The Normalization of the Blog in Journalism: Online Newspapers of Slovene Traditional Media

Igor Vobič[*]

SUMMARY

On the basis of an analysis of online newspapers from Slovene traditional media, along with interviews with their editors, the author attempts to show that power mechanisms normalize the blog as a form of communication in both the specific discourse of online newspapers and in the broader journalistic discourse. This is based on a combining of a Foucauldian understanding of the power of the norm and modern discussions about the normalization of cyberspace and the normalizing of the blog. The blog, which has in its technical structure the possibility of a complete bringing into force of the right to communicate (of the right to report and the right to receive) and promotes the idea of a critical public, moves, through this prism, away from C. W. Mills's concept of an ideal-typical model of the public and assumes the characteristics of the mass. The blog enters a space where discourses that are in a constant struggle for hegemony intertwine, and it is for this reason that the blog has assumed a broader meaning and wider use – it has moved beyond being characterized as a personal online journal. In the article the author also confirms that, by including blogs, Slovene online newspapers draw upon the discursive status of the blog as a promoter of public discussion. This leads us to the pervasion of the discursive status of journalism and of the blog, whereby journalistic responsibility and identity, as well as journalistic ethics, remain in crisis. However, in the discursive core of the blog as a form of communication, as a result of the coming into play of a wide range of interests, we lose the individual in the subject of the blogger par excellence.*

---

[*] Igor Vobič, assistant at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: igor.vobic@fdv.uni-lj.si.

Introduction

A consideration of the discussions and research which have concerned with the relation between journalism and (web)blogs shows that journalism has not yet overcome its ambivalent relation to the blog,[1] which has existed since the beginning of this decade. Even if the blog is being more intensively integrated into journalistic discourse, into journalism as an institutional part of the political, economic, and cultural system, there are, at the same time, hitches to the following of events in the blogosphere, as well as barriers to the normalization of blogging as a legitimate activity, or to the blog as a legitimate source in journalistic discourse.

On the one hand some media companies, such as *CNN*, prevent their journalists from publishing blogs which are not on the site of the individual media company's online newspaper. For this reason, some American journalists have started – mostly anonymously as they fear sanctions from their employers – to publish their own blogs and independently express their opinions (Petrič, 2004).[2] On the other hand, some online sources of traditional media, such as the *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, have recently begun offering blogs as a form of communication to their journalists and editors. They encourage them to create blogs in the online newspapers so that they can examine "events" and the background to those events in a more detailed manner, with the result that some have moved away from journalistic norms, while others continue to follow the existing model of reporting (cf. Singer, 2005). In addition to that, especially when it comes to unforeseen large-scale events and events in smaller communities, bloggers have become a source of information for online newspapers and also traditional media, which sometimes publish the work of independent bloggers in their entirety.[3] At the same time, some online newspapers offer visitors the opportunity to open a blog free of charge and to comment on the contents of other blogs, online newspapers and other topics in cyberspace.

Slovene online journalism, which on seeing the unrealized online potential primarily of the continuation of journalistic activities in traditional mass media (Oblak and Petrič, 2005: 182–4), has recently started to include blogs in various ways on its websites (e.g. *Rtvslo.si*, *Mag.si*, *Mladina.si*, *Delo.si*, *Vecer.si*, *24ur.com*). Thus, reporters from some online media companies are also bloggers, just as some online newspapers offer visitors the simple possibility of creating of a blog and publishing within it. In spite of this, some renowned Slovene online newspapers have not yet included in any manner, or begun to offer, permanent blogs (e.g. *Dnevnik.si*) – though we do occasionally see the posts of independent bloggers on them, or a more detailed formulation of the contents of their blogs.

The issue of the relation of journalism to blogging is one of the merging between two main branches in the discussion of the future of journalism. The first branch consists of discussions of the consequences of the development of modern information and communication technologies for journalism as an activity, which the authors view simultaneously as an opportunity for, challenge to, and threat to journalism (cf. Dahlgren, 1996; Deuze, 2002; Kawamoto, 2003; Salwen, 2005). The second branch of discussion about the continued development of journalism sees the waning or end of, or crisis in journalism (cf. Hardt, 1996; Iggers, 1999;

Splichal, 2005; Poler Kovačič, 2005). The reforming of journalism is linked to the crisis of the postmodern subject (the journalist, the addressee and the source) as well as to the difficult-to-transcend embeddedness of journalistic discourse in the streams of political, economic and discursive determinism, which in the postmodern era deepens the crisis of journalistic identity, responsibility and ethics. In this context a unified profile of the relation between journalism and blogging does not exist. Otherwise, a seemingly broad consensus does exist regarding the fact that the blog as a form of communication, which in its notional core is characteristic of the concept of the electronic public sphere, possesses the technical capability to democratize mass communication to resist the industrialization of journalism (Splichal, 2005). Some authors therefore link blogging with the second phase of public journalism (cf. Nip 2006) and with the realisation of the concept of citizen journalism (cf. Rosen, 2005).

In contrast to the idea of promoting a critical public modern discussion and examination, the following points emphasize the increasing complexity of the relation between blogging and journalism: blogging uncovers journalism's weaknesses, verifying information and fixing mistakes the journalist may make (Regan, 2003; Wendland, 2003; Andrews, 2003); because of the blog journalism is losing its "sovereignty" and its hegemonically trustworthy status in discourse (cf. Rosen, 2005); blogs can lead to the deprofessionalization of journalism – similar to journalists, some bloggers have become accredited as a result of various events (cf. Lasica, 2002; Singer, 2005; Splichal, 2005; McNair, 2006); blogs become sources of information for journalists, especially in small communities, with regard to large-scale events, or in exceptional circumstances (cf. Lasica, 2002; Wall, 2004; Singer, 2005; Robinson, 2006); journalism and other activities in mass communication are embracing the discursive characteristics of the blog and, through a step-by-step reforming process, are adapting to the new media landscape (Lasica, 2003; Wall, 2004; Singer, 2005; Lowery, 2006).

The first thesis to be verified is that Slovene online newspapers through the introduction of the blog have normalized the blog in journalistic discourse and overcome the ambivalence in the relation of journalism to the blog. The proving of this thesis will be interwoven with the rise of the normalizing of journalism, which will be based on the concept of the "power of the norm" (Foucault, 1979: 177–94), an idea which will be linked to various debates on the "normalization of cyberspace" (Resnick, 1998; Oblak, 2002), considerations of the "renewal of mediated publicness" (Slevin, 2000: 185–197) and the "normalizing" of the blog, according to which journalist bloggers incorporate elements of journalistic discourse into the blog.

The second thesis is that Slovene online newspapers, through the introduction of blogs, draw from the discursive status of the blog as a promoter of public discussion and reproduce the discursive status of trust in journalism. This thesis is founded on activities (cf. Tuchman 1999/1972; McNair, 1998; Schudson, 2003; Poler Kovačič, 2005) which emphasize that journalistic discourse is adapting itself to the changing context of the media landscape and that the addressees accept journalism – although in crisis – as an approximation of the truth, but in any case as a discourse that is trustworthy.

The blog: the space between discourses in the battle for hegemony

The blog is not revolutionary, neither in terms of technology nor in terms of content; it is a matter of a specific, simple, user-friendly intermediary. The first websites belonging to this framework, which would today be called blogs, were created by web pioneers at the beginning of the 1990s. About ten years later the number of blogs became to increase sharply when, with the help of the hypertextuality which is in the very foundation of the web (cf. Petrič, 2003), the first contours were drawn of the blogosphere, where a group of bloggers began to think communally (cf. Herring et al, 2004).[4] How s/he will take advantage of the communication and information potential of the modern web is primarily dependent on the individual blogger:[5] hypertextuality, interactivity and multimediality, the capacity to archive and personalize are, as some authors discern, not wholly utilized (cf. Kawamoto, 2003: 4; Oblak and Petrič, 2005: 15). The technical framework of the blog allows the individual immediate and convenient access to a wide stream of reconstructing "events" and allows that individual to play the role of an agent who unleashes a discussion about important or merely interesting "events".[6] Thus, the blogosphere is not a constant and closed category but a changing, overwhelming and inventive community, which creates a series of cyberspace discourses and identities.

The possibility of including the subject in the collecting and distributing of information (Kawamoto, 2003: 4) is a primary argument for how cyberspace can accelerate democracy (ibid). Such argumentation receives a new extension with the genesis of the multiple identities (cf. Oblak, 2000) that anonymous or disguised individuals bring into cyberspace. This element is also part of the blog, for instance, as the blogger in the blogosphere appears under a nickname, and those who identify themselves with their full name are in the minority – though all do leave traces to their computer. "This becomes relevant in a number of contexts, for audience/user research with the best intentions, to commercial market research, and the more baleful record-keeping for purposes of political or individual surveillance" (Dahlgren, 1996: 66). In this framework there are important discussions about continuing and difficult-to-determine changes of the public sphere (cf. Pinter, 2005: 157–85) which coincide with the development of the internet and the entering of the interests of power into this space. One of the consequences of this is the erasure of the borders between bloggers and non-bloggers as well as the introduction of new elements into the understanding of the concept of the blog, the blogger and the blogosphere. On the web there is a collision of various interests, which is hard to overcome; on the one hand, some interests see the world wide web as an ideal tool for e-commerce, while on the other hand it is a tool for the return of the subject (Oblak and Petrič, 2005: 52). Not only (un)anonymous individuals but also political, economic and other institutional agents are trying to penetrate into the blogosphere (cf. Nagel, 2004; Singer, 2005; Lowery, 2006). Petrič (2004) emphasizes that one of the fundamental qualities of the blog is that it is exclusively the property of the individual, that it is not in the hands of corporate apparatus, however, the latter must be respected when discussing blogging. Namely blogs are embedded in the interest network of cultural, economic and political continuities.

This is revealed in a cross-section of authors (cf. Splichal, 2005; Herring et al, 2004; Lasica, 2002; Singer, 2005: 176; Sifry, 2006; McNair, 2006: 134; Nagel, 2004; Kerbel and Bloom, 2005), on the basis of which blogs can be divided into four groups:

- **personal online journals**, in which the bloggers present details from their personal lives, which some freely integrate into the events of the community;
- **informative and interpretive blogs**, in which the bloggers strive to provide information and opinions, to broaden knowledge or to promote political participation;
- **public relations and advertising blogs**, in which the bloggers are commercial, political and other agents who use the blog for either internal or external relations with the public, whereby they try to exploit the discursive status of the blog as a democratic forum of public discussion for the realizing of political, economic or other interests;
- **other blogs**, among which are ranked those blogs which satisfy very narrow and specific interests – for example in the form of blogs that intentionally publish inaccurate information and cast discord into the blogosphere (fake blogs or flogs); these are void of information, created by automated programs and internet mechanisms used to earn from online advertising (spam blogs or splogs) and the like.

The borders between the listed interest group of blogs are blurred, for through hypertextuality blogs are always woven into a network that encompasses the above-mentioned ideal-typical examples. In addition to these, often with the publications of individual bloggers we simultaneously enter into the realm of interest of personal online journals, informative and interpretive blogs, as well as public relations blogs. The difficult-to-discern realm of interests is characteristic primarily for discourses that are in a constant battle for hegemony. Journalistic discourse is included among those discourse which promote and reproduce (co)dependence with the cultural, economic and political system.

The blog: a challenge, opportunity or threat to journalism?

The technological framework of the blog, which among other things enables inter-activity, reciprocity and personalization, can lead to the erasing of borders in the journalist-source-addressee triad, which journalistic discourse clearly and strongly opines (Dahlgren, 1996: 65). "Readers want to be part of the news process" (Lasica, 2003: 74). In this context the discussion of the definition of journalism and the journalism receives a new dimension, to which Splichal (2000: 48) draws attention: "The boundaries between journalism and non-journalism /.../ become even more problematic in cyberspace dominated by a constant flux of information produced, reproduced, and distributed by millions of internet visitors." As technologies of news relay broaden the field of who might be considered a journalist and what might be considered journalism, the evolving consensus over the qualities and skills belonging to the world of journalism changes (Zelizer, 2004: 23). In the context of blogging Bowman and Willis (2003) emphasize: "Journalism's he-

gemony as gatekeeper of the news is threatened by not just new technology and competitors but, potentially, the audience it serves."

The realization of the idea of the blog has at its core the right to communicate, which is of central importance for the idea of public and democratic communication, and is composed of an active and a passive part (cf. Splichal, 1999: 295). The exerting of the right to communicate as a whole is one of the founding characteristics of blogging, as the technical characteristics of the blog enable the individual to assume an active role in all phases of the production process (Lasica, 2003: 71); in certain cases they also influence the agenda-setting of traditional media (Lennon, 2003: 77) and place them in the role of "freelance fact-checkers" (Welch, 2003) or a "corrective mechanism for sloppy reporting" (Andrews, 2003: 64). Ideally, then, the blog represents newly collaborative news product (Singer, 2005: 177). The recent individualized technologies for delivering news have so enhanced the capacity to deliver news fast and far that they make mainstream news channels seem obsolete (Zelizer, 2004: 27). Where the long-established normative principles of the fourth estate stress the importance of objectivity, restraint and understatement, bloggers are aggressively opinionated, prepared to expose their views to public scrutiny and engage others in the fierce heat of online debate (McNair, 2006: 122). If we think through the prism of mass society blogs, at least at the technical level, evoke C. W. Mills's (1956: 303–4) ideal-typical model of the public: (1) the same number of people among the public express and receive opinions; (2) in public the means of public communication are organized such that each person can immediately and effectively respond to each publicly expressed opinion; (3) in public discussion the forming of opinions can be changed into effective action – also against power; (4) the public has an ensured autonomy, since the institutes of power do not penetrate into the public.

Recent studies show (cf. Robinson, 2006; Singer, 2005; Lowery, 2006) that also in the case of blogging the model of the public enters into the mass which Mills (1956: 304) defines as another extreme of mass society. As agents of power enter the formal means becomes the prevailing type of communication, "the public changes into just a market for mass media" (ibid). It is precisely in this context that the renewed springing up of characteristics of the mediated public sphere is interesting for Splichal's claim (2005) that the technical possibilities of the blog can lead to resistance against the industrialization of journalism and the deprofessionalization of journalism.

Although the majority of blogs place the individual or collective subject in the foreground, all bloggers strive to obtain and retain trust, which, in conjunction with the continuity of publishing, attracts visitors. Hypertextuality enables the verifying of information by elite sources, including online newspapers of traditional media, while the credibility of remaining sources and information is difficult to establish (Wall, 2004; Kawamoto, 2003; Pavlik, 2001). For this reason Dahlgren (1996: 62) emphasizes that, "[a]mong the oceans of information flowing through cyberspace, only a small portion can be deemed journalism, and the attention it gets may be even disproportionately smaller." Bloggers argue that they are "self righting – that anything printed in a blog can and likely will be fact-checked online, thus revealing veracity or the lack thereof" (Wall, 2004). One of

the interesting hallmarks of a successful blog is that it becomes an authoritative source of information based on community endorsement (Lasica, 2002). Blogs, which are characterized by a heavy use of hyperlinks, point towards a model of knowledge in which the truth of what is happening in the world cannot be channeled exclusively through one news text. Instead, the blog can be thought of as claiming a more contingent authority in its use of these multiple links (Matheson, 2004: 457).

Like traditional media and their online versions, bloggers also strive to ritualize visiting, especially that third of bloggers who understand blogging as a form of journalism (Lenhart and Fox, 2006: 8). This is valid for informative and interpretative blogs, especially for those written by journalists independently of their media companies. In informative and interpretative blogs they at first announced "events" and analyzed, commented on, or upgraded the journalistic discourse – authors have various names for this, calling it "black market journalism," "informal journalism" (Wall, 2004), "personal journalism" (Allan, 2002), "amateur journalism" (Lasica, 2002) and "interactive grassroots journalism" (Aufderheide, 2004: 339).

In this way some bloggers during the last presidential elections in the United States assumed a position along journalists – certain bloggers even received accreditation for covering the conventions of both of the main parties: "blogging was recognised as an important new factor in public opinion formation" (McNair, 2006: 134). The informative and interpretative blog's particular mix of a heavy dependence upon hyperlinks to a wide range of different kinds of text, its chronological rather than hierarchical organization of material on the site and its less rationally codified site mixing news and opinion, domestic and foreign themes – its move, in short, away from the established vocabulary of newspaper authority – has the potential to reach beyond the formulae of news (Matheson, 2004: 459).[7]

Especially the attack on Iraq in March 2003, the tsunami in south and southeast Asia in December 2004, the July 7 terrorist attacks in London and hurricane Katrina in Louisiana in August and September 2005 confirm the claim that blogs become a source of information for journalists not only for large-scale events and in extreme situations, but also in smaller communities (Robinson, 2006; Singer, 2005; Lasica, 2002; Wall, 2004). This is why McQuail's (1994: 267) oft-cited claim is placed in an entirely new context: "News could not exist without media institutions. Unlike all other forms of authorship or cultural creation, news-making cannot be done privately or individually. The institution provides both the machinery for distribution and the guarantee of credibility and authority." The blog as a form of communication, due to the individualization of the personalized group of mass communication as well as possibilities of sudden responding at the place of the event, complements journalistic discourse on the web and the prevailing one-way flow of information of traditional mass media. Moreover, traditional mass media have now started their own blogs in an attempt to recapture journalism authority. Thus, according to Robinson (2006: 65), "blogs represent reconstituted journalism – both renegade and legitimate reporting and writing – and have become part of the fabric sewn by the press."

The blog as a form of communication enters into journalism at several levels. The journalistic collective with large-scale and unforeseen events, among other things, creates a sort of informative blog and use for topical and simple reporting the technical format of the blog (Salwen, 2005: 68; Robinson, 2006: 76; Singer, 2005: 176; Aufderheide, 2004: 333–47). Some online newspapers at such times create special minute-by-minute blogs, where they first put into words the previous event, then report on new details. Blog becomes "news" in the traditional sense of action, but written in a postmodern way: no inverted lead, no kicker quotes, no nutgraph (Robinson, 2006: 76). A broader interest frame is represented by the blogs of embedded journalists, who at the start of the war in Iraq in spring 2003 interwove information and interpretations on the course of the war with entirely personal effusions, to which visitors usually were not able to respond with comments (Wall, 2004). With reports from "over there" they served primarily the media companies and despite reporting in the discursive frame of the blog they retained the one-way flow of communication that is characteristic primarily for traditional media and reproduced the journalist's role as a gatekeeper.

Blogs are also becoming a permanent and edited part of online newspapers, which journalists, editors or the entire editorial board of certain media or "common" citizens write. Journalism, which in this case makes use of the blog and its discursive status, simultaneously attempts to follow, paradoxically, journalistic objectivity, which is at the core of journalistic discourse, and which adapts to the changing technological and socio-historical context.

The power of the norm and the blog in journalism

The power of norm imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another (Foucault, 1979: 184). Normalization of journalistic norms and conventions has ever been the result of power tactics, which do not act directly on others, but rather on their actions (Foucault, 1991: 113). Matheson (2004: 444) acknowledges that the great coercive power of the norm, which shapes journalism in the absence of formalized codes, is weakening as journalism adapts to a context of the web. The blog as a specific form of communication, due to the possibilities of democratization (interpersonal, group and mass) of communication, thus sheds new light on the issue of responsibility and the identity of journalism, which is in crisis as a result of institutionalization, erases the borders in the journalist–source–addressee triad, and establishes anew the foundations of all phases of the journalistic production process.

Viewed more broadly, in cyberspace the expectations of a spontaneous unleashing of a communicative rationality are far from self-understood, and they are becoming separate from the modern understanding of the reforming of the public sphere. Many authors (cf. Slevin, 2000; Oblak, 2002; Pinter, 2005) have determined that the liberal communication potentials of computer-mediated communication are not being realized to the degree that they could be. Similar is Resnick's claim (1998) that this is to be deemed a consequence of the normalization of cyberspace. Resnick's normalization process can be presented as a Lockean process of change,

which can be divided into two stages. In the first stage, the internet figured as "a virtual state of nature"; in the second, the internet figures as "a virtual pluralistic society." Cyberspace gradually "lost its political innocence" and now seems more like a pluralistic civil society (Resnick, 1998: 49; Oblak, 2002: 15). "There emerged new institutions and with them new agents, new organisations; novel policies and practices also appeared, because it became increasingly attractive for economic, social and political powers, which had previously ignored it." (Oblak, 2002: 15) Only at that time, paradoxically, did the universal power of the norm start operating, which Foucault (1979: 184) understood as a quintessential characteristic of the "system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences".

T. Oblak (2002), borrowing from and expanding on Resnick's (1998) understanding of the normalization of cyberspace ascertains that on the internet a dialogue is interwoven, which is a communication relation *per se* in the concept of the electronic public sphere, based on a reconceptualization of Habermas, and representations which are more characteristic for the concept of mediating the public sphere, as it is understood by Thompson and Dahlgren. This shift is consistent with the increasing popularity of the internet and the fact that web representations are indicative of the presence of agents, institutions, groupings, corporations and individuals who use these new means for expressing identities and displaying interests (Oblak, 2002: 19). However, "the specificity of web representations, which is also their advantage over representations in broadcast media, is that they enable both passive reception as well as interactive exchange over them" (ibid). With the reigning paradigm of web representations and with the somewhat more relegated role of dialogue space, the electronic public sphere is more evocative of a model of mediating the public sphere than of moving away from it (Oblak, 2003: 71). The technical development of the internet and of mobile phones as well, as the simultaneous entering of interest of agents of power into cyberspace, brings with it new forms of communication relations and processes (Pinter, 2005: 182–3). Cyberspace can, through a taking over of the characteristic of societal space outside of computer-mediated communications, be normalized. Building on the idea of normalization of cyberspace, the necessary assumption is that the electronic public sphere heavily depends on the coexistence of both contrasting forms of communication – dialogue and representations (Oblak, 2002: 19).

The profusion of web representations contributes to the formation of various palpable bonds in cyberspace, for example, between institutions and individuals, between engaged and more random participants, between those of similar mind, and so on (Oblak, 2002: 19). The very fact that the individual can create a website about a particular theme and discuss it with others in cyberspace creates a climate of broader public discussion (Gauntlett, 2000: 17). It is precisely due to these possibilities of activating the individual that cyberspace is moving away from the concept of the mediated public sphere, as well as from the prevailing one-way flow of communication of mass media, which does not react to the existing audience but rather forms it within the specific socio-historical context (Schudson, 2003: 168). The electronic public sphere can, through this moving away from the

mediated public sphere, enable a more active and critical public. The question T. Oblak (2003: 71) raises in this regard is: how effectively are dialogue and representations on the web being put to use? Slevin (2000: 197) stresses that the transformative capacity of internet use in deliberative processes is dependent on the characteristics of the individuals and organizations involved, their location in time-space, the institutional arrangements within which they act and the means they have at their disposal.

This remark is very important for discussion about including blogs in journalistic discourse. Blogs in journalistic discourse enter at two levels: as a source of information for online journalism and traditional media, and as a form of communication that is embedded into online journalistic discourse. In this context some authors write of the "normalizing of the blog" (Singer, 2005), which is a consequence of similar power mechanisms as are at work in the normalizing of journalism and of cyberspace. With the analysis of the discourse of blogs written by journalists, Jane B. Singer (2005: 173, 193) discerns that the blog is being normalized as a component and an enhancement of traditional journalistic norms and practices and that journalists are seeking to remain gatekeepers in this highly interactive and participatory format. The normalizing of the blog in this sense is based on the aforementioned normalization of cyberspace and the intertwining of two main branches of discussions on the future of journalism: regarding the influence of the development of information and communication technologies as well as the crisis of journalism, which is a consequence of the institutionalizing of journalism and the normalizing of "objectivity" in its discursive core. The blog becomes, as Foucault (1979: 183) says, a sign of the belonging to a homogeneous body, which itself has the role of classifying, hierarchizing and allotting positions – it normalizes itself as an inherent part of journalistic discourse.

The blog builds the discursive status of the promoter of public discussion on potentials of the web (especially hypertextuality, interactivity and personalization) and places a blogger in the forefront: the individualized or collective subject. Blogs in online newspapers "acquire" journalists "of renown" or a collective blog, in which a specific group of journalists publish. At the same time blogs can be opened by journalists that are interspersed without differentiation among the other visitors of the website. Those sites which in an online newspaper are dedicated to a blog are maintained by the responsible editor or a smaller group of reporters who are usually not only responsible for that part of the online newspaper. By means of a strict division between blogs by "regular" people and the blogs of "the selected," which also includes journalists, there is a hegemonization of the status of the latter. Through the exposure of blogs by (some) journalists the discursive status of journalism, which is based on "working for the general good as its founding mission, on the elementary responsibility of journalism to the public" (Poler Kovačič, 2004: 23), is reproduced, and with that, paradoxically, the intersecting of the crisis of the journalistic identity, ethics and responsibility is confirmed. The normalizing of the blog thus entails a new dimension of the discursive status of the blog, and at the same time, by reproducing the general crisis of journalism, leads to the decline of the individual in the subject, as Foucault states (1979: 194): "The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an 'ideological' representation of society." Here we

must not negatively describe the effects of power ("exclusion," "suppression," "oppression," "censuring," "abstracting," "concealing"). In fact normalizing power is productive: it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and real rituals. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (ibid). The blog in this context as a form of communication is submerged into the journalistic discourse, which with the normalizing of the blog upgrades the discursive status of the blog as a forum of public discussion and at the same time reproduces the objectivity of journalistic discourse – a discourse which, if we add somewhat to McNair (1998: 5), the addressees (also as a result of these discursive changes) receive at least as an approximation of the truth, but in any case as a discourse that is close enough to the truth that its integrity is trustworthy.

Blogs in the online newspapers of Slovene traditional media

In the study we included online newspapers from media companies which have journalism in traditional media (print, television and radio) as one of their primary activities. We looked at the websites of the public *Radiotelevizija Slovenija*, the production company *Pro Plus*, which prepares the commercial programming for both *POP TV* and *Kanal A*, along with the online news source *24ur.com*, the websites of the three largest newspapers *Delo*, *Dnevnik* and *Večer*; we also included the websites of the weeklies *Mag* and *Mladina*.[8] Editorially speaking, these online newspapers are self-standing entities – the sole exception to this is *Mag* – but even though they have their own news production, their discursive status and content base, they rely primarily on the journalistic activities of the individual media company. We will try to answer to the thesis presented in the introduction by considering all of these websites, while including secondary sources and in-depth interviews with the editors of the online editions of the aforementioned Slovene traditional media – both those who include blogs in their online papers, and those who do not (yet) offer them.

In this study, Vehovar in T. Zupanič (2006) show that with personal computers more and more people in Slovenia are using the internet monthly: in fall of 2006 there were 880 thousand internet users. This growth has been reflected in the online newspapers of both main television channels: *24.com* has approximately half a million visitors monthly, and *Rtvslo.si* approximately a quarter million. The online newspapers of print media are advancing somewhat more slowly, as they are visited monthly by somewhere between 90 thousand and 180 thousand visitors, with *Delo.si* having the largest number of visitors, and *Dnevnik* the fewest. The websites *Mladina.si* and *Mag.si*, also a subject of our interest, were not included in that study. According to the data from the study *Merjenje obiskanosti spletnih strani* (*MOSS* – "Measuring the Visiting of Websites"), carried out for the Slovenian Advertising Chamber by the survey firm Aragon, the findings for fall 2006 are in accordance with this. *Rtvslo.si* excluded itself and did not cooperate in the study, while *Mag.si* is not among the 25 most-visited websites in Slovenia. According to the *MOSS* data the *Mladina.si* is visited monthly by approximately 130 thousand different users.

We came across the following interactive mechanisms in our study: online auctions, online games, sending messages to the webmaster, editor, or a journalist, "opinion polls", commenting on articles, rating articles, chatting, discussion forums, and blogs. With the help of RSS feeds most of the websites facilitate the personalized and ensuing ritualization of receiving content. Our main interest is in blogs, which are not a part of all of the online newspapers analyzed.

24ur.com

The most-visited online newspaper is *24ur.com* – which is put together by the television production house Pro Plus and offers most of the interactive forms mentioned above. Blogs as a form of communication are offered under the heading *Frendi in Flirt* ("Friends and Flirts"); here blogs that are personal journals strongly prevail. The editor of *24ur.com*, Barbara Repovž,[9] states that they are planning a section with selected bloggers: "We intend to include on our site some video blogs, where selected people would publish. Among them would be celebrities and perhaps reporters from *24ur* [the daily television news] and some more renowned journalists." Previously a blog was written by the presenters of the show *E+* on the commercial television channel *Kanal A*, but their blog was closed as a result of the cancellation of the show. *24ur.com* has the rubric *Vaše Novice* ("Your News"), where the visitors were asked: "Have you been witness to an event that would interest the public? Has something that bothers you fallen on deaf ears among those responsible for it? Do you have photographs and video clips that you would like to show to others? Send us your news!" In February they revamped the section – also beginning a new programme *Svet* ("The World") – and, as they claim, with the help of modern mobile phones and internet technology they will also try to realize the idea of citizen journalism. "We were a bit late with the blog, and for this reason we put the idea of the blog aside and are seeking interactivity elsewhere. These forms will primarily be linked with television media, which is an appropriate activity for the production house Pro Plus," says B. Repovž.

Rtvslo.si

Blogs were first integrated into the website of *Radiotelevizija Slovenija* (*RTVS*) at the end of September 2006. *RTVS* brought attention to the new blog via an advertising campaign on *Televizija Slovenija*; also, at *Rtvslo.si* there are still noticeable banners where the familiar faces from this public broadcasting station are to be seen. The blog can be used by any visitor – these blogs appear in a column under the title *Vaši Blogi* ("Your Blogs"). The director of *RTVS's Multimedia center* (*MMC*) Zvezdan Martič[10] asks why they did not have blogs and why they were not offered to visitors: "The blog is one of the most widespread forms of internet use. As a public broadcaster we were almost required to offer blogs to our viewers, listeners and readers as a form of communication and expression." Under the heading *VIP Blogs* there are blogs by journalists, presenters, editors and other employees of *RTVS* as well as "elite" individuals (musicians, academics, writers, models, and others). With the help of subject lists, a search engine or a blog-roll, we can navigate the blogs in both – clearly separated – sections. "We had to divide

the two sections. In the section *VIP Blogs* people with recognized names, work or achievements write. For this reason, these are people with something to say. While *Vaši Blogi* consists of anonymous individuals, whose posts are quite distinguished from those in the section *VIP Blogs*. The best of these, and the most-visited, will be included into the section *VIP Blogs*, which we will rename, as the current title is not the most appropriate," says Martič. The visitor can make use of the following mechanisms: most read, latest posts and selected five in the section *VIP Blogs*, and random five in the section *Vaši Blogi*. The blogs in the selected five mechanism are determined by a collective decision of the editors of MMC, and all posts are monitored by a special team of moderators who also take care of the forum and remove all insulting posts or instances of hate speech. The registered user, who need not be a blogger, can comment on and evaluate the blogs, which can only be seen if the blogger himself/herself allows it.

Delo.si

The daily newspaper *Delo* began in October 2005, as the first among the traditional media, to invite its readers – under the advertising slogans "Have One Too!", "You, Too, Can Blog!" and "Famous Slovenes also Know How to Blog!" – to visit http://tuditi.delo.si, where they could open a blog within the *Delo* website. *Delo's* website is host to approximately two thousand blogs. "We followed the trends of modern online newspapers elsewhere in the world. The concept of the blog is also connected to the idea of citizen journalism. In Slovenia this did not yet exist, which is why we began with the initial variety of blogs," says *Delo.si* editor Erika Repovž.[11] *Delo* wants in this way to establish a bridge between browsing the topics in a print edition and browsing its online version. On the first page there are the latest posts, arranged under the headings *Text Blog*, *Photo Blog* and *Video Blog*. For younger users they are also planning the heading *Art Blog*, which will enable people to draw using a simple technical frame. "We decided on this division because it makes for an easier overview of the blogs; the Photo Blogs are especially successful. Those which are 'mixed' are ordered among the Text Blogs," says E. Repovž. *Delo*'s journalists and editors can, within this framework, write their blogs, but these are not set apart from or separated in any way from the mass blogs. "The original idea was that the blogs would be written by journalists and editors. The sense of a blog is that it be written by people who can explain the background and other things that cannot be published in the print edition. At present it is very difficult to get in-house writers. If the work is not mentioned in the description of the job and the assignments, and it is unpaid, there is no interest," says E. Repovž. Registered users at *Delo.si*, among whom are *Delo* bloggers, can comment on individual articles, publish short commentaries on specific themes and take part in the moderated discussion forum. "People like to communicate; they only need to be guided by someone who is full of ideas, is popular, good with words and has public credibility, so that a good text form is achieved," says E. Repovž, who claims that *Delo.si*, through this sort of form of interactivity, is attracting visitors and building its reputation while advancing within its commercial niche.

Mag.si

The website of the weekly *Mag*, which evolved within the online framework of *Delo.si*, offers a thematic reflection of what can be found in the print edition. Visitors can comment on articles, as the journalists provide their e-mail address next to their byline. Visitors to http://www.mag.si are not offered their own blog, but here we must consider that *Mag* is linked in terms of ownership and organization structure to *Delo*, which in its website always provides a link to the weekly *Mag*. "In principle we also support the opening of blogs on *Mag.si*, but there is no euphoria for this. Supply and demand have met. For now estimate that, all in all, things are saturated," says *Mag* editor-in-chief Janez Markeš.[12] E. Repovž, who is responsible for the revamping of the website http://www.mag.si says that it is one media company, "but in spite of that *Delo* and *Mag* have different political pedigrees. Linking things in this communal house is important, because we enter together into the competitive environment. With blogs we will try to link with each other technically". Markeš does not exclude the possibility that journalists and editors of *Mag* will write their own blogs. "But it would have to occur out of enthusiasm, as we would not want this to become an obligation." *Urednikov dnevnik* ("The Editor's Journal") which was called *Urednikov video blog* ("The Editor's Video Blog") in advertisements and on other websites, is edited by Markeš. Here video clips are published which were taken with the help of simple digital cameras, and Markeš also comments on current political events. *The Editor's Journal* contains posts that are arranged in reverse chronological order, but the visitor is not able to comment on the individual editorial contributions. "With the *Editor's Journal* we beat the competition; however, it does entail a weekly duty. In future we will make it possible to comment on individual contributions," says Markeš. "With the *Editor's Journal* we wanted to introduce a new format, to try something new and Markeš was one of the few people in the company who was willing to cooperate. There are no comments, since comments are, for the most part, destructive," says E. Repovž.

Mladina.si

The internet site of the weekly *Mladina* contains primarily the interactive offers and services mentioned above, and thus enables personalized following of topics. Before users' contributions are published, they are looked over by the editors and rejected in the event of the presence of hate speech. Visitors cannot open blogs at *Mladina.si*, as the site does not offer them. The editor of *Mladina.si*, Jaka Železnik,[13] asks why they should be offered at all. "The only reason why certain media decide for this possibility and let users open blogs is to increase the number of visits to the domain and the advertising aspects linked to that. They are in no way conducive to the quality of the media, and in the majority of cases it is quite the opposite. *Mladina*, at least for now, has decided not to jump onto this commercial bandwagon of dubious quality. If someone wants to open a blog, he has more than enough free possibilities to do so with a blog software and server space." Visitors can, however, by clicking on the link at the top of the page, see the blog of *Mladina*'s editor of photography Borut Peterlin – *Dancing Photography*

(http://borutpeterlin.mladina.si). "We included Borut Peterlin's blog because this is the blog of *Mladina*'s editor of photography, with themes that are dealt with and indelibly linked to his work for *Mladina* and the events [concerning the Strojan family of Roma] near Ambrus, which *Mladina* also followed actively." Otherwise *Mladina* does not rule out the possibility of someone from the editorial board creating his or her own blog in the framework of *Mladina.si*. "In any case we're thinking in this direction. But the blog, to us, is not necessarily something that is intrinsically good. If you consider it carefully, you will notice that the daily news on *Mladina.si* have been in the form of blog since the inception of the site in 2000. There is nothing special about that and for that reason there is nothing special about the blog. It is only a manner of organizing content. Content alone is important."

Vecer.si

The online newspaper *Vecer.si*, in addition to online content, publishes free of charge an electronic version of the entire print edition of the daily *Večer*. The website has a series of interactive services: online auctions, games, the sending of messages to the webmaster, editor or a journalist, opinion polls, adding comments to articles, discussion forums and blogs. There are more than 700 active blogs, with 'active' meaning that that there has been at least one post in the past 100 days; the total number of open blogs is almost one thousand. Any visit to *Večer*'s website can open a blog. "After paying attention to what is going on in other countries we decided to do this to increase of the portion of contents created by visitors and to have more economical access to information from local communities. The generating of visits to our website was not the principle reason, since there is no advertising in *Večer*'s *blogosphere*. In addition to this it was important to us that the blogs be linked to one other – and with those at *Delo.si* and *Rtvslo.si*. The content is important," says the 'guardian' of *Večer's blogosphere* Zvone Štor.[14] In the main frame there are arranged the articles of individual bloggers in reverse chronological order, while blog visitors can navigate them by using a search engine and various other search mechanisms that take them to the most-visited and commented-upon blogs and bloggers' contributions from the previous week, month, or since the time blogs began to be offered.

"The blogs are looked over and moderated to a certain extent by a group of three people. In addition to this we establish the hierarchy by making use of technology that measures how often a blog is visited, the number of comments and linkability," says Štor. Besides this, there is also the rubric *Blog Ankete*, where the latest opinion polls are collected, which have been created by individual bloggers. The blog can also be accessed by means of an RSS feed, which enables personalized following and the ensuing ritualization of visits to blogs. Unlike their peers at *Rtvslo.si*, *Večer* reporters who have a blog are not accorded any special status. "Do you think it crucial that VIP bloggers exist? Journalists and editors have the print edition in which to write. It is important that we give space to people 'from the street,' to those who have something to say and are unable able to do so in traditional media. The posts of certain bloggers are also published in the print edition

of *Večer*," says Štor, who, on the basis of frequency of visits, the number of comments and linkability selects posts that are to be published in the print newspaper. They print them with all typos, spelling, grammatical and other errors, and the bloggers, says Štor, receive symbolic payment.

Dnevnik.si

The website of the daily *Dnevnik* is, in the words of its editor Milan Slana,[15] in the process of being reworked. This should be finished before the end of March 2007, and it will be strongly directed toward interactivity. *Dnevnik.si* does not offer blogs to visitors. "Blogs themselves will not be a part of the first phase of redevelopment, as we are somewhat delayed. There are already many blogs in Slovenia, and those who want to create a blog have already done so. We are now playing with many ideas for introducing interactivity. With the help of advanced internet tools we would like to create a generator of ideas and opinions collected from the Slovene web as a whole. At the same time we would like to make it easier for users to comment, in the manner they do on *BBC*, and publish these comments also in the print edition, or borrow *CNN*'s version – visitors would publish news, which to a certain extent they can on *24ur.com*." *Dnevnik.si* already offers visitors the possibility of publishing comments in the form of letters to the newspaper; this is done under the heading of *(Iz)Brano* [a wordplay on "chosen" and "read"], which is a subheading of *Kolumne/Komentarji* ("Columns/Commentaries"). It is also planned that some selected posts will be published in the print edition of *Dnevik* or its Saturday supplement *Objektiv*. The site contains no blogs by *Dnevnik* reporters. There is, however, an archive of contributions of individual Dnevnik columnists and commentators under the heading of *Kolumne/Komentarji*, which evoke blogs. Each columnist or commentator has his or her own identification, the viewing of articles is ordered in reverse chronological order, and visitors to the website can also respond to them. The heading *Kolumne/Komentarji* thus encompasses certain discursive characteristics of the blog, though it differentiates in one important aspect, as all columns and comments are simply taken from the print edition of *Dnevnik*, and there are no special web columnists and commentators.
"In future we promise columns that we are now calling *Kolumne/komentarji 2.0*. There columnists, commentators, journalists and editors from *Dnevnik* will be able to write a sort of blog, and we will offer blogs to representatives of civil society, that is, marginal groups and those voices who are otherwise without access to print and mass media," says Slana.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The analysis of online newspapers offered by traditional media, along with interviews with their editors, has shown that they are all directed towards interactivity. Some online newspapers have opted for the inclusion of blogs which can be partly edited by each registered user, and partly by selected bloggers, because they estimate that blogging is one of the most widespread and popular forms of online communication. They invite them to form and fill in an alternative space of pub-

74

licly written words. Blog hosts moderate blogs among the analysed websites, they also use editorial tactics for those sites where selected bloggers publish. Those online newspapers which have not offered blogs also do not plan to do so. They estimate that they have missed the initial demand and that there is a sufficient supply of blogs.

Thus, blogging is not seen by the editors of these online newspapers as a threat to journalism but as a means of activating "the common" citizen and possibly a means of obtaining information from smaller communities (as the online editors of *Dnevnik.si* and *Vecer.si* state), on the basis of which they could steer a part of their news production. By introducing blogs they hope to attract visitors and ritualize the visiting of the website of individual mass media; according to the plans of one online newspaper (*Dnevnik.si*), representatives of so-called marginal groups would receive a "voice". The blog, or a form of blog-like communication, would thus become an inherent part of the online newspaper of traditional mass media, and this at two levels: (1) some online newspapers assume the character of blog hosts and offer their visitors a metamorphosis into bloggers; (2) all the analyzed online newspapers, with the exception of *Večer*, provide or will provide blogs or some similar form of communication to selected bloggers, among whom are journalists and editors. Although blogging would not become a primary activity of journalists, but rather an additional burden, which is why, as the editors say, they do not plan to force anyone into blogging. As well, there will be posts from blogs written by people "from the street", as one of the interviewed editors says, and this will become a column in the print newspaper – for which in *Večer* they would also receive payment. With these actions, a flexible but firm link between print and online versions is established with an aim: keep the addressees at the same media company.

Conclusion

The blog as a form of communication is developing. The blog is, in terms of technology, a simple and accessible mediator by means of which, through a complete enabling of the right to communicate, the subject is placed in the discursive centre of things. At the same time, the blog reignites discussions about the development of a critical public. With the widening of the blogosphere and the simultaneous entering into cyberspace of elements from the mediative public sphere, blogs have begun to be interspersed among various discourses, including journalistic discourse. The blog as a form of communication that is quintessentially characteristic of the electronic public sphere has been employed to satisfy the widest array of interests. In the process, activities in the blogosphere or online have begun to assume the contours of Mills's ideal-typical model of the mass. The discursive status of the blog thus becomes a tool of various discourses which are in a constant struggle for hegemony.

In the first stage of the expanding of blog use, journalism as an institutional part of the political, economic and cultural system had an ambivalent relation to this form of communication. A consideration of the most prominent Slovene online newspapers and interviews with their editors shows they have rejected such a relation.

75

In recent times the blogs on (Slovene) online newspapers of traditional media have been written by journalists, editors and other "elite voices", and in the future blog-like forms of communication would be considered. The blog thus becomes an inherent part of the websites of Slovene traditional media. Online newspapers are simultaneously being transformed into blog hosts and allowing each and every visitor the possibility of creating his or her own blog, whereby they are generating a specific portion of the internet users on their own website and ritualising the visiting of online newspapers. The contributions of some bloggers are entering into the print edition of newspapers, and in the near future they may appear on television screens.

By combining the findings of entering of the blog into journalistic discourse with the theoretical frameworks of Foucault, Resnick and T. Oblak, we can confirm the first thesis presented in the introduction. Through the integration of the blog, Slovene online newspapers normalize the blog in journalistic discourse and surpass the ambivalence in journalism's relation to the blog. The power of the norm of the insertion of the blog into the online newspaper imposes homogeneity, and at the same time individualizes, when making it possible to consider differences. This is especially valid in normalized cyberspace, where the the characteristic of the mediated public sphere prevail. Here we must respect that journalism (including online journalism) builds its discursive status on the myth of journalistic objectivity, which, with the adapting to the changing socio-historical context as well as the development of information and communication technologies, reproduces the status of trust in journalistic discourse and its role as the main reconstructor of reality in cyberspace as well. At this point we can thus confirm the second thesis too: Slovene online newspapers through the introduction of the blog draw from the discursive status of the blog as a promoter of public discussion and reproduce the discursive status of trust in journalism. The normalizing of the blog brings into journalistic discourse a form of communication that mediates the possibility of forming a critical public and reproduces the discursive status of journalism as an objective activity for the public good. New discursive extensiveness is, at the same time, obtained by the blog. First, the blog as a normalized form of communication in journalism becomes a unit in a chain of equivalencies of journalistic discourse, which has in formation the status of truth and trust. Second, the introduction of the blog reproduces the status of journalism and simultaneously deepens its general crisis, which leads to the waning of the individual in the subject – more closely viewed, the blogger, who is only a fictitious atom of an "ideological" representation of the blogosphere and journalism.

The contours of the normalized blog in the discourse of online newspapers and journalistic discourse, in spite of the mentioned shortcomings, legitimize forms of computer-mediated communication in the almost exclusively one-way flow of journalistic information. The blog, along with the remaining forms of communication in online journalism, activates the addressee and increases the complexity in the journalist–source–addressee triad in traditional media as well. The question is, how will this influence the evolution of journalism in the service of the public good? The effects of the normalization of the blog in journalism, despite the democratic potential, are not uniform, not foreseeable and not revolutionary – they

are more dependent on the cultural context and relations than on the continuous advancement of technology.

ENDNOTES:

[1] There is no universal answer to the question what a blog is. The debate over whether the blog is (hyper)media or a web genre has not yet concluded (see Burnett and Marshall, 2003; Herring et al, 2004; Miller and Shepherd, 2004; Oblak and Petrič, 2005), indicating that further discussion is required. In spite of this, there is a rather wide consensus regarding the understanding of the blog as a fluid mixture of presenting an online space and an asynchronous form of computer-mediated communication (see Bausch et al, 2002, Herring et al, 2004). This sort of broad understanding supplements the definition of the blog as an online space consisting of text, published in reverse chronological order, with an overtly communicative intent. Originally, computer programmers made use of blogs to inform others about innovations and to offer advice to program users. However, with the emergence of bloghosts and the writing of a sort of online journal, the expression blog, due to specific occurrences, obtained a much wider meaning and use (Oblak and Petrič, 2005: 11). Those blogs offered by the majority of bloghosts (e.g. http://www.blogger.com, http://www.blogspot.com, http://www.livejournal.com) all basically share the same structure: a header with a banner and the name of the blog; a body with text, photographs, video and audio clips, offered in reverse chronological order, to which visitors can react with comments; a side-bar to the left or right of the main part, in which the blogger is personally identified, linked to texts which are ordered in an archive and categories (for example, culture, politics, sport, interests, entertainment), hypertextual links to other websites and blogs; some blogs also have advertising, provide search functions, offer surveys and the like.

[2] At the end of March 2003 CNN forbade its special reporter from Iraq, Kevin Sites, from publishing texts on his blog (http://www.kevinsites.com) and entirely fenced themselves off from him because his texts were subjective and not in accordance with *CNN*'s editorial policy. Sites started to blog again seven months later, when he began reporting from Iraq for MSNBC. At the moment Sites is producing the blog *Kevin Sites in the Hotzone* (hotzone.yahoo.com) in the framework of *Yahoo! News*.

[3] In spring of 2003 the online version of *The Guardian* published the posts of the "independent" blogger Salam Pax which he had published on his blog during the bombing of Baghdad (dear_read.blogspot.com); according to the data provided by his blog host *Blogspot.com*, 86 percent of all the websites's visitors were directed there (Alexander, 2004: 282). After not being able to blog for a certain period due to lack of electricity in Baghdad, Salam Pax returned online as a journalist for *The Guardian*.

[4] In our understanding of blogger community we join Lampa (2004), who bases the blogosphere on the theoretical frame of the imagined community as Anderson understands it, that is, as a community which we must indelibly link with the concept of the nation, language and technological development of media. Although some groups of bloggers do not extend to the national level and can be a network completely separate from the blogosphere, contemporary studies write primarily of a global blogosphere (cf. Herring et al, 2004; Sifry, 2006) or individual national blogospheres (cf. Schaap, 2004). According to data from *Technocrati* there are now at least 57 million blogs worldwide (Sifry, 2006), with the Slovene blogosphere consisting of more then ten thousand (in)active blogs.

[5] In the technical sense as well as in the sense of content a blog has as its core a subject – individual and collective. In the blogosphere there are individual blogs, which are created by individuals and represent more than 90 percent of all blogs (Herring et al, 2004: 5), as well as collective blogs, which are formed by a sort of ad hoc editorship with a specifically delineated publishing strategy (Lasica, 2002). The title blogger not only encompasses those who create a blog individually or in a group but those who, with their commentaries, are guests on other blogs. The blogger therefore can not be understood only as an isolated individual but as one interwoven into a specific blogger community.

6   In 2005 and 2006 there was a daily average of 1.3 million posts in the global blogosphere, with more posts on the date of large scale events that were covered by traditional media (e.g. the terrorist attack on London, the beginning of Israel's attack on Lebanon, the death of Terri Schiavo) (Sifry, 2006).

7   A recent example of "blogger journalism" in the Slovene media space occurred in late October/early November 2006 with regard to the Member of Parliament and mayor of Tržič Pavel Rupar. Before the mayoral elections in Tržič, the blog *Anti Rupar* (protirupar.blog.siol.net) published a video clip showing how at a public meeting in Tržič Rupar threatened Novica Mihajlović, a journalist from the Slovene daily *Finance*, with his fist; they had previously had a debate with each other on the information show *Trenja* on the commercial television channel *POP TV*. Mihajlović had said on *Trenja* that Rupar would benefit during the mayoral elections in Tržič from the alleged beating of his lover and from breaking law by no registering an apartment with the Anticorruption Commission. Within a few days the clip from the blog was circulating online. Almost a week later *POP TV* published it in its main news programme *24 ur*, while the public *Radiotelevizija Slovenia* declined to show it. Rupar resigned as member of the Slovene parliament and lost in the Tržič mayoral election.

8   We did not include one of the largest of the Slovene blog hosts: the Web portal http://www.siol.net, where there are approximately two thousand blogs. The Web portal was created by the company *Siol*, a commercial provider of internet services; because journalism is not one of their primary activities, including them would thus be a moving away from the main focus of this article.

9   Interview with Barbara Repovž, 16. 1. 2007.

10   Interview with Zvezdan Martič, 8. 1. 2007.

11   Interview with Erika Repovž, 17. 1. 2007.

12   Interview with Mag editor-in-chief Janez Markeš, 11.1.2007.

13   Interview with Jaka Železnik, 9. 1. 2007.

14   Interview with Zvone Štor, 20. 1. 2007.

15   Interview with Milan Slana, 12. 1. 2007.

REFERENCES:

Alexander, Alistair (2004) "Disruptive technology: Iraq and the Internet", pp. 277–285. David Miller (Ed.): *Tell Me Lies – Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq*. London, Sterling: Pluto Press.

Allan, Stuart (2002) "Reweaving the Internet: Online news of September 11", pp. 119–140. In: Stuart Allan, Barbie Zelizer (Ed.): *Journalism after September 11*. London, New York: Routledge.

Andrews, Paul (2003) "Is Blogging Journalism", *Nieman Reports* 57 (3): 63–64.

Aufderheide, Patricia (2004) "Big media and little media: the journalistic informal sector during the invasion of Iraq", pp. 333–46. In: Stuart Allan, Barbie Zelizer (Ed.): *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*. London and New York: Rotledge.

Bausch, Paul, Matthew Haughley, Meg Hourighan (2002) *Weblog – Publishing Online with Weblogs*. Indianapolis: Willy Publishing.

Bowman, Shayne, Chris Willis (2003) *We Media: How audiences are shaping the future of news and information*. Reston: The Media Center of American Press Institute, http://www.hypergene.net/wemedia/download/we_media.pdf, January 20, 2007.

Burnett, Robert, David Marshall (2003) *Web Theory: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Dahlgren, Peter (1996) "Media Logic in Cyberspace: Repositioning of Journalism and Its Public", *Javnost/The Public* 3 (3): 59–72.

Deuze, Marc (2002): Online Journalism: Modeling the First Generation of News Media on the Web. *First Monday* 6 (10); http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_10/deuze, November 14, 2006.

Foucault, Michel (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Alan Sheridan, trans., New York: Vintage.

Foucault, Michel (1991) *Vednost-oblast-subjekt*. Ljubljana: Krt.

Gauntlett, David (2000) *Web.Studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age*. London: Arnold.

Hardt, Hanno (1996) "The End of Journalism: Media and Newswork in the United States", *Javnost/The Public* 3 (3): 21–41.

Herring, Susan C., Louis Ann Scheidt, Sabrina Bonus, Elijah Wright (2004) "Bridging the Gap: A Genre Analysis of Weblogs", *Proceedings of the Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science HICSS-37*, http://www.ics.uci.edu/~jpd/classes/ics234cw04/herring.pdf, January 21, 2007.

Iggers, Jeremy (1999) *Good News, Bad News: Journalism Ethics and Public Discourse*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Kawamoto, Kevin (2003) "Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and the Changing Horizons of Journalism", pp. 1–31. In: Kevin Kawamoto (Ed.): *Digital Journalism*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers.

Kerbel, Matthew E., Joel David Bloom (2005) "Blog for America and Civic Involvement", *Press/Politics* 20 (4): 3–27.

Lampa, Graham (2004) "Imagining the Blogosphere: An Introduction to the Imagined Community of Instant Publishing." In: Laura Gurak, Smiljana Antonijevic, Laurie Johnson, Clancy Ratliff, Jessica Reyman (Ed.), *Into the blogosphere: Rhetoric, community, and culture of weblogs*, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/imagining_the_blogosphere.html, January 21, 2007.

Lasica, J. D. (2002) "Weblogs: A New Source of News", *Online Journalism Review*, April 18; http://www.ojr.org/ojr/workplace/1017958782.php, December 10 2006.

Lasica, J. D. (2003) "Blogs and Journalism Need Each Other", *Nieman Reports* 57 (3): 70–74.

Lenhart, Amanda, Susannah Fox (2006) "Bloggers: a portrait of internet's new storytellers", *PEW Internet & American Life Project*, http://www.pewinternet. org/pdfs/PIP%20Bloggers%20Report%20July%2019%202006.pdf, January 21, 2007.

Lennon, Sheila (2003) "Blogging Journalists Invite Outsiders' Reporting In", *Nieman Reports* 57 (3): 70–74.

Lowery, Wilson (2006) "Mapping journalism–blogging relationship", *Journalism* 7 (4): 477–500.

Matheson, Donald (2004) "Weblogs and the Epistemology of the News: Some Trends in Online Journalism", *New Media & Society* 6: 443–468.

McNair, Brian (1998) *The Sociology of Journalism.* London: Arnold.

McNair, Brian (2006) *Cultural Chaos: Journalism, news and power in a globalised world*. London, New York: Routledge.

McQuail, Dennis (1994) *Mass Communication theory*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Merjenje obiskanosti spletnih strani, Aragon d. o. o., http://www.soz.si/uploads/ pdf/moss_02_2006_dosegi.pdf, January 21, 2007.

Miller, Carolyn R., Dawn Scheperd (2004) "Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog" In: Laura Gurak, Smiljana Antonijevic, Laurie Johnson, Clancy Ratliff, Jessica Reyman (Ed.), *Into the blogosphere: Rhetoric, community, and culture of weblogs*, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/ blogging_as_social_action_a_genre_analysis_of_the_weblog.html, January 21, 2007.

Mills, Wright C. (1956) *The Power Elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, Bill (2003) "Weblogs: A Road Back to Basics", *Nieman Reports* 57 (3): 65–68.

Nagel, Sarah C. (2004) "Using the world of blogs for project and financial management", *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances* 17 (3): 102–105.

Nip, Joyce Y. M. (2006) "Exploring the second phase of public journalism", *Journalism Studies* 7 (2): 212–236.

Oblak, Tanja (2000) "Mitske podobe o življenju na mreži: od poljubnih identitet do izgubljenih skupnosti v kibernetskem prostoru", *Teorija in praksa* 37 (6): 1052–1068.

Oblak, Tanja (2002) "Dialogue and Representation in the Electornic Public Sphere", *Javnost/The Public* 9 (2): 7–22.

Oblak, Tanja (2003) *Izzivi e-demokracije*. Ljubljana: Založba FDV.

Oblak, Tanja, Gregor Petrič (2005) *Splet kot medij in mediji na spletu.* Ljubljana: Založba FDV.

Pavlik, John V. (2001) *Journalism and new media*. New York: Columbia UP.

Petrič, Gregor (2003) "Erozija hipertekstovne etike med avtorji spletnih mest", *Družboslovne razprave* 19 (44): 119–142.

Petrič, Gregor (2004) *"Blog obuja idejo kritične javnosti."* Delo, September 10.

Pinter, Andrej (2005) *Sodobne teorije javne sfere*. Ljubljana: Založba FDV.

Poler Kovačič, Melita (2004) *Novinarska (iz)virnost: Novinarji in njihovi viri v sodobni slovenski družbi*. Ljubljana: Založba FDV.

Poler Kovačič, Melita (2005) *Kriza novinarske odgovornosti*. Ljubljana: Založba FDV.

Regan, T. (2003) "Weblogs Threaten and Inform Traditional Journalism", *Nieman Reports* 57 (3): 68–70.

Resnick, David (1998) "Politics on the Internet: the Normalization and the Public Sphere", pp. 48–68. In: C. Touluse, W. T. Luke (Ed.): *The Politics of Cyberspace.* London: Routledge.

Robinson, Susan (2006) "The mission of the j-blog: Recapturing journalistic authority online", *Journalism* 7 (1): 65–83.

Rosen, Jay (2005): "Bloggers vs. Journalism is Over", *Press Think*, January 15, 2005, http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/15/berk_pprd.html, December 12, 2006.

Salwen, Michael B. (2005) "Online News Trends", pp. 47–80. In: Michael B. Salwen, Bruse Garrison, Paul D. Driscoll (Ed.): *Online News and the Public*. Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schaap, Frank (2005) "Links, Lives, Logs: Presentation in the Dutch Blogosphere." In: Laura Gurak, Smiljana Antonijevic, Laurie Johnson, Clancy Ratliff, Jessica Reyman (Ed.), *Into the blogosphere: Rhetoric, community, and culture of weblogs*, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/links_lives_logs.html, January 21, 2007.

Schudson, Michael (2003) *The Sociology of News*. New York, London: Norton & Company.

Slevin, James (2000) *The Internet and Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Sifry, Dave (2006) "State of the Blogosphere", *Technorati weblog*, October 2006, http://technorati.com/weblog/2006/11/161.html, January 21, 2007.

Singer, Jane (2005) "The political j-blogger: 'Normalizing a New Media Form to Fit Old Norms and Practices", *Journalism* 6 (2): 173–198.

Splichal, Slavko (1999) *Public Opinion: Developments and Controversies in the Twentieth Century*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Splichal, Slavko (2000) "Novinarji in novinarstvo", pp. 47–56. In: Slavko Splichal (Ed.): *Vregov zbornik*. Ljubljana: Evropski inštitut za komuniciranje in kulturo in FDV.

Splichal, Slavko (2005) *Konec novinarstva*, http://www.novinar.com/prikaz.php?show_dejavnost_objava=86&show_dejavnost=3&leto=2005, December 4, 2006.

Tuchman, Gaye (1999/1972) "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity", pp. 297–307. In: Howard Tumber (Ed.): *News: A Reader*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vehovar, Vasja, Tina Zupanič (2006) "Internet in slovenska država 2006", *Raba interneta v Sloveniji*, October 2006, http://www.ris.org/uploadi/editor/1166443 548InternetInSlovenskaDrzava2006.pdf, January 21, 2007.

Wall, Melissa (2004) "Blogs as black market journalism: A new paradigm for news", *Interface: The Journal of Education, Community and Values*, http://bcis.pacificu.edu/journal/2004/02/wall.php, January 20, 2007.

Welch, Matt (2003) "Emerging Alternatives – Blogworld: The New Amateur Journalists Weigh In" *Cloumbia Journalism Review*, September/October, http://www.cjr.org/issues/2003/5/blog-welch.asp, January 20, 2007.

Wendland, Mike (2003) "Blogging Connects a Columnist to New Story Ideas", *Nieman Reports* 57(3): 94–95.

Zelizer, Barbie (2004) *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Normalizacija bloga u novinarstvu: Elektroničke novine tradicionalnih slovenskih medija

Igor Vobič

SAŽETAK

Analizom elektroničkih novina slovenskih klasičnih medija i intervjuima s njihovim urednicima, autor pokušava dokazai, da snaga norme postupno normalizira blog kao obik komuniciranja kako u diskursu elektroničkih novina tako i u novinarskom duskursu općenito. Na tragu Foucoultovog razumijevanja moći norme kao i suvremenih rasprava o normalizaciji kibernetskog prostora, prepliću se i pitanja o normaliziranju bloga. Blog u svojoj tehničkoj dimenziji sadržava sposobnost za cjelovito ostvarenje komunikacijskog prava (prava priopćavanja i prava prihvaćanja informacija) te podupire ideju kritičke javnosti. Promatran kroz tu prizmu, blog se udaljuje od Millsovog idealnotipskog modela javnosti i preuzima karakteristike mase. Blog ulazi u prostor u kojem se prepliću diskursi koji su u stalnom sukobu za hegemoniju. Zbog toga je pridobio šire značenje i upotrebu i prevladao oznaku osobnog elektonskog dnevnika. Autor u članku tvrdi da slovenske novine, uključivanjem blogova u elektronička izdanja, crpe smisao iz bloga kao podsticatelja javne rasprave. Pritom, takvim širenjem interesa i prožimanjem diskurzivnih statusa novinarstva i bloga, novinarska etika, odgovornost i profesionalni indentitet dolaze u krizu, a u diskurzivnoj jezgri bloga kao oblika komuniciranja gubimo individuum u komunicirajućem subjektu, odnosno blogera *par excellence*.

Ključne riječi: blog, elektronička izdanja novina, normalizacija bloga, tradicionalni mediji, Slovenija