

**Prof. Dr Miroljub Radojković**

Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade University

Serbia

## Will Citizen Journalism replace the Professional One?

### Abstract

Information and communication technology is causing substantial social changes. One of them is evaporation of professions centered on collecting, saving and disseminating information. These activities are faster and more reliable by the use of ICT networked into Web 2.0 making men power obsolete. Since the most practiced communication on the internet is conversation, which Castells (2014) calls mass self-communication, the profession of journalism is threaten too. Hand in hand with the media journalists were privileged to collect, gate keep and publish information of public interest in XX century. By the use of digital gadgets citizens of today can by their own choice and will discover, share and publish information which in many cases was neglected by professional journalists. In the same way citizens are able to criticize, fulfill and deconstruct information produced by the media and their staff. Therefore, a myth of internet as a *technology of freedom of communication* rose. At the same time, a worry that citizens joined in virtual communities will make journalism profession disappear grows.

Citizen's activism in public communication is well established fact. Theory was able to systematize those practices as: 1) public journalism; 2) participative journalism; 3) interactive journalism and 4) blogosphere. Taken together these activities are put under the common denominator – “citizen journalism”. Therefore it is important to analyze its shortcomings and advantages in order to give a true prognosis about the future of professional journalism.

Because of changes described the general trust in media and journalists decreases all around the world. People know that professional journalists are under the pressure of various power centers and believe that only citizen journalists are able to publish uncontrolled information. They are free to communicate news and comments regardless if power centers agree or not. Therefore, blogs, forums and discussions on social networks replace mass media use. However, there is much less attentions given to the risks of citizen journalism visible till now as well. Those are: anonymity, direction to the private interests, plagiarism, deleting and changing of the posts published before, absence of accountability for the public word, ignoring of ethic and hidden financing. In long term these risks could bring about the loss of credibility of citizen journalism too. Paradoxically, as more and more citizens will be realizing these shortcomings they could turn back to the professional journalists and their products. If so happens, the profession of journalism will survive despite all pessimistic predictions.

**Key words:** internet, public communication, journalism profession, citizen journalism.