UNMUZZLING MYANMAR – GUERRILLA NEWS GATHERING FROM THE FRONTLINE

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Abstract

Digital technology has given people the opportunity to have a voice and to express themselves in new and effective ways. This has had important ramifications for those living in nations ruled by oppressive regimes, such as Myanmar. This paper will examine the role media technology has played in exposing the atrocities, injustices and secretive activities of Myanmar’s paranoid military junta by looking at three examples of how guerrilla news gatherers have plied their craft in a bid to bring about change within their nation.

Until recently in Myanmar, disasters such as the catastrophic cyclone Nargis, pro-democracy crackdowns and the ongoing forced exploitation of ethnic minorities would have occurred unreported and hidden from the outside world. But these events have now received global attention thanks to the use of digital technology, social networking sites and groups of independent guerrilla news gatherers who use digital images and eyewitness reports to document stories from the frontline. Most of these guerrilla news gatherers are not trained journalists but rather socially and politically-aware citizens with an understanding of the power of the media in bringing about change, but more importantly attempting to accurately report history as it occurs.

These guerrilla news gatherers use a variety of equipment, from mobile phones with image capturing technology; to sophisticated digital technology attached to satellite phones. However, most of the information is leaked either from Internet cafes in Yangon, Myanmar’s former capital, or smuggled illegally across the porous borders between Myanmar and Thailand. The research for this paper has been collected during fieldwork in the Mekong Sub-Region during the past three years, two of which were spent as a full-time community development worker, in a project working with Burmese refugees in Thailand.
INTRODUCTION

For almost 50 years Myanmar’s military government has built an unenviable reputation as one of the world’s most oppressive regimes. Through the use and abuse of its enormous military it has used social control and fear to oppress its 56-million citizens. Since 1989 the Myanmar Government has introduced even more controlling mechanisms to direct the flow of news and information distributed within Myanmar, as well as information exported out of the country. However, the Myanmar Government’s controlling strategies have hit an unprecedented and surprising snag in recent years, due largely to the introduction and use of digital technology. Although the Myanmar Government has introduced prohibitive strategies to limit the use of new media technology, it has been unable to stop the filtering of information from news gatherers on the ground in Burma. This technology, attached mostly to mobile phones, has given rise to a generation of guerrilla news gatherers, who are opportunistically using new technology to expose, document and authenticate much of which has been unreported and hidden from the outside world during the past 50 years. Although the use of this type of technology is typically associated with so-called ‘citizen journalists’, this research seeks to contextualise this widely used term within the specific and unique circumstances of Myanmar.

Although it is true much of the material being produced for global media consumption from Myanmar comes from citizen journalists who live in Myanmar, it is clear the intention of these individuals is to bring about social, political, economic, cultural and religious change. It is also clear these people don’t see themselves as journalists but rather ‘collectors of news’ or conduits that disperse the information to media organisations outside of Myanmar. These news gatherers also use covert tactics to capture and disseminate these images and many die or are imprisoned as a result of their actions. As a consequence they are more like guerrilla news gatherers. This could be called citizen journalism, but it is hard-core citizen journalism. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines a guerrilla as ‘a small, independent band of soldiers which harasses the enemy by surprise raids [including] attacks on communication
and supply lines (1998, p. 497). This accurately reflects the style of news gathering which is now providing the generals of Myanmar’s ruling junta with a major headache in terms of managing and controlling the flow of information leaving the country.

This paper will be divided into two parts. The first will address the significance of the research, a survey of literature, the research questions, the methodology and the research context. Part two of the paper will include three recent case studies of guerrilla news gathering in action within Myanmar and will include an analysis of the fruits of this style of reporting within a country with no press freedom.

PART 1
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH
Myanmar remains one of the world’s most oppressive regimes. In 2009 the South East Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) branded Myanmar the most draconian nation in the ASEAN bloc of nations in terms of press freedom. The not-for-profit media monitoring organisation Reporters Without Borders (2009) ranked Myanmar in its 2008 Press Freedom Index at position 170 of 173 countries ranked. Since the development of online journalism and Internet technology, the Myanmar junta has sought to revive outdated laws and to introduce new laws to limit the impact this kind of media can have on informing a wider audience.

This research is significant in that it highlights that in spite of these efforts to squash the media and to limit the freedom of information, the Internet and new digital technology has provided news gatherers in Myanmar with an unprecedented opportunity to overcome the limitations put in place by the ruling leaders. It demonstrates that untrained reporters and news gatherers have a valuable contribution to make in providing access to highly newsworthy events. The research will argue that this type of reporting does not just occur in an ad hoc manner but during the past three years has been significant in providing the world with valuable insights into three extraordinary new stories in Myanmar: the Cyclone Nargis disaster, the so-called Saffron
Revolution and the ongoing forced displacement of thousands of ethnic minority communities across Burma. It will be argued that these insights not only expose the injustices and realities for Myanmar people, but also highlight the value of this type of news gathering. Sein Winn, managing editor of Mizzima News produced by exiled Burmese living in India, agrees saying:

"The technology is making a huge difference. Now everyone in the world can know what is happening in Burma via the Internet. It is a reality of globalisation. Whether the junta [military government] like it or not, the government cannot isolate itself from the international community (in Yuasa 2007, p. 6)."

This research aims to make a significant and original contribution to the study of citizen journalism by analysing the methods, impacts and outcomes of reporting from dangerous and restricted frontlines of a country without press freedoms.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Until recently scholarship on the subject of citizen journalism has been linked, more often than not, with blogging (Lowenstein 2008, Quinn 2006, Klein & Burstein 2005 & Hewitt 2005). In addition, this scholarship has been presented largely from a relatively limited ‘Western’ perspective. Research has emphasised issues such as:

- Technology and its availability; (Quinn 2006, Downman 2008)
- Untrained or amateur reporting versus professional or skilled reporting (Public Eye 2006, Seneviratne 2008, Knight 2005, Borton 2005);
- News consumer habits; (Martin 2005, Quinn 2006)
- The response of media organizations to citizen journalism. (Knight 2005, Quinn 2006)

However, more recently research into the issue of citizen journalism has expanded to look at the impacts of citizen journalism on non-Western media markets. This important development has highlighted that moments of crises have provided the impetus for citizen journalists to assume their role (Rodrigues & Braham 2008, Seneviratne 2008, Guangquin & Clarke 2008). The research has also highlighted that in nations that have restrictive policies
on press freedom, citizen journalism has enabled a great flow of ideas and opinions to published. This emerging scholarship, on the influence of underground news gathering and its role as a mechanism for promoting justice and democracy, is already revealing that the notion of citizen journalism differs depending on context – that is whether the media is free or not. The publication of Antony Lowenstein’s volume *The Blogging Revolution* epitomises this exploration into the field of blogging and the hopes of radical citizen journalists reporting from difficult circumstances. In this volume, Lowenstein includes case studies from Iran, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Cuba and China and explains how this type of news gathering and reporting is occurring, along with the goals of participatory practitioners. He says: “The struggle for human rights and freedom is often paid lip service by Western media increasingly obsessed with localism (2008, pg 2). He goes on to argue the Internet is arguably the greatest tool since the invention of the printing press to facilitate democratic change, although he admits the medium is barely at the beginning of its potential. Perhaps indicative of the emerging and evolving nature of this scholarship, Lowenstein’s citations in his volume are limited largely to websites and web-based articles. This paper relies similarly on a variety of these web-based sources from ethnic Burmese living outside of Myanmar in a bid to provide some clarity to what is clearly a complex and evolving area of journalism studies.

The amount of literature in the combined areas of Myanmar studies and the media in Myanmar is extremely limited. However, there are comprehensive reports conducted annually by organisations such as Reporters Without Borders and the South East Asia Press Alliance. These organisations attempt to measure levels of press freedom and update developments (good and bad) in terms of the dissemination of information. SEAPA’s two reports published in 2008 focus on the decline of media freedom in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the so-called Saffron Revolution in 2007. The lack of press freedom is best summed up in a statement in the report *Slipping and sliding – The state of the press in Southeast Asia*:

The situation in Burma – already the worst in terms of environments for free expression and human rights – in the past year alone further
deteriorated before the whole world’s eyes. Amid civil unrest exacerbated by rising fuel and living costs in Burma, and following a brutal government crackdown on protesters, students and religious leaders in September 2007, a regime already notorious for its censorship and tight media controls has further shortened the leash on Burmese media, free expression, and access to information (2008, p. 2).

Reporters Without Borders (2009) continues this theme by labelling Myanmar one of the world’s ‘top 10 cyber demons’. Its index of press freedom also places Myanmar in the bottom five nations of the world alongside the likes of North Korea and Iran. The organisation’s annual country report into the media in Myanmar describes the country’s media as: “Monolithic: it is entirely controlled by the state” (2009).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What role have guerrilla news gatherers played in providing reporting content from the frontline in Myanmar?
2. How has digital technology enhanced the role of these news gatherers in reporting from a nation with no press freedom?

METHODOLOGY

This paper has uses a multi-pronged methodology to address the two research questions. There has been a heavy reliance on primary data collection that was gathered from fieldwork research during the past three years. This data was collected mainly from within Thailand.

1. Interviews: The data has been collected from more than 20 interviews with journalists, representatives of aid and community development organisations working either within Myanmar or with people from Myanmar. A further 10 interviews were also conducted guerrilla news gatherers who either live in Myanmar or visit Myanmar with the purpose of reporting events in-country. These extensive interviews have provided the bulk of the primary data. These interviews have all been conducted face-to-face. All citizen journalists who were interviewed requested anonymity given the potential personal danger they could be in if their identities were exposed.
2. Itinerant ethnography: The data was also collected via incidental conversations, observations and ‘informal interviews’, conducted with aid workers, refugee advocates and refugees. These conversations were diarised and provided valuable insights into the mechanics of how guerrilla news gathering occurs. Anthropologist Louisa Schein pioneered this technique in her China-based research saying:

Shopping, incidental conversations on trains and buses, the stares and queries my fieldworker mode elicited – these kinds of things became vital components of what I have called itinerant ethnography (Schein 2000, p. 28).

A similar approach was used within this research context.

3. Personal correspondence: Content from letters I received via email from guerrilla news gatherers living within Myanmar will also be used to demonstrate their first-hand experience as they seek to disseminate news to media organisations outside of Myanmar.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

During the past three years Myanmar’s military leaders have introduced some of the most restrictive media policies in the world, in a bid to censor any information with the potential to threaten or undermine the power of the ruling government. In 2009, Reporters Without Borders classified Burma as one of 12 nations in the world seen as ‘Enemies of the Internet’. The organisation classifies these nations as enemies because they have all transformed their Internet into an Intranet in order to prevent their population from accessing ‘undesirable’ online information. The 11 other nations on the list are: China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam (RSF 2009). Other media monitoring organisations have supported this assessment by releasing similarly scathing assessments of Myanmar’s press freedom. The Reporting free expression violations in south-east Asia report produced by the South East Asia Press Alliance and the International Free Expression Exchange (IFEX) in 2009 said: “Burma has some of the world’s most repressive press laws. Freedom of the press has
been virtually non-existent in Burma for more than four decades” (2009, p. 25).

Myanmar’s ruling *junta* uses a raft of legislation to prohibit any personal comment, as well as providing restrictions on how Internet can be used. The main instrument for censorship in Myanmar comes under the banner of *Printers and Publishers Registration Act* which was introduced in 1962. This law demands that all books, magazines, periodicals, song lyrics and movie scripts be approved by the Press Scrutiny Board prior to publication. Subjects which are prohibited from being addressed include: natural disasters, the AIDS epidemic, human rights, Aung San Suu Kyi’s detention, debates about government policy, poor local economic conditions and news considered ‘unflattering’ for the government (SEAPA/IFEX 2009, p. 26). These limitations provide the reason why events such as the cyclone *Nargis*, the Saffron Revolution and the ongoing civil war against ethnic minorities are highly scrutinised and high-risk areas for anyone daring to report on such issues.

Other laws that have been revived to enforce further restrictions on any level of reporting include the: *Emergency Provisions Act 1950, Official Secrets Act 1923* and *State Protection Law 1975*. These three laws aim to limit criticism of the government by prosecuting those who ‘leak’ information both within and outside Myanmar’s borders, produce material that could incite violence against the government or may expose ‘state secrets’. More recently additional laws have been approved by the *junta* as a means of controlling news forms of digital technology. These new laws include the: *Television and Video Law 1996, Computer Science Development Law 1996* and *Internet Laws*. Under these laws all equipment must be licensed to the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs. Equipment such as fax machines and modems are attached with devices that can monitor the flow and content of information. Under the new Internet laws ‘the posting of any writings on the Internet that may be detrimental to the interests of the Union, its policies or security affairs, and violations are punishable’. The aim of these laws is to limit any criticism of the government.
The other important restriction on the use of technology for citizen journalists in Myanmar is the cost of reporting equipment. The Myanmar Government has ensured that most up-to-date media technology is priced prohibitively in a bid to limit this kind of reporting. For example a SIM card for the sole, government-run mobile phone network costs about $US3000 and annual internet connection fees range from $US800 to $US1600 (SEAPA 2008). In one of the poorest countries in the world, these prices put the use of this technology out of the hands of most people.

PART 2
RESEARCH FINDINGS
Case Studies
The 2007 Pro-Democracy Crackdown (Saffron Revolution)
During the 2007 Myanmar uprising the power of the podcast and the role of guerrilla news gathering was emphasised as the world was flooded with images from inside Myanmar during a government crackdown on growing discontent within the country. The images of mass protests conducted by Buddhist monks were beamed to the world by an underground army of guerrilla news gatherers, seeking to document, expose and accurately record the protests, the Myanmar Government response and the outcomes. In September 2007, in what was called the Saffron Revolution, tens of thousands of people in Myanmar locked arms with monks in the biggest street protests seen in Myanmar in 20 years for weeks of protests against spiralling food and fuel costs (SEAPA 2008, p. 6). Sein Winn, the manager of the Indian-based Mizzima News, that is produced by exiled Myanmar citizens, said (in Yuasa 2007, p. 6) the new technology of podcasting enabled the brutality of the Burmese Government to be exposed. Kyaw Zwa Moe, the managing editor of The Irrawaddy publication, produced by exiled Burmese living in Thailand, argues new technology had made an enormous difference in the media coverage of the 2007 protests. He argues that when similar protests were held in 1988 and thousands were killed, the international community were kept in the dark and unable to verify the results because of a ‘media blackout’ instigated by the Myanmar Government. In a 2007 editorial in The Irrawaddy he argues:
Despite efforts by the reclusive regime to seal off its cowed people from the outside world, pictorial evidence of the crimes now being committed in the junta’s name is getting out, thanks in large measure to the ingenuity of young people with high-tech know-how to sidestep official attempts to gag them (September 2007).

Although footage provided to Burmese news sites operating in India and Thailand was supplied mostly by non-professional news gatherers, it did not detract from the effectiveness of the coverage (Downman 2008, p. 174). It was revealed tech-savvy university students uploaded digital images of the protests via their mobile phones, using online and offline networks of trusted contacts, via proxy servers (SEAPA 2008, p.7) The information and images were then carefully edited by organisations such as Mizzima and Irrawaddy before being published on the news websites.

However, perhaps indicative of the power and influence of this type of reporting it is claimed that the Myanmar Government launched its own cyber offensive against the potential impact of these guerrilla news gatherers. On September 27, 2007, at the height of the protests across Myanmar, the website of the Irrawaddy publication was infected by a virus. A so-called ‘Trojan Horse’ virus was launched into the website that caused a ‘traffic jam’ and ultimately shutting down the site (Naing 2007). On top of this alleged viral attack, Open Net Initiative, a collaboration of four universities researching Internet filtering worldwide, reported that on September 29, 2007 the Myanmar Government cut all Internet access within Myanmar in a desperate bid to block all information being leaked to outside news agencies. The Internet blackout remained in place until October 13, 2007 (Slipping and sliding 2008, p. 4). Reporters Without Borders (RSF) argue that the viral attacks on key websites had a crucial impact on the Irrawaddy website. RSF (2009) says the number of hits the Irrawaddy website received was halved in three months after the viral attack. Other exiled websites focussed on Myanmar issues such as Mizzima and Democratic Voice of Burma received similar viral attacks that affected their operations (RSF 2009).
The government-led offensive was not only limited to cyberspace. During the Saffron Revolution it was widely reported that people with cameras were singled out by government troops. Japanese cameraman Kenji Nagai, who worked with APF News Agency was shot dead during a demonstration in Yangon. One guerrilla news gatherer said: “Dozens of protestors were arrested, bound and beaten. The troops pursued fleeing people into buildings, singling out people with cameras” (Irrawaddy 2007). This combined strategy was effective in slowing the momentum of news produced by guerrilla news gatherers as the size of protests within Myanmar grew.

Cyclone Nargis May 2008

On the night of May 2, 2008 one of the most catastrophic cyclones in history ploughed into the low-lying Irrawaddy Delta area of Myanmar and the former Burmese capital Yangon. Although the true scale of the disaster may never be known, the published figures suggest 140,000 people died and 2.4-million were severely affected by the disaster (Adams 2009). However, the natural disaster was exacerbated by the unfathomable human disaster of the Myanmar Government and there efforts to play down the extent of the cyclone disaster. Brad Adams, Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said:

In the crucial hours and days after Nargis hit an already desperately poor people, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) – the Orwellian name adopted by Burma’s military rulers – initially refused some international relief supplies, while delaying others. The SPDC denied visas to foreign disaster response experts and refused to allow US, British, and French warships waiting off the coast to offload their supplies. It also denied foreign and Burmese media access to the delta (Adams 2009).

With the Myanmar government restricting access of media to report and capture images of the unfolding humanitarian disaster, it was up to local, Myanmar-based news gatherers to leak details of the disaster to the outside world. This guerrilla news gathering was done at great personal risk but some of those responsible for it said they believed it was an opportunity to help their people. Saw Chet (not his real name) was a member of Myanmar-based aid teams that travelled to the cyclone-effected areas to help the victims of the storm. Saw Chet says:
We went to help the people. We had cameras with us and the government tried to stop us from helping by setting up roadblocks to stop us from travelling to cyclone zone. But we managed to get around the roadblocks. When we got to the worst hit areas we couldn’t believe it. We had our mobile phones with us and they had cameras so we started to take photos of the dead. They were everywhere. The bodies of the dead people were floating in the rice fields and we knew we had to document the tragedy. (Personal communication May 22, 2008)

In an email sent with accompanying photographs Saw Chet said that when people watched government-run television within Myanmar, the government continually downplayed the size of the disaster. He says:

When we went and saw the extent of the cyclone damage we felt compelled to the get the real story out to the world. On our first trip to the effected area we found more than 400 villages completely destroyed. Any people who survived put white flags in the trees. Many people had been living in the trees since the storm because they were too scared to come down. The stench from the bodies is overwhelming (Personal communication June 8, 2008).

Saw Chet says he initially did not know what to do with the photographs but hoped by sending them to foreign friends living in Thailand that they might be forwarded on to international media services. He said in an interview:

I sent the photographs and the information from an Internet café in Yangon. We knew emails were screened so I didn’t mention that I wanted the photographs sent to the media. I was only sending them to a friend. But I knew my friend who was foreign aid worker would know what to do with them. It was important for us to know that these images and stories would be used to get the real story out. We know we aren’t journalists but there was no one there to do the job. We weren’t undertakers either but it didn’t stop us from burying the bodies of the dead. We did what needed to be done (Personal communication August 8, 2008).

These types of on-the-spot accounts have since been substantiated by international non-government organisations (NGOs) such as Human Rights Watch (HRW). Adams (2009) says: “The (Myanmar) government’s road and river checkpoints and security forces hounded anyone who tried to help without official approval. This led to unnecessary suffering.” Adams says HRW has been able to document cases of at least 21 Burmese aid workers, who have been jailed for helping cyclone survivors. Among them is Myanmar’s most famous comedian, Zarganar, who was initially jailed for 59
years for mobilising volunteers to help cyclone survivors. His jail term has since been reduced to 35 years.

Anecdotal evidence suggests this process of emailing information and images to a ‘foreign friend’ in a so-called ‘free country’ is one of the most common methods guerrilla news gatherers use to leak information out of Myanmar. However, prearranged personal meetings between foreigners, pretending to be tourists, are also common. One news gatherer said these meetings were often highly covert:

Meetings points are arranged well in advance. A pen drive will be left in a location or in a neutral place and collected by the contact. It is usually well-organised and undercover. It is dangerous but this is the best way to do things particularly when there is a crackdown like when Cyclone Nargis hit Burma (Personal communication September 2008).

Ethnic Minority Displacement – Karenni, Karen and Shan States (Eastern Myanmar)
Myanmar has a complex ethnic mix. There are more than 10 major ethnic groups within Myanmar. Since the military junta took power 50 years ago, the government has waged an internal civil war against many of these groups that provide armed resistance against the government. There are currently 400,000 (A Campaign of Brutality 2008) troops continuing this offensive using more than 50-percent of the nation’s budget. The statistics from this ongoing struggle are immense:

• More than 2-million refugees have fled Myanmar.
• There are more than 1-million internally displaced people (IDPs) still within Myanmar.
• 3000 villages have been destroyed during the past 10 years.
• There are more than 1100 political prisoners (A Campaign of Brutality 2008, p. 13).

These figures have not been plucked from the air, but rather have been collected as a direct result of guerrilla news gatherers working underground within Myanmar. Free Burma Rangers (FBR) is a non-government organisation committed to providing aid and support to Myanmar’s IDPs. However, in recent years guerrilla news gathering as become a key
component of FBR’s advocacy work as professional and non-professional media workers work together to document events within Myanmar.

One guerrilla news gatherer who worked for the organisation said news gatherers worked within military-like operations in order to expose the atrocities occurring in the eastern states of Myanmar. The source says:

We would cross into Myanmar based on intelligence we received from people on the inside. We would have a whole team working together with medical and food aid. The details were always very confidential and the missions are not without risk but we believe this is one of the best tools for exposing the atrocities against the people of Burma (Personal communication October 2008).

This extreme citizen journalism has culminated in the production of documentaries, magazines and international news stories. It has also branched into full-scale investigative citizen journalism in which minute details are recorded by guerrilla news gatherers. For example, FBR has mapped the Myanmar Government military camps in Karen State and documented every village that has been destroyed by the government. FBR has also recorded maps of minefields and areas of booby traps. However, this reporting is not without risk. During the making of FBR’s A Campaign of brutality report released in April 2008 four guerrilla news gatherers working with the organisation were killed while conducting their work (2008, p.1).

ANALYSIS

Guerrilla news gatherers are playing a critical role in reporting key events in Myanmar as they unfold. The three case studies highlighted in this research demonstrate the covert and guerrilla nature of this kind of news gathering and the critical role these people have played in documenting recent horrific events within Myanmar. Although there are examples of gross opportunism and exploitation in this field of news gathering in the West, this type of reporting in countries with limited to no press freedom is vital for the citizens of those countries to record events, as well as informing the world beyond national borders. As SEAPA’s Slipping and Sliding report says:

Burma in 2007 demonstrated that in the Internet age, the flow of information is inevitable – even in and from a country with an Internet
penetration rate of less than one percent – and as such it is the ultimate weapon of human rights advocates worldwide. (2008, p.5)

This inevitable flow of information often comes at great sacrifice to those involved. In spite of their lack of training the extensive network of citizen journalists operating in Myanmar have demonstrated this type of reporting has great legitimacy in providing the world a glimpse and insight into the horrors occurring within Myanmar. It demonstrates, that citizen journalism operates differently in different contexts. It also shows that technology has provided unprecedented opportunities to provide an information flow that previously would not have been possible. Quinn (2006) in his volume on convergence says the online interface will provide innovative ways to do better journalism, though this will take time to evolve. Guerrilla news gathering in Myanmar is not only challenging current notions of citizen journalism but is providing whereby the trained and untrained journalists work together for the common purpose of making news and arguably better journalism. It is a unique environment where a common goal has united both trained and untrained journalists and where the goal of publishing the truth and uncensored news, overrides everything else.

CONCLUSION
Citizen journalism is complex and varies vastly according to context. The case studies presented in this paper highlight that in the Myanmar context the ‘typical’ notions of what constitutes citizen journalism become even blurrier. This haze has developed because in Myanmar it is not unusual for both trained and untrained news gatherers to work together in order to document events from frontline situations. It is a complex interface that adds an important new dimension to citizen journalism scholarship. This research addresses the tip of the iceberg when it comes to modern notions of what it means to report from the frontline. The anonymity of citizen journalists has proven to be a crucial ingredient in their success in reporting from within this oppressive regime. What this paper highlights is that technology has provided empowerment and access. It has empowered guerrilla news gatherers within Myanmar with the ability to record events and it is provided media outside
Myanmar with crucial and unprecedented access to news events with Myanmar. The increasing interest in the role and purpose of citizen journalism in nations without a free press is an important field of research that demands and requires further enquiry.
REFERENCE LIST


