www.scripting.com/
[16] http://radio.weblogs.com/0107946/ and http://www.greensboro101.com/
[17] http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=77156

blogging in mid-2004, that was an "aha" moment for the newspaper, bringing the newspaper into a close conversation with the local community – which already contained a number of active bloggers, including Cone.

Cone described how the local blogs and the local newspapers complement – rather than compete – with each other. A recent county commissioner meeting was covered the usual way by the paper: "They covered it well but they focused on a particular issue of interest to the newspaper which is economic development." A blogger at the meeting focused on other issues, and did not have space constraints requiring him to focus his "coverage" to one main theme. Because the newspaper's reporters now have their own weblogs, they can continue the discussion with the bloggers about what happened at the meeting online. Here is Cone's description of how the blog-newspaper relationship works on the local level:

> The paper has space constraints. They have to cover a limited amount of what happened at that meeting. What they can do now is the reporter Matt Williams can go to his own News and Record web log and he can link to Sam Heed's coverage [on Sam's weblog] and say "By the way, let me comment on what I couldn't get in the paper and I don't even have to start from scratch and re-write it. I can just point you to Sam and then take off from there."
>
> So at the same time we have independent bloggers who want nothing to do with the News and Record and they have created what I call an online alternative media of their own; they're congregating at aggregator sites like greensboro101.com. They are having blog meet-ups. They see themselves as competitors, correctors, potential contributors.

Cone believes there is no conflict between the writing he does for the newspaper and his blogging: "I am a writer and a reporter and I feel tremendously empowered as a writer and a reporter and as a professional by this tool. …there is no conflict in my mind between being a professional journalist and a blogger."

Bill Buzenberg of Minnesota Public Radio described another way in which news media are developing more interactive relationships with their communities, aside from blogging. MPR has been developing "public insight journalism:" creating databases of audience members who are willing to contribute information for stories. "Basically we're using the audience, which knows far more about the subject than we do," he said. "We now have a source as wide as the state. We tap in to the blogosphere, but there are lots of people out there who are not writing, and that's what we're trying to tap into."

Towards the end of the session, Rosen pointed out that journalists are learning how to tap their audience as collaborators on stories. The conventional wisdom was that the audience lacked knowledge. In today's world: "the quality of your information is deeply related to your connection to the people you're trying to inform." Or in other words: "You're a great informer of people if you have a strong connection to those people."

Issues of control and power:

Radio host Chris Lydon said he believes we are in the midst of a "new reformation." *The New York Times* used to be like the word from God as filtered to the people by the priesthood. We're now experiencing a "sort of a protestant reformation in which people's unmediated relationship to the truth" in which "our individual participation in the mysteries of nature and Divine Spirit have been democratized." Rather than the religion analogy, the analogy Dan Gillmor would use is that the *New York Times* is the trade journal of the rich and powerful, while the blogosphere is the trade journal of ordinary people. He believes we need to understand how to live our lives in a democratic society, where good information is crucial for us to understand our neighbors. We need new ways to understand our lives when the newspaper can't. We now have a new way to gather information that no longer goes through the same funnels. "People who are not in the Rolodex" of news editors are now part of the source process.

Until now, Berkman Fellow David Weinberger believes, the media has been making choices for us in terms of what we should find interesting. We no longer need professionals to help us make those choices. We can recommend things to each other on our weblogs.

Blogger-journalist tensions:

In the view of Buzzmachine's Jeff Jarvis: "Bloggers vs. journalists" may not be the whole story, but the tension between the two is real, and is actually healthy. "There is also benefit in keeping the tension alive… and keeping the competition alive to make both better." Chris Lydon points out that the current situation is not bloggers vs. journalists, but rather the "blogosphere versus the world that institutional journalism created." The main problem, he says, is that "we're not well informed."

Trust, credibility, and objectivity:

"Trust and credibility now are social – it's recognized that they're social processes," says Lee Rainie, Director of the Pew Internet and American Life project. He sees news-consuming audience behavior evolving in the way that "e-patients" have evolved in medicine: many patients now arrive in the doctor's office with a sheaf of online research about their ailments, because they no longer count on their doctor having the only possible, definitive answers or diagnoses. People, he said, are "deciding what is true and what to act on only after this process of discovery and social comment and new kind of credibility-enhancing mechanisms are put into play."

Powerline's John Hinderaker believes it would be a shame to see those people who do primary news reporting abandon the ideal of objectivity, despite the fact that they might not live up to it. He believes that a real commitment to objectivity would also be reflected by a real commitment to newsroom diversity.

You're like a juror when you report as a journalist, says Alex Jones. Journalists must be accountable for that, and now blogs will hold you accountable. Accountability is the greatest thing that blogs are bringing to journalism. But as a journalist, when you're reporting a story, "who you are is not important." What's important is: how you did what you did, and why? "The 'who' actually gets in the way because it gets used to discredit reporters."

Ed Cone believes objectivity is a process, but also a metric. Newspapers use rhetoric to tell us what we should find interesting, and on the internet there is a surge of interest in taking back this power to decide what we find interesting. Perhaps we are contending along certain axes. One might be an economic tension, another is a tension over who is Best At Telling The Truth, and the third is a tension over reputation.

John Bonné of MSNBC asks: If journalists function as jurors, who will be there to help protect them? The news organization acts as protector for individuals who seek to tell objective truths that powerful – and sometimes dangerous – people don't want to hear. Will too much transparency lend fodder to those who want to "tear up" stories that show them in a bad light? "I wonder who is supposed to be there, to protect us from being consistently assailed from people with more power and more money."

David Sifry of Technorati says that when he considers how much to trust a news source, "knowing that there are fact checkers, that there's an editorial board, that there's an attempt to be objective helps me trust an organization or a newspaper more." But on the other hand, he also sees the point made by many bloggers that greater transparency about a reporter's background and biases can help make their reporting more credible. *The New York Times* isn't going away just because anyone can have a printing press, or their own blog. There is a great deal of accumulated public trust in everything the NYT does, even when they make mistakes.

A reporter or blogger's objectivity is colored by "what side your bread is buttered on," Robert Cox of the Media Bloggers Association believes. As you seek access to information as an individual reporter or blogger, you decide what to report based on a calculation of future consequences. He discovered as a blogger that sometimes he had the opportunity to blog about certain things, "but I didn't, because I wanted to continue to know about what was going on." In other words, as a blogger moves from being an "outsider" to being an "insider," your stake changes and the way in which you report things changes.

Andrew Nachison of the Mediacenter believes credibility is not dependent on objectivity, but rather on respect: "focusing on why you do what you do, whether you're a journalist or a blogger." He also doesn't think the point of journalism is credibility. "It's about creating a better world."

I (Berkman Fellow Rebecca MacKinnon) pointed out that there are also issues of short-term credibility and long-term credibility. If you're thinking about building credibility and approval from your audience in the short term, you'll only give them what they want

to hear and reinforce their conventional wisdom. But if you're focused on building credibility over the long run, your calculations will be quite different when it comes to "doing the right thing" – bringing forth information that your community (formerly audience) may not think they want to know in the short term because it's upsetting and makes them feel bad about themselves, but which, over time, will be seen as a critical piece of information that society needed. How do you encourage the development of mechanisms that encourage bloggers as well as professional media to focus on long-term credibility as opposed to short-term credibility?

What this means for our democracy:

Jan Schaffer, head of the J-Lab, said she believes that the question of who is or isn't a journalist is not the main question – and the answer is "so what"? She is concerned that "we're focusing on the platform but not on our audiences." She believes "the real tension that we are not focusing on is what will news look like and what do people need to know in a democracy? Where will I find what I didn't know before? Who will connect the dots for me on big issues? Where will I have "aha" moments? Who will ask the missing questions for me?" How do you "give people what they need to know" without swamping them with information that all but the most avid news junkies don't have time to process? In her view, both mainstream media as well as blogs are failing to solve this problem. I agreed. Right now blogging is very primitive compared to the potential of online, interactive participatory media. What kind of systems do we need to build if we want the result to be a more informed citizenry?

We need better ways to track discussion threads from the blogs, Dan Gillmor said. He also believes we need to expect more of the former audience: "To the extent that people want to be informed, they're going to have to do a little work." The challenge now is to develop a new "toolset" for people: how do you make this process less time consuming?

For Jim Kennedy of the Associated Press, it's about the people's right to know. People are now coming at their news through the opinion space – which is what most blogs are. How does the user sort through everything? Jane Singer, University of Iowa asks: How do we encourage members of the audience to search out ideas they do not agree with? Dave Winer asks: "So we all care about news. How are we going to make it better?

Jonathan Zittrain, Berkman Center co-founder, observed that there seems to be a sense among much of the public that journalism is "not setting the proper agenda for people," and "not speaking truth."

What's really at stake, he says, is how we frame our view of the world. And the problem is, the abundance of perspectives doesn't make the truth more certain, as a person with two watches is less sure of what time it really is. The problem is, "people are going to have to work much harder to figure out what they can believe."

To this end, Zittrain asks, can technology help people make better sense of reality? Is there some shared vision of "meta-principles" that helps us harness technology, so we can use it to arrive at better representation of reality? Collectively what do we have to say about how to harness the opportunities before us? What's at stake?

Session 2: Judith Donath examines online social behavior and the implications for news

Judith Donath, of the MIT Media Lab has written and researched extensively on the question of how people build online identity and credibility: what types of incentives do people have (or not) to be honest when interacting with each other on the internet?[18] She approaches her subject through "signaling theory:" the study of why people expend time and money on adornments, possessions, and mannerisms that send signals to others about identity and character. This theory actually originates in the field of biology, as scientists examine how and why some animals evolve to display various elaborate "signals" or characteristics that help to impress, frighten, or deceive other animals – and what the consequences of "honest" versus "dishonest" signaling tend to be.

In the world of news and information as well as in the animal kingdom, Donath says, the perception is that if you can afford to give off a "costly signal," you are perceived to be stronger than those who can't. In the human world as in the animal kingdom, there are repercussions for not being truthful. Humans lose their credibility; animals can be killed.

Newspapers and TV stations can afford to give off "costly signals." But what about bloggers? How do you build a reputation system in which there are repercussions for not being truthful? Furthermore, there are costs to the "receiver" of signals: you must spend time and effort evaluating whether somebody is being honest. Assuming most people are busy, a few people must come forward to perform this costly evaluating function for the rest of society. Newspapers do this by staking their own reputation on the reputation of the journalists they hire. Sorting out the credibility of individual bloggers is a much more messy process. One way of evaluating credibility is through the web of links that bloggers choose to build around some blogs but not others – and the positive or negative characterizations that they give each other. But volume – the percentage of praise versus criticism – may not always be the best way to measure credibility either. There need to be ways for people to what is actually substantive criticism: When people attack you online, "it is hard to know when that attack is noise," and how much is legitimate criticism.

The ensuing discussion focused heavily on the extent and manner to which a blogger or journalist needs to disclose about their backgrounds and private lives order to send an "honest signal" to build credibility. Technorati's David Sifry raised the tricky question of when an anonymous blogger is credible and when she is not. The answer appears to depend on circumstances, such as whether a blogger would be endangering himself by revealing his identity. Iraq's first blogger, Salam Pax, being a case in point.

Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales had a different perspective on disclosure as founder of Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia written collectively by a community of volunteer authors. In the Wikipedia model, nothing is disclosed about the collective authors of encyclopedia entries (or for that matter, news items in the experimental news project, Wikinews). Yet wikipedia is perceived to have credibility and authority – at least on

[18] http://www.media.mit.edu/ and http://smg.media.mit.edu/people/Judith/Identity/IdentityDeception.html

certain subjects – by millions of people who use it each day. As Wales sees it, there are three ways of building credibility through signaling: Personal disclosure – the bloggers' model – is one approach. Second, for established media organizations, credibility comes from "organizational authority." Wikipedia shows a third way: "the wiki way is another process, a collaborative review process," through which users can feel assured that the information they're receiving has been vetted by the collective wisdom and fact-checking of many eyes and brains.

Jane Singer pointed out that ultimately, the strongest form of credibility comes more from what you do as a journalist or a news organization – rather than what you say about who you are and what you think.

Jay Rosen took both points a step further: In the past, news organizations based their credibility solely on organizational authority, and the challenge was to make sure individual journalists they hired did not damage this. The paradigm has now changed, as "we are moving into a world now where we have to see that the individual journalist is also involved in creating trust, which is something we have not thought about before, and so that's going to…mean a new regime of control in the newsroom because those people now have more responsibility but they also are capable of adding to that asset – not just spending it or ruining it but actually adding to it." One way they can add to the credibility asset is by blogging: holding a direct dialogue with the community about the stories they report. As a result, newsroom relationships are also changed.

Jonathan Zittrain asked whether there is a "third step" in the process of building credibility: "Not just what you say and what you do, but essentially how you live." He points out that the journalists in the room had not been speaking nearly as much as either the people who blog, or the academics. Does this have to do with a journalist's need to keep their public personality footprint from getting too large – which they and their news organizations fear would harm their credibility as objective reporters of news? Many journalists in the room agreed that the fact that they are journalists has a tremendous impact on the way they live their private lives.

So where do we go from here? Donath points out that a simple list of a reporter or blogger's affiliations is much less credible than the long history of what they say. But she concludes there are no easy answers to the problem of signaling and credibility-building.

Session 3: Bill Mitchell on the ethics of journalism and blogging (Schneider, Bonné, and Rosenstiel commenting)

In another pre-conference paper, "**Earn Your Own Trust, Roll Your Own Ethics: Transparency and Beyond**" Bob Steele and Bill Mitchell of the Poynter Institute conclude: "Transparency is a first step in building trust with an audience but is insufficient to achieve credibility.[19] We do not prescribe ethics standards for bloggers. Instead, we recommend that bloggers involve their audience in a co-authored process that addresses the personal information the bloggers are willing to share, the principles they stand for, and the processes they follow." This applies to professional journalists who blog for news organizations as well as for stand-alone bloggers.

In reaction to the conference discussion so far, Mitchell asked that we think about ethics "not in the traditional way as a list of rules, but more as a way the work gets done; the way a publisher interacts with the audience/collaborator and vice-versa." If journalism is becoming a conversation and not a lecture, it becomes more of a relationship and less of a contract. What, then, does it take for the relationship to survive? If transparency is not enough to build trust, what might be? Finally, he throws out a hope: "I have a feeling that there is a tool we could create that could help build trusting relationships that we are talking about."

Librarian Karen Schneider responded from the user's perspective. Any ethical framework for information, she believes, needs to be informed by the way in which it moves through time & space. "Information has a way of growing legs and walking away from you and becoming very, very different sorts of things," she says. In other words, the journalist or news organization may package and present information in one way, but as it reaches different users in different contexts it is repackaged and re-distributed. This needs to be kept in mind. We can't rely on transparency of process alone, she argues, because "There is no transparency meta-data code at this point to link back to the person."

While she is a big fan of Dan Gillmor and his book *We the Media*, Schneider is concerned about his earlier point that the user needs to do more work. From the librarian's perspective, most users need advocates to help them make sense of the vast array of information sources. Most people out there still don't read blogs, and do not go to the internet for news and information. We cannot forget this.

John Bonné elaborated on Mitchell's idea that news ethics will increasingly stem from a relationship rather than a contract. "The relationship is inevitable," Bonné says. "One of the things that we are evolving towards in all of this is…some sort of larger understanding that the relationship is good."

So what can be done to help build this relationship? "Frequently Asked Questions" pages – or FAQ's - for news organizations would be a start. As would larger conversations about why the news organization does what it does through news ombudsmen. Bonné

[19] http://cyber.law.harvard.edu:8080/webcred/wp-content/mitchellsteelewebcredfinalpdf.pdf

cautions, however, that relationships between news organizations and the public can be manipulated, from all sides.

Tom Rosenstiel, Director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, pointed out that the norms of journalism have evolved over the past 200 years. They're not as codified or as monolithic as they now seem. "The culture did stultify" in journalism, he says "and did get disconnected from its audience to some extent in large part because it became so focused on technique. The journalism became a totality. Journalism was what journalists did and that's not where it started and that's not where it will end up."

The best thing about blogs, he believes, is that they are going to force journalists to respond to what people want. The more interaction, and the more that community can intrude on the newsroom, the better journalism will become.

But fundamentally, Rosenstiel points out, journalism provides society with facts. You can build everything off of that. To do that you need to have reporters who go and find things out, do the digging, run between places, and give people an end product that's the best version of what happened that day. This function is different than what blogs generally do. At the same time, this function is becoming more and more difficult to "monetize," and to finance. The risk, he fears, is that newsrooms will shrink and the professionals will have no jobs. This would be bad for society and democracy. But the threat, he believes, is not coming from the blogs: "The blogs are going to help us. They are going to help us re-connect."

The ensuing discussion focused less on the ethics of journalistic blogging than how professional journalism and blogging will coexist.

A heated debate arose when Jill Abramson of the *New York Times* asked the bloggers in the room: "do people realize how much it costs to maintain a news operation in Baghdad?" Dave Winer called that a "silly question." There are bloggers in Baghdad, he said, and "that's your competition."

Abramson argued that by maintaining a bureau in Baghdad – which she said cost over a million dollars in the past year – the NYT is providing a "tremendous public service." Being there to report and "bear witness" to events is important, and "I don't think that's what most bloggers in Iraq are doing."

Dave Winer said he had heard the "same conversation" in 1981 from manufactures of parallel mainframe computers. The argument, Winer said, was that "we will always need huge staffs in the glass palaces because the users can't be trusted with their own data … Two years, three years later, they were gone. That was it. They were wrong."

"I am hardly talking about a glass palace" Abramson replied, "I am talking about public service."

It was suddenly looking like a "bloggers vs. journalists" argument, despite earlier claims by many in the room that that argument was dead. Rick Kaplan of MSNBC jumped in. "What we are saying to you is that part of what is necessary in the coverage of Iraq – and it is extraordinarily expensive in terms of human costs and dollar costs – is what a professional group of journalists can bring to the story – the coverage that they can give it. That plus what you are – what the whole new world of blogging can bring to a story – that's better. It's not instead of you. It is in addition to you."

Jeff Jarvis then brought up an example of an anti-terrorism demonstration in Iraq which was covered by an Iraqi blogger but not by the NYT. The *Times*, he argued, should make more efforts to work directly with local bloggers in order to get more information and more facts than they can get with their own reporters alone.

Dan Gillmor pointed out that a lot of journalists are getting much of what they know from locals who are really on the ground. He would like to see more experiments that would enable these people to write what they're seeing and make their direct accounts visible to readers, rather than just feeding their information and perspectives to the visiting reporters.

As news organizations do more of this, several people pointed out that this leads news organizations into uncharted waters, as they are likely to be held responsible and accountable for these direct, raw and personal stories which may not always turn out to be completely accurate – and are very likely to be biased. What does this do to a news organization's accountability? Can you really disclaim the "citizen journalism" elements and keep them separate from what you have verified, checked, and tried to report objectively?

David Weinberger had several suggestions for newspapers like the *New York Times*, which would make their reporting more credible in his view: linking bylines to pages about the reporters; allowing (but not requiring) reporters to blog on the NYT site; allowing links to pages off of the paper's website; letting readers hold discussions around certain topics; showing what other bloggers are saying about specific stories; letting users organize the way articles are displayed and sorted "in the way we want," in other words, "Let us sort the metadata about your stuff off your site on other sites…. to pull together the pieces that are interesting to us." And finally, Weinberger asks, "on occasion, write your drafts in public." This, he believes, will increase transparency and public understanding of what goes into a good *New York Times* article.

Ed Cone agreed. "I want to see the *New York Times* use its resources to gather more information from more sources and vet them and then bring them to me."
He cites an example of a story from Iraq that editors of the *Greensboro News and Record* found on a soldier's blog, which hadn't been reported anywhere by the mainstream media. The N&R fact-checked and verified it, then put it on the front page.

Berkman Fellow Ethan Zuckerman quoted William Gibson: "The future is here, it's just not evenly distributed yet." He pointed out that there are many parts of the world about

which we in the U.S. would have no information unless mainstream media invested resources to cover them. But he hopes that over time, this will be complemented by a vibrant, global citizen-journalism. We will have the "American voice" of the professional journalist writing for a U.S. newspaper, but we will also be able to compare it to many "raw, unfiltered" local voices. This is valuable, and it will enhance our understanding of other parts of the world, in addition to enhancing – and keeping honest – the professional reporting.

The problem, Dan Gillmor pointed out, is that "the revenue model that supports that million-dollar newsroom is unraveling." That, he says, is "the elephant in the room." It is a problem to which nobody in the room has a solution.

Jan Schaffer said she hopes that blogs are not the "end game" of participatory media, but are instead just the beginning. The present format of the blog, she believes, is a "very inefficient" way to get information. In her view, both bloggers and journalists need to be working towards a "better end-product." This, she believes, might be meaningful commentary and meaningful conversations, or perhaps it might be through better links. Ideally this would be through "a mindset rather than a skill set:" a mindset for harvesting information to utilize the expertise in your community. Journalists would seek participation that would check and balance their stories. The question should be not only: did you get the story right, but: did you get the right story? She believes that paradigm should apply both to mainstream journalism and to the blogging world.

Rick Kaplan of MSNBC then took a few minutes to describe how blogging has become an integral part of what MSNBC does. MSNBC has staked its future on blogging and participatory media: it puts bloggers on air regularly, and the anchors of all new shows must have a blog.

Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales retuned to the issue of news bureau costs and the exchange of views between Jill Abramson and Dave Winer:

> Five years ago, if I sat here in front of this group or any other group and we discussed the Encyclopedia Britannica, which in the latest numbers I can find just now, in 1996, they had a budget of three hundred and fifty million dollars.
>
> And if I said to you "I am going to get together a whole bunch of people on the internet and we are going to write an encyclopedia that is going to kick butt on Encyclopedia Britannica," you would have said "That's crazy. How could you possibly do that? It would cost you millions and millions of dollars."
>
> It didn't cost millions and millions of dollars. We did it. And therefore, I don't think you can confidently say "Well, we are spending all this money. The blogosphere can never replace this." You don't know yet. You don't know yet what is going to happen and I think it's – I think it is very unlikely that the business model of the *New York Times* is sustainable over the next 20 years.

Whatever happens, Jill Abramson replied, if in the future there isn't going to be a paying audience for the kind of wide-ranging global empirical reporting that the *New York Times* or other mainstream news organizations do now, that would be a tragic loss. It would be

the loss of something with real public service value. Wales replied that it's only a tragic loss if it isn't replaced by something far better.

Opinions in the room differed over whether Wales knew what he was talking about. He acknowledged that the New York Times will undoubtedly adapt as it needs to. Returning to Dave Winer's computer industry analogy, he pointed out that IBM adapted and survived the death of the mainframe, but "it is still a very, very different thing from what they did 50 years ago."

Technorati's David Sifry said he hopes systems will be built to harness the best aspects of "the power of many, the wisdom of the group." He believes that the professional mainstream media "has a humongous part to play." True, sometimes bloggers break stories, but how do most people find them? How about most users who have fifteen minutes in their day to pay attention to world news? That is the fundamental problem that remains unsolved.

Cameron Marlow of MIT and Blogdex agreed: distributed synthesis is possible without destroying the need for the news organization.[20]

The session ended with statements from several more people who agreed that blogs and mainstream media must work together to create something new and better, and the world would definitely be worse off if either mainstream media or blogs ceased to exist.

Session 4: Jeff Jarvis: The business model

Buzzmachine's Jeff Jarvis invited the room to brainstorm on a shared objective: "to energize journalism and keep it healthier." In preparation for the conference Jarvis had written two blog posts (here and here) on "Economics and change in news."[21] He makes a number of points, including: "the mass market is dying, replaced by a mass of niches;" citizen-journalism is better positioned to serve niche markets than established news media; the value of controlling distribution is torn apart by the internet. He quotes Tom Curley's ONA speech: "Content will be more important than its container."[22] In his two blog posts, Jarvis outlines a wide range of trends and questions facing the news industry today.

How can the news business not only find a way to survive financially and still remain recognizable as "news" (as opposed to infotainment)? Participants at this session were unable to come up with concrete answers. Rather, the discussion focused largely on the central question that emerged from the previous session: how can citizens' media and mainstream media help one another improve and grow in a socially beneficial way?

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[20] http://blogdex.net/
[21] http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/2005_01_17.html#008898 and http://www.buzzmachine.com/archives/2005_01_17.html#008899
[22] http://journalist.org/2004conference/archives/000079.php

Minnesota Public Radio's Bill Buzenberg re-emphasized his point made in the previous session that news organizations could do much more to tap the knowledge of their audiences by building databases and better systems to tap the knowledge of readers and listeners – especially those who don't necessarily have the time or inclination to share their expertise through blogging.

A major complaint by some bloggers is that journalists working in mainstream media tend to be politically and socio-economically homogeneous. Jarvis asked how citizen's media can help mainstream media become more diverse. Powerline's John Hinderaker believes that the blogosphere are forcing greater diversity upon newsrooms.

But how does this translate to audience retention, viewer/readership numbers, and the ability to earn more advertising dollars? According to Rick Kaplan, blogs are a critical part of MSNBC's growth strategy. "The blogs," he believes, "are going to reenergize us." As he mentioned in the previous session, MSNBC now has blogs connected to most of its shows, and he says that there is a direct correlation between audience growth for a particular show and the amount of attention that the people involved with the show give to their blogs. "We have done a great job chasing our readers away, chasing our viewers away, becoming irrelevant for all kinds of people." When news shows converse with their audiences through blogs, responding to feedback, people know that the journalists actually care what they think and care about what they want. This, Kaplan believes, increases viewer attention and loyalty, and ultimately expands audience. MSNBC is betting on blogs. He also points out that his reporters frequently get story leads from blogs. "All of the sudden we have a couple hundred thousand extra researchers."

In this new world in which news organizations are revealing their primary source material and conversing with their audiences, Jarvis points out that audiences will also need to re-learn how to consume news. "I think people will have to kind of re-calibrate their B.S. detectors for this new world," Dan Gillmor believes. People are going to have to be more skeptical about information coming across the web, and not believe things just because they appeared on professional-looking websites.

Berkman Fellow Zephyr Teachout suggests that gaming technologies might be useful in helping people sort through information and decide what is believable and what isn't. Teachout also suggests that audience or community loyalty could be strengthened through the fostering of offline communities and groups as extensions of the online communities that form around weblogs.

Other points raised during the session included:

What constitutes news, who decides what is news, what ends up being reported, and how it gets distributed – as these things change, the way advertising is handled also changes. Lee Rainie pointed out that "modern American journalism is under-serving a lot of key markets." who do not currently have a good vehicle through which to receive and share information and stories of concern. There is also the question of who decides what news from which communities is of broader interest beyond that community.

Editors and producers of mainstream media organizations are no longer the sole gatekeepers of this. Blogs and other forms of interactive participatory media have the ability to target niche communities as well as tap their stories, which reporters may not know about, and which may actually be of interest to broader audiences if only they were known.

This not only helps to democratize media – it is also an untapped source of targeted advertising revenue. Jim Kennedy of the AP pointed out that "we are headed for a world where the user is going to take the content and reassemble it" to fit their interests and needs. News organizations will no longer have the same kind of control over presentation and story selection. This has interesting implications for advertising: "discreet pieces of content are going to need to be supported by micro-advertising." This may change the traditional divide between classified advertising and regular advertising. Jeff Jarvis asked: "if we can get down to a town level with content, can we target advertising then? Can we get in the critical mass of content and audience and then target advertising to a town level and then price that so that the dry cleaner and the lawyer and the pizza place, who never could advertise in any of our products before, could now come in and advertise, and can we find a new population of advertisers, as classified goes off to Craigslist?" But things won't stop there, as the "content" is increasingly separated from the programming or editorial "container." So as the content becomes re-purposable and re-shapeable by the users through RSS feeds, aggregators and the like, the placing and delivery of advertising will need to be re-thought even further.

Rick Kaplan pointed out that the way in which people consume content on the web is not the same as the way in which they consume it in a newspaper or broadcast, and thus the content provided on the web – in order to be of utmost use – must be reshaped to fit the way people want to view, read, and use it online. A 30 minute broadcast may work for TV, but online you might want short clips that people can click on instead.

Blogs and participatory media communities are not only a source of information and community engagement; they are also a talent pool and recruitment ground for professional media.

Bloggers in the room agreed that only a very small percentage of bloggers will actually make substantial advertising money from blogging. Most people blog for other reasons, including reputational reasons: by writing well and regularly about certain subjects on a weblog, a person becomes known as an articulate expert in those subjects. Brendan Greeley pointed out that he got his job at PRX because of his blog. Jill Abramson said that the *New York Times* looks at the blogs as a potential source of new writing talent with fresh perspectives. Jeff Jarvis put it this way: "This is the first time since William Randolph Hearst that young people can look upon journalism entrepreneurially."

Session 5: David Weinberger dinner speech

The dinner speech by Berkman Fellow David Weinberger dealt with three topics: "tags" and taxonomies, ethics or "philosophy of morality", and blogging. He claims in his introduction that these things are randomly strung together and unrelated, but they are actually well thought-out examples of the way in which he believes humanity has now embarked upon an overwhelming, messy, and revolutionary transition.

Tags and taxonomies: Weinberger has been writing and thinking a great deal about the new ways in which people approach and define knowledge in the internet age. The emergence of online taxonomies – the way in which facts and ideas are categorized and characterized – is a key part of this. In the offline world, the main vehicle through which knowledge is categorized, characterized, sorted and storied has been the library system, which is based on the Dewey decimal system. Every book or other work gets one category assigned to it, along with one number. Now, with the internet, writings, photos, videos, etc. can be assigned an unlimited number of categories by anybody. Things can be found not only through search engines, but through emerging services and software applications that help people make sense of and sort through the emerging "folksonomies." He describes services like del.icio.us, flickr, and technorati that enable people to tag the information they find in ways that are useful to them, share what they've found – and way in which they've chosen to characterize it – with everybody else on the Web, and then find things they're looking for by searching material tagged by others. People are participating in this project not only out of self-interest: "we also do it because we're building something together that is of greater value than the value that any one of us gets out of it on our own." This, he believes, is new: "We're building a thing that's a layer of meaning on top of the web that wasn't there before that's purely human."

Weinberger believes this has major implications for journalism and media. "The notion of what counts as a story is something that the media, necessarily, had to decide. Limited resources internally, limited attention, limited paper, limit only one front page. The media has decided what's a story. Now were going to be in a position that anybody can decide what's a story."

Ethics: How do we decide what is good or bad? Ethical or immoral? As a former philosophy professor this is something Weinberger has thought a lot about. He believes that what creates moral behavior, ultimately, is sympathy with other sentient beings: "Recognizing that that other person matters. And that the world matters." Not only that, but the human world is essentially a caring place, despite what many might think. It is "a place that we care about and care about with others." He cites the work of philosopher Richard Rorty, who wrote that societies at different points in history have looked to different things to determine what is and isn't moral behavior. People first looked to religion, then philosophy. Now many people look to novels. This is a good thing, says Weinberger, "because in novels we see the world – and not just see it, we care about the world – in a way that matters to somebody else. And this is how we work out our moral issues now. And that's proper because at the root of morality is this sympathy." This

represents progress, he believes, "because it makes morality more of our own, and gets back to what's at heart. Which is a shared world that we care about."

Blogging: What else is blogging if not a natural expression of "a shared world that we care about"?

This is why Weinberger insists – as he insisted many times during the conference – that while blogging may look like journalism to most journalists, journalism is not what most blogs are doing. A small percentage of the largest blogs look like media because they have many readers who do not comment or participate in the blog's conversation, and many of those blogs are creating content that is indeed a form of journalism. But most blogs are something else. Instead, he believes, most bloggers are creating a "permanent place" where "we build public selves." He has a journal and he has a newsletter. But his blog is different: "My weblog is *me*. And that's why I care about it… I'm writing myself into existence. As you all are who are bloggers."

It's also important to remember that we're all writing quickly (some might say "badly"), throwing out first drafts into permanent, linkable, posts in cyberspace. These blog posts represent a conversation on the Web. People link to one another's posts and comment on them, spreading each others' ideas around.

In this way, blogs offer a multitude of perspectives on the news of the day. "Now these perspectives are in conversation. They're talking with one another." This in turn has implications for the journalist's ideal of objectivity: "some of the heft and value of objectivity now can be had through multiple subjectivity… because now we're talking with one another. We haven't had that before. That's new to blogging." As a result, "we are together building this world of meaning that's shot through with humanness. … blogs help us build this world. A world of human beings, human meaning, being built in conversation."

In conclusion, Weinberger thinks we are going through a period of tremendous upheaval as we transition away from a world in which truths, morality and facts were handed down to ordinary people: through religious texts, through the teachings of respected philosophers, through novels, through the New York Times and through the TV. "We have been on couches, we have been sitting on the couch facing forward and it has been given to us," he says. "Well that's not going to happen anymore. We're in a world in which we are infusing the world with our meaning. And it's incredibly messy, it's unbelievably disorganized… We're engaged in a global project of taking down the trees and rolling in the leaves." Will order emerge from the chaos? Maybe, or maybe not. But whatever happens, Weinberger believes, "the world will be so much better off for it."

Session 6: Brendan Greeley: podcasting, credibility and non-text media

People have been text-blogging for a long time now, and people have been uploading MP3 audio files to their blogs for quite some time. Then Dave Winer had the idea of putting audio "enclosures" in RSS feeds, which makes it possible for aggregator or "newsreader" programs to automatically download audio. This can then easily be transferred to an iPod or other MP3 player. This little difference, says Brendan Greeley of the Public Radio Exchange, has made a big difference: it "has turned anyone into a broadcaster." Podcasting, as this new form of audio-blogging is generally called, is the ultimate public radio. But most public radio stations have yet to catch on to the potential of digital distribution.

In public broadcasting today, Greeley says, station managers are hungrily searching for "new voices" that will catch on with their audiences. The problem with public radio is that programming decisions get set far in advance and are difficult to change. The barriers to entry are tremendous. Podcasting, on the other hand, has "zero barriers to entry." Decent audio quality can be achieved with a Mac, free software downloadable off the web and a bit of gear that can be bought at any Radio Shack. Public broadcasters demand a higher level of "sound fidelity," however, which requires much more expensive tools to achieve. That, in addition to the inflexibility of programming, is the main barrier to entry for most aspiring radio programmers. It is enforced, he says, by something he calls the "NPR Sound Nazis."

Podcasters don't care about "sound Nazis" and programming directors: they can find and reach audiences without them. One of several examples Greeley cited is Adam Curry's Daily Source Code, in which the former MTV host sits in his kitchen and talks for a while in front of an open mike…sometimes stopping to let out the dogs or talk to the plumber, all of which gets recorded and fed out to listeners in his daily podcast. It's an authentic voice, but it's not the kind of thing that public radio would put on air. Why does Adam Curry care when he already has a few hundred thousand people downloading his show every day?

Ironically, such voices are not deemed "credible" to public broadcasters because they're not produced according to certain professional standards and norms, despite the fact that one could argue that Curry's unvarnished, direct voice – coming to you from the middle of his real life – ought to be considered more authentic and thus more credible than a polished public radio piece.

So, Greeley asks: "Where do podcasting and public radio meet?" One way is that a popular podcaster could wind up on the radio. "You can present your audience that you have built up on your own to a broadcaster and say, 'I come with this audience. These people like me. It's a proven show.' And that's something that wasn't possible before." Podcasting, he believes, "is like a blog finding its own audience." That also means that a podcaster can experiment and change their formats and styles at very little cost until they hit upon something that a large number of people find unique and want to hear.

Greeley ended his presentation with a few predictions:

1. "Podcasting will start to be adopted faster than blogging was simply because people are aware of citizens' media now… people are aware that these things can change the way we look at media."
2. The question now is: "How do broadcasters find these voices and bring them into the fold? …or should we be leaving them alone and letting them do their own thing?"
3. We need to think about where the raw material for podcasts will come from.

This third point relates to copyrights and digital media management systems. It's easy and legal for bloggers to quote a sentence or two from print media articles and link to their original web pages. The equivalent in podcasting would be to use short clips or "soundbites" from speeches, TV and radio programs, etc. But this is not legal. (Some would argue that it should be, and did in the next session.) In music, music labels are reluctant to distribute copyrighted music through podcasting.

The floor was opened up to questions. How do you find podcasts you might want to listen to? Greeley pointed out that podcast ranking, recommendation, and search services are emerging just as there are similar services for blogs.

What about the business model? So far, Greeley says, nobody has worked one out for commercial purposes, but many public radio stations are starting to use the podcast as an alternative means to distribute their shows to people who would rather listen to them on their iPod than on the radio.

I (Rebecca MacKinnon) said I believe the next step in the evolution of audio-citizen journalism involves the mobile phone. People will soon not only be able to record audio to the web through their mobile phones, but also receive podcast feeds through their web-enabled phones and store them on offline MP3 players integrated into those phones. I asked Any Carvin of the Digital Divide Network to talk more about the exciting possibilities of combining mobile phones and podcasting.

Carvin uses a service, Audlink.com, to record from his mobile phone directly onto the web. It doesn't automatically create enclosures or an RSS feed, so the podcast is not automatic, but it's a useful too. He also uses a tool called audioblogger.com which enables the blogger to "call in" to their blog and post audio files directly on it. He calls this process "mobcasting," and actually produced some "mobcasts" of the conference at various points. He has been thinking about how mobcasting could be used as a tool for citizen-journalism in parts of the world where internet connections remain hard to come by, but mobile phones are becoming commonplace.

Carvin had one further point: about Creative Commons and the importance of having free audio content for people to use in their podcasts. Ethan Zuckerman pointed out a very useful development in the emergence of services like IT Conversations, which make the audio of speeches and conferences freely available as podcasts. "This technology and this culture," he says, "makes it possible to repurpose as much audio as you can."

Minnesota Public Radio's Bill Buzenberg pointed out that MPR is now podcasting. He also praised the Public Radio Exchange for the way in which it makes a broad range of radio shows and reports easily available on the web, not only for large public radio stations but also for small stations operating out of basements.

Iranian blogger Hossein Derakhshan, participating through online chat, pointed out that in the third world, there are many people who have no access to traditional media, who would like to create content and contribute, but do not have access to the computer server space to physically to host their audio files. This is a problem, I agreed. Groups like Carvin's Digital Divide Network and the Berkman Center are hoping to help do something about it.

Dave Winer said he believes the real revolution will come not from cell phones, but when most major cities have free wifi, coupled with wireless-enabled iPods or similar devices. Imagine what you could do if your iPod had subscription software and wireless internet connection, and could download podcast feeds directly? Then you will be able to subscribe to podcasts from anywhere, wherever you are, without needing to use your computer as interface. "This is all going to be happening so quickly that any dragging of the heels at all amongst professional radio people is going to leave them wondering what happened when the dust settles."

Session 7: Gillmor and Wales: Looking to the future

This session began with Ethan Zuckerman as moderator. He introduced Jimmy Wales of Wikipedia and Dan Gillmor, who recently left the *San Jose Mercury News* to build a new grassroots journalism project, which at the time of the conference was still in the early stages of formation. Zuckerman invited each of them to describe their work and answer questions, then invited Wales and Gillmor to lead the discussion directly. The focus began with issues of linking, reproduction, and attribution on the web, then moved on to a conversation about the way in which news organizations handle their archived content online, and whether it would be in their long-term business interests to make this content freely and permanently available to all internet users.

Jimmy Wales on Wikipedia's new project, Wikinews

Wikinews is the latest spin-off project of Wikipedia, as a free, online, volunteer-produced encyclopedia that has been growing steadily since it began in 2001. (See earlier discussion of Wikipedia in Session 3, the first Friday afternoon session.) Like Wikipedia, Wikinews is a news site produced online entirely by the distributed efforts of volunteers. It began in late 2004 and remains extremely experimental. Wiki culture and values are very different from those of the "blogosphere." A blogger's voice and point-of-view is made very clear, and this transparency and straightforwardness about one's personality, background, and bias are considered essential to the blogger's ability to gain readers' trust and build credibility. The Wiki culture – in the encyclopedia as well as in the news

site – is very different. Wikipedia's authors are unknown to the casual reader of wikipedia entries (although if you are a member of the author community or are technically savvy about wiki software, there are ways to figure out who wrote what). Another very important value of both Wikipedia and Wikinews is "Neutral Point of View" – known to the wiki community as "NPOV." If somebody tries to insert opinion, unverifiable facts, or widely disputed facts into a Wikipedia entry, that material will be quickly deleted by other authors.

Wales believes NPOV was essential for Wikipedia's success for two reasons. The first is obvious: neutrality is essential for a credible encyclopedia. The second underlies the motivation behind thousands of volunteer "wikipedians" who are willing to work for free: "For a social community," Wales believes, "the neutral point of view policy enables us to have a way to get people to work together." People who achieve positions of respect within that community do so because they treat others with respect, whether or not they agree on anything. "People laugh at me, but we talk about love and respect a lot," Wales says.

The day before the conference, Wikinews was at least 12 hours faster than any of the news agencies in breaking a story on demonstrations in Belize. Zuckerman asked Wales to describe how that was reported, and how the wiki community decides what is credible and newsworthy. According to Wales, word of demonstrations in Belize first came from a "respected Wikipedian" who lived in Belize and who was known to the Wikipedia community as a credible person. A volunteer effort then ensued, scouring the web to verify his information. They found an advisory about it on a British government website, and from there felt confident in "running" the story, complete with pictures taken by the wikinews volunteer in Belize. If this had been a story in Iraq, Wales acknowledges, the big news organizations would have been over it quickly. But in countries where the mainstream media has little presence and to which little attention is generally paid, wikinews and its volunteers have, potentially, a very interesting role to play.

In response to a question by David Weinberger about who comprises the Wikipedia and Wikinews communities, Wales responds: "anyone on the planet who wants can come and edit a page right now." The caveat is that they must be a relatively tech-savvy person who can figure out how to log in and set up authorship privileges for themselves, but no-one is excluded from doing so. The community is policed for socially unacceptable, rude, and inappropriate behavior, but all points of view are welcome as long as they are presented in a rational, respectful manner, backed up with factual arguments. Wikipedia can only succeed and be credible if it remains open, Wales believes. Questioned on the demographics of the wikipedian author community, Wales admits that authors of the English language wikipedia are primarily white males. He recognizes this as a problem: "we're really trying to hard to reach out to people in different areas." Wikipedia is also trying to "reach out" to the Arabic-speaking online community in order to build an Arabic-language Wikipedia that would be credible to the Arab world. "There's a real need in that culture for a good neutral encyclopedia," he says, "so we're trying to reach out but it's difficult."

What is Wikipedia's financial model? Wales says it's a non-profit model, funded by public donations to the Wikimedia Foundation. But because Wikipedia is built entirely by volunteers, costs are shockingly low. The only thing that is actually paid for is bandwidth and hardware. Computer servers are administered 24 hours a day by volunteers around the globe. Editorially, nobody is hired to manage the project either. "There's nothing top down about it and that's actually one of the things that people find really hard to understand," Wales says. "People say, well, who's responsible for this? I don't know. Who did that? I don't know." Wales says over the past 12 months costs amounted to about $250,000. Based on the ratio of traffic-to-expenditure on sites like the BBC's news site, it should have been more like $20 million. Herein lies the real challenge that volunteer-based information organizations pose to conventional media and information businesses: "If citizens, if individuals, can organize themselves, and they're passionate about what they're doing as a hobby, and they're replicating or surpassing what was traditionally done by very heavy, expensive organizations, those organizations are going to have a really hard time adapting and surviving."

How does Wikinews aim to position itself in the news ecosystem? Who is the target audience and what particular, currently-unfilled news demand is it aiming to fill? Wales had a surprising answer: he has no idea.

> We're going to see what the community comes up with. Part of it is it grew out of a demand from within the community that people wanted to try this and it sounded cool and interesting so we're going to try it. It ends being a fantastic news resource that, you know, puts the *New York Times* to shame. That's fine, if it ends up being niche journalism. That's fine if it ends up being magazine length analysis that's fine too. I don't know. We'll see what happens.

For now, Wikinews is doing very little original reporting – despite the recent Belize example. Most wikinews articles are based on the synthesis, checking, and triangulation of news coming from a number of sources. He says that so far, the stigma against plagiarism and copyright violation within the Wikipedia community has been quite effective in ensuring that stolen material is not posted, and that all sources are duly credited. One possible vision for Wikinews' future, Wales thinks, might be to become the master-synthesizer of what journalists are reporting around the world on any given news story.

That said, political consultant and blogger Faye Anderson expressed the hope that Wikinews could become a place where news about unreported, under-reported, and mis-reported communities can emerge. Wales agreed that would be a great goal once Wikinews is able to work out a system whereby every article remains true to the NPOV ideal, so that Wikinews does not turn into a place where everybody can post any views and information they want publicized.

Dan Gillmor on grassroots journalism

Gillmor explained that he is still working to define and shape his grassroots journalism project since resigning from the *San Jose Mercury News* late last year. The aim, he says,

is to "bring to the fervor and energy and knowledge and talent out there at the edges, the citizens and the grass roots. I'd like to bring to that – not impose on it but offer to it – the best practices and principles that we've learned in a lot of decades of professional journalism." To that end, he is working with some other people to create a new kind of methodology or platform that can marry the best of professional journalism with the best of citizens' participatory media. This would include some kind of educational platform.

One example, Gillmor says, is that most people who are not journalists don't know what the Freedom of Information Act is. "Most people have no idea that's for all of us, not just for the journalists, priesthood and the corporate people who use it more than anybody." This is one area in which a grassroots network could help empower ordinary people: "help people find the things that journalists kind of do everyday and use everyday as tools."

Once the framework is established, Gillmor hopes to "put that to work on a couple of sites… that would basically look at community in several ways: one, community of interest, and then a community of geography." He is working on a site based on a particular "community of interest," but was not prepared to reveal its exact focus at the conference.

The real problem is figuring out the business model. "I'm looking for a really great businessperson to come in and join me to effectively figure out the revenue model," Gillmor says, "Because right now I'm not sure what that is."

Issues of linking, attribution, verification, and permissions

What should the standards be for fact-checking, identity disclosure, and verification of information posted on blogs and news sites? Are – or should – the standards be the same for blogs and "professional journalism?" Is there confusion about ownership and rights of material that ordinary people post on the web?

It was clear from the discussion that a range of bloggers apply a wide range of criteria and standards for linking to information on other web-pages. Many link because they find something interesting, but not because they endorse it. Sometimes people link to things they disagree with. Sometimes they link to things that seem significant and require noting, whether or not they turn out to be true.

Jim Kennedy of the AP described a situation in which a reporter found pictures that were deemed to be newsworthy on a public family photo-sharing website. AP ran the pictures after checking and verifying them, but did not have the family's permission. The family sued but AP maintained they had done nothing illegal because the pictures had been posted in publicly accessible internet space, without password protection. This led to a discussion of the difference between linking and reproducing something – and the different levels of endorsement and ownership implied by the different actions.

Bloggers in the room tended to agree that they apply different and less stringent standards of verification and endorsement when they link to things from their blogs, than they might if they were editors of news organizations.

That, David Weinberger believes, is exactly what makes blogging different from mainstream journalism. "I absolutely report on rumors and gossip and speculation in my web blog," he said. "I pass them along, I try always to qualify it with some English language around it saying, this is a really cool rumor. I don't know if it's true." In this way he is making no attempt to "be a little journalist." He is talking with other bloggers around a virtual water cooler. He believes that the most revolutionary challenges to news organizations will come from. "The place I believe where you should look for this to happen is not among the sort of journalist bloggers but among the people who don't think of themselves as journalists at all. They're just blogging."

Ethan Zuckerman's response to this is worth quoting in full:

> I find that a little disingenuous. And you know, I just did a Technorati check, and you've got 2200 links from 1500 sources over the last, you know, "n" period of time. You have an extremely effective water cooler and it's a water cooler with permanence as well. So these are two things that water coolers don't normally have. One is that you've got an audience far larger than the four or five people who listen to me over the water cooler and anything you say around the water cooler shows up as part of the permanent record and it's indexed. And in some cases, because of how effective a water cooler speaker you are, it is indexed more prominently than by what journalists say. So I guess I just want to challenge this notion that just because we haven't found ourselves as journalists on the continuum, that somehow there isn't an enormous amount of power to what's going on here and with that power is certain amount of responsibility.

Zephyr Teachout pointed to Thisisrumorcontrol.com… a foreign policy news blog that rates the information it posts on a scale of 1 to 10 ranging from absolute certainty to total rumor. This might be one model to help a blog's readers evaluate the information being posted and linked-to. Dan Gillmor said he believes the new information environment makes the role of websites like factcheck.org all the more important.

Jane Singer warned that the more freewheeling way in which blogs pass unverified information around could do real harm to innocent people.

Jay Rosen pointed out that the process of reducing raw information from "uncertainty" to "certainty" – which used to happen through the work of journalists before their stories got published – is now taking place publicly, online. That is something that the public needs to understand.

Calls for free and permanent online archives

Jimmy Wales, Jay Rosen, Dan Gillmor, Robert Cox, Dave Winer, Bill Mitchell and a number of other participants all agreed that the mainstream media should make its archived news material freely available on the web, with permanent URL web addresses attached to each piece of unique content. Many people advocated also putting this content under a Creative Commons license so that bloggers, podcasters, and others can legally quote and sample the material with attribution.[23] What is the business incentive for news companies to do this? Right now, many mainstream news organizations are looking at the high search-rankings of blogs and wikipedia entries and looking at ways to beef up their own visibility in Google searches. Wales says the obvious way to do this is to stop moving your older content behind a for-pay, password-protected firewall after it is a week or two old. "If you put your work out under a free license and you let people copy it but they have to link back to you, this is just going to increase your traffic."

Jim Kennedy of the AP pointed out that especially with images and video, doing that would encourage a great deal of theft, alteration, distortion, and abuse. It would be impossible to police.

Returning to the issue of archiving, Dave Winer asked what this means for credibility: "How do we judge the credibility of publication or an author when we can't go back and look and see what they wrote about what's now history?"

David Sifry of Technorati expressed his frustration with what he called the "elephant in the room." There needs to be a business model to justify the change. How do news companies make money if they make the switch?

Jay Rosen said he believes news companies will make money if they make the change.[24] Now, the archive goes behind the wall after a period of days. It "becomes lost to bloggers, lost to Google, lost to cultural memory, lost to high school students doing their papers, lost to the power of permanence on the web." Several participants agreed that as a result, not only is tremendous social value lost, but so is the opportunity for web traffic that might potentially generate more advertising revenue than is currently generated through the click-and-pay archive access system.

The test, however, will come when some bold news company actually takes the risk and makes the change. Somebody must take the lead and prove that a new business model exists, and can work.

[23] http://creativecommons.org/

[24] He has since written more on this issue. See "A Little Detail in the Sale of About.com to the New York Times" at http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/02/20/abt_nyt.html

Session 8: Wrap-up

In his concluding remarks, Alex Jones said he had learned, among other things, that the act of "blogging" means a wide range of different things to different bloggers – and what's more, that different bloggers use the blog format to different ends: some to have a conversation with a community of interest, some to report news, some to express opinion. He suggested it might be useful, as we talk about this new medium, to develop a new language beyond the term "blogging," in order to better differentiate between the different kinds of things taking place in "the blogosphere," many with rather different purposes. Jones also hopes that the "passion and idealism" of the blogosphere will be preserved. He worries, however, that the power of participatory media may become co-opted by corporations, and hopes that this can be prevented.

Jones also believes, however, that the work of professional journalists and news companies cannot and should not be entirely replaced by the distributed work of volunteers, along the lines of Wikinews. That said, he *does* believe that these new forms of participatory media and distributed, volunteer journalism can help make *all* journalism better: that the new environment will force professional journalists to be "more accessible, transparent, and better at what they do."

How do we "put a disruptive technology to work to the betterment of this world"? John Palfrey said he believes that after a day and a half of talking we remain a long way from any answers. He was heartened, though, by the strong sense of "shared commitment" – among bloggers and mainstream journalists alike – to find some answers. But Palfrey also predicted that the people who will ultimately lead the change were not in the room: they're the lone bloggers in distant countries nobody in the room has heard about, they're the individuals writing to wikinews and people in random places uploading pictures onto the web or talking into microphones. That is where the real change will come from. He hopes that "what we might do as we leave the room is to harness, to encourage, to push forward that energy."

Jonathan Zittrain believes that for better or worse, "our view of intellectual property," and how IP laws evolve over the coming years, will be very important to the way in which participatory media is able to evolve. The "underlying tension" remains: "how to create those structures that make that information happen and how to make people usefully be able to participate in it in a way that really works."

David Weinberger believes that despite our focus on credibility, credibility will not be the driving force of change – or success of news media. "It seems to me that what's actually going to drive whatever the change is – which I don't know what it's going to be but it's going to be something – that what's actually going to drive it is not credibility but interest." What is the "blogosphere," after all, if it's not a bunch of people writing about what interests them and pointing to it?

Several points were made about the international aspects of participatory media. Ethan Zuckerman reminded us that cyberspace knows no national borders, and that most of the

ideas discussed at this conference are much more revolutionary and disruptive in many other countries than they are in the United States. Xiao Qiang of Chinadigitalnews observes: “I think the blogosphere is a chaos…And think the traditional media, mainstream media, is order. It has structure…. And think what we’re looking at is at the edge of the chaos where the order is meeting the chaos." He agrees with Ethan that the implications for participatory media are much more revolutionary in places like China, where communities have a place to talk about their interests for the first time. International news, he believes, is essentially one community talking to another, but before, that had to happen through intermediaries like governments and professional media. Now it can happen directly between communities. This is very significant.

I cautioned that right now the blogosphere is driven by the “early adopters” who are primarily white, middle class, and first-world. As the new media ecosystem evolves in which blogs and mainstream media influence each other, a self-reinforcing feedback loop of interest is developing. The danger is that the interests and voices of certain groups who are not participating in the online conversation will be excluded as much from the new conversation – or perhaps even more – than they were from the old. Concerted efforts must be made to bring people who are currently not participating into the conversation. We need to help make people who are not white and middle class understand the power of blogging to further their interests and agendas. We also need to make sure they have fair access to the tools they need in order to participate in this conversation.

David Sifry believes that much remains to be done, and that the existing software tools remain very primitive compared to what they might potentially be able to do. He believes that people who are making media tools of the future have a "huge responsibility… to behave responsibly and to understand that there are sometimes unintended consequences, both good and ill." Secondly, he reminds the group "never to forget that the users are the people who are the most important… And, in a sense, it’s not only just about people creating the news, but it’s also about people who are listening and who are participating and who are living their regular lives. And it’s about giving them the tools that they need."

In Dave Winer’s view, one of the most meaningful parts of the conference was just the process of getting bloggers and journalists together in the same room and understand each other better as human beings. “I think we could get along and I think that we could approach it without dismissing each other as either being trivial or obsolete," he says. “Remember that we’re all people…trying to do the best that we can." People who share a passion for news and public dialogue. We have more in common than we realized before.

Jay Rosen announced: “The forces of denial are in retreat!” Mainstream American journalism has been one of the great strengths of the United States, but it’s now in crisis. The blogs have risen to challenge mainstream media’s legitimacy, but many news organizations have already been moving fast to change and adapt. “What I heard at this conference surprised me a little bit, frankly, because people are further along in this openness than I thought they were… Something has happened.”

Open Session

On Saturday afternoon we held a public session, open to anybody who wanted to attend. Unfortunately, due to a snowstorm, not many conference participants were able to stay for the session, and not as many additional people came as we had otherwise expected. Nonetheless, there was a spirited discussion and debate. Dave Winer moderated.

The session spanned a wide range of issues. A lot of time was devoted to the question of linking and responsibility. Do you "own" everything you link to? In other words, does linking equal endorsement? Are you responsible for linking to something which ends up being factually incorrect – or even libelous? Dave Winer summed up what many people in the room felt: "You don't own links but there is some implied responsibility." Jon Garfunkel expressed concerns about linking to blogs and blog posts without having checked them out thoroughly.

John Bonné believes that linking does not equal endorsement. At the same time, the blogger or mainstream media website does have some responsibility for what it chooses to link to. "Part of the editing process – not just in the text we publish, but the links we publish – is saying what do we feel would actually expand the things we're talking about beyond the word count that we have?" Links are a great way to refer people to more information – and conversations going on about whatever topic an article or blog post is focusing on. Ethan Zuckerman, in a viewpoint echoed by others, pointed out that if you have to vet everything meticulously before you link to it, people will not link to very much at all, which defeats the purpose of what much blogging is about – a web of links and conversation across the web. John Palfrey suggested that while you shouldn't be considered to "own" everything you link to, "it's about the context in which you make it," and that this is important to consider. Dave Winer concludes that linking does not equal endorsement: it's "merely saying that you're attention belongs here. You should be aware of what is going on here – nothing more than that." Many people in the room echoed the feeling, however, that by linking to something, a blogger directs attention to it, and while this is not endorsement it does have implications that must be considered by responsible bloggers – and mainstream media – in the context of linking. The context in which something is being linked-to may be different in different cases, and it's important to make this clear.

Later on in the session, the conversation turned to why mainstream media organizations would want to develop and link to a "stable of bloggers" who provide more insights and information on issues covered in a more informal and personal way than the professional journalists will do in the news pages. When MSNBC or other organizations do this, to what extent are they liable for the inaccuracies and biases of these blogs they're linking to? There are no easy answers, but it appears, ultimately, that the only real answer is that editors linking to blogs and blog posts need to be considering the implications of drawing attention to a blog or an individual blog post every time they link to it, and that specific circumstances may dictate different decisions in different cases.

Other topics covered included podcasting, and the issue of helping the non-tech savvy public more comfortable with consuming – and participating in – blogs, podcasts, and other new forms of participatory media. As Lisa Williams pointed out: "Between the point of having an ipod and reading a newspaper article about podcasting and getting to the point where you are actually set up and programs are automatically downloading for you and getting onto your ipod is still a pretty big leap. There's not a lot of public information about how to do that."

Lisa Williams also had an interesting take on the conference's "bloggers vs. journalists" discussion. Blogs, podcasts, and other things are by no means a threat to existing media forms, but they provide more options. She said: "New media doesn't destroy old media, what happens is that stories are like water they flow into where they feel most comfortable." What she finds most interesting and most useful about podcasts and blogs, "is in places where blogs actually do not compete with media." Filling niches that are unfilled by traditional media forms. That's the most important potential for new media.

A fair amount of time was also spent discussing the "constraints" and limitations of existing software tools for blogging and other forms of citizens' media. "I use it the way it forces me to use and if it were different I would use it in a different way," said Lisa Williams. This sentiment and frustration with the "constraints of blogging software" was echoed strongly by John Hinderaker and Jay Rosen. Several people appealed to the software development community to expand the options and possibilities. Dave Winer pointed out that software developers can't read users' minds, and that users need to be very clear about what they want to do but can't currently do, if they want to see changes. Wikipedian Sam Klein (known to many as SJ) pointed out that "there is a real art to organizing information" which currently goes under-appreciated, and which may be the key to the future of participatory media. This part of the discussion echoed the point made several times during the conference by Jan Schaffer and others, that the current tools on-offer remain primitive and inadequate. The challenge now is for users, journalists, and software developers to work together, figure out what kinds of new tools or features will help improve the public dialogue. And these tools will need to be as easy to use – if not easier to use – than current blogging tools.

Aftermath

The conference wrapped up after lunch on Saturday. On Sunday afternoon, Jay Rosen sent out an email to the participant list-serv, asking everybody to tell him "one thing you changed your mind about," or at least learned, as a result of the conference. [25]

Distinctions between blogging and journalism:

Jill Abramson: "While I still have a huge amount to learn about blogs, I wish you guys would try to learn and understand more about traditional journalism-- like calling anyone named in a story in a prominent way for comment (even when you are sure your facts are right.) You can be accurate and unfair. I don't ever want to impose our standards on blogs, but I wish you all at least knew the walk we walk."

Lee Rainie: " I had read the thought before but didn't quite get the wisdom of the notion until Jay said it: The difference between the mainstream media and bloggers is that reporters are edited before they publish and bloggers are edited after they publish. Bloggers have a lot to teach mainstream-ers about the virtues of opening up newsroom processes and making corrections/amplifications after publication. The mainstream media can offer bloggers some good lessons in why it's often important -- even if it's time consuming -- to try to get things right before they publish."

Jeff Jarvis: "Now having had that Kumbaya moment, I also saw that continued tension is a good thing, for it forces us from each perspective to reexamine how we think and view the world and do our jobs. That's all the more reason to keep coming together in mixed company."

Alex Jones: "The idealism and passion of blogging are its most precious qualities, and accountability and transparency are its core values. If institutional journalism can tap these qualities and values, journalism can be renewed. If blogging can maintain them, blogging will grow in influence and importance. These are both big ifs."

Tom Rosenstiel: "Bloggers define themselves as the antidote to journalism in some ways. I think they have more in common with old media than they realize. I don't know of any journalists looking seriously at journalism's or the Web's future who think of blogs as a threat. They are a complement to journalism, to the conversation among citizens, to consideration of the public square.

Apathy, poor education, triviality, banality, commercialism, the culture of spin, phony astro-turf groups that pose as grass roots, conglomeration—all these in different ways pose more of a risk to democratic society, to bloggers and to journalism. I suspect

[25] See Rosen's three blog posts compiling all the answers, at:
http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/26/brkm_own.html,
http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/26/bkm_two.html, and
http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/26/bkm_iii.html

bloggers are some of journalism's best customers, and vice versa, and I suspect in a few years we will see ourselves much more as allies (strange bedfellows. perhaps) than bloggers sense now."

Judith Donath: "The New York Times seeks to be credible not only in its individual articles, but in its choices of what to print-- and as importantly, what not to print…. Bloggers tell their readers what they think is interesting or important, but there is no attempt at comprehensiveness. … Bloggers are independent because they want to write about what they see as important; the mainstream media needs to hire reporters because there is a larger definition of what is important. Not everyone gets to write about Iraq, the tsunami or the inauguration."

Jane Singer: "So far, bloggers are dealing with this responsibility primarily by emphasizing transparency, at least as I understand it; journalists deal with it primarily be emphasizing objectivity (which I agree is problematic, at least as typically enacted) and veracity or verification. Both are fundamentally important, and it will be interesting to see the ways in which these two different cultural approaches to exercising the power of information can continue to converge, evolve and ultimately strengthen both forms."

Orville Schell: "The truth is that neither side constitutes the answer. The challenge for us is how to integrate the best virtues from each side of this currently rather yawning abyss."

News organizations should open their online archives

Bill Mitchell: "My going in thinking: Unlikely that news organizations would ever give up this revenue stream.

Early re-thinking, based on just a bit of reporting while snowed in Sunday: The range of news orgs generating significant revenue from archives with current biz models may be more limited than I had assumed.

All of which is underscored by this comment from Tom Rosenstiel: "I suspect bloggers are some of journalism's best customers, and vice versa." If that's true, and I think it might be, what does that suggest about how news organizations and bloggers might collaborate on new approaches to archives?"

Alex Jones: "Open archives is a *great* idea! It makes moral and professional sense. But it also has great potential for building audience, especially at newspapers. All it would take is a successful experiment at a couple of respected newspapers that show the income from selling reprints could be matched or exceeded from advertising at a newspaper's "old news" web site and from special services (for instance, tapping the desire for a momento by selling framed photocopies of actual clips). Result: win-win-win."

Business model: where is it?

Jeff Jarvis: "What did surprise me is how far we are from solving those issues in a world of distributed networks (that no one owns) replacing centralized marketplaces, a world with Wikipedia overtaking a $350 million encyclopedia business and CraigsList vaporizing $65 million in classified revenue in just one market."

Jim Kennedy: "The real "ecosystem" of news — with reporters, editors, bloggers and wikipedians — won't truly flourish until we figure out how to support it. Can we provide services to each other, form business partnerships, generate mutual traffic benefits?"

Jill Abramson: "Neither those of us from the mainstream media, especially print, nor you in blogworld, have figured out a business model on the Internet that could pay for and sustain the kind of deep, global news-gathering operation with highly experienced, trained reporters that is the lifeblood of the Times.

That there is not as wide a gulf between bloggers and journalists as I thought going in, although there are obvious differences, and ones that need to be respected by both worlds. The things that divide us are not all bad. There is no one better model for sharing information and informing the public.

The conference left me with a greater appetite than ever to figure out ways that a place like the Times can capture some of the vitality and energy and voice that makes so many blogs so readable and useful, without completely sacrificing the standards that guide our news reporting and editing."

Dan Gillmor: "We're not close to figuring out the business model either for tomorrow's citizen journalists or today's mass media as they make the transition to what's coming. But we'd better, or society is the loser (see No. 1)."

Rebecca MacKinnon: "In cyberspace, ideas no longer need clear plans to create something revolutionary. Your community organically takes your idea and runs with it, shaping it into whatever they need that they don't already have. Craigslist is an excellent--and profitable--example, though Craig isn't doing news, yet. (I'm betting he will.)

This kind of approach to media innovation doesn't strike me as very appealing, however, to corporate boards and shareholders of companies that own news organizations. Which is why the future belongs outside of corporate concentrated media."

Brooks Jackson: "Bloggers are ill prepared to deal with the tests they will be facing soon, mainly how to deal with lawsuits. I doubt that pro-bono legal representation will go very far in keeping a blogger going in the face of a big libel suit from a determined corporate opponent, or from an aggressive prosecutor. I suspect blogging is (legally speaking) right now about where Napster was, before the record industry went after it."

Jan Schaffer: "Could we produce the kind of journalism that would cause our audiences to stand up and take notice? Journalism that is totally out front of the mainstream media — not reactive or playing catch-up. Not easily spun. Powerfully informative.

The mindset should be zagging instead of zigging. I consider guerrilla journalism to be journalism that zags — away from conventional wisdom, above the fray of feuding candidates, and never stooping to stenography.

So what does it look like? In my mind, it is heavily steeped in database reporting. It connects the dots on meta issues to give readers "news epiphanies." And it is heavily visual or graphic— the better to avoid the conventions of he said/she said reporting or the pitfalls of false equivalencies."

Wikipedia blows everybody's mind

Dan Gillmor: "Watch Jimmy Wales and his community for many of the lessons the rest of us need to learn. I'm still skeptical of WikiNews in a bunch of ways, but what he and his WikiPedia community have done is astonishing."

Rebecca MacKinnon: "After listening to Jimbo, I realize that saying 'it can't be done' would be like scoffing at Ted Turner's idea of a 24-hour TV news network. Now I think: 'it just might be possible.'"

Brooks Jackson: "The Wiki world has even more potential than I imagined. I am going to be trying to learn more about it as I work through how to re-design my own website for the next four years."

Final Feedback

Jay Rosen, on his Pressthink blog, had the following reaction to the way in which the conference had been organized: **"Note to conference planners**.... This event showed that an invitation-only conference and a public weblog about it are in conflict. They don't mix. You can't be open to participation and invitation-only. At least, that is the state of our knowledge right now.

Going in, I thought the Blogging, Journalism, Credibility conference weblog was a good idea. Now it needs a re-think. More thought needs to go not into "branding," but into naming such an event, along with explaining its genesis, who's coming and why, what the point is, what the expectations are, and so on."

Of the participants who responded to feedback requests via e-mail after the conference, most felt that having the open blog and webcast added rather than detracted from the conference. Some felt we might have approached the blog a bit differently (being more careful about what we linked to and who we gave author privileges to) if we had known it would garner as much attention as it did.

Some participants who came from the "mainstream media" side felt that it would have been useful to structure the discussions differently to make up for the fact bloggers tend to be much more talkative and opinionated at conferences than the professional journalists. Thus the blogger perspective tends to dominate. One suggestion was that in future there should be smaller breakout groups focusing on particular problems and issues.

Many participants felt, in retrospect, that while they learned a lot and expanded their thinking in a number of ways, not much was learned about credibility per se. Thus the conference may have been mis-labeled.

Quite a number of participants felt that too many of the bloggers in the room had ties to the journalism profession in one way or another, and this made the group unrepresentative. "On another day," wrote Walter Bender of the MIT Media Lab, "it'd be interesting to focus on the 99.9% of the bloggers who aren't journalist (or journalist wannabees) in their day jobs."

Others believed that having "blogging" in the conference title was also misleading. Much discussion was devoted to wikis and other kinds of participatory media tools. Robert Cox of the Media Bloggers Association suggested: "maybe a start would be changing the name. Blogging is a useless word. It means nothing. … Dan Gillmor is closer to the idea with grassroots journalism, the pros/cons, whether/how it can be encouraged/supported/defended, developing some taxonomy, how big media folks can adapt it without killing it, risks," etc. Matthew Sheffield of Ratherbiased.com, who was not in the room but who followed the conference online, made this very interesting point in an email, suggesting it might be fodder for future conference discussions:

> Differences between bloggers and other internet denizens. There are several distinct ways that people use the internet for conversation that don't really get studied such as newsgroups, forums, mailing lists, IRC users, muders/mooers, or ad-hoc addressbook junkies. As an anthropological event, these other areas of the net are understudied.
>
> In many ways, these people are even faster-moving (though more inaccurate) than bloggers. As someone who studies the news cycle, it is fascinating to observe that many stories start on these places, move to blogs, then to radio/cable, to newspapers, to broadcast news, to magazines.

Many people expressed the hope that a future conference might focus specifically on creating a viable business model that would enable news organizations to keep their stories permanently and freely available on the web.

David Weinberger suggested another important line of discussion: how new participatory media changes the readers/viewers. In an email he writes: "This might help move the focus off the journalistic and "hit squad" bloggers. Those phenomena are important, but I think we all understand them better than we understand the "long tail" as a social phenomenon. So, suppose we were to take as an hypothesis that writing a blog changes the way the blogger appropriates media. I think that might give us a way to talk about the effect of blogging and how it's changing the nature of trust and credibility, without having us focus on blogging as a form of journalism."

Online communication strategist Aldon Hynes, who participated remotely, had the following suggestion: "How do we through journalism and blogging promote a culture of 'interactive deliberation' as opposed to a culture of 'gotcha muckraking'. Can the media ecology provide a good space for a true Habermasian Public Sphere? If so, what needs to be done to make this happen? I think this ties nicely to the question of ethics. It seems as non-ethical media (that is media that isn't necessarily unethical, but just attempts to sidestep the ethical questions), thwarts such a development. What else thwarts or promotes interactive deliberation and a Habermasian Public Sphere."

The works of Philosopher Jurgen Habermas, writing in the earlier part of the last century, have been a source of inspiration for people who are now writing and thinking about how the internet can be used to strengthen grassroots democracy.[26] Habermas wrote that discourse becomes democratic through the "non-coercively unifying, consensus building force of a discourse in which participants overcome their at first subjectively biased views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement ."[27]

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[26] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%FCrgen_Habermas

[27] See http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/gaynor/publics.htm, http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/habermas.htm, http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/bassr/gaynor/bib.htm, and http://socwww.cwru.edu/~atp5/habermas.html

Strengthening the public discourse, and strengthening democracy, is indeed the common ground shared by professional journalists, bloggers, wikipedians and others involved in the creation of grassroots media.

The conference established two important things: 1) that this common ground does indeed exist, and 2) that all are eager to work together. The goal is to create a better society and better means of giving citizens both the information they need and the forums of discourse required to hold their leaders truly accountable. Now we need to figure out how to achieve that goal. This conference has helped point us in the right direction, but the work – and the journey – has only just begun.

APPENDIX A1: Jay Rosen's essay

PRESSthink
BY JAY ROSEN

Story location:
http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/21/berk_essy.html

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January 21, 2005

Bloggers vs. Journalists is Over

"I have been an observer and critic of the American press for 19 years. In that stretch there has never been a time so unsettled. More is up for grabs than has ever been up for grabs since I started my watch."

This is the essay I wrote for the Blogging, Journalism & Credibility conference Jan. 21-22 in Cambridge, MA. (Participants.) Comments welcome.

Bloggers vs. journalists is over. I don't think anyone will mourn its passing. There were plenty who hated the debate in the first place, and openly ridiculed its pretensions and terms. But events are what did the thing in at the end. In the final weeks of its run, we were getting bulletins from journalists like this one from John Schwartz of the New York Times, Dec. 28: "For vivid reporting from the enormous zone of tsunami disaster, it was hard to beat the blogs."

And so we know they're journalism-- sometimes. They're even capable, at times, and perhaps only in special circumstances, of beating Big Journalism at its own game. Schwartz said so. The tsunami story is the biggest humanitarian disaster ever in the lifetimes of most career journalists and the blogs were somehow right there with them.

The question now isn't whether blogs can be journalism. They can be, sometimes. It isn't whether bloggers "are" journalists. They apparently are, sometimes. We have to ask different questions now because events have moved the story forward. By "events" I mean things on the surface we can see, like the tsunami story, and things underneath that we have yet to discern.

That's why we're conferencing: to find the deeper pattern, of which blogging and journalism are a part. So that is what I give you: my best attempt at scratching out a pattern.

I have been an observer and critic of the American press for 19 years. In that stretch there has never been a time so unsettled. More is up for grabs than has ever been up for grabs since I started my watch. And so it is fortunate that we meet next week on blogging, journalists and the social dynamics of user trust. For this is an exciting time in

journalism. Part of the reason is the extension of "the press" to the people we have traditionally called the public.

By the press I mean the public service franchise in journalism, where the writers and doers of it actually are. That press has shifted social location. Much of it is still based in The Media (a business) and will be for some time, but some is in nonprofits, and some of the franchise ("the press") is now in public hands because of the Web, the weblog and other forms of citizen media. Naturally our ideas about it are going to change. The franchise is being enlarged.

It was a sign of the times for everyone watching when on January 1, Dan Gillmor, a participant in our conference, and one of the most respected technology journalists in the country, quit the San Jose Mercury News, and quit Knight-Ridder, for a grassroots journalism start-up, funded not by any media company but two entrepreneurs in the tech biz, Mitch Kapor and Pierre Omidyar.

For years, Big Journalism had been losing great people when they ran out of room for their ideas. It was believed that these losses did not threaten the enterprise. Gillmor was gone because he had reached the limits of professional press think. The journalism he was interested in developing lay outside the capacities of a traditional media company. He left for the same reason Mark Potts, co-founder of WashingtonPost.com, is starting a hyper-local news operation where the content is to be citizen-provided.

But then it's the same reason newspaper editor John Robinson of the News & Record in Greensboro took up blogging, formed ties with the local blogging culture, and announced a shift in direction toward open-source and participatory journalism at his newspaper, which will mean gambling on a whole different kind of online operation. (See his column to readers about it.)

Not sovereign

They all sense it, what Tom Curley, the man who runs the Associated Press, called "a huge shift in the 'balance of power' in our world, from the content providers to the content consumers." If there is such a shift (and Curley didn't seem to be kidding) it means that professional journalism is no longer sovereign over territory it once easily controlled. *Not sovereign* doesn't mean you go away. It means your influence isn't singular anymore.

Orville Schell, dean of the University of California at Berkeley's journalism school and a conference participant, told Business Week recently: "The Roman Empire that was mass media is breaking up, and we are entering an almost-feudal period where there will be many more centers of power and influence."

When 90 percent of the op-ed style writing was done on actual op-ed pages, editorial page editors had sovereignty over that region of public dialogue. With blogging and the online space generally, that rule is gone. Opinion in reaction to the news can come from anywhere, and the bloggers are frequently better at it than the sleepy op-ed page ever

was. Newspaper op-ed pages can still have influence; they can still be great. But they are not sovereign in their domain, and so their ideas, which never anticipated that, are under great pressure.

When Mark Cuban, owner of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks and a figure in the news, wants to speak to fans, players or the community, he doesn't do it through the reporters who cover the Mavs. He puts the word out at his weblog. For the beat writers who cover the team this is a loss; Cuban hardly deals with them anymore. Here, however, the balance of power has shifted toward a figure in the news, once known as a source. A weblog helped shift it. (Blogs of a corporate executive, and an officeholder who have done the same.)

If my terms make sense, and professional journalism has entered a period of *declining sovereignty* in news, politics and the provision of facts to public debate, this does not have to mean declining influence or reputation. It does not mean that prospects for the public service press are suddenly dim. It does, however, mean that the old political contract between news providers and news consumers will give way to something different, founded on what Curley correctly called a new "balance of power."

Others have seen the change coming. In a 2003 report, New Directions for News said, "Journalism finds itself at a rare moment in history where ... its hegemony as gatekeeper of the news is threatened by not just new technology and competitors but, potentially, by the audience it serves." The professional imagination in Big Journalism wasn't prepared for this.

Armed with easy-to-use Web publishing tools, always-on connections and increasingly powerful mobile devices, the online audience has the means to become an active participant in the creation and dissemination of news and information.

Meanwhile, the credibility of the old descriptions is falling away. People don't buy them anymore. In 1988, 58 percent of the public agreed with the self-description of the press and saw no bias in political reporting, according to the Pew Research Center. (And that was regarded as a dangerously low figure.) By 2004, agreement on "no bias" had slipped to 38 percent. "The notion of a neutral, non-partisan mainstream press was, to me at least, worth holding onto," wrote Howard Fineman of Newsweek, Jan. 13. "Now it's pretty much dead, at least as the public sees things."

Big Notion death was a theme in journalism in 2004, coming not from the margins but the middle. Geneva Overholser of the Missouri School of Journalism, former editor of the Des Moines Register, former ombudsman of the Washington Post, said it:

This was the year when it finally became unmistakably clear that objectivity has outlived its usefulness as an ethical touchstone for journalism. The way it is currently construed, "objectivity" makes the media easily manipulable by an executive branch intent on and adept at controlling the message. It produces a rigid orthodoxy, excluding voices beyond the narrowly conventional.

If objectivity, once the "ethical touchstone for journalism," has finally collapsed, then we have conditions resembling intellectual crisis in the mainstream press. Steve Lovelady, managing editor of Campaigndesk.org, and a former editor at the Philadelphia Inquirer, agreed that the press in 2004 "was hopelessly hobbled by some of its own outdated conventions and frameworks."

When people like Fineman, Overholser and Lovelady--who are elders of the tribe, and products of its recent history--are saying about a key commandment "that's over," and "our belief system has collapsed," we can assume the causes are deeper than some spectacularly blown stories or the appearance of more nimble competitors. Loss of core belief is related to loss of editorial sovereignty.

"The paper doesn't have a voice."

"I live in Winston-Salem," begins a blog post from Jan 13, which I submit as material for the conference. Jon Lowder writes:

I have the Winston-Salem Journal delivered every morning. But I don't feel like I know anyone there. The paper doesn't have a "voice," at least not one that I can hear. The closest thing to its voice is the editor's column in the op-ed section.

The problems of finding a believable voice are fundamental in Big J journalism today. Jon Lowder admitted that one reason the Journal seemed so voice-less to him was the juxtaposition with the Greensboro News-Record, which had begun to reach him from the next town over through weblogs he read. (There are five and he subscribes to them all.) These he received via the wire service of the blog world, known as RSS, a truly disruptive technology for the news business. (See this.)

"I get all of the N&R blogs via RSS," Lowder said. (It stands for real simple syndication.) "I don't get their paper... yet. But I still feel closer to the N&R, and in a way I feel it is my hometown paper." And this is what his post is about: not blogging, or RSS, or journalism, but a shfting sense of "hometown paper" for the user. Lowder explains how the Greensboro paper (see my reports on them here, then here and here) has infiltrated his world. "It would probably pain the editor at the Journal (I have no idea what his/her name is) to know that I feel like I'm on a first name basis with the editor of the Greensboro News & Record (Hi John!)."

That would be John Robinson. With his Editors Log he is talking to Winston Salem more often than the newspaper editor in Winston-Salem does. Lowder speaks of the News & Record coming to him, while the Journal site just sits there, static.

I hear from the N&R several times every day, all via their blogs. I hear from the Journal in the morning and that's it... As a result I know more about Greensboro's city council than I do about Winston-Salem's. So for now I'd say that the N&R is my hometown paper. It's not too late for the Journal, but they better act fast or it will be. I'd love to write the editor and share some ideas... anybody have a name for me?

Distributed journalism. Open Source journalism. Citizens media. Citizen journalism. We media. Participatory media. Participatory journalism. These are the new names for the discussion that first grew up around blogging. Steve Outing of the Poynter Institute noticed it:

The earthquake and tsunamis in South Asia and their aftermath represent a tipping point in so-called "citizen journalism." What September 11, 2001, was to setting off the growth and enhanced reputation of blogs, the December 2004 tsunamis are to the larger notion of citizen journalism (of which blogs are a part).

The cartoon dialogue

Chris Willis, co-author of a key report, We Media, said in a recent interview with a Spanish journalist: "What is the most unsettling thing for media professionals is not change but how the change is happening and where it is coming from. Change is not coming from traditional competitors but from the audience they serve. What could be more frightening?"

And some of that fear had crept into bloggers vs. journalists, making it a cartoon dialogue. One reason I jumped at the chance to do this introductory essay is that I felt I had some hand in creating what John Palfrey of the Berkman Center called (in his letter inviting me) the "totally inadequate language that is used like a blunt instrument to describe both journalism and blogging." (See this PressThink post, and this one.)

Included in that is the simple, tempting and ultimately useless question: are bloggers "real" journalists? To put it that way is unnecessarily antagonistic. But it's worse than that. It's reductive, and smart people have been calling it that for years. Scott Rosenberg, managing editor of Salon and a technology-aware writer, said it back in 2002:

Typically, the debate about blogs today is framed as a duel to the death between old and new journalism. Many bloggers see themselves as a Web-borne vanguard, striking blows for truth-telling authenticity against the media-monopoly empire. Many newsroom journalists see bloggers as wannabe amateurs badly in need of some skills and some editors.

This debate is stupidly reductive -- an inevitable byproduct of (I'll don my blogger-sympathizer hat here) the traditional media's insistent habit of framing all change in terms of a "who wins and who loses?" calculus. The rise of blogs does not equal the death of professional journalism. The media world is not a zero-sum game. Increasingly, in fact, the Internet is turning it into a symbiotic ecosystem -- in which the different parts feed off one another and the whole thing grows.

"Participatory media and journalism are different, but online they exist in a shared media space," wrote Rebecca Blood, author of the Weblog Handbook and a careful student of the form. ("Shared media space" puts it well.) "I have no desire to conform my weblog to journalistic standards, or to remake journalism in my image. I want to find ways to

leverage the strengths of both worlds to the mutual benefit of both." I think that is the right attitude for our conference to take.

In an earlier essay, Blood showed how difficult it was to identify journalism exclusively with journalists. If we focus on *practices* that meet a certain standard, she said, then it is easy to tell who is who:

When a blogger writes up daily accounts of an international conference, as David Steven did at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, that is journalism. When a magazine reporter repurposes a press release without checking facts or talking to additional sources, that is not. When a blogger interviews an author about their new book, that is journalism. When an opinion columnist manipulates facts in order to create a false impression, that is not. When a blogger searches the existing record of fact and discovers that a public figure's claim is untrue, that is journalism. When a reporter repeats a politician's assertions without verifying whether they are true, that is not.

Instead of wrestling with blogging's actual potential *in* journalism, we have tended to fight about bloggers' credentials *as* journalists. This is a matter of far less importance, although I would never say "credentials don't matter." Even fights about credentials matter, sometimes.

But that is a poor way to go about discovering what blogging means for journalists and the future of the public service franchise. Today there is every reason in the world for journalists to finally get religion about blogging while bloggers get their thing with journalism straight.

Departure points for Friday morning (Schedule.)

I recommend the following points of departure for our discussion. There are five.

- 1.) Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one, and blogging means practically anyone can own one. That is the Number One reason why weblogs matter. It is the broadest and deepest of all factors making this conference urgent.

With blogging, an awkward term, we designate a fairly beautiful thing: the extension to many more people of a First Amendment franchise, the right to publish your thoughts to the world.

Wherever blogging spreads the dramas of free expression follow. And this will happen in journalism. There will be struggles with freedom of speech. A blog, you see, is a little First Amendment machine. And some of the roots of blogging are in the right to speak up, the will to be heard. In some cases, heard over the din of journalism. Dave Winer, conference participant, in a 2001 essay, "The Web is a Writing Environment," tried to get freelance interpreters interested in becoming sovereign on the Web:

What if you're a freelancer, you sold a piece on wireless computing, and that's it, but what are you supposed to do with the knowledge you've accumulated as the market you wrote about is developing? Or flipped around, what if you're an engineer and the press is covering your category without any depth, do you just sit by and watch the opportunity dissipate? What if you're a human resources manager in a large corporation, and want to publish a column for your constituents, but the internal development people are always too busy to work on your project?

In all these cases you can take the power into your own hands, start writing for the the Web, and see what comes back to you.

I think there's always going to be tension between bloggers and Big Journalism. It's in the DNA.

- 2.) Instead of starting with "do blogs have credibility?" or "should blogging obey journalism ethics?" we should begin in a broader territory, which is trust. Trust as it is generated in different settings, online and off, in both blogging and in journalism-- or in life.

When a student leaves NYU's graduate program and joins, say, the St. Petersburg Times as a staff writer, she benefits on her first day at work from the accumulated trust or reputation the newspaper has in its market, in the community around Tampa Bay. The circumstances in which this asset was created have long since passed from view. The trust transaction lives for new employees mostly in the form of professional standards they are to meet, which in theory maintain the brand.

This is the number one asset of the news organization: stored trust, reputational capital. Any competent journalist knows how to benefit from that: your calls get returned... like magic! But as to *how* that capital is created, or the transaction of trust that involves people and their connection to the news, the professional journalist is minimally involved.

We start telling students in graduate school they won't "have" credibility unless they meet professional standards and obey the rules, but this tends to be interpreted as: "if we obey the rules of journalism, and meet the standards of our peers, then we have credibility." And that is not true. (Your peers may have the wrong standards.) If it were true, having a wall of journalism prizes would be equivalent to having the public's trust.

In a 2002 essay in Microcontent News, John Hiler observed: "For bloggers, it's all about trust too: except weblogs are starting from zero, building their reputations from the ground up. Blog responsibly, and you'll build a reputation for being a trusted news source. Don't, and you won't have a reputation to worry about."

Here is one advantage bloggers have in the struggle for reputation-- for the user's trust. They are closer to the transaction where trust gets built up on the Web. There's a big difference between tapping a built-up asset, like the St. Pete Times "brand," and creating

it from scratch. Bloggers are "building their reputations from the ground up," as Hiler said, and to do this they have to focus on users. They have to be in dialogue. They have to point to others and say: listen to him! The connection between what they do and whether they are trusted is much alive and apparent. In journalism that connection has been harder to find lately. Journalists don't know much about it. They do know their rules, though.

- 3.) Look around: blogging partakes of a resurgent spirit of amateurism now showing in many fields earlier colonized by professionals. Why would journalism be immune?

We learn about it from a fascinating new study, The Pro-Am Revolution, a 70-page paper from Demos in the UK. It barely mentions bloggers or journalism, and so it is perfect for sketching a larger pattern into which J-blogging fits.

The twentieth century was shaped by the rise of professionals in most walks of life. From education, science and medicine, to banking, business and sports, formerly amateur activities became more organised, and knowledge and procedures were codified and regulated. As professionalism grew, often with hierarchical organisations and formal systems for accrediting knowledge, so amateurs came to be seen as second-rate. Amateurism came to be to a term of derision. Professionalism was a mark of seriousness and high standards.

And of course this happened in journalism in the 1920s through 1940s. University training, professional societies, codes of ethics emerged. This movement created my institution, the J-school, as well as the standard of neutral, nonpartisan professionalism of which Howard Fineman spoke. Demos on the shift:

But in the last two decades a new breed of amateur has emerged: the Pro-Am, amateurs who work to professional standards. These are not the gentlemanly amateurs of old – George Orwell's blimpocracy, the men in blazers who sustained amateur cricket and athletics clubs. The Pro-Ams are knowledgeable, educated, committed and networked, by new technology. The twentieth century was shaped by large hierarchical organisations with professionals at the top. Pro-Ams are creating new, distributed organisational models that will be innovative, adaptive and low-cost.

In other words, they cannot be dismissed. "Knowledge, once held tightly in the hands of professionals and their institutions, will start to flow into networks of dedicated amateurs," says the report. "The crude, all or nothing, categories we use to carve up society – leisure versus work, professional versus amateur – will need to be rethought." Written about other fields, these words should be read into journalism, which is being hit hard by the Pro-Am trend.

Professionals – in science and medicine, war and politics, education and welfare – shaped the twentieth century through their knowledge, authority and institutions. They will still be vital in the twenty-first century. But the new driving force, creating new streams of

knowledge, new kinds of organisations, new sources of authority, will be the Pro-Ams. (p. 67)

Bloggers vs. professional journalists is over. But there's power in the revolution Pro-Am.

- 4.) If news as lecture could yield to news as conversation, as some have recommended, it might transform the credibility puzzle because it would feed good information to journalists about the trusters and what they do and do not put their trust in.

Professional journalists confronted with the confusions of the online world have consistently maintained that the "traditional" news criers will do fine on the new platform, even with more competition, because, the feeling goes, the bigger the onslaught of information online, the greater the need for some authoritative filter, like the daily newspaper.

William Safire, for example, wrote a "nah, we'll be fine" column about it. "On national or global events," he said, "the news consumer needs trained reporters on the scene to transmit facts and trustworthy editors to judge significance." Indeed, everyone needs an intelligent filter to find what's good and make sure nothing essential is missed. Journalists reckon, "that's us."

Sound reasoning. However it doesn't tell you *how* the filter does the filtering for the filterees. I mean... "editors to judge significance" based on what? Big Journalism's answers have been: Knowledge of professional standards in journalism. Knowledge of our community. Knowledge of the story. The knowledge that comes from experience. In other words, the filter is reliable because it is operated by a professional editor who knows what to do.

But online a filter becomes more intelligent by people *interacting* with it. To judge significance, it helps to be in conversation with the people you are sifting things for. One might propose: over time a blog teaches a journalist how to become an intelligent filter by forcing interaction with the Web and its users. If the traditional press expects to survive on its filtering skills, and to be authoritative, it will have to devise a way of interacting more with the filterees. Ask not how professional or experienced the filter is, but how *interactive*. We need filters that learn from users. Trust, I believe, will flow from that.

- 5.) Among bloggers there is the type "stand alone journalist," and this is why among journalists there now stands the type: blogger.

Some journalists are identified with a brand, like MSNBC. Others, as Chris Nolan figured out, stand alone. Many of the practical problems of bloggers are the problems of standing alone. If there were solutions to those, there might be better blogging all around.

Writing about the Iraq war in his blogger's manifesto (2002), Andrew Sullivan explains the advantages of the stand alone style in blogging:

The blog almost seemed designed for this moment. In an instant, during the crisis, the market for serious news commentary soared. But people were not just hungry for news, I realized. They were hungry for communication, for checking their gut against someone they had come to know, for emotional support and psychological bonding. In this world, the very personal nature of blogs had far more resonance than more impersonal corporate media products. Readers were more skeptical of anonymous news organizations anyway, and preferred to supplement them with individual writers they knew and liked.

It's not all about providing good information. Responding when people are "hungry for communication" also builds trust online. In certain ways, which we have yet to learn much about, the stand alone journalist may be easier to trust than a corporate provider.

Conclusion

Because bloggers vs. journalists is over, better and better comparisons can be drawn between the two. Simon Waldman of the Guardian said that the tsunami disaster "has shown both the greatest strengths of citizens' journalism, and its greatest weakness."

The great strength is clearly the vividness of first person accounts. And, in this case, the sheer volume of them. Pretty much every story of everyone who experienced the tsunami is moving in someway or other - and thanks to blogs, text messages, camcorders and the overall wonderfulness of the net, there have never been so many stories recorded by so many people made so widely available to whoever who wants to find them, whenever they want to find them.

This is the revolution in supply, via self-publishing on the Web. "The great weakness, though, is the lack of shape, structure and ultimately meaning that all this amounts to. It is one thing to read hundreds of people's stories. It is another to try and work out what the story actually is." That won't come from a revolution in supply because it's about *reducing* information, distilling it down, as "happens in traditional media." Waldman is clear on the advantages of professional journalism's sense of discipline:

The disciplines of traditional media--space, deadlines, the need to have a headline and an intro and a cohesive story rather than random paragraphs, the use of layout or running order to give some sense of shape and priority to the news--aren't just awkward restrictions. They add meaning. They help understanding. Without them, it's much, much harder to make sense of what's happening in the world.

Xeni Jardin, co-editor of the hugely popular BoingBoing, told John Schwartz of the New York Times that arguing about whether blogs would *replace* the major news media is like asking "will farmers' markets replace restaurants?"

"One is a place for rich raw materials," she continued. "One represents a different stage of the process."

Blogging from the tsunami, she said, is "more raw and immediate," but the postings still lack the level of trust that has been earned by more established media. "There is no ombudsman for the blogosphere," she said. "One will not replace the other, but I think the two together are good for each other." (Link.)

Amen to that. My closing thoughts are the peaceable ones of writer, blogger and Web philosopher Mitch Ratcliffe, who, like so many of us, is trying to keep track of a dizzying scene. "The point of innovation in media is to expand, not simply to displace, the voices that existed before," he writes. Politics, by contrast, is where we *replace* one group of voices with another.

I'm feeling more Buddhist all the time about this whole journalism v. blogging debate. The middle way in the metalogue that is emerging—the miraculous opening up of "the media" that's going on—is plenty wide for all sorts of writing, the objective, the disclosed and the personal.

The price of professionalizing journalism was the de-voicing of the journalist. The price for having mass media was the atomization of the audience, who in the broadcasting model were connected "up" to the center but not "across" to each other. Well, blogging is a re-voicing tool in journalism, and the Net's strengths in horizontal communication mean that audience atomization is being overcome.

It's an exciting time in journalism. As the great social weave from which it arises changes form, the thing itself comes up for grabs.

After Matter: *Notes, reactions & links*

For what happened at the conference, see Big Wigs From the Blogging & Journalism Conference Say What They Found and A Few Key Moments...

This post was somehow accidentally deleted and it had to be re-constructed. All the text was saved, but the original comments were lost. They can be viewed if you go here and scroll down.

Conference material: What's Radical About the Weblog Form in Journalism? Which is PressThink's most popular post ever (Oct. 2003). A top ten list...quite short!

Talking via experiment to the Harvard blogging conference, David Berlind, Executive Editor of ZDNet, does a proof-of-concept for reporting transparency, sending out by podcast the full original audio files of an interview he did with Scott Young, CEO of

Userland-- against which (in theory) the column he wrote could be checked for fairness. (See his additional remarks in the comments here.)

Resembles a suggestion I made on Jan. 10 in a post about CBS: 60 Minutes should publish on the web full transcripts and videos of all interviews conducted for a segment that airs. *It's good to see the conference sparking actual experiments.*

Mark Tosczak, writing for a local Business Journal, offers a very competent overview of the Greensboro News-Record's bold departure, which I discuss in my essay. It includes this from Phil Meyer of the University of North Carolina and author of a new book, The Vanishing Newspaper:

"What's wrong with newspapers today is that because of their long history of easy money, they're very conservative, very reluctant to try new things," Meyer said. "This is a fairly radical experiment and it's exactly the kind of things newspapers need to do."

The key, Meyer said, is for the News & Record and other daily newspapers to experiment more and make more mistakes. In the process, he said, they'll discover what works and what doesn't.

"That's why blogging came about, as a counter-action to the corruption of the professional system." Dave Winer warms up for the Harvard conference.

Speaking of counter-actions, Andrew Sullivan, writing about the Howard Fineman essay from which I quoted:

"His admission that the mainstream media have acted as a de facto political party for three decades strikes me as a big deal - the first crack of self-awareness in the MSM. But I truly hope the blogosphere doesn't become its replacement. Blogs are strongest when they are politically diverse, when they are committed to insurgency rather than power, when they belong to no party. I'm particularly worried that the blogosphere has become far more knee-jerk, shrill and partisan since the days when I first started blogging. Some of that's healthy and inevitable; but too much is damaging. In challenging the MSM, we should resist the temptation to become like them."

Action around my line, "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one, and blogging means anyone can own one." See Scott Rosenberg's "not quite, Jay." And then see Ernest Miller's Freedom of the Press Belongs to Those Who Own Servers. His notion of "the server in the closet" is essential to grap, so grasp it. When everyone has a server at home, not a PC, *then we'll have a free press!*

Note to readers who've asked: I am coming late to the big blow up about Zephyr Teachout's naming names post on bloggers ethics. Frankly, I was in a cave finishing my conference essay and didn't pay attention to anything said about it. I will try to get up to speed, starting with this list. I may have nothing to add, by the looks of it. Lots said.

Meanwhile, I recommend Chris Nolan's skeptical read on Teachout and the Havard bash, Not-So-Spontaneous Human Combustion. I recommend it not for that, but for its take on "stand alone journalists," Big Journalism and a Web "community" that is about to split, she says. Nolan originated the term *stand alone journalist* for independent J-bloggers; and I used it in my piece.

I also recommend this forceful statement from Digby.

Dave Pollard has written "The Ten Most Important Ideas of 2004: Blogs and the Internet." Comparable to PressThink's Top Ten Ideas of 2004. And of course completely different. Good conference background.

The Houston Chronicle's opinion page editor writes Notes on blogs: Trying the hot medium, wherein the writer decides to "experiment to see what it might be like to write a blog." The results are not encouraging. One small problem: no links! See Dave Pell's priceless commentary on the Chronicle editor: Elegance, Wit and Insight. "Question of the day: Is it possible to be a journalist and still not really have any idea what a blog is or what the personal publishing revolution is all about?" It's possible.

Not dead yet. Here's Todd Gitlin in the Los Angeles Times:

The crowning ideal of the American news business — that there is such a thing as objective journalism — persists amid the terrible pressures to cut corners in the shortsighted lust for competitive advantage. Despite the evident frailties of mainstream journalism, even those who operate around its margins — bloggers, Op-Ed writers, even some of the more opinionated sectors of cable — are still completely dependent on it and still believe they're getting some truth there. (Where would Bill O'Reilly or Al Franken be without a daily newspaper?)

Micah Sifry: "Mainstream journalism is dying in part because it has insisted on an impossible thing: objectivity. In the process, it killed the human voice (and all too often has replaced it with the paid voice, the corporate shill, the ideological hack.) Now, real human voices are back via blogging and other online communications platforms, and we are gravitating toward that 'strange attractor' (as the Cluetrain put it) of real human conversations over the web."

Just so there's no mistake, conferencers, I agree with this from the Washington Post's ombudsman Michael Getler:

Despite some high-profile stumbles in the past year or so, the so-called mainstream media continue to routinely do their job of uncovering what others would prefer be kept quiet. That they keep doing so, that they not become intimidated by political pressure, remains crucial to an informed citizenry and our democracy. The country's major newspapers, in particular, are uniquely equipped for this work and, whatever one thinks of any of them, we will all pay an incalculable price if they falter.

Chris Hedges, former foreign correspondent for the New York Times, in the Philadelphia Inquirer (Jan. 23): "Balance and objectivity have become code words to propagate the insidious and cynical moral disengagement that is destroying American journalism. This moral disengagement gives equal time, and sometimes more than equal time, to those who spread falsehoods and distort information. It tacitly sanctions the dissemination of lies. It absolves us from making moral choice. It obscures and often shuts out the truth."

Posted by Jay Rosen at January 21, 2005 05:43 PM

APPENDIX A2

Earn Your Own Trust, Roll Your Own Ethics: Transparency and Beyond

Prepared by Bill Mitchell and Bob Steele (1)
The Poynter Institute
January 15, 2005 (Updated 1/17/2005)

Blogging, Journalism and Credibility: Battleground and Common Ground

a conference sponsored by:

the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at the Harvard Law School, the American Library Association's Office of Information Technology and the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government

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SUMMARY (Added 1/19/2005): This paper explores the ethical implications of blogging. *Our central premise*: the act of publishing almost always holds consequences for stakeholders beyond the writer. *Our major question*: what are the writer's obligations to those stakeholders? *Our main conclusions*: Transparency is a first step in building trust with an audience but is insufficient to achieve credibility. We do not prescribe ethics standards for bloggers. Instead, we recommend that bloggers involve their audience in a co-authored process that addresses the personal information the bloggers are willing to share, the principles they stand for, and the processes they follow.
END SUMMARY

Midway through The Year of The Blog, the worlds of blogging, journalism, and public affairs converged in a basement banquet room at the Hilton Hotel in Boston.

The event, a Bloggers Breakfast, was staged by the Democratic National Convention for the citizen journalists it had credentialed to cover the party's ceremonial crowning of its 2004 nominees for president and vice president of the United States.

The breakfast was a lot like hundreds of other politics-as-usual gatherings that week in Boston: state delegations, interest groups, and influence peddlers of various stripes assembled for bagels and fruit plates with candidates, party leaders, and campaign workers.

But the Bloggers Breakfast offered a glimpse of something else.

As much as some of the bloggers *looked* sufficiently scruffy and sleep-deprived to pass for reporters, they *acted* quite differently. It wasn't so much their applause for Barack

Obama and Howard Dean that set the bloggers apart from the no-hands-clapping journalists lurking in the back of the room. It was the style and tone of the bloggers' questions: more conversational, less prepared, less *polished* than what you'd expect from journalists.

Except for two quite pointed questions that blogger David Weinberger put to retired AP correspondent Walter Mears. Their exchange crystallized, for just a few moments, two of the worlds on display in the room.

Weinberger is the spirited and thoughtful philosopher who wrote "Small Things Loosely Joined" and co-authored "The Cluetrain Manifesto." Mears is the Pulitzer Prize winning campaign legend and author of "Deadlines Past: Forty Years Of Presidential Campaigning: A Reporter's Story." The AP recalled him from retirement to file to the wire's first-ever convention weblog.

Weinberger: "So, who are you supporting for president?"

Mears shook his head and refused to say. "How could you trust what I write?"

Weinberger followed up: "Then how can we trust what you write in your blog?"

Later that evening, Weinberger described Mears' response in a post to a blog he was keeping for the *Boston Globe*: "Mears gave an articulate defense of the canon of journalistic professionalism, and the craft and value of objectivity. (2)

"Of course I respect that," Weinberger added. "How can you not? We need professional journalists. But for most blogs, we want to know what the writer's starting point is. That's not because we're subjective journalists. It's because a blog is a conversation among friends, and when you're arguing politics with your pals, it'd just be weird to refuse to say where you stand." (3)

Battleground and Common Ground

The blogger and the journalist had arrived at the heart of the matter: *trust*, the cornerstone of credibility for blogging as well as journalism, and *transparency*, a reasonable starting point for any discussion of trust.

The idea of revealing your political preference in front of a crowded room is anathema to many, probably most, journalists. I have my own views, this line of thinking goes, but the editorial process in my newsroom is designed to wring out the bias and present an even-handed story.

Refusing to reveal such information appears silly – maybe even deceptive -- to many, probably most, bloggers. How can readers evaluate the fairness of a report, they ask, if the writer withholds basic information about his or her own beliefs?

That journalists and bloggers would hold conflicting views on the question is hardly surprising. Jay Rosen, chair of the journalism department at New York University, has explored the distinctions between blogging and journalism in great depth on his PRESSthink blog. (4)

For all those differences, however, blogging and journalism are not dogmas in opposition. And they share a common aspiration: credibility with their audiences.

Traditionally in journalism, credibility means a story rings true. It's accurate. It's in context. The reporting and presentation are fair. In the blogosphere, credibility may borrow from those values but is likely also shaped by what the individual blogger – or group of bloggers -- stands for.

Both groups – traditional journalists and bloggers -- face significant challenges in terms of credibility and ethical conduct. For the traditional journalist, it's a matter of measuring up to existing, generally accepted standards. For bloggers who have not yet addressed the issue, it's first a matter of figuring out what their standards might be – and *then* measuring up.

Ethical considerations are not the sole province of policy blogs. Blogs about knitting can carry ethical dimensions, too, depending on what they say about fellow knitters and the owner of the yarn shop. But this paper is focused, for the most part, on the subset of bloggers – journalists and non-journalists alike -- hoping to inform or influence others on of matters of public concern.

UPDATE 1/18/2005: Transparency has been at the center of much of the discussion about credibility, and we agree that it's important. Traditionally, journalism has not been an especially transparent enterprise. Judge us by what we produce, the old argument goes, not by how we do it or by what we do or think or say after work. (See Jeff Jarvis' discussion of the topic here.)

Transparency can alert the audience to important information. It addresses the critical question of *how* the work is created. Transparency by itself rarely reveals much of the *why*, though, and that's a critical dimension for any audience. That's why we urge bloggers – as we urge journalists – to be transparent about the principles they stand for and the processes they follow in the course of upholding them.

Transparency should not be confused with accountability. When Poynter redesigned its website in 2002, we described the process to users in detail and invited feedback. It turns out that wasn't good enough. We had dramatically underestimated how strongly much of the audience was attached to particular aspects of the ROMENSKO page, for example. After a flood of negative reaction, we involved the audience far more directly in our decision-making and made significant revisions to our redesign. We're not saying that the audience always *rules*, but that you'll never achieve accountability unless the audience actually *counts*. (See our discussion of that redesign experience, and reader comments, here.)

More conversation than lecture, blogging presumes a relationship between publisher and audience. It's a relationship that, to be successful, demands mutual respect. It's that kind of relationship that can result in trust and can produce extraordinary credibility for the publisher – blogger, journalist or otherwise. Regardless of publishing platform, it is not a relationship that is easily achieved.
END UPDATE

What Engenders Trust?

Unable to reconcile recent scandals involving plagiarism and incompetence with their traditional standards of accuracy and professionalism, many journalists are groping for new approaches that their audiences would judge more trustworthy.

Some are revising their ethics guidelines. Several major news organizations, including *The New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun* and National Public Radio, have hired public editors, or ombudsmen.

Others are focusing more directly on doing their day-to-day work in a way that the audience finds trustworthy. Some have been going to school on bloggers, starting their own blogs as a way of engaging their audience more directly in the news.

Ethical concerns are emerging in the blogosphere as well, some of them linked to conflict of interest, others to questions of rumor and fact. Zephyr Teachout, a former staffer in the Dean presidential campaign (and a participant in this conference), raised a number of questions with a Jan. 10 report on her blog that the campaign had paid two bloggers "largely in order to ensure that they said positive things." (Teachout's account has been challenged by the two bloggers; Rebecca MacKinnon has rounded up the discussion here.) (5,6,7)

Some blogs are addressing questions of credibility directly and personally, posting their own standards. Calls for more general standards -- a kind of seal of bloggers' independence – have been prompted by various commercial propositions. (8)

And some codes are being proposed as working models for the blogosphere, including this one by Martin Kuhn, a doctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. (9)

Principles Beyond Platforms

Dan Gillmor, who recently left his job as technology columnist at the San Jose Mercury News to launch a new initiative in grassroots journalism, notes in his book, "We the Media," that core principles transcend publishing platforms. (10)

"No matter which tools and technologies we embrace," he writes, "we must maintain core principles, including fairness, accuracy, and thoroughness. These are not afterthoughts. They are essential if professional journalism expects to survive."

Like the Internet itself, blogging is a publishing tool invented by non-journalists that holds enormous opportunities, risks, and consequences for journalism and society.

Society. That's where trust, credibility, integrity, transparency, and ethics, take on dimensions beyond the individual. Given likely debates over definitions, let's rely on Wikipedia for now. Here's how Wikipedia frames its "simple view of ethics and morals":

"Ethics is often called the science of morality. It attempts to make consistent descriptions of complex situations and difficult decisions. It is considered to be important because, to those who practice the ethical tradition in which the descriptions are applied, it answers the big question, 'How should we live?'" (11, 12)

We recognize the pitfalls of suggesting in a short paper how bloggers should blog, how journalists should do their work or, for that matter, how anybody *should* do much of anything.

We have three objectives in mind, two that we'll address in this paper and one – an online resource -- that we hope will result from our discussions Jan. 21-22:

- Context for a meaningful discussion of such issues as trust, transparency, ethics, and credibility.

- Concrete examples of steps that journalists and bloggers are taking in pursuit of increased credibility.

- A framework, perhaps in the form of an online tool, that could help journalists, bloggers – and their employers – work with their audiences to develop customized blogging guidelines.

User-Generated Ethics?

The process we're suggesting is not completely user-generated – the blogger will be the one implementing the guidelines, after all – but it's far more collaborative than traditional approaches.

The idea, in brief, is for bloggers to invite questions from their audience about what questions they have about the blog, what might increase their level of trust, etc. The questions would vary with the blog. The blogger might then build an FAQ responding to such questions and could update the FAQ as new questions arise.

UPDATE 1/17/2005: One advantage of a dynamic FAQ like this would be the chance for bloggers and their audience to keep the trust/credibility conversation current. As new issues and circumstances arise, readers could focus their questions on the FAQ, enabling bloggers (and their audience) to address how well their performance is measuring up to the principles and process they've promised.

As issues have arisen recently about blogging for pay, for example, some bloggers have entered posts declaring their own policies. Why not add such material to a standing page that remains easily accessible over time? **END UPDATE.**

The blogger could be guided by those questions in creating a principles and policies statement addressing issues of trust and credibility. The blogger could describe the principles he or she is committed to, e.g., fairness, independence, accuracy, etc. In addition, bloggers creating such a page could describe the processes they'd use in order to uphold their principles. They might explain how they handle updates and corrections on their blogs, for example, as well as an explanation of how they handle comments. And if the blogger wants to offer some personal background – "where they're coming from," as Jay Rosen puts it – so much the better.

Individual bloggers will have to make their own decisions about whatever principles and processes guide their behavior, of course. The most effective standards and codes are not imposed from the outside. The idea that the journalism establishment would have the standing or influence to impose ethical standards on the blogosphere seems especially disconnected from reality.

Bloggers' Responsibilities

But that doesn't mean bloggers have no responsibilities to others. At the point bloggers make their work public, the public – and anyone the blogger is writing about – become stakeholders. That's a matter of ethics.

Without getting into the question of when a blogger is a journalist, let's look at ethics as framed, pursued, and sometimes violated by journalists.

Journalists who follow time-honored ethical norms and values have found they are able to build trust and respect with many readers and viewers. Those who violate ethical standards jeopardize their own professional reputation and they put their organizations at considerable risk.

For decades, most mainstream newspapers and many broadcast news organizations have relied on some form of ethical guidelines to set forth expectations for their employees. These guidelines – often but not always in writing – cover a wide range of issues from accuracy and fairness in reporting to avoiding conflicts of interest.

In addition, many journalists apply their own personal ethical standards to guide their behavior. These generally include the obligation to be honest, to keep promises and to "get the facts and the story right."

The most effective ethical standards and guidelines are aspirational. They are ideals. Even the best of journalists sometimes falter. Those who are less competent can be susceptible to more serious breeches of ethics even when well intentioned. And then there are those journalists who knowingly lie, cheat or steal.

Ethics: More About Process than Rules

The most eloquent codes are useless if they're not put to good use. So the best standards and guidelines describe a process to be pursued when ethical questions arise. These processes do not prescribe a solution to the problems at hand. They suggest a way to move through the decision-making process toward a good ethical choice.

Ethics should not be seen as a set of rules aimed at restricting the flow of information. Instead, think of ethics as a system that you and your audience can use to share as much information as appropriate – and to explain just what criteria you've considered in arriving at decisions toward that end.

Journalism ethics directly connects to professional purpose and mission. Journalists serve the public in multiple ways – informing on significant issues; reporting on events of interest; holding the powerful accountable as watchdogs; using words and images and sound to take people to places where something important or fascinating is occurring.

That's part of the duty of journalism. There's an ethical responsibility to fulfill this unique and essential role in our society.

When journalists succeed in their duty the results are positive. Citizens are well informed. They use news reports to better understand the world around them and to use that knowledge to live life more fully and meaningfully. Good journalism evokes a wide range of emotion and provokes people to act, whether that involves expressing choices in a voting booth or engaging in spirited discussions with family or friends about the latest news. High quality reporting serves the civic good.

Journalists who fail in their duty create negative consequences. Citizens are uninformed or misinformed. Poor reporting can produce apathy. It can create rumors and cause fear. Incompetent journalists cause harm, sometimes damaging reputations and victimizing vulnerable people. Bad journalism fails to serve the public good.

Journalists create relationships with those they serve. They do this sometimes by informing with news stories, sometimes by enlightening through analysis, sometimes by provoking with opinion. These relationships are built on trust. Those receiving the information must have confidence that what they are getting measures up. When the trust erodes, the credibility of the journalist falls and the value of the information declines.

Economic Consequences

As Philip Meyer demonstrates in his new book, "The Vanishing Newspaper, Saving Journalism in the Information Age," declines in consumer confidence in media have been accompanied by declines in readers and viewers. This has obvious consequences for both the social and economic future of media in all forms. (13)

Mainstream media organizations have recognized the bottom line linkage for decades. The issue is fresher in the blogosphere, as aggregators of blogs – and individual bloggers – begin exploring ways they might be compensated for their work.

If they're hoping to be compensated by advertising, that will depend, in some measure, on advertisers concluding that their readers trust what they find on the blogs in question.

In addition to trust and credibility, media consumers apply different expectations to the information they consume, sometimes unconsciously. For some, relevancy is essential – how does this information help me personally? Others want intellectual stimulation or emotional punch from their news content. In terms of expectations of ethical standards, accuracy is a primary value for many. Others will measure the worth of a report on a scale of fairness. Some put a premium on timeliness, the faster they can get the information the better, even if it's imperfect.

Resistance to Ethics Standards – Codes and Otherwise

Journalists have long debated the value and necessity of ethical standards. Some say it's a matter of common sense, and apply a basic notion such as the Golden Rule. Others argue that each individual should know the right thing to do.

The matter of ethical values and individual behavior is more complex. Both individuals and organizations need clear standards to guide behavior. This is true for virtually any professional or personal setting, from architects and homebuilders to family and friends.

Professional ethics codes are built on two ethical theories. One theory (deontology) emphasizes duty and obligation. The other theory (teleology) stresses the consequences of our actions. In reality, all codes are a blend of these two approaches.

Codes prescribe certain standards that individuals should adhere to in order to fulfill their duty and obligation to others. For journalists, that includes serving citizens and democracy by reporting meaningful information about civic affairs and holding government officials accountable.

Codes also ask individuals to consider their ethical decisions in terms of what good occurs and what bad happens from resulting actions. This balancing of good versus bad consequences is a commonly used approach by journalists. For instance, the coverage of a tragedy often leads to decisions on what pictures to use that help reveal the truth while

not further victimizing those caught up in the tragedy or not overwhelming readers or viewers with images that will greatly offend.

Formal codes have been resisted for a variety of reasons, some of them legal, some of them more philosophical.

Some lawyers don't like them because they provide plaintiffs' attorneys with a document that can be used against a journalist if procedures specified in a newsroom code were not followed. (14)

Existential Journalism vs. the Hutchins Commission

John C. Merrill, author of "Existential Journalism," characterizes codes as "asinine rules and practices of the organization."

He says codes are useless to the kind of journalist – an existential journalist -- who "has an attitude of commitment, of rebellion, of individuality, of creativity, of freedom."

He adds: "Although this journalist has a conscience or a moral sense, this does not translate into worshipping strict professionalism or institutionalism; more important for the existential journalist is a sense of self-esteem and self-reliance." (15)

Merrill's concept of existential journalism is rooted, in many ways, to the Libertarian theory of the press. That approach is in considerable tension with the concept of social responsibility. Journalism professor Edmund Lambeth describes the contrast in his book "Committed Journalism: An Ethic for the Profession."

Lambeth proposes an ethical system that blends the strengths of utilitarianism with the strengths of a duty-based approach to professionalism. "While journalists are expected to consider the consequences of their actions, they are viewed as best guided by rules derived from principles – telling the truth, behaving justly, respecting and protecting independence and freedom, acting humanely, and being a good steward of the resources, especially the First Amendment, that protect journalism and a free society." (p. 28)

The social responsibility concept was a product of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, the so-called Hutchins Commission, in the mid-1940s. Lambeth writes: "Rather than merely keep hands off the press, as libertarian doctrine demands, social responsibility theorists urged the press, government, and the public to actively promote not only freedom of expression but also the requirements the Hutchins Commission defined for a free and responsible press." (16)

The Commission underlined a dimension of journalism of particular relevance to many bloggers: their role in the community. As Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel point out in "The Elements of Journalism," the "Commission in 1947 placed this mission (journalism as a forum for public discourse) second only to telling the truth." They quoted the

commission: "[T]he great agencies of mass communication should regard themselves as common carriers of public discussion." (17)

Fact Checking Your Ass

Blogging has emerged as an important element in at least a couple of ways as mainstream media wrestles with its credibility crisis. As Jeff Jarvis reminds his media colleagues periodically on his Buzzmachine blog, it's foolish to do journalism without realizing that bloggers are going to "fact check your ass." (18)

Many journalists are also beginning to realize that an editorial stance of arrogance or aloofness from readers cannot be sustained for long.

Bloggers – and others inspired by their success -- are forcing accountability on news organizations. They're also demanding – and sometimes getting – a much bigger say in what's news.

More and more journalists are realizing that blogging can help them increase their transparency – and their credibility – with their audience. They're opening their eyes to a fact of life that Dan Gillmor has taken up as something of a creed: the readers (at least some of them) know more about a story than its author does.

The *Spokesman-Review* in Spokane, Wa., provides some good examples of the promise this trend holds for journalism. Among 18 blogs maintained by the paper is Ask The Editors, a group blog that enables five of the paper's editors to open a window on the way the paper does its work. The blog addresses reader questions ranging from the misuse of adverbs to concerns about the ideological balance of the editorial page. It's encouraging and interesting. It reads a lot more like a conversation than a lecture. (19)

At the *Oregonian* in Portland, reporter Mike Francis has been demonstrating remarkable range in his reporting on the war in Iraq – and the paper's Iraq Blog is playing a significant role. (20)

Francis broke a major international story about abuse of Iraqi prisoners in Baghdad in August, but he also provides his readers with access to the nuts and bolts of daily life in Iraq for friends and family stationed there.

Among the elements of the blog maintained by Francis and photographer Randy Rasmussen is something called *The Nice Section*, which conveys birthday and anniversary greetings back and forth between soldiers and their relatives in the Portland area.

The writing is short, personal, engaging – and transparent. Among other things, the reporter and photographer use the blog to let readers know how they're doing their jobs on this critical story.

How Should News Organizations Handle Blogs?

News organizations are still wrestling with the most effective ways to handle blogs, some produced by staff members as part of their jobs, others by staff members who are writing on their own time.

Blogging-by-journalists has caused some problems for individuals and companies alike. (21)

Reporter Daniel P. Finney was suspended from – and then quit – his job at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch after his bosses discovered he was trashing the internal workings of the paper, among other things, on a blog written under a pen name. (22)

C. Max Magee, a journalism graduate student at Medill, reported in a unpublished paper last year that, among papers that have begun anticipating electronic issues, most of them "typically address one of two concerns: credibility or competition."

He added: "*The New York Times*' policy, for example, falls into the first category: "staff members who establish their own sites on the World Wide Web must insure that their online conduct conforms to [*New York Times*] guidelines;" while the *Chicago Tribune*'s policy falls into the second: "a personal Web site of almost any nature could be seen as competition to *Tribune*'s various online offerings, so proposals must be examined closely before permission is granted."

Magee noted that many news organizations base their codes on one adopted by the Society of Professional Journalists. Among the sections most relevant to bloggers are those requiring staffers to "avoid conflicts of interest real or perceived," and to "remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility." (23)

The principle of independence, which undergirds such provisions, raises interesting questions for journalists and bloggers. And it gets us back to the transparency issue again.

Different Standards for Different Content

Many, probably most, news organizations, lack standards that address the specifics of blogging. At Poynter, we ask staffers and contributors who blog to do so within the framework of our ethics guidelines. We address specific issues and questions, e.g., how and why various blogs are subject to different editing standards than other Poynter material, in a Frequently Asked Questions document attached to the ethics guidelines. (24, 25)

In an e-mail exchange Jan. 9 about blogs at the *Oregonian*, the paper's public editor, Michael Arietta-Walden, wrote: "We have not developed clear standards yet. We have

only had three blogs. Mine was the first, followed by our reporters in Iraq and a new one by our Sports columnist."

The lack of standards does not appear to have caused significant problems for the paper so far.

Says Scott Nelson, who edits the Iraq blog: "I have the authority and ability to edit the Iraq blog, but rarely do. I generally backread once they're already posted, looking for fact errors. What I don't want to do is take Mike's or Randy's idiosyncrasies out of the blog. The beauty of the blog, as opposed to the newspaper, is that it's individual and quirky and sometimes hastily done. We're not trying to recreate the newspaper there, but allow it to be something more fresh and distinctly its own. That, of course, requires a higher level of trust between editor and reporter than is true of the regular paper." (26)

Interestingly, however, the lack of specific blogging standards may be a factor in limiting the effectiveness of the public editor's blog. (27)

Said Arrieta-Walden: "In terms of my blog, I have found it onerous to keep up because I have applied essentially the same standards to what I post as I do to the column I write in the Sunday paper. That means I am certain about the accuracy of everything posted and I have vetted what others tell me. I actually have found myself to be more conservative in terms of the blog, in part because it does not go through as many editors as my column does. As a result, I will tend to be quite cautious, which I realize in some ways is the antipathy of blogging."

Which links are just helpful? And which should be considered paid advertising?

He also raised a standards-related question about a new blog under consideration: "We have considered starting a blog by our travel writer, but in preliminary discussions realized that that will require much more discussion about the content. For instance, if he describes traveling to a location and listing places to visit, do we provide links to those sites? Or is that considered promotion or advertising?" (28)

At the *Boston Globe*, Ombudsman Christine Chinlund told us by e-mail: "Blogging has not, to my knowledge, posed any huge problems yet, although I do know of one or two cases in which readers complained (to me) about what a staffer wrote on a blog.

"The *Globe*'s top editors are preparing a new ethics policy that will address blogging. It is expected to say something like this: blogs that appear on the paper's official web site are subject to the newsroom's standards of fairness, taste and legal propriety. If a staff member publishes a personal web page or blog on a site outside our control, the staffer still has a duty to make sure the content is purely personal and avoid topics they cover professionally so as not to invite confusion of roles. The policy will also probably say they may not post any content created for the *Globe* without obtaining permission.

"The overarching concern, of course, is that staffers don't say or do things while blogging that would compromise their integrity as a print journalist. It's easy to think that what one types online is private, or separate from our daily paper pursuits but, in this day and age, it's all of a piece. The same rules must apply." (29)

Bloggers and Some of The Guidelines They've Established So Far

Controversy about the possible financial implications of various word of mouth marketing initiatives has gotten blogging entrepreneurs Nick Denton and Jason Calacanis talking about ethics guidelines for bloggers.

Calacanis posted a survey Dec. 26, 2004 asking a range of questions about how readers would feel about bloggers "accepting money to blog about a product" under various circumstances – with or without disclosure, for example. The self-selective nature of the survey limits the usefulness of the results, but the questions frame interesting issues about transparency and beyond for bloggers. (30)

Some bloggers have included basic disclosure statements on their sites for some time. Dave Winer, who describes his Scripting News blog as "the longest continually running weblog on the Internet, " offers a two point guide to integrity as necessary and sufficient:

"1. Disclose all pertinent information about your interests.
2. Never state as fact something you know not to be true."

To hear Winer elaborate on integrity, listen to the podcast he recorded Jan. 13, 2005. He also elaborates, in writing, on the About page of Scripting News. (31)

Rebecca Blood, another long-time blogger and author of "The Weblog Handbook: Practical Advice on Creating and Maintaining Your Blog", credits Winer as "the springboard" for her own, somewhat different approach to the issue.

"Let me propose a radical notion," she writes on her blog, rebecca's pocket. "The weblog's greatest strength – its uncensored, unmediated, uncontrolled voice – is also its greatest weakness." She describes transparency as the characteristic common to each of her standards, adopting Winer's two and adding four more:

"1. If material exists online, link to it when you reference it.
2. Publicly correct any misinformation.
3. Write each entry as if it could not be changed; add to, but do not rewrite or delete, any entry.
4. Note questionable and biased sources." (32)

David Weinberger, the author-blogger who challenged the AP's Mears at the Blogger Breakfast, includes this disclosure statement on his JOHO (Journal of the Hyperlinked Organization) blog.

Instead of listing standards, he takes the narrative approach:

"No one pays me to write this blog or to say particular things in it. That includes all forms of compensation, including offering to shovel my walk or tell me that I look like I've lost some weight. I don't run ads, no one pays me under the table, and I don't sell JOHO t-shirts or coffee mugs. I don't own stock and the couple of companies I invested in went broke a long time ago, so I've got nothing to tout except the companies and people I'm enthusiastic about. So, what the hell I am spending so much damn time blogging for? Now you've got me all depressed. .."

He adds: "All I can promise is that I will be honest with you and never write something I don't believe in because someone is paying me as part of a relationship you don't know about. Put differently: All I'll hide are the irrelevancies." (33)

Do the Right Thing

Wikipedia, the collaborative online encyclopedia, has launched a similarly collaborative news service – Wikinews – and has created a Wikinews:Code of Ethics page where anyone can begin suggesting standards, principles, or guidelines. (34)

There were no entries as of Jan. 14, 2005, but Wiki founder Jimbo Wales, a participant in this conference, has attached a "statement of principles" to his user page that adds some intriguing dimensions to traditional policies and codes. (35, 36)

"This community will continue to live and breathe and grow only so long as those of us who participate in it continue to Do The Right Thing," Wales says. "Doing The Right Thing takes many forms, but perhaps most central is the preservation of our shared vision for the NPOV (neutral point of view) and for a culture of thoughtful diplomatic honesty." (37)

Wiki's NPOV represents a journalistic worldview in itself, of course, but Wales concludes his statement of personal principles more modestly: "Diplomacy consists of combining honesty and politeness. Both are objectively valuable moral principles. Be honest with me, but don't be mean to me. Don't misrepresent my views for your own political ends. And I'll treat you the same way."

Wikinews is a good example of citizen journalism, which it says "usually involves empowering ordinary citizens -- including traditionally marginalized members of society -- to engage in activities that were previously the domain of professional reporters." (38)

Roles in Constant Conflict

A more modest – but more fully developed – example comes from Barry Parr, a blogger and veteran web entrepreneur who runs Coastsider, a community blog in Montara, Ca. Parr has developed pretty detailed terms of service, but he notes in an e-mail that he's still faced with some difficult calls. (39)

"I constantly find that my multiple roles as writer/editor/publisher/ citizen/neighbor are in conflict," Parr told us. "I can't hide behind a role or use someone else to cover for me. So I can't say, 'Sorry, the editor won't let me do that' or 'talk to your sales rep' or 'maybe Bob should cover that story because the subject is a friend of mine' or 'that's the policy. I only work here.'

"I deal with it by being up front with my point of view, writing news stories in the first person, and being as fair and accurate as I can. I don't always get it right and I have to learn from my mistakes." (40)

One of the most ambitious citizen journalism efforts in the works among newspapers is the Public Square initiative at the *Greensboro News & Record*. The plan follows a request from the paper's editor, John Robinson, for advice from the local and blogging communities on how to improve the paper. (41, 42)

The paper's plans – which include extensive blogging by staff and contributors -- have been warmly received by the blogosphere. One skeptic is Dan Kennedy, media critic for the Boston Phoenix, who describes the plan as "an interesting idea that a few people will love" but that most won't have time for. He also raised objections to one of the ideas under discussion: "a permanent bio page for each full-time reporter and editor, with photo, contact info, background, political & religious affiliation."

Said Kennedy: "I'm not sure that I'd work for a place that forced me to post my political and religious affiliations. You're asking journalists to give up a lot of privacy for the privilege of working long hours for little pay."

Jay Rosen, the PRESSthink blogger who has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Greensboro plans, challenged Kennedy's assumptions about reader reaction but acknowledged his point about the bio page.

Rosen said he agrees that "listing religious and political 'affiliations' in the cause of transparency is going to be a lot harder than many champions of that policy think. There are rights issues there." (43)

He proposed a middle ground relevant to our discussion of transparency: "Begin experimenting with transparency by asking staffers to explain 'who they are, where they've been and where they're coming from,' but limiting it to those willing to disclose."

Principles, Process, Person

One way to think about Rosen's recommendation is to provide transparency in three key areas -- the principles you hold, the processes you follow, the person you are.

Just as other conventions (ABOUT, CONTACT ME, etc.) have proven useful to readers of blogs, so, too, might wider use of a declaration of the principles, the process, and the

person behind the blog. Many such statements exist in various forms already, but we invite readers and conference participants to consider possibilities for improvement.

Such a declaration might list the principle of accuracy, for example, or respect (or honesty or politeness, as Jimbo Wales puts it). To uphold accuracy, you might describe how you do your fact checking – or how you handle rumors.

Each of us will decide the level of transparency we're willing to provide, placing ourselves somewhere along the spectrum between, say, Walter Mears, near one end and, at the other, believers in radical transparency. (44)

As we said at the outset, though, transparency is just the starting point.

Disclosure in all three areas – principles and processes as well as the personal – can help you move beyond transparency to accountability. That means not simply the disclosure of personal information you're willing to share, but the justification of your actions that comes with discussion of principles you uphold and processes you follow on your blog.

If you have any doubts about whether such an approach is building trust with your readers/contributors, you can always slap a mailto into your page and borrow (or adapt) the kicker David Weinberger uses at the end of his disclosure page: (45)

"If you don't like this or disagree, let me know." (46)

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46. After the conference, this paper will be posted at www.poynter.org/credibility_paper, and we invite your feedback there. We also welcome your comments and suggestions to us via e-mail at bmitchell@poynter.org and bsteele@poynter.org.

APPENDIX B: SCHEDULE

FRIDAY (Jan. 21): 10am start

MORNING: (10-12)

Opening remarks from Alex Jones, John Palfrey, and Rick Weingarten.[28]

Jay Rosen kicks off 1st session. He *briefly* introduces the concepts raised in his paper, which is about redefining the vocabulary we currently use to discuss issues like blogging, journalsm and credibility. We'll launch the discussion by asking two people with differing perspectives to respond directly to his paper, then open up the floor.
Moderated by John Palfrey.

LUNCH: (12:30-2:00) Discussion of online social behavior and what this may mean for news consumption behavior in the future. Led by Judith Donath of the MIT Media Lab .
Moderated by John Palfrey

AFTERNOON: (2 sessions)
(2:00-3:30) Poynter's Bill Mitchell launches a discussion based on his paper about the ethics of journalism and blogging. As with Jay's session, 2 designated "respondents"will kick off the action.
Moderated by Alex Jones.

(4:00-5:30) How blogging & the growing web presence of conventional media changes the news media's business model, and what this means for ethics and standards. Led by Jeff Jarvis.
Moderated by Alex Jones.

DINNER: (6:30-) At the Harvard Faculty Club (invited participants only) David Weinberger will kick off the meal with some provocative remarks along the lines of: "truth, facts, blogs, and journalism." This session will be recorded and posted later, but not webcast live.
Moderated by John Palfrey.

SATURDAY (Jan.22):

8:30-9:30 - Podcasting Breakfast
Brendan Greeley of the Public Radio Exchange wakes us up with a discussion of how the credibility issues we've been discussing apply to non-text media - especially audio, which with podcasting is the next big thing in citizens' media. At 9:15 we'll dip into the opening videocast of "vloggercon" (a video blogging conference) being held all day Saturday in NYC.
Moderated by Rebecca MacKinnon

[28] Weingarten was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Colleague Carrie Lowe spoke in his place.

10AM- NOON –

Dan Gillmor and Jimmy Wales of Wikipedia kick off a debate and discussion. The idea is to identify central questions coming out of Friday's sessions that the journalism and blogging communities need to address.
Moderated by Ethan Zuckerman.

LUNCH: Led by John Palfrey and Alex Jones - summary of what we've accomplished/concluded, next steps going forward.

1:30-4:30: OPEN SESSION. The room will be opened up to whoever wants to show, first-come, first-served. Fire safety standards will be observed if too many people show. However this session will also be webcast.

6:30 SCRIPTING NEWS DINNER. At Bombay Club. Tell Dave if you want to attend.

APPENDIX C: Attendees

Blogging, Journalism & Credibility: Battleground and Common Ground
January 21-22, Harvard University

PARTICIPANTS

Jill Abramson, Managing Editor, New York Times

Abramson was appointed managing editor of *The New York Times* in August 2003 after having been Washington bureau chief since December 2000. Before that she served as the enterprise editor in the Washington Bureau. From from 1988 to 1997 she worked at *The Wall Street Journal* as the deputy bureau chief in Washington D.C. and as an investigative reporter covering money and politics. From 1986 to 1988 she was editor in chief of *Legal Times,* a weekly newspaper in Washington. During 2000-2001 fall term she was a Ferris professor at Princeton University teaching an undergraduate seminar on politics and journalism. Abramson is the co-author of two books: *"Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas" (Houghton Mifflin, 1994)*, and *"Where They Are Now: The Story of the Women of Harvard Law, 1974"* (Doubleday, 1986). In 1992, she won the National Press Club's national correspondence award.

Faye M. Anderson, writer, producer, and public policy consultant

Anderson is the writer and producer of *Counting on Democracy*, and is now writing a book about electronic voting machines entitled *Democracy@Risk: The Perils of E-voting.* Previously, she has worked as a national correspondent for PoliticallyBlack.com and served as president of the Douglass Policy Institute, a nonpartisan education and research organization. She is a consultant to various nonpartisan public policy groups and has observed elections in Ethiopia and Nigeria, and provided voter education training in Angola and Kazakhstan. Anderson was also a vice chairman of the Republican National Committee's New Majority Council, and a member of the boards of the Ripon Society and Ripon Educational Fund. She formerly served as executive director of the Council of 100, a national network of African-American Republicans.

Walter Bender, Executive Director, MIT Media Laboratory

Bender is a senior research scientist and director of the Electronic Publishing group. He is also a member of the laboratory's Information Organized (formerly News in the Future) consortium. Mr. Bender also directs the Gray Matters special interest group, which focuses on technology's impact on the aging population. He received his BA from Harvard University in 1977. Mr. Bender joined the Architecture Machine Group at MIT in 1978. He received his MS at MIT in 1980. A founding member of the Media Laboratory, Mr. Bender is engaged in the study of new information technologies, particularly those that affect people directly. Much of the research addresses the idea of building upon the interactive styles associated with existing media and extending them into domains where a computer is incorporated into the interaction. He has participated in much of the pioneering research in the field of electronic publishing and personalized interactive multimedia.

Jon Bonne, MSNBC.COM

Bonne covers the business and health of food and wine for *MSNBC.com* and has written about everything from airline economics to barbequing. Previously, he was managing editor of CourtTV.com and has reported for Fox News, Newsweek, The New York Times and NPR. A native New Yorker and graduate of Columbia University, he lives in Seattle.

Bill Buzenberg, Senior Vice President of News, Minnesota Public Radio

Buzenberg joined MPR in 1998. He has been a journalist for 30 years, and has worked in public radio for the last 25 years. He joined National Public Radio in 1978 as a reporter to assist in the launch of *Morning Edition*. He worked as an NPR foreign affairs correspondent for 11 years, covering Central and South America, and later the Philippines, and Western and Eastern Europe. For three years he was NPR's bureau chief in London. In 1989, Buzenberg returned to Washington D.C. to become the first managing editor for NPR News. Nine months later he was named vice president of News and Information. Buzenberg launched NPR's *Talk of the Nation* program, expanded NPR's newscast service and extended *All Things Considered* to two hours. During Buzenberg's tenure, NPR was honored with nine DuPont-Columbia Batons and 10 Peabody Awards. In recognition of his achievements at NPR, Buzenberg was presented in 1997 with the Edward R. Murrow Award, the highest honor in public radio. With his wife Susan, he co-edited "Salant, CBS, and the Battle for the Soul of Broadcast Journalism," published in the fall of 1998.

John Bracken, Program Officer, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Bracken's work centers on public-interest media and intellectual property and the public domain. Prior to joining the Foundation, Bracken was Assistant Director of the American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, an Israeli-Arab peace project. Previously, he was a Program Associate in the Ford Foundation's Media, Arts & Culture unit, where he worked on portfolios in news media and media policy and technology.

Ed Cone, EdCone.com and the Greensboro News-Record

Cone works as a senior writer at Ziff Davis Media and writes an opinion column for the *News & Record*, the monopoly daily newspaper in his home town. He has worked as a contributing editor at *Wired*, a staff writer at *Forbes*, and a freelancer for a wide variety of magazines and papers. He blogs at EdCone.com

Robert Cox, The National Debate & Media Bloggers

Cox is founder of the Media Bloggers Association. The MBA includes all of the top media bloggers as well as many outstanding, up-and-coming bloggers. The MBA recently launched the MBA Legal Defense Project to protect member bloggers from legal threats. The MBA was also responsible for the Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative to assist citizen journalists and video bloggers in defraying the high cost of hosting high-demand video files. He blogs at

TheNationalDebate.com which achieved a fair degree of notoriety in early 2004 when The New York Times sought to shut it down over a parody of The Times columnist correction policy. He is developing a strategy consulting practice focused on the use of blogs in promoting media properties.

Judith Donath, Assistant Professor, MIT Media Lab

Donath directs the Sociable Media research group. Her work focuses on the social side of computing, synthesizing knowledge from fields such as graphic design, urban studies and cognitive science to build innovative interfaces for online communities and virtual identities. She pioneered a number of social applications for the web, including the first postcard service ("The Electric Postcard"), the first interactive, juried art show ("Portraits in Cyberspace") and an early large-scale web event ("A Day in the Life of Cyberspace"). Recently, she directed "Id/Entity", an exhibit of collaboratively produced installations examining science and technology's transformation of the subject and form of portraiture. Her current research focuses on creating expressive visualizations of social interactions and on building experimental environments that mix real and virtual experiences.

Bob Giles, Curator, Nieman Foundation

Robert H. Giles is Curator of the Nieman Foundation, a mid-career fellowship program for journalists at Harvard University. He worked for nearly 40 years as a newspaper reporter and editor, most recently as editor and publisher of *The Detroit News*, which he joined in 1986 as executive editor. From 1977-1986, Giles was executive editor and then editor at the *Democrat & Chronicle* and the *Times-Union*, in Rochester, N.Y. His newspaper career began in 1958 at the *Akron* (Ohio) *Beacon Journal*, where as managing editor of the *Beacon Journal*, Giles directed coverage of the campus shootings at Kent State University, for which the newspaper was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Before coming to Harvard in 2000, he was a senior vice president of the Freedom Forum and executive director of its Media Studies Center in New York City.

Dan Gillmor, Grassroots Media Inc.

Founder of Grassroots Media Inc., Gillmor is working on a project to encourage and enable more citizen-based media. His weblog, at http://dangillmor.typepad.com is devoted to the discussion of the issues facing grassroots journalism as it grows into an important force in society. Gillmor is author of *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism By the People, For the People*, a 2004 book that is widely credited as the first comprehensive look at way the collision of technology and journalism is transforming the media landscape. From 1994-2004, Dan was a columnist at the San Jose Mercury News, Silicon Valley's daily newspaper, and wrote a weblog for SiliconValley.com. He joined the Mercury News after six years with the Detroit Free Press. Before that, he was with the Kansas City Times and several newspapers in Vermont.

Brendan Greeley, Site Editor, Public Radio Exchange

Greeley is Site Editor of PRX.com, a web-based marketplace for public radio programming. PRX allows programmers to find and air work from other stations, independent producers and international broadcasters. He blogs at www.mistakesweremade.org. Greeley has contributed print pieces to *The New York Times*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal Europe*. He is a frequent contributor to the Little Gray Book lecture series in Brooklyn. Lest he mislead you with these clips, however, he used to support himself as a web content consultant,

back in the days when the phrase "web content consultant" still had some cachet. His audio work has been featured on Transom.org and Radio Netherlands, as well as *Wonkette* and Andrew Sullivan's *Daily Feed*.

John Hinderaker, Powerlineblog.com

Hinderaker blogs at Powerlineblog.com, a conservative weblog. He is a lawyer with the Minneapolis law firm Faegre & Benson. For more than ten years Hinderaker has written with his former law partner Scott Johnson on public policy issues including income inequality, income taxes, campaign finance reform, affirmative action, welfare reform, and race in the criminal justice system. Both Hinderaker and Johnson are fellows of the Claremont Institute. Their articles have appeared in National Review, The American Enterprise, American Experiment Quarterly, and newspapers from Florida to California.

Edith Holway, Shorenstein Center, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

Edith Holway is the fellows and programs administrator for the Joan Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Her responsibilities include administering and overseeing the Center's fellows program and organizing public events which include a weekly speaker series, Shorenstein Center-sponsored John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum events, conferences, executive sessions, press briefings, and *ad hoc* events. Ms. Holway works closely with journalists, scholars, and public officials who participate in programs at the Center. Prior to joining the Shorenstein Center in November 1989 she worked at Harvard College. Before coming to Harvard, she held positions at Urban Innovations, the Organization for Social and Technical Innovation (OSTI) and the Education Development Center. She earned a B.A. from Mary Baldwin College and a certificate from the Sorbonne University in Paris, France.

Kathy Im, Program Officer, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Kathy Im is a Program Officer in the General Program of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She is responsible for a diverse grant portfolio that includes the Foundation's work in media and special initiatives. Prior to joining the Foundation, Ms. Im was a Community Builder Fellow with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, worked in grantmaking at the Field Foundation of Illinois, the Polk Brothers Foundation, and the Bank of America Foundation, and was a speechwriter at the White House.

Brooks Jackson, Director, Annenberg Political Fact Check

Jackson is a journalist who covered Washington and national politics for 34 years, reporting in turn for The Associated Press, the Wall Street Journal and CNN. At CNN he pioneered the "adwatch" and "factcheck" form of stories debunking false and misleading political statements starting with the Presidential election of 1992. His investigative reporting for The AP and the Journal won several national awards. He is the author of two books: *Honest Graft: Big Money and the American Political Process* (Knopf, 1988) and *Broken Promise: Why the Federal Election Commission Failed* (Twentieth Century Fund: 1990).

Jeff Jarvis, Buzz Machine

Jeff Jarvis is mediaman by day -- as president and creative director of Advance.net, the online arm of Advance Publications -- and blogboy by night -- at Buzzmachine.com. He was creator and founding editor of Entertainment Weekly; TV critic for TV Guide and People; Sunday editor and associate publisher of the New York Daily News; a daily columnist on the San Francisco Examiner; and a reporter and editor on the Chicago Tribune. He is also media critic for Air America's Morning Sedition.

Alex Jones, Shorenstein Center, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

Jones is the Laurence M. Lombard Lecturer in the Press and Public Policy and Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He covered the press for the *New York Times* from 1983-1992 and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1987. In 1991, he coauthored (with Susan E. Tifft) *The Patriarch: The Rise and Fall of the Bingham Dynasty*. In 1992, he left the *Times* to work on*The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Time*s (also coauthored with Tifft), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle award. He has been a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, a host of National Public Radio's *On the Media*, and is currently the host and Executive Editor of PBS's *Media Matters*. He is on the Advisory Board of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, International Center for Journalists, Committee of Concerned Journalists, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Rick Kaplan, President, MSNBC

Kaplan joined MSNBC in 2004 after serving as Senior Vice President of ABC News since mid-2003. Prior to that Kaplan was a teaching fellow at the Shorenstein Center of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. From 1997-2000, Kaplan served as President of CNN-US and was responsible for all news and programming at the flagship network of the CNN News Group. From 1979-1997, Kaplan held a variety of high-level positions at ABC News and the ABC Television Network. Kaplan has 34 Emmy Awards, four Oversees Press Club Awards, three George Foster Peabody Awards, two George Polk Awards, four Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Awards, and twelve Headliner Awards.

Jim Kennedy, Vice President, Director of Strategic Planning, Associated Press

Kennedy leads strategic planning across all divisions of the world's largest news organization, including services for print, broadcast and new media. He began his second stint with The Associated Press in 2001, after two years as executive director of product planning for *The Wall Street Journal Online*, also known as *WSJ.com*. Before moving to the Journal, he spent 13 years at AP, first as business news editor and later as the founding director of the news agency's multimedia department. He is a founder and board member of the Online News Association. Kennedy began his journalism career at *The Ogdensburg (N.Y.) Journal* as a reporter and later managing editor. He also spent several years as a bureau chief, foreign correspondent and business editor for *The Tampa (Fla.) Tribune* before moving to AP.

Carrie Lowe, Internet Policy Specialist, ALA, Office of Information Technology Policy

As Internet Policy Specialist for the American Library Association's Office for Information Technology Policy, Carrie researches, writes, speaks and advises upon a constantly-changing array of technology policy issues facing libraries, including RFID, filtering, accessibility, E-rate

and many others. Before coming to ALA, Carrie worked as Senior Education Associate at PBS. Before that, she was Assistant to the Dean of the Information School at the University of Washington, and also worked for the Gateway to Educational Materials Project at the Information Institute of Syracuse.

Christopher Lydon, Public radio host, Bopnews.com

Lydon has been a voice in print, television and radio journalism for more than 30 years. In the 70's he covered the McGovern/Humphrey, Reagan/Carter presidential campaigns for the New York Times Washington Bureau. In the 80's he anchored public television news on WGBH Boston. In the 90's he founded "The Connection" on WBUR Boston and brought it to 75 public stations around the country. Chris spent the last year in Jamaica, West Africa and Southeast Asia collecting sounds, voices and ideas for the "The Whole Wide World with Christopher Lydon".

Rebecca MacKinnon, Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School

As a fellow at the Berkman Center, MacKinnon organizes conferences, speaks, and writes on the future of journalism, internet weblogs and participatory media. She is co-developer (in conjunction with Berkman Fellow Ethan Zuckerman) of a new "Global Voices" project, which seeks to promote universal semiotic democracy: a world where everyone has the legal right and tools to engage in dialogue with a global audience via text, audio and video. She blogs at www.RConversation.com and is also founder of a blog on North Korea at: www.NKzone.org. MacKinnon worked as a journalist in Northeast Asia for over a decade. From 2001 until the end of 2004, she was CNN's Tokyo bureau chief and correspondent, responsible for the network's coverage of Japan in addition to covering major events in Korea, Pakistan and the Philippines. From 1998-2001 she was CNN's Beijing Bureau Chief and Correspondent.

Cameron Marlow, MIT Media Lab, Blogdex.

Marlow is a Ph.D. student in the Electronic Publishing Group at the MIT Media Laboratory. He blogs at http://overstated.net, and is creator of Blogdex.net, a service that tracks the diffusion of links/ideas through the population of webloggers. He is looking to objectively describe the information epidemics that occur regularly within informal social networks.

Bill Mitchell, Director of Publishing, Poynter Institute

Bill Mitchell is director of publishing and editor of Poynter Online. Before joining The Poynter Institute in 1999, he worked as editor of Universal New Media ('95-'99) and director of electronic publishing at the San Jose Mercury News ('92-'95). He was a reporter, editor, Washington correspondent, and European correspondent for the Detroit Free Press & Knight Ridder, and a bureau chief for TIME. He was a Pulitzer juror in 2002 and 2003.

Andrew Nachison, Director, The Media Center @API

The Media Center is a nonprofit think tank committed to building a better-informed society in a connected world. It is a separately-funded division of The American Press Institute. Nachison is a writer and online publishing veteran who has reported and edited for The Associated Press; written for The New York Times, Infoworld, Audubon and other magazines; and managed one of the world's most ambitious small-market

newspaper Web sites, lawrence.com. He is founder of the interactive media consultancy Nach Media, and taught journalism and new media at Indiana University.

John Palfrey, Executive Director, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School

As Executive Director, Palfrey is responsible for working with the faculty directors to set and carry out the Center's ambitious, public-spirited agenda and overseeing the work of its crack team of staff, fellows and students. He is a Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School**.** His research interests include the Internet and democracy, intellectual property, and technology law as it relates to commercial transactions. John came to the Berkman Center from the law firm Ropes & Gray, where he worked on intellectual property, Internet law, and private equity transactions. He is a co-founder and a former officer of a venture-backed technology company, and also served as a Special Assistant at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during the Clinton administration.

Xiao Qiang, China Digital News, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism

Xiao Qiang is founder of the China-watching blog, China Digital News (http://journalism.berkeley.edu/projects/chinadn/en/) He is the Tang Teaching Fellow and the Director of the Berkeley China Internet Studies Program at the Graduate School of Journalism, University of California at Berkeley. A physicist by training, Xiao Qiang received a B.S. from the University of Science and Technology of China and studied as a PhD candidate (1986-1989) in astrophysics at the University of Notre Dame. He became a full time human rights activist after the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989. Xiao was the Executive Director of Human Rights in China (HRIC) from 1991 to 2002. Xiao is a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship in 2001, and is profiled in the book "Soul Purpose: 40 People Who Are Changing the World for the Better," (Melcher Media, 2003). He is also a weekly commentator for Radio Free Asia.

Lee Rainie, Founding Director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project

Since December 1999, the Washington D.C. research center has examined how people's Internet use affects their families, communities, health care, education, civic and political life, and work places. The Project has issued more than 90 reports based on surveys and other research on these social issues and important public policy questions such as trust and privacy online, e-government, intellectual property, broadband adoption, and the digital divides. Prior to receiving the grant, Rainie was managing editor of U.S. News & World Report.

Elspeth Revere, Program Director, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Elspeth Revere is the Director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's General Program. Her responsibilities include designing and implementing special initiatives in fields ranging from engaging young people in community service, to international human rights, to the impact of the digital revolution on society. She also is responsible for making grants representing special opportunities and for implementing the Foundation's program of large institutional grants. Elspeth joined the Foundation as a program officer in 1991. She was promoted to associate director of the program in 1992, and to director in 1998. Prior to joining the Foundation, she was president of the Woodstock Institute, a nonprofit policy research organization working to increase

private sector investment in low-income neighborhoods; Director of Program Development for the city of Chicago's Department of Housing; a senior planner in the Department of Development and Planning; and a consultant on community development projects in the U.S. and Central America. She was a founder and board member of the Women's Self Employment Project and has also served on the boards of directors of the Association of Women in Development and ACCION Chicago.

Jay Rosen, New York University

Rosen blogs at Pressthink.org. He is a press critic and writer whose primary focus is the media's role in a democracy. A member of the faculty since 1986, he is the current chair, and teaches courses in media criticism, cultural journalism, press ethics and the journalistic tradition, among other subjects. Rosen is an advocate of "public journalism," which calls on the press to take a more active role in strengthening citizenship, improving political debate and reviving public life. From 1993 to 1997, he was the Director of the Project on Public Life and the Press, funded by the Knight Foundation and housed at NYU. He is author of *What Are Journalists For?*, published in 1999. From 1993 to 1997, he was the media editor of *Tikkun* magazine, where he was often published. In 1994, Rosen was a fellow at the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University.

Tom Rosensteil, Vice-Chairman, Committee of Concerned Journalists

Rosenstiel designed the Project for Excellence in Journalism and directs its activities. He also serves as vice chairman of the Committee of Concerned Journalists, a sister initiative of the project engaged in conducting a national conversation among journalists about standards and values. A journalist for more than 20 years, he is a former media critic for the Los Angeles Times and chief congressional correspondent for Newsweek magazine. He is the editor and principal author of the Project's Annual Report on the State of the News Media, a comprehensive report on the health of American journalism. He also directs the Project's content analysis reports on the performance of the press. Rosenstiel is also co-author of the Committee's "Traveling Curriculum," an ongoing education program that since 2001 has trained more than 5,600 journalists in print, TV and online newsrooms nationwide. Among his books, he is the author with Bill Kovach of *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect* (Crown 2001). He is a frequent commentator on radio and television and in print.

Jan Schaffer, Executive Director, J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism

Schaffer is the Executive Director for J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism, a center at the University of Maryland's College of Journalism that helps newsrooms, educators and communities use innovative information technologies to develop new ways for people to learn about important public issues. She is the former Executive Director of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, a $14 million, 10-year journalism reform initiative. J-Lab is extending the Pew Center's work by focusing on innovations in the use of information technology. It also administers the national Batten Awards for Innovations in Journalism and New Voices, a pioneering program to seed innovative community news ventures in the United States. Schaffer, a former Business Editor and a Pulitzer Prize winner for The Philadelphia Inquirer, brings more than 30 years of journalism experience to her work.

Orville Schell, Dean, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism

Orville Schell has devoted his professional life to reporting on and writing about Asia. Author of 14 books - nine about China, including "Virtual Tibet," "Mandate of Heaven," and "Discos and Democracy" - Dean Schell has also written widely about Asia and other topics for Wired, The New York Review of Books, The NewYorker, Harper's, The New York Times, The Atlantic, Newsweek and other national magazines. Schell has also served as correspondent and consultant for several PBS "Frontline" documentaries as well as an Emmy award-winning program on China for CBS' "60 Minutes"

Karen G. Schneider, Director, Librarians' Index to the Internet

Schneider is a writer and librarian who has written over 100 articles and 2 books, primarily about Internet technologies for library trade publications. She blogs at freerangelibrarian.com. From 1995 to 2001, as the Internet Librarian columnist for American Libraries (circulation 65,000), Schneider consistently ranked in magazine surveys as AL's most popular author. In 1998, as author of *A Practical Guide to Internet Filters*, Schneider provided expert testimony for Mainstream Loudoun vs. Board of Trustees, a pivotal First Amendment case about free speech on the Internet. Schneider selects, evaluates, describes, and organizes websites for the well-regarded Librarians' Index to the Internet, http://lii.org, a publicly-funded portal/announcement service focused toward librarians and lifelong learners.

Jack Shafer, Editor at Large, Slate

Jack Shafer is a Slate editor at large. He has edited two alternative weeklies, Washington City Paper and SF Weekly, and has written on new media for the New York Times Magazine, on the press for the New Republic, and on drug policy for publications big (Wall Street Journal) and small (Inquiry). His "Press Box" column appears several times a week in Slate, which he joined prior to its 1996 launch.

David Sifry, Founder and CEO, Technorati

Technorati is a real-time search engine that keeps track of what is going on in the blogosphere — the world of weblogs. Sifry is a serial entrepreneur with over 19 nineteen years of software development and industry experience. Before founding Technorati, Dave was cofounder and CTO of Sputnik, a Wi-Fi gateway company, and previously, he was cofounder of Linuxcare, where he served as CTO and VP of Engineering. Dave also served as a founding member of the board of Linux International and on the technical advisory board of the National Cybercrime Training Partnership for law enforcement. Dave can often be found speaking on panels and giving lectures on a variety of technology issues, ranging from wireless spectrum policy and Wi-Fi, to Weblogs and Open Source software. He blogs at Sifry's Alerts.

Jane Singer, Assistant Professor, University of Iowa

Singer is Assistant Professor at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Her dissertation, from the University of Missouri School of Journalism, was titled: "Newspaper Journalists' Actions and Attitudes Regarding Interactive Media." From 1990 to 1992 she worked as News Manager, Program Manager, and Writer for Prodigy Communications. Before that she was News Manager and Senior Editor for Trintex, and editor at CBS's Venture One project. From 1977-1982 she worked as a journalist at the *Delaware County Daily Times*, the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, and the *Clearwater Sun*.

Zephyr Teachout, Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School

Teachout was recently appointed a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society, where she plans to write about the internet and comparative collective action solutions. She worked as Howard Dean's Director of Online Organizing in 2003-2004, and consulted for America Coming Together. She also ran a college organizing effort. A Graduate of Duke Law School, in 2001 she co-founded The Fair Trial Initiative, a non-profit that trains lawyers for death penalty trial work. She does occasional consulting on community and list-building online.

Susan Tifft, Eugene C. Patterson Professor, Duke University

Tifft is currently Eugene C. Patterson Professor of the Practice of Journalism and Public Policy Studies, DeWitt Wallace Center for Communications and Journalism. Her research focus includes: Media ethics; impact of media ownership on news content; hurdles and dilemmas associated with investigative journalism, and the role of the press in the policy process. She is co-author with Alex Jones of *The Patriarch: The Rise and Fall of the Bingham Dynasty* and *Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Time*s.

Joe Trippi, Trippi & Associates

Trippi began his political career working on Edward M. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1980. His work in presidential politics continued with the campaigns of Walter Mondale, Gary Hart, Richard Gephardt and most recently Howard Dean. In 2004, he was National Campaign Manager for Howard Dean's presidential campaign, pioneering the use of online technology to organize what became the largest grassroots movement in presidential politics. Trippi began his work in media consulting at the Democratic media firm of Doak, Shrum and Associates, where he was involved in developing the strategy and producing the media for the successful campaigns of Jerry Baliles for Governor of Virginia and Bob Casey for Governor of Pennsylvania. Trippi was also instrumental in the re-election campaigns of U.S. Senator Alan Cranston of California and Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles. In addition to his work in politics, Trippi works with a number of high-tech companies including Wave Systems, Progeny Linux Systems, and Smart Paper Networks. He is the author of, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet and the Overthrow of Everything," the story of how his revolutionary use of the Internet and an impassioned, contagious desire to overthrow politics as usual grew into a national grassroots movement and changed the face of politics, and indeed many aspects of American life, forever.

Jimmy Wales, Co-Founder, Wikipedia

Wales is the co-founder of Wikipedia, a wiki-based online encyclopedia derived from the free software model. He and co-founder Larry Sanger had previously worked on the now-defunct Nupedia encyclopedia project. Wales is currently the director of the Wikimedia Foundation, a Tampa-based non-profit organization that encompasses Wikipedia and its younger sister projects. *Time* magazine reported that Wales had spent around $500,000 on the establishment and operations of his Wiki projects. In the mid-1990s Wales started Bomis, a search portal focusing on aspects of pop culture, which also sells original content. More recently, he founded Wikia, a wiki-style search engine, and Wikicities, a free wiki hosting service.

David Weinberger, Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School

Weinberger is co-author of the *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, the bestseller that cut through the hype and told business what the Web was really about. His latest book is *Small Pieces Loosely Joined*. He is a frequent commentator on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and has written for the "Fortune 500" of business and tech journals, including *The New York Times, Harvard Business Review, The Miami Herald, The Boston Globe and Wired.* He is a columnist for *Worthwhile and Knowledge Management World,* and writes an influential business technology newsletter and a daily weblog. He was a philosophy professor for six years, a comedy writer for Woody Allen for seven years, a humor columnist for Oregon's major daily newspaper, a dot-com entrepreneur before most people knew what a home page was, and a strategic marketing consultant to household-name multinationals and the most innovative startups.

Rick Weingarten, Director, Office of Information Technology Policy, American Library Association

As Director of the Office for Information Technology Policy of the American Library Association, Weingarten does research and analysis of the policy implications of new technology for libraries and librarians. He is also on the adjunct faculty of the College of Library and Information Services at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he teaches information policy. For the previous three years, he has held the dual positions of Senior Policy Fellow for the ALA and Director of Public Policy for the Computing Research Association (CRA), a scientific association of academic Computer Science and Engineering Departments and industrial research laboratories. For five years, he served as the first full-time Executive Director of CRA. Before joining CRA, Dr. Weingarten served for several years as Manager of the Communication and Information Technologies Program at the congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), an agency of Congress responsible for performing technology policy studies. Dr. Weingarten has served on advisory groups for the National Science Foundation, the State Department and the Defense Department, and is an advisor to the Canadian Foundation for Innovation on their information technology research and application funding programs. He serves on the federal government Computer System Security and Privacy Advisory Board.

Dave Winer, Scripting News

Winer is editor of Scripting News, the weblog started in 1997 that bootstrapped the blogging revolution. He is co-developer of Frontier, Manila and Radio UserLand. Winer has pioneered several Internet standards in distributed computing, including SOAP, XML-RPC, RSS, OPML and podcasting. A software industry veteran, Winer also produced award-winning commercial software products at Living Videotext, which merged with Symantec in 1987. He was a contributing editor at Wired in the mid-90s and in 1997 was chosen as a Seybold Fellow for his pioneering work in Web-based publishing systems. In 2001 he was honored with the top award by Wired Magazine for his work on SOAP. Winer was a member of the Board of Advisors of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and a fellow at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet & Society. He has hosted two BloggerCon user conferences at Harvard University, and one at Stanford University.

Ethan Zuckerman, Fellow, Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard Law School

Zuckerman became a fellow of the Berkman Center in January, 2003. His work at Berkman focuses on the impact of technology on the developing world. His current projects include a study of global media attention, research on the use of weblogs and other social software in the developing world, and work on a clearinghouse for software for international development. In

2000, Ethan founded Geekcorps, a non-profit technology volunteer corps. Geekcorps became a division of the International Executive Service Corps in 2001, where Ethan served as a vice president from 2001-4. Prior to founding Geekcorps, Ethan helped found Tripod, an early pioneer in the web community space. Ethan served as Tripod's first graphic designer and technologist, and later as VP of Business Development and VP of Research and Development. After Tripod's acquisition by Lycos in 1998, Ethan served as General Manager of the Angelfire.com division and as a member of the Lycos mergers and acquisitions team. He serves on the boards of regional and international organizations that focus on technology and education, including on the sub-board of the Open Society Institute's Information Program.

Jonathan Zittrain, Faculty Co-Director, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School

Jonathan Zittrain is the Jack N. and Lillian R. Berkman Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurial Legal Studies at Harvard Law School. He is a co-founder of the Berkman Center and served as its first executive director from 1997-2000. His research includes digital property, privacy, and speech, and the role that is played by private intermediaries in Internet architecture. He currently teaches Internet & Society: The Technologies and Politics of Control, and has a strong interest in creative, useful, and unobtrusive ways to deploy technology in the classroom. He holds a J.D. from the Harvard Law School magna cum laude, an M.P.A. from the J.F.K. School of Government, and a B.S. in Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence from Yale summa cum laude. He is also a fourteen-year veteran sysop of CompuServe's online forums.

APPENDIX D: A small selection of articles written about the conference

Jessica Mintz, "When Bloggers Make News," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 21, 2005; Page B1. at: http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB110626272888531958-search,00.html

Jon Bonné, "Blog nice, everyone: Why credibility matters even if you write for free," MSNBC 9:39 p.m. ET Jan. 19, 2005. at: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6844492/

Frank Bajak, "Memo to media establishment: Ignore blogs at your peril," Associated Press article in *San Jose Mercury News*, January 24, 2005 at: http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/siliconvalley/10722818.htm

Jack Shafer, "Blog Overkill: The danger of hyping a good thing into the ground." *Slate*, Jan. 26, 2005, at 5:48 PM PT at: http://www.slate.com/Default.aspx?id=2112621&

Jenny Attiyeh, "Who's got the power? Bloggers vie with journalists in the era of the Internet," *Harvard Gazette*, February 3, 2005, at: http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2005/02.03/17-blog.html

OTHER USEFUL LINKS:

Online links to blog posts, articles and other online material related to "Blogging Journalism and Credibility" can be found at: http://del.icio.us/tag/webcred

The conference weblog: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred

Conference audio: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=62

Conference transcripts: http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/webcred/index.php?p=66