The purpose of this thesis is to analyze what effect, if any, citizen journalism is having on journalism and ethics in today's society. It starts by examining the role citizen journalism played in the early American colonies to show that the concept of citizen journalism is not new but has played a vital role throughout American history. Next, the focus shifts to the events and reasons that led to the re-emergence of citizen journalism during the past few decades, such as media consolidation and new technology. The thesis then highlights a few of the major issues that surround citizen journalism today, notably with regards to the federal shield law debate. From these evaluations, the conclusion will argue what kind of overall effect citizen journalism has on the journalism field and its ethical signature, as well as whether citizen journalism and traditional media can co-exist and complement each another.

**Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze what effect, if any, citizen journalism is having on journalism and ethics in today's society. It starts by examining the role citizen journalism played in the early American colonies to show that the concept of citizen journalism is not new but has played a vital role throughout American history. Next, the focus shifts to the events and reasons that led to the re-emergence of citizen journalism during the past few decades, such as media consolidation and new technology. The thesis then highlights a few of the major issues that surround citizen journalism today, notably with regards to the federal shield law debate. From these evaluations, the conclusion will argue what kind of overall effect citizen journalism has on the journalism field and its ethical signature, as well as whether citizen journalism and traditional media can co-exist and complement each another.

**Advisor(s) or Committee Chair**

Professor Gordon McKerral

**Disciplines**

Arts and Humanities

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HISTORICAL ROOTS. Before focusing on citizen journalism in a contemporary sense, one must first understand its history. The most common misconception about citizen journalism shared. Chapter 3. Contemporary citizen journalism. For decades, newspapers were king in the news world. Even when radio and later television rose in prominence, newspapers remained an established player in the media field, providing “timely” news.