Who are CitizenJ? An investigation into the motivations and experiences of volunteers and facilitators at the CitizenJ project

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

CitizenJ is a New Journalism program running under the auspices of The Edge, at the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. The program operates at three levels – a community newsroom, public talks and workshops, and an experimentation fund – and hosts a dedicated publishing platform at http://citizenj.edgeqld.org.au/.

The program supports Citizen Journalism, where everyday people are encouraged and supported to report on events considered relevant to their local community. This report outlines the results of a short research project looking at those people involved in CitizenJ, both volunteer members and paid facilitators. The research aimed to understand the motivations and demographics of CitizenJ contributors and facilitators so as to better support their needs and professional development, and engage new contributors with the program.

Participants were asked four different sets of questions.
- To illicit information about the contributors and facilitators themselves, to learn about their journalism/media backgrounds and their involvement with CitizenJ so far.
- To find out how participants initially became involved and their experiences relating to this, specifically around accessibility and support.
- To learn about journalism routines and the types of stories preferred by the participants
- To explore broader questions about the nature of Citizen Journalism itself, as well as the journalistic concepts of objectivity and news worthiness.

Just over 60% of contributors and 75% of facilitators self-identified as journalists. Exactly half of the contributors had participated in formal journalism training of some description and all of the facilitators were formally qualified with a Bachelor of Journalism or similar. Just over one-third of all participants specifically mentioned being paid for journalism or media work.

Participants said they initially heard about the CitizenJ program from a wide variety of sources and around one third couldn't name a specific source.

39% - involvement at community radio station 4ZZZ.

28% - contact with The Edge

22% - directly contacted by CitizenJ staff

The majority of participants (72%) spoke highly of the accessible nature of the CitizenJ program, particularly in relation to the ease of signing-up online and physical accessibility. Participants also indicated high levels of satisfaction with the support provided to them, particularly in relation to editorial and emotional support for their writing and other support from staff members.

Participants indicated a variety of reasons for their involvement. The two most popular reasons related to the philosophy of the program and the participants' career/studies. Other reasons included (in order of popularity) skills acquisition, publishing opportunities, and creativity/innovation.

All facilitators and nearly half of the contributors explicitly said their involvement had contributed positively to their professional development. There were four prominent areas of development raised, all of equal importance – a boost in confidence, broader exposure, an awareness of new approaches and development of teaching skills.

Participants could not name any particular regular sources for story ideas or contacts. The major source of ideas, however, could be most accurately described as being the participants' own professional and social (physical and online) networks.

Community stories were by far the most popular story type cited by participants, followed by "people" stories, social justice issues and science and technology. Other story types of choice included politics, education reform, human interest, and "big ideas".

Time was by far the most popular reason for participants not contributing to CitizenJ as much as they would like to. 67% of contributors stated that lack of time, due to work, university studies or personal issues, was the main reason they either were yet

to submit a story at all, or did not contribute as often as they would like to. Other inhibiting factors included cost, domestic demands, getting access to talent, living outside of Brisbane and needing a refresher course on the editing equipment.

Three major themes arose from discussions about the definition of the term "Citizen Journalism". Most prominently was the theme of the ordinary person being given a voice. The second main idea was based around the role Citizen Journalism played as an alternative to mainstream media practices and, thirdly, was the political or activism element to the concept. It should be noted that there was a contradiction at play in the way a number of participants defined Citizen Journalism when placed within the context of broader discussion. While a significant number of participants recognised Citizen Journalism as a platform for the Ordinary Person, there was also great emphasis placed on the "professional" or "credible nature" of the CitizenJ program.

Participants expressed two distinct views on the concept of maintaining objectivity as a journalist. Two thirds said that objectivity was an important part of their professional practice, and that journalism should strive more generally to be objective. However, another significant group of participants said they did not believe in the concept of objectivity.

News values considered important by participants varied greatly, and were not necessarily framed in traditional journalistic terms. "Finding a new angle" was considered the most important news value, followed by timeliness, interest, relevance and entertainment factors.

Main criticisms of the CitizenJ program were also registered. The main areas for improvement were the lack of advanced-level workshops, adherence to "mainstream" concepts of journalism, restricted opening hours outside of the 9 – 5 and the delay in the editorial process.

All of the above findings are discussed in further detail throughout this report.

1.0
Introduction

CitizenJ is a New Journalism project based at The Edge, hosted by the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia and philanthropically funded by Tim Fairfax, through the Queensland Library Foundation. The project operates on three levels - a community newsroom, public talks and workshops and an experimentation fund - and was officially launched in The publishing platform launched in February 2013 at http://citizenj.edgeqld.org.au/.

CitizenJ aims to equip everyday people with the skills to become credible citizen journalists. To quote the program's website,

> The CitizenJ program experiments with the application of citizen journalism in community news outlets, finding new ways to source, produce and publish stories. The program aims to recognise libraries as a key part in the information services industry and explores their potential for generating, supporting and preserving commentary on issues of significance to society.

Citizen Journalism is generally agreed to be a subsection of what is more broadly recognised as alternative journalism (Forde 2011). Other descriptors include grassroots or participatory journalism. There are many different definitions of the concept, none of which can be applied universally. It is a complex idea with many potential variations (Deuze 2009, p 261), however, there is general agreement that Citizen Journalism involves news content produced by "ordinary citizens".

> "When the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another, that's citizen journalism" (Rosen in Deuze 2009, p.256).

Citizen Journalism has been applauded for providing more open access to information, greater truthfulness, more freedom to report what is seen, less bias "and greater plurality of perspectives, especially counter-hegemonic perspectives" (Tilley

and Cokley 2008 p.103). In a similar manner, Citizen Journalism is defined by CitizenJ as

> … people telling real stories about their community. It might be an eyewitness account to something newsworthy, the story of a local person/organisation doing good work, a review of a local play or exhibition, or an article about an important issue in your community.

Specifically, the CitizenJ newsroom offers free media workshops, a physical newsroom space, one-to-one support with the story-making process (including editing) and a dedicated publishing platform. Participants in the program can borrow a range of media equipment to produce their stories including a laptop, iPads, audio recorders, and broadcast quality video and still camera. Software is available at the newsroom for photo, video and audio editing, as well as animation. The program has also offered $30 000 in experimental journalism funds.

In addition, CitizenJ provides other media organisations with ready-content and, at the same time, further publication opportunities for contributors. Published contributions are licenced under Creative Commons which allows for non-commercial and unaltered republication so long as stories are attributed to the original author.

OhmyNews.com may be considered an example of a similar (albeit much larger and more established) Citizen Journalism program where the work of professionals can be combined with the work of citizen journalists. 70% of this site's content is made up of citizen reporter-filed work, however, professional reporters create the rest, and not everything submitted is accepted for publication (Johnson and Wiedenbeck 2009, Woo Young 2009).

"*Who are CitizenJ? An investigation into the motivations and experiences of volunteers and facilitators at the CitizenJ project*" is the result of a two month research project funded by the CitizenJ Experiments Fund. The research aimed to understand the motivations and demographics of CitizenJ contributors and facilitators

so as to better support their needs and professional development, and engage new contributors with the program.

This research project will impact and assist:

- The CitizenJ Project itself as the findings apply directly to enhancing the experiences of contributors and facilitators, as well as providing evidences of success which can be used to secure future support.
- The Edge and the State Library of Queensland, as a flow on effect from the impacts mentioned above.
- Current and future CitizenJ contributors and facilitators as the findings can be applied to better understand and support their activities.
- University programs that may utilise CitizenJ as an outlet for journalism students.
- The wider community/audience of CitizenJ who will benefit from improved content on the website.

An interim survey was conducted by the current CitizenJ newsroom coordinator in April 2013 that provided basic, mainly quantitative, information regarding the ways in which contributors used the newsroom facilities. This research aims to build on this initial research to build a stronger, more holistic understanding of who contributes (and works) for CitizenJ and their experiences with the program so far. Where appropriate, the results of the Interim April Survey will be compared to the results of this research project throughout the report.

2.0
Methodology

The research project was conducted over a two month period between May and June 2013. I have employed a qualitative approach using In-depth Interviews.

Qualitative research methods seem most appropriate in research that seeks to "understand social action at a greater richness and depth" (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg 1991:17). Qualitative research recognises that reality is subjective and that people (and the organisations they work in) can be fundamentally different (Wimmer and Dominick 1994). Quantitative research often gives the impression that our beliefs, attitudes and personalities are static (Williams 1991) whereas qualitative research "assumes a continually changing world" (Rubin and Rubin 1995:38) where our knowledge is conditional and situational. Qualitative methods are most appropriate to investigate the roles of cultural citizenship, empowerment, and other concepts that are influencing current thought on Citizen Journalism.

Interviews take the researcher into "the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world…to see the content and pattern of daily experience" (McCracken 1988:9). Qualitative interviewing explores the meanings that people share when they work together or in similar situations (Rubin and Rubin 1995) and puts human interpretation at the core of the research (Stempel 1981). Interviewing was a valuable activity as it provided insights into the motivations of both contributors and facilitators.

Qualitative interviewing should be treated in a similar manner to an ordinary conversation – questions and answers should follow in a logical manner and questioning should be determined on answers not predetermined and set in stone (Rubin and Rubin 1995). According to Fortner and Christians (1981) open-ended interviewing plays an essential part in discovering how individuals define their experiences and beliefs (or realities). While I prepared a list of questions based on my findings from the literature, this list was treated as a guide only and the interviews took the form of a guided discussion.

In total I conducted 22 interviews with 18 contributors (including one student intern) and four paid staff members (two current and two former)[1]. Contributors ranged from those who had been involved for over 6 months and had submitted multiple stories, to those who had joined in the last month and were yet to submit, as well as those who had been involved for sometime but also without filing a story. It was considered important to find the perspectives of those who hadn't engaged with the program quite as effectively, as well as those who were considered active. I also conducted interviews with the current and previous newsroom coordinator (who established the program) for background information only. As this is a study of CitizenJ contributors and facilitators, these last two interviews were not included as formal data but rather gave me context within which to conduct my research.

15 interviews conducted by telephone, four in person and three via email. The average interview (not including email) went for approximately 17 minutes with a range between 5 minutes and 46 minutes. It was initially intended to also conduct focus groups, however, it proved quite difficult to arrange suitable times to be able to meet with participants for interviews, and only one participant indicated an interest in actually attending a focus group. The high number of telephone interviews was also a result of the difficulty of being able to arrange face to face interviews. The research project was conducted within a short timeframe and a decision was made to maximise the number of interviews by conducting them over the telephone. Email interviews were conducted with participants who were either located overseas or unable to take telephone calls at appropriate times that I was able to make and record them. The same set of interview questions used during "live" interviews was sent to email interviewees, who replied with a written set of answers.

State Library of Queensland privacy legalisation prevented me from having direct access to the contact details of CitizenJ members so I composed a letter of introduction outlining the research project, which was then emailed to all mailing list

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[1] Three of the paid staff members were employed as facilitators and one was employed near the start of the project as a paid intern. The work described by this participant matches the work of the later facilitator role and, therefore, all of the paid staff, will be referred to from here on as facilitators.

subscribers by the current newsroom coordinator. I received eight responses from this call-out, after several "resends".

I then directly reached out to members of the CitizenJ Editorial Group on Facebook, sending 62 Private Messages, introducing myself and the project. This method gained another 14 participants, almost tripling my original number. An additional 14 replied explaining that, while they were members, this was purely out of interest and they did not have any further involvement in the program. Another four were unable to take the time to speak with me, one explicitly refused to be interviewed, and 29 did not reply.

2.1
Limitations of the study

The CitizenJ Editorial Group on Facebook has 102 members (six of whom joined in the past month), however, I was only able to secure interviews with 22 of these members. The Interim April Survey only received 11 respondents. As mentioned above, joining the Editorial Group doesn't necessarily equate to active interaction with the program itself. Therefore, it is difficult to know how representative the results of this research actually are.

It is also acknowledged that follow up questions were not included in the three email interviews, limiting the information gathered from these participants.

3.0
Findings and Discussion

This section outlines the major findings of the research project and provides discussion throughout the text. Participants were asked four different sets of questions, although not necessarily in a specific order. The first set of questions sought to illicit information about the contributors and facilitators themselves, to learn about their journalism/media backgrounds and their involvement with CitizenJ so far. The second set asked how participants initially became involved and their experiences relating to this, specifically around accessibility and support. The third focused on journalism routines and the types of stories preferred by the participants and the fourth set of questions focused on broader questions about the nature of Citizen Journalism itself, as well as the journalistic concepts of objectivity and news worthiness. It was considered important to provide specific attention to the journalism element of the participants' involvement which should be seen as "distinct from the broader organisational outlet" itself (Forde 2011, p. ix).

3.1
General overview of contributors and facilitators

Contributors

Of the 18 contributors, seven were active contributors, having published between five and twenty stories. Four had submitted one story and one participant had almost finished their first. Six were yet to submit a story, although one of these had produced an animation of the guidelines for contributors, which was published on the CitizenJ website. Six participants have worked on the Mega Stories. All participants yet to submit a story indicated they intended to do so in the future.

Three participants had been involved since late 2012 when the original newsroom coordinator was on staff, and the rest joined after the current newsroom coordinator came on board. Five considered themselves to be new to the program, being involved for less than three months. Seven said they also volunteered at community radio 4ZZZ. Three participants identified as being older (50 years plus).

Eight contributors mentioned attending CitizenJ workshops including Introduction to Journalism/Citizen Journalism, Radio, Interviewing, Story Gathering, Media Law and another two participants had watched workshops online. Two explicitly mentioned attending the Walkley Talks, and a third had participated as a panel member for a Walkley Talk.

Facilitators

Of the four facilitators, three were or had been active story contributors. The fourth was working on the program before there was a CitizenJ publishing platform. Both of the active facilitators volunteered at 4ZZZ, with one of these also working at community 4EB[2]. One former facilitator left due to being over-committed with work and study while the other was hired for six months through an internship from Sept 2012.

Tasks described by the facilitators included:

- Subediting
- Providing advice and mentoring to contributors
- Facilitating workshops
- Assisting with Walkley Talks
- Checking website, emails, twitter and Facebook accounts
- Organising and assisting with events
- Assisting with overall planning of the program

3.2

What prior experience with journalism or media do participants have?

Contributors

11 contributors self-identified as journalists. Two identified as activists and two more as entertainers. Other perceived roles at CitizenJ included activist, educator, producer and messenger. Two contributors specifically said they did *not* identify as being journalists.

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[2] Both of these community radio station have acted as partners in the CitizenJ project.

Exactly half of the contributors had participated in formal journalism training of some description. Five had completed formal studies in journalism, and four were currently studying in this area. Formal studies included Bachelor of Journalism, Bachelor of Communications, Graduate Diploma of Journalism and one participant had recently completed a Masters in Communication for Social Change. Institutions included University of Queensland, Griffith University, Open University and JSchool. One contributor had completed a number of journalism subjects as part of a Science undergraduate degree.

Seven participants had completed internships or volunteer work with media organisations (other than CitizenJ) as part of their studies. Placements included 4ZZZ, major newspapers, commercial radio stations, Radio National and local ABC radio stations.

One participant had contributed to the JSchool news website, Newsbyte, and another had volunteered with JAC Radio at the University of Queensland. One had contributed to sports and other voluntary association magazines while another participant was currently writing a weekly unpaid column for a sports news website about National Rugby League, which she described as being for a niche market.

Five contributors specifically mentioned being paid for journalism or writing work. One had been writing for Socialist newspaper *Green Left Weekly* for ten years, one worked in online media and three had been paid for freelance work. Freelance work included writing a history for a local not-for-profit organisation, being published in The Big Issue, and writing "on and off" for educational/computer magazines. Four participants worked in other areas of media including "documentary development, production and research", communications for the World Wildlife Fund, newspaper advertising and in advertising for a media agency.

Three participants described themselves as being self-published, with one of these saying he had written books as a child self-published by his parents, one of which was archived at the library of the Queensland Museum. Three mentioned having their own personal blog on topics including personal development, and local Multicultural issues.

Two participants mentioned the role of writing in previous employment. One mentioned being a prolific writer as a teacher, writing reports, curriculum and similar work. The other wrote training manuals for the mining industry.

Two participants specifically said they had next to no prior experience in writing, one saying they had "terrible writing skills" and the other describing themself as a novice writer with "no training, experience or exposure in journalism/writing".

Facilitators

All of the facilitators were formally qualified with a Bachelor of Journalism or similar. Not surprisingly, three of the four self-identified as journalists, with one being more comfortable being considered as a producer. Other perceived roles included editor, educator and mentor.

Three had previous paid employment in a journalism role. One had three year's of experience in commercial media, one had worked at Radio National, and another at Radio 4EB. Two volunteered at 4ZZZ, one for five years and the other for nearly two.

3.3
How did participants first find out about CitizenJ?

The Interim April Survey found that the majority of respondents learned about CitizenJ through word of mouth or The Edge. Other sources include a story in the media and university.

Participants for this research said they initially heard about the CitizenJ program from a wide variety of sources and around one third couldn't name a specific source.

Seven participants said they heard about CitizenJ through their involvement at 4ZZZ. Five participants said they found out about CitizenJ via their contact with The Edge, be this through the calendar of events or newsletter, or from casual conversations with Edge staff. One participant found out when attending The Edge to conduct an audio tour of the venue as part of a story for JAC Radio, and one "stumbled into the

Introduction to Citizen Journalism seminar by mistake". Four were directly contacted by either the previous or the current news coordinator, and an equal number by paid facilitators.

Two participants were directly recommended by tutors or supervisors at university and one was told about the program by a fellow student who was already contributing. Other general sources included "googling the term 'free journalism courses'", being told by friends, following people on Twitter who had begun to contribute and "generally surfing the Internet".

On a slightly different note, three participants felt that CitizenJ could be better promoted, especially to university students and community groups.

> I think it could be improved. I think The Edge and CitizenJ are fantastic but they don't have a strong voice, especial in my demographic. As a journalism student … it was few and far between that we heard about it so I think there could be much more integration ... I think there needs to be more (done) at a grass roots level to spread the word about what CitizenJ is doing.

> I'd like to see us going out in the community too and help people tell their story in this way … that would be really cool, you know … give people enough skills and then go away because you're redundant, they've got enough knowledge to run with it … whatever it takes to make get more people involved and get people's stories being told … and the way to do it is to go out, not just sit here and wait for people to come in.

3.4
What are participants' opinions on the accessibility of CitizenJ and the support offered by the program?

Accessibility

Participants' main methods of initial contact were through attending workshops, directly contacting the newsroom coordinator, applying for an internship or signing up to the Facebook group.

13 of the participants specifically praised accessibility to the program.

> I signed up, easy. There's a Facebook group where they post information you might be interested in doing a story on so I had no problems with accessibility.

> It was really easy and everyone was keen for me to do more stuff.

> Really easy, to be honest with you it was just a matter of going in and saying "hello" … And I've found since that the crew that hold the newsroom down, they're all very friendly, and any idea that you have, they're all too willing to discuss it in the pitch stage so you can construct something that's more likely to suit their news platform. Yeah, it's good. I would definitely say that it's open and accessible.

> I live in Brisbane, so it's easy for me to get into the newsroom and have access to the facilitators and their comments.

Two participants specifically mentioned the importance that it was easy for them to physically access the newsroom, while three recognised that access may be an issue for those living outside of Brisbane, or who may have other difficulties physically accessing the newsroom.

> While the Internet is a valuable source of information, personal contact is much more impacting.

Suggestions were made to extend the program to smaller regional and rural centres, as well as other libraries throughout Brisbane, however, the logistics of this were recognised as being an obstacle to such an idea.

> Experience for regional contributors isn't the same but you can't really change that, you can't have a newsroom for everywhere.

Two participants felt that, while age had not been a barrier to them, the younger demographic target of CitizenJ and The Edge may have deterred some people. In a similar manner, the opening hours of the newsroom also may have deterred people.

> It worked because I had a connection with The Edge … but for other
> people, say older or not familiar with technology, walking into The Edge
> cold would be, could be, daunting … that itself is not The Edge's fault …
> that's not a criticism, that's just simply is the way it is.

> Particularly people like me who go to work five days a week, we're
> available to write for a publication after work, in the evenings, on the
> weekend. Now CitizenJ is available Monday to Friday, nine five basically,
> and I just feel that it wasn't accessible at the times when a large
> proportion of the population are available to write Citizen Journalism.

> Access is a bit tricky due to the times the workshops are. And the ability
> to get out at night is also a problem with commitments at home … I would
> have to make the effort to go along I think, rather than me trying to
> change the structure to suit me.

One participant felt that accessibility was difficult for them because of their own personal situation being a sole carer living "a considerable distance" from The Edge, while another felt "it wasn't immediately obvious how to contribute, how to link up with the others that are involved".

One facilitator felt that some contributors might be put off by the processes and paperwork asked of them, which may be "a little bit too much" to ask of volunteers. Facilitators also expressed frustrations as to how to get people involved past the "signing up" stage.

> So people might hear about it and say "hey that sounds great", or they
> might even join up on the website but then we don't actually hear from
> them, or perhaps they might join our Facebook editorial group ... lurk in
> the background and look at the discussions that are going on there. And I
> think we have, like, close to 100 people in that group, and … probably
> less than 50% would actually produce something.

However, four contributors quite explicitly mentioned that being an active member was the responsibility of the individual, relied on self-motivation, and was not hindered by accessibility to the program.

> At the end of the day there were more than enough ways to get involved, it was just choosing what level you wanted to be involved in.

> I think it comes down to people's personal motivations. It's up to them if they follow through.

> I just believe it's certainly one of those situations where you get back from it what you're willing to put into it

> I think the major problem … is getting contributors to look in the toolbox, and I think a lot of questions can be answered just by looking at the documents. I know I've asked (the newsroom coordinator) stuff before and she's said "there's actually a document in the tool box that will explain that"!

This is issue is discussed in more detail in Section 4.9.

Support

Respondents to the April Interim Survey strongly indicated they found the CitizenJ facilitators helpful. This research also received strong indication from both facilitators and contributors that they were satisfied with the levels of support provided to them by the CitizenJ program. Participants said they received editorial and emotional support for their writing, and named the workspace itself and the workshops as being particularly helpful.

> The guidelines on the CitizenJ website are really helpful - the instructions on how to put audio and everything up were really good.

> It's really great in the fact that it's very, very supportive. Because most of us are new to journalism and are trying to just gain experience and get into the industry, it's like the stepping stone between being at university and being part of print or TV or anything like that.

The newsroom space itself is quite good, its open plan, everyone's always there to seek advice, and also the website itself has … the Contributors' Toolbox that offers all sorts of documents.

One facilitator and a student intern both commended the way in which the newsroom coordinator negotiated their work plans.

We had a meeting where she outlined the expectations of the newsroom and in return she asked us for our expectations. That was a good starting point to make sure there were no gaps with what we were expecting from the program and what we needed to do for them.

Facilitators also spoke highly of support provided to them by other members of staff at The Edge, who assisted them with technical issues, booking studios and other administrative duties. One facilitator also felt that, earlier on in the program, there was confusion in regards to roles and responsibilities, but that this was settled over time, and "once set-up we had a nice structure supporting us and pushing us in the right direction".

There were some suggestions for improvement (such as a cheat sheet for how to construct a story) although quite often these came with a sense of "but that might be offered already, I just need to check". One participant still felt "technically inept" and another felt they needed to become more connected with the website. One suggested social activities where people can get to know each other if they chose to, and more promotion of the workshops on the Facebook group. Another felt that the induction process and orientation could have been more thorough with more attention given to the workshops and training on offer.

3.5

Why are contributors and facilitators interested in being involved with CitizenJ?

Participants indicated a variety of reasons for their involvement, however, two – philosophy and career/study related – were most popular. Other reasons included (in

order of popularity) skills acquisition, publishing opportunities, and creativity/innovation.

One third of all contributors said CitizenJ was an excellent opportunity to enhance their career opportunities and/or their studies.

> The training they offer is outstanding and, also, the opportunity to work with people who are a lot more knowledgeable in the area of journalism outside of university.

> Breaking into journalism is so hard, and if you have no experience of any kind it makes it even harder … my aim up until graduation is to get as much experience as I can so when I apply for the cadetships at ABC and SBS they have something to go on. So that's it, I have a very clear plan as to what I want to do.

> It's a fantastic platform to practice journalism. As a young journalist you want to experiment in the online realm and to have a platform there with support, not just technical support but also journalistic support … it's a fantastic combination. You can't really say no to it. And you've got the equipment and you've got a bunch of other interested and interesting people to work alongside.

> You have the support for people to give you editorial feedback … If you're doing an internship for a major newspaper, you often don't have the freedom that this placement allows you.

The other most popular reason for involvement was that participants felt attracted to the philosophy behind the concept of Citizen Journalism itself.

> The stories are being told from a citizen's perspective - it's very different to mainstream media and you just get a really different perspective, and that's what I like about it.

> I think it's important for more journalism to be accessible to more journalists. I don't think we have enough quality journalism in Australia

and I think it's, in general, quite tightly controlled … there's a certain freedom to Citizen Journalism, and that's what attracts me to CitizenJ.

Something about the concept of creating work with everyday people and making it available on a creative commons basis, something about this sort of publishing appeals to me … was just something that felt worthy of my time. There's a lot of stuff out there that's purely to make money … and this seems to have a little more to it, a little more meaning behind it, a little more incentive to make a difference to something in some way … maybe there's a sense of activism involved in, it's got the right kinds of values and it aligns well with what I want to spend my spare time on.

After working in commercial media, where advertising was how the publication earned their income I was really interested to be part of a program where advertising didn't happen, where it wasn't part of the strategy of that publication.

Developing skills was the next most popular reason cited for wanting to be involved. Specific skills included writing, video, photography, and Photoshop while broader concepts were also described, such as wanting to develop a professional understanding of journalism, or become more technologically savvy.

It's definitely to gather some more professional understanding of what it is to be a journalist or what it is to publish stories. (In) my industry (personal development) a lot of people are trying to get seen on the Internet but are uneducated about publishing, so I'm trying to look at it from the angle of being a publisher with professional writing standards.

I don't have a real bent for writing and I realised that I don't really understand journalism. I'd like to be able to write more clearly and concisely, it's as simple as that … I wanted to see if I could learn to write in a different way … I think secretly that's probably why I went, to see if I could pick up something that would open the emotional side of it rather than just plain boring who, what, when, how, why.

Four participants said they were involved because of the opportunity to publish. An equal number were interested in the experimental and creative aspects of the program, which they saw to be innovating and exciting. Furthermore, there were a number of individual reasons for participation – a love of writing, a love of learning and the suitability of the writing style.

> I find it really satisfying and because in the process of doing it (publishing) I learn so much myself, enhance my own learning and the whole point of being alive is to learn.

3.6
How has involvement with CitizenJ contributed to the participants' professional development?

All four facilitators and eight of the contributors explicitly said their involvement had contributed positively to their professional development. There were four prominent areas of development raised, all of equal importance – a boost in confidence, broader exposure, an awareness of new approaches and development of teaching skills.

Three facilitators said they felt much more equipped to teach journalism skills to other people, be this in a workshop or classroom environment, or assisting with the editing process.

> I learnt a lot about how to manage interactions with people, manage a story, (and) push the story in the right direction while still keeping it someone else's piece, so that was a lot of fun and a really good learning experience.

However one facilitator still didn't feel they could be classed as a professional yet.

> I still don't feel like I've had enough experience or know enough to (teach) and that's a hurdle for me. I try to approach it from the point of view of just giving advice rather than saying "this is what you should do", because I never know what it is that one should do … I don't feel I'm that good at putting on the persona of an educator, I just can't do it. I have skills but I wouldn't call myself someone who's a total polished professional.

Generally though, both contributors and facilitators indicated an increase in confidence and its connection to enhanced professional development. Participants indicated increased confidence in a variety of skills, including giving workshops, editing, taking photographs and in their own journalism craft.

> I think it's been a big confidence boost, I think that it's taught me a bit more about the journalism craft as well, about how stories need to be presented in order to get published. Even down to the nitty gritty of writing, it's definitely sharpened me up in that sense … It's helped me to sharpen the instinct of hunting down a story and all the other stuff that goes with that, making phone calls, setting up interviews, trying to work through chains of people to what really is at the heart of the story.

There was also a strong feeling that CitizenJ had assisted participants to be open to new ideas and new ways of approaching journalism, and gave them a different perspective as to what constitutes a legitimate story or storytelling approach.

> It's just something new to mull over and to think about. It made me think about what other kind of work I could be doing. My creative thoughts, and thoughts for programs that I'm working on, have been given a bit of life.

The fourth main contribution to professional development came directly from the exposure given to participants through publication on the CitizenJ website. This exposure was considered to be more "reputable" than exposure gained through self-publication.

> CitizenJ worked really hard to make itself a legitimate source of news for people and there is a big emphasis on the news values, trying to be objective, keeping your story balanced where it needs to be, making sure you've got all the facts right. So I think that the skills that you are applying … are certainly true of any kind of journalism job.

Other areas of professional development included network expansion, experience with the editorial process, the opportunity to practice and expand skills, and access to new technologies and equipment.

Working with technology and integrating that into journalism, because in the private sector they're not going to spend money on unnecessary things, but when you work somewhere like The Edge, they can invest in really cool technologies They invested in a drone … a flying camera, which is something really cool that I'm sure maybe major newsrooms have, but not newsrooms that I would probably work in, So accessing technology in new ways to disseminate news to the community, that was really cool.

3.7

Where do participants get their story ideas from?

Carpenter (2008) found that Citizen Journalists tend not to rely on official sources and opinion compared to their mainstream counterparts, partly because they were less reliant on daily news gathering routines. Not one participant in this research project said they had a regular bank of sources from where they got story ideas, or to who they went to for information. In fact, one described their story ideas as coming from "anywhere and everywhere" and this was quite indicative of the whole group. The major source of ideas, however, could be most accurately described as being the participants' own social and professional networks. Participants said they got their ideas from "being out in community", from peers, friends and professional contacts and from their work environments.

I've just been really lucky to meet lots of really interesting people over the last few years who are involved in lots of community groups, or people who are just creative and are doing lots of whacky projects … they've kept me in the loop with what they're doing and I found some really interesting stuff through them.

I am a very interested person and I've gone around Brisbane, in the last six years since I've lived here, to meet as many interesting people as I could and see as many interesting things that I could.

The other major source of ideas and information came from social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter. Two participants said they followed up with contacts from

previous stories and another two also mentioned press-releases, however, one of these was a little wary of press-releases as a news source.

> I guess press-releases sometimes, but I kind of avoid them because … it
> can be tricky navigating through media releases.

Other individual sources of ideas came from "other contributors", news articles, personal interests, being a parent, "whatever is pitched to me (by CitizenJ)", Google and "just walking around Brisbane".

3.8
What stories do participants like to do?

Forde (2011) says that alternative and community journalists (including Citizen Journalists) prioritise local news immediately relevant to their audiences and choose stories that encourage participation in the broader community. Indeed, community stories were by far the most popular story type cited by participants, followed by "people" stories, social justice issues and science and technology. Half the participants used the word "community" when describing the types of stories they like to produce and a third used the word "people". There was a distinct interest in covering under-represented local issues. Phrases included

- Stories that effect local community
- Community stories
- Marginalised communities
- Local stories, people and groups that don't get attention
- People working in the community
- People profiles
- Stories that put people first

And more generally:

- The more challenging social issues of our community
- Community events, arts and cultural events
- Ethnic communities, race and cultural identities.

> Stories are so de-contextualised and I think that just has a really bad
> impact on our collective memory as a society, so I think, for me that's a
> big thing, can I take a story and can I make it, not just as a standalone

thing, but a story that sits within a rich history or the values of community?

I like to write about people, and I really like to research people … I'd like to take the ordinary person and show them as the extraordinary person that they are.

I guess one of my interests in Brisbane is those strange kinds of communities and pockets, people that live quite different lifestyles.

People and groups in the community who don't get the attention that I believe they deserve. Groups that might not have a lot of power and money at their disposal but at the same time are important players in the community. Particularly marginalised groups, groups that have experienced discrimination, groups within the community that are under attack from targeted budget cuts, privatisation, that kind of stuff.

On a similar theme to the above quote, the next most popular types of stories were those that advocated for social justice or environmental change, as well as those that fell under the category of Science and Technology. Participants also said they liked to produce stories about politics, education reform, human interest, and "big ideas". Particular styles of stories of interest included investigatory approaches to storytelling, anecdotes, social documentary, and photojournalism.

3.9

What restricts participants from doing the stories they want to do?

Time was by far the most popular reason for participants not contributing to CitizenJ as much as they would like to. 12 contributors stated that lack of time, due to work, university studies or personal issues, was the main reason they either were yet to submit a story at all, or did not contribute as often as they would like to.

Time is the predominant thing and what I have quickly learnt starting to do this … It's not just the time that you have available, it's also the timing

of telling any story that's so critical, and to do that you have to be available because these moments come and go very quickly.

Time and opportunity, working fulltime in an admin job, it's a matter of being able to find the time to interview people. If it's (audio) it can be a bit of a challenge to get in to use the phone booth, by preference I will try to meet people in person. There are heaps of stories that come and go but I can't necessarily get to them. Equally, at the other end, once I've collected the audio, sometimes it just takes a little bit of time to get through to finalising the edit.

Two of these participants also felt that time inhibited them from giving stories as much attention as they deserved.

Stories that you can see the potential for and that really deserve talking to a couple of more contacts, or trying to get someone from government to talk to you, which all take a lot of time, but you just can't be dedicated to it because of other things going on.

In addition to lack of time, three participants also admitted that CitizenJ was less of a priority, especially in comparison to paid opportunities.

I know a lot of people involved are journalism students but I'm not a student so I do have to prioritise work and push forward with paid opportunities. I think CitizenJ is a wonderful initiative but I'm not sure where I could go from there.

Cost was another inhibiting factor. One participant said if she could afford her own equipment she could overcome some "time issues" by being able to work at home. For another it was the costs of travel on a student budget.

For my own style of journalism, I really like going out and interview people and I like accessing different areas of the community but, especially on a student budget, that can come as quite a cost, paying for petrol and public transport trying to get to your interviews. That could be solved easily by using the phone in the newsroom … but if you like going out and doing stories, it can be an expensive venture.

Other singular issues raised included domestic demands, getting access to talent, living outside of Brisbane and needing a refresher course on the editing equipment. One participant felt that there were unofficial expectations to avoid "political" or "left-wing" stories, which were exactly the type she most wanted to pursue.

> I couldn't think of too many things that actually interested me that didn't have a political bent to it, so I just sort of stayed off that for a while.

Finally, a suggestion was made that more guidance through the process might help contributors produce stories on a more regular basis.

> If there were more people that were facilitating directly going "ok we've got this story this week, this story next week, who wants to get on board?" and it was not all up to you on your own to come up with the story and get it done from start to finish. If you could get involved in a story that was already happening, I think I'd been involved in a few more. I feel like if you do it, you have to do it all on your own, and it's a very big undertaking each time and if you're not as familiar with journalism it's a little bit much to take on.

3.10

What does the term Citizen Journalism mean to participants?

As mentioned in Section 1.0, CitizenJ's website defines Citizen Journalism as

> … simply people telling real stories about their community. It might be an eyewitness account to something newsworthy, the story of a local person/organisation doing good work, a review of a local play or exhibition, or an article about an important issue in your community.

Three major themes arose from discussions about the definition of the term "Citizen Journalism". Most prominently was the theme of the ordinary person being given a voice. The second main idea was based around the role Citizen Journalism played as an alternative to mainstream media practices and, thirdly, was the political or activism element to the concept. These all align with broader academic and practitioner

frameworks for discussing Citizen Journalism theory (see bibliography for a wide selection of reading).

Just over one third of participants specifically referred to Citizen Journalism as a means for "ordinary" people or regular members of the community to express themselves, and share their ideas or experiences. Four of these participants also explicitly described Citizen Journalists as people not working or qualified as professional journalists. Within this framework Citizen Journalism was seen as an empowering experience and a way for "the community to have a voice". Citizen Journalism was seen as a means for "getting what (issues) mean to the individual and to community", and to explore stories in the community. This placed a focus on issues relevant to local geography and culture, and emphasis on local knowledge and information.

> Everyday people seeing themselves with a different filter as to what their
> view can be … Finding the right outlets to express their views or express
> their opinions … and create something that will last, so you will have a
> sense of history being created by everyday people.

> Citizen Journalism means, to me, the news told from a non-journalist
> trained individual, using mediums which are usually accessible to the
> everyday consumer such as a camera phone, a small digital camera, a
> small audio recorder and sometimes even a DSLR, covering stories as an
> event unfolds.

> It's the community being able to talk to itself.

> I think Citizen Journalism has a huge advantage through just the local
> knowledge and observation … because they're able to know if something
> is strange or know if something's going on and have a much more
> intuitive and connected view of the issue or problem.

The second major theme of discussion relating to Citizen Journalism placed the concept as an alternative to mainstream media practices. Participants described it as having a different approach to mainstream media, unrestricted by commercial

expectations and not driven by any specific institutional agenda. Citizen Journalism was seen to act as a watchdog to other media outlets and a return to "real journalism values".

> If you look at journalism as a craft, it should adhere to some ethical principles, and the common person on the street, if you will, is probably, in this day and age, in a more privileged position to adhere to those kind of ethical standards that people working in any kind of commercial broadcasting platform, so I think that's a strength of the actual Citizen Journalism concept, that it's relatively free from corruption … That's really the crux of it, is freedom from, most of all, money.

> It's a kind of movement that is necessary given the concentration of media ownership and the ideological domination of the mainstream media by special interests, so I think Citizens Journalism… is a movement that seeks a return to the real values of journalism and investigation, it's about telling the stories of the people, especially those who get overlooked by the mainstream media, for whatever reasons.

> You're not necessary driven by the particular agenda of an organisation so much as what stories deserve to be told.

> I found that it's a way for the community to have a voice, that is relatively unbiased by any kind of commercial overtones or even governmental overtones.

A third major theme for framing Citizen Journalism was based around political activism. Participants connected the work they were doing to that of a wider movement, rooted in events such as the Arab Spring and places where communications were heavily restricted such as North Korea and China. They described Citizen Journalism as a way of exposing stories, as a means of activism and a way for people with a passion or a personal involvement to tell stories not usually given attention by the mainstream media.

> There are people in North Korea who are writing their stories and smuggling them across the border into China where they're met by

> somebody who's an agent of somebody who publishes the stories in America … that to me is Citizen Journalism … they're citizens of the world trying to let us know what's happening to this element of humanity and we need to be aware of it and that's the highest possible standard I can think that journalism could hold.

> If you are a truly altruistic journalist and someone who believes passionately in the fundamental elements of journalism, what you want to do is really expose people to realities and to create change and to have affect … its more about creating some kind of change, having a catalyst for future innovations.

> I think activism plays quite an important role because people are writing about issues that are important to them and dedicate the time to bring light to an issue that might have otherwise stayed unvoiced.

To a lesser extent, Citizen Journalism was also seen as a means by which the public could receive authentic eyewitness accounts from people on the scene, "in the right place at the right time". The Queensland floods were used as an example of this as was the recent "Queen Street gun-man". This second event, however, led one person to question the term itself.

> It's just a catch all phrase to use – with a particular event, like with the gun-man in the Queen Street mall - people madly taking photos on their mobile phones and they might lodge it in, and they might use the term Citizen Journalist there because they've captured a topical event, but are they really being journalists?

One other participant was explicitly critical of the concept.

> To me, I'm not a big fan of the term. For me it implies that anybody on the street can just write a story and hold up a phone and record something … I would prefer a Citizen Journalist to have some kind of knowledge, or background but that can't happen because it's Citizen Journalism. I do understand the positives, for example, journalists can't be in every place at every time, so because there are cameras on everyone's phones we get a lot of footage that we normally wouldn't get, but, especially in terms of

CitizenJ, I think the term Citizen Journalism degrades what we all actually do.

3.11

What are participants' attitudes to the journalistic notion of objectivity?

Carpentier et al (2009, p.170) claim that media such as Citizen Journalism "can overcome the absolutist interpretations of media neutrality and impartiality". However, traditional news outlets have been vocal of their criticism of Citizen Journalists' ability to respect intrinsic journalistic values such as objectivity (Singer and Ashman 2009). Participants in this research project expressed two distinct views on the concept of maintaining objectivity as a journalist. Two thirds said that objectivity was an important part of their professional practice, and that journalism should strive more generally to be free of personal bias and focus on "reporting the facts".

> I truly believe that if you are too personally attached to anything, you have to give it to someone else, there's no way you can report as a true unbiased journalist if you can't be objective.

> I think objectivity is vitally important in journalism. It's about not pushing your personal views on a story and trying to cover it from all angles. However, for special interest journalism it can vary a bit, as you might be telling one side of a particular story in-depth

As indicated in the above quote, participants also recognised that objectivity was a tricky concept - more of an ideal to strive for than a reality of day-to-day routines.

> To define objectivity, it's trying to not introduce bias into a piece, now, that's a really tricky thing to do. Everybody is biased by their own sociocultural context … and I think the smartest people, in terms of commentary on journalism, say that there is no such thing as an unbiased piece of journalism. I think objectivity and remaining unbiased is an ideal.

Another significant group of participants said they did not believe in the concept of objectivity, because, as social beings, it was impossible to completely leave our biases behind when approaching a story.

> Well I don't believe in it, but one attempts to attain it, but … you always bring yourself to it (the story). Objectivity, as an absolute, is unattainable.

> We're all human, people who tell stories are human, people who read stories are human. People construct meanings, a story is relayed and the reader constructs it in different ways that align with their own experiences and, as much as I think it's a good and noble concept, it's not a perfect concept.

Participants recognised that objectivity and balance were often confused, and that there are often more than two "sides" or elements to a story. Attempting to attend to all sides of a story was seen to distract from the ability to "tell a story".

> Balancing two different points of view is not actually the true reality of what's happening.

> Based around my own thoughts about justice but I think that whole "point, counterpoint thing" interferes with storytelling and with getting some important meanings across.

3.12
What News Values do participants consider when choosing a story?

In May 2013 the CitizenJ newsroom coordinator wrote an article published on the website about emerging news values at the program, in comparison to traditional news values. It was identified that a pattern had emerged from the stories published so far that indicated a number of proposed CitizenJ news values. These were, as published,

- Human Interest – stories that interest people
- Self-defining – stories that give an insight into life/culture in Queensland

- Common ground – where people/groups with differing opinions/cultures agree/harmonise/respect
- Good News – positive developments. events/stories
- Significance – important information/will affect a lot of people
- Currency – topic of conversation among general public
- Timeliness – just happened
- Proximity – happened close by.

Participants were asked which were the most common news values they applied when determining what might be a "good story". Approximately half of the respondents responded by referring to "traditional" news values, while the others used their own ideas and concepts.

The most common response was based on assessing if there was a different perspective, angle or "take" that can be applied a story, to provide new information or context to a wider issue. This is somewhat connected to the news value of Currency, "what everyone is talking about now", which participants also mentioned as important.

> It could either be a new way of looking at something, so a different take on something that's topical … It could be an issue that isn't talked about so much, because maybe it just doesn't affect effect a large amount of the population. It could just be new information … on a topic that is of considerable importance … I just try to do things that other people aren't doing and so I tend to go towards a new perspective, new information.

Timeliness was also cited as an important news value. However, two participants mentioned that the publishing platform and processes at CitizenJ somewhat hindered attempts at timeliness.

> Timeliness is very important to me and this is an area I feel that CitizenJ falls down a lot … Reporting on something on the weekend or at night, I have reported situations and it has taken one, two or three days for it to get up. Sometimes that's because of editorial issues where I've had to rewrite sections, but timeliness to me is very important. If something has

happened I want to read about it before, during or straight after, not three
days later.

We'll read over someone's work and then we'll contact them and suggest
some changes and I'm going to wait for that person to get back to us,
which is a bit hard sometimes because a lot of our contributors work full-
time, so they don't always have the time to deal with that quickly, and that
can be a problem with stories that are timely and they need to be
published right away … and we've lost stories because of that and that's
really disappointing.

Three other news values were recognised by more than one participant. Firstly there
was the idea that if the participant found the story interesting themselves, then there was
a good chance other people would as well. Secondly, relevance was considered
important especially to a local or Brisbane audience. Thirdly, participants recognised
"entertaining" as a significant news value.

Other elements that indicated the value of a story included its "emotional interest",
shock/controversy, human interest, if "good talent" was available and if the story
made a positive contribution.

If the story contributes positively to society then I think it is worthwhile.
If it is a story that demonises, excludes or judges harshly any
individual/organisation/the environment or situation, then I do not think it
is a valuable story.

4.0
Further Discussion

This section outlines a few additional areas of discussion not encapsulated by the original set of questions.

4.1
Dichotomy of definitions

It should be noted that there was a contradiction at play in the way a number of participants defined Citizen Journalism when these definitions are placed within the context of broader discussion. While a significant number of participants recognised Citizen Journalism as a platform for the Ordinary Person, there was also great emphasis placed on the "professional" or "credible nature" of the CitizenJ program. More broadly, journalists have long opposed the concept of Citizen Journalism (Singer and Ashman 2009, p.233), for many reasons but including that "participatory ideals do not mesh well with notions that journalists should keep their professional distance" (Singer and Ashman 2009, p.235). A number of participants in this research, while praising the ideological notion of providing the public with a voice, still felt that Citizen Journalism should maintain a certain level of professionalism.

> CitizenJ worked really hard to make itself a legitimate source of news for people and there is a big emphasis on the news values, trying to be objective, keeping your story balanced where it needs to be, making sure you've got all the facts. I think that the skills that you are applying are certainly true of any kind of journalism job.

> What was really great about the program, as opposed to a blog where people can just go and upload information or stories, was that because there were professional journalists working on the program, it wasn't just like people could say whatever they wanted. Journalists are very good at researching, fact checking, we know the ethical codes around reporting the news and so I felt that this particular Citizen Journalism (model) was a way for the community to have a voice which was also trusted.

> I think what makes CitizenJ's breed of Citizen Journalism exciting for me, is that in the past Citizen Journalism is unfiltered, there is no editorial oversight, there's no gatekeeping, there's no back up if things go wrong. CitizenJ could still provide all of those things but still capture the unique voice of the community.

In addition, while there was much recognition of the benefits of Citizen Journalism when compared to mainstream or commercial media, participants also saw CitizenJ as a platform to "proper" outlets such as the ABC.

> If they do it in a professional manner they are essentially as good as any other journalist … If you're in the right place in the right time it shouldn't matter if you're a qualified journalist or not, you should be able to tell your story and be listened to and potential have that story picked up, if it's worthy of being picked up by a proper news outlet. That's what I think is great about CitizenJ is that you've got everything in the right format so that if it was a piece of news that was worth taking further, all the checks have been done so it could be continued on to mainstream media, which is a pretty cool thing.

> The concept of Creative Commons is very interesting in the sense that people are able to disseminate your information without any constraints other than not adulterating or doctoring the work, and so I have heard of people who've had really advantageous situations where they've ended up being broadcasting on the likes of ABC.

4.2
Suggestions and criticisms

Participants made a number of suggestions for improvement that didn't "fit" into the previously discussed categories. The following quotes represent the essence of these suggestions and criticisms.

> The beef I have – when I look at the courses available through The Edge, it would be good if they could take more numbers. The things that I want

at the moment, I'm sourcing elsewhere … I'm kind of looking for more meaty workshops rather than just "beginners only" in something … That's just me, that's where I'm at.

The CitizenJ group needs to be much more of a learning organisation … it needs to be designed from the ground up so that that component (learning) is at the heart of the way it's doing its journalism.

But it's mainstream, it's not innovative or different or left-field or exciting or gonzo or any of those sort of things, which again I think would act as a barrier for people coming in … I don't think the approach is innovative enough, but that's not criticising anybody who's there, they are under the auspices of the State Library and it hasn't had a chance to evolve … But I do believe it has been somewhat trapped by its mainstream definition of journalism … and we have been constrained by that.

My views on what constitutes Citizen Journalism and the views of CitizenJ are not poles apart but they are different. I believe that I was being steered in the way of mainstream reporting which I just found wrong, I felt like I was bumping heads with myself. My feeling was that people who had been employed in mainstream journalism were unable to let go of their mainstream journalism training and see Citizen Journalism for the differences that it has to mainstream journalism. It just didn't sit well with me. …I think it's a fabulous idea, I think there are fabulous people and I understand it's a pilot program and there's always going to be wrinkles that need to be ironed out. But I feel that it's too rigid.

4.3
Testimonials

Respondents to the April Interim Survey indicated that CitizenJ had so far met their needs and expectations. 55% responded positively to this question, and 30% said their needs had been somewhat met.

Participants in this research were overwhelming positive in their reaction to the CitizenJ program. All of the 22 people interviewed had positive feedback about their experiences and the concept itself. Once again, the following quotes reflect the general attitudes towards the program.

> I think it's pretty good, considering it's only relatively new, and it seems to have some goodwill in the community already. I think trying to strengthen ties with other community media organisations in Brisbane would be a great way to share ties and resources, as well as the universities as well.

> I thought this was a really good addition to community media in Brisbane.

> I've seen lots of different projects that people have tried to set up, CitizenJ has been the most successful that I've seen. I think it really works that there's a full time supervisor who can dedicate 9 – 5 everyday building infrastructure for the site and coordinating facilitators, and that she has a background in journalism as she understands the different pressures and skills.

> The Edge has really good facilities. They have a lot of workshops and a fantastically equipped newsroom, almost better than some newsrooms that you get in a commercial environment. And there was also education that was free, all these workshops with professionals.

> For me it's been a gift having it there. It's really worked for me.

4.4
Final Words

This research report has looked at a small sample of contributors and facilitators working at one innovative Community Newsroom in a metropolitan area. While it is not wise to claim we can extrapolate these findings more widely, they do give insight into these particular participants' experiences and attitudes towards their media practices.

Deuze (2009, p. 255) tells us that the basis of convergence culture offers potential strategies for a future Citizen Journalism where citizens and professional journalists can co-create public spheres within their communities. In addition, Dooley (2008) says that traditional journalism is on the outside looking in, while citizen journalism is the inside looking out. In order to get the complete story both points of view are valuable and there is a place for both forms of media. CitizenJ appears to be one such place.

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