Participatory ‘journalism’ at mainstream UK news websites

5th International Online Journalism Seminar, Vilanova I la Geltrú, 19 November 2007

Neil Thurman
The University for business
and the professions

1,092,000
visits / month
TX-23: The DCCC is In

by KTinTX

Mon Nov 20, 2006 at 08:41:50 PM PST

(from the diaries -- kos)

The DCCC is on the ground in TX-23 where we have a run-off against Republican Rep. Henry Bonilla. They have made amazing progress in getting Democrat Ciro Rodriguez to actually abide by their rules for this short election period seeing as he's low on cash and institutional support. In other terms, Ciro has actually been on the phone doing call time which in itself is short of a miracle, just to put it in perspective.

Meghan Gaffney as some will remember from Paul Hackett's race in OH-02 is there now as well as Adrian Saenz, the DCCC's National Field Director (who if I'm not mistaken is from San Antonio as it is).

There is a poll in the field right now to determine where things stand on that front.

The election date cannot be set earlier than this Friday, from what we've been...
TX-23: The DCCC is In

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There is a poll in the field right now to determine where the front.
85% written by its readers

50-200 articles submitted daily (70% published)
Use of message boards at ten UK news websites

- Guardian.co.uk
- DailyMail.co.uk
- Scotsman.com
- ThisisLondon.co.uk
- FT.com
- Telegraph.co.uk
- Independent.co.uk
- TheSun.co.uk
- TimesOnline.co.uk
- News.bbc.co.uk

Message board posts ('000s):
- Guardian.co.uk: 1221
- DailyMail.co.uk: 1165
- ThisisLondon.co.uk: 389
- Telegraph.co.uk: 9 (Pre-moderated)
- FT.com: 0.116 (Pre-moderated)
- TimesOnline.co.uk: 0
- TheSun.co.uk: 0
- Independent.co.uk: 0
- Scotsman.com: 0
- News.bbc.co.uk: 0
“[The mainstream media] have a rather static core set of new practices . . . [they place] other journalists practices at its margins” Matheson, 2004: 446

“innate conservatism . . . when big media companies consider having a conversation with their audience, they tend not to push many boundaries” Gillmor, 2004, 114

“[Innovation in newsrooms unfolds in a] gradual and ongoing fashion [and is] shaped by combinations of initial conditions and local contingencies” Boczowski, 2004: 4
Formats for reader participation:

1. Polls
2. Message boards
3. Have your says
4. Q&As
5. Blogs
6. Reader Blogs
7. Comments on stories
8. Your media
9. Your stories
Inside Whitehall: Benedict Brogan's election blog
17:24pm 27th April 2005

He is in the privileged position of seeing the election campaign from the other side of the fence. And here, in his regular election blog, Daily Mail Whitehall Editor Benedict Brogan gives us an exclusive insight into the corridors of power...

Wednesday April 20

Is the Tory promise to put off council tax revaluation until after the next Parliament shamelessly opportunistic? You bet! But that's the whole point - this is an election campaign and unless the Tories start creating more opportunities to win over voters, the next fortnight is a waste of time.

This morning's main press conference proved that a well-timed sort of opportunism can work wonders. The Tories always said they would save a few surprises for the later stages of the campaign, and today they delivered what amounts to another tax cut.

Voters now know that if the Lib Dems get in, council tax will be replaced by a local income tax that will clobber most earners. They know that if Labour get in, council tax will be overhauled to reflect soaring property prices - householders in the Tory south and London watch out.

And if they return the Tories they know that neither of the above will happen. It's simple, it's audacious and it reflects that council tax is one of the most explosive issues in British politics. It's gone up by 70 per cent.
John Peel: 30,000 emails from readers the day he died. 100,000 by the end of the week.

John Peel, veteran radio presenter and DJ, has died suddenly on holiday in South America.

I loved that man. Very cool guy, even when he was being deliberately and devoutly uncool.

Crow, Bristol, England.

Back in the late 60s John was the only way some kids could hear 'underground' music. All other airwaves were wall-to-wall formulaic pop. His ear for good sounds was revolutionary. He certainly changed my life. I remember as a teenager hearing Tonto's Expanding Headband, Velvet Underground, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Loudon Wainwright III for the very first time on Radio One's 'Top Gear'. He was a man of integrity: true to himself and his listeners for over 3 decades. Rest easy, John.

Godfrey Bartlett, Brentwood, England

“ All other airwaves were wall-to-wall formulaic pop”

Godfrey Bartlett, Brentwood, England
Search engines: your questions answered

John Battelle, publisher, journalist and author of The Search, responds to your queries

Wednesday October 5, 2005
Guardian Unlimited

Q: Given how important search engines are to many aspects of modern life, is there a case for some kind of government regulation to ensure fair play?
Mavan

John Battelle: I’d say not. Unlike, say, Windows, there are many viable choices for search engines, and market competition seems to keep them pretty honest.

Q: I am the editor of AskYourNeighbour.co.uk, which is one of the UK’s fastest-growing forums. We now have 2m pages on Google, which generates considerable traffic. But do you think websites can become too obsessed by their Google exposure at the expense of more traditional marketing methods?
Graham Parker
Inside Whitehall: Beating spin

Wednesday April 20

Is the Tory promise to put off council tax rises until after the next Parliament 'a false prospectus'...? You bet! But that's the story of an election campaign and unless the Tories create more opportunities to win on the eve of the campaign is a waste of time.

Tories always said they would save £10 billion of the later stages of the campaign, and despite what amounts to another election tax rise - voters now know that if the Lib Dems win the general election they will be replaced by a local income tax.

And if the return of the Tories they know is not the best thing to happen. It's simple: it's not. It's not that council tax is one of those major issues in British politics. It's gone up...
I believe I can drive

AFTER 10 years travelling on London’s public transport system, Sun man Toni Perry is finally learning to drive.

November 8 2006

AFTER taking advantage of London’s memorable public transport system for almost 10 years, constantly pacifying myself with the excuse “what use would a car be here anyway?” I finally had to succumb to the pressures of manhood and learn how to drive.

Upon starting my epic journey to the land of independent mobility, I discovered that there is actually quite a lot of things to consider and a lack of readily available information. So while I’m going to learn to drive for the sake of my own feet, I’m also biting the bullet for you lot too.

Over the coming months, I’ll give you the low-down and the highlights of my experiences behind the wheel in a weekly blog - I believe I can drive.

BSM are the lucky people who have taken on the responsibility to teach me the ins and outs of this driving malarky. The first thing I did was have a good look around their website for any useful information, and as luck would have it, there staring me in the face was just what any complete novice in the motoring world would need; a step-by-step guide!

It takes you through each step you’ll need to complete, from an online application for your provisional plate, to what documents you’ll need to...
Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, news, sport, showbiz, health, femail, comment | the Daily Mail - Mozilla Firefox

Special promotions
- Entering Young Brits
- Ashes Competition
- All promotions »

Advertorials
- ING Direct
- School leavers
- Laura Ashley
- Skincare science

RSS feeds
- RSS HOMEPAGE
- What is RSS?
- All our RSS feeds

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Help

City University London
The University for business and the professions

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/dailymail/home.html?in_page_id=1766

HOW DO YOU LABEL A GOAT?

Just one of the ludicrous examples of red tape imposed by New Labour thanks to 3,621 laws

LUCKY OR STUPID?

Dangling from a 25,000 volt, he could have fried. Is this the luckiest or stupidest man in Britain?

'2 million people will spend a lifetime repaying debt'

Two million people have borrowed so much they are destined to spend the rest of their lives struggling to repay debt, Britain's biggest debt firm said... read

Trainspotter who put a railway in his garden to fool motorists into slowing down

As roadside features go, it is certainly an arresting sight. So much so that speeding motorists have for once been slowing down to check trainspotter Eddie Knorn's front garden - complete with the 58ft railway carriage - is not a level crossing... read

Soldier's moving diary reveals plea to Blair to pull troops from Iraq

A soldier killed in Iraq wrote a poignant battle diary in which he implored Prime Minister Tony Blair to pull poorly equipped British troops out of the war, it was revealed... read
Buncefield oil depot fire. Summer 2005

The BBC News website received:

* 15,000 images and
* 20,000 eye-witness accounts.
My Day in Iraq: US aid worker

As part of the BBC News website's One Day in Iraq coverage, we heard from people from all walks of life, all over the country.

"Susan", a US aid worker based in Dohuk in the Kurdish autonomous area of northern Iraq, told us about a day spent working with local communities to improve awareness of the burgeoning political system.

“It was the second day of a three-day workshop in Mangesh focusing on the Iraqi constitution and elections.

The night before, I stayed at the home of friends near Dohuk. There were 12 of us sleeping in two rooms on mattresses. Luckily, it was a cool night!

We had problems getting people here from Baghdad as the road is dangerous and we didn't have time to organise flights, but locals managed to

BBC News website

“user generated content is not a ‘cheap alternative’ to conventional, traditional journalism . . . High editorial standards apply as much to material sent to us by our audience as it does to material generated by our own correspondents.”
Saenz's story

My Story is a collection of features written by our readers. They allow us all to share in their Scottish heritage. You can join the discussion by adding comments below.

MY NAME is Michelle Elizabeth Lear Saenz, I was born in Baton Rouge, LA, but my heart was born in Scotland. I have always known this since I was little. It got stronger when my Uncle Larry served his mission for the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He went when the Prince of Wales got married the first time. The thing is my family think is either Irish or Scottish.

My mother does genealogy and did find that on her side and my dad's side we have Scottish blood. My grandma Lear's father name was Arnold, but he has Irish in him but me and my grandma Lear got his very bad temper which for us is good we protect our husband and family not afraid of standing when someone hurts us. Grandpa Arnold's father is the one who came to the
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### ‘Blogs’ at a selection of British News sites, November 2006

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“Becoming a forum for debate was an area that newspapers had to get into otherwise they’d get left behind”

Richard Burton, 2006

[telegraph.co.uk]
“It has partly been an attempt to keep them within the family because otherwise they’d and create their own blogs”.

Peter Bale, 2006
“Our science editor is keen to blog because he wouldn’t to dress everything up as a tabloid idea”.

Steve Purcell, 2006
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“It’s the ‘tragedy of the commons’. If you create an open space there will always be someone who is going to abuse it.”.

Simon Waldman, 2006
### ‘Have Your Says’ at a selection of British News sites, April 2005

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Editors’ concerns / local constraints

1. Quality of contributions: Spelling, punctuation, editorial selection, accuracy & balance
2. Making user generated content initiatives pay
3. Uncertain legal environment
4. The information systems involved in the eliciting, processing and publishing of reader contributions.
“[the reason people] buy a newspaper or a magazine is to read a well-crafted news story or feature”

Pete Picton, editor, Sun

[ 10 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
“On any user-invited feedback there will only be about ten [different] points of view”

Mike Smartt, ex-editor, BBC News Website
“99 per cent of the blogs are extremely dull or are of very marginal interest”

Peter Bale, editorial director  
[ 14 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
"a very, very high quality of exchange with readers"

Peter Bale, 2006
“[the contributors were]... a bunch of bigots who were shouting from one side of the room to the other.”

Martin King, editor, *The Independent* [16 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman]
“Our . . . Diana message board . . became invaded with abusers.”

Steve Purcell, 2006
2. Local constraints: Making user generated content initiatives pay
“We had to cut down the number ‘Discussions’ because it was too resource intensive.”

Tracy Corrigan, editor, FT.com  
[13 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman]
“They just want to write their experiences...the question of getting paid isn't a major issue”.

Mike Smartt, ex-editor, BBC News Website
“Message boards are just like self-contained playgrounds, no-one wants to leave. The number of active users has been 10-12,000 for ever.”

Simon Waldman, 2006
“Generally people don’t want to advertise on talk boards, except perhaps travel.”

Simon Waldman, 2006
Speaking sorrow: Nick Clarke
Anne Karf Nov 24 06, 11:15am: Nick Clarke, who has died of cancer at 58, won the trust and affection of radio listeners everywhere with that soft, warm voice of integrity.
Comments (1) ·  

A genteel faith?
Sue Blackmore Nov 24 06, 10:40am: I went to church on Sunday and the sermon was all fire and brimstone, albeit in its most polite form.
Comments (10) ·  

A makeover is not enough
Shamit Sagar Nov 24 06, 10:07am: There is something a bit old-fashioned about how race and faith concerns are debated in Britain.
Comments (0) ·  

Let's have commonsense games, not an exorbitant festival of chauvinism
Simon Jenkins: The 2012 Olympics now belong to London, not the IOC. We should end the link with national pride and extravagance.
Comments (29) ·  

Sarah Boseley
Iran and Syria want to be seen as a stabilising force in Iraq. In contrast to the failure of the US, but there is little they can do. 

Jonathan Steele
The west's attitude to issues of reproductive health, especially in the US, causes women's deaths all over the world. 

More comment from Friday's paper
Race and faith: a new direction?
“The initial story will more visits straightaway, but the community may have a higher number of visits over time”

Richard Avery, 2006
“With user generated content, people see it often in terms of what users write but quite often for us, it’s in terms of the stories they bring. Users were doing this prior to the web . . . It’s just a lot easier to do it online now”

Pete Picton, Editor

[ Interview with Neil Thurman, 2006 ]
The University for business
and the professions

US unique users as a percentage of total unique users

Sources:

3. Local constraints: Uncertain legal environment
While the G8 waters down its plans to combat climate change, the Antarctic ice sheet is melting far faster than we thought. The consequences could be devastating.

“This is definitely not science fiction ... it could happen.”

By Rob Edwards, Environment Editor

Lord Fraser McLetchie should reveal tax expenses

By Paul Hutcheon, Scottish Political Editor

Rebate row will mean ‘lame duck presidency’

Blair’s tenure to be ‘hard going’

By James Cusick, Westminster Editor

EVERYONE AGREES GLOBAL WARMING IS WRECKING OUR PLANET ... EVERYONE EXCEPT THOSE WHO CAN STOP IT ON THE SUMMIT WHICH COULD CHANGE THE PLANET
4. Local constraints: The information systems supporting the processing and publishing of reader contributions.
“When John Peel died we had over 100,000 emails. Because we read and sub everything that we put up, we just couldn't cope.”

Pete Clifton, editor, BBC News Website

[ 8 November 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
“We have to … be a bit more relaxed about letting users comments come into an area of the site where people will know we haven’t gone through these with a fine tooth comb.”

Pete Clifton, editor, BBC News Website

[ 8 November 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman ]
Send your tributes to Nick Clarke

The BBC journalist and presenter Nick Clarke has died of cancer. He was 58. What are your memories of him?

Nick Clarke worked for the BBC for more than 35 years. He started in television, but he'll be best remembered by listeners to Radio 4.

On both The World This Weekend and then The World At One, Nick's courteous yet forensic style of questioning earned him a fearsome reputation and a large, loyal audience.

Named Broadcaster of the Year in 2001, he also presented Radio 4's Round Britain Quiz and on occasions Any Questions.

A keen lover of cricket, Nick was also the biographer of another Radio 4 icon, Alistair Cooke.

How will you remember Nick Clarke? What was his contribution to broadcasting? Did you ever meet him? Send us your tributes and comments.

Nick's obituary
Published: Thursday, 23 November, 2006, 12:46 GMT 12:46 UK

[Comments section]
TODAY'S TOP STORY

Thanksgiving Reading: Charity With a Bottom Line

Milton Friedman, meet Andrew Carnegie. As the season of end-of-year tax deductions gets into high gear, The New York Times's Stephanie Strom has taken a look at how free-market forces—as fiercely championed by Mr. Friedman, the late economist—are increasingly being incorporated into charitable ventures. The trend includes Google, eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and AOL co-founder Stephen Case, among others.

Click here for the full article, or see below: MORE »

LATEST DEALBOOK HEADLINES

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For M&A, a Much-Deserved Holiday

Quantas Draws Interest from Buyout Firms

Editor's Note:
DealBook will be on a limited posting schedule through the weekend, picking up our regular schedule on Monday morning. Thanks for reading, and happy Thanksgiving.

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MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Air France-KLM Starts Merger Talks with Alitalia

Bayer to Sell Chemicals Unit to Advent and Carlyle for $1.5 Billion

Kerkorian Seeks More MGM, Less G.M.
“I think most people do like to consume media as opposed to take part in it”.

Richard Withey, 2006

“[Readers] tend to be keener to send us things they’ve seen rather than actually [creating video themselves]”

Pete Picton, 2006
“In online communities, 90% of users never contribute, 9% of users contribute a little, and 1% of users account for almost all the action”.

Jakob Nielsen, 2006
• Wikipedia has 68,000 active contributors, which is 0.2% of its visitors in the US

• Wikipedia’s most active 1,000 people—0.0003% of its users—contribute about two-thirds of the site’s edits.
“only 1-5% of readers contribute”

Simon Waldman, GuardianUnlimited interview, 2006

At the BBC News website on 0.05% of the site’s daily unique audience contribute to any ‘popular’ Have your Say

City University estimate
“And I don’t know that we need more than 50, 10-20 people contributing”

Alan Revell, 2006

“that small number make it much more interesting for everyone else”

Simon Waldman, 2006
Your experience

■ Do you ‘participate’ with the mainstream media online?
■ Do you contribute to ‘citizen journalism’ sites or wikis or keep a blog?
Discussion points

- Does the mainstream media ‘get’ citizen journalism?
- Does user-generated content add anything to mainstream new sites?
- Can readers change journalists’ sourcing practices?
- Can citizen journalists really produce original news?
- Are readers / citizens politically & economically motivated in the same way as traditional sources?
“We have this huge resource of opinion, of really quite vocal readers . . . so how do we get them in the paper? Because if we get their names in the paper they are more likely to buy it”

Stewart Kirkpatrick, editor, Scotsman.com
[20 December 2004, telephone call with Neil Thurman]
“even in highly equipped and financed news organisations there is an enormous reliance on the news gathering of agencies and on a few prominent institutional sources”

—Golding and Elliot
“[news production is] for the most part passive. . . selecting from already limited supplies of information”

—Golding and Elliot
“[only] powerful or skilled sources know how to make contact with reporters”

“[most people do not] know how to contact reporters”

—Gans
“[only the] bureaucratic self-reporting apparatus [can generate the reliable quantities of information that reporters require].”

—Fishman
“[sources are politically / economically motivated trying to gain] favourable public access [for their] political constituents, potential supporters, customers [or] investors”

—McManus