

## Arab media Adopts Citizen Journalism Changing the Dynamics of Conflict Coverage

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The 2008/2009 Gaza War came at a time when Arab Citizen Journalism had just begun to make its mark on the region's media environment. The prominent Qatar-based *Al Jazeera* satellite network outlets chose to incorporate their tweets, YouTube broadcasts and virtual maps to tell a better story, attract a larger audience and bring a counter balance to the Israeli government and pro-Israel online support. This opportunity permitted the network to utilize online technologies to bring citizen views to regional, global and previously unreachable audiences, and to influence other Arab media.

This paper will present an analysis of this cyber influence as Arab citizens contribute more actively in shaping the news and information, influencing public opinion, and shifting the level of discussion. In addition, the paper will discuss the effect of the cumulative amount of Arab virtual citizen participation in bringing wider discourse about conflicts and affecting the dynamics of war coverage.

Keywords: Arab Citizen Journalism, Weblog, Gaza War, *Al Jazeera* Networks