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MaYoMo lets you ask and answer: "What's happening where and when?"

MaYoMo: News has a new face

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On October 5th a new way to digest the news launched with www.mayomo.com going live. MaYoMo, short for Map Your Moments provides site visitors with an interactive map of the world sprinkled with markers hyperlinked to videos of events happening worldwide.

"MaYoMo allows users to ask and answer the question, 'What's happening, where and when?'" said Hristo Alexiev, CEO and cofounder of MaYoMo. "We're a 'social news network' for journalists and their readers, empowering a new era of Internet news creation and distribution. A key difference with our model is that we attract content from both young, aspiring journalists, as well as experienced independent journalists and bloggers."

The option of asking what is going on is found on one of the top tabs labeled 'Ask for News'. After activating a free account, one can fill out a request for coverage and information about a specific event, person, or place. Because this request will be made available to other MaYoMo users worldwide, it's suggested that one requests both a primary and secondary language for the response. It is this user-to-user dialogue that leads to the concept of Citizen Journalism, the cornerstone of MaYoMo.

Citizen Journalism can be described as: "The participation of the public to collect, report, and analyze news events," according to the 2003 report, 'We Media: How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information.

It is nowadays common for news websites and blogs to allow for readers to leave comments or discuss news topics in forums. In conjunction with this are websites like YouTube and GoogleVideo that allow unaffiliated individuals to upload videos or series of photos of events occurring locally. MaYoMo is, essentially, a mechanism that fuses these readily accessible, technological capabilities of several individuals around the world. This new mechanism goes beyond reader commentary on news blogs and uploaded videos to video-sharing accounts. It presupposes that citizens can have some ownership and say into what is 'news'.

"We're about creating the future of journalism," said Alexiev.

On October 5th, the same day the interactive news source launched, MaYoMo issued a call for Journalism

students around the world to create a free account and to contribute. The site would enable journalism students the opportunity to post breaking news stories that will be made available to the world, and not only other MaYoMo users. Additionally, MaYoMo can be used to post commentary on community issues ranging from the local to the global.

Unlike YouTube or a general search engine of user-generated media, MaYoMo is categorized in three clear ways: where, when and what. To choose where, users can zoom in from any particular hemisphere to the smallest of villages to see what specific news-video links have recently been posted. The when option is controlled by a timeline along the horizontal axis of the interactive world map. One can set the time indicator to any time between the year 1895 and 2100. There are vertical bars along the timeline to represent the volume of news stories provided by MaYoMo for that particular year. For any time past the present, MaYoMo has a number of 'projected' news stories, such as new models of futuristic cars released in 2100 by a car dealership in Britain. For choosing 'what', there is Citizen Journalism, People, Entertainment, and News Requests to choose from with subsets of their own. Within Citizen Journalism, one can differentiate between Political news and news regarding crimes or travel.

A new category one might not be accustomed to seeing on a news website is the 'Good News' category. Good News generally features human triumphs, big and small, community-wide and individual. For example, on June 11th of this past summer, a passerby noticed a small dolphin stuck in the Pettitcodiac River in Canada. Two firemen waded into the thick mud and saved the stranded mammal - all of this was captured on video for anyone wondering where all the good news is to be found.

Because MaYoMo is relatively new, it is expected that there are some flaws. Posts from users in Russia appear in Russian, and subtitles are not provided unless the user has placed them there to begin with. Another oddity of the site is the curious landmass sitting between the North Americas and Africa. Zooming in tells us it is a compilation of 'imaginary states' for: Lineage II, Half-Life, World of Warcraft, FIFA, and other virtual worlds. Clicking on a particular state yields the same result as clicking on a real country - markers denoting current updates within that country, real or not. Whether this adds to the versatility of MaYoMo, or questions credibility is still very much up in the air.

Since the original version launched in 2008, members have joined and contributed from 120 countries and counting, with a total of over 57,000 news pieces posted. To learn more, visit www.mayomo.com.

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