**Cyberspace**

Online journalism is journalism more or less produced for the World Wide Web (unlike print, radio and television journalism) .It exploits the unique characteristics of the Internet. A network of networks, joining many government, university and private computers together and providing an infrastructure for the use of E-mail, bulletin boards, file archives, hypertext documents, databases and other computational resources The vast collection of computer networks which form and act as a single huge network for transport of data and messages across distances which can be anywhere from the same office to anywhere in the world.

First conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the United States government in 1969.The ARPANet was a project funded primarily by U.S. military sources such as the Department of Defense. Journalism is any non-fiction or documentary narrative that reports or analyzes facts and events firmly rooted in time (either topical or historical) which are selected and arranged by reporters, writers, and editors to tell a story from a particular point of view. Journalism has traditionally been published in print, presented on film, and broadcast on television and radio. "Online" includes many venues. Most prominent is the World Wide Web

**Distinguishing characteristics of online journalism as compared to traditional journalism Online = real time**

Online journalism can be published in real time, updating breaking news and events as they happen. Nothing new here -- we've had this ability with telegraph, teletype, radio, and TV.

**Online = shifted time**

Online journalism also takes advantage of shifted time. Online publications can publish and archive articles for viewing now or later, just as print, film, or broadcast publications can. WWW articles can be infinitely easier to access, of course.

**Online = multimedia**

Online journalism can include multimedia elements: text and graphics (Newspapers and books), plus sound, music, motion video, and animation (Broadcast radio, TV, film), 3D, etc.

**Online = interactive**

Online journalism is interactive. Hyperlinks represent the primary mechanism for this interactivity on the Web, linking the various elements of a lengthy, complex work, introducing multiple points of view, and adding depth and detail. A work of online journalism can consist of a hyperlinked set of web pages; these pages can themselves include hyperlinks to other web sites. Traditional journalism guides the reader through a linear narrative. The online journalist lets readers become participants, as they click their way through a hyperlinked set of pages. Narrative momentum and a strong editorial voice pull a reader through a linear narrative. With interactivity, the online journalist can pre- determine, to a certain extent, the reader/participant's progress through the material, but manifold navigation pathways, branching options, and hyperlinks encourage the reader/participant to continue to explore various narrative threads assembled by the reporter/writer/editor. A web of interlinked pages is also an ideal mechanism to give reader/participants access to a library of source documents and background information that form the foundation of an extensive journalistic investigation. Readers/participants can respond instantly to material presented by the online journalist; this response can take several forms. Email to the reporter or editor resembles the traditional letter to editor of print publications, but email letters can be published much sooner online than in print. Online journalists can also take advantage of threaded discussions that let readers respond immediately to an article, and to the comments of other readers, in a bulletin board-style discussion that can be accessed at any time. Readers can become participants in the ongoing co-creation of an editorial environment that evolves from the online journalist's original reporting and the initial article. Blogs (short for "Web log", a Web-based journal) make this easy. Much of the journalism published on the Web and elsewhere online amounts to nothing more than traditional magazine or newspaper articles and graphics, perhaps with some added links to related web sites. By providing an instant, ubiquitous, cheap distribution medium, the Internet adds tremendous value to such articles. Journalists are still experimenting and discovering how best to take advantage of interactivity and hyper linking to create distinctive works that take advantage of the benefits of the online medium

**Characteristics of online journalism**

**Hypertextuality**

A news story is connected to other stories, archives, and resources and so on through hyperlinks

**Interactivity**

* Complexity of choice available
* Responsiveness to the user
* Facilitation of interpersonal communication
* Ease of adding information
* Multimodality

It has to do with the media format or formats that may best convey given news story. Media are means of disseminating knowledge.

**Characteristics of the Internet**

1. Anonymity
2. Interactivity
3. Beyond geography
4. Online community
5. Lower cost to participate in the public sphere
6. Lower threshold for self-expression of political opinions

**Potential of the Internet**

1. Active, participatory citizenship
2. Not only consumption but production
3. Undermines the centralized control of information
4. Reflects the range of views and ideas
5. Improve the level of civic engagement among younger generation

**Limitations of the Internet**

Inaccuracy: misrepresent and lie

Internet news audience is smaller than that of the traditional media Entertainment rather than political engagement

“Digital divide”: a class system based on (a) computer ownership, (b) Internet access, and (c) computer literacy that corresponds with social economic statuses

**How digital journalism has changed the way we access the news?**

The development of digital journalism has radically changed the way people access the news. The introduction of the internet opened the way for the creation of an entirely new medium of journalism a online journalism. Online journalism presents users with the unprecedented ability to chose when, where and what news they will receive. The traditional news media of broadcast, print and radio all broadcast, publish or air their bulletins at the time they chose, in the order they chose and to the depth they chose. However, online journalism allows the user to access the news at any time from any computer or personal device with an internet connection. Once connected, the user can select the stories they wish to view and can easily access further information on the story if they so desire. **Interactivity of Online Journalism**

These developments have given the user an unprecedented amount of interactivity when accessing the news. People have always interacted with the media however, interactivity is far more flexible in online journalism (DeWold, 2001: 102). Users can sign up for an online newspaper and be regularly emailed stories about their interests; online journalism also gives the user unprecedented possibilities in responding to the story. After reading a story the user can email the journalist to tell them what they thought of the article, join a chat group to discuss the article or post a comment on a feedback page.

**Construction of Online Journalism**

Studies into how users digest content on online journalism sites show that users consume the story in a completely different way to users of traditional journalism media. In the early stages of online journalism many sites where attached to news outlets who simply posted their print story or the script of the radio story onto the page. This proved to be ineffective as writing for the online world is vastly different from writing for the printed page (DeWolk, 2001: 90). Author Martha Sammons pointed out in her Internet Writer Book that people read off the computer screen thirty percent slower then they read off paper. Also, people do not read carefully online, rather they scan. If they cannot quickly and easily find the information they are after they promptly leave the site (DeWolk, 2001: 90).To complement this, online journalism developed its own style of story construction. Presenting the story in chunks allows the reader to quickly scan the story and single out the passages relevant to them (Ward, 2002: 148). Presenting information in the form of bulleted lists, tables, graphs or other clear graphic elements allow the reader to get the information they want quickly (DeWolk, 2001: 92). The writing towards the end of the page should not conclude the story but rather should compel the user to link onto other pages connected to the story.

In broadcast, print and radio the story is presented to the user in a linear fashion. The journalist decides how the story should be constructed and it is presented to the audience in the manner chosen by the journalist. The user would then hear, read or view the story from start to finish giving the user the option of either consuming it or not. To a certain extent, the journalist can try to guide the user through the story but ultimately the result rests with the user (Millison, 2004). The hyper textual nature of online journalism allows the user to read the parts of the story they wish to, link onto other pages within the site, play audio grabs or view short video pieces. To encompass this, the journalist must construct the story to be non-linear, allowing the user to be able to easily follow the story as they want to. Online journalism is the place "where television, radio, and the new media forms of the internet collide" (Hall, 2001: 6). This

Convergence within Journalism is likely to change everything journalists think they understand about mass media (DeWolk, 2003: 85)

**Immediacy of Online Journalism**

Immediacy has always been a fundamental element of journalism as the very nature of the new is that it is new Broadcast and radio were traditionally the most immediate form of journalism as, should a major story break, they could interrupt their programming with a bulletin. However, they are still constrained by deadlines and cannot explore the story in too much depth (Gunter, 2003: 48). Print journalism allows story depth but often the story is not reported until the morning after. Online journalism provides perhaps the best arena for distributing news quickly (DeWolk, 2001: 51) as it presents the immediacy of broadcast and radio with the depth of print. However, this has presented a problematic question for news organizations that run both a traditional and online outlet whether or not to break a story on the online site before broadcasting or publishing it. "In the one hand, the news organization wants to take advantage of the incredible speed of the internet and be the one to break the story. On the other hand the organization does not want to beat its own primary news vehicle and tell competitor what it has. The again, the organization wants to use the web site as a promotion for its primary news product. But it does not want to make it unnecessary for people to purchase the newspaper or to watch or listen to a broadcast because they saw the story on the Web already." (DeWolk, 2003: 172-3)