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**STEPPING BACK FROM THE GATE:  
Online Newspaper Editors and the Co-Production of Content in Campaign 2004**  
Jane B. Singer

**Abstract:** In their coverage of the 2004 political campaign, editors of Web sites affiliated with major U.S. newspapers continued to emphasize their role as providers of credible information. But they moved toward seeing that information less as an end product than as a basis for user engagement, participation, and personalization. This study, which builds on a similar study conducted after the 2000 election, suggests journalists may be taking steps toward reshaping their gatekeeping role to accommodate the interactive nature of the Internet.

Journalists see themselves as central to the democratic process. In the journalist's view of democracy, the notion of citizen sovereignty rests on the quality of information that those citizens possess – and it is up to journalists to provide it.<sup>1</sup> Giving citizens the information they need to be free and self-governing has been defined as the primary purpose of journalism.<sup>2</sup>

Editors have contributed to this process primarily through their role as gatekeepers, ensuring through their selection of content that “the community shall hear as a fact” only what the editor determines is suitable.<sup>3</sup> Yet the power of such gatekeepers seems to diminish in a modern information society.<sup>4</sup> The Internet defies the whole notion of a “gate” and challenges the idea that journalists (or anyone else) can or should limit what passes through it. At the same time, the sheer quantity of information online, along with its wildly varying quality, reinforces the need for someone to sort it out as well as to lend it credibility and, ideally, utility.

This article explores editors' reconceptualization of their gatekeeping role in the democratic process. It suggests that as they continue to "normalize" the Internet<sup>5</sup> as a vehicle for journalism, journalists still see themselves as a primary source of credible political information. But more of that information than in the past is explicitly intended as a starting point rather than an end product for audience members. Online editors are increasingly accommodating the interactive, participatory nature of the medium, simultaneously redefining and reaffirming their own space within it. To investigate this subject, the article presents and analyzes findings of a 2004 follow-up to a 2000 study of online newspapers' campaign coverage. The results indicate a continuing focus on providing information but suggest a growing emphasis on content that serves as the raw material for user participation and personalization.

### ***Literature Review***

Previous work in several areas is relevant to this study. This section begins with an overview of how journalists have (or have not) taken advantage of the interactive capabilities of the Internet. Literature related to online political communication is then summarized, followed by a review of the evolving concept of the journalist as gatekeeper.

#### ***Online Journalists and Interactivity***

Nearly 1,200 U.S. daily newspapers currently offer online versions,<sup>6</sup> and the Internet is a regular news source for half of Americans.<sup>7</sup> Online journalism has become a regular subject of academic inquiry; attempts to document the extent to which journalists are taking advantage of the medium's inherently interactive nature are directly relevant here. Findings have been mixed, partly because of conceptual disagreement about what "interactivity" means.<sup>8</sup> Definitions encompass a range of user capabilities, from clicking on a hyperlink to construct a non-linear story<sup>9</sup> to providing feedback to professional communicators<sup>10</sup> to engaging in online discourse and forming virtual

communities.<sup>11</sup> The most valuable definitions for the purpose of this study relate to a user's ability to "participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time."<sup>12</sup>

Applying a journalistic framework, Massey and Levy call this concept "content interactivity," or "the degree to which journalists technologically empower consumers over content."<sup>13</sup>

Journalists have been slow to let go of "the 'we write, you read' dogma of modern journalism."<sup>14</sup> Traditional media have been criticized for failing "to really take reader response and reader-to-reader communication seriously"<sup>15</sup> as they move online, opting to repurpose existing content rather than capitalize on the medium's ability to support interactivity and personalization.<sup>16</sup> A recent industry study found that users had relatively few options for manipulating content or tailoring it to their own needs, although such options varied widely among the news sites analyzed.<sup>17</sup> One observer has characterized the audience's relationship to online journalism as "the biggest question of all in looking at the future of the profession,"<sup>18</sup> as users become active co-producers of online content. This idea of user-manipulable content as a definition of interactivity is especially useful in considering online campaign coverage.

### ***Online Political Communication***

The notion of an active audience is critical in considering the Internet's potential effect on democratic society. The idea of an electronically enabled public sphere, a zone in which authentic public opinion can emerge from unfettered, rational discourse,<sup>19</sup> continues to tantalize scholars. Yet despite high hopes for the potential of an "electronic republic" to empower citizens,<sup>20</sup> a decade of Web use has led many to conclude that a "virtual sphere" is just a dream. These observers emphasize that although the medium offers a useful place for political discussion and may encourage greater pluralism, technology alone cannot foster democracy by engendering political interest or engagement.<sup>21</sup> The Internet may affect the expression of political communication but cannot and will not change its internal structures.

Building on these ideas, some empirical research suggests that as political players have moved online over the past decade, they have begun “normalizing” the new medium. From this perspective, users are incorporating the Internet into existing political behavior patterns instead of using it to generate significantly new ones;<sup>22</sup> the medium thus reflects users’ offline interests, experiences, and desire to communicate.<sup>23</sup> Citizens turn to the Web for traditional uses and gratifications, including surveillance, entertainment, and social utility.<sup>24</sup> Candidates and politicians have used the medium largely to strengthen long-standing goals, notably a desire to exercise message control and thus shape both public perceptions and the media agenda.<sup>25</sup> Candidates in 2004 used the Internet extensively to expand such traditional political activities as raising funds and mobilizing supporters.<sup>26</sup> Journalists, too, are normalizing the Internet, which they conceptualize primarily as a medium for delivery of information, including political information.<sup>27</sup>

However, there is contradictory evidence that citizens are indeed using the Internet as a political vehicle in novel ways. Johnson and Kaye found that online activity may help stimulate civic engagement, with Internet use predicting political attitudes.<sup>28</sup> Scheufele and his colleagues also document evidence of connections between online political discourse and civic engagement.<sup>29</sup> Foot and Schneider describe the Web as a site for co-production of political content by elites and non-elites; for a “carnival” or playful engagement with and creation of political content; and for mobilization of grassroots political actors. They call for consideration of the Web as “a robust dimension of the U.S. public sphere.”<sup>30</sup> Papacharissi suggests the heated nature of much online political discourse may extend the public sphere by providing a space for healthy disagreement.<sup>31</sup>

The 2004 political campaign produced evidence of novel forms of citizen engagement in online political communication. Especially noteworthy were the prominence and influence of political bloggers<sup>32</sup> and the apparent propensity of users to seek out diverse political views online,

including through sites not affiliated with mainstream media.<sup>33</sup> Some media outlets also incorporated interactive and personalizable features into their online campaign coverage.<sup>34</sup>

The conflicting literature in this area suggests two broad schools of thought. One indicates a “normalization” of the Internet as a political tool, notably by elites such as candidates and the news media. The other offers growing evidence that citizens are finding new ways to become engaged or to express themselves politically – ways that may bypass these elites altogether. The changes pose an increasingly significant challenge to journalists’ traditional gatekeeping function.

### *The Journalist as Gatekeeper*

The sociological concept of gatekeeping was first applied to newsroom processes by White, who studied the choices made by a newspaper wire service editor. White concluded that the editor served as a gate between all the events reported in a day and those relative few that readers would have an opportunity to see.<sup>35</sup> Although editors may have personal values and preferences, they still must operate within professional and organizational constraints in selecting the day’s news.<sup>36</sup> Gatekeeping may actually be more of a group effort, and there may be multiple gates within the newsroom;<sup>37</sup> nevertheless, emphasis has remained on choosing what gets in the news product and what does not, with an implication that a proper functioning of the gate will yield unbiased news.<sup>38</sup>

Recent considerations of gatekeeping posit that it remains a viable role despite technological changes. A study of newspaper coverage of presidential primary debates found that journalists served as gatekeepers by discarding more than 90% of what was said, choosing to stress character over policy and attacks over acclaims.<sup>39</sup> And despite the emphasis on “live” coverage, journalists continue the familiar gatekeeping practice of bringing official sources into the news frame.<sup>40</sup>

Some studies have suggested that journalists are retaining all or part of their gatekeeping roles as they move online. Boczowski found that online editors’ practices, including story assignment and copy editing, reproduced those of their print counterparts.<sup>41</sup> Yet multiple flows of

information into and out of the online newsroom reflected an understanding that the editor's role includes creating a gathering place that enables audience members "to do what they really want to do."<sup>42</sup> Other work has highlighted fundamental new challenges to the gatekeeping role. Williams and Delli Carpini used the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal to illustrate what they deem the collapse of this role in a media environment with virtually unlimited information sources.<sup>43</sup> Singer found that online newspaper editors were abandoning their role as gatekeepers of national and international information by emphasizing local content on their sites.<sup>44</sup>

Regardless of what online editors choose to include, their sites inescapably share a media space in which anything goes. The open, participatory, fluid medium makes a traditional view of the journalist – or anyone else – as gatekeeper hard to defend. Journalists' hegemony as gatekeepers is threatened by an audience able to actively participate in creating and disseminating news.<sup>45</sup>

The present study draws on these three strands of thought to explore the ways in which online editors conceptualized their roles in covering the 2004 campaign and how their ideas have changed since the 2000 election. In particular, the present study seeks to understand whether journalists are moving away from their traditional gatekeeping role, oriented toward the selection and provision of information, and toward a "new normal" that accommodates greater user participation in shaping the political media environment.

**RQ1:** What did editors of Web sites affiliated with major newspapers see as their goals and their most noteworthy achievements in covering the 2004 political campaign and election?

**RQ2:** To what extent did these editors relinquish their gatekeeping role by providing opportunities for users to provide or personalize content?

**RQ3:** In what ways have the views of editors of Web sites affiliated with major newspapers changed since 2000?

### ***Method***

This study was designed to replicate one conducted in 2000; it therefore used the same sampling and data collection techniques. A purposive sampling method, appropriate in studies that

seek especially informative cases,<sup>46</sup> was used to solicit information about 2004 campaign and election coverage from online editors at sites affiliated with major newspapers in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia. The information is not intended to be generalizable; rather, it reflects activities of leading newspaper sites across the nation and within each state.

The largest newspaper in each state was included in the sample, as were any other dailies with print circulations over 250,000, the largest Newspaper Association of America category.<sup>47</sup> Print circulation figures were used rather than online usage data because familiarity with the newspaper itself is likely to lead users to seek it out online as a source of political information; indeed, online news organizations see the Web largely as a branding tool.<sup>48</sup> Eighty newspapers were included in the 2000 sample; in 2004, following circulation declines that dropped some papers below the 250,000-reader mark,<sup>49</sup> seventy-seven were included. Newspapers in the 2004 sample ranged in size from under 34,000 to 2.6 million, with an average circulation of about 450,000.

The newspapers' Web sites were accessed in fall 2004 to identify an editorial staffer responsible for political news; in most cases, this was the site's editor or news editor. Following an introductory contact the week before the election, the researcher sent each editor an e-mail survey on November 5, 2004; e-mail was chosen over an online survey because of its familiarity and ease of use. The survey replicated the one used in 2000, with minor wording changes for clarity and updated time references. It consisted of both open- and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions sought concrete data related to such items as the presence or absence of interactive components; open-ended ones sought editors' opinions about content, goals, and future direction for their site. The intent was to understand not just what was included but also why it was there.

Three follow-up mailings were sent to successively smaller groups of non-respondents in late November and mid-December 2004, and in February 2005. Eventually, forty-seven editors completed the survey, a response rate of just over 61%. They included editors from both the largest



and smallest newspapers in the sample, representing thirty-five states and the District of Columbia. Respondents included editors at thirty-eight of the same papers that were included in the 2000 study; the remaining nine newspapers in the 2004 study were not represented in the 2000 study.

The response data were entered into a Word template, which provided an easy-to-read format for identification of significant themes. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the responses to the closed-ended questions, which yielded nominal and some ordinal data; the sample was too small to allow meaningful significance tests. Of greater interest here are responses to the open-ended questions, which were subjected to discourse analysis, using the categories that emerged from the 2000 study as a basis for thematic identification. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the attributes used for analysis. The 2000 and 2004 data also were compared to identify changes. This sort of longitudinal analysis permits observations over time of different individuals from the same population. It is valuable in describing shifts in a population and can be used to compare survey data; it is particularly helpful when based on consistent measures, as here.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Findings***

This section describes online editors' perceptions about their coverage of the 2004 campaign and election, focusing on potential modifications of their traditional gatekeeping role.

A couple of findings not directly related to the research questions may provide context. One, the size of Web staffs in relation to those of the newspaper remains small. Using the rough industry guideline of one newsroom staffer per 1,000 circulation,<sup>51</sup> the average paper whose affiliated Web site was included here could be expected to have more than 400 full-time editorial employees. Excluding two unusually large operations, with fifty-five and sixty staffers, the average for the forty-three sites whose editors provided their staff size was 8.3 full-time editorial employees. Seventeen of these online newsrooms had five or fewer staffers; four newsrooms had only one. These findings are in line with industry staffing reports.<sup>52</sup>

Second, a majority of what is published online continues to come from the print newspaper, again in line with industry findings.<sup>53</sup> Online editors estimated that about 22.9% of the campaign or election content on their sites was unique to the Web. The figure should be interpreted with caution; some editors who said little of their content was online-only also described extensive interactive or multimedia components that clearly could not have run in print. Nonetheless, this study suggests that although online journalists are increasingly likely to enhance or expand the paper's content, a sizable amount of the material originates in the traditional medium.

***RQ1: Goals and noteworthy achievements***

The overwhelming majority of online editors cited informing the public as the primary goal of their campaign 2004 coverage – faster, in greater volume, and with more detail than was possible in print. They adhered closely to Gans' definition of a journalist's view of democracy,<sup>54</sup> sometimes explicitly. For instance, one editor said his goal was to “help readers educate themselves about the issues and get all the information they needed in order to vote.” Three of the thirty-nine editors who cited a goal related to providing information emphasized its role in fostering civic engagement. “We wanted to increase interest in the process, encourage more people to vote, and give voters the information they needed to make an informed choice,” one editor wrote.

Only two editors offered overall goals directly related to engaging users in a more discursive form of democracy. One, in a state where the presidential outcome was a “foregone conclusion,” described her site's goal with one word -- “interactivity” -- which included graphics, message boards, chats, and polls. In the other, the editor's goal was “involving the audience in the process” of the election. “The paper gave us the backbone of content with its ongoing campaign coverage and voter's guides,” he said. “We reinforced that with our blogs and forums, giving the voters the interactive ability to discuss the issues and candidates and also to interact live with the candidates.”

As in 2000, editors were asked to briefly describe as many as three online-only content areas of which they were most proud. Thirty-seven editors responded to this question; Table 1 offers a summary by the number of responses in each category and Table 2 by percentage of total responses. Although the results underscore the emphasis on information, responses suggest definitions of “information” broadened to take advantage of the medium’s attributes. For example, eight editors cited online voter guides, highlighting the ability to provide them earlier, in more detail, and more conveniently than the print newspaper could. Another five mentioned candidate questionnaires or profiles. The editor of one site that provided responses from candidates from Congress down to the local school board said the responses were “a valuable, and popular, tool for readers (and frankly, for the reporters covering those campaigns).”

Seven editors mentioned multimedia components as particular sources of pride, ranging from animated graphics showing how new voting machines worked to an “irreverent” animated boxing-match feature in which users could click on George Bush to have him pop John Kerry or vice versa. Several cited multimedia products that stemmed from convergence efforts, notably partnerships with television news providers, such as video clips of candidate visits. In addition to the editors who cited multimedia components as sources of pride, another fourteen listed such features as new but did not highlight them otherwise.

A couple of editors mentioned ways in which the Web enabled them to use “real people” as sources for stories more effectively. One site offered “Voter Voices,” beginning at 7 a.m. on Election Day; faces of local voters were rotated onto the page, with quotes about whom they voted for, who they thought would win, and what the results would mean for the nation. Another asked voters for comments about their voting experiences, generating more than 100 responses.

***RQ2: User-generated content and the editorial gatekeeping role***

Online-only features that enabled personalization of content provided by journalists were prominently represented in editors' descriptions of innovations they felt worked well in 2004. Almost all the sites complemented the political content provided by journalists with opportunities for users to contribute information or ideas. Journalists stepped aside from their gatekeeping role in three primary ways.

The first involved sections in which journalists provided baseline information that users could manipulate to suit individual needs or interests. Fifteen editors, or 31.9% of respondents, indicated they offered personalizable content. Examples included interactive maps, which typically allowed users to explore Electoral College scenarios; "ballot builders" that enabled users to enter their ZIP code and see a preview of their ballot, sometimes along with candidate profiles or questionnaire responses; candidate match features, which allowed users to identify their stance on an issue, then compare candidates' positions; and online polls. User response was "phenomenal," said an editor whose site combined a candidate questionnaire with matching features. "We don't always hear from people who want to compliment us, but that happened with these features."

Blogs were the second novel form of participatory content. Some blogs came from political reporters or columnists, some from journalists at parent companies, others from local opinion leaders, and a few from users themselves. Nineteen editors, or 40.4% of the respondents, indicated their 2004 campaign site included at least one blog, and all but three cited the blogs as a source of pride. "They were interesting, smart, and lively," said one editor whose site offered two staff blogs and another "Backyard Blog" from readers. "Our live debate blog between two reader/contributors to the Backyard Blog was some of the best commentary and analysis anywhere." An editor whose site offered a blog by community members said their online conversations offered "the kind of political discourse that enlightens and entertains." Another site ran an "Undecided Voters" blog, in which six people chronicled their decision-making process for nearly a year.

Others found the blog format to be a valuable reporting tool. One large site offered “diaries” from journalists covering the conventions and the campaign. The editor of another Web site offering “Election Day Poll Watch Weblogs” said they were easy to update and useful for the print newspaper: “In a feat of `reverse publishing,’ we chose the best of it to run in print the next day.”

The third broad area of user participation involved chats, discussion forums, or message boards about politics. Thirty-three editors, 70.2% of the respondents, said their sites offered chats or forums although only seven highlighted them as sources of pride. Some editors said the quality of the discourse continued to be uneven and dominated by “activists.” But others praised the degree of engagement they fostered by providing an unfiltered place for people “to vent, to discuss, to congregate, to have their say.”

A few additional participatory components also ceded to readers the roles that journalists have traditionally played. One site ran an “Ask the Candidates” feature in which readers submitted questions by e-mail; another teamed up with the local PBS station to allow users to submit debate questions; a third offered a Webcast for mayoral candidates to take questions live from users. In general, online editors in this study reported a variety of ways in which they had stepped out of their gatekeeping role to enable users to have a significant voice in the product contained on their sites.

### ***RQ3: Changes since 2000***

In doing so, they moved conceptually beyond where they and their colleagues were in 2000. Relatively consistent was editors’ pride in the ability to provide expanded depth and detail of information and in their use of multimedia or animated graphics. But the weight given to other aspects of campaign coverage varied. Although sample sizes in both studies are too small to test for significance, there is evidence of a shift in online journalists’ gatekeeping perceptions and priorities from one coverage cycle to the next.

In covering the 2000 campaign and election, online editors highlighted the medium's ability to provide extensive information and faster results on Election Night.<sup>55</sup> Although the presidential race was nearly as close in 2004 as in 2000 and the campaign comparably contentious, editors in the present study were less likely to cite Election Night returns or other aspects of timeliness in their coverage. Only 13.8% of the responses to the question about sources of pride involved speed of information delivery in 2004, compared with 30.5% in 2000.

In 2000, eighteen responses, or about 19% of the total for this three-piece question, indicated editors' pride in their ability to offer some form of user-generated content. In 2004, thirty-four editors (offering about 39% of the responses) mentioned some aspect of user-generated content as a source of pride, and nine of those mentioned more than one type of such content. They cited not only the forums, chats, and match features available four years earlier but also interactive voter guides, candidate Q&As, and blogs. These findings suggest that editors may be devaluing discussion forums as a means of civic engagement. As mentioned above, nearly two-thirds of the 2004 respondents said their sites offered such forums, but only seven cited them as sources of pride. Their comments in both years suggest frustration with the propensity of the boards to encourage ranters. Editors in 2004 turned to other ways to engage users that were unavailable to them in 2000, were still technologically clunky -- or that they simply did not choose to use earlier.

Editors in 2000 were asked what they hoped to do differently in 2004; common responses involved offering better, earlier voting guides and information at a "more granular" level, as well as interactive maps and automated Election Night feeds.<sup>56</sup> The current study indicates that many of these elements were in place by 2004. But the editors' descriptions of new or noteworthy content areas indicates an evolution in thinking from merely providing such information to providing it in ways that might actively engage users in constructing personally relevant meaning.

Looking ahead, just over half the 2004 respondents said they would like to add interactive components in 2008. “The key seems to be providing tools a voter can use, rather than simply presenting information,” one editor wrote. An editor who hoped to add a variety of interactive components wanted to “involve the reader/view more in the reporting/evaluation process. What do they think is important? What are their perceptions? Let the audience guide the coverage.” In addition, twenty-five editors cited a desire to provide more, better, or faster information in 2008; only three mentioned enhanced multimedia. Five editors sought goals related to greater staffing or better promotion of their content, or both.

### ***Conclusions***

This study suggests an evolution in online journalists’ thinking about the nature of information over the past four years: Although they still see their role as revolving around the delivery of credible information, that information is less likely to be static and more likely to be open to further shaping by individual users. Compared with their counterparts in 2000, these respondents expanded their provision of baseline content that users could manipulate to suit personal needs through such offerings as interactive voter guides, ballot builders, and Electoral College scenario-construction features. Although a majority offered discussion forums, editors no longer saw these as the only or even the best options for utilizing the Internet’s inherent interactivity. Nearly four times as many editors cited personalization features or participatory blogs as greater sources of pride than cited message boards or chat areas. The weight previously given to timeliness, particularly on Election Night, also declined.

These findings suggest that newspaper editors may be reconceptualizing their gatekeeping role as they become more experienced in creating content for the Internet, a medium whose open nature obliterates the traditional notion of the professional journalist deciding what information people can and cannot see. The move away from a focus on discussion boards may be particularly

revealing. Discussion boards, which media sites have offered for years, do provide a way for users to interact – but only with each other. Perhaps because editors have been wary of the unfettered and unverified conversations in these boards, most media sites have kept them separate from the news, leaving users with a segregated place to talk amongst themselves. The options described here are different. They represent a step away from preliminary conceptions of “interactivity” and toward a partnership between users and journalists to construct meaningful information, either for individual use, as with ballot builders, or for public consumption, as through participation in candidate Q&As.

If these exploratory findings prove correct, they could signal movement toward integration of the traditional role of the journalist as a provider of credible, accurate information with the nature of an open, participatory medium. The Internet has been labeled the future of journalism.<sup>57</sup> Yet throughout their first decade online, journalists struggled to see how a profession based on selecting and vetting information before disseminating it might fit in a world where anyone can easily and instantly publish anything at all. In a medium that privileges collective knowledge, the selective knowledge provided by a gatekeeper has seemed on the verge of irrelevance.

The online newspaper editors studied here offer one viable scenario for creating an online future for journalism that includes a central place of professional journalists. In it, they maintain their traditional role: They continue to provide information distinguished from other online content precisely by the vetting process. In that sense, they continue to act as gatekeepers, arguably a role more vital than ever in today’s rowdy, unbounded information environment. At the same time, they facilitate expansion of what scholars have termed content interactivity.<sup>58</sup> They enable and even encourage users to take that information and reconstruct it, forming a basis for the ongoing process of creating personally relevant meaning and, potentially, sharing it in either a physical or electronic public sphere.<sup>59</sup>



That process is at the heart of the journalistic definition of democracy, the notion that journalists provide information that citizens need to be free and self-governing.<sup>60</sup> According to the theory, it always has been incumbent on journalists to provide credible information and on citizens to use that information wisely. The Internet, however, is the first medium to serve a dual function not only as the vehicle for delivering information but also as the tool for fashioning something of personal utility. The extent to which journalists can position themselves as vital to that civic process is the extent to which they will continue to be vital to democracy. Rather than “normalizing” the medium to fit an old and relatively static definition of their traditional roles,<sup>61</sup> journalists have an opportunity to create a “new normal” that is still based on information but conceptualizes its production as a shared rather than an exclusive endeavor.

This study draws on a deliberately limited sample of online newspaper editors; its findings need to be tested and revised through sampling methods that allow generalizability and rigorous statistical analysis. Several intriguing concepts emerged from the data but were not explored here, notably indications that online sites may increasingly be providing content for the traditional print product, a process one editor referred to as “reverse publishing.” Other conceptual approaches besides gatekeeping also would extend these preliminary understandings. A uses and gratifications framework, for example, would consider these changes from the perspective of an active audience. The findings also suggest a possible evolution of civic journalism. The notion of users actually shaping media coverage is one with which most traditional journalists were never comfortable; new media formats may accommodate desires both to preserve journalistic independence and integrity, and to engage users more fully in the democratic process.

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**TABLE 1: Key Attributes of Online-Only Content That Editors Cited as Sources of Pride in 2004: Raw numbers**

(Figures for 2000 are in parentheses.)

Editors were asked to describe as many as three campaign 2004 content areas of which they were especially proud. This table reports the number of editors who cited content areas in each category shown.

	Cited First	Cited Second	Cited Third	TOTAL times attribute cited
Depth/Detail	15 (15)	12 (11)	7 (12)	<b>34 (38)</b>
Updated Info	6 (16)	3 (9)	3 (4)	<b>12 (29)</b>
Forums / Chats / Q&As with Users	1 (8)	3 (4)	3 (2)	<b>7 (14)</b>
Participation / Personalization	6 (4 *)	3 (-)	2 (-)	<b>11 (4)</b>
Blogs **	7	6	3	<b>16</b>
Multimedia / Animation	3 (1)	2 (7)	2 (2)	<b>7 (10)</b>
<b>TOTAL editor responses</b>	<b>38 (44)</b>	<b>29 (31)</b>	<b>20 (20)</b>	<b>87 (95)</b>
* In 2000, all four responses in this category related to “match” features allowing users to match their views with those of a candidate. In 2004, editors cited various forms of content that users could manipulate, including ballot builders, Electoral College vote scenarios and online polls.				
** Blogs were not used by any major newspaper sites in 2000.				

**TABLE 2: Key Attributes of Online-Only Content That Editors Cited as Sources of Pride in 2004: Percentages**

(Figures for 2000 are in parentheses)

Editors were asked to describe as many as three campaign 2004 content areas of which they were especially proud. This table reports the percentage of responding editors who cited content areas in each category shown. Percentages are based on the total number of editors responding to this question (not the overall number of questionnaire respondents).

	Cited First n = 38 (44)	Cited Second n = 29 (31)	Cited Third n = 20 (20)	Percentage of all attributes cited n = 87 (95)
Depth/Detail	39.5 % (34.1%)	41.4% (35.5%)	35% (60%)	<b>39.1%</b> <b>(40%)</b>
Updated Info	15.8% (36.4%)	10.3% (29%)	15% (20%)	<b>13.8%</b> <b>(30.5%)</b>
Forums / Chats / Q&As with Users	2.6% (20.5%)	10.3% (12.9%)	15% (10%)	<b>8%</b> <b>(14.7%)</b>
Participation / Personalization	15.8 % (9.1% *)	10.3% (0)	10% (0)	<b>12.6%</b> <b>(4.2%)</b>
Blogs **	18.4% (n/a)	20.7% (n/a)	15% (n/a)	<b>18.4%</b> <b>(n/a)</b>
Multimedia / Animation	7.9% (2.3%)	6.9% (22.6%)	10% (10%)	<b>8%</b> <b>(10.5%)</b>
<b>TOTAL (rounded)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
* In 2000, all four responses in this category related to “match” features allowing users to match their views with those of a candidate. In 2004, editors cited various forms of content that users could manipulate, including ballot builders, Electoral College vote scenarios and online polls.				
** Blogs were not used by any major newspaper sites in 2000.				

