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Citizen Journalism: How Far It Goes? A Review

Abstract

Citizen journalism arises because technology provides opportunities for consumers to become content producers, which can be referred to as user-generated content (UGC). With the emergence of the ability of citizens to produce content, citizen journalism has become an alternative to content produced by the mainstream media. The locality and uniqueness of citizen journalism's point of view are one of the strengths because citizen journalists are considered to be independent. Citizen journalists can use any media freely such as Youtube, Blog, Twitter, or other social media. This is different when the mainstream media also provides a place for citizen journalists to be creative. Indirectly, the benefits accrue to the mainstream media by having a forum for citizen journalists that they create, and vice versa. The existence of opportunities provided by the mainstream media, provides an economic motive for citizen journalists. This was offset by the independence of citizen journalism which is still strong. The limitation of this paper is that the data used are existing research articles, not empirical research. So it is necessary to do further research to be able to see the effect of economic motives on citizen journalism.

Keywords: citizen journalism, independence, mainstream media.

ABSTRAK

Jurnalisme warga muncul karena teknologi yang memberikan peluang bagi konsumen menjadi produsen konten, dapat disebut sebagai *user generated content* (UGC). Dengan munculnya kemampuan warga dalam memproduksi konten, jurnalisme warga menjadi alternatif selain konten yang diproduksi oleh media *mainstream*. Kelokalan dan keunikan sudut pandang jurnalisme warga menjadi salah satu kelebihan, karena jurnalis warga dinilai bersifat independen. Jurnalis warga dapat menggunakan media apapun secara bebas seperti Youtube, Blog, Twitter, atau media sosial lainnya. Hal ini menjadi berbeda ketika media *mainstream* juga memberikan wadah bagi jurnalis warga untuk berkreasi. Secara tidak langsung muncul keuntungan yang diperoleh oleh media *mainstream* dengan adanya wadah bagi jurnalis warga yang mereka ciptakan, begitu juga sebaliknya. Adanya kesempatan yang diberikan oleh media arus utama, memberikan motif ekonomi bagi para jurnalis warga. Hal ini ternyata diimbangi dengan indepensi jurnalisme warga yang masih kuat. Limitasi tulisan ini adalah data yang

digunakan merupakan artikel penelitian yang sudah ada, bukan penelitan empiris. Sehingga perlu dilakukan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk dapat melihat pengaruh motif ekonomi pada jurnalisme warga.

Kata Kunci : jurnalisme warga, independensi, media *mainstream*.

Introduction

Information is something that is needed by society and has important value (Rogers, 1987). Before the emergence of new media, mass media such as newspapers and television played a role in disseminating information. The mass media is a social institution whose main activity is the production and distribution of information and culture (McQuail, 2010). In addition, the media also functions to be responsible in the public sphere for the production of this information. Basically, media differentiation in mass media is easy to see using print or broadcast media, but with the emergence of the internet and digitalization, the media characters have converged and are difficult to distinguish (McQuail, 2010).

New media brings changes to the mass media, uniting several media into one or media convergence. Dijk (2006) explains how technological developments created by humans move along with the character of society. The development of internet technology forms a new infrastructure in society (Dijk, 2006). In the 21st century, a new character of society has emerged, namely a network society, this network can be in the form of social networks or media networks.

This network makes information scroll very quickly, various levels of society can access information or provide information according to what they want. The public, consumers, and audiences can connect with the network they want. The network community is a well-informed community. Thus the presence of new media is something that supports democracy and freedom of expression. This statement is in accordance with the characteristics of new media, namely digital, interactive, hypertextual, networked, and stimulated (Lister et al., 2009).

With convergence, interactivity, and digitalization, information dissemination is not only carried out by the media, but citizens can also produce information and form their own media (Papacharissi, 2009). Previously, the mass media had the power to select and convey information to the public. The presence of new media provides space for citizens to produce information as well.

Citizen journalism is described as the involvement of non-professionals in creating, analyzing, and disseminating news and information in the public interest (Roberts, 2019). It arises because technology provides user-generated content (UGC). Citizens or users can make content or share information through social media, blogs, or social networking like Twitter. This advantage is also supported by new media characteristics.

The interactivity and digital characteristics of new media encourage the presence of citizen journalism. With the character of digital media, message production is easier to create, because data is stored digitally and can be stored and distributed via the internet, digital disks, or memory devices (Lister et al., 2009). Thus, the data produced can be distributed through telecommunication networks in the form of digital data, or in the form of hard copies. The same goes for interactivity, making information produced by citizen journalists shareable with internet users. Citizen journalism appears outside the mainstream media because citizen journalism has strong relationships with other citizens not with journalists, they are sometimes independent. Citizen journalism is in the opposite direction of the mainstream media (Deuze, 2009a) (Deuze, 2009a). This independence is the advantage of citizen journalism, making it more trusted by the public.

In addition to independence, citizen journalism is also related to freedom of expression and diversity of information. The diversity of information is obtained from information boundaries that are getting thinner due to technology, and the opening of opportunities for marginalized groups to voice their opinions (Luce et al., 2017). That's why Nah (2008) defines citizen journalism as 'amateur and grassroots reporters or journalists'. At the beginning of the emergence of citizen journalism, they were independent and did not depend on the mainstream media.

This independency is a strength of citizen journalism. With UGC, citizens spread information to other citizens, repost it, comment on it, and gain mass. In the Asian context, citizen journalism is a form of democracy by the public to mutually support fellow citizens and equalize positions with the mainstream media (Zeng et al., 2019). In India, citizen journalism is able to show movement in some public issues such as addressing grievances, access to services, helping citizens overcome bureaucratic hurdles, fighting corruption, upholding basic rights, and achieving justice. Meanwhile, in South East Asia, the success of citizen journalism can be seen in Indonesia, because the root tradition of citizen journalism has been embedded

in radio which the developed through new media. This development has made the media system in Indonesia more diverse, not only dominated by the elite.

The freedom of citizen journalism is not entirely ideal, as time goes by, it is possible that citizen journalism has to relate to mainstream media or mass media. The power of citizen journalism to gain mass, and spread information make mainstream media develop their application to gain information from citizen (Kperogi, 2011; Palmer, 2013). The mass media reads the diversity of information offered by citizen journalism as an opportunity to provide a forum for citizen journalism and present information with different agendas. One example, CNN has a special website for citizen journalism, titled iReport.com. This practice is also starting to be seen in Indonesian local radio, such as Suara Surabaya, or Indonesian online news portals like pasangmata.com (detik.com) or kompasiana (Kompas.com) which creates a citizen journalism website and has its own citizen journalism event slot.

Initially, the space provided by the mainstream media only provided media for citizen journalists to convey their work. The mainstream media provide space to motivate citizens to become citizen journalists and to make their reports with a local context. However, is it possible for citizen journalists to still exist if the mainstream media starts cooperating with them?

Research Method

The method used in this paper is a literature review. The data source used is a secondary data source in the form of scientific articles obtained through publisher indexes such as Science Direct, Sage Publications, and Taylor & Francais using the keyword "citizen journalism". From the secondary data search, 2108 journals were obtained which were then analyzed. In order to reduce bias in conducting literature reviews, it is necessary to carry out several key stages (Winchester & Salji, 2016) which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Stages of Literature Review

Stages	Examples
Select Review/ Topic Title	Citizen Journalism
Identify keywords and search terms	Citizen Journalism, Public Journalism, Civic Journalism
Identify information sources	Online search engines: Google
Generate a reading list and collect articles	• Start with a broad search term e.g. 'citizen journalism' and "jurnalisme warga" • Use online resources: Google Scholar: English : 1070 , Indonesian: 173 articles

Make notes in your own words	• Group and collate information relating to keywords and search terms • Evaluate data in peer-reviewed research articles • Compare and contrast similarities and differences • Keep track of information sources
Write literature review	• Summarise findings • Expand into a full review using keywords and search terms to structure the text into sections • Generate a citation list

Results and Discussions

Combination of UGC and Social Media

Converged media indirectly changes the character of the user who was initially passive to become active. Audiences are not only consumers (consumers) anymore, but they can also become producers (producers), so the term prosumer (Bruns on Hess, 2009) appears in the mainstream media. The term prosumer began to appear in academic circles when facts began to emerge that prosumer users began to appear between producers and consumers, as well as professionals and consumers (Dijck, 2009). It can be said that User Generated Content is media content produced by other than media professionals (Dijck, 2009).

"*Audiences empowered by new technologies, forming spaces between old and new media, demand to participate in culture*" (Jenkins, 2006, p.24). Jenkins argues that network technology influences users to renegotiate their relationship with corporations (Dijck, 2009). The community as users also wants to move to form new content and contribute to providing information. Tang, Fang, and Wang (Colistra et al., 2016), explain that UGC is media content created by users to share information and or opinions with other users.

UGC also provides input on journalism content, which provides an opportunity for citizens to shape their own content, which is called citizen journalism. The UGC form of citizen journalism includes journalistic practices such as blogging, sharing photos and videos, or posting comments about the testimony of an incident. In another scope, citizen journalism activities also include re-posting, linking, tagging, rating, modifying, or commenting on news content posted by other users or by professional news sites where sometimes citizen participation in the reporting process is carried out unintentionally (Goode, 2009). In principle, citizen journalism is the result of reporting by non-journalist citizens who use any means to make reports to other citizens.

Youtube or blog is a site that provides a special platform for UGC. Youtube, is currently one of the largest UGC Video on Demand (VoD) which states that they are a forum for the UGC VoD community and provide opportunities for citizens to produce their own content in the form of videos (Cha et al., 2007). In 2006, Google, one of the largest technology companies, bought Youtube for USD 1.65 billion (Hidayat, 2013). This proves that Youtube has great potential. This potential is meaningless without reason since it was founded in 2005 until 2015 it was recorded that 300 million videos were shared (Prihadi, 2015). Pew Research released data that stated that of the hundreds of popular news videos uploaded to Youtube, 40% were produced by non-journalists (Prihadi, 2015). APJII data (2016) shows that YouTube is one of the social media that is often used by internet users in Indonesia as many as 14.5 million people. From this data, it can be seen that many people use Youtube as a means to spread their 'product', and there are many enthusiasts.

Apart from Youtube, there are still many other media, sites, or technologies that support UGC such as Twitter and Facebook. Twitter is one of the substitutes for mainstream media in breaking news (Murthy, 2011). Information on Twitter can scroll through retweet activities or quoted tweets. Not only that, Twitter become a prominent part of social protest movement communication. Twitter enabled the spread of news information across physical spaces and provided a standardized platform for the contextualization of that information even though as time goes by, user behavior changes from a reliance on redistributing information to a greater prevalence of original information being disseminated in tweets (Veenstra et al., 2014).

Other social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and blogs, can also be a channel for citizens to carry out citizen journalism activities. Citizens can choose any channel to create their own content including journalism. Even though the role of Facebook and Twitter is different in citizen journalism. Facebook tends to have power on network size (bonding and bridging), while Twitter's power tends to have strength in personal factors social media use, and civic skill (Kim & Lowrey, 2015).

One of UGC's strengths is that content is produced by citizens and distributed through what channels they want, with the content they expect. This freedom can create a variety of content produced by users or audiences. This advantage also applies to citizen journalism. As mentioned in the introduction, citizen journalism is primarily concerned with establishing relationships between citizens, not with journalists, so the content produced tends to be unique because it often has a different point of view from the mainstream media (Deuze, 2009a). This

is then reinforced by the opinion of Goode (2009) who says that usually, citizen journalism is spontaneous and unintentional. With these advantages, citizen journalism can be an entry point for professional journalism to be more accepted by the audience.

Reaching the Unreached by the Mass Media, A Mainstream Media Gap

New media gives citizens the opportunity to appear in public space due to the characteristics of new media that have been mentioned previously, and the primary function of new media. Pavlik (1996) explains that new media has four technical functions in information processing. In the production of information, new media provides speed and efficiency. Collection and processing of information can be done more quickly, easily, and efficiently. In addition, information distribution can be done through the internet, depending on how many channels are connected to the manufacturer's network. With the nature of digital data, display of information can be packaged more attractively or interactively (Lister et al., 2009), as well as providing new experiences for users. Finally, data regarding information can be stored in various formats making it easier to store.

In addition, related to its scope, citizen journalism is able to cover and raise local matters globally (Deuze, 2009b). One of the things that can be used as an example is information about the explosion of Pertamina's fuel storage in Plumpang, Jakarta (Farisi, 2023). At this disaster, people need clear and actual pieces of information about what happened. One of the first things that could be relied upon regarding information on a bomb explosion was a video uploaded by people around the scene. Apart from being in the form of videos, Twitter users' tweets also help spread information about the explosion. This indicates that citizen journalism is something that helps disseminate information in society, helping to reach information faster than traditional media.

Another example is reporting on natural disasters, a condition that requires rapid distribution of information to expedite disaster management. In 2008 there was an earthquake in China, and information about the earthquake that occurred in Wenchuan China spread via Twitter (Nip, 2009). This is a practice of citizen journalism, one of the scattered videos was recorded by a student from his dormitory at Sichuan University (Nip, 2009). The video was then broadcast by CCTV (China Central Television). It is proven (Chang, 2009) that citizen journalism helps in speeding the distribution of information that is not reached by the mass media. Citizen journalism complements the information reported by the mass media.

Specifically, citizen journalism can bridge the proximity gap between the public and the newsroom. Proximity recognizes as something important to develop a sense of community, avenues at a greater distance from smaller towns are more likely to offer balanced political coverage of public interest matters (Freeman, 2020). In South Korea, there is the OhmyNews website which is a form of citizen journalism that changes handlers from "right to know" to "right to the expression" (Chang, 2009). This citizen journalism site has a mission as a new source of information for the community. In 2008 OhmyNews reportedly had 37,000 contributors and issued both English and Japanese editions (Thurman, 2008). In Indonesia, there are also citizen journalism channels such as Kabarindonesia.com. but there is no citizen journalism site that can be as big as OhmyNews in South Korea.

The excitement of sharing information between residents on social media is seen by the mass media as an opportunity to collaborate with citizen journalists. One of the media that does this is CNN, through iReport which provides a forum for citizen journalism in the form of video or writing to contribute without any re-editing and censorship processes from CNN (Kperogi, 2011). One of the things they highlight from iReport.com is the novelty of videos from citizen journalists, which will later be broadcast on CNN's conventional media. On the other hand, CNN takes advantage of the efficiency of their workforce/contributors network in various locations. Until 2011 alone, iReport.com had managed to collect 200,000 videos from citizen journalists who uploaded them voluntarily (Kperogi, 2011). In addition, CNN producers form assignment teams to determine what topics must be reported by citizen journalists, and this report will eventually be used by CNN itself (Kperogi, 2011).

In 2010, CNN launched a mobile app for iReport.com to make it easy for citizen journalists to produce news (Palmer, 2013) This launch reinforces the assumption that CNN is trying to create a global information network. This practice carried out by CNN shows the dependence between CNN as a media and citizen journalists as contributors (Palmer, 2013).

In Indonesia, several mainstream media have also started to open space for citizen journalism. Kompas has Kompasiana which provides space for writing, Tempo have Indonesiana, and Detik have pasangmata.com site as well. This extension is a manifestation of the media industry following and utilizing media convergence. It is possible that media companies in Indonesia will create platforms for citizen journalists to provide content, obtain information networks, and possibly earn money.

One form of citizen journalism forum facilitated by the mainstream media is netcj.co.id which was formed by Net. TV in 2013 (netcj.co.id, 2017). Even though this program was discontinued, it still represents how mainstream media embrace citizen journalism to be a part of them. On the NETCJ website, they explain that NETCJ is a form of social media that facilitates interactivity and citizen discussion regarding uploaded content. NETCJ also openly explains that there are awards for the best videos every week and every month. Besides that, NETCJ opens opportunities for the best videos to be broadcast on NET TV every day(Husain, 2016).

In the organizational structure of NET TV, NET. CJ is under the News Division. NET videos. CJ which is broadcast on television undergoes a selection and editing process in this division (Honsujaya, 2016). Indirectly, NET. CJ has an information database, and it is processed according to its agenda so that it can be broadcast in their mainstream media. One example is the selection of Islamic news videos that undergo gatekeeper selection by NET Producers. CJ, NET Producer. 10, dubber, editor, and apprentice (Khasanah, 2016). NET Islamic news selection. CJ is broadcast based on two criteria, namely attractive packaging and news value (Khasanah, 2016).

NET. CJ himself is considered a space choice for citizen journalists to work. This program has several uniqueness, namely integrating various platforms as one unit, providing greater broadcast opportunities, and being superior in terms of ideas (Honsujaya & Gafar, 2019). To develop citizen journalism, NET. CJ also educates citizen journalists through workshops and camps to provide journalistic knowledge (Honsujaya & Gafar, 2019).

Deuze (2009b) explains that one of the reasons traditional media embraces and works with consumers as partners in producing content is because the costs are lower. The first is the efficiency and speed of information production. Besides, that production is more efficient, because to get certain information the media doesn't need to send their crew to do the coverage, just use the network of citizen journalists. This provides an economic advantage because it can reduce production costs and only provide honorariums as compensation to citizen journalists whose content is used by the mainstream media.

Second, citizen journalism sites can be a repository of information for traditional media, so that to find information with certain categories this information can be used as content that is shown on television. From a media management standpoint, mainstream media takes advantage of technology and works with citizen journalism, this creates a new pattern in

media production. There are several characteristics of citizen journalism that support content production activities in the mainstream media. Information production becomes effective and efficient, technology also provides new information storage that is easier to use because it is in digital form, and this information can also be produced anywhere with easier distribution via the internet network (Pavlik, 1996).

The entry of the role of mainstream media in facilitating the practice of citizen journalism is contrary to one point of view regarding the independence of citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is an alternative for citizens to obtain essential information, not through gatekeepers such as the mass media (Nugraha, 2013). If citizen journalists are forced to follow the techniques used by journalists, the uniqueness of the information will not appear, because citizen journalism content has been processed through an editing process.

This phenomenon also illustrates the development of citizen journalism networks that no longer only establish relationships with fellow citizens but also with professional journalists and even the mass media. Citizen journalists have a loophole for economic interests to enter, which is contrary to the idealism of citizen journalism. Citizen journalists who are members of citizen journalism sites have the opportunity to get paid for their content. This certainly affects the independence of citizen journalism. However, the space provided by the mainstream media is only one of the channels that citizen journalists can use. Citizen journalists can use other media to distribute their work.

Does the citizen journalism idealism is still work?

There are some hopes for citizen journalism idealism to work, in the middle of the "facilitation" that mainstream media give. Citizen journalism fangs are still strong because they still have the power to influence traditional media's agenda and policy agenda, even making the government take action for solving actual problems (Luo & Harrison, 2019). Online public opinion, comments, and discussion on social media or online news sites followed by traditional media and affect their agenda.

The citizen journalism spirit still grows alongside social and mobile technology development. It brings information locality can be shared with fellow citizens and empowered passive citizens to be proactive to take action (Lin & Zhao, 2019). Lin & Zhao (2019) call it as SoMoLo (Social, Mobile, Local), which was found to have a role as an extension of offline

citizen activity to online citizen activity. This activity is supported by people who participated in this practice, the internet users.

In another research, citizen journalism influences civic participation in volunteering and donating programs held by a non-profit organization (Nah et al., 2017). Based on the communication mediation model, social capital perspective, and communication infrastructure theory, citizen journalism increase civic and community engagement (Nah & Chung, 2020). The appearance of information and technology increasingly connects civic, community, media, and the public.

The connectivity is represented in how citizen journalism aid, and creates a network for marginalized people. In the Indonesian context, there is limited reporting about the marginalized religious community in mainstream media. To solve this problem, the marginal religious community uses social media and chat applications to communicate and share information (Heychael et al., 2021). Accordingly, because of this connectivity, citizen journalism is seen as the fifth estate of democracy and it applied to Balebengong (Astuti, 2022). Balebengong is a citizen journalism media portal in Bali that was established on June 26, 2007, as a forum for Balinese people to tell stories.

The active role of citizen journalism is caused by distrust of the mainstream media. Dewey, a citizen media in Brussels produce constructive news against stereotypes or against a lack of coverage on mainstream media of certain issues (Wiard & Simonson, 2019). Then, it can explain that citizen journalism thorough information exposure. When Tianjin blasts happened in 2015, civilians engaged to verify the rumor about it on Weibo (SNS in China)(Zeng et al., 2019). The fact is that civilians trust more grassroots information than official information from the government and their partners.

This distrust makes both government, mainstream media, and public figures find it hard to lie about occurrences. Because the journalist's role as a gatekeeper began to be inserted by the same role of citizen journalism. Initially, it was the journalists who recorded and conveyed an incident quickly and accurately, but now residents can do it with technology. It can be seen (Lin & Zhao, 2019; J. Zeng et al., 2019)in riots in America when black civilians are shot by white police which begins with one witness video and is uploaded on social media (Walker, 2022). Then, netizens can comment and discuss it on the internet regardless of whether the discussion is in accordance with the news in the mainstream media.

Looking at the discussions above, it can be seen that citizen journalism still has hopes. Still, the research discussed before was done in many different countries. In Asia, citizen journalism growing to enjoy less media plurality, and activate the resident to be proactive to take action like in Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Macau, and Vietnam (Lin & Zhao, 2019; Zeng et al., 2019). In America, it assists riots when black citizen are shot by police (Walker, 2022). In Africa, citizen journalism is starting to grow depending on the technology infrastructure in the area (Mutsvairo & Salgado, 2022). Mustvairo & Salgado emphasize that in the future the expert have to discuss and agreed about what is the definition of citizen journalism.

Conclusion

Citizen journalism is a beneficial consequence provided by technology. Accuracy, locality and independence are the strengths of citizen journalism. This power is then seen as an economic gap for the mainstream media to be able to embrace citizen journalists to help professional journalism. In the end, the question arises whether the breath of citizen journalism independence will fade with this collaboration. But apparently, citizen journalism which is also grassroots journalism still has life. Even though it is contextual in some areas, citizen journalism still has the power to offset mainstream media information, build bonds between citizens, share information, and even create movements. Citizen journalism also has the ability to influence traditional media agendas as well as policy agendas, because journalists as gatekeepers in the press can take information on social media to make news material (Luo & Harrison, 2019). This article compiles arguments regarding citizen journalism based on existing literature so that in the future empirical research is needed to see whether economic motives can affect the independence of citizen journalism.

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