



SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Theme 10 – SECURITY, Collaborative Project

CPSI	Changing Perceptions of Security and Interventions (CPSI)
Grant agreement no.:	217881
Contact person EC:	Julien Giordani

1 partners	University of Kent		
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Deliverable N°: WP 2.3

Title: Citizen Journalism & Public Opinion

Due date: 30 November 2009

Delivered date:

CPSI: Deliverable – WP 2.3

Citizen Journalism & Public Opinion

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Abstract:

This report 'Citizen Journalism and Public Opinion' has been written as part of Work Package 2.3, a sociological analysis of Public Opinion of Security, for the 'Changing Perceptions of Security and Interventions' (CPSI) research project. It aims to explore the process through which Citizen Journalists using new forms of media attempt to play a role in influencing public opinion of security. Morphological Analysis on determinants of Public Opinion of Security was conducted in June 2009, aimed at developing a framework for influences on public opinion. Following the Morphological Analysis workshop it was hypothesised that new forms of media, particularly those associated with social media, may play a role in influencing public opinion of security-related issues in Europe. The issues raised at this workshop pointed towards the need to assess the role of the new media in the constitution of EU public opinion on security-related issues. This report focuses on the emerging influence of Citizen Journalists (self-publication of news by members of the public) and considers their influence on the public opinion of security in Europe.

This report analyses the changing media landscape in Europe. The use of the Internet by EU citizens is increasing and Europeans have been found to spend an increasing proportion of their life online. There is also a growth of Europeans' use of social media, such as blogs (In the global report on blogging by Technorati, Europeans' use of blogs accounted for 27%). Blogs were found to be direct platforms for communicating and producing Citizen Journalism. To capture the workings of Citizen Journalism, we examined a number of recent European case studies of security-related events. Examples include the Germany school shootings, the Italian earthquake, Holland's Queen's Day, the swine flu epidemic, the missing Air France plane and an in-depth sociological account of Citizen Journalism during the 7/7 London bombings in 2005.

Our analysis suggests that new sources of media give a voice to both members of the public and officials. Nevertheless, Citizen Journalism was predominantly found to reinforce the agenda set by the mass media. The key challenges that may result from Citizen Journalism reports of security-related events are the segmentation of communication and spread of rumours and conspiracy theories. Since the CPSI project started, public experience and interaction with new forms of media have significantly changed, and now play a significant role in influencing public opinion and perceptions of security.

Executive Summary

1. In Europe Citizen Journalism represents an important and growing medium of communication influencing public opinion of security-related issues.
2. New forms of media represent a challenge to policy makers as audience viewing habits are changing. Individuals no longer look for news; instead they expect news to come to them. It is the recommendation of this report that those concerned with public opinion of security need to develop tools that engage with new forms of media.
3. Citizen Journalists play a role in the agenda-setting function of the news media, which can influence public opinion of security-related issues.
4. The character of the European media landscape is continually evolving as a result of the emergence of the Internet.
5. Significant changes have occurred between the media and the audience. The audience are now actively involved in the news-making process.
6. Individuals are increasingly using blogs and other social media such as Twitter. 27% of Europeans use blogs. Blogging of European events is gaining prominence in the blogosphere – with 0 blog posts concerning the Madrid terror attacks in 2004, to 223 blog posts on the London bombings of 2005 to 400 blogs posts following the earthquake in Italy in April 2009.
7. Blogs mostly repeat news media reporting of events. Bloggers can be seen to reinforce the agenda set by the news media. The publication of new information regarding events is limited. Following the 7/7 London bombings, only 11% of blog posts contained personal accounts whilst 38% referred to 'other' news media articles.
8. A symbiotic relationship exists between the news media and new forms of media.
9. Citizen Journalism promotes the spread of rumours and conspiracy theories surrounding an event – this has the potential for insecurity in society.
10. Citizen Journalism promotes the spread of rumours and the expansion of the media has the potential to result in more segmented audiences. There is no longer a single 'mass media'. Instead audiences are subjected to a range of 'media', which may intensify perceptions of miscommunication and public insecurity.

Citizen Journalism & Public Opinion

In 1922, far before advances in technology and the widespread availability of media, Walter Lippmann (2008) argued that people's knowledge about the world comes from the media rather than an individual's direct experience.

"We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him." (Lippmann, 2008, p. 28)

Individuals' opinions of security threats stem not solely from direct exposure and experience of the threat, but more often than not from our exposure via the mass media. Since 1922, the spectrum of media available to audiences has dramatically expanded beyond the daily newspaper. This echoes assertions by Marshall McLuhan, who in 1964 argued that the *medium is the message*.

"In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology." (McLuhan, 1964 (2008), p. 7)

Over time, the range and types of media available to individuals has expanded - from radio to television to the Internet. In addition, individuals can now update themselves on the news at the touch of a button. Today mobile phone technology, Netbooks and laptops, to name but a few, allow individuals to access the news as it is reported. Never before has the world been subjected to such an easily-accessible and instant news service.

A significant correlation between the media and its effect on public opinion on security-related issues has been identified in other areas of the CPSI research project. This correlation was found following a Morphological Analysis of societal determinants upon public opinion. Morphological Analysis involves non-quantified modelling. It calls for the coming together of a group of specialists to develop a common problem space, in this case determinants on public opinion. By conducting Morphological Analysis we were able to achieve an approximation and hypothesis concerning the essential parameters to be investigated that were considered to influence public opinion. (*For further information see the section on News Media and Public Opinion below*). This correlation was also identified in a report reviewing existing social surveys that sought to understand public opinion of security. For example, results from the World Social Summit survey (2008) suggested that of six different sources, the media was found to influence individuals' level of fear in metropolitan cities. A similar conclusion was drawn by the British Crime Survey (BCS), which specialises in understanding individuals' experience of crime and includes a measure that identifies the relationship between newspaper readership and an individual's perception of crime. Results from the 2008 BCS suggest that greater exposure to newspapers is linked to a higher 'worry' over crime. The link between the media and public perception of security is also noted in Work Package 4.3 'Media Content Analysis' of the CPSI project, the purpose of which was to develop a model that would enable analysis between media content and specific security issues.

The purpose of this report is to identify how 'new' sources of media have developed and in turn how they interface with traditional sources of news media to influence public opinion of security. In particular, focus will be placed upon the expansion of 'Citizen Journalism' within 'new' media. It is worth noting that this is a new and evolving area of social research.

Understanding the uses and functions of new forms of media is crucial to policy makers who wish to reinforce their ability to communicate security-related information to members of the public. Via the media, public opinion of security-related incidents is framed. It is essential for officials to understand the consequences of the growth in both the use and popularity of new forms of media. Audiences are changing, and individuals are increasingly exposed to an *information rich* environment. The younger generations are increasingly using new forms of social media to gain information about the world around them. Individuals are no longer solely relying on traditional sources or specific 'types' of media for information. Today, officials and the public are able to communicate with one another directly. The growth in use of new forms of media has the potential for influencing perceptions of security in two ways. First, enhancements in communication allow individuals to gain increasingly accurate information, which means they are likely to feel greater reassurance about their security. Second, a greater flow of information also has the potential for intensifying anxiety. Instead of feeling reassured and informed, there exists the possibility that individuals will be made to feel isolated, misinformed and exposed to inaccurate information, leading to insecurity. Officials must understand and embrace new forms of media to grasp its influence on evolving opinion of security-related issues.

From a sociological perspective, the process whereby the media *decides* what are the most pressing items for news coverage is characterised as 'Agenda Setting'. Once the media have decided upon the 'Agenda' it becomes the public agenda, which in turn influences public opinion (McCombs, 2006: pp. 2). This report will argue that the Internet creates a space for Citizen Journalism to contribute to the shaping of news. The report will then present a series of European case studies that will identify Citizen Journalism involvement in the news making process. It will be noted that Citizen Journalism contributes to the efforts of the media agenda, which assists in the framing of public opinion. In this sense, the term *framing* refers to the way in which a piece of news is constructed and presented to audiences (McCombs, 2006). Framing of an event via Citizen Journalism will be considered by regarding the use of social media sites such as blogs and *Twitter*. Analysis will identify how Citizen Journalism contributes to the framing of the events by utilising a number of case studies, including: the Germany school shootings (March 2009), the Italian earthquake (April 2009), the incident during Queen's Day in Holland (April 2009), the swine flu outbreak (April/May 2009) and the reports of the missing Air France plane travelling from Brazil to Paris (June 2009). In addition, the report will present findings from an in-depth sociological analysis of Citizen Journalism following the 7/7 London bombings of 2005. By conducting these case studies, this report will present an extensive discussion surrounding the nature and consequences of Citizen Journalism in relation to public opinion. The report will conclude with a summary of findings in addition to a number of recommendations for further research in this area.

News Media & Public Opinion

For many individuals events and occurrences do not take place within the vicinity of his/her reality. Rather, the individual is subjected to a range of media sources that enlighten them about occurring events. In 1922 Walter Lippmann argued that individuals are presented with a number of *pictures* that influence the individual's knowledge of an event. These pictures can be made by him/her self or can be given to them.

"We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge but on pictures made by himself or given to him...The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do." (Lippmann, 2008, p. 28)

During Lippmann's time of writing, the principal source of media about current affairs was the daily newspaper. Today, the wealth of media available to individuals has greatly expanded. We now live in

a world in which the latest news is available to us at the touch of a button, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Rather than waiting for the 'next' daily newspaper, individuals can access updates in global news across a range of mediums, including radio, Internet and mobile phone browsing. But while we are presented with a changing news media, what Lippmann wrote in 1922 is still pertinent to our experience of the world today. The world remains '*politically out of reach*' (Lippmann, 2008, p. 31) – and while our knowledge may be more comprehensive, we still live in an external reality.

Robert Park (1940) argues that the concept of news is defined as a matter of interest.

"News, therefore, at least in the strict sense of the term, is not a story or an anecdote. It is something that has for the person who hears or reads it an interest that is pragmatic rather than appreciative. News is characteristically, if not always, limited to events that bring about sudden and decisive changes." (Park, 1940, p. 681)

In this sense news is a portrayal of reality, and more often than not is a serious matter of public interest. Due to media exposure, reporting of an event can bring about change in policy. The problem of knife crime in the UK in the summer of 2008 can be used as an example to illustrate the point made by Park. Following an increasing number of knife crime incidents, the problem of knife crime was communicated by the media. Media attention on the issue of knife crime resulted in decisive action in terms of policy. The British police began a campaign to encourage youths to discard their weapons at local police stations without fear of prosecution. In November 2008 the BBC reported a father's support of the 'hand-in' scheme as a result of his son being a victim of knife crime.

"The father of a teenager stabbed in the chest by a gang of youths is backing a two-week 'hand-in' offered by a police force as a way to tackle knife crime." (BBC, 2008)

Support of such a scheme can be linked to individuals' insecurity over knife crime and a growth in public concern over knife crime. Insecurity can be seen to be promoted via an individual's exposure to a greater salience of news items than ever before. The greater attention paid to knife crime by the media was not an outcome of an actual increase in the prevalence of this activity. However once the media communicated the idea that this was a growing threat to the public, it was perceived as a novel example of a menacing risk to people's security. Exposure of the problem of knife crime in the British media resulted in a change in police policy.

For McCombs (2006) the salience of topics in the news is central to our understanding of 'what' is on the public agenda. In turn, the public agenda influences public opinion of what the most important issues facing society are and often what makes people feel most insecure.

Nacos et al (2008) also argue that there is a strong correlation between the media and public agenda. They refer to the public agenda of maintaining US citizen support for the War on Terror. Following content analysis of US television content between 1st October 2001 and 31st December 2004 they were able to establish a direct correlation between the media and the public agenda. In order to understand public response to television coverage they also conducted a review of opinion polls. These opinion polls were aimed at identifying public confidence in the US government's efforts to prevent terrorism. As a result of their research efforts, Nacos et al found that following 9/11 little attention was paid to the prevention of terrorism in the news media. Instead, emphasis was placed on raising awareness about the impending threat of terrorism.

"Moreover, in the case of threat, we found that public perceptions and reactions have been responsive to news of the rhetoric by political leaders, media personnel, and especially mass-mediated announcements of changes in terror alerts levels and the recurrent videotape appearances and threat made by Al Qaeda leaders." (Nacos, Bloch-Elikon, & Shapiro, 2008, p. 15)

Nacos et al identified a specific news agenda that they perceive as being greatly influenced by then US President, George W. Bush. Much of media attention at that time paid little attention to terrorism prevention at home, focusing instead on the terrorist threat from outside. By doing so, Nacos et al argue that the Bush administration was able to exploit the 'politics of fear' that were at work via the barrage of media concerning the threat of terrorism. By placing emphasis on impending 'doom', public fear would be generated. They concluded this would enable US support for the war effort against terror. In essence, Nacos et al argued that the US government would be able to maintain support for the Iraq war effort and other 'controversial' measures that they felt were justifiable in the war against terror (Nacos, Bloch-Elikon, & Shapiro, 2008, p. 21).

McCombs (2006) suggests that there are a number of salience cues in the media portrayal of events. McCombs argues that newspapers identify a number of cues that are indicative of the salience of news on their daily agenda. Such cues include key words in headlines, images, font size and so forth. These cues are central to the layout/presentation of a news article. The greater amount of space that a news piece takes up relates to the importance of the news article and therefore the greater projection of the piece of news. For television news, salience cues are linked to the placement of the broadcast and the amount of time spent covering the topic. Repetition of a news piece throughout the day is also crucial to understanding its importance (McCombs, 2006, p. 2). In this sense, the media set the agenda for what they deem to be the most pressing items of news for the public agenda. In sociological terms, this concept is referred to as 'agenda-setting'.

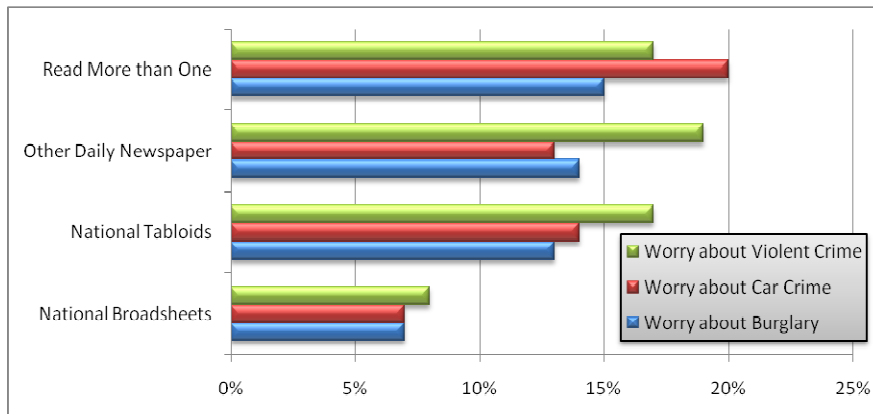
The concept of agenda-setting is important in identifying the process involved in the relationship between the media and public opinion. The first phase of this relationship is a correlation between the media agenda and its ability to set the public agenda. The second phase is a connection between the public agenda that has been set and its influence on public opinion. To illustrate, we return to the example of knife crime.

- 1. Media set the agenda:** *In this case the British media reported extensively on the occurrence of knife crime.*
- 2. Media agenda influences the public agenda:** *Extensive reporting of knife crime reveals that the number of knife related incidents were increasing. This set the public agenda to 'concern' over knife crime. Outcome: Policy was revealed to help combat knife crime. For example, anonymous knife hand- in.*
- 3. Public agenda influences public opinion:** *As a result of phase one and two, knife crime becomes a security issue from the public perspective.*

Subsequently, knife crime became a dominant feature of insecurity in society. Anxiety over domestic crime can be seen to stem from exposure to crime via the news media, rather than direct exposure to crime. The media can be seen greatly to affect individuals' feeling of insecurity. As seen in other areas of the CPSI project¹, results from the 2008 British Crime Survey (BCS) suggest that although crime rates were reduced in the UK, public opinion of crime indicates that individuals believe that crime is increasing. Public opinion on crime is largely attributed to individuals' exposure to the media and the type of media that they are exposed to. The graph below shows level of worry over burglary, car crime and violent crime is greater among national tabloid readers than national broadsheets. Furthermore, those who read an 'other' daily newspaper and those who read more than one newspaper have a great level of worry over burglary. For those who have a high level of worry over car and violent crime it appears that reading more than one newspaper plays a role in contributing to worry. For tabloid and broadsheet readers, concern is highest over violent crime. A limitation of

¹ CPSI: Work Package 2.3 - Review of Existing Surveys on Public Opinion

the BCS media analysis is that it is confined to the relationship between newspaper reading and crime perception. Other media need to be taken into account to gain a more balanced picture.



McCombs argues that issues do not simply remain on the public agenda all the time. Instead, what we witness is a change in the public agenda as a result of the media’s changing agenda. As a result, changes can be identified in the salience of different topics over time:

“Over time, the salience of individual issues rises and falls as the attention of the mass media and the public shift” (McCombs, 2006, p. 37)

The following table is indicative of the change in media attention in the United Kingdom to topics over time. This is not to say that the media only gave attention to these topics at this time. Rather, attention would be primarily focused on these events.

	Media Attention
April 2009	Swine flu
June 2009	British MPs’ expenses scandal
June 2009	Iran protests
July 2009	UK fatalities in Afghanistan

As illustrated in the table above, in July 2009 the public agenda in the UK shifted momentarily from the scandal over MPs’ use of public money for personal expenditure, to the violent protests in Iran following the presidential elections. Much competition takes place over what news makes the media agenda. Unfortunately, the media only has so much space to publicise its ‘news’. Even the great expanse of the Internet does not differ in this regard. Whilst there is infinite space on the Internet for material, consumers will only spend so much time browsing its content. For this reason, the media remain restricted over the amount of material they are able to release (McCombs, 2006, p. 38).

The amount of space devoted to new stories is best understood in terms of the process of claim making. Best (2008) argues that media coverage brings primary (original) claims to the forefront of individuals’ and policy makers’ attention. This is particularly the case with news in relation to social problems such as crime and other security issues. However, due to time constraints the media do not have enough time fully to explore claims that are presented to them. They must therefore amend the content of claims to make them suitable for public viewing. In this instance, Best describes these claims as ‘secondary claims’ which are shorter, more dramatic and less ideological than original ‘primary’ claims (Best, 2008, p. 130). This is linked to the notion of claim makers

competing for media attention; wanting a stake in the choice of the agenda being set by the media (Best, 2008, p. 130). In this case claim makers must make their 'claims' more appealing to the media in order to compete for attention on the media agenda. However, despite the expansion and constant exposure to the media, they still have a limited 'carrying capacity' for presenting claims (Best, 2008, p. 131).

Claim makers attempt to bring social problems to the attention of the public. Such claims are frequently dramatised through emphasising the threat that a particular social problem represents to society. Through raising such concerns the activities of claim makers often contribute to enhancing anxiety on specific issues.

The New Media

The Internet is at the forefront of the changing media that we are presented with today. Members of the public can now participate in the activity of claim making. Via the process of blogging, blogs allow individuals to contribute quickly to the news process at very little cost. As a result, individuals are able to present claims to their audience. For example, following the Germany school shootings in March 2009, a blogger posted on his blog *Keep Schools Safe* that gun violence in schools was not restricted to the USA (Thomas, 2009). The blogger placed emphasis on the need for a global awareness of gun crime and for enhanced security measures to be put in place in schools to prevent further shootings. In this example, the blogger is able to make a claim to his/her audience. Although this claim is not channelled directly through the news media, the blogger is able indirectly to voice claims surrounding the incident. In this sense, there exists a new species of claim makers, who can indirectly influence the media in the claims-making process. We refer to them as new media claim makers (NMCs).

As a result of access to the media via the Internet and advances in technology, indirect claim makers such as those who use blogs can change the shape of the news and the formation of public opinion. Naila Hamdy (2009) points to the use of Citizen Journalism as a reporting mechanism in countries that have tight media restrictions and control; Citizen Journalism via blogging allows residents of those countries to disseminate their reports and opinions faster than their governments can restrict them. Importantly, Hamdy cites Isherwood (2008), who argues that Arab Citizen Journalism has great importance in terms of influencing elite opinion and the news media.

"Arab blogs influence the elite, opinion leaders and opinion makers. Blogs also have a powerful impact, not in their ability to directly influence the public but in their ability to influence the media, which in turn influences larger publics." (Hamdy, 2009: 102)

This argument is supported by Tanni Haas, who suggests that one of the greatest functions of 'blogging' is its ability to steer mainstream news coverage and influence elite politics, allowing for independent citizen-based coverage of events (Haas, 2005). Hamdy points to the example of Arab blogging following a sexual harassment incident in Cairo in 2006.

"For several days, the state media did not report the story. However, the Associated Press and satellite television channels picked up on the blogs and testimonies from witnesses. A snowball effect took place; it became a topic discussed in the media, universities and other gatherings. Ultimately, the story that was broken by a few bloggers was subsequently forced onto the national agenda (El-Tahawy, 2006)" (Hamdy, 2009: 102)

In the USA political blogging is plentiful. Charlie Beckett (2008, July 5), director of POLIS Journalism and Society, directs attention to the success of liberal bloggers. In particular, Beckett draws on the success and impact of blogging on the 2006 mid-term elections for the Democratic party:

“In the US the liberal blogosphere prides itself on the part it plays in elections. It has a major role in fundraising, critiquing politicians and examining policy issues in great detail. It was the liberal blogosphere that swung the 2006 mid-term elections to the Democrats. They have certainly been a significant factor in Barack Obama's emergence from obscurity.” (Beckett, 2008, July 5)

The official use of blogging strategies in the US has proved to have a significant influence on politics. The successful use of campaigning strategies throughout Barack Obama's political campaign proved fruitful in terms of his election as US President in 2008. As a result, blogging can be seen not only to influence media, but can also play a significant role in the political process, providing a powerful means of political communication/fundraising and advertising.

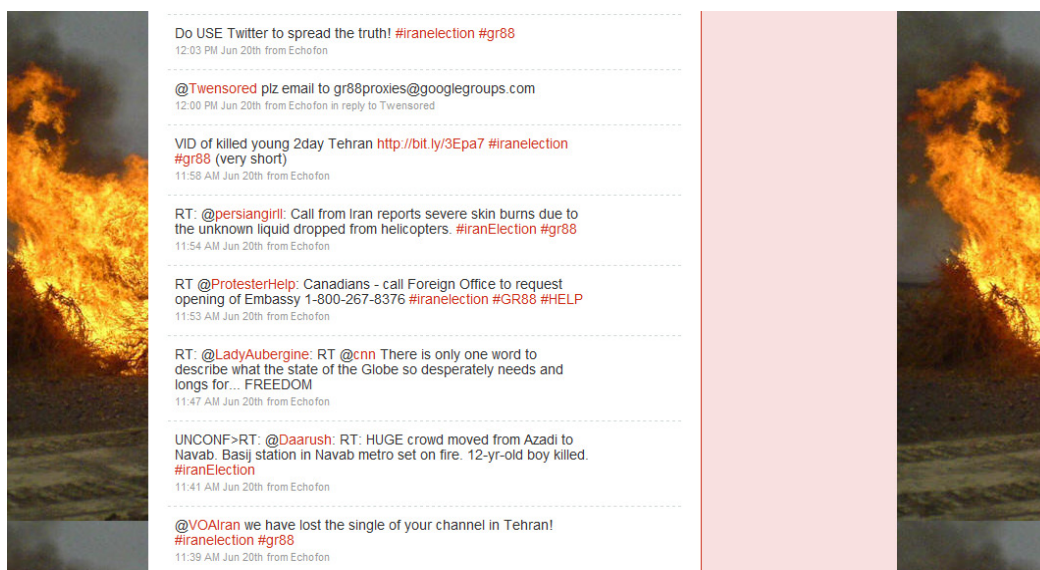
In this sense, there is evidence that Citizen Journalism is able to mobilise individuals. For example, during the Mumbai Terror attacks in November 2008, reporting of the incident was significantly influenced by the mobilisation of Citizen Journalists. On 27th November 2008, Islamist militants attacked the Taj Mahal hotel in Mumbai. Throughout the siege, individuals both directly and indirectly caught up in the attacks utilised the social networking site *Twitter* to communicate to the outside world. Over the course of the 24 hours that the siege took place, other citizen-based commentary of the events was broadcast across the Internet: videos were uploaded onto YouTube, news was released on Wikipedia, news providers such as *The Guardian* re-broadcasted those tweets that were being posted by individuals inside the hotel. Citizen based content of the attacks established mainstream knowledge of events. For example, the following tweet was repeated by *The Guardian*:



(Primaveron, 2008)

Further examples of the content released by Citizen Journalists include the publication of photographs onto social media website *Flickr*. *Flickr* is a social media website used by individuals to host photography. In this case, as reported by Charles Arthur, writing for *The Guardian*, photographer Vinukumar Ranganathan submitted over 120 photographs of the incidents in the aftermath of the attacks in the district of Colaba (Arthur, 2008). Individuals are able to influence directly the material surrounding an event.

Public communication of events is not solely restricted to the Mumbai bombings. In June 2009, following protests in Iran, it became clear that members of the public were organising themselves and mobilising further protests via blogs and tweets to *Twitter*. The use of *Twitter* to organise protests was so widespread that *Twitter* chose to delay maintenance work to the website, and voiced its decision (Anderson, 2009). Examples of tweets include:



(Iran 09, 2009)

The Internet has made mass public communication/discussion of an event possible. Members of the public are now able to utilise a range of sources to participate in the public dialogue surrounding events. Examples of these news sources include: blogs, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Flickr*, *Myspace*, *YouTube* and *Wikipedia*.²

Whilst there are various different media communications now available, there is no apparent agreement as to which is the most powerful (McCombs, 2006, p. 48). The influence of the type of media used varies from individual to individual. Media influence is seen to be dependent on an individual's exposure to the media. An important aspect of this is linked to how the media frame an issue in their efforts to set the agenda. For example, Haider-Markel et al (2006) argue that the way in which terrorism is framed by the media influences public opinion of the threat of terrorism. Crucial to the framing process is the use of language in the framing of an event. The type of language employed in reporting can determine the way in which 'terrorism' is received by members of the public. For example, if an item of news utilises negative and threatening language, terrorism will be received as a threat to be feared. Alternatively, if the threat of terrorism is reported via neutral language, the threat of terrorism would be seen as being rationally explained; allowing individuals to determine for themselves the extent of the threat.

Haider-Markel et al conducted a study shortly after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, to understand how individuals respond to various frames of the threat of terrorism in the US. The study was conducted in Kansas between 6th November 2001 and 8th February 2002. Participants were placed into a situation in which they were exposed to one of four frames consisting of potential future terrorist attacks. The wording of the frame was exactly the same with the exception of the type of threat that terrorists could use:

*"Frame 1 'To insure our safety, government officials have been reporting on the various possibilities for future terrorist attacks. Terrorism experts suggest that the terrorists will most likely attempt **an attack on America using hijacked airplanes**. What do you think the terrorists are most likely to do next?'...Frame 2 ... **an attack on America by creating a smallpox epidemic**... Frame 3 ... **an attack on America by targeting commercial nuclear***

² Note: This is **NOT** an exhaustive list of the range of sources available to members of the public in communication/discussing an event.

reactors...Frame 4 ... an attack on America using truck bombs at shopping malls.” (Haider-Markel, Joslyn, & Al-Baghal, 2006, p. 548)

Results indicated that for those individuals exposed to an issue frame, it would significantly increase the probability that a respondent would predict an attack consistent of the frame (Haider-Markel, Joslyn, & Al-Baghal, 2006, p. 550). This study is a useful example in understanding the direct nature of the relationship between the media agenda and its impact upon public opinion of a security threat.

McCombs uses a useful metaphor of ‘peeling an onion’ to establish ‘who’ sets the media agenda. In this case, each layer of the onion corresponds to the array of influences upon the media agenda.

“The concentric layers of the onion represent the numerous influences at play in the shaping of the media agenda, which is the core of the onion. This metaphor also illustrates the sequential nature of this process in which the influence of an outer layer is, in turn, affected by layers more proximate to the core of the onion.” (McCombs, 2006, p. 98)

The layers of the ‘onion’ include major sources that provide information for news stories. Other sources include public officials, public relations professionals and other news organisations (McCombs, 2006, p. 117). For example, following the car crash during Holland’s Queen’s Day Parade in April 2009, a number of sources can be identified as influencing the structure of a news article. The quote below, taken from the *Times Online* (2009), illustrates the use of two sources: a major source of news (*a witness*) and information from a public official (*the mayor*).

“Peter von de Vorst, a witness, told RTL television that the incident was like watching a Hollywood film. ‘It was a really nice day. Then you hear a bang. Everyone looks up and you see people indeed flying through the air,’ he said. ‘This must be a joke or a strange prank. Then suddenly panic, and you realize that something really terrible has happened.’...Fred de Graaf, the Apeldoorn Mayor, said all festivities were being cancelled. ‘The scare and the images that the family has seen are reason to break off the official program,’ he said.” (Times Online, 2009)

Berkowitz (1996) argues that those who supply information to the news have a greater influence over setting the media agenda.

“Between Policy Makers and Journalists there exists News Sources; News Sources supply news items and story information to journalists...news sources exert a stronger influence over the news agenda than do journalists...Further, policymakers have been found to be even more influential than the overall group of news sources” (Berkowitz, 1996, p. 81)

Aware of media effects on public opinion, Berkowitz argues that the media serve as a useful tool in politicians’ ability to influence opinion. The media serve as a ‘channel’ to communicate policy makers’ messages to the general public. This transmission is conducted in a number of ways. Sometimes this communication is intentional, allowing politicians to place certain items on the news agenda, whilst at other times, as seen with the Queen’s Day example above, they act as useful sources of information that media professionals can depend upon. By utilising different means of being part of the news making process, politicians maintain their exertion of power and control over the news. For Berkowitz, this wields a ‘greater social power’ (Berkowitz, 1996, p. 88)

McCombs identifies *Public Opinion* as the prominent consequence of agenda-setting by the media. For McCombs this is a psychological process. Members of the public can be seen as being selective in their viewing capabilities. They are not capable of consuming and remembering every piece of news that is presented to them. As a result, when asked to express their opinion over a matter they utilise their judgement abilities. For McCombs this means that rather than trying to remember all the

different pieces of news they have consumed, individuals place emphasis on the big items of news. Those larger items of news, which have had a greater amount of salience, remain with the individual. The media agenda influences the criteria by which opinion is rendered (McCombs, 2006, p. 122).

Furthermore the media's audience has become segmented. As a result of the expansion of technology, audiences are no longer regarded as one single audience but as a wide range of different audiences. We refer to these as 'Segmented Audiences'. Best (2008) argues that theorists used to be worried about the damage caused by the 'mass media'. A mass media implies that audiences were subjected to common experiences of media, and were therefore presented with the same message. This has now significantly changed. There is no longer a 'mass media', but a vast amount of individual media, competing for public attention. Audiences have segmented, and different media now exist to attract different audiences. For example, in September 2009 a new 'Islamic' centred search engine *ImHalal* was launched on the Internet. *ImHalal* specialises in allowing its audiences to 'safely' search for information. Built into the search engine is a system which flags any information that may be considered 'Haraam' (*forbidden*). An example of content that is considered 'Haraam' may be content of a pornographic nature. This search engine serves to insert its opinion of 'right' and 'wrong' onto audiences; what information is appropriate to view and what is not. It also implies that its users are of a particular type of audience. In contrast, users that utilise search engines such as *Google* are able to access any information without opinion of content being broadcasted. Individuals' choice of search engine leads to an ever-expanding segmented audience. Audience segmentation is a key consequence of the vast range of material online.

As a result of audience segmentation, it is easier for claim makers to gain media attention, as in effect they have a wider stage from which to gain attention. However, they must tailor their claim towards a particular type of audience in order for it to be consumed (Best, 2008, p. 141).

A downside of audience segmentation is that it has the potential for encouraging miscommunication. Audience segmentation implies that audiences are seeking information from a range of media outlets. As a result, knowledge of reliable information will greatly vary. As sources of media compete to gain audience attention, they will invariably have to rely on a range of information on which their audiences are also relying. To illustrate, consider the reporting of the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008. During the attacks, the social media site *Twitter* gained enormous popularity. Individuals involved both directly and indirectly in the attacks were using *Twitter* to report news of the attacks. In response, the BBC utilised the tweets to complement their broadcasting of events. It was later revealed that the BBC would retrospectively have to consider its actions: was it appropriate to re-publish tweets from *Twitter*? Apprehension surrounding the reporting of the Mumbai attacks was largely linked to miscommunication, in this case the validity and reliability of the claims made by citizens. This forced the BBC into discussions concerning use of citizen-generated content (Herrmann, 2008).

The problem of miscommunication was also present following the discussion of *swine flu* on *Twitter*. Following the outbreak, individuals utilised *Twitter* to discuss the nature of the swine flu epidemic. Tweets included alerts about symptoms, locations of the outbreak and so forth. As a result, *Foreign Policy Magazine* (2009) published a blog post in which they highlighted the concern that *Twitter* had the power to misinform. An enormous host of voices surrounding a given topic aids in the misunderstanding and the miscommunication of a problem. As a result of what can be described as an overload of information/discussion surrounding an event, there is also a problem of miscommunication feeding insecurity. With so many 'versions' of events, it becomes increasingly difficult to choose 'right' from 'wrong'.

Audience segmentation is key to understanding the nature of public opinion of security today. Audience segmentation implies that there are different types of media available for different

segments of the population. As individuals share and debate these different media perspectives, there are likely to be shifts within public opinion. In this respect, audience segmentation leads to a fragmented public opinion. From this perspective, it is essential to understand the ways in which different types of media communicate with members of the public; this will contribute to the various opinions that are created.

The media's ability to set the public agenda, which influences public opinion, relates to Bernard Cohen's assertion that...

"...The news media may not be successful in telling people what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling their audiences what to think about." (McCombs, 2006, pp. 2-3).

As echoed by Kenamer (1994), one of the greatest functions of the media is to establish topics of concern and conversation for the public via its agenda-setting function. For Kenamer it is important to take note that the media are involved in the framing of news rather than simply reporting news. To illustrate we can consider the perceived threat of immigration. Vala et al (2006) refer to the impact of the mass media upon framing public perception of immigration. Vala et al argue that one of the ways in which the media present immigration as a problem is by framing immigration as an economic threat. In this sense, immigrants pose a threat to the economy in terms of immigrants being a burden on the state. Immigrants may also be presented by the media as contributing to unemployment. Following 9/11, Muslim immigrants were cast by the media as a 'cultural threat' to society. Vala et al utilise a number of examples of incidents in which the perpetrators (and therefore the threat) were cast as immigrants.

"After the 11 September 2001, 11 March 2004 and 6 July 2005, immigrants, particularly those of the Islamic religion, have been openly represented as a threat, not only at a security level, but also to the values and the identity of 'western civilization'. For example, the Time magazine of 28 February 2005 dedicated an extensive dossier to the identity crisis of Europe, and presented on its cover a reproduction of Mona Lisa wearing a veil, with Islamic connotations." (Vala, Pereira, & Ramos, 2006, p. 122)

The example cited by Vala et al in the quote above signifies a clear message in terms of telling people what to 'Think About'. The following image can be seen from the European edition of *Time Magazine*, 28th February 2005.



(Time Magazine, 2005)

With the use of this image, *Time Magazine* suggests that Europe is suffering from an identity crisis in which Islam is implicated as threatening European identity. The spread of Islam has met an iconic symbol of European culture: Mona Lisa.

From the perspective of framing, the media have become known as ‘Gatekeepers’. In this way, the media are able to establish a set of decisions as to what ‘is’ news and how it should be presented (Kenamer, 1994, p. 8). As argued by Cohen, this weighs in upon the consciousness of individuals, telling them what to think about. This enables the media greatly to influence public opinion of security-related matters.

Whilst it is evident that the media are central to understanding public opinion of security, it is worth mentioning that this project is aware of the fact that there are other societal influences upon public opinion. Other areas of research for the CPSI project entailed developing a wider understanding of the factors influencing public opinion. In particular, Morphological Analysis was used to identify the central determinants on public opinion. Morphological Analysis involved the coming together of a group of specialists that would enable a problem space to be identified. In this case, the key question was ‘What influences public opinion of security? This modelling framework served as an approximation and hypothesis of the essential parameters to be investigated. This was accomplished via a non-quantified modelling method – Morphological Analysis.³

Following Morphological Analysis of public opinion the following matrix was developed.

Morphological Analysis: WP 2.3 – Public Opinion

Social-economic & demographic variables	Cultural group identity	Factors which influence perceived state of society	Media channel - Usage	Media source - Content	Principal security issue
Age	Cosmopolitan	Level of economic stability	Broadsheets	Government/official information	"Terrorism"
Gender	National mainstream	Level of political stability	Tabloids	Personal/ community sources	"Crime" and anti-social behaviour...
Ethnicity	Regional identity (within country)	Trust in government	On-line news media	Academic / technical specialists	Economic security/ employment
Type of household	Local identity	Trust in civil society	Social on-line media	Pressure groups	Immigration/ integration (Cultural cohesion)
Urban-rural spectrum of living	Political identity	Level of community cohesion	TV	Popular culture	Natural disasters
Health status	Religious faith identity	Physical environment	Radio		Man-related (technical) disasters
Immigrant status	Life-style identity	Past experience and tradition	Local press		Health
Economic status	Ethnicity	Personal experience of security breach	Popular culture: magazines - cinema - games etc.		Self-fulfilment/ development
Level of education		Level of moral cohesion			External pol-mil threats
		Media use: frequency and breadth			Children (e.g. their future)

³ For further information see CPSI WP 5.2 – Qualitative Analysis

The figure above presents the matrix produced by the Morphological Analysis, whereby six dimensions were identified as being central to influencing public opinion:

1. Socio-economic and demographic variables
2. Cultural group identity
3. Factors which influence perceived state of society
4. Media channel - Usage
5. Media source – Content
6. Principal security issue

The first dimension was identified as *Socio-economic and demographic variables*. This dimension consists of an exhaustive list of variables which come to define an individual. Examples include: age, gender and level of education. To demonstrate: a positive correlation can be found between an individual's gender and their opinion of immigration. Semyonov et al (2008) found that negative attitudes towards foreigners are likely to be more pronounced among men than women. Similarly, Erlinghagen (2008) points to a number of theoretical considerations which may influence perceived job insecurity; one of these factors is 'age'. Insecurity amongst older people is said to be higher than younger people. In his analysis of 17 European countries, Erlinghagen found that workers over 40 years of age were more affected by job insecurity than younger workers. Furthermore, when considering the security issue of terrorism, Goodwin et al (2005) conducted a British study which revealed perceptions of terrorism by gender. Women were more likely to perceive themselves to be at personal risk of terrorism than men (Goodwin et al, 2005: 395).

The second dimension influencing public opinion was labelled as 'cultural group identity'. Under this heading, variables identified included those aspects related to an identity. Examples include if an individual considers him/herself as cosmopolitan, an individual's political identity or religious identity. To illustrate: when considering individuals' opinion of crime, Van Dijk et al (2007) found those that live in main cities (cosmopolitan identity) are likely to be more fearful of crime than those living in the suburbs.

The third dimension linked to influencing public opinion consisted of a number of factors seen to influence an individual's perceived state of society. These included aspects such as an individual's level of economic stability, trust in government, past experience and media use. For example, when considering an individual's opinion of crime, results from the British Crime Survey (Home Office, 2008) suggest that having a direct previous experience of crime influences an individual's fear of crime. A further example of this dimension can be seen when considering the perceived threat of immigration as a consequence of proximity to immigrants within a community. In 2007 Kehrberg points to the work of Quillian (1995), in which he argues that as the size of the immigrant population increases, so does the perceived threat stemming from the growing immigrant population. As a consequence, the visibility and exposure of local persons to an immigrant population increases, which in turn influences the perceived threat to the 'native culture and society' (Kehrberg, 2007: 267) and may decrease political tolerance. A relatively small immigrant population can be perceived as a smaller threat than a larger immigrant population.

Under this dimension, it is also hypothesised that the frequency and breadth of media usage greatly influences an individual's opinion. To illustrate: Vala et al (2006) refer to the impact of the mass media upon public perception of immigration. For many, messages in the media regarding immigration consist of immigrants presenting a threat to the economy, citizens and unemployment. Further to this, immigration is constructed as a 'cultural threat'. For Vala et al (2006) there appears

to be a lack of information regarding immigrants within the media. Vala et al (2006) point to the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 in the USA, 11 March 2004 in Madrid, and 7th July 2005 in London, which caused immigrants to be considered as representing a 'cultural threat', as depicted by the mass media.

The fourth dimension relevant for this report includes the media channel to which individuals are exposed. Examples include broadsheet newspapers, online news media, social online media, television, radio and so forth. This demonstrates awareness of the wide variety of media seen to influence public opinion of security. To illustrate: consider the effect of popular culture on public opinion of the threat of climate change. Lowe et al (2006) conducted a questionnaire, to which they received 300 responses, following the screening of the film 'The Day After Tomorrow' at a cinema in Norwich in May (2004). Respondents were slightly more concerned about climate change following viewing the film (Lowe et al, 2006: 443). Their conclusions suggested that although the main environmental issue of the film was climate change, viewing the film also triggered concerns over other environmental issues such as radioactive waste and human impact on the planet. Lowe et al (2007) concluded that the film appeared to increase awareness and anxiety over climate change – thus we see how popular culture can influence public opinion and understanding of a threat.

The fifth dimension, relating to the agenda-setting process of determining what is newsworthy, stems from the media's source. Examples include governments/official information, pressure groups, popular culture, personal/community sources and so forth. Under this dimension, it is possible to take note of a range of claim makers who feed information to news providers. From this dimension it is possible to see who has a stake in influencing public opinion of security-related matters.

The final dimension, relating public opinion back to security, includes a list of principal security issues. These issues include security threats such as terrorism, crime, economic security, natural disasters, man-related (technical) disasters, and so forth.

As a whole, this matrix assists in understanding the wider factors in society which can be seen to influence public opinion of security-related issues. Central to this report are dimensions three, four and five – all relating to the media. It is necessary to consider all variables in playing a role in constructing public opinion of security-related events. The remainder of this report will focus on the use of the Internet and the rise of new sources of media. The report will consider how these changes have transformed the ability and functioning of the media to influence public opinion of security-related issues.

The Internet and Public Opinion

The Internet to which we have grown accustomed today was fully established by 1995. The Internet is a global forum for communication. Castells (2002) argues:

"The Internet is a communication medium that allows, for the first time, the communication of many to many, in chosen time, on a global scale...we have now entered a new world of communication: the Internet Galaxy" (Castells, 2002, p. 3)

The Internet allows users to access, and, more recently, to publish news across the world. An example of this global form of communication is the Arabic news provider Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera began broadcasting in 1996, becoming the first English language Arabic news service. Al Jazeera has made headlines in terms of its ability to capture and report the world's events, specifically its ability to capture diverse news. At times of distress Arabs have in the past sought out international news services such as the BBC World Service. However with Al Jazeera being an independent network it has the freedom to report without censorship. Al Jazeera is renowned for its ability to 'scoop'

controversial issues. For example Al Jazeera broadcasted breaking news on 7th October 2001, with a video message by Osama Bin Laden claiming responsibility for the 9/11 terror attacks (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002).

Castells (2002) argues that the birth of the Internet brought with it a global increase in communication. For Castells, an increase in communication over the Internet implies a revolution in terms of 'social interaction'. By this, Castells argues that the Internet has increased the capacity for individuals to communicate with each other. Castells points to a US study by Katz, Rice and Aspden (2001). Katz et al analysed the relationship between individuals' use of the Internet and their civic engagement and social interaction. They used results from four national telephone surveys in the US (1995, 1996, 1997 and 2000), and found that Internet users had a greater level of social interaction than non-Internet users:

"Internet users were more likely than non-users to meet with friends, and to have a social life away from home, although their networks of social interaction were more spatially dispersed than those of non-users." (Castells, 2002, p. 121)

Castells argues that as a result of the growth of communication on the Internet a fundamental change has occurred within the media. In effect the media has been re-routed onto the Internet (Castells, 2002, p. 191). News media such as newspapers, magazines and radio re-established themselves on the Internet. By doing so, the media were able to increase their audience size. They were also able to expand the capacity and speed of which they were able to publish information. As a result of this change in the publishing capabilities of the media, the rate at which the media is able to set the agenda has also changed. The Internet has allowed a greater salience of news to be broadcasted than ever before. If necessary, audiences are able to access vast amounts of material online at no cost. Additionally, they are able to access material from a wide range of media. Individuals are no longer restricted to local/national news; instead a global forum of news is accessible to audiences across the world.

As a result of the re-routing of the media onto the Internet a change has occurred between the media and its audience. Members of the public are no longer restricted to simply consuming news. Instead, they now have the opportunity to assist with the construction of news. Advances in technology have made self-publication online possible. Individuals are able to construct their own version of news events and publish them single-handedly. This is largely a result of the development of weblogs. A weblog is a form of online journal that allows individuals to construct their own material in the form of text, links, imagery and video. Following the collation of material, a weblog post is compiled. Once completed, the user can then publish the post onto his or her blog. At the preference of the weblog's author, a blog can be made public; available to all Internet users. In this sense, bloggers (the term used to describe the author of a weblog) are able to publish their own content. From the perspective of public opinion, with bloggers publishing their own posts, the salience of news items can be seen to have expanded. Self-publication of news is more commonly referred to as Citizen Journalism. As a result, individuals are now able to participate in the construction of public opinion.

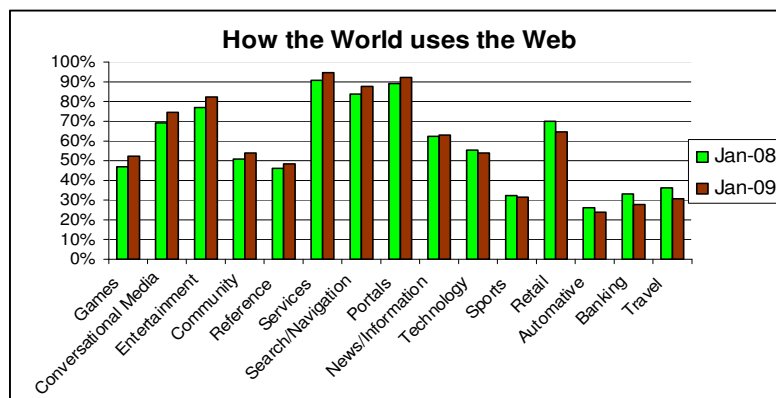
Further analysis will take place understanding the relationship between Citizen Journalism and public opinion later in the report. For now, the following section will present a summary of social surveys which identify the public's use of the Internet. Focus will be placed upon the amount of time spent online and what individuals use the Internet for. In particular, it will become evident that users regularly use the Internet across Europe. Part of this regular usage includes browsing of media pages in addition to 'conversational media' such as blogs and *Twitter*. By understanding how individuals use the Internet, we will be able to illustrate the importance of the Internet in its role in influencing public opinion.

Public Interaction with the Internet

The following section consists of a review of existing surveys that seek to understand the interaction between the public and their use of the Internet in society. Three surveys have been identified as being relevant to a sociological approach of understanding this interaction; comSCORE – ‘Data Passport’ (2009), a survey by TNS Global ‘Digital World, Digital Life’ (2008) and a Flash Eurobarometer 241 (2008) ‘Information Society as seen by EU Citizens’.

‘Data Passport’ by comSCORE in December 2008 revealed that Europe makes up the second largest area of the world’s Internet population (28%). Leading the world’s Internet population is the Asia Pacific Region (41%). This is followed by Europe (28%), North America (17%), Latin America (7%) and the Middle East/Africa (5%). Significant to exploring public opinion in relation to the influence of ‘New Media’, comSCORE assessed how the world uses the Internet, including use of ‘Conversational Media’ (74.5%) and ‘News/Information’ (63.0%). For both of these categories there is an increase between January 2008 and January 2009; ‘Conversational Media’ use was up by a noticeable 7.1% and use of the Internet for News/Information saw a relatively small increase of only 1.4%. (See graph 1 below for further information).

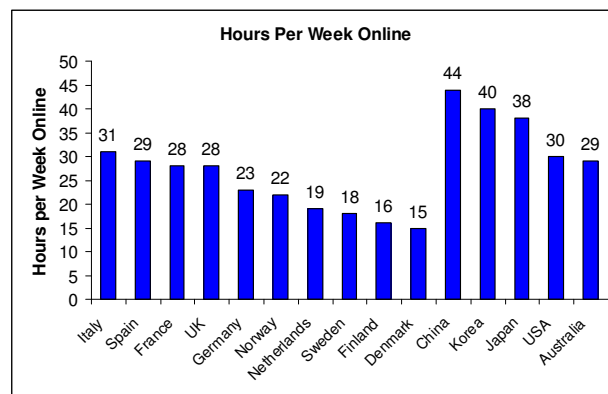
Graph 1:



‘Digital World, Digital Life’, a report from a survey conducted by TNS Global in 2008, analyses use of leisure time on the Internet worldwide. By focusing on European results (taken from 10 countries), it is possible to take note of varying amounts of time and the emphasis individuals placed on spending time on the Internet. Those countries spending the most time on the Internet each week include: Italy (31 hours), Spain (29 hours), France/UK (28 hours respectively) and Germany (23 hours per week). Those spending the least amount of time on the Internet each week include Finland (16 hours) and Denmark (15 hours).

As expected, those spending a greater amount of time on the Internet place a superior level of importance on the Internet: Germany (60% - Very Important), Italy (55% - Very Important), UK (56% - Very Important). In comparison, other countries dedicate a greater amount of their leisure time to surfing the Internet (see graph 2 below). For example, in China individuals spent a total of 44 hours per week online; in Korea, time spent online was recorded at 40 hours per week.

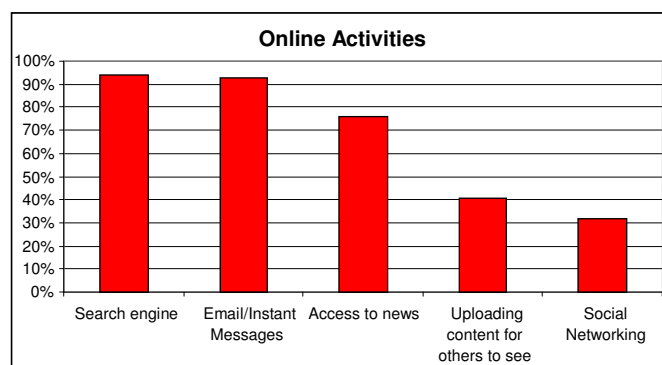
Graph 2:



Further insight into the use of the Internet can be seen when regarding the Flash Eurobarometer (EB 241, 2008) 'Information Society as seen by EU Citizens'. Results from EB 241 suggests that the majority of the sample 'watch TV' (86%) every day/ or almost every day and 78% of the sample 'keep yourself involved – for example via newspapers, Internet etc'. Unfortunately, the survey does not distinguish between newspapers and the Internet and subsequently different uses of the Internet. This would have allowed for a greater understanding as to the role of new media in keeping individuals informed. In turn, this would have enabled an understanding of how the sources of new media impacts upon public opinion.

The survey also included a question concerning 'Online Activities'. This allowed for an insight into 'what' individuals spent their time viewing online. (Note: the graph below illustrates selected online activities – for full list see EB 241, 2008: 19). As seen in graph 3 (below), the majority of online activity consists of 'Using a search engine to look for information' (94%). This is followed by communication via email and/or instant messaging (93%). Surprisingly, with the enormous expansion of social networking sites such as *Facebook*, the least amount of time was spent 'Creating a profile or sending a message in a social networking website' (32%). A possible explanation for this may be linked to a lack of Internet literacy or understanding of what constitutes 'Social Networking Website'.

Graph 3:



Unfortunately the survey does not distinguish between the types of 'websites' that information is uploaded to. For example the survey could have specified whether users access a blog, personal website or social networking site. Doing so would have allowed for a greater understanding as to the role of citizens in publishing their material. The Eurobarometer survey has the potential to gain insightful information from a vast array of individuals. It is evident that more effort needs to be taken in designing surveys. This would allow for questions to unearth further information regarding

citizen behaviour online. For example the survey could have employed Internet jargon such as 'blog' or cited examples of 'Social Networking Websites'. The current language utilised falls short of technological advances on the Internet such as 'blogging'. In addition, the survey assumed a high level of Internet language literacy which may result in the survey being unable to capture crucial information.

The European Interactive Advertising Agency (EIAA) has for the past six years conducted research into Europeans' media consumption. Latest results from 9095 interviews conducted across Europe in 2008 are suggestive of a number of trends, particularly in the growth of Internet users. EIAA argues that Europe has a population of 297 million individuals, of which 178 million (60%) are actively using the Internet. Fifty-five per cent of this 178 million are using the Internet on a daily basis. EIAA argues that we are witnessing a great expansion in Europeans' use of the Internet. Not only are individuals using the Internet for their leisure pursuits such as email and booking holidays, but in addition, individuals are utilising the Internet to '*actively enhance and manage their daily lifestyles*' (EIAA, 2008).

EIAA offers an insight into Europeans' media consumption. Results from the interviews conducted revealed that 75% of Europeans still listen to the radio, and 72% read daily newspapers; however, the average amount of time spent reading the newspaper is the lowest to date (4.9 hours per week). Similar results were found with regards to consumption of television: 93% continue to watch the television. However, the amount of time spent watching television each week is also at an all-time low of 14.2 hours per week. Instead, results suggest that there is an increase in consumption of television online. Whilst individuals are still using traditional media such as television and newspapers, the amount of consumption is reducing, with the Internet becoming increasingly important in terms of media consumption.

Additional results from the EIAA study suggest that in terms of demographic details of Internet users, women outweigh men online – 89.3 million women compared to 88.7 million men. The most prominent age group online are those labelled as the 'Golden Youth', aged between 25 to 34 years of age. Those in this age group are spending an increasing amount of time online: from 13 hours per week in 2007, to 13.9 hours per week in 2008. Internet activities include: social networking (49% of individuals), searching (84%), sharing thoughts on forums (29%) and creating personal profiles (26% - up from 24% from 2007). 61% access the news and 16% are using their mobile phones in addition to their home computers to access the Internet. The 'Golden Youth' are the most significant age group in terms of in their ability to circulate public opinion. This is largely a result of their social activities online. Relevant to this report, from these results it is possible to see that Europeans are consuming new forms of social media online. This implies that social media can play a significant role in shaping public opinion. However, as with the studies analysed above, this study provides limited knowledge of the extent of use of social networking sites.

From the above surveys it is possible to understand the role of the Internet in individuals' lives. However, following a systematic review of existing surveys, there appears to be a significant gap regarding an in-depth understanding of Internet users' behaviour online; particularly with regards to the use of different types of media. Surveys need to revamp their current question structure by utilising questions that further tap into audience behaviour. Doing so would enable further understanding as to the extent of the influence that the new media plays in shaping public opinion.

The Expansion of Citizen Journalism

There are two different types of journalism within the realm of Public Journalism: *Citizen Journalism* and *Participatory Journalism*. This distinction has been made clear by Joyce Nip (2006). For Nip, Citizen Journalism refers to those acts in which individuals are involved entirely in the practice of

journalism; they are responsible for *'gathering content, visioning, producing and publishing the news product'* (Nip, 2006, p. 225). Alternatively, the term Participatory Journalism, coined by mainstream journalists, involves the practice of involving members of the public in mainstream acts of journalism. In this case individuals are given the opportunity to express their views. Nip points out that more often than not the two terms are used inconsistently.

To illustrate, Nip uses the example of acts of public journalism following the South Asian tsunami in 2004. Photographs and videos taken of the tsunami by tourists and local people would amount to Citizen Journalism if they were published by the people themselves. However, they would be considered acts of participatory journalism if the material was handed to mainstream news organisations for publication (Nip, 2006: 225). The London bombings of 7th July 2005 can be utilised as an example for distinguishing between these two different types of public journalism during a terrorist attack. News websites such as the BBC opened up arenas for participatory journalism to members of the public. This enabled individuals to submit video footage of the attacks, photographs, and firsthand accounts. Alternatively, individuals who collated their own material and published content via a blog would be considered Citizen Journalists. This distinction is critical to the emphasis placed upon the development of Citizen Journalism in relation to its influence on public opinion for this report.

Dan Gillmor (2006) makes a crucial point that 'Personal Journalism', as we are witnessing with 'Citizen Journalism', is not new, but can be traced back to 1800s. Individuals have for a long time been able to contribute to the news making process. Largely, as identified by Nip (2006), this was in the form of participatory journalism. Individuals would collaborate with professional journalists to give validity to a reporter's version of events. What is 'new' is the availability and ease with which consumers are now able to participate in the reporting of news. By and large this ease of contributing to the news making process is due to developments in technology.

Castells (2007, p. 247) argues that we have entered an era with a 'new' system of communication, which he labels 'Mass Self-Communication'.

"Appropriating the new forms of communication, people have built their own system of mass communication, via SMS, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, wikis, and the like...As of October 2006, Technorati was tracking 57.3 million blogs, up from 26 million in January. On average 75,000 new blogs are created every day. There are about 1.2 million posts daily, or about 50,000 blog updates an hour." (Castells, 2007, p. 247)

From this perspective, technology has expanded the abilities of individuals to communicate. Using the Internet, individuals are able to create their own blogs, enabling them to compile their own interpretation of what they deem to be newsworthy events. Technology is not restricted to compiling content online. In addition, technology such as mobile phones and digital cameras enable individuals to upload their own photographs and video recordings of events online. As argued by Castells, in this way, individuals are able to communicate by themselves.

This development in self-communication has been increasingly referred to as 'Citizen Journalism' and/or 'Instant Reporters' (Allan, 2007, p. 9). Allan identifies this act of self-reporting as:

"Spontaneous actions of ordinary people compelled to adopt the role of a journalist in order to bear witness to what was happening during the London Bombings of July 2005." (Allan, 2007, p. 3)

Allan refers to the 7/7 London attacks as an example to show the work of 'Citizens Journalists' and 'Instant Reporters'. For Allan, these terms relate to those individuals who were directly involved in the London bombings. They were either directly involved in the attacks or in the aftermath of the attacks. Those individuals would self-publish their own commentary of events on blogs. Allan points

to an example of a blog post 'Surviving a Terrorist Attack' by Justin Howard, posted just four hours after the attacks.

"Travelling just past Edgware Road Station the train entered a tunnel. We shook like any usual tube train as it rattled down the tracks. It was then I heard a loud bang... I fell to the ground like most people, scrunched up in a ball in minimize injury. At this point I wondered if the train would ever stop, I thought 'please make it stop', but it kept going. In the end I just wished that it didn't hit something and crush. It didn't. When the train came to a standstill people were screaming, but mainly due to panic as the carriage was rapidly filling with smoke and the smell of burning motors was giving clear clues of fire. As little as 5 seconds later we were unable to see and had all hit the ground for the precious air that remaining. We were all literally choking to death. The carriage however was pretty sealed; no window could open, no door would slide and no hammers seemed to exist to grant exit. If there were instructions on how to act then they were impossible to see in the thick acrid black smoke (Pfff, July 7 2005)." (Allan, 2007, p. 10)

The blog post by Howard can be perceived as an original piece of news relating to the London bombings. Citizen Journalism is directly related to those reports that individuals publish themselves rather than via the media.

In his book 'We The Media' Dan Gillmor (2006) develops analysis of the type of 'Citizen Journalism' surrounding major world events such as 9/11, the 2004 Tsunami in South Asia, the July 7th bombings in London in 2005, and so forth. We see that 'Citizen Journalism' is becoming increasingly prominent in the reporting of adversity. With regards to terrorism, Gillmor argues that 9/11 was essentially a 'catalyst' to show how far personal journalism had come (Gillmor, 2006, p. 18). Gillmor argues that 'Citizen Journalism' within the reporting of terrorism can be traced back to the September 11th 2001 attacks in the United States of America.

"But something else, something profound, was happening: news was being produced by regular people who had something to say and show, and not solely by the 'official' news organisations that had traditionally decided how the first draft of history would look. The first draft of history was being written, in part, the by the former audience. It was possible – it was inevitable – because of the Internet" (Gillmor, 2006, p. xx)

The presence of 'Citizen Journalism' within the reporting and framing of terrorism is noted by the Andrew Hoskins, who outlines how 'Citizen Journalism' was an essential source of reporting for the 7/7 London bombings in 2005.

"Despite the highly individual, random and non-journalistic sources of many of the sounds and images that comprised the news coverage of 7/7, it was nonetheless their selection, framing and repetition by 'Big Media' that dominated the public sphere. ('Citizen Journalism', anyhow, is a label used by Big Media to disguise the fact that they ultimately remain Big Media.) What the introduction of mobile image and sound narratives into the media mix produces is a much more visually intimate and proximate, although nonetheless mass, experience, and ultimately mass record, of crisis, conflict and catastrophe." (Hoskins, 2006, p. 465).

Essentially what we are witnessing is a change in the relationship between the media and its audience. Axel Bruns (2008) of Queensland University of Technology specialises in the growth of blogs. In an article titled 'News Blogs and Citizen Journalism: New Directions for e-Journalism', Bruns argues that we have now left the 'Industrial Age' and entered the 'Information Age'. In the information age, consumers are increasingly involved in the production of news. Bruns describes them as hybrids and labels them 'Producers'. This is supported by J.D. Lasica, who argues that we are

witnessing a 'Quiet Revolution' in journalism whereby readers want to become part of the news making process (Lasica, 2003, p. 74). Unquestionably, there has indeed been a change in the relationship between the media and the public. We are no longer solely assessing traditional media, but in addition we are assessing the impact of members of the public in contributing to the shaping of public opinion.

The audience is no longer restricted to viewing, but now participates in the news making/communicating process. We must therefore take this change into consideration in terms of the way in which we consider the media to influence public opinion of security. Media influence on 'Public Opinion' no longer stems solely from television, radio, newspapers and the Internet. Along with this expansion, there are important new systems of communication that allow members of the public to self-publish their interpretation of the news. From this, it is crucial to take note of the additions to the media, such as blogging, that add to the salience of the news.

The Blogosphere

The blogosphere is a key arena in which Citizen Journalists are able to self-publish their own version of news stories. Bloggers use the blogosphere to compile and create blog posts that are used for publication. Quiggin (2006) defines a blog as:

"...Simply a personal webpage in a journal format, using software that automatically puts new entries ('posts') at the top of the page, and shifts old entries to archives after a specified time, or when the number of posts becomes too large for convenient scrolling." (Quiggin, 2006, p. 482)

A blog then can be seen to function as an online journal with archival capabilities. For Lasica (2003) it allows for individuals to play an active role in the production of news:

"Simply put, it refers to individuals playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, sorting, analysing and disseminating news and information – a task once reserved almost exclusively to the news media." (Lasica, 2003, p. 71)

Due to advances in technology a blog post may contain a number of elements: original content or reproduced content from another site. The reproduced material can be acknowledged by the author or ignored. In addition the post may include tags (links) to other websites and material. These links may be in the format of links to other blog posts, news websites, official sources of information or any other relevant type of website. The creation of a blog post can include photographic images and/or video content. The publication of a blog by an individual via the Internet opens the blog up to a global audience. Upon viewing a blog post, an audience can comment (if the blog creator allows), supply links to other blogs, or simply view the blog post without physically interacting with the post.

The most comprehensive data available concerning the state of the blogs on the Internet is made available by Technorati. Technorati was set up to assist bloggers in 'blogging' online and contributing to global discussion. Technorati also functions as a blog search engine and supplies the 'most comprehensive source of information on the blogosphere' (Technorati Media, 2009). A recent report by Technorati (2008) depicts the current size of the blogosphere: they identified that 133 million blogs had been created since 2002. A total of 7.4 million blogs had been created in the last 120 days; 1.5 million of these blogs had been posted in the last 7 days prior to the survey; 900,000 blogs posts had been posted in the last 24 hours. Undeniably, the size of the blogosphere is rapidly expanding.

In June 2008 Technorati conducted a survey from a random sample of 1.2 million blogs from over 66 countries worldwide. This survey was an English speaking survey **only**. As a result the sample is not representative of the global blogging population. However, whilst caution must be taken, at a period

in time where blogging is greatly under-researched, statistically speaking, this is the most 'accurate' data that is currently available. Technorati identified the following geographic distribution of bloggers:

Table 1:

Country	Percentage
Africa	1%
Australia	3%
South America	7%
North America	48%
Europe	27%
Asia	13%

(Technorati, 2008)

The following table depicts further insight into the European demographics concerning the nature of bloggers.

Table 2:

Male	73%
Female	27%
18-34	48%
35+	52%
Single	31%
Employed full time	53%
Household Income > \$75,000	34%
College Graduate	67%

(Technorati, 2008)

Results from table 2 (above) confirm that males and those over the age of 35 can be seen as comprising the greatest percentage of European bloggers. Those employed full time and college graduates also make up for a greater percentage of bloggers. These results are also supported by findings from McKenna and Pole (2008). They found that with regards to blogger demographics (from a random sample of 500 bloggers), the majority of bloggers were white (116 out of 141), male (106 out of 141), well educated, and between the age of 26 and 41 (58%) (McKenna & Pole, 2008, p. 101).

When asked how much time bloggers spent blogging, results suggest that the majority spend between three to ten hours per week (see table 3 below).

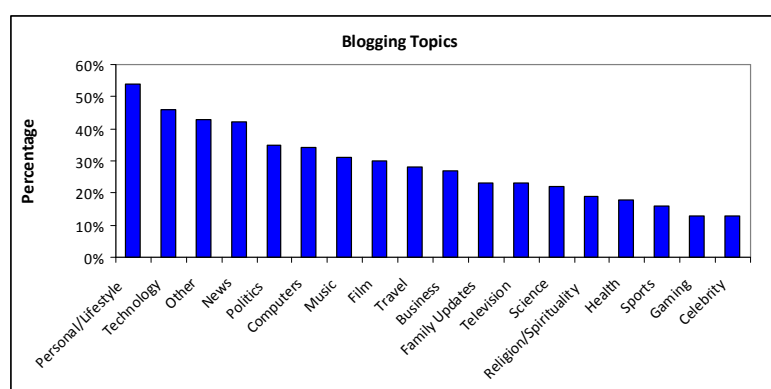
Table 3:

Time Spent blogging per Week	Percentage
< 1 hour	15%
1-3 hours	19%
3-5 hours	21%
5-10 hours	21%
10-20 hours	12%
20+ hours	12%

(Technorati, 2008)

The survey identified a number of topics of which individuals opt to discuss in their blog posts. These topics range from topics linked to bloggers' personal life and lifestyle (54%), to blogging about technology, news, politics, computers, business and so forth. (See graph 4 below for full results).

Graph 4:



(Technorati, 2008)

Further evidence from McKenna and Pole (2008) suggests that there are a number of 'core' activities to engage in while blogging. These activities include: a form of reporting, informing, keeping an eye on mainstream media, engage in political activities and philanthropist activity (McKenna & Pole, 2008, pp. 101-105). Controversially, Reese et al (2007) found that bloggers relied heavily on professional news websites and other news reports by professional journalists for their blog posts. Additionally, Reese et al argue that bloggers promote discussion on a broad range of topics and push their readers to see information that readers may not otherwise view. They conclude that the blogosphere

"...weaves together citizen and professional voices in a way that extends the public sphere beyond the boundaries policed by the traditional news media." (Reese, Rutigliano, Hyun, & Jeong, 2007, p. 257)

When asked 'Why' individuals blog, Technorati gave respondents eight choices. Crucially, in terms of analysing the relationship between Citizen Journalism and public opinion the two most popular reasons given include: 'In Order to Speak My Mind' (79%) and 'To Share My Expertise and Experiences with Others' (73%). See table 4 below for full results.

Table 4:

Reasons for Blogging	Percentage
In order to speak my mind on areas of interest	79%
To share my expertise & experiences with others	73%
To meet and connect with like minded people	62%
To keep friends & family updated on my life	32%
To get published or featured in traditional media	28%
To make money or supplement my income	24%
To enhance my resume	21%
To attract new clients to my business	14%

(Technorati, 2008)

An ethnographic study by Nardi et al (2004) argued that there are five main reasons why individuals blog. First to document one's life, second to provide commentary and opinion, third to express deeply felt emotions, fourth to articulate ideas via writing, and fifth to form and maintain community relations (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz, 2004, p. 43).

As seen from the survey by Technorati and other academic studies, there are various recognisable trends in blogging: from demographic factors to time spent blogging. In addition, the studies presented above reveal the types of topics that bloggers compose posts on and why bloggers choose to blog. Important for this report, a significant topic that bloggers opt to write about is the news.

The Rise of Social Networking & the Power of the 'Tweet'

Social Networking may be seen as today's technological fad; first discussions concerning *MySpace* infiltrated society, quickly followed by other social networking sites such as *Facebook*, *bebo*, *digg* and most recently, *Twitter*. Following the terror attacks in Mumbai in November 2008, global issues such as swine flu and most recently the protests in Iran have received a great deal of 'publicity' by social networking sites.

Twitter (2009), originally a privately-funded organisation, began as a side project in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey. Fully established in May 2007, *Twitter* is now a 'real-time' short messaging service that functions over 'multiple networks and devices'. It is used by individuals, organisations, businesses and political organisations worldwide. A tweet, a form of micro blogging, is comprised of no more than 140 characters and can be uploaded via instant messaging services, the World Wide Web and mobile phone technology (via an SMS text message).

A report by the social media analytical company Sysomos (2009) indicates that as of June 2009, analysis of 11.5 million *Twitter* accounts shows that 85.3% of *Twitter* users post a tweet less than once per day. 93.6% of users have less than 100 followers, whilst 92.4% follow less than 100 people. Analysis suggests that only 5% of *Twitter* users account for 75% of all activity. Statistically speaking, the extent of activity on *Twitter* may be less than hype may suggest, specifically the number of tweets per day by individuals.

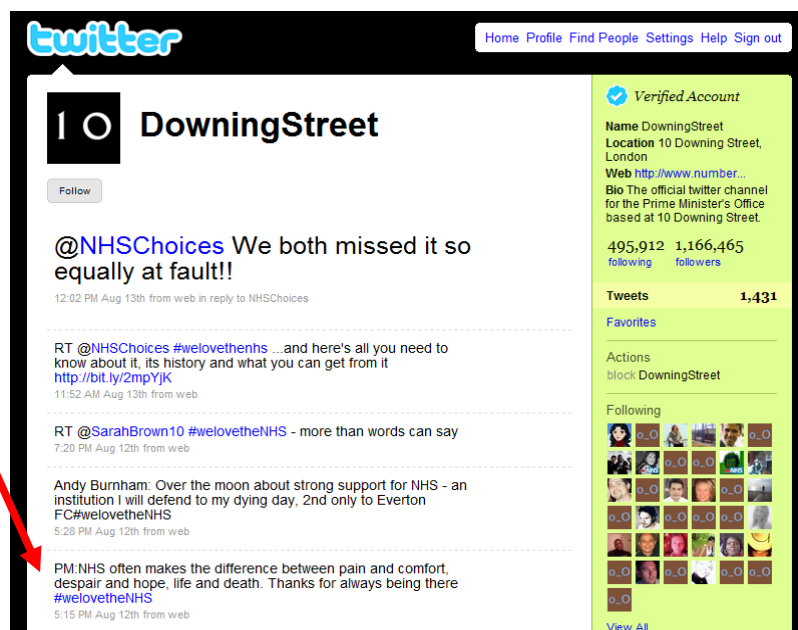
Shortly following the 2009 Mumbai attacks at the Taj Mahal Hotel it was clear that citizens were posting information surrounding the attacks on *Twitter*. Following the Citizen Journalism efforts during 9/11 and 7/7, it again became apparent that there was evidence of the presence of Citizen Journalism during/following an act of terrorism. Paul Lewis (2008) writing for the *Guardian* reported that individuals were able to provide snippets of information regarding the unfolding of events, number of casualties, gunfights and so forth. In many cases *Twitter* was able to produce more-up-to-date information than traditional media outlets. However, as with any form of 'Public Journalism', not all information was accurate and some *Twitter* users came under fire for providing inaccurate information. As a result, much apprehension and concern surrounds the use of *Twitter* and its wider consequences.

The use of *Twitter* in responding to world events was again seen following the outbreak of swine flu from Mexico in April 2009. Criticism of the social networking site soon followed indicating that *Twitter* was causing a global panic over swine flu. An article by *Foreign Policy* (2009) held the view that *Twitter* had great potential to misinform the public at large. The author argues that essentially *Twitter* added too much 'hype' and discussion to the outbreak of swine flu, which held the potential to create an atmosphere of alarm, panic and fear within public opinion. The author indirectly argued that social networking sites such as *Twitter* hold the power to influence public opinion and public response to the swine flu outbreak. In this case, the use/viewing of social media represents a threat to security. Whether or not this was a simple a case of misinterpretation on part of the author is debatable. Yet it does raise the question as to how a tweet should be received by its audience: as 'harmless banter' or a serious response to a perceived threat?

Social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* are not only used by members of the public but are now being used as a platform for official information to be communicated to the wider public. On the 17th August 2009, the British Labour Party appointed Labour MP Kerry McCarthy as '*Twitter Tsar*', responsible for ensuring and maintaining the Labour Party's presence on social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* (Stratton, 2009). In addition this responsibility involves ensuring that Labour utilise social networking sites to engage directly with voters (McCarthy, 2009). Labour justified this placement as maintaining a traditional approach to campaigning and using new media to access its voters. Its choice of MPs to represent this position is a result of a Poll by the *Independent* newspaper, which placed McCarthy as the most influential politician on *Twitter*.

"Voters will increasingly be searching the web to find out what we think about the issues, what we've actually been doing in the locality and looking to see what we sound like. Rather than being something completely new, campaigning using new media is simply doing what we've always done in a new setting – and rather than replacing traditional ways of doing things, it's about making traditional campaigning methods even more effective." (McCarthy, 2009)

A further example of political engagement with social networking sites was seen during the NHS debate. In August 2009, *Twitter* became an arena for debate following criticism of the British National Health Service (NHS) in the USA, whilst President Obama was attempting to 'sell' his own National Health Service. Not only were members of the public using *Twitter* to express their own opinions in support of the NHS, but *Twitter* was also used by the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who declared his continuing support and belief in the NHS system.



(10 Downing Street, 2009)

In August 2009, a study by Pear Analytics (2009) hypothesised that *Twitter* was predominantly utilised as a form of self-promotion: however, results revealed an entirely different picture. The study found that 3.6% of tweets surrounded news items, 3.75% were spam messages, and only 5.85% were found to be of a self-promotional nature. 8.7% were of a 'pass-along' nature, whereby individuals would include links as part of their tweet. 37.55% consisted of conversational tweets, and the greatest proportion (40%) of tweets consisted of 'Pointless Babble' (Pear Analytics, 2009, p. 5). However, it is difficult to determine what 'Pointless Babble' is: for others, it may consist of a remark that the individual deems important.

The Internet can be seen as enabling the expansion of the expression of public opinion across society. It allows both officials and individuals to express and deliberate their opinion in society, and acts as a community forum for this discussion to take place. Mainstream media are no longer at the forefront of guiding individuals towards a particular topic of interest; the power now also lies with the individual and his/her ability to direct attention. As a result, the role of the gatekeeper is changing. As Dr. Axel Bruns (2008), Senior Lecturer at Queensland University of Technology, observes, the mainstream media are now 'Gatewatchers' rather than 'Gatekeepers'. In this sense the media are able to guide individuals to certain news items, '*identifying and highlighting newsworthy material*' (2008, p. 5).

The power of the tweet lies with the operation of individuals, who first observe the tweet and second respond. Otherwise it is simply a short message that is unobserved and slowly slides down into the enormous black hole that is the World Wide Web. Crucially, what we are witnessing is an expansion in the capabilities and therefore the consequences of the power of *Twitter*; what started as a way of connecting with friends and family is now a global outreach. The power of the tweet is expanding, as is the potential and willingness of individuals to express their opinion and assist with the construction of opinion in society.

The remainder of this report will consider the use of Citizen Journalism and the 'Blog' as a means through which members of the public assist with the construction of public opinion surrounding a security threat. What follows is a collection of contemporary European case studies that will provide an insight into the nature of blogging in relation to security issues.

Case Studies: Blogging and Public Opinion

When it comes to matters of public interest it is possible to tap into their prominence in the blogosphere. Table 5 (below) consists of a number of 'events' between 2004 and 2009 which have been tested using the *Google Blog Search* to determine the number of blog posts written on the days the events occurred.

Table 5: Events Blogging

Event	Date of Event	Google Blog Keyword	Number of Blogs
Madrid Bombings	11/03/2004	Madrid Bombings	0
Asia Tsunami	26/12/2004	Tsunami	9
Murder of Dutch Film Maker Theo Van Gogh	02/04/2004	Theo Van Gogh	4
Death of Pope John Paul II	02/04/2005	Pope John Paul II	20
London Bombings	07/07/2005	London Bombings	223
Hurricane Katrina	29/08/2005	Katrina	314
Danish Cartoons	30/09/2005	Danish Cartoons	0
French Riots	27/10/2005	France Riots	8
UK Depot Robbery	26/02/2006	Depot Robbery	2
ETA Ceasefire – Spain	22/03/2006	ETA Ceasefire	9
Avian Flu – Scotland	05/04/2006	Avian Flu	5
Gay Rights Moscow	27/05/2006	Gay Rights Moscow	2
World Cup	09/06/2006	World Cup	393
Al Jazeera Launches English Channel	15/11/2006	Al Jazeera English	74
Death of Saddam Hussein	30/12/2006	Saddam Hussein	1279
Bulgaria and Romania Join EU	01/01/2007	Bulgaria and Romania EU	26
Hurricane Kyrill - Western Europe	18/01/2007	Hurricane Kyrill	5
Virginia Tech Shootings	16/04/2007	Virginia Tech	393
Madeleine McCann	03/05/2007	Madeleine McCann	4
Live Earth Concerts	07/07/2007	Live Earth	2199
Flooding UK	22/07/2007	Flooding UK	20
Assassination of Benazir Bhutto	27/12/2007	Benazir Bhutto	1978
Josef Fritzl	26/04/2008	Josef Fritzl	4
Mumbai Attacks	26/11/2008	Mumbai	1844

Plane Lands in Hudson	15/01/2009	Plane Hudson	398
Obama President	20/01/2009	Obama President	14647
Germany School Shootings	11/03/2009	Germany School Shootings	167
Italy Earthquake	06/04/2009	Italy Earthquake	400
Holland Queen Parade	30/04/2009	Holland Queen Parade	67
Swine flu	02/05/2009	Swine flu	5733
Missing Air France Plane	01/06/2009	Air France Missing	399

This table shows it is possible to take note of the events that captured the attention of bloggers worldwide. Examples of highly 'blogged' events include the death of Saddam Hussein in December 2006 (1279 blog posts), the Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008 (1844 blog posts), the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 (1978 blog posts), the Live Earth concert in July 2007 (2199 blog posts), the swine flu pandemic in May 2009 (5733 blog posts) and the inauguration of President Barack Obama in January 2009 (14, 647 blog posts).

Noticeably, *Google Blog Search* picked up upon inconsistencies of use of blogs to discuss European events. The following list of events received very few blogs posts – perhaps as a result of blogging becoming more popular over time.

- Madrid terror attacks in March 2004 (0 blog posts)
- The publication of the controversial Danish cartoons in September 2005 (0 blog posts)
- The robbery at the UK Securitas Depot in February 2006 (2 blog posts)
- The murder of Dutch film maker Theo Van Gogh in April 2004 (4 blog posts)
- The inquiry into Austria's Josef Fritzl, who held his daughter captive for over 20 years in April 2008 (4 blog posts)
- French riots in October 2005 (8 blog posts).

However a number of large-scale events attracted a greater amount of attention from bloggers. This may be a result of these 'events' capturing a greater global audience due to the nature of the events: i.e. a school shooting involving children, terrorism, football, natural disaster and the disappearance of a passenger jet. Examples include:

- German school shootings in March 2009 (167 blog posts)
- London terror attacks in July 2005 (223 blog posts)
- Start of the World Cup football tournament in Germany in June 2006 (393 blog posts),
- Missing Air France plane in June 2009 (399 blog posts)
- Italian earthquake in April 2009 (400 blog posts).

These inconsistencies can be linked to limitations within the research methodology. This research used *Google Blog Search* to identify relevant blogs. However, this may not have identified all blog

posts on the Internet concerning these events. There is no guarantee that *Google* accesses all blogs on the Internet during its search. In addition, the research used particular search terms and search dates to restrict the blog search, to avoid irrelevant blog posts. As a result this would have restricted the findings. Alternatively, this may be a result of a change in citizens' use of blogging, and we may be witnessing a greater use of blogging over time. At present, there is no certainty as to what the cause is of these inconsistencies.

Major events can be seen to be gaining increasing attention in the world of blogging. For example, when considering terror attacks: 0 blog posts on the Madrid bombings, 223 blog posts on the London bombings and 1844 blog posts on the Mumbai attacks. Therefore we are able to conclude that there appears to be an expanding circulation of blog posts following an event.

Despite the limitations to the above findings discussed above, they do offer some insight into the growth of blogs on current events. In order to appreciate fully the nature of blogging surrounding an event and its influence on public opinion, five European case studies relating to security will now be presented. This will be followed by an in-depth case study of blogging during a major security event: the 7/7 London bombings in 2005.

Case Study 1: Germany school shooting - March 2009

At 09:30 am on Wednesday 11th March 2009, former school student Tim Kretschmer went on a shooting spree in his old school in Winnenden, Southern Germany. Traditional news media reports of the shooting reveal that Kretschmer entered the school shooting, killing nine students and three teachers. Revelations of Kretschmer's earlier movements suggest that he was also involved in the death of an individual at a nearby clinic. His assault on the school came to a chilling end after being killed in a 'shoot-out' with local police in which two additional passers-by were killed (Pidd, 2009).

By the afternoon, reports of the shooting were broadcast on news sites across the web. Headlines include '*Teenage gunman kills 15 in German School Attack*' (Reuters, 2009) and '*Teenage Gunman Kills 15 at School in Germany*' (New York Times, 2009). Communication of the attacks expanded to statements released to the news media by politicians and senior officials. For instance, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of her fury at the shooting.

"It is unimaginable that in just seconds, pupils and teachers were killed — it is an appalling crime," she told reporters, adding her feelings were with the families of the victims. "This is a day of mourning for the whole of Germany," she said." (Pidd, 2009)

Following the attacks there is evidence of Participatory Journalism (members of the public contributing to the reporting of an event). One student supplied a local radio station '*Antenne 1*' with evidence of the attack, describing where they were at the time of the shootings and the instructions that were relayed to them by those with authority.

"We were in the computer room. Suddenly we heard bangs and then our teacher ran out, looked around and just closed the door. And later we were told by another teacher that a gunman was on the loose, and that we had been told by police that we should go out to the swimming pool." (Pidd, 2009)

In addition to traditional news broadcasters releasing the story, the news of the Germany shootings picked up considerable attention from a number of bloggers. As depicted in the table above, a *Google Blog Search* of the term 'Germany School Shootings' for the 11th March 2009 revealed that 167 blog posts had been written. Suggesting that reports of the attacks were not solely communicated via traditional news sources. Instead, bloggers were publicising their own

accounts/opinions of the attacks, contributing to a wider public dialogue surrounding the events via the Internet.

There is no single format in blogging the Germany school shootings; rather bloggers articulate their opinions of the attacks in several ways. For example, *The Lens*, a photoblog by Kai Pfaffenbach (2009), uses photographs to illustrate and depict events. The blog post consists of eleven colour photographs. Accompanying each photograph is written text with the author's explanation of the photograph. For example:



“Police forensic experts remove the body of a victim in a park next to a school where a shooting incident took place in Winnenden March 11, 2009. A 17-year old gunman went on a shooting spree at his former secondary school, the Albertville-Realschule in Winnenden in southwest Germany on Wednesday, killing up to 15 people before dying himself in a shootout with police at the car dealer, authorities said. REUTERS/Kai Pfaffenbach”. (Pfaffenbach, 2009)

These photographs range from a bloody emergency worker's glove left at the side of the road to images of mourners at the scene of the shootings. The photographs are all extremely clear and as a result come with a warning *“PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT READERS MAY FIND SOME IMAGES OFFENSIVE.”* (Pfaffenbach, 2009).

Audience interaction can also be seen within this blog post, with the posting of a viewer's comment. The comment raises a question as to 'why' the shootings took place. The addition of a blog post in the public domain allows for discussion and deliberation amongst viewers. In this case, however, the blog post only attracted one comment. A lack of comments may suggest a lack of audience interaction with the blog post. However, this lack of audience interaction with the blog post does not necessarily imply an absent audience: it may have attracted the attention of a number of individuals who were not inclined to leave a comment.

Further examples of blog posts concerning the Germany school shootings include blogs such as *Twilight Language* (Coleman, 2009) and *eLUMINATI Blog* (2009). Both blogs discuss the nature of the Germany school shootings. The blog posts go on to suggest theories that may be related to the attacks; suggestive of the relay of conspiracy theories surrounding an event. *Twilight Language* points to March and April being 'copycat' months for school shootings to take place in Germany. The post supplies evidence of previous Germany school shootings in April 2002 and April 2006. The *eLUMINATI Blog* post points to the importance of numbers. In particular it links the date of the Geneva school shootings two days earlier to the number of deaths. The blogger predicted 11 deaths on the 11th. A comment to the blog post points out that the blogger mistakenly located the previous school shooting, which occurred in Alabama, not Geneva.

Blog posts surrounding the Germany school shootings can also be seen to bring policy concerns into question. A blog by *FoxNews* (Lott, 2009) in the USA questions whether or not tighter gun control is the answer to school shootings such as that seen in March 2009 in Alabama and Germany.

"We all want to take guns away from criminals, but gun control is more likely to disarm potential victims relative to criminals and make crime easier to commit. Multiple-victim public shootings are terrifying and they drive much of the gun control debate, but they make up just a tiny fraction of one percent of the murders in the United States, Europe, or the rest of the world. The problem is that the gun control laws that come out of these crimes not only make crime go up, they also make multiple victim public shootings more likely." (Lott, 2009)

Alternatively a blog post by *Keep Schools Safe* argues that violence such as school shootings are not restricted to the United States, and that measures must be put in place to prevent further attacks in the future (Thomas, 2009). In different ways, both blogs point to the importance of policy in light of the German school shootings.

The news media can be seen to play a role in bloggers' reporting of the German school shootings. For example, *Twilight Language* utilises information supplied by news media websites such as *Reuters* and the *BBC* to assist with the author's explanation of unfolding events. When referring to these news organisations, *Twilight Language* places links within the text, to allow his/her audience to access the original source of information. Domingo and Heinonen (2006) argue that a link adds to validity to a blog post. The following example illustrates the use of links by *Twilight Language*.

"We have at least nine dead and numerous wounded," a police spokeswoman reported to [Reuters](#). This was later updated to 15, including the teenager student shooter...A number of people are also thought to have been wounded in the incident at the Albertville-Realschule school in Winnenden, north of Stuttgart, earlier reported the [BBC](#)" (Coleman, 2009)

Note: The use of the news media in a blog post will be discussed at length in the discussion section.

Case Study 2: Italy earthquake – April 2009

At 03:30 am on the 6th April 2009 an earthquake shook the medieval city of L'Aquila and surrounding villages in Italy. *EuroNews* (2009) reported that 10,000 buildings had been damaged, leaving up to 50,000 people homeless. Elsewhere reports from news sites on the Internet revealed a similar picture of the unfolding devastation caused by the earthquake. The American news network *ABC* revealed an estimate of the scale of the earthquake, measured at a magnitude of 6.3, on their televised morning show 'Good Morning America' (ABC, 2009). The UK newspaper *The Guardian* reported the number of suspected deaths as a result of the earthquake: "At least 27 people were killed, and 30 left missing" (*Guardian Unlimited*, 2009, April). The report continued by revealing rescue efforts and linking the present earthquake to the last severe earthquake to hit Italy in November 2002.

As seen with the Germany school shootings in March 2009, reports of the Italian earthquake in April were met with immediate attention from bloggers across the Internet. As indicated in the table above, following a *Google Blog Search* a total of 400 blogs posts were identified as having been written relating to the Italian earthquake.

The Internet opens up a portal of communication for users across the world. The first blog presented here is by *Global Giving* (2009), an online marketplace that allows users to give aid to causes and countries which they deem worthy, enabling users to express their support. The blog post contains a summary of the earthquake's destruction, revealing that more than 300 individuals had been killed

and 28,000 people had been left homeless. (These statistics can be seen to contrast to initial media reports). The post also contains a visual display of images of the earthquake in the format of a slideshow, which reveals photographs of the destruction caused. One is a building surrounded by the rubble of an adjoining collapsed building; others include victims wrapped in blankets and emergency workers assisting a collapsed victim. The blog post hosts a link enabling individuals to donate funds to the project and supplies an array of information surrounding the aims of the project. Interestingly, and in contrast to other blogs posts, the post does not supply any links to other sources of information such as official sites or news media organisations. Instead, the blog concentrates its efforts on fundraising.

The blog post “Italy Earthquake: Rome and Pescara” by *Wild Cherry* (2009) offers an alternative publication of events. The focus of this blog is on relaying the latest news surrounding the earthquake. The post contains a number of videos captured from other news sites such as the *BBC*, and from the video-sharing website *YouTube*. The blog post concludes by pointing its audience in the direction of further reading from official news broadcasters *The Times* and *CNN*. As seen with other blogs, audience interaction is evident in feedback from readers.

Blog posts are not strictly aligned to individuals, but some news media organisations also choose to host professional blogs on their websites. *The Frame* (2009) is a professional blog written for the *Sacramento Bee*, a Northern Californian newspaper. *The Frame* is a photoblog presenting a series of 29 images taken following the Italian earthquakes. Each photograph contains an accompanying description.



“Rescuers search April 6 for trapped people under the ruins of a collapsed house in the center of the Abruzzo capital L’Aquila, the epicenter of an earthquake measuring 5.8-magnitude on the open-ended Richter scale. At least 20 people were killed in an earthquake that struck central Italy as most people lay sleeping early on April 6, and the death toll was rising steadily after many homes collapsed in the Abruzzo region. AFP / Getty Images / Vincenzo Pinto” (The Frame, 2009)

The photoblog presents a rich visual description of unfolding events, allowing audiences to imagine realistically the devastation of the earthquake. Different to a news report containing solely text, the photoblog allows its publisher space for a visually powerful portrayal of the events. The professional blog attracted a large audience, with the photoblog receiving 16 comments. The following comment can be seen to start by responding to another individual’s comment, signalling the ability of a blog post to promote community discussion. The comment continues by arguing that ‘all’ earthquakes gain an immense amount of media coverage. The comment then takes the time to consider the positioning of governments and their role in the amount of devastation caused by an earthquake – in particular their inability to monitor building code regulators.

“[Markstein](#) wrote on 04/06/2009 09:45:12 PM:

bgeo-excellent comment. You're right on all your facts. All quakes get LOTS of media coverage internationally! Scientists share info immediately 7 with gusto-same as volcanists--selfless, courageous group of people (including Red Cross). The Mexican & Chinese & Turkish quakes were more devastating PRECISELY because of govt. inability to curb graft & to monitor bldg code regulators (or to even have the decency to pass regulation legislation re: bldg codes)...” (The Frame, 2009)

Other comments attempt to engage readers by prompting audiences to consider the devastation of other earthquakes, in this case the 1958 Alaska quake.

Jossip (2009) contains a blog post which gives a brief description of the destruction caused by the earthquake and goes on to supply a number of photographs from the incident. The blogger does not indicate where these photographs initiate from. Interestingly, a comment responding to the blog post displays a voice of concern over the rescue efforts.

“No. 1 · AMERICAN DREAMER

when I look at the rescue operation they don't seem to have many people pulling rubble from each building and most of the people pulling the rubble are using their bare hands it seems much less sophisticated than a rescue operation in Japan (where they have much bigger earthquakes) or even China (where you see thousands of people poring over each building) for a first world nation in an earthquake zone it seems like italy should be far more ahead of the game they can't blame it on the size of the earthquake either Posted: Apr 6, 2009 at 4:26 pm · @Reply · [Flag?]” (Jossip, 2009)

This comment supplies further evidence of the extent and type of discussion that new forms of media are bringing to the reporting of an event. Comments are a useful way of recognising the extent of discussion that an alternative form of communication such as a blog can muster, engaging audiences and allowing them the opportunity to express their opinions and debate topical issues.

Case Study 3: Holland Queen’s Day - April 2009

30th April marks Queen’s Day in Holland, an annual Dutch national holiday in which crowds flock to the streets across the Netherlands celebrating the late Queen’s birthday. The present Queen Beatrix, whose birthday is January 31st, chose to keep her late mother’s birthday as the national holiday due to ‘better weather’. In 2009, Queen’s Day celebrations were marred by an attack on the Dutch Royal family. The attack was carried out by a 38-year-old national, Karst Roeland Tate. Tate drove at high speed into a parade that included Queen Beatrix. As a result seven people were killed, and a further ten individuals were injured (*Statistics taken from Dutch Royal House (2009)*). Tate later died in hospital under police custody.

As with previous newsworthy events, the mass media immediately began to report. As a result of Queen’s Day being a public event, live video clips captured the proceeding events, including the final crash that the car took into a memorial statue. Clips were later broadcast by news services such as the *BBC* and *Times*. In addition to revealing the nature of the events, news organisations posted officials’ statements. For example, the *BBC* identified Queen Beatrix’s response following a live television address.

“What began as a great day has ended in a terrible tragedy that has shocked us all deeply,” she said. “People who were standing close by, people who saw it happen on television, all those who lived through it, must have looked on with bewilderment and disbelief. We’re speechless that something so terrible could have happened.” (BBC, 2009)

As well as including the Queen's statement following the incident, *The Times* also included statements from Apeldoorn Mayor, Fred de Graaf, declaring that further celebrations including the Royal Family would be called off.

"The scare and the images that the family has seen are reason to break off the official program," he said. Holiday programs also were called off in the port city of Rotterdam, and more were likely to be cancelled around the country." (Times Online, 2009)

Other avenues of information include *Wikinews* (2009) and *Twitter*. News updates of the incident appeared on *Wikinews* shortly after the incident. *Wikinews* is a branch of the public-devised online encyclopaedia known as *Wikipedia*. It presents itself as news written by the people, for the people. *Wikinews* presented details of the assault by the vehicle, in addition to posting a map of where the incident took place. It also provided a range of sources that viewers can then use to find out further information of the incident, which included references to sources such as English news organisations (*BBC*) as well as a number of Dutch news sites (*Radio Netherlands Worldwide, NRC Handelsblad, De Telegraaf and DutchNews.nl*).

The range of communication surrounding the incident of the car assault during Queen's Day also expanded to a number of social networking sites. Dutch individuals can be seen to use the micro social networking site *Twitter* to update their statuses with news of the incident. Examples include:

"Queensday in Holland: Car crash in crowd was attack Casualties: 13 injuries, 4 dead.6:53 AM Apr 30th from web" (Hennyvandermost, 2009)

"Terrible crash happened in Apeldoorn during Queen's day parade. Car drives into crowd, still unclear what the reason was for the incident.3:26 AM Apr 30th from web" (Pink Elephant, 2009)

The news media can be seen to capture and present a range of different voices and graphical presentations (both video footage and photographs) following an incident, enhancing their portrayal of events. In addition, news of events can be seen via social networking sites such as *Twitter* and public portals including *Wikinews*. As with previous events, the accident at the Queen's parade also captured bloggers' attention. As indicated in the table above, *Google Blog Search* revealed 67 posts relating directly to the events.

A blog titled *The ConservativeXpress* (2009) presents two videos of the incident and includes a short description of the result of the incident. The videos are taken from *YouTube*, a publicly accessible website in which users are able to upload and watch videos that have been submitted to the website by users across the world. In addition the blog provides a link to another of its blog posts, which contains a number of graphic videos containing a warning that the contents of the videos may be offensive to some viewers. The blogger describes the incidents as an act of terror and calls for the toughest of Dutch laws to be utilised to prosecute the driver. In this instance the author can be seen to express his/her disgust at the car attack. Both blog posts contain a number of comments, signalling the influence of the blog post on other viewers. In addition within the comments it can be seen that the blog post has instigated discussion amongst its readers.

As with the German school shootings and the Italian earthquake, many bloggers utilise other news websites to assist with the validity of their claims. This can be seen when regarding a blog titled *The Composed Gentleman* (2009). In this instance the author began his/her blog post by describing the context of the incident. The author then goes forward to present the blog's viewers with a link to an alternative Dutch Blog that contains a number of graphic images of the car crash. The blogger describes the photos on this other blog as being extremely horrific and uses this as a justification as to why he chose not to include them in his blog post. Here, there is evidence of communication between bloggers, via the use of pushing viewers into the direction of other blogs on the Internet.

Linking then is not solely attributed to news websites and other official sources of information. The blog post concludes by including a video clip taken from CNN news.

Case Study 4: Swine flu outbreak - May 2009

Swine flu is the name given to a strain of influenza, thought to have originated from pigs. Symptoms include fever, sore throat, diarrhoea, headache and dry cough, similar to regular flu. Swine flu was first identified in Mexico in April 2009 and has since been declared a pandemic (NHS, 2009).

Following the swine flu outbreak, official sources of information utilised various portals across the Internet to inform the world about the threat. For example the World Health Organisation (WHO) dedicated a section of its website to necessary information for individuals, containing guidance documents, frequently-asked questions, situation updates and so forth (World Health Organisation, 2009).

Website space dedicated to swine flu can also be seen across the media. For example, the BBC also has a page solely discussing swine flu. The BBC web page contains information regarding swine flu in addition to links to other BBC pages such as *What is Swine Flu* and *Pandemic Facts*. The site also contains an image of a human body that indicates the symptoms associated with swine flu. As with traditional news items, the BBC section on swine flu contains links to news articles and video clips concerning the occurrences of swine flu in both the United Kingdom and across the globe (BBC, 2009).

What is interesting to note about the outbreak of swine flu is its prominence across the Internet on social networking sites such as *Twitter*. Particular focus was placed upon the danger of *Twitter* users misinforming members of the public over the outbreak. *Foreign Policy* (2009) magazine released an article asking whether *Twitter* had the potential to misinform individuals. The author argues that essentially *Twitter* added too much 'hype' and discussion to the outbreak of swine flu.

"The "swine flu" meme has so far that misinformed and panicking people armed with a platform to broadcast their fears are likely to produce only more fear, misinformation and panic...Thus, Unlike basic internet search -- which has been already been nicely used by [Google to track emerging flu epidemics](#) -- Twitter seems to have introduced too much noise into the process." (Foreign Policy: Net Effect, 2009)

As argued, this 'hype' has the potential to create an atmosphere of alarm, panic and fear. The author indirectly argues that social networking sites such as *Twitter* hold the power to influence public opinion and public response to the swine flu outbreak.

The popularity of the use of *Twitter* following the swine flu outbreak was picked up by the news media. The *Telegraph* argued that news of the spread of swine flu around the world was taking place on *Twitter*. The article introduced the idea of official sources of information using *Twitter* to convey important information surrounding the threat to members of the public.

"HealthMap, a Boston-based disease surveillance website which plots health news geographically, has also used its Twitter page to keep readers up-to-date on swine flu. John Brownstein, who founded the site with medical researchers after the SARS outbreak in 2002, said: 'I think that probably a lot of users coming to the site were specifically [thinking] "show me a list of the latest on this outbreak." Twitter is ready to do that.'" (Swaine & Irvine, 2009)

CNN can also be seen to take part in the discussion surrounding *Twitter* and its role in communicating the swine flu outbreak. For *CNN*, the question posed is the role of *Twitter* in how

people gain information during an emergency. In addition, *CNN* reported the controversy surrounding the use of *Twitter* during the swine flu outbreak.

Against: *"This is a good example of why [Twitter is] headed in that wrong direction, because it's just propagating fear amongst people as opposed to seeking actual solutions or key information," said Brennon Slattery, a contributing writer for PC World. "The swine flu thing came really at the crux of a media revolution."*

For: *"I think it's generally a useful development, but I would encourage people to look to other sources, especially established, recognized medical authorities," said Glen Nowak, chief of media relations at the CDC. "It shows that people are engaged and they care and that it's caught their attention -- and those all are good things."*

(Sutter, 2009)

A blog post by Carmi Levy (2009) at *TG Daily* also discussed the impact of websites such as *Twitter* during the initial swine flu outbreak. *TG Daily* is a website that analyses and discusses the technological generation we now live in. Levy describes the increasing use of *Twitter* as a technological tool that has grown in popularity in its ability to communicate breaking news stories. Levy points to its recent success in gaining a 'scoop' when it reported initial news of the US aircraft that made an emergency landing in the Hudson River in January 2009. In this case a *Twitter* user was able to upload a photograph of the incident to *Twitter*. In terms of the controversy surrounding the use of *Twitter* during the swine flu outbreak, Levy points to the immense freedom of speech when using social media sites. As a result, as indicated in the post by *Foreign Policy*, an endless barrage of tweets has the potential to misinform the public and add to a sense of panic. Levy does not view *Twitter* as a social harm -- if anything, Levy places a positive emphasis on the use of social networking sites. Rather, Levy warns that caution must be taken: if we are solely relying on social media to keep ourselves abreast with information, there is potential for fact and fiction to become blurred.

"No matter who you are, there's nothing wrong with using Twitter as a tool to keep abreast of what's going on in the world... Where we begin to lose it is when we assume it's the only thing we'll need going forward. It isn't. And in the absence of the context provided by using a well-chosen set of conventional and new media tools to stay up-to-date, we run a greater risk of being unable to separate fact from fiction." (Levy C. , 2009)

The role of new media in communicating a threat can also be seen to be utilised by officials. CDC, the American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also contributed to the *Twitter* debate during this time to inform the public about the threat of swine flu. For example, on the 2nd May 2009 CDC released a tweet informing individuals of the two types of drugs that would be utilised to tackle the virus.

"2 antiviral drugs are recommended for H1N1 flu: oseltamivir (Tamiflu) & zanamivir (Relenza): <http://bit.ly/ofzZZ> #swineflu12:42 PM May 2nd from [mobile web](#)"
(CDCemergency, 2009)

Further examples of CDC's use of *Twitter* to inform the public includes presenting viewers with websites to view further information and updating information regarding the number of cases of swine flu (H1N1).

"RT @CDC_eHealth Access important CDC info including H1N1 flu via the mobile CDC Website at <http://m.cdc.gov> 3:09 PM May 16th"

“RT @CDCflu Update 5/14/09: 4298 total cases of novel H1N1 flu, 3 deaths, 47 states affected: [#swineflu](http://is.gd/zSrl) 10:28 AM May 14th” (CDCemergency, 2009)

In addition, the topic of *swine flu* was seen to be extremely popular across the blogosphere. For example, *Google Blog Search* revealed a total of 5733 blogs posts on the 2nd of May 2009 alone. As can be illustrated, there is evidence of a slightly different approach to the usual ‘reporting’ focus of a blog post. In this case one blogger, in a post titled ‘I have SWINE FLU’, Mandias (2009) uses humour to define the media frenzy and other warnings surrounding swine flu.

“In the last few hours I have felt a slight tingly in the back of my throat. We all know this feeling. You are watching TV and as you swallow you feel something unnatural at the back of your throat. It’s almost as if small piece of sandpaper is trapped uncomfortable between your tongue and ... But in this case, with the latest media frenzy, I believe I have the early stages of swine flu. While I would usually dismiss such a thing as happening to me there has been something different about my behaviour this week. As I reflect on my week I have to admit that I have been acting a little weird this week. Well weirder than I usually do. This weirdness I can deal with, what I find hard to deal with is that my behaviour is starting to resemble your average pig. This is one of the indication doctors use to determine if you have the dreaded swine flu. One example is that earlier today I ate something straight out of the rubbish bin.” (Mandias, 2009)

Viewers’ comments to this blog post suggest that the author’s audience is aware of its humorous nature. It is clear that the audience has accepted this as a work of fiction rather than a serious warning based on fact. Furthermore, there is evidence of discussion between the author and his/her audience via the comments submitted.



(Mandias, 2009)

Virology Blog (2009) published a blog post on swine flu on the 2nd May 2009. *Virology Blog* is written by Vincent Racaniello Ph.D., Professor of Microbiology at Columbia University Medical Center. This blog post identifies a key and trustworthy scientist whose expert opinion should, in the author’s view, be taken into consideration for people with concerns over the swine flu pandemic. The author supplies links to both the scientist he has referred to as well as the piece that the scientist had written for the *Wall Street Journal*, thus verifying his post. Throughout the blog post, the author inserts a number of excerpts from the original *Wall Street Journal* article. In this instance, this blog differs from the previous ‘humorous’ blog in that it takes a serious stance towards swine flu. The chosen excerpts include information surrounding facts concerning swine flu as well as a number of reasons as to why people should be optimistic during this time. The blog post has attracted a

number of viewers, with a total of 16 comments being submitted to the post by the blogger's audience. Comments are suggestive of a debate occurring, with audiences questioning certain parts of the initial report. On the other hand, there is evidence of support of what was written. Some commentators use this blog post as an opportunity to suggest website links to other articles that may be of interest to this blog's audience.

Much attention and discussion surrounds the swine flu outbreak and the influence of the 'new' media in communicating the threat. What is important to consider is that social networking sites such as *Twitter* should not be seen simply in terms of promoting fear. For some, the social networking tool may simply be a form of release; a way of expressing one's opinion of the seriousness of the threat of swine flu. Social network sites such as *Twitter* are audience-orientated, and how a tweet is internalised by its viewers is highly dependent on the audience. For some it may be a serious fact, for others it is simply a work of fiction. In reality, there appears to be a great lack of trust in individuals' ability to interpret the difference between fact and fiction.

Case Study 5: Missing Air France plane - June 2009

On the 1st June 2009, Flight AF 447, an Air France plane vanished on its journey from Brazil to Paris. The flight left at 22:00 GMT from Rio de Janeiro and sent an automated signal indicating an electrical fault at approximately 02:14 GMT. The disappearance of the plane became of particular interest to the media. For example, the *BBC* report identified the aircraft to be carrying 228 people. Rumours suggest that the plane vanished over the Atlantic Ocean following turbulence (BBC, 2009). The *BBC* report also alluded to the nationalities of passengers on board. Other items included in the *BBC* report included a map of the plane's route as well as photographs of relatives and friends of the plane's victims at airports in Rio de Janeiro and Paris. The *BBC* concludes its article by giving details of France's rescue efforts and important telephone numbers for those in need of information. Similar news items were released across the web by other news agencies. For example, the *New York Times* included details of the timeline of the missing plane. In addition, the *New York Times* included analysis of a theory aligned to the cause of the disappearance, based upon experience and knowledge of the cause of the losses of altitude on two Qantas Airbuses the previous year (McNeil & Negroni, 2009). From this perspective, the media can be seen to bring together a range of sources/voices to confirm and give detail to the causes and current situation of the search for the missing aircraft.

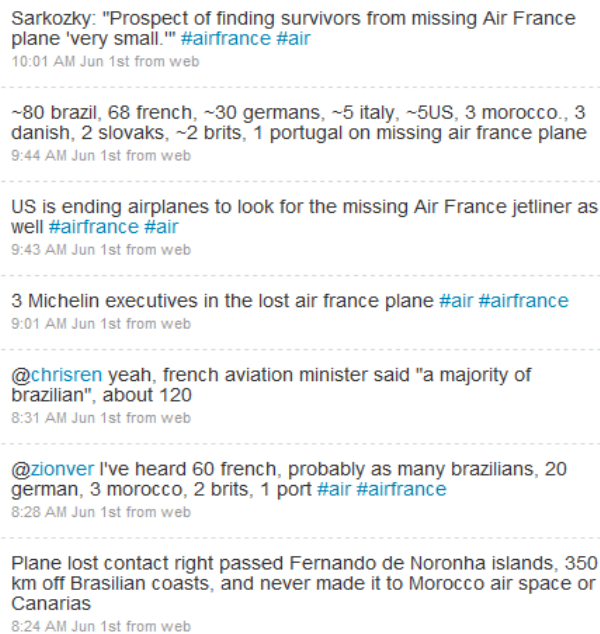
Elsewhere on the Internet, the public news provider *Wikinews* (2009) reported on rescue efforts to find the missing plane on the 2nd June 2009. The report on *Wikinews* included references to alternative news sources of information that influenced the publication (examples include: *BBC News*, *Herald Online* and *United Press International*). As seen with professional news agencies including the *BBC* and *New York Times*, *Wikinews* also gave pictorial evidence of the route of the flight by the inclusion of a map. This enables its audience to visualise graphically and understand the flight path and possible whereabouts of the missing aircraft.

The social networking site *Twitter* can also be seen to play a role in communicating the disappearance of the Air France plane. Official use of *Twitter* can be seen on the National Airline of the Republic of Indonesia, *Garuda*. *Garuda* updated its *Twitter* page with a message of condolence and hope in the wake of the disappearance of the jet.

"Is hoping for survivors, of the missing Air France plane. (rio>paris)9:28 AM Jun 1st from web" (Garuda Indonesia, 2009)

Alternatively, *Twitter* can also be seen to be used by ordinary members of the public. John A (2009) posted eleven tweets concerning the missing Air France plane. Tweets included references to the

area in which the plane could have gone missing, as well as the nationalities of passengers and news that the search had been called off. Additionally, there is evidence of discussion over this topic between different *Twitter* users (see image below), represented by the '@' at the beginning of a tweet.



(John A, 2009)

In terms of the number of blogs surrounding this event, *Google Blog Search* identified a total of 399 blog posts on the 1st June 2009 relating to the missing Air France plane. A blog post by *Firegeezzer* (2009) gives two updates over the course of the 1st June 2009, indicating various 'new' updates on the news surrounding the missing plane. The main focus of the blog appears to be to provide up-to-date information to its viewers. In addition to a number of quotes from professional media sources, the blog also hosts a video taken from *CNN*, describing the plane's official flight plan. Whilst this blog has been descriptive in its presentation of the details surrounding the disappearance of the Air France flight, other blogs such as *A Seattleite in Paris* are not so forthcoming with information. Instead, the blogger simply states that a plane has gone missing between Rio de Janeiro and Paris using a *BBC* link to verify its claim.

"MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009

Air France plane missing

An Air France plane carrying at least 228 people from Brazil to France

has gone missing over the Atlantic." (A Seattleite in Paris, 2009)

The missing Air France flight also attracted the attention of Professional Journalists, with blog posts released on their companies' official websites. For example, Anderson Cooper writing for *CNN* provides details of the nature of the missing aircraft. The blog also supplies photographic evidence of the type of plane that had gone missing: an Airbus A330-200 (Cooper, 2009). Additional photographs include a map of the flight plan and images of passengers believed to be on the plane. The blog post provides several links to a number of other *CNN* web pages that correspond to the missing Air France plane. Here, rather than with ordinary public blogs, *CNN* can be seen to have a monopoly over the use of links and where these links lead audiences. This allows *CNN* to maintain

audience attention within the *CNN* wider network of web pages. This differs from an alternative public blog, in that a unique feature of a public blog is to direct audiences to several different websites for further information rather than solely using one source of information.

In-Depth: Citizen Journalism during 7/7 and public opinion

The following research consists of analysis of blogging during the 7/7 London terror attacks in 2005. What follows is a presentation of the methodology used, followed by the display of results. This will be followed by a discussion of blogging with regard to all case studies considered in this report.

Methodology:

Analysis of blogs from 7/7 was conducted using Qualitative Media Analysis (QMA). The method of QMA was designed by media specialist David Altheide (1996), and allows for a mixture of methods to be utilised. QMA blends traditional notions of content analysis with participant observation to form ethnographic content analysis. By doing so the researcher interacts with various documents, in this case blogs created on the day of the 7/7 attacks, to place them into context with the attacks for analysis. By conducting QMA into the 7/7 blogs it is possible to recognise the various avenues in which public opinion of 7/7 terrorist attacks are presented online. In order to complete analysis a series of six steps took place.

Identifying Documents: Documents were identified using *Google Blog Search* (Google Inc, 2009). The term 'London Bombing' was entered under search criteria. In addition, the search was limited to a specific date: 7th July 2005. A total of 195 blogs were identified as being relevant to this research.

Note: This by no means implies that only these blogs exist (as previously discussed by Allan's (2006) work). However with the vast expanse of the Internet it is difficult to determine an exact number, which is why a search engine devoted to identifying 'Blogs' was used for research purposes.

Collection of Data: Once the 195 blogs were found using the search parameters on *Google* it was then necessary to collate documents. This was completed using Microsoft Excel 2007 in which a database was designed allowing for all 195 blogs to be entered according to their blog title and blog website link to be entered. (See Appendix A for full list of blogs).

Examine Data: The third step was to examine a number of the blogs to identify a protocol in which the content of blogs would be analysed. The first 20 blogs were used to revise protocol for analysis.

Protocol: By regarding the 20 blogs in the examination stage, a series of eight variables were identified as being central to analysis for the research.

1. Whether the blog was relevant to 7/7.
2. Whether the blog contained images.
3. An identification of the types of image.
4. Whether the blog supplied links to other blogs.
5. Whether the blog supplied links to online news media.
6. Whether the blog contained comments.
7. Whether the blog was a blog devoted to the topic of 'Terrorism'.
8. Whether the blog contained a 'Personal Account' of the events of 7/7.

Code Data: A separate Microsoft Excel sheet was designed with columns dedicated to the blog number and each of the 8 variables above. Each of the 195 blogs were then systematically processed; responses were given as to their suitability: 'Yes (Y)', 'No (N)' or 'Not Applicable (N/A)'.

Analysis of Results.

Limitations of Method

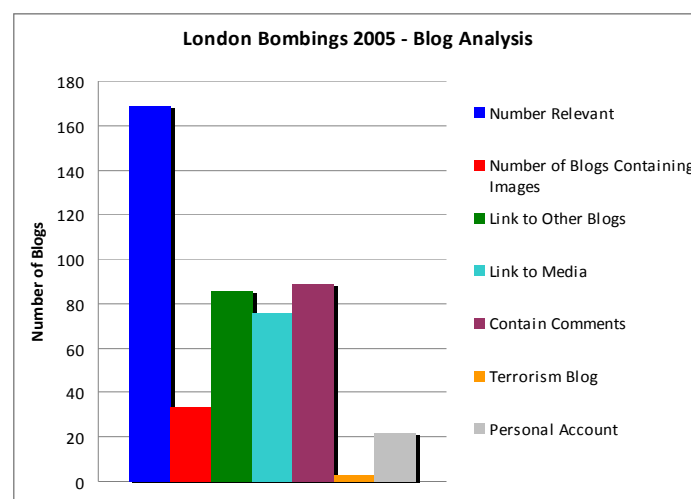
Whilst QMA was utilised as the most appropriate method for analysis, as with many other methods in social research, there are various limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, as previously discussed, the sample of blogs is limited to those identified by *Google Blog Search* rather than taking multiple steps to identify as many blogs as possible. This was primarily to avoid time wasting during the search process. Second, the coding process is left to the interpretation of the researcher, thus differences in perception of coding may differ if a variety of researchers had been utilised. However, time and financial limitations prevented this.

Results

A total of 195 blogs were found to contain words that linked to the terms 'London' and 'attacks' using *Google blog search*. Of these, 169 (86%) were found to contain content directly related to the 7/7 attacks. An example of a blog that was found to be irrelevant includes terrorism-centred blog *Dhimmi Watch* (Blog 91 – See Appendix A), which refers to an alternative news item rather than placing focus on the London bombings ('5 Pakistanis Arrested over "honour" Rape').

From the blogs that were relevant, the following results (See Graph 5 below) were found with regards to the listed variables (above). Of the 169 relevant blogs, 34 (17%) contained images. A total of 86 blogs (44%) contained links to other blog sites. A further 76 blogs (38%) supplied links to other media websites (for example *BBC*, *CNN*, *Sky News*, *Guardian* and so forth). 89 (45%) blogs contained comments. 45 blogs (26%) contained links to both other blogs and news media. 3 blogs (less than 0.01%) were dedicated to the topic of terrorism and 22 blogs (11%) supplied evidence of a personal account of the London bombings.

Graph 5

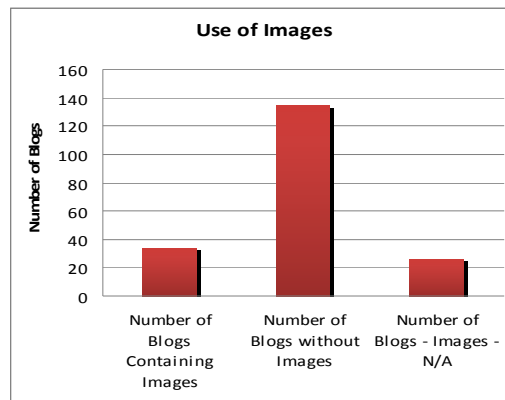


What will now follow is an extensive discussion of each of the variables in Graph 5, above. Examples will be used to illustrate the nature of findings and their wider sociological significance.

Use of Imagery

Graph 6 (below) reveals the use of images in blogs posts. A total of 34 (20%) of the relevant blogs contained images, whilst 135 blogs (79%) did not contain any images.

Graph 6



A wider variety of images were used throughout the relevant blogs. For example Blog 8, *PsyBlog*, presents an image of the destruction of the number 30 bus at Tavistock Square. The blogger does not directly refer to the image in his/her post, and there is no indication of the author interacting with the image utilised. The image used supplies photographic representation of the bombings with the iconic London double-decker bus as evidence. (See table 6 below).

Some bloggers post photographs that link to other blog sites. For example Blog 47, *Global Guerrillas*, presents a photograph of a member of the public caught up in the underground, which has been taken from another blog. Significantly, there is evidence of a wider sense of communication between bloggers; information is not simply replicated from news media sites, but duplication is also seen across blogs. (See table 6 below).







An alternative use of images in blogs is that of historical photographs. For example Blog 61, *Annika's Journal*, utilises an image taken during the period of the Blitz, linking the public response to the London bombings to the World War Two experience. This supplies evidence of a wider cultural response of drawing upon past experience: in this case the ability of Britons to respond to adversity. We witness a resilient stance whereby London has a history of overcoming adversity and can continue to do so in the wake of the 7/7 attacks. From the perspective of *public opinion* it appears as though the opinion of some bloggers is that Londoners can withstand an act of terror, and respond in accordance with responses to adversity in the past. (See table 6 below).

Rather than using a photographic image, various bloggers use an image of the British Union Jack flag. For an example, see Blog 167, *Watching Washington* (table 6 below). The purpose of using such an image may draw conclusions, such as a sense of patriotism fostered during the London bombings. This blog supplies evidence of a strong-willed discussion in response to the London bombers; this is portrayed in the blog post and its attraction of discussion via the presence of comments.

There is also evidence of photoblogs. Photoblogs are those blogs which predominantly use photography to present the author's desired content. This provides direct evidence of Citizen Journalism following an act of terrorism. For example, Blog 5, *Andrews Photo Blog*, presents a series of photographs from around London on 7/7. To illustrate, one photograph captures the *Evening Standard* newspaper board. Other photographs include members of the public being directed by police outside Liverpool Street station, and an image of city workers walking in the road along Bishopsgate. In this sense, rather than utilising language to draw upon and report events, pictures

are used to convey meaning, in line with the saying ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’. (Examples of images discussed presented below, table 6).

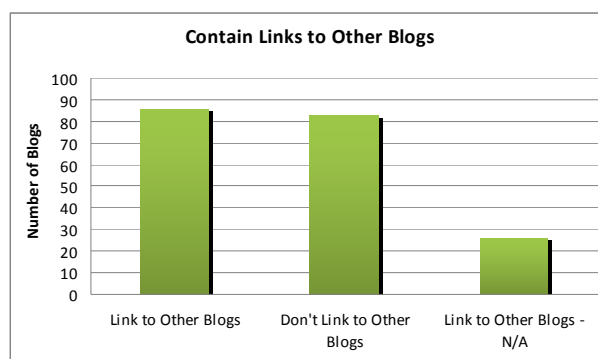
Table 6: Use of images in blogs of the 7/7 2005 London bombings

<p>Blog 8</p> 	<p>Blog 65</p> 
<p>Blog 47</p> 	<p>Blog 152</p> 
<p>Blog 167</p> 	<p>Blog 5</p> 

Links to Other Blogs

86 (50%) of the relevant blogs provided links to other blog websites, whilst 83 blogs (49%) did not contain any links to ‘Other’ blogs (see Graph 7 below):

Graph 7

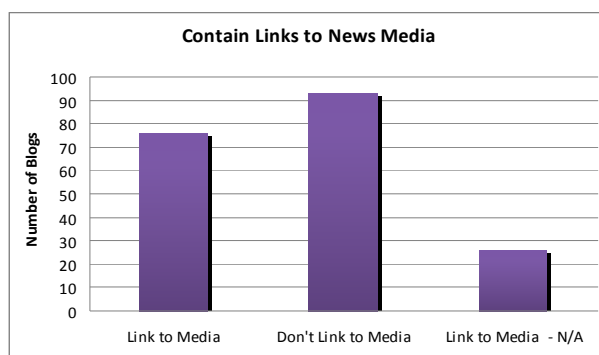


For many bloggers, a blog post offers the opportunity to supply his/her audience with links to other blog sites. *First Draft* (Blog 4) is a classic example of a blogger providing links to other blogs, in this case *Norm Blog*. Furthermore, the blog includes links to photograph host sites such as *Flickr* and

websites such as the public online encyclopaedia directory *Wikipedia*. Following the London bombings an increasing number of people utilised *Wikipedia* to update their perceptions and relate the day's unfolding events.

A total of 76 blogs (44%) supply links to news media. However, a greater number of blogs do not supply any links to news media (93; 55%). Thus it can be argued that, to an extent, bloggers reinforce the news media. It can also be argued that the news media provide the original agenda for bloggers, who then increase the salience of news with 'news' of the event on their blogs.

Graph 8:



Examples of blogs that contain links to 'News Media' sites include *First Draft* by Tim Porter (Blog 4), which supplies links to the *BBC*, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* news. The blogger provides evidence of reporting from both British and American news media. The blog post then proceeds to illustrate critically what the blogger expects from news media reporting of the London bombings – suggesting a critical stance towards the media.

Context: *The history of terrorism in London and on the European continent.*

Update: *What happened to the Madrid subway bombing suspects?*

Local: *What are the safety measures on the New York subway system? On BART in the Bay Area? How have they changed since the Madrid bombing? What money is involved?*

Geography: *A large, data-rich info-graphic of what happened (which so hard to read online).*

People like me: *London is filled with American tourists. Tell me their stories.*

Debate: *An op-ed page devoted to liberty vs. security.*

Voices: *The words and images of those who were there.*

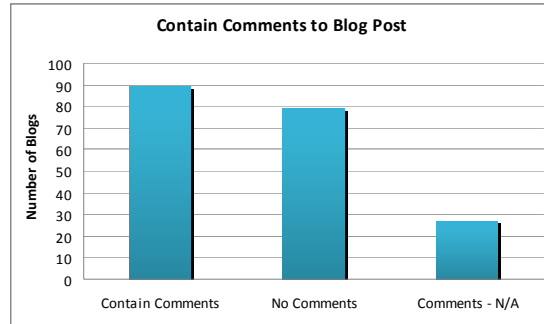
(Porter, 2005)

Other blogs that include links to news media include Blog 39, *News Hounds*, which supplies a critical analysis of American news network *Fox News'* coverage of the London bombings. Whilst there is evidence of critical news analysis from bloggers, blogs also contain links to news media sites (see Blogs 90, 100, 101 for examples). Many of these blogs reinforce news media rather than supplying an alternative voice. For example, Blog 120, *Rhymed With Right*, supplies over twenty links to news media sites including the *BBC*, *Times Online*, *Sky News* and *ITN*.

Contain Comments

As previously seen, comments are an essential element of blogging. Of the 169 relevant blogs, 89 blogs (52%) contain comments and 79 blogs (46%) do not contain any comments.

Graph 9:



The presence of comments in a blog allows for an indication of the level of publicity that it is receiving. However a lack of comments does not necessarily imply a lack of interaction or audience: it could imply that people are simply viewers of a blog rather than active participants. Comments also display public interaction with blogging and, in some cases, serve as a platform for discussion of events. For example, the comments found in Blog 12, *World Changing Change Your Thinking*, links readers to news media sites. In this case we see that linking is not solely down to the original author, but can also be seen with those interacting with a blog. Alternatively, Blog 41, *Cowboy Caleb*, contains much discussion in its readers' comments section ranging from thanks for links to a personal reflection on the impact of the terrorist attacks.

"Darren: Mankind is hopeless"

"PigPog Blog: (Thanks to Cowboy Caleb for the links. Yes, I'm in Nottingham, and I got the best sources for news from someone in Singapore. So much for geography.)"

"J.: that they would strike at a city i love and live in fills me less with terror than an overwhelming conviction that the fools who did this must be stopped, regardless of cost. this must be how america felt after 9/11. not just angry, not just saddened, but vengeful and imbued with a righteous conviction. forgive me for the emotional outburst, but london didn't deserve this."

(Cowboy Caleb, 2005)

There is also evidence of a sense of misuse of comments for a blog. Some participants use another person's blog as an advertising space for their own personal gain, for example Blog 162, *Science Religion and Citizenship* (Jordan, 2005).

[michelsmith04313522](#) said...

=Brand New News FrOm The Timber Industry!!'=

=====*Latest Profile*=====
 Energy & Asset Technology, Inc. (EGTY)
 Current Price \$0.15

(dndylion, 2005)

Personal Account

Of the 169 blogs, a total of 22 blogs (13%) were identified as supplying a personal account of having been directly affected by the 7/7 bombings. For example in Blog 4, *First Draft*, Porter discusses the author's morning and his trouble in locating his wife in London;

*"My wife is in London on business, an investment conference not far from one of the tube stations that was bombed. She took a cab today, by chance, rather than the subway and is fine. At 3:15 a.m., a call from her mother woke me, to tell me about the attacks. **It took me an hour to locate my wife**, an hour spent on the phone and on the Internet, finding telephone numbers, reading the BBC and Yahoo and Google news."* (Porter, 2005)

A second example of a blog which contains a personal account is Blog 5, which contains a series of photographs taken by the author out and about in London. (This blog has previously been discussed above, see Image Section – table 6).

A third type of blog which contains a personal account is Blog 7, *City of Sound*, which supplies an account of an individual working for the BBC. The blog's focus is on the author and his/her colleagues' safety and the efforts of the BBC in assisting its workers and its workers' efforts in keeping news rolling.

Blog 25, *d.brady.net*, contains a brief post indicating the author's safety following the London attacks:

"There were heaps of bombings on London public transport this morning. Jen and I are both fine. So are all the people I know of in London. Both trains and buses seem to be shut down in central London" (d.brady.net, 2005)

Various methods are taken by bloggers to relate their personal experiences of the London bombings. Blogging during 7/7 provides valuable insight into the nature of Citizen Journalism during security-related events and its wider implications for shaping public opinion. What follows is further discussion of the case studies.

Discussion of Case Studies

The relationship between new forms of media and public opinion is a new and evolving area of social science research. To date there is no extensive evidence of research that has been conducted in this area. As has been identified in various areas of the CPSI project, there is a strong correlation between the media and its influence on public opinion of security. The purpose of this report is to see how new forms of media authored by Citizen Journalists contribute to the media's influence on public opinion. Our understanding of the term 'media' has expanded from newspaper, radio and television news. Traditional forms of media have been re-routed to the Internet. In addition to the Internet hosting traditional media, it has opened its doors to consumers enabling them to take part in the production of news. The ease, reach and speed with which members of the public are able to contribute to the news-making process is largely linked to free software known as 'Social Media'. Advances in technology coupled with the declining cost of technology have resulted in a revolution in terms of Citizen Journalism. Members of the public can now, without too much difficulty, contribute to the news-making process and self-publish their material to the Internet's global audience. A key question of this report is to identify how the 'new' media affects the communication of a security related incident and, in turn, its consequences in terms of public opinion.

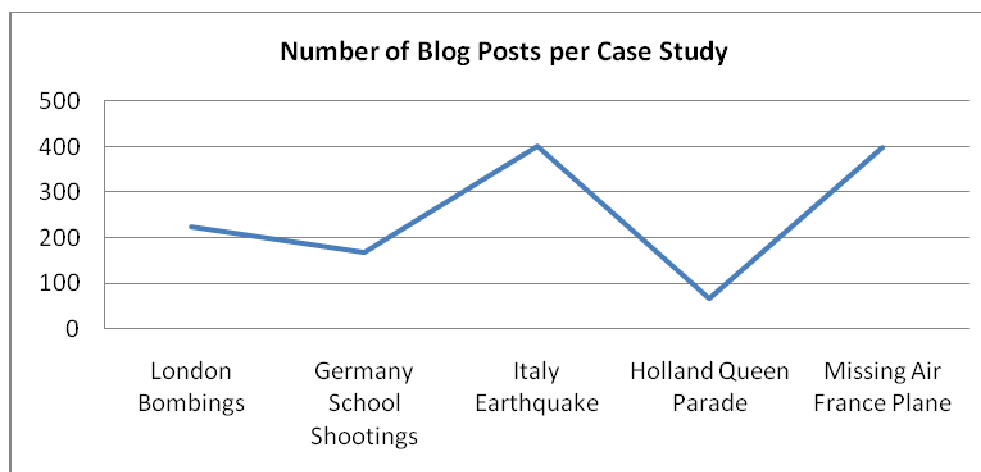
The case studies presented in this report are a valuable way of exploring how 'new' media affects the communication of a security related incident. Taking note of the number of blog posts found during the *Google Blog Search* for each case study from 2004 to 2009 suggests that blogging of

security-related events has significantly increased over time. As a result, bloggers play a vital role in expanding the salience of news. News reports such as those concerning the Germany school shootings in March 2009 are extended beyond traditional news outlets. New Media serves to replicate news of the shootings taking place. Further to this, they encourage community discussion, thereby promoting communication of an event. The salience of news is not restricted to blogging activity. As seen with the swine flu outbreak, communication is extended to other forms of social media such as *Twitter*. In this case, as argued by Walter Lippmann in 1922, the number of 'pictures' that individuals are presented with determines the extent of the influence of these 'pictures' on public opinion. Today, it can be argued that via new forms of media individuals are presented with a far greater number of 'pictures' of events than ever before. These pictures are not restricted to 'local' news but, as a result of the Internet, are 'global' depictions of news events. This is evident when considering the various outlets of communication surrounding the Italian earthquake, with broadcasts from across the globe. The audience can be seen to interact with new forms of media, thereby contributing to the communication of events. Communication can be seen to thrive on the Internet. Via blogging, Citizen Journalists significantly contribute to this expansion in communication of security-related events. We must therefore ask, what do blogs add to the communication of the news?

Analysis of a number of case studies is suggestive of a public response to events. Following the 7/7 London attacks, individuals can be seen to draw upon past experience of adversity to deal with the terrorist attacks. In particular a number of references were made to the Blitz during the Second World War. This can be regarded as a positive response to the terrorist attacks. In terms of policy, this is symptomatic of a 'safe' feeling with regards to responding to the terror attacks. Despite the number of deaths and injuries and general level of destruction from the bombings, individuals present images of emergency services at work. This suggests a sense of capability in responding to the terror attacks. The presence of emergency services was also seen during the Germany school shootings. Alternatively, a number of the case studies presented in this report present a sense of mistrust and uncertainty following events. For example, when considering the Germany school shootings and the earthquake in Italy, bloggers point to the need for policy. Comments to blog posts about the Italian earthquake question the appropriate use of building regulations. During the Germany school shootings there is evidence of the circulation of rumours and conspiracy theories; a subconscious response of uncertainty. Furthermore, when considering the blogging effort following the swine flu epidemic, there is vast evidence of confusion and miscommunication. Following a blog post or tweet, there is a fine line in how individuals interpret written text. Following the Queen's Day incident in Holland, *Twitter* users can be seen to ask questions about why the incident took place. It appears that when individuals are presented with a positive response by authorities there is evidence of confident blogging. However, when questions remain and people are asking why this has happened, there is a sense of insecurity over the unknown. Individuals can be seen to be searching for validity of claims.

It is difficult to understand the scale of the importance placed upon Citizen Journalism/public discussion of these events. As of yet, there is no clear method of understanding the prominence of discussion on the social networking site *Twitter*, nor is there an exhaustive tracking system for the blogosphere. The following graph illustrates the extent of attention from the blogosphere on the case studies regarded in this report. Graph 10 (below) illustrates the importance of the scale of the event on the reaction of the blogosphere. Those incidents that are seen to affect a greater number of people, receive greater attention by bloggers. Not included in the table below is the case study of swine flu. This global event received a huge number of blog posts, totalling 5733. Not only are events gaining attention in the blogosphere, but they also attract considerable attention from social media sites such as *Twitter*. Prominence of an event on *Twitter* is also linked to the scale of the event and with regards to the case of swine flu and the missing Air France plane, is also linked to the global impact of an event.

Graph 10: Number of Blog Posts for Case Studies



Results from the blogging effort during the 7/7 London bombings provide a number of indications as to 'what' bloggers add to the communication of security-related events. The majority of blogs are somewhat repetitive of news media reports of the London bombings, and only 11% of the blogs sampled offered a 'Personal Account' of bombings. From this perspective, new information in blogs was significantly limited. In terms of bloggers shaping the news agenda it can be argued that they offer very little in the way of providing 'new' material that may re-direct the agenda set by the media. 38% of the blogs sampled provided links back to traditional sources of news. As a result, bloggers can be seen to reinforce the news media's agenda. In this case, as argued by J.D. Lasica (2003), there is indeed a symbiotic relationship present between the news media and bloggers. Bloggers can be seen to rely upon the media to give them 'something' to discuss in their blogs. In return, the news media benefit by bloggers using links to re-direct traffic back to the news media. Thus a mutually beneficial relationship between the news media and bloggers exists.

In terms of 'adding' to communication of security-related events, bloggers provide a number of distinguishable functions to this communicative process. The use of 'links' in a blog post provides an expansion in various sources of communication of events. For example, when considering Case Study 3, Queen's Day in Holland (April 2009), there is extensive use of links by bloggers to report the events. In particular, a blog post by *The Composed Gentleman* supplies links to another blogger, who had posted a series of 'graphic' images of the incident during the Queen's Day parade. This use of linking not only provides further photographic evidence of the incident, but is suggestive of individuals' behaviour of viewing other blogs. This note of audience behaviour is crucial to understanding that bloggers do gain audiences, which consume the content of blogs. In this case, the other blogger made an impact on *The Composed Gentleman*. In addition to supplying a link to another blog, *The Composed Gentleman* also utilises a video clip taken by *CNN*, an American professional news organisation. In all of the case studies, there is extensive evidence of the use of links throughout the blogging communicative process of security-related incidents.

As with professional media, bloggers are also able to upload images and videos to their blog post, thereby adding to the content of their blog post. In turn, this may add to the attractiveness of a blog post to its audience. Throughout a number of the case studies, reference was made to the use of 'graphic' images. For example, during his blog post concerning the Germany school shootings, Pfaffenbach (2009) warns of graphic images that for some may be offensive. This use of photography may not be so easily published via the professional news media. Bloggers are not so heavily restricted by professional ethics and legal principles as are professional journalists. From this perspective, a blog post may add to the presentation of a security event in its ability freely to publicise 'graphic' content. This 'graphic' content readily contributes to the shaping of an event,

which in turn can have a great impact on public opinion of a security-related incident. A possible downside of this freedom of expression may result in heightened insecurity. If individuals are subjected to 'graphic' content, this may heighten their level of fear -- in this case, of gun crime. If an adolescent can gain access to a gun, access a school and shoot people, where does this leave people in terms of general street safety? Does this imply that guns are readily available and accessible in Germany? A criticism of blogging may be of its ability to readily expose 'shocking' imagery, which may heighten insecurity in society. This highlights questions as to whether there should be some control placed over the content that bloggers are allowed to produce online.

One of the greatest functions of a blog in communicating an event is its ability to allow for discussion of an event. If the author of the blog permits, his/her viewers are able to comment on a blog post. Once a comment has been posted, this brings a discussion element to blogging. Individuals are able to discuss the event and at times may debate the event. From this perspective, bloggers add to the communication of an event by blogging, and add further communication by allowing audiences to voice their opinions. This creates a circle of communication, whereby the communication of an event is potentially able to expand to a wider audience. Comments in a blog post can be seen as evidence that people consume more than one type of media. The analysis of the London bombings demonstrates that comments may not always necessarily be used appropriately. Some individuals may use a blog post of a highly discussed topic for advertising purposes. Just because a blog post has a comment does not necessarily imply that it is communication of an event. Further research into the wider discussion of a blog post must take this into consideration.

These new forms of social media give a direct voice to officials. As observed with the swine flu outbreak, officials are able to use social media to communicate directly with members of the public over a security threat. For example, *CDCemergency* was able to use the popular social media site *Twitter* to inform citizens of the possible drugs that could be used to fight swine flu. Officials are therefore able to contribute to setting the public agenda via new forms of media. They are no longer solely at the mercy of the media in communicating to the wider public. It is already apparent that governments are taking stock of the importance of social media to reach their voters. This was recently seen with the appointment of the 'Twitter Tsar' Kerry McCarthy, who was recently placed in charge of Labour's media campaign in the United Kingdom. From this perspective, it is possible to note that new forms of media allow for a range of both official and unofficial voices to be communicated. The professional media no longer hold a monopoly over whom they deem worthy of giving a voice. In this case, Bernard Cohen's view that the media excels in 'telling us what to think about' is extended to those that take part in communicating via new media. New forms of media give officials access to influencing public opinion directly. By giving a platform for communication to officials, this raises questions of authority and verification.

With the ease of access to the Internet via technology, Overholser (2009) argues that today, what matters is whether or not the right news is on the platform we are checking – whether it be *Twitter* or some other form of social media website. As users we expect information to be available where we choose to search first. Whether or not this information is correct is another matter. Individuals are then able to consult alternative sources of information across the Internet to verify their original choice of sources of information. Overholser points to the example of the 'rumour' of the death of Michael Jackson. Not happy with information that was identified with the original search, Overholser went on to consult several other news services including *Twitter* and *Los Angeles Times*. Overholser raises the question – *at what point would I stop searching?* At what point are users satisfied that 'rumours' had been verified? For Overholser, this raises the critical question of whether or not the practice of journalism should take on responsibility for verification of news that stems from social media sites. In terms of official sources of information this also raises questions as to who should be given the authority to make claims on behalf of organisations. Once given authority, is there a system in place whereby claims are verified for legitimacy? It is necessary for policy makers to take

new media into consideration, particularly with regard to those given the access to speak on behalf of official organisations. New media has the potential to reach an extremely wide, global audience. Officials must therefore take careful measures to ensure the legitimacy of the claims that are made on their behalf.

Bloggers add to the communication of an event by either contributing new/original information or by reinforcing the reports made by the media. To what extent do new forms of media participate in agenda-setting? The position of this report is that via the agenda-setting function of the media, the media are able to influence public opinion. New media have been found clearly to influence a greater salience of news concerning security-related incidents. Bloggers can be seen to utilise similar salience cues in their reporting of events. Such cues include eye-catching headlines, images, videos, links and comments. However, sources of new media such as blogs do not appear to position themselves over the traditional news media. The case studies presented in this report reveal that bloggers provide little 'new' information in terms of description and reporting of events. New media then can, and has been argued does, reinforce the old media. In this setting, the news media can be seen as the primary 'keepers' of agenda-setting. Bloggers do not appear to challenge the existing agenda-setting structure to any great extent. Nevertheless, by reinforcing the news media's agenda, Citizen Journalists are in effect continuing to exert pressure on the salience of news. As a result, Citizen Journalists can be seen to play a role in shaping the public agenda. By contributing to the setting of the public agenda, Citizen Journalists are also linked to influencing public opinion of security-related issues. As a result, a relationship is present between Citizen Journalism and public opinion, whereby Citizen Journalists participate in the processes in which the 'media' influence public opinion.

Various problems have been identified as a result of the new media's contribution to the reporting of security-related events. One such problem is the development of 'conspiracy theories'. The process of being involved in conspiracy theories is associated with individuals' inability to comprehend the goings-on in the world around them. Conspiracy theories are able to function as a form of explanation for some individuals, allowing them to make sense of the world around them.⁴ For example, during the reporting of the Germany school shootings, conspiracy theories were found to be present. A blog post by *Twilight Language* points to March and April being 'copycat' months for school shootings to take place in Germany. A public blog is not under any form of private administration or inspection in terms of its content. A blogger then has the freedom to publish anything he/she deems relevant to the event. The only way in which such a post can be contested is via the comments (if allowed by the blogger). Large scale security events tend to attract multiple conspiracy theorists. For example, following the 9/11 terror attacks a number of conspiracy theories were identified, such as the US government being behind the attacks as a way of gaining access to oil in the Middle East. New forms of media are a useful tool for conspiracy theorists to publish their thoughts and beliefs. Recognising the limitation of truth within a blog post is crucial to the way the public may relate and interpret its content.

Stemming from the creation of conspiracy theories is also the problem of 'rumour'. Following an event, hype around the blogosphere may add to rumours surrounding an event. For example, Kyle Brady (2009) points to the role of Internet chat rooms in the Germany school shootings. Brady questions whether or not the police have investigated the evidence from chat-rooms.

"Which begs the question: have the police, or anyone of any authority, come across this "evidence" yet? I don't know if this is entirely real or not, but I think it's worth people knowing about – worth consideration." (Brady, 2009)

⁴ For further information on Conspiracy Theories – See Furedi, F. (2005) *Politics of Fear*. Continuum, London.

Following the swine flu pandemic rumours were plentiful. One of the bloggers, Mandias (2009), wrote a humorous post surrounding the symptoms surrounding swine flu. For example:

“As I reflect on my week I have to admit that I have been acting a little weird this week. Well weirder than I usually do. This weirdness I can deal with, what I find hard to deal with is that my behaviour is starting to resemble your average pig. This is one of the indication doctors use to determine if you have the dreaded swine flu...One example is that earlier today I ate something straight out of the rubbish bin. I usually don't act in this way but upon returning home for work I quickly had to rush out again to pick up the boys from daycare. Before I left I went to discard some rubbish into the kitchen rubbish bin. When I flicked the handy foot release, the lid flung open and revealed a half eaten chocolate muffin. Almost on reflex my hand was in there, carefully removing the muffin off the pile of pumpkin peels and silverside offcuts. One side of the muffin was soaked in one of the boy's morning porridge but this broke off easily and left me with almost a perfect muffin. It wasn't until I was halfway to Daycare that I realised what I had done.” (Mandias, 2009)

Mandias refers to acts symptomatic of swine flu such as ‘eating out of the rubbish bin’. Whilst this is a comical stance towards swine flu, it also presents a valid reality in which members of the public are increasingly seen to partake in ‘symptom sharing’. Following the outbreak, declaration of symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, aching and so forth was widespread. Blogs and other social networking tools such as *Twitter* offer audiences an arena in which they can contribute to discussion. This discussion may be in the form of humour as witnessed with Mandias or may be a serious claim made by a blogger. Blogs offer rumours the possibility of circulation. Members of the public utilise the Internet to convey and share their own theories and ideas surrounding events. These ideas are not necessarily based on fact and may contribute towards a misguided understanding of events, let alone adding to insecurity surrounding an event. Though rumours have always come about following an incident, the Internet allows rumours a greater wealth of voices and a greater audience. The damaging potential of a rumour on the Internet is far greater than a simple case of community Chinese Whispers.

Rumours are able to circulate as a result of the freedom of speech that new forms of media allow. Park (1940) points to Charles A. Dana, who argues that news is ‘*always something that will make people talk*’ (1940, p. 678). As a result, with new sources of media contributing to a greater salience of news, there is larger danger that news stories will be surrounded by gossip and rumour (1940, p. 79).

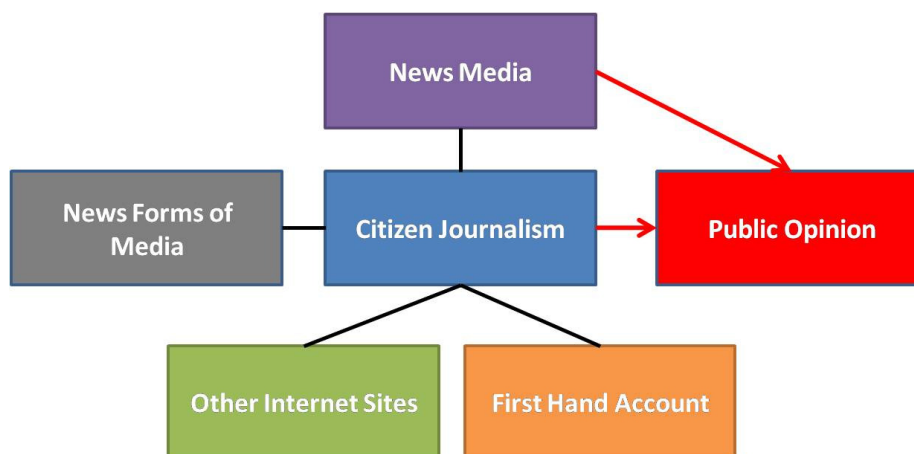
One way in which the Internet can be utilised as a useful mechanism battling against rumours is via a counter-claim by officials. For example, following the outbreak of swine flu, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can utilise social networking sites such as *Twitter* to guide individuals back to truthful claims. By dedicating a webpage to the issue, a team could be put in place to keep a watchful eye on rumours circulating the net and discounting the validity of these claims. It is apparent that there are a number of dangers in terms of well-being as a result of new media on the web. It is therefore crucial that officials take note of this and take action to counteract the potential damage that new media could cause. In this case, both good and bad can come from appropriate and intelligent use of new media.

The promotion of conspiracy theories and rumours may result in a heightened level of insecurity in society. In 1922 Walter Lippmann argued that individuals live in a ‘Pseudo-Environment’, which provides the individual with a number of pictures of the world. The pseudo-environment is the view of the world that exists in our mind – a view that according to Lippmann is often incomplete and at times inaccurate. For Lippmann, our behaviour corresponds to the pseudo-environment rather than our actual environment (McCombs, 2006, p. 21). In this sense, if new sources of media are adding to the number of pictures that influence our view of the world, there is greater potential for these

pictures to be distorted and/or inaccurate. An example of inaccurate posts was seen during eLUMINATI's blog post on the Germany school shootings. This distortion and inaccuracy contributes to individuals' insecurity about the world around them. Concern over distortion and inaccuracy has never been clearer than during the swine flu outbreak. *Twitter* was held culprit, accused of having great power to misinform people about swine flu. Yet some may ask whether some tweets were of trivial importance, and not regarded as official information.

The findings from the analysis of case studies has established that there is indeed evidence that Citizen Journalism assists with the construction of public opinion in society. This can be seen in two different ways. The first way is via an individual's firsthand experience of an event, which he/she then self-publishes via new forms of media. The second way in which Citizen Journalists can influence public opinion is via the Internet and their experience with the news media. The Internet allows individuals to access the news media, and enables them then to utilise new forms of social media such as blogs and *Twitter* to replicate news. New forms of media allow individuals to assist with the wider discussion and promotion of news surrounding an event. The following diagram serves as an explanation as to how Citizen Journalism and public opinion are intricately connected.

Figure 1: Citizen Journalism & Public Opinion



The case studies that have been utilised in this report suggest that the second approach to Citizen Journalism is more widespread than via an individual's primary experience with an event. New forms of media allow Citizen Journalists to influence public opinion in a number of ways. The construction of a blog post allows for an event to gain greater promotion across the Internet. Central to the construction of a blog post is the use of links, which allows individuals to guide his/her audience to other sources of information. Rebecca Blood (2003), author of the 'Weblog Handbook,' argues that the use of links gives a blog post a sense of accountability; authors that utilise links are seen as providing more reliable information, especially if they can refer their audience to the original source of information. In addition, a blog post that contains images and video content also establishes a much more 'realistic' and 'believable' post on the part of the audience. The final aspect in the presentation of a blog post is the use of comments. If a blogger allows his/her audience to comment on a blog post, this serves to widen the discussion surrounding an event. For analysis purposes a comment also serves as proof that the blog has an audience; without an audience there is no possibility of public opinion being influenced.

Blog posts serve to provide evidence that individuals have a vested interest in contributing to the news-making process. Individuals today do not simply sit back and consume the news as passive audiences, but play a crucial role in contributing to the deliverance of news. By use of a blog, Citizen Journalists contribute to expanding the communication of an event. This was seen in all case studies considered in this report. New forms of media are not restricted to giving a voice to members of the

public – they also supply officials with a voice. This gives officials the opportunity to set the public agenda with their claims. Therefore, those with authority are able to contribute directly to the construction of public opinion.

The involvement of new forms of media in influencing public opinion can be associated with a number of benefits and problems. As a result of advances in new media, members of the public are able to contribute to the wider discussion of events. Furthermore, new media give citizens an outlet for expression, to self-publish their own opinions and interpretations of events. Essentially, members of the public are given a voice. In addition to individuals benefiting from new forms of media, officials are also able to benefit. New media allow officials access to the public at large. They are able to direct their claims by themselves to members of the public; they too are given a platform to express themselves. On the downside, there are a number of problems that stem from the expansion of the new media. New media content is largely uncensored, and it is not verified for legitimacy. From this perspective, new forms of media hold the potential to relay inaccurate information which may misinform the public. In addition, the new forms of media allow rumours and conspiracy theories to be spread across the different mediums of communication. This, too, has the potential to misinform individuals and therefore can be seen to contribute to an increasingly insecure public. Public opinion of events is no longer solely influenced by traditional sources of media. In addition, opinion is now at the mercy of new media. Information is sought from a range of sources, resulting in an increasingly fragmented public opinion.

Conclusion

Citizen Journalism has been defined by Nip (2006) as those acts in which individuals are involved entirely in the practice of journalism. They are responsible for the gathering, production and publication of news. New forms of media on the Internet host a range of opportunities for Citizen Journalism to take place. Citizen Journalism analysed within this report is predominantly produced via the use of blogs. Results from a study by *Technorati* conducted revealed the size of the blogosphere, indicating that a phenomenal increase has taken place in society with citizens' use and exposure to blogs.

Citizen Journalism plays an important role in giving both individuals and officials a platform for expression. By using blogs, both the author and the author's audience are given an opportunity to voice their opinions on topical matters. The author has the primary opportunity for expression. He/she can choose how to frame the blog post in terms of language, use of links, images and video. The blogger's audience then has the opportunity to comment on a blog post if the author allows his/her audience to take part in the wider discussion of an event. New forms of media allow individuals to release comments and full statements surrounding an event. Citizen Journalism can also take place via the social networking sites such as *Twitter*. This service allows individuals to post a short comment, otherwise known as a tweet. An increasing number of users are using both blogs and *Twitter* to communicate and express opinions/views to the outside world. Alternatively, officials are also able to establish their own system of communication online. In this sense, the gap between officials and members of the public is narrowing. They are now able to share an arena where both parties can express their opinions. Furthermore, officials are able to make their own primary claims via new forms of media rather than having to compete with other claim makers for attention by the news media.

A crucial role of a Citizen Journalist is in communicating a wide range of information to his/her audience. Citizen Journalists are not restricted by deadlines, editorial decisions or any other need to report specific information. Instead, a Citizen Journalist has the freedom to express his/her opinion on any matter that he/she chooses. When considering the act of blogging, Citizen Journalists are not restricted by carrying capacity or any other time restraints. This gives the Citizen Journalist the added

benefit of communicating as much or as little information as he/she wishes to. The use of links in both blogs and tweets allows Citizen Journalists to link his/her audience to a wealth of alternative information, thereby further expanding the communication of information. Not only are Citizen Journalists able to communicate information, but with the act of allowing comments to be submitted to a blog, the Citizen Journalists allows his/her audience the possibility of adding to the communication of information. Essentially what we are witnessing with Citizen Journalism is the potential for unlimited information to be communicated to an increasingly wide and global audience.

The framing of an event by Citizen Journalists is similar to that of the news media. As with the news media, Citizen Journalists employ a number of salience cues. For a blog post, these cues include the use of attention-grabbing headlines, text, images and video content. Dissimilar to the news media, a blog post commonly employs the use of website links. These links can lead an audience to anywhere on the Internet. Commonly, bloggers use links to relate back to traditional sources of the news media, which not only adds validity to the blog, but in addition it adds to the wider promotion of the original news item. Bloggers may choose to include a comments section within a blog post. Incidentally, the use of comments is increasingly seen across the media, enticing the engagement of the audience. As argued elsewhere, comments are central to the wider discussion of an event and serve to assist with the framing of an event. A range of components add to the framing of a blog post. The framing of a tweet is the opposite of a blog post as it is extremely restricted: it can be no longer than 140 characters, which greatly limits the amount of information that the user is able to upload to the Internet. However, although 140 characters does not allow the user to write at length, it can allow individuals to be direct with what they are choosing to publish. Similar to a blog, a tweet has the potential to utilise links to lead the audience to various other sources of information. There are various ways that Citizen Journalists can utilise new forms of media to publish their own material. However, the way in which they can frame their material differs depending on the medium they use to communicate.

Results from the analysis in this report suggest that Citizen Journalism plays a potentially increasingly large role in the process of agenda-setting. It is widely recognised that the news media have an agenda-setting function whereby they decide what topics should be placed upon the news agenda. In turn, the agenda set by the media becomes the public agenda, which results in the shaping of public opinion. Rather than setting the media agenda, Citizen Journalists predominantly reinforce the agenda that the media have set. Citizen Journalists do, however, hold the power to decide what topics on the media agenda they choose to discuss. In this sense, there is some form of selection process involved in bloggers' choice of topics. The only exception to this rule can be seen in countries where the media are restricted in their coverage of national events. In this sense, pressure from Citizen Journalists can force issues on to the media agenda. This was seen in a sexual harassment case in Cairo, Egypt, in 2006, in which Citizen Journalists were able to challenge the agenda set by the news media, and place the case onto the media agenda.

The impact of Citizen Journalism upon the media is a relatively positive one. As a result of continuing the agenda set by the media, Citizen Journalists are able to reinforce statements by the media. From this perspective, a symbiotic relationship exists between the news media and Citizen Journalism. Unless present at the scene of an event, Citizen Journalists benefit from the media in that the media gives them a topic to discuss. On the other hand, the media benefit from Citizen Journalists, who supply their audiences with links to their sites. In this way, Citizen Journalists direct audiences towards the media. In addition, Citizen Journalists expand the salience of news items that the media are themselves trying to promote. As a result, both parties are likely to benefit; thus a symbiotic relationship between the two is present. However, at times the media may not serve to benefit from Citizen Journalism, particularly when Citizen Journalists challenge the media. This was seen during

the reporting of the 7/7 London bombings. Generally speaking, however, Citizen Journalism has a positive impact on the news media.

The efforts of the CPSI research project have identified a significant relationship between the media and its effect on public opinion. (For further information see: WP 2.3 Review of Existing Social Surveys and WP 4.3 Media Analysis). It is worth noting that since the planning stages of this research project, there have been considerable changes in individuals' use of new media, as well as the range of new media available and abilities of individuals to access new media. For this reason, it has been crucial for this research project to embrace the changes in the media that have come about and seek to understand their influence on perceived security.

This report began by establishing a strong correlation between the media and its ability to influence public opinion of security-related incidents. By and large, this was largely a result of the media's ability to direct the public agenda. The selective nature of the media made it possible to identify what news would be considered 'newsworthy'. As a result of a news item being newsworthy, the media would then be able to place the piece of news onto the news agenda. In turn, this would contribute to the development of a public agenda, which would eventually influence public opinion of security-related issues. As a result of advances in technology, the spectrum of media available in society has expanded. The development of the Internet brought along the possibility and feasibility of the re-routing of the media to become a form of global media. In addition to the formation of global media, the Internet has made it possible for members of the public to contribute directly to the reporting of news in the form of Citizen Journalism. Citizen Journalism has been made possible by new forms of media.

As a result of this initial investigation confirming a relationship between the media and public opinion, this report has been able to utilise this framework with regard to understanding whether or not new forms of media via Citizen Journalism can influence public opinion. Via the analysis of a number of European case studies relating to security, this report has confirmed that there is a relationship between Citizen Journalism and public opinion. Citizen Journalists reinforce the agenda set by the media via expanding the promotion of news events. In accordance with the framing of events by Citizen Journalists they are able to establish and encourage the discussion of events amongst the wider Internet population. As a result, this furthers the potential for Citizen Journalists to influence public opinion of events.

In establishing confirmation of this relationship between Citizen Journalism and its influence on public opinion, this report also identified a number of problems relating to the expansion in citizen based reporting/discussion of events. These problems are largely linked to the distortion of information. Citizen Journalism can be argued to breed the potential for rumours, conspiracy theories and inaccurate information to be circulated. The presence of rumours, conspiracy theories and inaccurate information was found in a number of the case studies analysed in this report. A possible consequence of this is an enhancement in individuals' insecurity: for example, an increase in panic and concern over the swine flu outbreak as highlighted by *Foreign Policy*.

A further problem is related to the idea of a wider range of media resulting in an increasingly segmented audience. From this perspective, whilst individuals are accessing a vast array of media for information regarding events, with different perspectives being presented, there is the possibility of an increasingly fragmented public opinion. In addition, this could result in a greater expansion of miscommunication; as a consequence this may also lead to a greater amount of public insecurity. Whilst this is not necessarily a direct problem for public opinion, it does represent a problem in the measurement of public opinion in society. This requires a great amount of attention to be paid to the working of the media, both old and new, in influencing public opinion.

New forms of media that allow for Citizen Journalism can also be seen to impact upon the communicative capabilities of officials. Crucially, these new forms of media lend a voice to officials. They are now able to take centre stage as and when they chose in the communication of information surrounding events. This not only makes it viable for officials openly to discuss matters with members of the public (for example, via *Twitter*), but it also allows for officials to influence public opinion without the aid of the news media. On the downside, this also implies that officials now have the capacity directly to influence public opinion. If taken advantage of, this could result in a greater degree of social power handed to elites, which could lead to abuses of power. This in turn this could exacerbate the trend towards the ‘politics of fear’, whereby officials are given a greater opportunity to set the public agenda. If the agenda is set to further the goals of officials, this has the potential greatly to affect public opinion of security-related matters. Further research is required to identify how much attention and trust individuals attribute to official sources of social media, which would enable understanding about the role of elites in influencing public opinion.

The following table presents both the negative and positive impacts of new forms of media on security:

New Media Impact on Perceptions of Security

Negative	Positive
Segmented Audience	Impact of Public Enhances Quality of Information
Creation of Distinct Pools of Communication	Challenge Media Monopoly
Miscommunication	Generates Debate
Rumours	Encourages Public Participation in Civic Society.

Negative Implications:

The following model (*figure 2 below*) identifies the relationships between the various negative consequences of Citizen Journalism with regards to the communication of security in society.

Figure 2: Negative Implications of Citizen Journalism influencing Public Opinion of Security.



1. *Segmented Audience*: As a result of expanding media, audiences are less subject to a common experience via the mass media. Instead, individuals are presented with a range of different media allowing them to branch off and utilise different media for different purposes. As a consequence there is now extensive segmentation within audiences. Resulting from this is the problem of *miscommunication*. Different audiences are subjected to different claims, which are not necessarily of a reliable nature. The growth of individuals being able to submit claims indirectly implies that there is the possibility of the spread of inaccurate information. Segmentation within audiences implies a fragmented public opinion. As a result, it will be extremely difficult accurately to measure and understand public opinion of security related issues.
2. *Creation of Distinct Pools of Communication*: A danger with new forms of media is that it encourages individuals to discuss security-related information within a self-contained group. As a result, individuals are discussing security-related events with a select few. If information is inaccurate, this could result in individuals being falsely informed of matters, leading to distrust and apprehension. This again places pressure on the possibility of *miscommunication* of information, which could result in greater insecurity amongst individuals.
3. *Miscommunication*: Points 1 and 2 allude to the problem of miscommunication as a result of new media. Not only can miscommunication of security related events result from segmented audiences and the creation of distinct pools of communication, but furthermore it could take place as a result of Citizen Journalism. If individuals are relaying inaccurate information surrounding events, this has the power to misinform the Citizen Journalist's audience. Once information is internalised by one individual, it has the power to spread. This in turn holds the potential for Chinese whispers. Whereby as information is relayed between individuals the greater the potential for false information to be communicated. This has already been highlighted by *Foreign Policy*, as a potential for causing panic amongst individuals, as was seen in the case of swine flu. As individuals increasingly turn to new media for information, the power to be misinformed also increases.
4. *Rumour*: As a result of miscommunication, new media allows rumours to be spread. By its very nature, new media allows any individual the power to publish information. As a result, not all information is verified. As information is discussed amongst individuals this can cause the spread of inaccurate information, resulting in rumour. In addition to rumour, the availability of self-publication allows individuals a platform for discussing and declaring conspiracy theories surrounding events. This encourages a climate of suspicion and insecurity within society.
5. *Challenge for Policy Makers*: All four points made above pose a challenge for policy makers in dealing with the negative implications of new media. This raises questions as to how policy makers can keep tabs on Citizen Journalism – and whether they even should. In addition, new forms of media pose a problem to policy makers in terms of what the best route is in reaching audiences. Is having a Twitter Tsar, as appointed by the UK Labour Party, the best way of maintaining communication with audiences? Engagement with new forms of media by policy makers is key in countering many of the negative impacts of new forms of media. (A discussion of how this engagement can take place will follow).

Positive Implications:

Figure 3, below, identifies the positive outcomes of the growth of Citizen Journalism.

Figure 3: Positive Implications of Citizen Journalism



1. *Impact of Public Enhances Quality of Information:* As a result of the wide range of sources of media available to members of the public, there is now a greater wealth of information available for audiences to consume. As a result, this places pressure on the ‘big’ media to ensure the quality of their reports. Otherwise, the public are able to access both a platform and audience to challenge publicly the authority and information relayed by the traditional media. In addition, Citizen Journalists are able to self-publish their own material, enabling first-hand accounts of security-related events to be broadcast to the world. Between pressure on the big media and the expansion of Citizen Journalism in society, a greater quality of information is now available to audiences.
2. *Challenge the Media Monopoly:* Advances in technology have placed power into the hands of the public. The public are now able directly to challenge the existing media monopoly, and the media have to compete for attention to gain an audience. Citizen-based media such as *Digital Journal* can challenge the media monopoly. Effectively, the media are no longer the sole owners of the means by which claims can be made. New forms of media allow individuals, both public and official, to participate in non-direct claim making (NDC).
3. *Generate Debate:* New forms of media benefit the public in that they allow the public to participate in debates over security issues. Whether citizens choose to participate in Participatory Journalism or Citizen Journalism, new forms of media allow for individuals to voice their opinions. Additionally, new forms of media such as *Twitter* allow for a public space for debate and discussion between those in positions of authority and members of the public. As argued by Lowery (2009), this allows for meaningful conversation between users.
4. *Encourages Public Participation in Civic Society:* New forms of media encourage the public’s participation in debate. Whether the public is reading, discussing, debating or challenging existing information, they are able to take control and voice their own opinions. Individuals are no longer at the mercy of simply consuming news regarding security; they are now at the forefront of civic discussion. This potentially allows power to be reinstated to the individual.

New forms of media have both a negative and positive impact on the communication of information relating to security. As a result it is important to consider 'what can be done' to enable a greater understanding and positive use of new forms of social media.

Engaging with New Media

- *Social Surveys*: In line with our findings from a 'Review of Existing Social Surveys' (Work Package 2.3) there is a need for amendments in current designs of social surveys to include questions on the role of new media within the shaping of public opinion of security-related issues. Questions need to identify: viewing habits, contribution habits, time spent online, the extent of the role of the media in shaping opinion of events. This can be achieved by listing a selection of the various types of media, rather than solely relying on traditional sources of media outlets such as newspapers and online news. Overall, public opinion surveys must pay greater attention to viewing habits. Surveys must engage with new sources of media, understand how they work and incorporate them into existing surveys. By doing so, this will ensure greater understanding of public opinion of security-related events.
- *News Media*: The media must also take note of the wealth of new media that surrounds them. They must engage with their readers by understanding where else readers are seeking information. In addition, the media should take it upon themselves to maintain watch over breaking news from alternative new media sources. The 'big' media should take partial responsibility for countering unofficial/inaccurate claims that are made via new forms of media. This would result in greater trust towards the 'big media' and would ensure that the public are not misinformed. As argued by Lowery (2009), a symbiotic relationship can exist between new forms of media and the news media, but it is necessary for the news media to filter information and confirm facts before re-broadcasting.
- *Policy Makers*: In addition to the media taking on this responsibility, officials are also able to play a crucial role in countering unofficial/inaccurate information. Both parties must engage with new forms of media. In addition, official sources of information should relish the opportunity of being able to directly engage with their audience. A greater amount of time and attention should be paid to participating in public discussion of events. For example, on the 22nd September 2009, CPSC, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, released news of the launch of its service 'CPSC 2.0'. Via social networking services it will be able to communicate directly with its audience over 'lifesaving and safety initiatives' (CPSC, 2009). The technology and media is available for officials to engage with their audiences; it is simply a matter of time before officials realise the potential 'good' that can come from engaging with new forms of media.
 - Both the news media and officials must take note that when using new forms of media such as *Twitter* audiences respond to a humanised tweet. As argued by Lowrey (2009), utilising tweets for breaking news is not simply a case of repeating headlines to direct audiences to their websites. Automation is not the answer. Instead, *Twitter* users must remain 'human' and tweet alternative information that they would not otherwise use their website for. New forms of media allow for interaction with audiences, repetition of headlines does not entail interaction. Via social media, barriers are broken down between the media/officials and their audiences; it is necessary for the media/officials to make the most of this and communicate with their audiences.
- *The Public*: The public must also take note of the dangers surrounding new forms of media. Perhaps it would be fruitful to encourage officials both to 'warn' and to encourage the public. Individuals need to be educated in both the benefits and problems surrounding new forms of media. It is extremely difficult to monitor Citizen Journalism, but with attention from those in a position of power to 'presenting' the benefits and problems of new forms of media, steps can be

taken to embrace new media. As argued by Dan Gillmor (2009), 'active engagement' is key in maintaining public involvement in the news-making process. Active engagement requires individuals not to be passive audiences, but to take hold of and relinquish the involvement that individuals are now able to have with the media; essentially we must become what Gillmor calls 'active users'.

The impact of the news media upon public opinion has been widely recognised by the academic community. This report has revealed that members of the public spend an increasing amount of the leisure time online; including their pursuit and consumption of the news. Research must bring itself into the current age and stop focusing all its efforts on traditional media. If we are to believe that newspaper readership is in decline, we must consider where these readers are re-positioning themselves. Are they using one form of online media, or are they exposing themselves to several sources of media? Recently media tycoon Rupert Murdoch has released information about his intention to secure the position of the press online by charging members of the public to read online articles (*BBC, 2009*). With free information/news updates elsewhere, this move holds the potential to push individuals to seek 'free' sources of information elsewhere. Pure Citizen Journalism sites such as *Digital Journal* (2009) may become more prominent in individuals' use and search of information related to security events. As a result, Citizen Journalism would rapidly gain prominence in its ability and role in influencing public opinion.

Since its inception, the CPSI project has made efforts to understand, take note of and incorporate the evolving new media into an understanding of perceived security. Those concerned with public insecurity need to engage with the changes in the media that have been highlighted in this report. Opinion research must stay afloat and branch out of its secure zone of the 'traditional media' to analyse the influence of all avenues of the news media: professional, participatory and Citizen Journalism. Only then will we have a concise understanding of how public opinion of security is formed.

Appendix A: 7/7 Blogs

	Blog Title	Website
1	Jack Lewis.Net	http://jacklewis.net/
2	Gorilla In the Room	http://gorillaintheroom.blogspot.com
3	Althouse	http://www.althouse.blogspot.com/
4	First Draft	http://www.timporter.com/firstdraft/
5	Andrew's Photoblog	http://www.andrewor.com
6	CNET News Blog	http://news.cnet.com/
7	City of Sound	http://www.cityofsound.com/blog/
8	Psyblog	http://www.spring.org.uk/
9	The Memory Bank	http://www.thememorybank.co.uk/2005/
10	The Pagan Prattle	http://www.prattle.net/archives/
11	Tabloid Edition	http://timworstall.typepad.com/
12	World Changing Change Your Thinking	http://www.worldchanging.com/
13	The RoBlog	http://theroblog.blogspot.com/
14	MediaCricity	http://mediacricity.blogspot.com/
15	Sudan Watch	http://sudanwatch.blogspot.com/
16	Ancrene Wiseass	http://ancrenewiseass.blogspot.com/
17	A Fistful of Euros	http://fistfulofeuros.net/afoe/
18	The Conglomerate	http://www.theconglomerate.org
19	Aqoul	http://www.aqoul.com
20	Jihad Watch	http://www.ijihadwatch.org
21	No Signal Input	http://www.nosignalinput.co.uk
22	blog.delaranja.com	http://blog.delaranja.com
23	Google Blog Scoped	http://blogscoped.com
24	Tarkan Deluxe	http://tarkandeluxe.blogspot.com
25	dbrady.net	http://dbrady.net
26	Rising Hegemon	http://rising-hegemon.blogspot.com
27	Haight Speech	http://www.leftist.org
28	Search Engine Watch	http://blog.searchenginewatch.com
29	Searc Engine Roundtable	http://www.seroundtable.com
30	Informed Comment	http://www.juancole.com/
31	Bookworm Room	http://bookwormroom.blogspot.com/
32	Camworld	http://www.camworld.com
33	The Big Picture	http://bigpicture.typepad.com
34	LaurenceJarvikOnline	http://laurencejarvikonline.blogspot.com
35	Jews sans frontieres	http://jewssansfrontieres.blogspot.com
36	New Economist	http://neweconomist.blogs.com
37	Terranav	http://www.terranav.net/
38	Lennin's Tomb	http://leninology.blogspot.com
39	News Hounds	http://www.newshounds.us
40	...Or Does it Explode?	http://www.ordoesitexplode.com

41	Cowboy Caleb	http://cowboycaleb.liquidblade.com
42	Reason Online	http://www.reason.com
43	Micro Persuasion	http://www.micropersuasion.com
44	The Counterterrorism Blog	http://counterterror.typepad.com
45	PyroManiac	http://phillipjohnson.blogspot.com
46	Webbed Fet, Web Log	http://jinja.apsara.org/blog/
47	Global Gurreillas	http://globalguerrillas.typepad.com
48	The Blog Herald	http://www.blogherald.com
49	AfricaVox	http://panos.blogs.com
50	The Corridor	http://www.cricket.mailliw.com
51	Emergent Chaos	http://www.emergentchaos.com
52	Way Off Bass	http://wayoffbass.blogspot.com
53	The QandO Blog	http://www.qando.net
54	IMAO	http://www.imao.us
55	Captain's Quarters	http://www.captainsquartersblog.com
56	The Quaker Ranter	http://www.quakerranter.org
57	Your Village Voice	http://yourvillage.blogspot.com
58	The Command Post	http://www.command-post.org
59	Corante	http://unwired.corante.com/
60	Dailly Sally	http://dailysally.blogspot.com
61	Annika's Journal	http://annika.mu.nu
62	Grateful Dating	http://www.gratefuldating.net
63	24ahead.com	http://24ahead.com
64	Jeff Matthews is not making this up	http://jeffmatthewsisnotmakingthisup.blogspot.com
65	Sepia Mutiny	http://www.sepiamutiny.com
66	Escape of the freelance conscience	http://freelanceconscience.blogspot.com
67	Para Pundit	http://www.parapundit.com
68	Anders Jacobsen's blog	http://www.jacobsen.no/anders/blog/
69	Vergil Reality	http://members.optushome.com.au
70	Informaniac Behind the News	http://heraldresearch.blogspot.com
71	American Street	http://www.reachm.com
72	Blatant Optimism	http://www.sparklefluff.com
73	Simplicity	http://simplicityitk.blogspot.com
74	Instapundit.com	http://www.pajamasmedia.com
75	Hyscience	http://www.hyscience.com
76	Flickr	http://www.flickr.com/photos/murky/24288645/
77	Livingroom	http://www.livingroom.org.au
78	Grok Your World	http://www.grokyourworld.com
79	Simon World	http://simonworld.mu.nu
80	Blackinformant	http://www.blackinformant.com/
81	Bloggelydook	http://www.bloggelydook.com
82	Around the world in 80 days	http://in80days.blogspot.com
83	TreeHuggerz Blog	http://treehuggerz.blogspot.com
84	The Black Kettle	http://theblackkettle.blogspot.com
85	Steve's random and often belligerent journal	http://tyrell.livejournal.com/

86	Confederate Yankee	http://confederateyankee.mu.nu
87	The Belmont Club	http://fallbackbelmont.blogspot.com
88	Making Light	http://nielsenhayden.com
89	The Jarndyce Blog	http://fairvotewatch.blogspot.com/
90	EU Referendum	http://eureferendum.blogspot.com
91	Dhimmi Watch	http://www.ijihadwatch.org/
92	Church of the big sky	http://www.merujo.com
93	Across the Bay	http://beirut2bayside.blogspot.com
94	Jessey.net	http://jessey.net/
95	Empire Burlesque 1.0	http://empireburlesquenow.blogspot.com
96	The Mudville Gazette	http://www.mudvillegazette.com/
97	Ralph the Sacred River	http://ralphriver.blogspot.com/
98	Podcast NYC.net	http://www.podcastnyc.net
99	The Fire Ant Gazette	http://www.ericriegmund.com
100	The Radical Centrist	http://www.theradicalcentrist.com
101	Crow's Nest	http://moizkhan.blogspot.com
102	Cyber Chocolate	http://cyberchocolate.blogspot.com
103	Shadow Warrior	http://rajeev2004.blogspot.com
104	Steve Clift's Notes	http://www.dowire.org
105	Sirotablog	http://www.davidsirota.com
106	Northwest Progressive Institute Official Blog	http://www.nwprogressive.org
107	The Jawa Report	http://mypetjawa.mu.nu
108	girtby.net	http://girtby.net/
109	Squaring the Bostong Globe	http://squaringtheglobe.blogspot.com
110	techno.blog	http://almaer.com
111	Snapshots a camera blog	http://blog.camera.org
112	Yes! Magazine	http://www.yesmagazine.org
113	Free Thoughts on Iran	http://freethoughts.org
114	Willisms	http://www.willisms.com
115	Rconversation	http://rconversation.blogs.com
116	Be Specific	http://www.bespacific.com
117	Thinking Anglicans	http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk
118	Castrovalva	http://www.logopolis.org.uk
119	Respublica	http://respublica.typepad.com
120	Rhymes with Right	http://rhymeswithright.mu.nu
121	Normblog	http://normblog.typepad.com
122	Skype Journal	http://skypejournal.com
123	Kung Fu Monkey	http://kfmonkey.blogspot.com
124	Yoav's Space	http://yoavs.blogspot.com
125	The Ryan King	http://theyrinking.com
126	Where Worlds Collide	http://www.kalyr.com
127	Countersignature	http://countersignature.blogspot.com
128	Grasping Reality with Both Hands	http://delong.typepad.com
129	Legacy Matters	http://estatevaults.com
130	View from the Pew	http://pewview.mu.nu

131	BTC News	http://www.btcnews.com
132	The Florida Masochist	http://thefloridamasochist.blogspot.com
133	Bloggerheads	http://www.bloggerheads.com
134	Orthomom	http://orthomom.blogspot.com
135	Hughes for America	http://hughesforamerica.typepad.com
136	Europhobia	http://europhobia.blogspot.com
137	Socienics	http://econlog.econlib.org
138	Great Smoky	http://greatsmoky.blogspot.com
139	Mystery Pollster	http://www.mysterypollster.com
140	The Smedley Log	http://www.thesmedleylog.com
141	The Huffington Post	http://www.huffingtonpost.com
142	Rhodarian	http://www.iori.ri.gov
143	Michelle Malkin	http://michellemalkin.com
144	Too Much Information	http://alex.tsd.net.au
145	Perrpectives	http://www.perrpectives.com
146	Different River	http://differentriver.com
147	Drunken Blog	http://www.drunkenblog.com
148	Corante Moore's Log	http://mooreslore.corante.com
149	WorldAndUs	http://journalism.berkeley.edu
150	Jennifer's History and Stuff	http://jenlars.mu.nu
151	Rubber Hose	http://upyvernoz.blogspot.com
152	Horizon	http://horizon.bloghouse.net
153	Alarming News	http://www.alarmingnews.com
154	Three Years of Hell to become the Devil	http://www.threeyearsofhell.com
155	The Iraq War was Wrong Blog	http://iraqwarwrong.blogspot.com
156	Jeff Krimmel	http://jeffkrimmel.com
157	Message for my friends	http://www.flickr.com/photos/davegoodman/24234488/
158	Wirecan	http://wirecan.blogspot.com
159	The Volokh Conspiracy	http://volokh.com
160	Thirdwavedave	http://thirdwavedave.blogspot.com
161	Mistress of the Dorkness	http://mistressofthedorkness.blogspot.com
162	Science, Religion and Citizenship	http://dndylion.blogspot.com
163	Professor Chaos	http://professorchaos.mu.nu
164	The Astute Bloggers	http://astuteblogger.blogspot.com
165	Another Worthless Blog	http://www.enthalpy.net
166	Leo Kelb's Stories	http://leokelbs.blogspot.com
167	Watching Washington	http://watchingwashington.blogspot.com
168	Guido Fawke's Blog	http://www.order-order.com
169	Anticipatory Retaliation	http://anticipatoryretaliation.mu.nu
170	Karen's Musings	http://estherchaya.livejournal.com
171	dan.lucas	http://www.ibiblio.org
172	Red State Son	http://redstateson.blogspot.com
173	A Watercolor Artist's Journal	http://emcroe.blogspot.aom
174	Ragged Thots	http://raggedthots.blogspot.com
175	The Black Kettle	http://theblackkettle.blogspot.com

176	Pacific Views	http://www.pacificviews.org/weblog/
177	Blogenspiel	http://blogenspiel.blogspot.com
178	Kn@ppster	http://knappster.blogspot.com
179	Paul Kingsnorth	http://www.paulkingsnorth.net
180	My Many My's	http://mymanymys.blogspot.com
181	Chocolate and Gold Coin's	http://chocolateandgoldcoins.blogspot.com
182	micah holmquist's irregular thoughts and links	http://mth.blogspot.com
183	Random Pensees	http://randompensees.mu.nu
184	Blue Sun 2600	http://bluesun2600.blogspot.com
185	Buzz Machine	http://www.buzzmachine.com
186	Colorado Politics Archives	http://coloradopoliticalnews.blogs.com
187	neo-neocon	http://neo-neocon.blogspot.com
188	Peenie Wallie	http://www.peeniewallie.com
189	Gridskipper	http://gridskipper.com
190	Babalu	http://www.babalublog.com
191	Roads of Stone	http://roadsofstone.com
192	Capitalist Pic vs Socialist Swine	http://pig-vs-swine.blogspot.com
193	Upside Downsie World	http://blog.nerdchic.net
194	The Wicked Stage	http://thewickedstage.blogspot.com
195	ethiopundit	http://ethiopundit.blogspot.com

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