

Citizen journalism v. legacy news: The battle for news supremacy

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A team of researchers from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and two other schools say that even the top 60 citizen websites and bloggers are not filling the information shortfall that has resulted from cutbacks in traditional media.

"While many of the blogs and citizen journalism sites have done very interesting and positive things, they are not even close to providing the level of coverage that even financially stressed [news](#) organizations do today," said Margaret Duffy, associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism. "Not only do these blogs and websites lack the staff to adequately cover stories, but most citizen journalism managers do not have the financial resources and business experience to make their websites viable over time."

Duffy collaborated with Esther Thorson, associate dean for graduate studies at the MU School of Journalism, and Mi Jangh, doctoral candidate at MU, along with others at Michigan State and North Carolina. The Pew and Knight foundations underwrote the research.

The researchers identified a number of factors including how much linking each [website](#) included, how much public participation they allowed or invited, how frequently news and content were updated, and whether the citizen websites provided contact information for the public.

Duffy says it is important to understand how citizen journalism and legacy news organizations co-exist. She believes it is critical that

democracy have an effective journalistic presence. With many newspapers and broadcast news outlets struggling financially, she is concerned about the future of journalism.

"A strong democracy depends on vibrant, robust news coverage with informed citizens and voting public," Duffy said. "If news media have to cut back and are unable to provide the same level of coverage for their communities that they did in the past, [citizen journalism](#) may need to step in. That is why it is important to examine what these websites need to do to improve and survive. "

More information: Elements of the study were published in the Newspaper Research Journal as well as presented at the International Communication Association conference June 24 in Singapore.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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