Journalism Practice

Whose News? Whose Values?

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WHOSE NEWS? WHOSE VALUES?
Citizen journalism and journalistic values through the lens of content creators and consumers

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As user-generated content (UGC) and citizen-driven forms of journalism have risen to prominence alongside professional media production, they have presented a challenge to traditional journalistic values and processes. This study examines that challenge from the perspective of the creators and consumers of citizen-driven news content, exploring their perceptions of citizen journalism and the professional tenets of good journalism. Through a nationally representative survey of US adults, this study finds that citizen journalism consumers hold more positive attitudes toward citizen journalism, but do not show a significant identification with professional journalistic values, while general news consumption is positively related with affirmation of professional journalistic values. Compared with consumption, content creation plays a relatively insignificant role in predicting attitudes toward citizen journalism and the professional tenets of good journalism. Implications for understanding the changing perspectives of news creators and consumers are discussed.

KEYWORDS   citizen journalism; news consumption; news creation; news values; participatory journalism; user-generated content

Introduction

As participatory digital technologies such as blogs push into their third decade and social network sites (SNSs) reach unprecedented scales of users, the long-touted potential for media users to actively participate in the creation and dissemination of their news may finally be coming to fruition on something approaching a mass scale. Tools allowing users to discuss news items and interact with the people who produce them are becoming more ubiquitous (Singer et al. 2011), and social platforms such as Facebook are gaining the broad user base and technological affordances to make sharing news more frictionless (Sonderman 2011), embedding it into the activity of everyday life.

The lines between professional and amateur media, and between production and consumption, are becoming increasingly difficult to discern, not least in the area of journalism (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006). Media research has determined much about the interaction between the professional and citizen-driven spheres of journalism and media production, particularly from the perspective of professional journalists (Hermida and Thurman 2008; Jönsson and Örnebring 2011; Singer et al. 2011). Less is known about the content creators themselves: how they view the work they are doing, what kind of values they ascribe to it, and how those values compare with what they consider to be good journalism. Those issues are what this study explores, examining attitudes toward citizen journalism and conceptions of what makes good journalism among citizen news and

content creators as well as the consumers of that content. Through this inquiry, this study seeks to help build a ground-up perspective of the values and conceptions of citizen-created news and information among both the content creators and those who consume and interact with their content.

Theoretical Context

Online News Consumption and Creation

The consumption of news has undergone a dramatic shift with the rise of digital and mobile technologies. Traditional forms of news consumption have given way to a form of intake marked by grazing among numerous news sources and platforms, as well as the transformation of routines to accommodate a more saturated, always-on news environment (Purcell et al. 2010; Robinson 2011; Yadamsuren and Erdelez 2011). The internet has begun to overtake traditional media such as newspapers and TV as a source of news (Ksiazek, Malthouse, and Webster 2010; Purcell et al. 2010; Gil de Zúñiga and Valenzuela 2010), and though use of online and offline sources of news tend to overlap, the motivations for consuming online and offline news differ (Flavián and Gurrea 2007).

A significant component of that online news consumption is of content created or filtered outside of professional channels. Blogs emerged in the early 2000s as a major form of user-created news and commentary (Johnson and Kaye 2004, 2009; Gil de Zúñiga, Puig-i-Abril, and Rojas 2009), and more recently, social networks have played an increasingly important role as news sources, with many SNS users relying on their own social filters to process news, in addition to traditional media's (Hermida et al. 2012; Purcell et al. 2010). Online news consumers seek both opinion and fact, but can distinguish between the two (Gunter et al. 2009). Likewise, recent evidence suggests they are incorporating both professional and non-professional forms of news creation and filtering, though they maintain distinct perceptions of both (Hermida et al. 2012).

Several terms have been suggested to describe what these users are consuming—content, particularly news-related, being created by those who have primarily been users of a medium, rather than professional content producers. Three of them in particular—user-generated content (UGC), participatory journalism, and citizen journalism—bear some significant characteristics of the underlying concepts being examined in this study, though a considerable amount of ambiguity and overlap exists among them.

UGC is the broadest term of three, encompassing a wide variety of content creation that includes, but is not limited to, journalism and news creation. Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery (2007) described three main criteria for UGC: publication, creative effort (including the adaptation of existing works into something new), and creation outside of professional routines and practices. Örnebring (2008) has broadened the concept to include less participatory or creative action, including commenting on existing content through outlets such as online comment boards. Additionally, Jönsson and Örnebring (2011) have further codified that broadness with their typology of UGC into high, medium, and low participation, ranging from content customization to self-initiated content creation.

Participatory journalism and citizen journalism are both subcategories within UGC that refer to journalistic behavior undertaken by non-professionals, or "the people formerly known as the audience" (Rosen 2006). Scholars have generally distinguished the two by their relationship to organizational media: in participatory journalism, the users

produce, disseminate, and discuss news in collaboration with media organizations, or in a frame provided by those organizations (Nip 2006; Paulussen et al. 2007). By contrast, citizen journalism has been defined by some scholars as journalistic efforts in which citizens play an active role in the reporting, analysis, or distribution of news and information with relatively little involvement by professional journalists (Bowman and Willis 2003; Nip 2006; Thurman and Hermida 2010). Each of these concepts has a broad applicability across media platforms such as blogs, SNSs, mobile media, or photos and video. In this study, a news-oriented version of UGC is examined—one which also refers to sharing and commenting on news, as well as creating content from scratch.

Scholars have disagreed over the level of overlap between content consumption and creation in a media environment increasingly characterized by active user participation. Some have argued that the boundary between the two has become mostly indistinct, as participation subsumes traditional, passive forms of consumption and the social experience of sharing becomes an integral part of online news consumption (Hermida et al. 2012; Robinson 2011). In Bruns' (2005) gatewatching, in fact, news consumption and creation are merely parts of the same process: news consumption consists of watching information flows to determine which stories will be publicized, a form of creation by the user. Other scholars have recognized boundaries between UGC consumption and creation (Östman 2012), distinguishing conceptually between those who treat media passively and those who use it as a form of self-expression (Daugherty, Easton, and Bright 2008). This study takes the latter approach, classifying consumers and creators separately and looking for similarities or differences between their attitudes and journalistic values.

Perceptions of and Motivations for Content Creation

Public opinion of the value and credibility of several forms of UGC has tracked closely with consumption, with blog readers tending to view blogs as more credible than traditional media (Johnson and Kaye 2004, 2009) and the public at large viewing blogs—especially independent ones—as less credible (Flanagin and Metzger 2007; Lee 2011). The same trend has been found in use and perceptions of YouTube, news site UGC, and Twitter and Facebook (Bergström 2011; Lee 2011; Towner and Dulio 2011). Views of UGC's credibility overall are highly dependent on the platform: blogs are viewed as more credible than bulletin boards or chat (Flanagin and Metzger 2007). But even on several of those platforms, users have preferred professional content more than UGC (Bergström 2011; Hermida et al. 2012; Towner and Dulio 2011).

The public has a more positive view of strictly news-based UGC, which, according to one study, was seen as immediate and authentic, while user-generated comments and opinions were seen as uninformed and extremist (Wahl-Jorgensen, Williams, and Wardle 2010). Similarly, Nah and Chung (2012) found that citizen journalists were seen as playing similar journalistic roles as their professional counterparts, though professionals were seen as stronger in each of those roles except that of the adversary. Citizen journalists can, however, enhance their credibility with the public by providing profiles, profile photos, and links (Johnson and Wiedenbeck 2009).

The research into the attitudes of content creators themselves is more scarce and scattered than the research into those of the public that consumes it, though some common threads run through it. Bloggers and other non-professional content creators and citizen journalists have been found to be guided by a broad spectrum of motivations, led

by self-expression and a desire to connect with others (Liu, Liao, and Zeng 2007; Robinson 2011), though some creators—especially more popular, politically oriented bloggers—are motivated by more political or journalistic factors, including wielding political influence, informing readers, and acting as an alternative to traditional media (Ekdale et al. 2010; Gil de Zúñiga et al. 2011; Kaye 2007). In general, the creators of online content are drawn to its social and expressive functions, and a subset of more journalistic and political content creators ground their practices in a more civically oriented set of values.

The conceptual ambiguity of UGC and citizen journalism, along with the broad range of perceptions and motivations associated with it, gives rise to thorny questions for journalism researchers and practitioners to address. Given the wide variety of activity UGC covers and the everyday embeddedness of that activity (such as sharing on SNSs), it is worth questioning whether users' creation of news content is conscious and news-oriented enough to connect with their perceptions of the citizen journalism to which they may be contributing. Likewise, in a period of news consumption marked by grazing across a wide variety of professional- and citizen-produced news content, it is not immediately clear whether those consumption patterns are accompanied by distinctions in perceptions of the news content produced by their fellow non-professionals *vis-à-vis* professional journalists. However, given the past associations between UGC consumption and perceptions and the positively oriented motivations for UGC creation, this study poses the following hypotheses and research question:

H1: Individuals' news creation will be positively associated with positive attitudes regarding citizen journalism.

H2: Individuals' consumption of citizen journalism will be positively associated with positive attitudes about citizen journalism.

RQ1: What association, if any, will there be between news consumers and attitudes about citizen journalism?

Professional Tenets of Good Journalism

One of the key dimensions of values among journalists—both professional and citizen—and the public is their conception of what constitutes good journalism. This has been a significant area of divergence between professional journalists and the public: for decades, journalists' fundamental identification of their chief values has revolved around public service through acting as a watchdog of powerful institutions and contributing to an informed society (Croteau and Hoynes 2001; Weaver et al. 2007). On a secondary level, journalists have also consistently valued accuracy, autonomy, and objectivity (Beam, Weaver, and Brownlee 2009; Shoemaker and Reese 1996).

The public, on the other hand, has a much different notion of what constitutes the public-service element of journalism. Rather than emphasizing the watchdog and informative aspects of public service, members of the public have defined public service in terms of a populist, civically oriented approach, coupled with an interpretive role (Chung 2009; Heider, McCombs, and Poindexter 2005; Weaver et al. 2007). Even in cases when the public's and professional journalism's values overlap, such as objectivity, the public has tended to believe that journalists are failing to adequately practice those values (Gil de Zúñiga and Hinsley 2012; Purcell et al. 2010).

An understanding of content creators' and citizen journalists' conception of good journalism is less certain. Some evidence has indicated that citizen journalists' values

replicate those of traditional journalism (Allan 2003; Hänska-Ahy and Shapour 2013), though some subtle, but important, distinctions have been found. Bloggers practice a role guided more by interpretation and dialogue than traditional journalistic values of verification and objectivity (Tremayne 2007), though Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2011) found that some bloggers perceived themselves in more journalistic terms and thus embraced those practices. A key element of the news values of citizen journalists and online content creators is based on a belief in the democratization of information, which can manifest itself in reliance on populist approaches to newsworthiness (Goode 2009) or the conception of knowledge that is communally constructed, often outside traditional journalistic processes (Robinson and DeShano 2011). In keeping with these values, Chung and Nah (2012) found that citizen journalists tended to see their own role as that of populist mobilizers, while viewing professional journalists in the more traditional roles of interpretation and dissemination.

As the creation of news content becomes more widely distributed and exists in less distinct forms alongside news consumption, the questions of what values are associated with that content creation become more crucial for those practicing journalism, professionally or otherwise. Do they resemble the traditional values of professional journalism, or are amateur content creators marking a break between themselves and the journalistic values espoused by professionals? Beyond that, do news consumers perceive any of those differences? In order to address those issues and provide an indicator to those practicing journalism of the perception of the values involved in producing it, this study poses the following two hypotheses and one research question regarding the conceptions of good journalism among news creators, news consumers, and citizen journalism consumers:

H3:   Individuals' creation of news content will be positively associated with identifying the professional tenets of good journalism.

H4:   Individuals' news consumption will be positively associated with identifying the professional tenets of good journalism.

RQ2:   What association, if any, will there be between citizen journalism consumers and identifying the professional tenets of good journalism?

Method

Data

This study relied on responses obtained from a representative sample of the US adult population, which was drawn from a two-wave national panel administered by the Community, Journalism & Communication Research collective at the University of Texas at Austin. The analyses reported here were confined to respondents contacted for the second wave, which assessed respondents' roles in news creation, consumption patterns of news and citizen journalism, attitudes toward citizen journalism, and perceptions of good journalism. Both waves of the study were administered using the online survey instrument Qualtrics. The first wave of the survey was administered from December 15, 2008 to January 5, 2009. For a more accurate representation of the US population, this national sample was based on two US Census variables, gender (50.2 percent men; 49.8 percent women) and age (30 percent 18–34; 39 percent 35–54; 31 percent 55 or more).

Of 8568 participants, 1159 completed the survey for a 23 percent response rate,[1] an acceptable rate for Web-based surveys (Göritz, Reinhold, and Batinic 2002). The second wave of the survey, conducted in July 2010, resulted in 312 responses for a retention rate of 27 percent (for more details, see Appendix A). Considering the second wave of respondents was also reasonably representative of the US population except for education, the data were weighted by education. That is, all analyses were performed using a weight in which the different education levels were exact to the proportion provided by the US Census.

Key Variables

Respondents were asked a battery of questions about their role in news creation and consumption, as well as their attitudes toward citizen journalism and their perceptions of the professional good tenets of journalism. To increase the reliability of testing these variables, indices were created and tested for each.

News creation.   Recognizing that news media creation has evolved into multiple forms across many platforms, this study sought to develop an index that reliably measured the creation of news-related content. Such engagement could include blogging, micro-blogging, use of SNSs, creating videos, and uploading photos (Chung, Nam, and Stefanone 2012; Livingstone, Bober, and Helsper 2005). Accordingly, the study measured respondents' role in news creation by asking how often they engaged in forms of news creation with several statements based on a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 10 = all the time): (1) I create posts for my blog that I consider to be citizen journalism; (2) I upload my own photos or videos acting as a citizen journalist; (3) I tweet content I consider to be citizen journalism; (4) I create and upload my own videos online; (5) I write posts or entries on my own blog; (6) I create and post videos about current events or public affairs; (7) I upload my own photos online; (8) I create content on social networking sites; (9) I create content on micro-blogging sites such as Twitter; (10) I link to mainstream media sites in my micro-blog posts or entries; (11) I post my thoughts about current events or politics on micro-blogs; (12) I post or share my thoughts about current events on social network sites; (13) I post or share photos, videos, or audio files that relate to current events on social network sites. Reponses to each statement were added into a single index ($\alpha = 0.92$, mean $= 30.19$, SD $= 20.76$), with higher scores indicating a higher level of news-related creation.

News consumption.   This study measured respondents' consumption of news by asking on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 7 = every day) how often they got their news from certain platforms: (1) local television news; (2) national network news on ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS; (3) cable news networks such as CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC; (4) radio news programs such as NPR; (5) national newspapers online such as the NYTimes.com or USAToday.com; (6) national newspapers in print such as the *New York Times* or *USA Today*; (7) local newspapers online; and (8) local newspapers in print.

Respondents were also asked to rate how often they took part in certain consumption habits using a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 10 = every day): (1) I use Twitter to follow journalists; (2) I use Twitter to follow news organizations; (3) I use Twitter to get breaking news; and (4) I read comments on news websites.

Lastly, respondents were asked on a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree) how much they agreed with the following statements:

(1) I use social network sites to get news about current events from mainstream media such as CNN or ABC; and (2) I use podcasts to get news programs. These 14 items were added into a single index (α = 0.87, mean = 56.16, SD = 22.22), with higher scores indicating higher news consumption.

Citizen journalism consumption.   Recognizing a difference between the consumption of news from more traditional sources and citizen journalism outlets, this study measured the uptake of citizen journalism that might stream through social network sites, blogs, and micro-blogs. Respondents were asked on a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree) how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "I use social network sites to get news about current events and public affairs."[2] They were additionally asked on a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 10 = all the time) how often got news through platforms that promote citizen journalism: (1) I watch videos created by other people such as on YouTube; (2) I browse photos created by other people; (3) I visit a citizen journalism site such as CNN's iReport; (3) I read blogs that I consider to be citizen journalism; (4) I watch videos that I consider to be citizen journalism; (5) I read news that I consider to be citizen journalism; (6) I read content on Twitter I consider to be citizen journalism. These nine items were added into a single index (α = 0.88, mean = 23.83, SD = 14.03), with higher scores indicating more consumption of citizen journalism.

Attitude toward citizen journalism.   Five items were used to determine respondents' attitudes toward citizen journalism, each using a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree): (1) citizen journalism gives ordinary people a chance to express themselves; (2) citizen journalism covers stories that should be covered; (3) citizen journalism helps me connect with other people; (4) citizen journalism is more opinion-based than fact; and (5) citizen journalism is biased. Initial reliability tests indicated the possibility of two factors within the five items, and a factor analysis revealed a distinct split between the first three items—positive attitudes toward citizen journalism—and the latter two items—negative attitudes toward citizen journalism. The positive items were summed into one index (α = 0.79, mean = 27.97, SD = 8.31) and the negative items into another (r = 0.720, p < 0.01).

Professional tenets of good journalism.   The main dependent variable in this study encompasses journalistic traits that are often perceived as good journalism as indicated in the literature (Beam, Weaver, and Brownlee 2009; Braman 1988; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Weaver et al. 2007). Using a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = not well, 7 = very well), respondents were asked how well they think journalists are doing based on eight items: being objective, covering stories that should be covered, helping people, getting information to the public quickly, providing analyses and interpretation of complex problems, verifying facts, giving ordinary people a chance to express their views, and being the watchdog for the public (α = 0.95, mean = 30.3, SD = 12.2).

Control Variables

To control for potential confounds, a variety of control variables that have been found in previous research to be related to news creation and/or consumption were included in the analyses. The respondents' gender (64.6 percent female), age (mean = 49.32, SD = 12.25), and race (77.2 percent white) were straightforward control variables. Respondents also reported their education levels, which ranged from 1, indicating less than high school, to 8, indicating a doctoral degree (mean = 4.52, SD = 1.92), and their

income levels, which ranged from 1, indicating less than $10,000, to 15, indicating more than $100,000 (mean = 6.26, SD = 2.53).

Additionally, political efficacy and trust were controlled for to isolate the effects of the variables of interest even further. Political efficacy has been identified as a robust predictor of participatory behaviors, and scholars have been inclined to use, and sometimes combine, single-item measures. This followed suit by asking respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with three statements based on a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree): (1) people like me can influence government; (2) I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics; and (3) I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues the country (United States) is facing. Reponses to each statement were added into a single index (α = 0.81, mean = 17.01, SD = 7.3), with higher scores indicating stronger political efficacy.

Trust in media creators and organizations as well as citizen journalism creators plays a role in the way such media actors are perceived (Johnson and Kaye 2009; Lee 2011; Nah and Chung 2012). The measurement of trust, particularly in communication and media studies, remains a difficult task rife with debate (Metzger and Flanagin 2008), and the employment of multi-dimension scales that support one another—that is, increase the potential validity of trust measures—have increasingly been urged (Kohring and Matthes 2007). Because this study examined several facets of media, including journalism and citizen journalism, which is often associated with social media, an index of trust was appropriate. Using a 10-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 10 = strongly agree), respondents indicated how much they trusted journalism, citizen journalism, and social media. Reponses to each statement were added into a single index (α = 0.73, mean = 10.31, SD = 5.43), with higher scores indicating more trust in the collective news media.

Statistical Analysis

This study used zero-order and partial correlations to test the associations between the independent and dependent variables. Two ordinary least squares (OLS) hierarchical regressions were also employed to test whether news creation, news consumption, and/or citizen journalism consumption predicted attitudes toward citizen journalism and perceptions of the professional tenets of good journalism. While a previous study using this data set found attitudes toward citizen journalism may indeed predict consumption (Gil de Zúñiga and Hinsley 2012), this study takes a different tack, examining media consumption and creation as antecedents to attitudes. This approach is not contradictory to studying attitudes as antecedents, but rather supplements that model by suggesting that those attitudes toward media have antecedents of their own—namely media consumption and creation. As an example, Napoli (2010) conceived of attitudes toward media content as coming in the midst of the media interaction process, after consumption but before such behaviors as content creation. To further explore these relationships within this multiaxial context, this study examined the predictive nature of certain media-related actions (i.e., news consumption and creation) on attitudes toward citizen journalism and perceptions of the professional tenets of good journalism.

The theoretical logic behind this approach is that both antecedents and perceptions may exert an influence in people's behavior, and vice versa. For instance, people's attitudes toward journalism may shape how and why they consume information. Similarly, media consumption may also shape certain attitudes people will have over journalism or the media

itself. This study understands the limitation of cross-sectional data. Panel data will certainly help to solve this quandary and shed light over a possible non-recursive relationship between attitudes toward journalism, the media, and information consumption.

In the first regression, the independent variables were entered causally in separate blocks: (1) demographics, (2) political efficacy and trust, and (3) news creation, news consumption, and citizen journalism consumption. To fully isolate the perceptions of the professional tenets of good journalism, attitudes toward citizen journalism were entered as a fourth block into the second regression.

Results

The first two hypotheses predicted a positive association for news creation (H1) and consumption of citizen journalism (H2) with attitudes about citizen journalism. Zero-order correlations confirmed both (news creation $r = 0.394$, $p < 0.01$; consumption of citizen journalism $r = 0.443$, $p < 0.01$), as did partial correlations that controlled for demographics, political efficacy, and trust (news creation $r = 0.394$, $p < 0.01$; consumption of citizen journalism $r = 0.443$, $p < 0.01$). Interestingly, as shown in Table 1, consumption of citizen journalism was also positively correlated with negative attitudes toward citizen journalism when controlling for confounding variables ($r = 0.153$, $p < 0.05$). A regression analysis showed that news creation, news consumption, and the consumption of citizen journalism explained 5.1 percent of the variance of positive attitudes toward citizen journalism (see Table 2). However, people who consume citizen journalism are more likely to have a positive attitude toward citizen journalism ($\beta = 0.309$, $p < 0.01$). The creation of news is non-significant ($\beta = 0.053$, $p = 0.622$).

Examining the first research question (RQ1), the results were again mixed. While the zero-order correlation confirmed a positive association between news consumers and positive attitudes toward citizen journalism ($r = 0.346$, $p < 0.01$), that relationship was not confirmed when applying the control variables ($r = 0.069$, $p = 0.303$). The same held true within the regression model ($\beta = -0.069$, $p = 0.398$).

The next set of hypotheses predicted the creation of news content (H3) and the consumption of news content (H4) would be positively associated with identifying the professional tenets of good journalism. Zero-order correlations confirmed both (news creation $r = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$; consumption of news content $r = 0.394$, $p < 0.01$). However, when controlling for confounding variables, only the consumption of news remained significantly associated ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$). A regression analysis showed that news creation, news consumption, and the consumption of citizen journalism explained 12.0 percent of the variance of the professional tenets of good journalism. People who consume news are more likely to affirm those tenets ($\beta = 0.475$, $p < 0.001$). The creation of news is non-significant ($\beta = -0.136$, $p = 0.218$).

To further test this relationship, attitudes toward citizen journalism were entered as a fourth block (Table 3). Positive and negative attitudes toward citizen journalism accounted for just 0.4 percent of the variance, and neither was a significant predictor of affirming the professional tenets of good journalism (positive attitudes $\beta = 0.031$, $p = 0.803$; negative attitudes $\beta = 0.041$, $p = 0.717$). This finding reaffirms the original association between the consumption of news and the likelihood of identifying the

TABLE 1

Zero-order and partial correlations among key variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. News creation	–	0.602***	0.795***	0.394***	0.063	0.142*
2. News consumption	0.351***	–	0.673***	0.346***	0.186	0.394***
3. Citizen journalism consumption	0.617***	0.440***	–	0.443***	0.146	0.171**
4. Positive attitudes citizen journalism	0.182**	0.069	0.255***	–	0.727***	0.155*
5. Negative attitudes citizen journalism	0.171*	0.078	0.153*	0.821***	–	0.045
6. Tenets of good journalism	−0.030	0.325***	0.017	0.036	0.056	–

Cell entries are two-tailed zero-order Pearson's correlation (top diagonal) and partial correlations (bottom diagonal) with controls for age, gender, education, income, race, political efficacy, and trust. $N = 221$ for partial correlation; $N = 301$ for zero-order correlations.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

professional tenets of good journalism, indicating consumption may in fact be more important than attitudes about citizen journalism.

As a final research question (RQ2), this study asked if there would be an association between citizen journalism consumers and affirming the professional tenets of good journalism. A zero-order correlation suggested a positive relationship ($r = 0.171$, $p < 0.01$), but the relationship vanished when controlling for confounding variables ($r = 0.017$, $p = 0.805$). The second regression confirmed this finding, indicating the consumption of citizen journalism content did not predict the affirmation of the professional tenets of good

TABLE 2

OLS regression models predicting attitudes toward citizen journalism and professional tenets of good journalism

	Positive attitudes	Negative attitudes	Tenets of good journalism
Block 1: demographics			
Age	−0.060	−0.048	−0.074
Gender (male = 0)	0.081	0.021	−0.004
Education	0.070	0.131	0.079
Income	0.001	0.122	0.059
Race (white = 0)	0.013	0.078	0.007
ΔR^2 (%)	1.5	5.7**	2.1
Block 2: political efficacy, trust			
Political efficacy	0.226**	0.179*	0.034
Trust	0.339***	−0.134*	0.269***
ΔR^2 (%)	19.1***	3.4**	7.4**
Block 3: creation/consumption			
Create news	0.053	0.162	−0.136
Consume news	−0.069	0.000	0.475***
Consume citizen journalism	0.309**	0.102	−0.117
ΔR^2 (%)	5.1**	2.8*	12.0***
Total R^2 (%)	25.7***	7.8**	21.5***

$N = 312$. Cell entries are final-entry OLS standardized beta (β) coefficients.
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE 3

OLS regression model predicting professional tenets of good journalism

	Tenets of good journalism
Block 1: demographics	
Age	−0.074
Gender (male = 0)	−0.004
Education	0.079
Income	0.059
Race (white = 0)	0.007
ΔR^2 (%)	2.1
Block 2: political efficacy, trust	
Political efficacy	0.034
Trust	0.269***
ΔR^2 (%)	7.4
Block 3: creation/consumption	
Create news	−0.136
Consume news	0.475***
Consume citizen journalism	−0.117
ΔR^2 (%)	12.0**
Block 4: attitudes toward citizen journalism	
Positive attitude	0.031
Negative attitude	0.041
ΔR^2 (%)	0.4
Total R^2 (%)	21.9***

$N = 312$. Cell entries are final-entry OLS standardized beta (β) coefficients.
**$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

journalism (β = − 0.117, $p = 0.294$). When entering attitudes about citizen journalism into the model, the consumption of citizen journalism remained insignificant as a predictor (β = − 0.131, $p = 0.258$).

Analysis and Discussion

While research into attitudes toward citizen and professional journalism has often looked at news creators and consumers separately, this study is one of a relative few to distinguish and examine content creation and consumption alongside each other (Östman 2012), and one of the first to do so in relation to journalism. In doing so, this study compiled comprehensive, although not exhaustive, measurements based on reliability tests from a nationally representative US survey, making it a particularly thorough examination of the relationship between consumption, creation, perceptions, and values of both citizen and traditional journalism.

The findings indicate a surprisingly significant role for news consumption, and a relatively weak one for news creation. While it is clear that creation plays a significant and positive role in attitudes toward citizen journalism and the professional tenets of good journalism, more stringent analytical models revealed that the role of consumption is far more central. In those models, news creation had no relationship with attitudes toward citizen journalism or the professional tenets of good journalism, but news consumption was a predictor of both—citizen journalism consumption for attitudes toward citizen journalism, and general news consumption for affirmation of the professional tenets of

good journalism. This may suggest that people who create news care less about their role in the process and more about simply being engaged. Such an attitude could, in a way, indicate the embeddedness of news creation in everyday life, to the point that creators do not view their actions as being related to citizen journalism, or their guiding principles as being related to traditional journalism. While content creation has traditionally been conceived of as a set of distinct, purposive acts, it may be becoming a more everyday activity that although important, continues to detach from professional journalistic practices and values.

Such a finding may provide insights, and possibly a bit of optimism, for media organizations seeking more engaged audiences. The key to attracting and maintaining audiences may indeed be about opening the guarded gates to news content creation, but the perception of engagement may be of even greater value. Users may be most compelled to contribute to news production and distribution online, not necessarily when they are portrayed by news organizations as co-creators of news but when the way in which they are contributing is both engaging to them and smoothly embedded into their everyday lives. This observation lines up with recent findings that most news-oriented UGC is reactive, rather than creative (Bergström 2011; Örnebring 2008) and that users even prefer such reactive production (Bergström 2008). Paradoxically, then, the best way to produce widely participatory journalism may be to place less emphasis on the user as journalist, particularly rhetorically, and to instead to focus energies on creating a more seamless, engaging, and fully integrated news participation process for users.

The central role of consumption, on the other hand, is less surprising: It confirms the results of previous studies that consistently find that consumption of particular types of news are strongly connected to attitudes toward and confidence in those news sources (e.g., Bergström 2011; Johnson and Kaye 2004, 2009; Towner and Dulio 2011). In the case of the professional tenets of good journalism, this study indicates that the relationship between consumption and attitudes goes even deeper, as consumers of traditional news media showed that they also absorbed and understood the professional values behind the news media they were consuming. This relationship was found with the consumers of traditional news but not citizen journalism consumers, suggesting that not only is news consumption a pivotal conduit for the formation of public journalistic values, but the particular form of news consumption is a significant attribute in that role as well.

Taken together, the findings suggest a gap between the attitudes developed by those who consume news and those who consume citizen journalism, as well as their views of the professional tenets of good journalism. Consumers of general news and consumers of citizen journalism each have an affinity for the type of news they tend to use, but harbor some ambivalence about the values behind other forms. This split suggests that while the realms of citizen and professional journalism are becoming increasingly enmeshed (e.g., Robinson 2011; Singer et al. 2011), many news consumers may still perceive distinct differences between the work of citizen journalists and the values of professional journalism, and that those differences may specifically drive them to prefer one over the other. Those seeking more engagement, either perceived or actual, may opt for content created by citizen journalists, while those steeped in traditional journalistic values may stick to what they have known. More deeply, these findings may indicate that the perceptions of what journalism is continue to change and are becoming increasingly contested as citizen journalism stakes out a more prominent place in journalistic discourse. Future research could examine the precise differences between

professional and citizen journalistic values and the extent to which the public is shifting between the two.

Likewise, Schudson (2011) noted that in the midst of such dramatic paradigmatic change toward a participatory journalistic process, journalism practitioners should work to understand the ideals as well as the functions of individuals who immerse themselves in traditional (e.g., consumption) and non-traditional (e.g., creation) news habits. Through the lens of news creators and consumers of news and citizen journalism, this study sought to examine attitudes toward citizen journalism and the identification of the professional tenets of good journalism. The data collected here are cross-sectional, so causality should not be strictly assumed or interpreted. The regression models imply that news creation plays little role in attitudes toward citizen journalism or perceptions of journalism more broadly and elucidates a gap between attitudes and perceptions of news consumers and citizen journalism consumers; it may be plausible that attitudes and perceptions guide those consumption patterns.

The findings of this study also relied on comprehensive indices developed through reliability tests rather than through existing research or theoretical guidance. Yet, few studies to date have developed indices of media consumption and creation (see Östman 2012). Östman's (2012) study used similar means for achieving valid measurement of consumption and creation, though not specifically for news or citizen journalism. The present study thus may pave the way for future research by encouraging the development and exploration of news creation and consumption indices that keep pace with developing definitions of news, journalism, and citizen journalism.

Limitations notwithstanding, the results of the study contribute to the existing literature in a number of ways. They help improve current understandings of the contours of the public's views of good journalism and how those views relate to various types of news consumption and creation. Critically, they indicate the consumption of news, rather than creation or consumption of citizen journalism, may guide the affirmation of the professional tenets of good journalism. This finding may send up a positive message for professional journalists: those who consume the news agree with them about what good journalism is. During a time in which the disconnect between professional journalism and the public seems sharper than ever, this could be an encouraging indicator of a significant point of connection between journalists and those who consume their work. For many of today's content creators, those communicative acts may be becoming so embedded in the daily routines of media use that their perceived relationship to journalistic values is relatively weak. Still, the consumption of that content, whether created by professionals or amateurs, continues to play a critical role in forming the public's conception of what good journalism is and should be.

NOTES

1. Calculation based on the American Association of Public Opinion Research's RR3 calculation.
2. Noting that SNSs can provide news generated by traditional news sources as well as individuals, the survey asked two separate questions about SNS use for news. The first question asked specifically if respondents used SNSs to get news from sources such as CNN or ABC. Responses were then reliably entered into the index for *news consumption*.

The second question gauged SNS use and fit more reliably into the index for *citizen journalism consumption*.

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Appendix A

Demographic Profile of Study Survey and Other Comparable Surveys

	Author group study survey, December 2008 to January 2009 (%)	Author group study survey second wave, July 2010 (%)	Pew Internet & American Life Project post-election survey, November to December 2008 (%)	US Census community population survey, November 2008 (%)
Age				
18–24	3.5	1.1	6.0	12.5
25–34	18.9	12.5	9.9	17.8
35–44	21.6	22.9	13.5	18.4
45–64	50.5	53.5	40.5	34.6
65 or more	5.5	10	30.2	16.6
Gender				
Male	33.0	35.4	47.2	48.3
Female	67.0	64.6	52.8	51.7
Race/ethnicity				
White	84.4	88	79.8	68.5
Hispanic	4.5	4.7	6.1	13.7
Black	5.0	3.6	9.2	11.8
Asian	3.0	2.6	1.3	4.6
Education				
High school or less	15.4	10.6	38.4	44.6
Some college	28.1	29.6	27.7	28.3
College degree	37.2	24.8	19.8	18.1
Graduate degree	19.2	35.1	14.1	9.0
Household income				
Less than $49,999	41.1	37.5	51.2	42.0
$50,000 to $99,999	37.9	34.3	31.8	35.3
$100,000 or more	21.0	28.3	17.1	22.7