

Again today the topic of anonymous commentators via local blogs and online news sites has become part of the story. It's interesting to see how far news standards have devolved in the 5 years or so since I was last a reporter. We were held to a high standard when anonymous sources were involved. Often we had to have two or more sources confirming the information before it was published. Now we have longtime journalists publishing anonymous tips as news and failing to maintain a level of objectivity required of their colleagues. The line between news and opinion is blurred, at best. Many of the sources deemed "credible" and often hiding behind their anonymity are the same crackpots who had a reputation for bringing bunk tips to the newsroom -- when there was still a newsroom in Idaho -- which couldn't be confirmed otherwise. For any news organization (and the two local papers are both guilty of this, along with TV stations) to publish anonymous tips and comments when they hold their reporters to a higher standard is beyond reproach. Anonymous letters won't be published in the print editions, so why is it acceptable to do it in the online realm? Newspaper ethics policies should apply both in print and online but, unfortunately, the local news outlets are simply becoming page hit whores. Question what you read online. Because somebody has to ...

[Taryn Thompson's Facebook comment posted March 30, 2013. Reproduced with her permission.]