

# **The Open Newsroom: the broadcast news ecosystem in an era of online media migration and audience participation**

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Vincent Murwira

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## 1 Abstract

The media has always gone through changes, starting from the era of the Gutenberg printing press several centuries ago, to the introduction of radio and television in the last 100 years. In the last two decades, Internet and digital technologies have rapidly transformed the media and reshaped how news is gathered and disseminated, and re-defined audiences and their role in the media.

Before the Internet, news dissemination was scheduled and periodic, for example the 6pm television bulletin or weekly newspaper. Today news is now global and published in 24/7 round the clock news cycles.

At this time, there were clear demarcations between radio, television and newspapers, which were all separate entities. These demarcations have largely fallen away as all media have migrated online to publish on the same platform, using the same elements such as text, audio and video. Increasingly, television is migrating online to the degree that forecasts predict that online television will eclipse traditional TV as we now know it, just as much as online newspapers have eclipsed traditional newspapers. This debate is widely contested

In pre-Internet days, the media had distinct demarcations between the media owners, news gatherers (and production people), like journalists, and the audience. These demarcations are blurring as audiences increasingly participate in the media resulting in the emergence of a new breed of journalists; the citizen journalist. This is the most popular term used to describe these new journalists.

The dynamic nature of the online platform and functionalities like Web 2.0 made it possible for anyone to publish themselves online, on a blog, on social networking sites or to set up their own website, at very little or no cost. This has spurred a lot of creativity, and the wider public has created vast amounts of content such as video, audio and text and submitted or published them online. Consequently, content creation is no longer the preserve and domain of the media and journalists; the ubiquitous nature of the Internet and the availability of other enabling technologies: inexpensive digital technologies like video cameras, digital cameras and recorders means that anyone with access can now create content and disseminate it.

Debates in many parts of the world have suggested that these abilities are catalysts that could spur the public into contributing news and video content of breaking news to the media and help keep the 24/7 round the clock news cycle current. After all, some online social networking sites have already demonstrated that citizens possess the skills to produce and publish video content.

At a time when the media is facing financial pressure due to reduced advertising revenues, caused in part by the economic crisis and by the shift to the online platform, there are suggestions that citizens could help newsroom budgets by contributing material. It is against this background of rapid online migration by the media, and the emergence of this new breed of news gatherers, that this research on the Open Newsroom is set. The

research topic is not new; a body of research about online migration of the media and the new news ecosystem exists in many other countries. In New Zealand however, this is still an emerging area of for research.

This research monitored news bulletins on New Zealand's two main television news channels, 3 News on TV3 and One News on Television New Zealand for 12 months from early 2008 to late 2009. The idea was to gauge and analyse the amount of content submitted by citizen journalists. The research also looked at a case study which illustrated the potential dangers of using news content submitted by citizen journalists.

The research sought the professional opinions of a wide range of decision makers and influential people from the New Zealand media such as editors, journalists and publishers and those involved in the training of journalists in New Zealand. Using a Mini-DV video camera and a digital audio recorder, the researcher filmed and recorded interviewees and edited video clips of the interviews which were then published in the media gallery on the website [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com).

The interviews sought to find out and discuss the online migration by the media, the new news ecosystem, the public's participation in the media and the benefits and disadvantages of citizen journalism.

To put the research into perspective, the website also carries some research articles and literature reviews on the media.

The research findings from the interviews with New Zealand media professionals who participated in the study match trends happening in many countries. While most value the potential benefits of citizen journalists in the news process, some strongly expressed a great deal of skepticism and suspicion regarding news contribution from nontraditional journalism sources.

In general, the research offered a series of insights into modern media rather than clear-cut answers

## **2 Hypothesis**

As the Internet transforms newsgathering and dissemination and equips audiences with the means to create and transfer digital content from point to point, what issues are New Zealand newsrooms facing regarding the use of user-generated content in their TV and online bulletins

## **3 Key Research Areas**

The aim of the research is to gauge the changes and trends in newsgathering, dissemination, new players in the media, format changes and quality of news. The main focus was on:

- 3.1 Audience participation in the media as contributors or media creators
- 3.2 Citizen Journalism content in the media globally and in New Zealand broadcast news media (TV One, TV3) and online content at <http://nzherald.co.nz>
- 3.3 Online migration by the media and its effect on newsgathering
- 3.4 IPTV – global take-up and review, and emerging technologies and their effect on newsgathering and dissemination
- 3.5 Changes to the practice of journalism and to the news

## **4 Methodology**

### **4.1 Literature Review**

There exists a growing body of literature and research in the field of communications which looks at many aspects of the media, how it started and evolved and what is likely to happen in the future. For this thesis, it was necessary to read some of the current debates in communications and to try to put this research in the context of existing literature. The literature review involved reading books and articles and reading the ever-increasing online repositories of communications and media texts.

### **4.2 Monitoring news bulletins**

News bulletins on Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and TV3 in New Zealand were monitored to gauge audience and citizen journalism participation in the media. Content on [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz) in New Zealand was also analyzed to gauge audience and citizen journalism participation in the media. This methodology was based on the premise that there would be some citizen journalism content to analyse.

From the beginning, the thesis design involved data collection, followed by data analysis and then discussions with relevant editors and journalists and making projections.. However, during the monitoring period, there was just one citizen journalism story contributed to the media. The primary research focus then changed to open-ended interviews.

### **4.3 Technology Review**

Assessing technologies like IPTV and online television hardware and their possible ramifications on new television formats and news consumption habits.

### **4.4 Online research**

Given that most news organizations worldwide now have an online presence, the aims of this research were to gain insights into the new developments, changes and debates regarding online platforms.

#### **4.5 Open ended interviews**

To understand the changes in the media, the researcher asked several questions to respondents recruited or canvassed for interviews via telephone, email and word of mouth. The questions were tailored to suit the individuals.

The use of unstructured interviews was necessary as most of the interviewees were drawn from different sections of the media and from different organisations in New Zealand, the United States, one from the United Kingdom and one from South Africa. The interviewees included Online Editors, TV News Editors, Freelance journalists, a News anchor, a Blogger and a former newspaper editor, recent journalism graduates among others. The only common element among the interviewees was that they are all involved with the media. Their roles, understanding of and exposure to audience participation in the media differ. Some of these people have a direct responsibility for sourcing content for their organisations, some of them only get involved during the editing stage while some are journalists who face the prospect of having competition from the audiences they serve. Over and above these factors, strategies and approaches to editorial processes vary from organization to organization and not everyone is doing the same thing.

As such, structured uniform questions would have limited or failed to elicit an accurate picture of what is going on in these organisations. A journalistic line of inquiry was adopted and seemed the best option for getting interviewees to open up and talk about issues they were well versed in. Therefore, instead of structured questions, the line of inquiry changed to conversational interviews around set topics.

The limitation of this approach however was that the research topic widened and the research findings were mostly a series of observations and trends rather than specific data. In mitigation, the Open Newsroom project is an original project and there are no other similar models to draw inspiration from and it goes some way toward increasingly understanding of the media.

The researcher videographed some of the interviews using a Mini-DV camera, conducted two of the interviews via Skype and the rest via the telephone. All interviewees were emailed a uniform interview pack which included a list of indicative questions to prepare them for the interview, a consent form, and information sheet outlining the research and a cover letter. The information sheet clearly outlined that the output of the research findings would be the website [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com)

#### **4.6 Content Analysis**

Video footage of interviews was viewed and logged for suitable grabs. These were edited and categorized into several sections that cover the research. Content analysis was



done over twelve months from early 2008. The aim was to elicit views, professional opinion and assessments from interviewees.

## 5 Who was interviewed and why

More than 30 key players with a wide range of skills and experience in the media were approached via email, telephone, and word of mouth with a request to participate in this research. The interviewees range from an editor with more than 40 years experience in the media, through broadcast journalists, a blogger, and technology professionals to a recent communications graduate and cumulatively represent all the major sections of the media. The research is journalistic in nature and the broad areas or categories of people identified and approached at the research design stage fell into following categories:

1. consumers who have become news gatherers
2. consumers with a view on this phenomenon
3. journalists and their views on this development
4. broadcasters who utilize the services of citizen journalists
5. critics, academics and media commentators
6. companies that produce media technologies

In the end, 15 people were interviewed from all categories except number two above (consumers with a view on this phenomenon). The researcher attempted to interview two people in this category but the quality of the video and material was not meaningful enough to add to this debate. Instead, a telecommunications expert and a blogger agreed to participate and offered some insights that enriched the research. One candidate provided a write-up assessing the perceived threat of the Internet on television. The 15 interviewees, all professionals in the media and related industries provided a convenient and workable sample of opinion, which is published in this report and on the [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com) website.

Interviews with most New Zealand based candidates were filmed on a Mini-Dv camera. The interviews were all transcribed and relevant answers are featured in the media gallery on this website. Below is a list of the candidates interviewed.

**Brent Impey: CEO MediaWorks New Zealand (TV3, C4).**

**Crisford Chogugudza: Doctoral Candidate and Social Work Manager, London, UK, Freelance journalist for 20 years.** Recently graduated with Diploma in Journalism and news writing, London School of Journalism.

**Dan Gillmor: Director of the Knight Center for Digital Media Entrepreneurship.** a project of the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, United States. Author of *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*, and writer of the online book <http://mediactive.com/>, Journalist, and 25-year veteran of the newspaper business.

**Dr Paul Reynolds: Chief Executive Officer-Telecom New Zealand**, formerly with British Telecoms and a pioneer of video on demand.

**Gavin Ellis: Former Editor In Chief of the *New Zealand Herald*, Doctoral Candidate and Lecturer at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.** Media experience- more than 40 years, began journalism just as television news started in New Zealand.

**Glyn Jones: Editor News Plus, TVNZ (Television New Zealand),** Radio and Television Journalist since the 1980s.

**Jeremy Rees-Publisher, *New Zealand Herald Online*** <http://nzherald.co.nz>  
Media experience of 20+ years.

**Keith Slater: TV3 New Zealand, Auckland Bureau Chief,** Broadcast Journalist since the 1970s.

**Lauren Mentjox: Freelance Journalist,** Auckland, New Zealand.

**Meagan Ellwood: Communications Studies Graduate, AUT University, New Zealand-** Interest in all types of media but predominantly uses the Internet.

**Paul Norris : Head, New Zealand Broadcasting School, Christchurch, New Zealand,** former Head of News and Current Affairs, TVNZ (Television New Zealand) and former broadcast journalist, BBC, London with 25 + years experience.

**Rawdon Christie- Television Producer and Presenter, TVNZ (Television New Zealand),** former broadcast journalist/Presenter, BBC, London with 10 + years experience.

**Russell Brown: Journalist and writer of Hard News a blog found on PublicAddress.net,** a community of New Zealand-centric weblogs.

**Shayne Bowman: Co-writer, *We Media, A whitepaper on Citizen Journalism and how audiences are shaping the future of news and information.*** Commissioned by The Media Center at The American Press Institute, Shayne is based in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States.

**Tommy Makhode: National News Editor, SABC-South African Broadcasting Corporation,** Johannesburg, South Africa, Broadcast Journalist for 15 years.

## 6 Output Format

Research findings are on [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com) website in three formats: (a) as video and audio grabs in the Media Gallery, (b) as Q & As and (c) as write-ups in the Research Articles section on the front page of the website.

The exegesis document sums up the research methodology and findings and a full copy is in the Research section with an extract on the main page.

These formats were chosen to present content in as many formats in line with trends on online media. Video and audio content was selected to let audiences hear opinions directly from research participants. The Question and Answer (Q & As) were chosen because they are easy to read and digest. The Research Articles section on the site has several academic literature review articles and also includes the exegesis.

## **7 Research Challenges**

During the research, some of the interviews conducted with media consumers yielded unusable results. As a result, a decision was made to drop this category and interview a blogger and a telecommunications expert instead.

At the thesis proposal stage there was an expectation of identifying news stories submitted by citizen journalists to the media and then discussing these stories with editors to see how they compare with stories by professional journalists. During the media monitoring period however, no stories from citizen journalists were broadcast on the two television channels that were being monitored.

Also at the proposal stage, the research was more inclined towards broadcast journalism. It became apparent during the research that in the online space, the traditional demarcations of broadcast, radio and print are blurring and as such, an analysis of any online endeavours by broadcasters inevitably leads to analysis of all types of media online.

During the 12 month period of monitoring TV3 News and One News on Television New Zealand (TVNZ), beginning in early 2008 to late 2009 only one “complete” TV story was submitted by a ‘citizen journalist’ to TVNZ. The story is discussed by Rawdon Christie in the Media Gallery on the website [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com) under “Risks of citizen journalism”

During the monitoring stage, the sheer size of recording an average of 6GB of footage a day for TV3 and for TVNZ became impractical. In the end, I decided to go to TV3’s newsroom and checked their news rundown for the 12 month period in their ENPS News Production System which keeps a record of all stories broadcast and details such as the running order, length and source of story and, together with the Auckland bureau Chief Keith Slater I satisfied myself that indeed for the whole period of the news monitoring, the only contributions from citizen journalists had been photos sent via mobile phone and email and a few video clips, mostly of severe weather, something that has always happened in the media.

TVNZ provided a print out of the stories broadcast from November 2007 to February 2009 from their iNews production system. This listed Am-Cam (Amateur Camera) footage from viewers, mostly of severe weather and both TVNZ and TV3 networks said

the have always received Am-Cam footage sent in by viewers and this predates the advent of citizen journalism. Both indicated that they now seem to be receiving a lot given the ease and simplicity of uploading images to their websites via email.

The publisher of [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz) Jeremy Rees said that they receive very little in the way of stories from citizen journalists, save for photographs and a few video clips. (See Media Gallery on [www.theopennewsroom.com](http://www.theopennewsroom.com) for his interview).

## 8 Research Findings

During the content analysis process, the researcher undertook a rigorous process to categorise the interviews and data into topics and subtopics that would cover all the research questions (see 3 Key Research Areas) and answers collected. From the onset, the researcher acknowledged the importance of all the opinions and professional views of the participants.

However, when it came to presenting the opinions and views of interviewees on the Open Newsroom website, there were some practical considerations to bear in mind. All the research findings would not fit on the website. This is not unusual, most research or newsgathering projects collect much more material or data than they require and screen or select and edit the best or most usable material.

The research findings were re-categorised to fit the eleven categories created in the media gallery on the Open Newsroom website. The categories covered all the research areas and all the findings in the exegesis. It was necessary to simplify the categories in the media gallery to enable any viewer or reader to understand the site, whether they work in the media or not. Selection of video grabs for the media gallery was done using a journalistic /editorial selection criteria used in television news editing or selection criteria for broadcast material. Picture quality of the video grab, audio levels, and content/context were the main selection criteria.

To establish a thematic coherence, some URLs were placed on video grabs in the media gallery linking them to the Research Articles on the website. These articles include a literature review and relate to issues covered in the research. The linking of the media gallery to the Research Articles was necessary as during this research it became apparent that any discussion on any aspect of the media often involves many other issues pertinent to the media. For example, talk of citizen journalism could in some ways lead to a discussion on uptake of the Internet and other enabling technologies or lead to a discussion on the make up of newsrooms in today's media environment as Shayne Bowman explains:

“The media is undergoing massive transformation which isn't as simplified as we'd like to think. It really is affecting so many different aspects of not only how we create information but how we share it”

“A lot of times we are talking about one big thing like citizen journalism but it’s really a lot of separate things that have to be talked about individually. You can’t just say citizen journalism changes how we report, well, it does a little bit, what’s changes more, what’s really changing is how we share information like, from individual to individual ”<sup>1</sup>

## 8.1 Format Changes and Changes to News Content

The literature review and research show that the media is increasingly operating in 24 hour round the clock news cycles and that there are significant changes in format and types of content. Newsrooms are adapting to the new online platform that includes video, audio and text in their reporting formats. As Gavin Ellis former Editor In Chief of the *New Zealand Herald* says, traditional print newsrooms like the *Telegraph* in London, or the *Guardian* for example now have TV studios and describe themselves as multimedia newsrooms.<sup>2</sup>

The format of the early days of journalism -that of “who, what, where, when, why and how”, as Gavin Ellis says, has changed and journalism now has elements like commentary and analysis added to it. Increasingly, news is getting opinion-based, a trend that has Rupert Murdoch’s Fox News as a benchmark. Rawdon Christie, a journalist and presenter at TVNZ, believes that in a ratings-driven industry, often an opinion is more interesting to listen to than somebody presenting the facts, due in part to an entertainment value.

“I think that news gatherers, news presenters, I think we are playing a far less objective role a lot of the time. Let’s just hope that we’re balancing out something on the other side”<sup>3</sup>

Others like Meagan Ellwood, a recent communications graduate at AUT University say no matter where you are getting your story from, “it’s gonna come from a person who comes from a context that’s going to make them try and form an opinion even if they try not to”<sup>4</sup>

Some participants in this research claim that online content is now highly politicized and highly sensationalized and that the traditional media ethos is not being applied as rigorously as before. Others, like London-based freelance journalist Crisford Chogugudza say there is “no attempt to apply the basic principles of accuracy and balance and fairness” adding, “this has an effect on how people perceive the media in general”<sup>5</sup>

Other claims say that news is beginning to mimic entertainment and that as a result, there is a “dumbing down effect” on news. Of particular concern was the way celebrity had intruded into previously serious newspapers. Gavin Ellis believes the inclusion of that sort of material must be to the exclusion of other, more serious, topics.

“It’s a function of declining audiences and the need for publishers to try and to recover those audiences. They think that populism is the way to go... You might say by definition yes, it must be, it’s more popular. But you do reach a point where the dumbing down effect is problematic” (Gavin Ellis, i/v)

Not everyone agreed that TV news is now watered down or that it is now more of public relations style pieces than factual journalism. Glyn Jones, Editor News Plus, TVNZ (Television New Zealand) believes there is more variety of news and more news simply in bulk terms partly because of the increased amount of airtime.

“the news is being spread in a different fashion...what in the old days may not have been seen to constitute news, entertainment news, that kind of thing is now seen as part of the landscape”<sup>6</sup>

## **8.2 More purveyors of news as the supply side of the news changes: Bloggers, public relations encroaching into news, new niche websites and fragmentation of news platforms**

The traditional media's hold on the supply of news is facing challenges from new forms of journalism. The media is now fragmented and there is an increasing variety of platforms dedicated to news with many commercial and non commercial portals, websites, blogs, Real Simple Syndication (RSS feeds), news aggregators and sites carrying user generated content. All these can now be accessed on multiple devices that connect to the Internet.

In the new media paradigm, “Everyone may not be the source of news, but everyone is certainly the source of comment on the news” (Gavin Ellis i/v). There is an explosion of news commentary on many blogs and while these are not supplying news, some of them offer highly intelligent and informed debates and raise pertinent issues and keep current affairs stories alive for much longer than the original sources.

Some of the blogs are carving a niche in the void left by a highly pressured news media trying to stay up to date in the round the clock 24/7 news cycles. The blogs are picking stories from the media or other sources and offer analysis of issues. Journalist and blogger Russell Brown says online access to government reports for example “ gives everyone the opportunity to read and analyze reports ” and says that examining source material is a core activity for good bloggers in particular..

“Keith Ng at Public Address (blog) is very good at this -- his demolition of North & South's 'Asian Angst' (North & South Magazine, New Zealand, November 13, 2006) story about a supposed Asian crime wave was founded in a correct reading of public data -- which North & South had fundamentally misread. It resulted in the Press Council's upholding complaints on grounds of accuracy”<sup>7</sup>

The increase in the variety of niche sources of news has Gavin Ellis worried. He fears that this can potentially lead people to rely on these niche forms of communication and forsake mass media entirely.

“What you'll have is a multiplicity of small sectoral information portals, often skewed to a particular point of view or a particular part of the political spectrum or the social spectrum, and if people are only accessing information that is

tailored to a particular point of view and tailored to their specific outlook, then we lack the common knowledge” (Gavin Ellis, i/v).

Gavin Ellis adds that if you’re only getting your news “from a website provided by the *National Front*, for example, then you are not going to be exposed to viewpoints on multiculturalism” and concludes that we’ve got to be exposed to viewpoints with which we do not agree because “its only in so doing that we have a fully informed opinion of our own”

One of the causes of the fragmentation of the media has in some ways been the attempt to give people the “ease and ability... to choose what they watch, when they watch it, how they watch it, where they watch it, what they watch it off”, according to Rawdon Christie. The media, particularly broadcasters are responding to fragmentation by delivering content faster.

TVNZ’s Glyn Jones believes that the downside of fragmentation of the media is one of the reasons why newsrooms have had to reduce in size. He says that there is more competition across platforms for funding or revenue and that while “part of it is a commercial reality; it’s also a technological reality.”

Among the many new sources of news, it was also found that the growth of the media has also been accompanied by a growth and encroachment of public relations into news. Gavin Ellis believes these PR firms have skills to package broadcast quality materials “that are couched like news items, so a television station can put it to air with minimal editing” (Gavin Ellis, i/v).

TV3’s Keith Slater corroborated this; he says they receive many packaged ready-to air videos from public relations companies, they show them on air with an explanation to viewers that this is what the PR company “would have you believe,” and follow them with an investigative piece questioning the motives of the client company or organisations and also telling viewers the real story behind the public relations campaign<sup>8</sup>

### **8.3 Is the definition of a journalist changing?**

With technology changing newsgathering and dissemination in the media, this research found that the role and functions of journalism are also changing. In the past journalists used to write stories for one outlet like a daily newspaper or prepare stories for a daily news bulletin. However, in the new paradigms of 24 hour round the clock news, journalists have to feed their multi-media outlets constantly with news updates in a variety of formats. Some believe that the definition of a journalist has changed partly as a result. This notion is contested.

Most of the interviewees in this research saw no changes in the definition of a journalist. Paul Norris, Head of the New Zealand Broadcasting School says the definition has not changed and identifies a journalist as “a person who gathers news or presents news and usually works for a professional organization, but they don’t have to”. Norris adds that

“they can be freelance, but they usually have to have some credentials as a journalist, either having a degree in journalism or having been published and that gives them authority and credibility”.<sup>9</sup> Blogger Russell Brown says journalists do not necessarily have to work for mainstream media organizations and adds that “by the same token, not every blogger is a journalist” (Russell Brown, via email)

Others say the definition has changed, but for different reasons. Gavin Ellis, a 40-year veteran of the news industry says that as a cadet journalist in the 1960s, his function was the gathering and presentation of facts straight and simple. He says that the role of the journalist today has expanded.

“In addition to the gathering of facts, there is an expectation that the journalist will be able to analyze, in the case of some journalists, also to comment. So they do have that extended role, but definitely the role of the journalists today, particularly in an era where people have access to almost too much information, the ability of the journalist to synthesize large amounts of information and to analyze this information and to analyze its significance has increased way beyond when I started in journalism, way beyond ” (Gavin Ellis, i/v)

#### **8.4 Impact of the online migration on news**

The increasing online migration of the media has made the Internet the main source of breaking news. Media organisations are responding by increasingly concentrating on their online platforms. There are even examples of newspapers like the *Christian Science Monitor*<sup>10</sup> scaling back their traditional formats. All media, including newspapers (some of which used to publish more than once a day) now compete head to head to break stories online, at the same speed as radio journalists and continually update material without being held hostage by other more immediate media like radio, or television. The old demarcations of television, radio and newspapers do not exist online. Online publishing has also “removed the tyranny of deadlines...having to wait until the next morning to publish your news” (Gavin Ellis, i/v). Television used to keep everything for 6 o’clock, but that is now changing. TVNZ’s Glyn Jones says unless the story is an exclusive, it will appear online before it appears at 6pm.

##### **8.4.1 The 24/7 online media attracting audiences from traditional media**

The adverse impact of online media on traditional media audiences is widely contested. During this research, those in the television industry dismissed any threat and said that on the contrary, the Internet is a promotional tool for them as it drives audiences back to the television screen. Television viewership figures support them-viewership is at an all time high and the industry believes viewers are watching many platforms at the same time.<sup>11</sup>

Shayne Bowman sees problems in current television news delivery formats where you have to sit through a whole bulletin in linear presentation format, something which may explain why audiences prefer online formats. He says “in an era where two or three clicks



online can have news content wants delivered right to a desktop or through a TV” these formats are not viable long term or even a viable short-term strategy.

“We tolerate what’s relevant and what’s not but in five years, it’s going to be another whole demographic that’s driving those choices and decisions...our children definitely won’t tolerate it”(Shayne Bowman, i/v).

This was corroborated by Meagan Ellwood, a recent communications graduate who says her generation almost exclusively accesses news online and says what broadcasters should be worrying about is knowing “whether their audience is in front of their television screen or in front of a PC” (Megan Ellwood, i/v).

Could this explain why the demographic of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are watching video online rather than traditional television? NielsenWire viewership figures in both New Zealand and the United States show a marked TV viewership decline for this age group<sup>12</sup>

TV3’s Keith Slater says the Internet is not a threat, but a valuable tool:

“We also use it as a device to drive audiences to watching our 3 News bulletin at 6 o’clock and our other news programmes. It’s one big promotional device so we don’t see it as the enemy; we see it as a friend.”<sup>13</sup>

Broadcasters like the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s Tommy Makhode see the Internet as a valuable platform for their audience as it enables them to “catch-up” on the news online.<sup>14</sup>

#### **8.4.2 Online media emerging issues: archival and search functions presenting challenges, loss of advertising, dwindling newsroom staff numbers**

This research found the archiving of news stories online is presenting new challenges to newspapers. People named in crime stories by online media like [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz) and many others regularly approach them requesting to have their names removed from their servers. Most of a person’s crime history can now be searched simply using a keyword or name on popular search engines like Google or Yahoo. *New Zealand Herald*’s Jeremy Rees says “..That’s opened up a huge can of worms...about the public archive, keeping the public archive versus a person’s right-in news gathering”. The archive, says Rees, can be detrimental as the continued availability of people’s criminal records can hamper their search for jobs among other issues.<sup>15</sup>

Judge David Harvey, sitting in the Manukau District Court New Zealand on August 23 2008 had this in mind when he banned publication of names of two murder accused on news websites during an initial court hearing. He allowed print and broadcast media to publish the names. Judge Harvey was concerned about people being able to “Google someone’s name in the future and being able to access it later and finding them linked to a crime if found innocent.”<sup>16</sup>

Processes in newsrooms are increasingly changing as the media adapts to the online environment which requires the updating of news 24 hours a day as and when news happens. Ironically, as journalists grapple with these new pressures and do more work, there have been widespread media reports not just in New Zealand, but also in many countries of job cuts in newsrooms. Gavin Ellis believes that such pressure, with no greater resource than before is likely to cause news quality to fall and journalism to suffer.

In 2007 and in 2009 Television New Zealand (TVNZ) laid off dozens of newsroom staff, so did other media organisations in New Zealand.<sup>17</sup> Statistics of numbers of newsroom staff laid off were not easily available, but media layoffs in New Zealand and in many countries were widely covered in the media.

As the media migrates online, one of the negative consequences is the reduction of revenues from advertising in traditional media. The global financial crisis which started in 2007 has exacerbated this further as advertising budgets get slashed:

“We are seeing an ongoing secular shift from traditional to online media as marketers recognize that ad dollars invested in interactive media are effective at influencing consumers and delivering measurable results...”<sup>18</sup>

Online advertising revenue in the United States increased from the \$21.2 billion reported in 2007 to \$23.4 billion in 2008 a 10.6 percent increase.<sup>19</sup>

In New Zealand, television advertising revenue for the first half of 2009 was reported at \$257.1 million, a drop of 13.3% from the \$296.5 million achieved in the first half of 2008. Interactive advertising on the other hand recorded an increase of 7 percent for the first half of 2009 over the first half of 2008<sup>20</sup>

While the online environment represented 8.3 percent of all advertising expenditure in 2008, the Interactive Advertising Bureau IAB (New Zealand) were forecasting the online environment to exceed 10 percent of all adspend for the full 2009 year (Online Advertising Insights [www.iab.org.nz](http://www.iab.org.nz))

Although advertisers are moving their advertising dollars online to where audiences are, revenues being generated online are still nowhere near those of traditional media. Advertising costs online are much lower than those of traditional media. However, traditional media like TV and newspapers still reach out to a wider mass market compared with its online counterpart.

In theory, the impact of the Internet on news is that anyone can now set up his or her own news website or blog. TV3's Keith Slater says broadcasters are no longer the custodians of the tools for disseminating information. He says that although anybody can disseminate news, people look for credibility:

“I guess that credibility is always going to be the hurdle for so called citizen journalists, that they can’t get themselves into a position where what they say, their views, their opinions, their allegations, their thoughts don’t have the backing of a rigorous editorial process, and so while they might be there, they’re not going to have the influence that a programme like 3 News will have in the marketplace” (Keith Slater,i/v)

Others share the sentiment. Jeremy Rees says to survive and thrive in the current media environment, the trick is going to be convincing people to “come to the *Herald*, TV3 or TVNZ because we’ve got something that’s different from everybody else because we’ve actively gone out and found it”

## 8.5 Impact of the Internet on newsgathering

In the pre-Internet era, newsgathering was focused on the traditional building of contacts and networks and a lot of time was spent on the phone, meeting people and trying to find the news actively, whereas today a “lot of the news is presented or potential news is presented to us on a daily basis through email, or through the Internet” according to TVNZ’s Rawdon Christie.

Everyone in this research agreed that the Internet now makes it easy to do some research. Online news sites can easily see what their competitors are running with and news sites can quickly catch up on a breaking story if their rivals have out-scooped them or they can simply use their rival’s site as a ‘bouncing board’ for story angles and ideas and “react pieces”.

This ease of newsgathering and research “certainly helps in getting things turned around quickly”, according to Lauren Mentjox, particularly when “doing research on another country” (Tommy Makhode i/v)

As a searchable database, the Internet can hold vast amounts of information and this is useful for the media as it allows those doing some research to pull out information from multiple sources and for researchers to pull out and see full press releases, documents or speeches that are unmediated.

In the new online environment, the old demarcations of radio, TV and newspapers are blurring. This has an impact on newsgathering and journalists:

“Even as a student who’s studied journalism, you’re no longer trained to write a story just for print or for broadcasting, you need to really know how to do it all”(Meagan Ellwood i/v). As a result, in today’s newsrooms, specialist journalists are dwindling in numbers.

“The timeframe is now thoroughly compressed and there are more outlets, so journalists working for say Reuters, will probably have to service print, radio and television and the web, all for the same story” (Paul Norris, i/v)

## 8.6 Citizen journalism - benefits

Citizen participation in the media, or the contribution of user generated content or ‘citizen journalism’ as it is commonly known, is a growing phenomenon. Its benefits are that audiences witnessing incidents can post eyewitness accounts on the Internet as soon as they happen or send in their account to mainstream media. Citizen journalism also dwells a lot on analysis and debates of issues and stories appearing in mainstream media. Unlike mainstream media journalists, citizen journalists can be anonymous contributors with no journalism training.

There is now a general expectation that audiences or citizen journalists will fill the void when journalists are not present at the site of a breaking story or in times of emergencies, such as disasters. The media now expects audiences or citizen journalists on the ground to capture visuals, like video and photographs and send them by email or text messages to the media.

These expectations have increased since the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami when ordinary people used their media generating tools (camera, mobile phones) and committed “acts of journalism” and published the imagery on blogs and also submitted photographs, videos, texts and personal accounts to media like the BBC, MSNBC, and CNN. This disaster highlights the potential power of audiences or ‘accidental journalists’.

The media increasingly expects images from eyewitnesses in far-flung places or dangerous places, and in these times of tight newsroom budgets, this can be a good thing. An example of this is the Iranian elections of 2009 where audiences and citizen journalists fed compelling visuals of the Iranian government’s clampdown on protests against election results to websites, blogs and the micro-blogging tool Twitter. Mainstream media picked up images from these spaces.

Keith Slater of TV3 says the first question their reporters ask when they go down to a news scene is if anybody present took some video. “All our journalists ask that question first up. Or if they don’t they bloody well should”, Keith Slater says he has received pictures of fires, or beached whales sent in via email by audiences by just asking.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)’s Tommy Makhode concurs and says that in an era of immediacy, any useful material that helps achieve this immediacy is useful. Journalist and blogger Russell Brown says first-hand reports from people on the scene expand the scope of what can be reported.

Other areas where citizen journalists are being increasingly expected to play a part is in niche areas like reporting of local events, which are being under reported in mainstream media. Gavin Ellis felt that if we continue to see the corrosive reduction in newsroom numbers in our mainstream media, then it may be that the general public, “almost by default will have to fill in the gaps that are not being covered by professional journalists” (Gavin Ellis, i/v).

Historically, the *Drudge Report* will always stand out as one of the best examples of a story that was ignored by the mainstream media. In 1998, Matt Drudge scooped mainstream media by publishing Bill Clinton's alleged affair with a young White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, after Newsweek magazine refused to publish it after a one year long investigation. The story was then picked up by mainstream media from [www.drudgereport.com](http://www.drudgereport.com) and went on to become one of the biggest stories of recent times.

Dan Rather's downfall at CBS where bloggers questioned documents he used to criticize President George Bush's army service record also demonstrates how citizen journalists have found avenues for writing stories and not necessarily for mainstream media. This was just one instance in a growing trend which started a few years ago. There are numerous instances where citizen journalists writing on blogs have raised important issues which are then picked up by mainstream media

### **8.6.1 Citizen Journalism – the limitations**

In the past few years, debates on citizen journalism claimed that access to enabling technologies like the Internet and digital technologies gave audiences the means and ability to create and publish content and would increase their participation in the news process. There is not much evidence of this. Most editors, journalists, and interviewees in this research saw citizen journalism as a limited source of news for mainstream media, the only media with a meaningful and significant audience reach. Citizen journalism seems to be thriving on individual or community blogs and on a number of commercial and independent citizen journalism sites.

TVNZ's Glyn Jones says citizen journalism still faces many hurdles and that there are still very much defined boundaries between journalists and the audience:

“Citizen participation in journalism is still somewhere else, so you have your message boards, on Internet sites and people sending emails which are read over the air on the breakfast show, you have people sending their opinions, emailing their shots of severe weather events and that kind of stuff. I am not sure if we'll ever get to it, the era that citizen journalism is prevalent to the extent that its difficult to work out what is journalism and what is the a member of the public writing something.” (Glyn Jones, i/v)

In the early days of the Internet, there were many utopian claims that citizen journalism would eclipse traditional news reporting, as we know it. Journalist and blogger Russell Brown dismisses this notion and says the idea of citizen journalism “neatly replacing the established” does not sit well with everyone as there is “no substitute for skills, knowledge, experience and ethics” (Russell Brown, via email).

Russell Brown says that in TV news for example, the role of citizen journalists will always be limited as TV news is all about pictures and said that getting “fully processed reports from amateur journalists” was never going to happen as citizen journalism “often

focuses on the kind of detail that's hard to convey on television” (Russell Brown, via email).

TVNZ’s Glyn Jones agrees. He says the structures of traditional media and their systems limit participation:

“In real terms, it’s actually quite difficult for TV. You really have to want to contribute something to TVNZ News for it to get here. You have to capture the visual footage from your camera, you have to email it or send it. There’s not a simple ‘Oh I’ll send One News that shot’; it actually does take some thought and some process to do it” (Glyn Jones i/v)

Others say citizen journalism has not brought about quite as much change as most people predicted. The change has occurred to a degree, rather than a wholesale change as initially predicted. Newspapers like the *New Zealand Herald*, have always published stories written by people who are not trained journalists since the newspaper began in 1863, according to Jeremy Rees, who describes citizen journalism in New Zealand.

“most citizen journalism in mainstream media comes down to a couple of things; down to news tips, a little bit of writing, photos that are sent in from news events and a little bit of video - generally non controversial issues and none of political speeches, political meetings, church meetings” (Jeremy Rees, i/v)

While some debates in media research acknowledge the benefit of citizen journalism to the media as a potential source of up-to date news, some say accepting copy from citizen journalists can be risky. Others say media organisations can mitigate these risks-through gate keeping.

Rawdon Christie, a Presenter /Producer at TVNZ saw first hand the potential risks of citizen journalism and the potential biases and hidden agendas that can come with it. During TVNZ’s coverage of the 2008 New Zealand general election campaign, the first video he received in response to his public appeal for contributions from citizen journalists was from an activist political supporter trying to discredit the opposition candidate.

Another relatively minor risky incident was in July 2007 when TVNZ and TV3, the two main TV News channels in New Zealand aired a photoshopped photo from an anonymous contributor who had superimposed a twister to the photo. While not as risky, the image put the New Zealand media on guard and now they always test the provenance of any visuals.

### **8.6.2 Citizen Journalism – the future**

This research found that the relationship between the media and citizen journalists is not symbiotic as most citizen journalists are not rewarded or paid for their services, something that limits growth. Dan Gillmor believes that television broadcasters could get

more contributors to provide video and information by paying for it instead of assuming that it is free. He believes that incentives could produce better results. He says, “The current procedure that I’ve seen generally is to say ‘please send us things, if we use them, thank you very much. That seems to be kind of an unfair system” (Dan Gillmor, i/v)

Others are undecided and see both benefits and disadvantages of using rewards and incentives. While Jeremy Rees thinks that incentives can increase citizen journalism, he also doubts if the economics are there to be able to do it especially under current economic restraints.

Most interviewees in this research acknowledged the risks of accepting copy from citizen journalists. According to Dan Gillmor, “the question is how traditional organizations label and investigate what they get from other people, whatever the information is, how they apply basic principles including being skeptical, they need to be skeptical” <sup>21</sup>

There were many suggestions on how the media could mitigate risks of copy from citizen journalists. Mainstream media could adopt CNN’s style of gatekeeping by setting up a separate citizen journalism site and then pick up stories from there, give them a “journalistic treatment” before they publish them on the main news site. CNN’s iReport<sup>22</sup> has no editors and every now and again some of these reports make it into the CNN site. The iReport website carries a warning which says that stories on the site are user-generated “That means the stories submitted by users are not edited, fact-checked or screened before they post. Only stories marked “On CNN” have been vetted for use in CNN news coverage” it adds.

Others say that their way of mitigating and gatekeeping was to ensure editorial control remained in their hands at all times. TV3’s Keith Slater firmly believes in this; he said while citizen journalists could contribute information, pictures and audio, it should be tested and corroborated, “the editorial control remains fair and square right here...we do the shaping so the editorial control remains with us”. This represents a widely held view in the industry.

Jeremy Rees of the *New Zealand Herald* tells of his shock at finding out that one simple tenet of gatekeeping was not carried out during coverage of one of the biggest stories of all time.

“Ben Bradlee who’d been editor of the Washington Post during the Watergate Scandal came here and spoke with us and was asked ‘Did you know who Deep Throat was, the main source of information on Watergate, and did you know who they were during the thing?’ and he said ‘No’. He said he never asked and when he was asked ‘would you ask now’, he said ‘absolutely!’ He can’t believe looking back that he didn’t ask who Deep Throat was.” (Jeremy Rees, i/v)

Jeremy Rees says now they need to know the name of the source, that even the editor would need to know the name of the source or to be convinced that if the worst came to the worst in a law case, “we’d be able to contact that source”.

Dan Gillmor believes that in the future, the main participation in television by citizens is going to be what people do themselves. Some of it “may or may not make it to the attention of mainstream media”, he says. He adds that there is plenty of interesting work going on by people who are doing their own media. “I don’t necessarily think that they have to do it with traditional media”.

The phenomenon of citizen journalism varies from society to society. In theory, citizen journalism is most feasible in countries that have high Internet usage.

Citizen journalism models that work in one country do not always work in another. The South Korean citizen journalism site *OhMyNews*’ foray into Japan demonstrates this. Attempts to replicate *OhMyNews* in Japan failed and this online newspaper closed shop in 2008. This story has been covered extensively in the media.

“Now you’d have to ask why, is it because the society is different, the expectations are different or what should be published perhaps, I don’t know”, said Jeremy Rees.

In countries that have state controlled media or highly politicised media, citizen journalism can be a voice for the voiceless, or an alternative view or voice to that of established media. In other countries, it can fill a void left by existing media.

There were mixed views in this research about the future of citizen journalism. Rawdon Christie believes that citizen journalism will find a role and thinks that it will be a very large role. He however rules out citizen journalism taking over, as he believes that “news providers will always try and stay a step ahead as far as the quality goes and as far as the assurance”

Dan Gillmor believes that audiences will contribute a large chunk of what we read in the media

“The people who have been audiences in the past will contribute to the media but it won’t necessarily be contributing by working with traditional mainstream media organizations. A lot of it will be published by them. Probably more so with video”( Dan Gillmor i/v)

Meagan Ellwood was opposed to the idea of sourcing content from non-journalists for whatever reason. She said that taking stories from people who do not even have the experience to write in an impartial manner or in an un-opinionated manner would compromise the media.

Freelance journalist Lauren Mentjox was uncompromising; “I don’t know if I like the term citizen journalist in a way”, she said adding, “I don’t know if you can base news entirely on that”<sup>23</sup>

## 8.7 Emerging online television platforms - IPTV and online TV

This research found mixed views and opinions on online television formats, invariably referred to as Internet Protocol Television (IPTV). Online formats represent a shift from the one-to-many linear format that traditional television uses to the one-to-one non-linear



format that enables viewers to choose what to watch and when. How this will affect audiences is unknown but it will certainly fragment television audiences even more. Critics say online formats still have many hurdles while supporters claim that it is not long before online television formats take on traditional television. This research found that both camps have compelling arguments and this makes the job of objective analysis of the future all the more difficult.

Critics say there is clearly a digital divide which will limit the success of IPTV. This digital divide is two-fold; at the first level, there are those who cannot get broadband (a minimum requirement for online TV) which automatically rules out more than two thirds of the world. The second level of a digital divide occurs to those that can actually get broadband, but have many other hurdles including slow broadband speeds and data caps on their broadband, user inertia, lack of interest or desire to change and most of all, satisfaction with existing television formats.

Besides the digital divide, critics also say IPTV's long incubation; technical issues like hardware compatibility and poor video quality experience for users have failed to give the 'plug and play' experience offered by traditional television.

However, IPTV technology is changing rapidly and many new set top boxes which plug into a broadband connection and stream a video signal to a TV set are beginning to flood the market. However, it is still a long way away from reaching a critical mass.

Dr Paul Reynolds, Chief Executive Officer of Telecom New Zealand, a man who dabbled with the world's first video on demand-a variant of online TV since the 1990s says IPTV has not taken off fast enough due to lack of a business model.

Dr Reynolds said that lack of a business model makes it difficult to guarantee a return on investment and said that everyone currently involved in IPTV is "wasting a tonne of money". He added that other limiting factors include the fact that many technology-led services and applications do not take account of usability and the cost of technology.

His analysis was that IPTV tended to be successful or more successful in situations where there is no entrenched cable TV company or satellite distribution company. Hence so far IPTV has been successful in a few countries like France and Hong Kong. Generally, IPTV tended to be "less successful than people thought five or ten years ago" he says, adding that the hype has "been overestimated because it's actually quite hard to do".

Despite this uncertainty, telecommunications companies are said to be taking a greater role in content distribution,

"The common approach is in maybe in partnering with, studios, TV, traditional TV stations to distribute more on demand offerings"<sup>24</sup>

Dr Reynolds believes that in ten to fifteen years time, virtually all telecommunications companies will have somewhat more active roles in media and content distribution".

The deployment of IPTV, which represents a shift in television consumption habits, is a complex one which this research found has no clear answers. Enthusiasts of online television believe that IPTV will ultimately eclipse traditional television. Others like Paul Norris are doubtful of that and see IPTV only succeeding in niche markets.

“There are enormous problem in terms of that, simply in terms of bandwidth. If everybody is trying to receive the same programmes at once, it creates enormous difficulties and its doubtful if any networks optic fibre or otherwise will be able to cope even though there has been talk of hubs and so forth”(Paul Norris, i/v)

Dr Paul Reynolds dismisses the issue of bandwidth and says there is enough capacity on networks to deliver IPTV.

“For example in the UK, the BT Vision Service works on 2mbps lines. I think there’s a myth that you need some massive capacity for people to get. It’s a myth. 2 MB does a good job” (Paul Reynolds i/v)

It is hard to gauge dissatisfaction with current one-to-many linear delivery formats of television. Paul Norris says pundits, enthusiasts and commentators have suggested that we’ll move away from that model and we’ll move into the “me channel model” where you’ll go home and select various news items recorded by your recorder or content obtained from the Internet. He believes that there are people who are very happy to come home and slump in front of the TV and watch their news that way and believes in coexistence between different forms of obtaining the news.

Others see online TV as the future. Shayne Bowman says he does not read newspapers for the same reasons why he does not consume broadcast TV News.

“I won’t sit there and wait. Why bother when I can go online and in two or three clicks have that delivered right to my desktop and it will look just as good if not better than what I get through my TV”

Bowman says he does not understand how TV News thinks that current formats are a viable long term or even viable short-term strategy.

“Certainly you and I won’t tolerate it; our children definitely won’t tolerate it! I think we don’t often think enough in those terms. We tolerate what’s relevant and what’s not but in 5 years, it’s going to be another whole demographic that’s driving those choices and decisions. If you look at our lives, our lives are constructed to consume news that way. For the mobile devices that we have now, they’re connected and interactive” (Shayne Bowman,i/v).

The question is what percentage of the TV viewing public share this view and what percentage will act on it and switch their viewing online. This is a highly contested issue with no clear answers.

## 8.8 The Future of News

Most research participants said the future of news is very hard to predict. While there is acknowledgement and recognition of the existence of citizen journalism as a new entity or player in the media, participants saw the future of the media as ‘business as usual’ with or without citizen journalism.

“I am not sure if we’ll ever get to it, the era that citizen journalism is prevalent to the extent that its difficult to work out what is journalism and what is the a member of the public writing” (Jeremy Rees, i/v)

Dan Gillmor says he is not pessimistic about the future of news and expresses sentiments held by others :

“I think we are going to have plenty of good supply. This more diverse eco-system is better than, better than the sort of mono-culture that we have had. And the big trick, or tricks and difficulty could be in figuring out what we can trust and helping people do that. I’m pretty optimistic. I don’t think we’ll lack for a good supply. What I worry is we’ll lack for high quality” (Dan Gillmor, i/v)

## 8.9 Predicting the future impossible, but media will survive

This research found that although predicting the future of the media is impossible, many tough times lie ahead due to financial constraints and shifts in media consumption. Gavin Ellis, and others interviewees say the media in the United States and to a large degree in the United Kingdom are “in such a state of flux that the next five years are going to be quite cathartic” and that we’re going to see considerable change in the media landscape (Gavin Ellis, i/v)

The effect of online media over traditional media is a highly contested issue. Some say online media will eclipse traditional media particularly in terms of drawing audiences. Lauren Mentjox disagrees:

“Online is about breaking news, and it’s about reading headlines and it’s about having punchy headlines that draw people in. There is still a background to news and there’s still a story there that will take time to read, or to watch to get the full story. Online is instant; it’s more of keeping up to the pace with what’s going on, so I don’t think it would affect things.” ( Lauren Mentjox, i/v)

However, most say although the media is troubled, it will survive. Some of the media players in his research foresee changes in frequency of newspapers - the replacement of a daily paper by a weekly paper for example (similar in a way to the *Christian Science Monitor* experiment) and the introduction of an electronic reader which Rupert Murdoch says is the future platform for the newspaper of the future.

## 9 Critical Analysis of Research

## 9.1 What are the strengths of this study?

The strength of this study is that there has been a clear attempt to identify the various problems current in the different media, particularly in television and newspapers, caused in part by technological shifts, new media consumption habits, reduced revenues, and an unstable global economy, which are all mentioned in this study.

The research highlights the causes of the changes and problems in the media arising from technological change. As media adopts technology, some processes are changing. Technology has seen the media migrate online to cater for changing media consumption habits.

Online migration has also seen a culture change in newsrooms with more work being done by fewer people. Advertising revenues online have not matched levels previously accrued in traditional media.

Other changes have been caused by the recent global financial crisis which has further inflicted harm on an already bleeding media due to loss of advertising revenues as advertisers cut their advertising budgets. This issue has been covered extensively in the media in New Zealand and globally.

The emergence of citizen journalism and its role in the new media ecosystem has been highlighted in this research.

This research raised many other complex issues but these require in-depth study as stand alone topics in order to gain a thorough understanding. This research is a primer on the new paradigms in news and as such does not go into detailed analysis.

## 9.2 What are the weakness of the study?

This is still an emerging area of academic research particularly here in New Zealand and the speed of change makes it hard to keep up. The research was groundbreaking in the sense that there were no other examples to draw upon.

This research relied heavily on the willingness and openness of interviewees to discuss processes in their news organisations or activities. Ample time was given to interviewees to ponder the research questions. The questions were emailed several days or weeks before the interviews were held.

There is no global office that records all the latest technology in the media or the dates when a new technology is released. This means that there is no central register of what business strategy each media organization is implementing or who has just purchased what technology and for what problem. Neither is there a register that keeps research findings on the effect or impact of technologies on audiences. This makes it challenging to assess how these technologies are affecting the media.

The fact that media have all responded differently to problems is a difficult challenge for any research. Some media have reduced newsroom staff, lowered newspaper circulation,

and dropped some news and current affairs shows, particularly the long-form shows in response. Affected media organisations are using different strategies and the situation is constantly evolving.

## **10 How relevant is this study to general debates within the field**

The issues raised or discussed in this research are current in the media and in other debates in communication research. The interviewees selected for this research are all active practitioners in the media or related fields who are aware of the changes in the media and are directly confronted with the crisis raised in media debates.

It is important to compare the changes in New Zealand and those happening globally. Results of the interviews show that New Zealand is not in isolation nor is not immune from changes that are taking place in the media globally. Migration of the media online, loss of advertising revenue in television, dwindling numbers of journalists in newsrooms, falling newspaper circulation and the increasing changes in television news content are all global issues being experienced by different media in different countries. A point of difference is that citizen journalism in New Zealand is still very much pedestrian as compared to countries like the United States or South Korea for example. There is no clear answer as to why, but perhaps given the small population of New Zealand, there is potentially fewer events happening here that are falling under the radar of mainstream media to the extent which warrants vibrant citizen journalism.

## **11 Areas of Future Research**

### **11.1 IPTV and non-linear television**

With broadband speeds getting faster and uptake of broadband increasing, services like IPTV are going to be common and popular. This means more TV channels delivered via the Internet, to a computer but increasingly delivered to a TV screen. IPTV is usually mostly Video on Demand, which means it is unscheduled and non-linear. Just how much of an effect will this have on traditional TV, the one- to-many formats versus the one to one format? Will online pose a threat by taking viewers away from regular TV?

### **11.2 Online newspaper subscription and new newspaper technologies**

Most content produced by media companies can be read online free. With the media looking at recouping costs, an idea that has been floated is changing newspapers to a subscription model. Now that Rupert Murdoch has picked up the idea, how is this going to develop?

While there's a general belief that circumventing pay-per read online newspapers will be easy as anything can be found on the web by running a 'Google' search or using any other searches, a little known fact is that there is the invisible Web, deep Web, Deepnet, or dark web and these are terms which all relate to websites that cannot be searched using search engines (e.g government or police websites).<sup>25</sup> These technologies could be applied

to online subscription only newspaper websites. Other devices that could be potentially used for newspaper subscriptions are hardware like the Kindle Wireless enabled E-Book Readers, which have embarked on a global drive by making their reader available in 100 countries<sup>26</sup> Apple's iPad is also being looked up to as a revolutionary device that will change the way newspapers are read.<sup>27</sup>

The US show business title *Entertainment Weekly* magazine featured the first-ever video advertisement in a traditional paper in their September 18, 2009 issue

The chip technology used to store the video - described as similar to that used in singing greeting cards - is activated when the page is turned. Each chip can hold up to 40 minutes of video. Could this save newspapers? Could this be the future of news, with videos clips of news? What is the impact of this technology?<sup>28</sup>

## 12 Conclusion

One major point arising from this research is the difficulty in predicting the future of the media, particularly the role of citizen journalism. The fact that citizen journalism is beneficial is acknowledged by most interviewees. However some had strong doubts about incorporating citizen journalism as an essential pillar of the media. Others like Dan Gillmor see citizen journalism playing a large role in news, but not necessarily with mainstream news. Glyn Jones at TVNZ saw citizen journalism as a limited activity restricted to social networking and not in mainstream media.

Although the media has always been driven by technology and has always evolved, creating new audiences and new media formats among many changes and effects, the pace of change in the Internet era is faster than most media can plan for. In reference to this pace, Paul Norris says the timeline is now "thoroughly compressed".

It is therefore paradoxical to write a conclusion regarding media such as broadcast news in the Internet era, given that the media is in a state of transition and changing all the time. This has not stopped researchers however from drawing up conclusions, which this study raised.

In '*Internet and the mass media*', Kung et al, (2008) conclude that in terms of its current status, the Internet so far represents little more than a new medium for "delivering what appears to be very familiar old media content"<sup>29</sup>

These conclusions could very well be correct, but as long as the media evolves, these can only be developments or trends. The Internet has been around commercially for less than two decades and as such, is still in its infancy compared with other communication formats. The true potential is still unknown, so rather than conclude that the Internet will not eclipse traditional media, a more cautious approach is necessary. Looking at the current trends gives a better understanding of the Internet and its potential.

In "*Interactivity to play important role for the future of TV news, The Future of News, A Study by The Radio Television News Directors Foundation*," a study commissioned by Radio-Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF), Ball State University Professor

of telecommunications Bob Papper says interactivity is set to play a more important role in the future of TV news. Papper found strong interest among viewers - particularly younger viewers - in new ways of interacting with TV news.<sup>30</sup>

According to Papper, 40 percent of respondents like the idea of assembling their own newscasts, not just on the Internet, but on television as well.

With IPTV technology, providing this level of interactivity on television is possible, but it is difficult and time-consuming, and broadcasters have to come to terms with that and figure out a way to deal with it, Papper says.

The future of the Internet and its effects on the media are widely contested. As discussed earlier, 'conclusions' on the potential or future of the Internet limits research and debate as exemplified here by Hans Durrer. Writing on the future of journalism, Hans Durrer posits:

"The Internet that many hail as the revolution will in no time at all be relegated to where it belongs — next to the TV, the video, the record player and the radio. It will become an electronic gadget among others. We will get rid of the quantity thinking, the more-is-better consumerism, because we will all experience what all major religions have always been preaching us: that less is more."<sup>31</sup>

Other researchers, like Amanda Janes, formerly of the Washington Post try to offer some balanced assessment on the future of news in the Internet era, but do it in a way that tends to overrate the profession of journalism.

"Regardless of how delivery times change over times, skilled information gatherers and storytellers will never go out of style. Democracy is not possible without journalists who can obtain, analyze and give the public an accurate accounting of their government at work. And our sense of humanity is elevated when we are made-through reporting and deft writing, editing, camera work and creative packaging-to understand the experiences of people who are not like ourselves. Sure, anyone can post information online in the form of a blog. But journalists help sift through the volumes of information out there, give it a sense of order and make judgments about whether the information is reliable and how important it is to the people in their communities."<sup>32</sup>

This study has shown that in the New Zealand context, access to enabling technology by consumers has not translated to or given rise to the phenomenon of citizen journalism or led to a rise in user-generated content or news video footage from non-professionals in television news broadcasts or mainstream media. In social media perhaps, but this is outside the focus of this study.

There were several observations from this study, regarding the limited participation of citizen journalists in the media. The lack of remuneration for citizen journalists has been cited as one possible reason for the limited participation and quantity of content submitted to mainstream media both in New Zealand and internationally.

Another observation was the lack of a dedicated citizen journalism platform, a ‘walled off platform’ if you like, similar to iReport or even Indymedia for example which offers ease of use and enables contributors to publish themselves with the minimum of fuss. Such a platform could be the real “enabling” platforms where potential citizen journalists in New Zealand could submit their material.

The study found that while newsrooms have invited audiences to “participate” or be “part of the news”, contributions coming from audiences for online newspaper websites and broadcast media have not changed much over the years from news-tips and photos, primarily of weather events, essentially materials that go towards stories as has always been the case. In the New Zealand media, citizen journalists do not write or piece together a video story for television for example.

This research found that there was resistance or reluctance by the media to use copy from citizen journalists. The main reasons cited were technical quality, mistrust, a lack of need, and the financial resources to pay for content.

Like the rest of the world, the New Zealand media is undergoing massive transformation, mostly due to online migration of the media, and the changing news consumption habits and fragmentation of the news. Internationally, and in New Zealand, the Internet has become an important news platform and has become a source of free news to the detriment of circulation figures for newspapers like the *New Zealand Herald* whose circulation is in decline (see [www.abc.org.nz](http://www.abc.org.nz))

Globally, traditional media has embraced online technology and have established a very strong online presence. In New Zealand, TVNZ and TV3 are heavily marketing their websites as sources of breaking news 24/7. Even on their main television news, most stories do not end on the television screen; they end on their websites-“for more on this story, visit our website”.

Further research, particularly in the areas of the mainstream media’s online platforms and the effect they will have on their traditional platform will be beneficial to the news industry and to scholars. In New Zealand, both TVNZ and TV3 believe that the online platform is just a promotional platform where viewers check out what is on offer on TV and then go back to the TV screen. However, the online platform is increasingly offering full news stories and video clips of important news stories. The platform lets viewers choose the order of stories and allows them to view in their own time. These two main points may make online news consumption more attractive.



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