



Citizen Witnessing: Revisioning Journalism in Times of Crisis

Stuart Allan

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What role can the ordinary citizen perform in news reporting? This question goes to the heart of current debates about citizen journalism, one of the most challenging issues confronting the news media today.

In this timely and provocative book, Stuart Allan introduces the key concept of ‘citizen witnessing’ in order to rethink familiar assumptions underlying traditional distinctions between the ‘amateur’ and the ‘professional’ journalist. Particular attention is focused on the spontaneous actions of ordinary people – caught-up in crisis events transpiring around them – who feel compelled to participate in the making of news. In bearing witness to what they see, they engage in unique forms of journalistic activity, generating firsthand reportage – eyewitness accounts, video footage, digital photographs, Tweets, blog posts – frequently making a vital contribution to news coverage.

Drawing on a wide range of examples to illustrate his argument, Allan considers citizen witnessing as a public service, showing how it can help to reinvigorate journalism’s responsibilities within democratic cultures. This book is required reading for all students of journalism, digital media and society.

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