

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to get the profile of the different online community newspaper available in the community; characterize the users of these online newspapers; identify the respondents' preferred online newspaper; determine the respondents attitudes towards online newspaper; identify the respondents' perceptions towards online newspaper; identify the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and solicit suggestions of the respondents for the improvement of the identified sites.

There were 100 respondents who were purposively selected from La Trinidad. The study was conducted on December 2010 to February 2011.

Findings showed that out of the 14 community newspapers circulating Baguio City and Benguet during the study, eight of them had their online newspaper. However, three of the said publications stopped their online version of their newspaper.

Majority of the respondents were female and all of them attended formal education. Most of the respondents also browsed the online newspaper of Baguio Midlan Courier.

Results showed that all of the respondents were in favour in the use of online newspapers. All of them also recommended the continuity of online newspapers.

The identified advantages of online newspapers is it was cheaper compared to the printed copy and it offered the same services as the printed copy; it archived articles for viewing now or later; it allowed the readers to comment on certain issues especially those sites with RSS Feed. Meanwhile, the identified disadvantages on the use of the online newspaper are time-consuming; not appropriate medium in areas where internet access is not available; not applicable in remote areas with no electricity and those who are computer illiterate, and not applicable in times of power interruption.

The study recommends the continuity of the local newspapers in utilizing the internet through its online sites in disseminating information to its intended readers. The online sites should also consider improving some of its features to meet the preference of its intended audience.

Zigzag Weekly may also consider improving some of its online features like including an archive section, search box, and implementing RSS Feed. These features were considered important for easy browsing. These online newspapers may also consider hiring web developers to address the issues or problems on its web features, layout and design.

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Newspapers, dating back in the 17th century, are the primary medium in which people learn on current events about everything from economic conditions and wars, weather conditions and discoveries, to human-interest stories and entertainment.

Today, with the popularity and widespread use of the internet, newspapers and other printed media are gradually being overshadowed by the accessibility of vast information from online sources. With this trend, newspaper companies worldwide are increasingly adapting online means of delivering news to the public; thus, the birth of online journalism. This has changed the landscape of journalism practice worldwide.

Online journalism breaks the physical restrictions present in print media and opens new capabilities and advantages, such as multimedia presentation and interactivity. As Ward (2002) noted, switching to online publishing enables articles and news to be archived-allowing extensive research.

To go with the trend, newspaper companies in the Philippines have already adapted online journalism as a component of their services such as the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, Philippine Star among others. Local publications are also establishing their own online sites like Baguio Midland Courier, Sun Star- Baguio, Nordis Weekly, Zigzag weekly among others.

With the gradual declining use of traditional journalism and adaptation of online journalism, the future journalism is beginning to shift towards digitalization.



According to Camburn (2009), many persons are becoming aware of the versatility of the internet and the ways in which they can gain access to media of their own choice, at any given time, or any given day. People realized that they can update themselves of the happenings in their areas, and surrounding areas as well as the world through the internet.

In addition, Camburn (2009) also noted that online journalism was proven to be cost-effective and alternative way to reach their targeted audience, and more, because even when you are surfing on the web, you come across tidbits of information on blogs you would normally view, then if and you decide to expand on it, or read more about a particular topic, you click on a link to a several news sites

With these developments in journalism, the need to check the preferences of the audience regarding the services of online journalism sites is of importance. As Arao (2006) stressed, there is a need for online journalism sites to meet the preference of their audience and to deliver appropriate information to these “cyber people”. He also added that online journalism should take note of the problems besetting the design and layout of websites as form tends to overshadow the content.

The study is generally established to get the profile of the different local online community newspaper; characterize the users of these online newspapers, determine the respondents preferred online newspaper; determine the respondents’ attitudes towards online newspapers, identify the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and solicits suggestions of the respondents for the improvement of the identified sites.



Statement of the Problem

The study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the different online community newspaper available in the community?
2. What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents?
3. What online community newspaper do the respondents prefer to browse most?
4. What are the respondents' attitudes towards online newspaper?
5. What are the respondents' perceptions towards online newspaper?
6. What are the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites?
7. What are the respondents suggestions for the improvement of the identified sites?

Objectives of the study

The study aims to:

1. get the profile of the different online community newspaper available in the community;
2. characterize the users of these online newspapers;
3. identify the respondents' preferred online newspaper;
4. determine the respondents' attitudes towards online newspaper;
5. determine the respondents' perceptions towards online newspaper;
6. identify the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and



7. solicit suggestions of the respondents for the improvement of the identified sites.

Importance of the Study

The results of the study may be significant to the administrators of the different publications in maintaining, improving or redevelopment of their sites. It will provide insights to the administrators of the publications on whether the information or articles published in the site meet the needs of its intended audience.

The study will also encourage the publications to redevelop their online papers for the convenience of the readers. This can also be used by other Development Communication students and other researches as a basis for formulating the same scope of the study.

Scope and Limitations of the study

The study focused on the five online community newspapers being read by the respondents here in La Trinidad.

The data gathered include the profile of the five online community newspaper; the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, the respondents preferred online newspaper; the respondents' attitudes towards online newspapers, the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and the suggestions of the respondents for the improvement of the identified sites.

The study did not cover the readers abroad, did not evaluate the specific content of each online newspaper and it did not include the information need that the respondents would like to have in each online newspaper.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online Journalism Overview

Online journalism is categorized as reporting, producing and distributing facts and information through the internet. According to Camburn (2009), online journalism, for the most part, has seen changes not common for many industries such as: it has been revolutionized by the advent of the internet, blogs, and forums. She also noted that many persons are becoming aware of the versatility of the internet and the ways in which they can gain access to media of their choice, at any given time, or any given day. People also realized that they can update themselves of happenings in their areas, and surrounding areas as well as the world through the internet.

Moreover, many media houses have welcomed the introduction of online journalism. They became aware that it plays a huge role in revolutionizing the information reported by the media, and the ways in which it is reported, when it is reported, how it is reported, and to whom it is reported.

History of Online Journalism in the Philippines

According to Arao (2006), online journalism is relatively new since Filipinos were introduced to the Web only in 1995. Thus, problems besetting the design and lay out of websites as form tends to overshadow the content. This situation can be rooted to the lack or even absence of knowledge in the principles of design and lay out. He also noted that websites have grown in numbers mainly as a result of the three factors: (1)



introduction of what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) web authoring programs; (2) better and more varied Internet access; and (3) ubiquity of blogging.

In addition, Alecks Pabico a pioneer in the art and science of multimedia journalism in the Philippines helped set up the PCIJ's website, which hosted the nation's first journalism group blog and later podcast the "Hello Garci" tapes of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo talking to various officials about manipulating the 2004 elections (GMANews.TV).

Online Journalism versus Traditional Journalism

Online journalism as compared to traditional journalism has its own advantages. According to Millison (2004), online journalism can be published in real time, updating breaking news and events as they happen. He also noted that it takes advantage of the shifted time. Online publications can publish and archive articles for viewing now or later, just as print, film, or broadcast publications can however WWW articles can be infinitely easier to access.

According also to him, online journalism is interactive. Hyperlinks represent the primary mechanism for this interactivity on the Web, linking the various elements of a lengthy, complex work, introducing multiple points of view, and adding depth and detail. A work of online journalism can consist of a hyperlinked set of web pages; these pages can themselves include hyperlinks to other web sites. Comparing to traditional journalism, it guides the readers through a linear narrative. Narrative momentum and a strong editorial voice pull a reader through a linear narrative.



In addition, according to Camburn (2009), online journalism was proven to be a cost-effective and alternative way to reach their targeted audience, and more, because even when you are surfing on the web, you come across tidbits of information on blogs you would normally view, then if and you decide to expand on it, or read more about a particular topic, you click on a link which leads to a several news sites. She also noted that online journalism has proven to be less expensive, while targeting a larger audience.

According to Aloha Online as cited by Liclican (2008), here are the important site considerations:

Functionality. The site contains all desired information and includes all desired methods of contact or interaction.

Navigation. Site navigation is easily understood and all site areas can be reached with a minimum number of mouse clicks.

Consistency. All of the sites' content is consistent with the clients' message. All the sites' design and graphic elements are consistent with the desired style for the site.

Accuracy. Each link on every site page has been tested and each programming element on the site has been tested for all anticipated user responses. All site elements have been checked for errors in spelling and grammar.

Speed. Each site page loads within the desired amount of time and all graphic elements have been optimized to load as quickly as possible.

Appearance. The sites' overall design is appropriate and appealing and all graphic elements are as attractive as possible for loading within the desired amount of time.



Criteria for Evaluating Websites

According to Kapoun (1997) as cited by Liclican (2008), you may have a web page that could be of value to your research through this list of criteria for evaluating websites:

Accuracy. If your page lists the author and institution that published the page and provides a way of contacting him/her.

Authority. If your page lists author credentials and its domain is preferred (.edu, .gov, .org, or .net).

Objectivity. If your page provides accurate information with limited advertising and it is objective in presenting the information.

Currency. If your web page is current and updated regularly (as stated on the page) and the links (if any) are also up-to-date.

Coverage. If you can view the information properly-not limited to fees, browser technology, or software requirement.

Definition of Terms

Accessibility. It refers to the access to the web by everyone, regardless of disability. It also includes device independence, universal access, availability of information, performance speed, and ease of navigation.

Currency. It refers to the timeliness of articles being published (how current the information is).



Design consistency and ease of navigation. It refers to the easiness of surfing on a web page through proper arrangement of information and consistent pattern throughout the site.

Hyperlinks. It refers to the reference or navigation element in a document to another section of the same document, another document or a specified section of another document that automatically brings the referred information to the user.

Search engines. Search capability of a site where you can search for information needed by typing keywords inside the search box.

Site integrity. It refers to the stability of the website over time.

Visibility and functionality. This means that the links are clearly labeled, easy to read, distinguishable from the content, functional and not broken or dead.

Website. Set of interconnected web pages generally located on the same server, and prepared and maintained as a collection of information by a person, group, or an organization.

Archives section. A storage area for all previously published contents of a website.

Search box. A text box where a user can input a word or a phrase to be searched within the website.

RSS feed. A small message which is broadcasted to all RSS subscribers describing the update details and contents of a website.

Cross-browser compatibility. The capability of a website, webpage, or a web application to look and behave the same way in all web browsers.



METHODOLOGY

Locale and Time of the Study

The study was conducted in La Trinidad, Benguet (Figure 1) since most readers of the mentioned local newspapers are from La Trinidad.

La Trinidad is a first class municipality. It is located three kilometer north of Baguio City and is 256 km north of Manila. It is bounded on the north by the municipality of Tublay, on the south by Baguio and the west by Sablan and Tuba.

The study was conducted on December 2010- February 2011.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the residents of La Trinidad, Benguet. They were chosen through purposive sampling. They must meet the following criteria:

- a. 18 years old and above
- b. browsing online papers and other related online reading materials
- c. they must also be browsing online community newspapers

Respondents were composed of 100 individuals. The respondents were obtained from computer shops and a government office. The computer shops and the government office were selected through convenience sampling.

One respondent, Rosendo Loste, is an IT expert who evaluated the features of the five online newspapers.



Data Collection

Personal interview was done with the editor-in-chief and the staff available to get the profile of the online version of their newspaper using guide questions. A survey questionnaire was also floated to some of the respondents and the others were interviewed personally using the survey questionnaire.

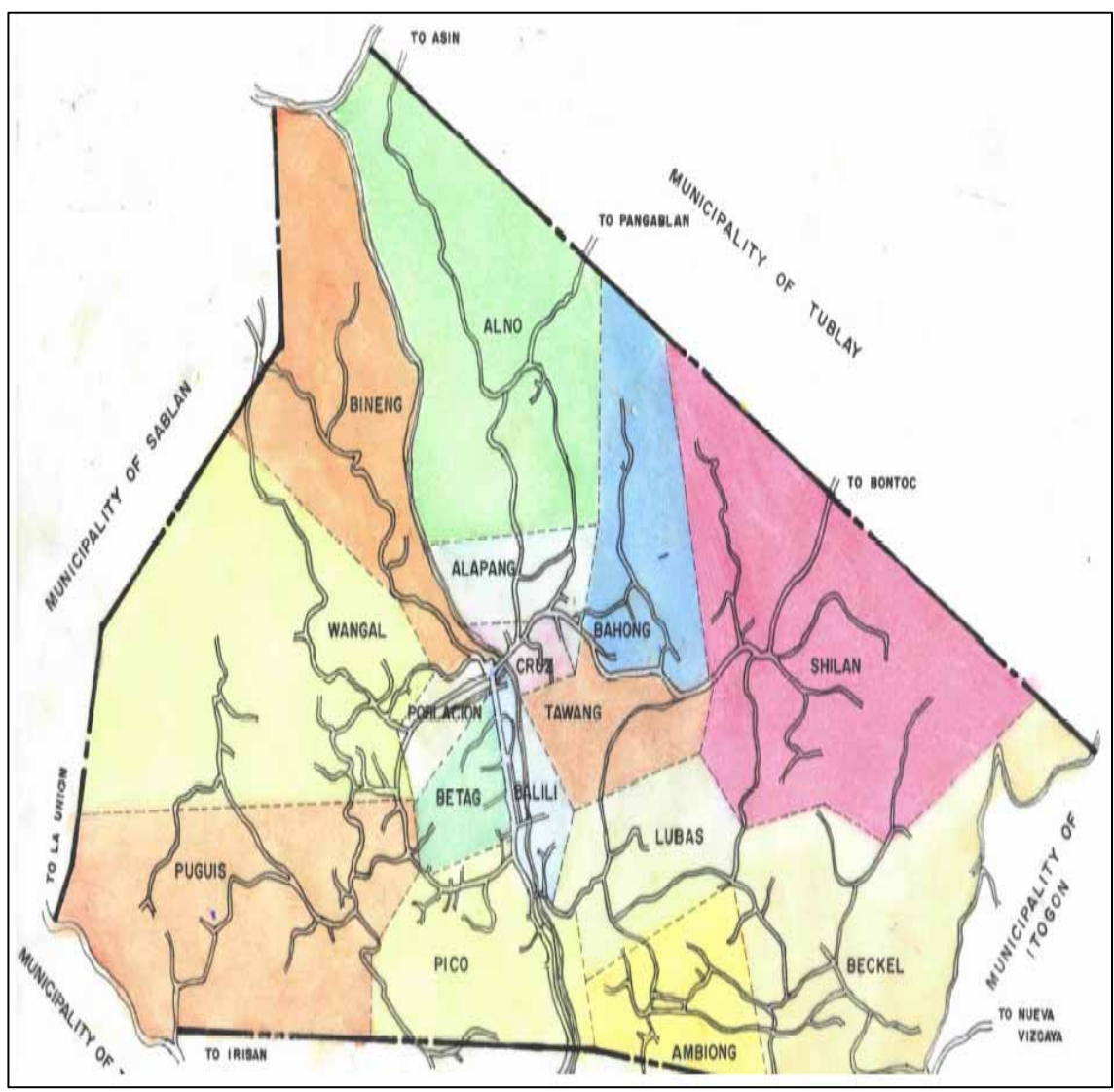


Figure 1. Map of La Trinidad showing the locale of the study

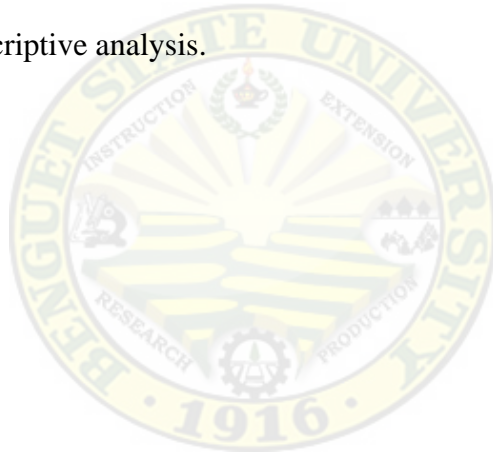


Data Gathered

The data gathered focused on the profile of the different local online community newspaper; the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, the respondents preferred online newspaper; the respondents' attitudes towards online newspapers, the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and the suggestions of the respondents for the improvement of the identified sites.

Data Analysis

The data gathered was tabulated and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and descriptive analysis.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Online Community Newspapers Available in the Community

There were 14 local community newspapers circulating in Benguet and Baguio City during the study. Eight of them had their online newspaper as follows: The Baguio Reporter, Baguio Chronicles, The Junction, Baguio Midland Courier, Sun Star Baguio, Northern Dispatch, Zigzag Weekly, and Northern Philippine Times. However, three of the said publication stopped their online version of their newspaper; The Baguio Reporter, Baguio Chronicles, and The Junction.

In assessing the workability of these sites, it's web features were evaluated as shown in Table 1. These web features include cross-browser compatibility, availability of archives section, and search box and its ability to automatically update or notify its subscribers through the RSS Feed.

Cross-browser compatibility. Cross-browser compatibility is the capability of a webpage, a website, or a web-based application to be supported in all web browsers. A cross-browser compatible website will look and behave the same way in all web browsers (i.e. Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and Google Chrome). If a website is not cross-browser compatible, some of the features (i.e. search, photo gallery, or posting comments) of the website might not work depending on the web browser used.

As evaluated by a key informant who has a knowledge on web design and development, the online newspapers of Sunstar Baguio (Figure 2), Baguio Midland Courier, Northern Dispatch Weekly, and Northern Philippine Times are cross-browser



Table 1. Features of the online newspapers compatible based on the tests conducted on major browsers such as Internet Explorer,

	Cross-browser Compatible	Has an Archives Section	Search Box Working	Supports RSS Feed
Baguio Midland Courier	✓	✓	✓	✗
Sunstar Baguio	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zigzag Weekly Online	✗	✗	✗	✗
Northern Dispatch Weekly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Philippine Times	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mozilla Firefox, and Google Chrome. The website of the Zigzag Weekly is not fully cross-browser. According to the findings of the evaluator, Zigzag Weekly's online newspaper encountered problems of the website when it was viewed with Internet Explorer. Using the web browser Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome fixes the problem.



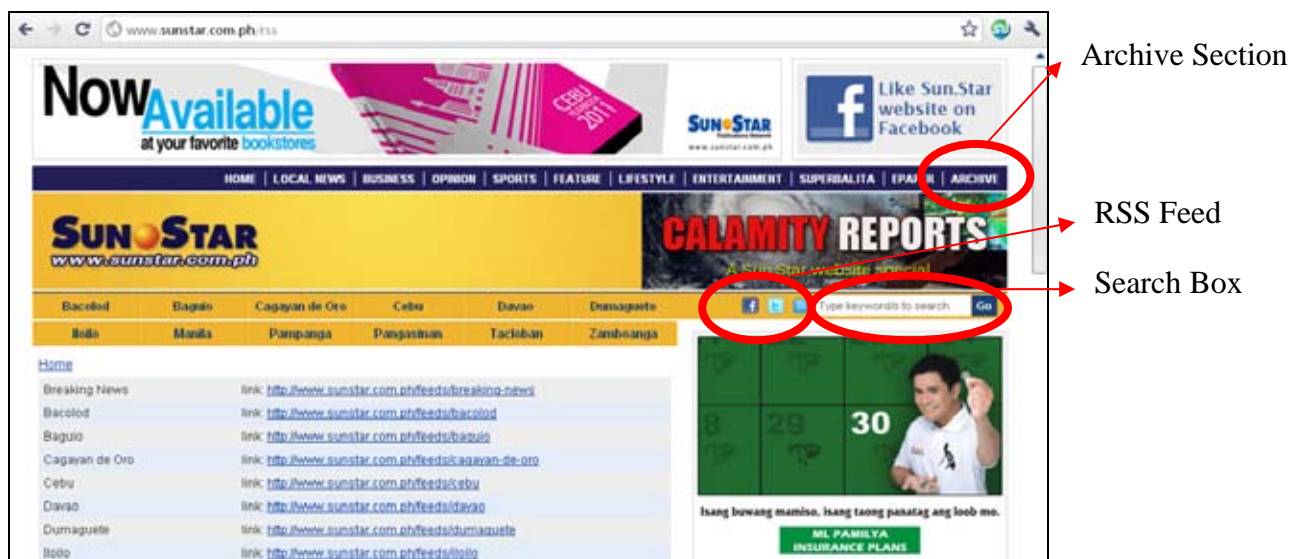


Figure 2. Sample online site with complete features

Archives section. An archives section is where all the previous publications of an online newspaper are stored. It serves as a readily-available resource for references and studies. Archives are usually categorized by month.

As evaluated by an expert, all of the online newspapers but Zigzag Weekly Online have an archives section. Although previous publications of Zigzag Weekly Online can be viewed by thoroughly searching the website, the idea of having an archives section (one-click access to all the previous publications) could immensely help an interested reader, according to the expert.

Search box. A search box is commonly a rectangular text box where a user can type in a word or phrase that will be looked up in a website. Having a search box greatly helps users who want to find a specific topic, news, or headline.

Based on the assessment, only Zigzag Weekly Online does not have a search box. As such, finding specific news in Zigzag Weekly Online could become a laborious task



since a reader would have to manually search all the previous publications. On the other hand, the online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier, Sunstar Baguio, and Northern Philippine Times employ a fast and efficient search box powered by Google. Northern Dispatch Weekly has its own search box.

RSS feed. RSS Feeds are short messages broadcasted to all RSS subscribers. It is commonly used for notifying updates (i.e. news, headlines, or a new blog entry) used by news-providing websites.

As evaluated, only the online newspapers of Sunstar Baguio, Northern Dispatch Weekly, and Northern Philippine Times support RSS Feed. During the period of the study, the online newspapers of Baguio Midland Courier and Zigzag Weekly Online did not support RSS Feed. According to an expert, using RSS Feeds will help the more experienced readers since they would not need to open a web browser to check on news since the news comes to them instead.

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the profile of the five local online community newspapers.

Baguio Midland Courier. The online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier was hosted under the domain name <http://www.baguiomidlandcourier.com.ph/> (Figure 3). It started in early 2007 and was developed by an undisclosed development team. The website was primarily developed with the ASP.NET, a web application framework used to develop web pages, web sites, and web-based applications.

Featured articles on the online site were categorized into city, region, environment, health, life, business, and sports news. Other features include opinion, obituaries, cartoon, week's mail, speaking out, animated me, true or false, snapshots,



Table 2. Profile of the five local online community newspapers

PUBLICATION	DATE OF START	ONLINE EDITOR	REASON FOR ESTABLISHING ONLINE SITE
Baguio Midland Courier	May 2007	Ms. Cecile Afable	To cater the online readers especially to the readers abroad.
Sun Star Baguio	2000	Mr. Sam Bautista	To cater the online readers especially to the readers abroad.
Nordis	October 2005	Ms. Kathleen Okubo	To cater to the growing numbers of readers especially the readers abroad.
Zigzag Weekly	2007	Atty. Antonio Pekas	To cater both paper and online readers as it is already the trend today.
Northern Philippine Times	April 2007	Mr. Alfred Dizon	To cater the online readers especially the readers abroad.



Figure 3. The homepage of the online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier

OpEd cartoon, and Plus Juan. The paper was edited by Ms. Cecile Afable, the editor of the print version.

Sunstar Baguio. The online newspaper of Sunstar Baguio was hosted under the domain name sunstar.com.ph/baguio (Figure 4). It started in early 2000 and was developed by an undisclosed development team. The website was primarily developed with PHP, the dominant web development program used to create web pages, web sites, and web-based applications.

Sunstar Baguio's online newspaper is a component of Sunstar Network Online which is composed of different Sunstar online newspapers such as Sunstar Bacolod, Sunstar Cagayan de Oro, Sunstar Cebu, Sunstar Davao, Sunstar Dumaguete and the rest. Featured articles on the online site were categorized into local news, business, opinion, sports, feature, lifestyle, entertainment, and superbalita. The paper is currently being edited by Mr. Sam Bautista.





Figure 4. The homepage of the online newspaper of Sunstar Baguio

Northern Dispatch Weekly. The online newspaper of Northern Dispatch Weekly was hosted under the domain name <http://www.nordis.net> (Figure 5). It started in October 2005 and was developed by an undisclosed development team. The website was primarily built with WordPress, a web development framework used to quickly and easily create web pages, web sites, and web-based applications.

Featured articles on the online site were categorized into community, city, region, national, and environment news. The paper is also being edited by Ms. Kathleen Okubo.

Northern Philippine Times. The online newspaper of Northern Philippine Times was hosted under the domain name <http://northphiltimes.blogspot.com/> (Figure 6). It started around 2005 and was developed by an undisclosed development team. The website was developed in Blogspot, a blogging website which can be customized to user's preference.

Featured articles on the online site were categorized into local and regional news and opinion.





Figure 5. The homepage of the online newspaper of Northern Dispatch



Figure 6. The homepage of the online newspaper of Northern Philippine Times

Zigzag Weekly Online. The online newspaper of Zigzag Weekly was hosted under the domain name <http://www.zigzagweeklynews.com/> (Figure 7). It started around 2007



and was developed by bcweblab, an IT company specializing in web development. The website was primarily developed with PHP.

Featured articles on the online site were categorized into news, opinion, features, and obituaries. The paper is being edited by Atty. Antonio Pekas.



Figure 7. The homepage of the online newspaper of Zigzag Weekly

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 3 shows the respondents' socio-demographic profile in terms of age, sex, educational attainment and tribal affiliation.



In terms of age, 88 respondents belonged to age bracket of 18-29, followed by age bracket of 30-41 with seven respondents. Majority of the respondents (79%) were female and 21% were male.

Also, great majority (93%) of the respondents were single and only 7% were married. From the 100 respondents, 82% were college students. In addition, 13% finished college level of education with only 5% finished high school level. This implies that all the respondents attended formal education.

Table 3. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE(%)
Age		
18-29	88	88
30-41	7	7
42-53	5	5
TOTAL	100	100
Sex		
Male	79	79
Female	21	21
TOTAL	100	100
Civil Status		
Single	93	93
Married	7	7
TOTAL	100	100
Educational attainment		
College	13	13
College student	82	82



High school	5	5
TOTAL	100	100
Tribal Affiliation		
Kankana-ey	34	34
Ibaloi	23	23
Ilocano	33	33
Tagalog	10	10
TOTAL	100	100

In terms of tribal affiliation, 34% were Kankana-ey, 33% were Ilocano, 23% were Ibaloi, and 10% were Tagalog. This shows that majority of the respondents were Cordillerans.

Table 4 presents the place where the respondents browsed and read online newspaper. Majority (61%) of the respondents were browsing and reading online newspapers at internet cafes or computer shops while 35% accessed online newspapers at their home or personal computer. Moreover, 33% accessed online newspapers using their friends or relatives computer, 2% accessed the online newspapers in their office and another 2% accessed it in their school.

Table 4. Place of access to the online newspapers

PLACE	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE(%)
Internet cafes/computer shops	61	61
home or personal computer	35	35



Own/personal (at home)	33	33
Friends/relatives internet	2	2
School	2	2
Office (others)		

*Multiple response

Reading practices of the readers. Table 5 presents the frequency of the respondents in browsing and reading online newspapers.

Thirty four percent of the respondents browsed and read online newspaper weekly. In addition, 28% browsed and read the online newspaper once a month, 22% of them browsed and read it every two to three times a month, and 16% browsed and read it every two to three times a week.

This shows that local online newspapers were seldom browsed by the chosen respondents during the conduct of the study.

According to Paulino Manzano, a college student who seldom browsed online publications, he still preferred the printed newspaper because he can carry it to class where reading was required and that he can bring it anywhere he goes. This supports what John McItyre as cited by Baclili (2008) noted that despite the accessibility of a rich digital environment, people are still buying and reading the printed newspaper because of its portability factor. They can take it wherever they go and print medium contains information they cannot get from another source of information.



Table 5. Respondents' frequency in browsing and reading online newspapers

Table 6 presents the length of time that the respondents browsed and read online newspaper. Great majority (89%) of the respondents browsed and read the online paper for less than one hour; 10% browsed and read for one to two hours; and 1% for four-five hours. This implies that the respondents only consume or allot a few hours in reading their preferred online newspaper. According to some of them, they can just browse online newspapers while they are surfing the net. Also, Annie Marie Tacloy, a college student, said that she would only read the headlines if she is interested to read a certain story.

Online Newspaper Preference of the Respondents

FREQUENCY	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Weekly	34	34
2-3 times a week	16	16
Once a month	28	28
2-3 times a month	22	22
TOTAL	100	100

CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE (%)
<i>The Rise of Community Cyber Journalism: Preferred Online Publication of Internet Browsers in La Trinidad, Benguet / ANALYN G. ADAMAG. 2011</i>		



Less than 1 hr	89	89
1 to 2 hrs	10	10
4 to 5 hrs	1	1
TOTAL	100	100

Table 7 shows the online newspaper which the respondents prefer most. Their answers were acquired through interview schedule and survey questionnaire. Most (57%) of the respondents preferred to browse and read the online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier. According to Andre Lam, Information Technology instructor, he preferred to browse the online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier because it was the most popular online newspaper among the other online newspapers present in the community. Meanwhile, 48 % preferred SunStar Baguio. Some of those who read SunStar said that they read the site since it was a daily publication and it had some entertainment features where one can read stories about the movie industry.

Table 6. Length of time readers browse and read the online newspaper

One respondent noted that the online newspaper of Sun Star Baguio was a daily newspaper; thus, it was more updated. Also, 16% prefer NORDIS because according to them, some articles were written in local dialects. On the other hand, 14% prefer Zigzag Weekly. According to those who were browsing the online newspaper of Zigzag, it was the common online newspaper to them.

This was followed by Northern Philippine Times (3%), Baguio Chronicles (3%) and The Baguio Reporter (1%).

Reasons for reading online sites. Table 8 presents the general reasons of the respondents for preferring the online sites that they chose to browse. Out of the 100 respondents, 37 persons answered that the articles published in the online newspapers



were enough and twenty six answered that the site was easy to read. This result implies that there is still the need for the publications to improve their websites.

Moreover, 23 answered that the “search” feature is available; 26 answered that the links were properly functioning, and 26 said that the design and layout was pleasing to them.

Table 7. Online newspaper which the respondents prefer to browse most

ONLINE NEWSPAPERS	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Baguio Midland Courier	57	57
Sun Star Baguio	48	48
NORDIS	16	16
Zigzag Weekly	14	14
Northern Philippine Times	3	3
The Baguio Reporter	1	1
Baguio Chronicles	3	3

*Multiple response

Table 8. Respondents’ reasons for preferring online sites

REASONS	BMC		SunStar		Nordis		Zigzag		Total (%)
	Yes	%	Yes	%	Yes	%	Yes	%	
number of articles is enough	15	15	10	10	7	7	5	5	37
the site is easy to read	16	16	6	6	2	2	2	2	26
the "search" feature is available	16	16	7	7	-	-	-	-	
the links are visible and properly functioning	15	15	7	7	2	2	2	2	24
the design and layout is pleasing to me (font size, font color, and images)	14	14	7	7	2	2	2	2	25



This supports what Arao (2006) noted that despite the advances in telecommunications there is still a need to go back to the fundamentals of journalism and journalists' basic task of shaping public opinion by giving the people information that they need.

In addition, some of the respondents did not answer this part of the questionnaire.

Attitudes of Readers Towards Online Newspaper

All (100%) of the respondents were in favor on the use of online newspapers. The leading answer of the respondents was because it was less expensive; they can browse past issues; and can easily be accessed if there is internet without spending too much. This supports what Camburn (2009) said that online journalism is cost effective and it targets a large audience.

In this connection, all of the respondents recommended the continuity of the use of online newspapers because it helps those who do not have time to read the printed newspaper aside from being less expensive and the archives that preserves or keep the stories for public records and historic documents. Some of the respondents also said that they wanted to recommend it because the trend today is going online.

This implies that the respondents have a positive view on the use of online newspapers especially on its accessibility and easy use. This result supports what



Camburn (2009) noted that now a days people are becoming aware of the versatility of the internet and the ways they can gain access to media of their preference.

Reasons for favoring the use of online newspapers. Table 9 presents the reasons of the respondents for preferring the online sites that they are browsing. The top answer of the respondents was that online newspaper is cheaper and it archives articles for viewing now or later. This corroborates what Journalist (2010) noted that online journalism allows news to be stored accessed easily by the audience.

Some of the respondents also said that one reason they consider for browsing and reading online newspaper was the credibility and reliability of the online site.

Respondents' Perceptions Towards the Use of Online Newspapers

Listed below are the advantages and disadvantages perceived by the respondents regarding the utilization of online newspapers. Answers were acquired via interview schedule and survey questionnaire.

Table 9. Respondents' reasons for browsing the online sites

ONLINE NEWSPAPERS	REASON/S
Baguio Midland Courier	The respondents browse and read the site of Baguio Midland Courier because it is less expensive and reliable and credible source of information.



SunStar Baguio	The respondents browse and read the site of SunStar Baguio because it is a daily newspaper, thus, it is more updated and easier to browse. It is also cheaper and easier to browse compare to other online sites and it has an entertainment section.
NORDIS	The respondents browse and read the online newspaper of NORDIS because it is easy to browse and uses simpler terms and it is a detailed online newspaper. Some also said that the site is detailed and it has IK articles.
Zigzag Weekly	The respondents read and browse the online site because it contains stories that came from the Mt. Province.
Northern Philippine Times	The respondent did not state any reason for reading the online newspaper.

Most of the respondents said that online newspaper was cheaper compared to the printed copy and it offered the same services as the printed copy: it archives articles for viewing now or later. According to the respondents, they can read past stories through the archives that preserves or keep the stories for public records and historic documents. This corroborates what Journalist (2010) has said that online journalism allows news to be stored and accessed easily by the audience.



In addition, a key informant emphasized that online newspapers, as compared to print, allows the readers to comment on certain issues especially those sites with RSS feed. He added that readers would just log in on the website of their preferred online newspaper to be able to comment on the issues they wanted. By joining as a member, one can also join the forum of a certain online newspaper, as noted by another key informant. These responses supports what Millison (2004) and Journalist (2010) noted that online journalism is interactive; it allows an increase in audience participation in every news.

Another perceived advantage of using online sites is that it allows the readers to do multi-tasking: surfing the net, at the same time, reading the online newspaper. According to Jolibee Calderon, a Development Communication student, she read online newspaper while doing research assignments at the internet shop. This way, there was no need for her to buy the printed newspaper. This scenario of multi-tasking supports what Camburn (2009) stated that online journalism is being affected by the so called “media multitaskers”. These are those people who are able to absorb more than one medium, at any given time.

With these advatages, some of the respondents also noted some perceived disadvantages as follows: online newspapers are time-consuming; not appropriate medium in areas where internet access is not available; disadvantageous to remote areas with no electricity and those who are computer-illiterate and not applicable in time of power interruption.

These statements of the respondents support the other statements of Arao (2006) that there still remains a limited reach of the internet. He noted that in 2000, the penetration rate of personal computers was small (1.5%). This can be attributed to the



generally high cost of desktop and laptop computers. Also, National Electrification Agency noted, that as of December 2000, only 77% of barangays were energized. Arao (2006) stressed though that this figure would totally change with the fast change happening in this modern generation where computer and internet is becoming a need.

Problems Encountered in Browsing the Online Newspaper

Table 10 presents the problems encountered by respondents when browsing online newspaper. Thirty seven of the respondents said the online newspaper was not immediately updated and 32% said that some links were broken or not functioning. This result contradicts what Arao (2006) had stated that the online publications are theoretically more content based and for that matter, contents are more professionally treated and are also periodically updated to fulfill the online user's information needs.

Moreover, 30% said that the websites were at times not available, 25% said that some of the sites were erroneous, and 14% said that the layout of some of the sites were not good.



Table 10. Problems encountered by respondents when browsing online newspaper

PROBLEM	NUMBER (N=100)	PERCENTAGE (%)
It is not updated	37	37
Broken links	32	32
Website is sometimes not available	30	30
Erroneous	25	25
Bad layout	14	14

The problem on layout and site features substantiate what Arao (2006) stated that online journalism is relatively new to the Filipinos since World Wide Web was only introduced in 1995; thus, problems besetting the design and layout would always come out.

In addition, according to a 2001 survey done by the monthly magazine 'The Web', as cited by Arao (2006), 82.3% (65 out of 80 web developers surveyed with one respondent skipping the question) learned their skills through self study. This survey done by the Web reflects that most of the web masters did not attend formal education; thus, resulting to an underdeveloped websites.

Suggestions for the Improvement of Online Newspaper

Table 11 contains the suggestions of the respondents for each specific online newspaper. Majority (51%) suggested that the articles should be updated. Fifteen percent suggested that the font size should be increased, 14% said that the broken or dead links should be eliminated, 10% suggested that the design or layout should be improved and 10% suggested that some of the inappropriate font styles used should be changed.



Table 11. Suggestions of respondents for each online newspaper

ONLINE PUBLICATION	SUGGESTIONS
Baguio Midland Courier	The site should be updated in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper. They should organize the stories because the site is too crowded or they should screen the stories that they are going to publish online. They should also fix the links that are not properly functioning. The layout including the font size and font style must be improved and the classified ads section must be added.
Sun Star Baguio	The site should be updated in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper. The editor should always check the spelling and punctuations and the publication should improve the layout of the online newspaper. They should also add other features.
Nordis	The site should be updated in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper. The editor should always check the spelling and punctuations and the publication should improve the layout of the online newspaper. They should add other features.
Zigzag Weekly	The site should be updated in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper. The publication should improve or remake the layout of the online newspaper. The “search” must also be included.
Northern Philippine Times	The site should be updated in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper and the layout should be improved including the font size and font style. They should add other features.
Baguio Chronicles	The publication should revive their online newspaper and improve their layout including the font size and style.
The Baguio Reporter	The publication should revive their online newspaper and improve their layout including the font size and style.



These suggestions imply that although the trend today is going online, the publications were not putting much attention to their online newspaper. According to Ms. Kimberlie Quitasol, business manager of Nordis, it is their business strategy which requires the readers to buy the printed copy that is why they are not updating their online newspaper in time with the circulation of the printed newspaper. She also admitted that the problem with the layout is due to the lack of technical skills.



SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The study was conducted to get the profile of the five local community online newspaper available in the community; characterize the users of these online newspapers; identify the respondents' preferred online newspapers; determine the respondents' attitudes towards online newspaper; determine the respondents' perceptions towards online newspaper; identify the problems regarding the utilization of these online sites, and solicit suggestions for the improvement of the identified sites.

The study was conducted in La Trinidad, Benguet since most of the readers were from La Trinidad. The study was conducted from December 2010- January 2011.

Personal interview was done with the Editor-in-chief of the different community online publications and a survey questionnaire was furnished to gather the information needed in the study. The data gathered was tabulated and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and descriptive analysis.

Based on the result of the study, 88% of the respondents belonged to bracket 18-29. There were 100 respondents interviewed and majority of them were female and only 21% were male. Majority of the respondents were single and 7% were married. Most of the respondents were college students. Among the 100 respondents, 34% were Kankanaey, 33% were Ilocano, 23% were Ibaloi and 10% were Tagalog.

All of the respondents were in favor of the use of online newspapers. All of the respondents also recommended the continuity of the use of online newspaper.



Most of the respondents were reading the online newspaper of Baguio Midland Courier (57%) as compared to the other community online newspapers.

On the other hand, the advantages of the online newspaper is that it is cheaper, it archives articles for viewing now or later and it allows the readers to post comment on certain issues.

Meanwhile, the identified disadvantages of the use of online newspaper is that it is time consuming, not suitable for computer illiterate, not applicable in remote areas in time of power interruption and not all the articles are available online.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Local online newspapers available in the community were established mainly for readers abroad or outside the community to have access on these publications.
2. Baguio Midland Courier is widely browed because of its familiarity to the browsers.
3. The importance of online newspapers is now widely recognized by online browsers due to its many advantages.
4. Despite its many perceived advantages, available online newspapers are still bound with different problems with regard to its audience's preferences and knowledge level, area of coverage, and its online features.



Recommendations

1. Local newspapers are encouraged to continue utilizing the internet through its online sites in disseminating information to its intended readers.
2. Since there is a growing recognition on the importance of these local online newspapers, there is a need for these sites to improve some of its features to meet the preference of its intended audience.
3. Zigzag Weekly may consider improving some of its online feature like including an archive section, search box, and implementing RSS Feed.
4. The online newspapers may consider hiring web developers to address the issues or problems on its web features, layout and design.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Name: _____ Age: _____

Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

Civil Status

_____ Single _____ Separated

_____ Married _____ Widow/Widower

Educational Attainment

_____ College Graduate _____ Elementary Graduate

_____ High School Graduate _____ Others (please specify)

Tribal Affiliation

_____ Kankana-ey _____ Ilocano

_____ Ibaloi _____ Others (please specify)

Where do/did you access the online paper? (You may check more than one).

_____ own/ personal (at home) _____ friends'/relatives'

internet

_____ internet cafes/computer shops _____ school

_____ others (pls. specify) _____

READING PRACTICES OF THE READERS

1. How often do you read the online papers?

_____ Weekly _____ Once a month

_____ 2-3 times a week _____ 2-3 times a month

_____ others (pls. specify) _____

2. How long do/did you browse the online paper?



_____ less than 1hr

_____ 3 to 4 hrs

_____ 1 to 2 hrs

_____ 4 to 5 hrs

II. ONLINE NEWSPAPER PREFERENCE

1. Which of the following online newspaper do you prefer to browse? You may check more than one).

Online newspaper	Yes	No
Baguio Midland Courier		
Sun Star Baguio		
NORDIS		
Zigzag Weekly		
Northern Philippine Times		
The Baguio Reporter		
Baguio Chronicles		

2. What are the reasons for preferring these online sites? (Put a check mark on the preferred online newspaper you identified above).

Reasons	BMC		SunStar		Nordis		Zigzag		Northern Phil. Times	
	yes	no	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
a. number of articles is enough										
b. the site is easy to read										
c. the "search" feature is available										
d. the links are visible and properly functioning										
e. the design and layout is										



pleasing to me (font size, font color, and images)										
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Others (pls. specify):



III. ATTITUDES OF READERS TOWARDS ONLINE NEWSPAPER

1. Are you in favor of the use of the following online newspaper? (Put a check mark on the online newspapers you identified).

Online newspaper	Yes	No
Baguio Midland Courier		
Sun Star Baguio		
NORDIS		
Zigzag Weekly		
Northern Philippine Times		
The Baguio Reporter		
Baguio Chronicles		

2. What are your reasons for favoring the use of these online sites?

Online newspaper	Reason/s
Baguio Midland Courier	
Sun Star Baguio	
NORDIS	
Zigzag Weekly	
Northern Philippine Times	
The Baguio Reporter	
Baguio Chronicles	



3. Are you willing to recommend the continuity of the use of the following online newspapers?

Online newspapers	Yes	No
Baguio Midland Courier		
Sun Star Baguio		
NORDIS		
Zigzag Weekly		
Northern Philippine Times		
The Baguio Reporter		
Baguio Chronicles		

IV. RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF ONLINE NEWSPAPER

1. What do you think are the advantages of these online newspapers?
2. What do you think are the disadvantages of these online newspapers?

V. PROBLEMS IN BROWSING THE ONLINE NEWSPAPER

1. What problem/s do you encounter when browsing local online newspaper?

Check problems you encounter

PROBLMES	
It is not updated	
Broken links	
Website is sometimes not available	
Erroneous	
Bad or not good layout	



Others (pls. specify)

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF ONLINE NEWSPAPER

What do you suggest for the improvement of these sites?

Online newspapers	Suggestions
Baguio Midland Courier	
Sun Star Baguio	
NORDIS	
Zigzag Weekly	
Northern Philippine Times	
The Baguio Reporter	
Baguio Chronicles	



Thank you very much for taking time to answer this form!

APPENDIX B

Guide questions getting the profile of the five local online newspapers

1. When did the publication started?

2. Who is the founder of the newspaper?

3. Who is the first Editor?

4. When did you decide to have an online publication?

5. What are your criteria for publishing articles online?

6. What are the challenges that you face with regards to having online publication?

