GE3202:
Citizen Journalism and Civil Society
A Brief Introduction

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What is citizen journalism?

There is no one single definition of citizen journalism. Generally, the term refers to the practice and work of journalism-related activities by ordinary citizen. It takes many different forms, such as “public journalism,” “civic journalism,” “open source journalism,” “citizen media,” “we media,” “participatory media,” and “networked journalism.”

The rise of the Internet, especially the social media, has contributed significantly to the proliferation of new form of journalism: citizen journalists.

Citizen journalists are bloggers, but not all bloggers are citizen journalists.
Web of Influence

Every day, millions of online diarists, or "bloggers," share their opinions with a global audience. Drawing upon the content of the international media and the World Wide Web, they weave together an elaborate network with agenda-setting power on issues ranging from human rights in China to the U.S. occupation of Iraq. What began as a hobby is evolving into a new medium that is changing the landscape for journalists and policymakers alike. | By Daniel W. Drezner and Henry Farrell
Internet and Citizen Journalism

- A powerful tool of autonomous political expression
- Contribution to political process, either through online donation or public debate and deliberation (e.g., blogging)
- Increase in exposure to political information and its effect on participation
Internet and Public Affairs

The interplay between the Internet and public affairs:

- As a platform of social activism
- As a form of deliberation
- As a means of political participation
Internet and Public Affairs: As a Platform of Social Activism
Internet Protest Over Bronx School's Metal Detectors

By FERNANDA SANTOS

The first rumors started swirling last spring, in hushed talks in the classroom, amid hallway banter, in lunchtime chats at pizza parlors along Jerome Avenue: metal detectors were coming to DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx.

By the time the summer school term began, students were noticing the newly installed surveillance cameras along DeWitt Clinton’s stairwells and the shell of a metal detector perched beyond a side door.

At 7 a.m., one person was protesting. By 11:30, 1,500 had walked out.

As Form of Deliberation

The student wrote on an Internet message board, Sconex.com.

Soon, instead of their usual postings about classmates turned couples, prom king contenders and unbearably hot days of boredom at home, students were complaining about the changes that awaited them — and, eventually, organizing a protest.

Two days ago, all the planning became a reality. For the first time in recent memory, 1,500 New York City high school students skipped classes, marched for two miles and got what they wanted: a sit-down meeting with school administrators, who have agreed to meet with students again and listen to their demands.

How they got to this point is a lesson in modern-day democracy that blends teenage angst and the Internet; a show of force borne out of disagreement and frustration among the students of one of the city’s most traditional and toughest high schools.

The Education Department installed the metal detectors because of DeWitt Clinton’s high crime rate: 60 percent higher than the citywide average for schools of the same size.

But the protest was not violent, said Edward Jackson, 17, a senior and a tight end on the high school’s football team.

“It was a good protest, the way protests should be,” he said. “We got chance to show that we care about what goes on in our school. We were able to express our point of view, even though we know what we believe in is very different than what the school believes in.”

The DeWitt Clinton of today, which had 13 major crimes during the 2003-04 school year, counts many celebrities among its graduates. It is the alma mater of the actor Burt Lancaster, the fashion designer Ralph Lauren and the cartoonist Stan Lee. It opened its doors in 1935 as an all-boys’ school and stayed that way until the mid-1980’s, when it began to enroll girls, a period that also coincided with the decline of the Bronx.

The protest started to gather steam on Sept. 14, six days after the school year began. That morning, at each of the 10 periods of gym class, school safety officers explained to the students how the process would work: line up, remove metal from your pockets, take off your belt and walk through the metal detector. Book bags would be searched, too, scanned by X-ray machines like those at airports, and, starting Monday, no one would be allowed to leave the building at lunchtime. The safety officers said it would be too difficult to screen all the returning students.

It did not sit well with José David, 17, a senior. Last Thursday, he circulated a petition against confinement, and the next day, he said.

On Friday, Mr. message on the Sconex.com invited students to protest on Monday. They, silently, un

José David, second from the left, and fellow students at the protest against the lunchtime confinement and the
As a Means of Political Participation

- Local networking and citizen participation
- Access to government and democracy
Consequences of the Interplay

- Politicization
- The rise of civil society challenging the status quo
- Institutional innovation
- Convergence of all media forms
Before the Internet, you will have to rely on the traditional media to be known in the world of public affairs. Today, the blog levels the playing field for citizens and politicians alike.
Today on Technorati

- The Son of a 9/11 Victim Speaks Out
  With the death of the man behind the 9/11 attacks, a son of a victim speaks out about the emotions surrounding both events.
  in Women

- Beastie Boys - "Fight For Your Right (Revisited)"
  The new Beastie Boys mini movie in support of their new album is a star-studded wet dream.
  in Videos

- Employer Wellness Programs - Can They Lower Health Care Costs?
  As many employers are slowly learning, yes, a healthy employee is a good employee.
  in Business

Top blogs

- View the entire blog directory
- Technorati TOP100
- Top 5 risers
- Top 5 fallers

Recently Updated Features

- Soapbox Musings
- A View from the Id
- Apple's Pad
- Observations of a Brain Damaged
- Bob on Books

Learn how to make smart financial decisions through every stage of life.

360 degrees of financial literacy - Finnish Institute of FISI
133 million blog records indexed by Technorati since 2002
7.4 million blogs posted in last 120 days
1.5 million blogs posted in last 7 days
900,000 blog posts in 24 hours
76,000 blogs with Technorati Authority of 50+
Top 100 blogs by Technorati Authority

Technorati Authority is the number of blogs linking to a website in the last six months. The higher the number, the more Authority the blog has.
Social activism is one of the basic elements of democracy. What are the examples?

Examples of social activism include civil rights, gay rights, trade unionism, anti-globalization, environmentalism, and feminism.
Anatomy of Deliberative Democracy

- Decentralization
  - Diffusion of power
  - Blogging: From professional journalist to citizen journalist in mass communication

- Participation
  - Online forums
  - Civic engagement
  - E-democracy
About E-Democracy.org

E-Democracy.org builds online public space in the heart of real democracy and community. Our mission is to harness the power of online tools to support participation in public life, strengthen communities, and build democracy.

Starting with the world’s first election information website in 1994 in Minnesota, today we host over 30 local issues forums in 15 communities across three countries - New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition to these “online town halls,” we promote civic engagement online around the world.

E-Democracy.org is a U.S. registered 501c3 non-profit non-partisan organization that accepts grants and donations. We estimate that 99% of our labor is donated by volunteers.

Connect with us

- Our blog with over 200 posts and E-Newsletter sign-up
- People - Staff, contractors, lead volunteers, and board members
- Contact us - Or contact support for issues forum assistance
- Follow us: Facebook Page, Twitter @edemo
- Donate - We appreciate your support

Further Information

- Mission and Goals and Strategic plan
- Services - Consulting options we offer
- About Issues Forums - Extensive details, guides, webinars
  - Issues Forum services - For local communities
  - Funders Guide - Two pager on us from Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement guide
  - Forum Rules
  - Privacy and Public Life Policy
  - Forum Content and Removal Policy
  - Policy on Legal Threats
Anatomy of Deliberative Democracy

- Rationalization

“A set of ideas which inspired the emergence of rules-based organizations based upon rational calculation, planning, and control.”

Andrew Chadwick, *Internet Politics*, p. 30

Examples: E-government, e-commerce, narrowcasting, personalized communication, data-mining
The control over the Internet has serious implications for civil society.
Civil Society

Civil society is:

“an arena where free, self-determining individuality sets forth its claims for satisfaction of its wants and personal autonomy.”

Citizen Journalism and Civil Society

Citizen Information and Political Participation