

# THE GOTHAMIST NETWORK:

Gateway to Local News?

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### SUMMARY

Founded in 2003 by a pair of college friends, New York City-based Gothamist is the flagship site in an international network of metropolitan news blogs. The network includes 14 websites in five countries, each covering local news, events, food, and entertainment “for an avid audience of young urbanites.”<sup>1</sup> Gothamist’s founders, Jen Chung and Jake Dobkin, both 31, own and oversee the network, acting as editor and publisher, respectively. Although technically run on blogging software, Gothamist and its network of other “-ist” sites are not author-centric media, but publishers, with editors who determine editorial direction and oversee writers, who happen to be volunteers.

By adhering to an organic business model, a modest editorial mission, and a laid-back management style, Gothamist’s founders have built an army of successful sites that are consistently popular with an audience that includes a steady stream of people willing to make significant commitments as volunteer authors. Quantcast estimates the network reaches 3.2 million unique visitors per month, with nearly 20% of traffic flowing to the New York City site.<sup>2</sup> With mainstream media knocking on their doors, the young founders have signaled that they may soon be ready to move on. Whether the sites would retain the loyalty of their staff and contributors if the network were to be sold to a more overtly corporate entity is an open question.

### HISTORY

Chung and Dobkin met as undergraduates at Columbia University, in the late nineties, at the height of the Internet bubble. After graduating they started sending each other links to interesting stories. Dobkin would put the links up on his website; Chung would comment on them.<sup>3</sup> In February 2003 they decided to open their conversation to a wider audience, and launched Gothamist.com. Meanwhile, Dobkin pursued an MBA at NYU and Chung worked full-time at an advertising agency. In 2004 the duo launched Chicagoist, then DCist, and by the end of 2005, had their first international sites, Torontoist and Shanghaiist.<sup>4</sup> This rapid growth produced enough ad revenue for Dobkin to become the company’s first full-time employee upon graduating from business school.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, the company employs 10 full-time staff, including

Chung, who left her advertising job last year to focus on her role as the network’s executive editor.

For Gothamist’s founders, growth is the goal and the sky is the limit. When the first site launched, says Dobkin, his and Chung’s only mission was to write a site about New York that they both enjoyed. Three years ago, Dobkin says they started asking themselves: “Can this be a full-time job? Will I have to do something else?” Now, the question they ask themselves is: “How big can we grow it?”<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1.** The Gothamist network grew to 14 sites in two years.

Site	Traffic (Uniques/Month)	Established
Gothamist	652,763	February 2003
Chicagoist	113,757	May 2004
LAist	555,977	July 2004
SFist	111,115	July 2004
DCist	116,836	August 2004
Torontoist	186,310	October 2004
Londonist	83,714	November 2004
Seattlest	65,867	February 2005
Bostonist	54,200	February 2005
Austinist	37,933	March 2005
Shanghaiist	170,279	July 2005
Phillyist	26,810	July 2005
Parisist (on hiatus)	3,481	July 2005
Houstonist	21,284	November 2005

Sources: Gothamist network, Quantcast

### BUSINESS MODEL

Gothamist and its sister sites are owned by its founders, Jen Chung and Jake Dobkin, and registered as an LLC. The company relies entirely on ad revenue to power its sites, pay employees, and propel growth. Dobkin manages ad sales across the network, along with a three-person staff. Advertisements are targeted toward their young, urban demographic, promoting retailers like American Apparel, bands like Coldplay, and travel companies such as Zipcar. Some ads, including those for concerts, bars, or local websites, are location-specific. Ads are available as leaderboards, skyscrapers, rectangles, and remnants, and rates and specs are clearly outlined in the network’s centralized media kit, linked to from each site.<sup>7</sup> Every week, a “Thanks to this week’s advertisers” post appears

across the network, which lists and links to the previous week's advertisers, and encourages prospective marketers to "check out our online media kit."<sup>8</sup>

The site also occasionally runs sponsored posts, which may be written by Gothamist staff or by the advertisers themselves. In the first case, comments are enabled and encouraged. A post sponsored by NYCVisit.com entitled, "What's the hottest late-night scene?" implored readers to suggest their favorite nightlife spots; thirteen comments were posted, including one by Jen Chung.<sup>9</sup> In the second case, a disclaimer appears above the ad reading, "The following post is from our advertiser,"<sup>10</sup> and the comment feature is disabled. A recent example: a glowing review of the film *Mongol*, accompanied by a YouTube trailer. In both cases, posts are clearly titled and tagged as being sponsored.

Of the company's 10 full-time employees, 6 are based in New York, including Chung, Dobkin, a technical director, and Dobkin's advertising staff. The top four "-ist" sites outside New York—Chicago, L.A., San Francisco, and D.C.—have full-time editors, and the remaining sites have part-time editors who earn part-time salaries. All other writers are unpaid, an arrangement that has raised eyebrows in the blogosphere.<sup>11</sup> Bostonist co-editor Rick Sawyer, who earns a part-time salary, admits that not paying contributors has made it more difficult to recruit writers with diverse backgrounds, occupations, and levels of education. It has also meant lowering standards in terms of content: "When someone's giving you free content, it's hard to say 'this sucks,'" Sawyer says. "The barriers to entry [for aspiring contributors] are pretty low."<sup>12</sup> Former LAist editor Tony Pierce, who now runs the *LA Times* blog network, says he relied on his sales background to recruit and motivate contributors. Pierce would promote the site as a place for fledgling bloggers to reach a wider audience. "I would tell them, 'My job is to get you read,'" says Pierce. "'Your job is to write interesting things.'"<sup>13</sup>

Dobkin describes Gothamist's business strategy as "bootstrapping" and closely evaluates each site's monthly traffic statistics to determine whether the site is viable. The company has never solicited venture capital, but Dobkin and Chung are open to the possibility. Dobkin also suggested that the company may be acquired or sold in the near future, saying: "You're always in a grow or die situation." Gothamist relies on word-of-mouth and linking to build readership and has never advertised, according to Dobkin.

The decision to expand to new locations using a proven model rather than adding new features to the original site takes advantage of the low cost of launching online publications and easily replicable infrastructure for new media organizations. Without venture capital or grant money, Dobkin and Chung have grown the network organically and frugally. As of 2008, the company was still attracting a pool of skilled writers for little or no pay. This is likely because the "-ist" brand now carries considerable cachet and because of the recognition that so many former staffers have moved on to professional media careers.

The simplicity of Gothamist's success has risks, as well—especially the risk of copycats. The strategic decision to grow by adding projects that are so simple and involve so little financial risk means that the barriers for competitors are also low. Each site depends both for content and audience on maintaining its popularity with an inherently fickle audience that can change its loyalties with the click of a mouse. Predictions that Gothamist writers were poised to leave *en masse* for sites that would pay them to contribute have not materialized. Readers know they can count on Gothamist and its sister sites to clue them in to the most current and important news about their cities, even on a Sunday or in the middle of the night. The sites are fun and engaging, but as a first-stop local headlines source, they're also remarkably consistent.

As their most popular volunteer and paid contributors and staff continued to be lured away by other publications, the need to continue to attract talent and the active audience that supports them will remain a constant challenge for each city site. At the same time, the network is not dependent on the survival of any one site; the Parisist site has been "on hiatus" since April 2007, but it is doubtful that its apparent failure to take off had any ramifications for other sites or the network as a whole. The personalities and complementary talents of the founders and the paid editors they encourage in each city have been integral to their success. If Dobkin and Chung become restive and decide to cash out, it will be interesting to watch how a possible sale to, or acquisition by, a larger organization would alter Gothamist's brand.

## EDITORIAL MODEL

Gothamist and its spin-off sites thrive on a liberal, opportunistic editorial model. Posts can be as short as a few sentences, or

as long as several paragraphs, and cover any subject related to or taking place in the relevant city. Each site is overseen by a paid editor-in-chief (or several part-time editors) to whom Chung grants a remarkable amount of editorial freedom. Besides posting frequently, site editors are charged with recruiting contributors, scheduling posts throughout the day, and approving content. They also determine the overall orientation of the site. For example, as editor of LAist, Tony Pierce focused primarily on covering the city's music scene, while his successor, Zach Behrens, has oriented the site toward hard news—his area of interest.<sup>14</sup> All other posts are generated by unpaid writers, who are generally assigned beats that differ from city to city (food, music, sports, books, news, subculture,<sup>15</sup> urban development,<sup>16</sup> and so on).

Some “-ist” sites—New York is an exception—distinguish between staff who are editors and those who are contributors, and some have weekend editors, editors-at-large, co-editors, and assistant editors. The titles and natures of these positions differ from city to city and reflect prestige and responsibility, not salary (only chief editors are paid). At Bostonist, editors are expected to contribute more regularly than contributors, and have some authority over their beats, according to Sawyer. For example, Sawyer wouldn't introduce a new sports contributor without the approval of Michael Femia, Bostonist's sports editor.<sup>17</sup> Any contributor can post, but Sawyer says he or his co-editor, Kerry Skemp, usually “take a look at them” before they go live, make changes, and in rare cases, ask for a rewrite.<sup>18</sup>

Broadly, content can be sorted into two categories: what Dobkin calls “meta-coverage”—which rounds up and comments on mainstream coverage of news stories—and original reporting. Hard news items tend to fall into the former category, and arts coverage, reviews, and event listings are almost always original. The majority of posts fall under the meta-coverage category. Dobkin says his editors track about 500 sources in each city, including newspapers, alternative weeklies, newsletters, and blogs. Writers synthesize a number of related stories, rewriting them in a chatty yet authoritative voice that emulates “that friend who knows what's going on in the city, the friend who knows all the news stories.”<sup>19</sup>

For example, a June 11, 2008 post by Chung about the sale of the Chrysler Building was essentially a detailed summary of a *New York Post* story. It also linked to a previous Gothamist post, which summarized a *New York Times* op-ed about the building's 75th anniversary. Chung, who personally

posts approximately a dozen stories a day, uses transitions such as, “What's interesting is . . .” and “Which would mean . . .” to steer her readers through information from other sources. “Even in our meta-coverage,” says Dobkin, “we try to add at least one original fact or opinion or photo—something that makes it unique and, you know, ‘ours,’ and I think that's why people read us.”

On a typical week day Gothamist posts around 30 stories, with slightly fewer posted on weekends; smaller sites such as Bostonist aim for 15 to 20 posts a day.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the day, posts can flow seamlessly from serious, to silly, to tragic. One hour on Gothamist, for example, saw the following sequence of subjects covered: a violent beating,<sup>21</sup> a turf war between competing ice cream trucks,<sup>22</sup> a speech by Fed chairman Ben Bernanke,<sup>23</sup> a Crown Heights pastor's fatal car crash,<sup>24</sup> rebuilding delays at Ground Zero,<sup>25</sup> and the Hollywood ambitions of Elliot Spitzer's former prostitute.<sup>26</sup> On each site, staff reporters post regular features, which appear throughout the day. Some of these features, such as the morning round-up of top local news stories, usually posted by the site's chief editor, are recreated by other sites across the network. Other daily features, appearing across the network under different titles, include the “photo of the day,” event listings, and weather reports. Every Sunday, a feature called “Week around the Ists” is syndicated across the network, featuring links to interesting stories posted on each site the previous week.<sup>27</sup>

The company's formula is “the more you post, the more hits you get,” says Tony Pierce, the former LAist and current LA Times blogs editor. Pierce dubs Jen Chung the “greatest blogger of all time” for her ability to turn out nine or ten stories a day while overseeing the Gothamist empire (and, until 2007, holding a day job). Pierce says Chung instilled in him the belief that volume of posts and traffic are directly correlated. As editor, Pierce increased LAist's post average from 8 to 25 posts per day. At the *LA Times*, he has converted veteran reporters into prolific bloggers, and is always pushing them to produce “one more post.” To sustain this model, field reporting is rare among Gothamist writers, although some site editors—including Bostonist's Sawyer—emphasize it more than others.<sup>28</sup> For the most part, contributors sift through tips and feeds online, make phone calls if they need to, and post from their offices or homes. Accordingly, original field reporting tends to be limited to reviews of concerts, restaurants, and other events that can be covered outside office hours. “To generate the volume of posts we need to sustain our traffic

and sell ads, we need to be writing,” Dobkin says. “And you can’t do that when you’re walking around.”

The sites are targeted toward people “our age,” according to 31-year-old Dobkin, meaning 24-to-36-year-olds. The company compiles considerable data on reader demographics, and posts some of it in its online media kit,<sup>29</sup> which is geared toward advertisers and reporters. According to the data, “-ist” readers are mostly male (the percentage of male readers ranges from 51% for Gothamist and Austinist to 58% for LAist and Seattlest), 25–34 years old, and college-educated. Some other facts highlighted in the media kit for the New York site:

- 80% of readers shop online for books;
- 60% shop online for electronics, travel, and music
- 50% of Gothamist readers “go out” 2–3 times a week

More than half of Gothamist readers use a social networking site, such as MySpace or Facebook. The company’s success is built on fostering community as well as content. The writers’ whimsical take on the news seems to attract readers who are intelligent, opinionated, and somewhat cynical. The larger sites, particularly Gothamist, have vibrant comment boards in which registered users debate, editorialize, joke, and generally wax ironic. Chung herself is active in these threads, weighing in on others’ stories and responding to comments on her own posts. Chung is something of a cult heroine on Gothamist; for example, several users seem to pay homage to her with tongue-in-cheek usernames such as jenchungsboobs. At LAist, Tony Pierce says he used to respond to commentators who objected to his posts by “dissing” their mothers. Pierce suggests that LAist’s informal, occasionally bratty voice draws both readers and writers, saying that it is “how most journalists would like to write if they could.”

At times, one gets the sense that “-ist” sites are a place not so much to read the news as to make fun of it. On a July 9, 2008 post by Chung, featuring a photo of President Bush planting trees with fellow G8 leaders in Japan, users competed to outdo each other with witty snipes: “Those trees don’t stand a chance,” “I’m surprised he was able to hold the shovel with the scoop end down,” “Hey guys, I think I struck oil here,” “6 months left until Bush is history!”<sup>30</sup>

At other times, the discourse is remarkably gracious. On July 8, 2008, Chung posted that a judge had ruled the city would not have to sift through World Trade Center debris

in hopes of finding more human remains. Users debated the issue passionately, but respectfully:

Outter: Fenian: I’m a NYer, I was here then, and while the words “move on” tend to be read as callous, the sentiment is the correct one. We’re almost seven years on now; at some point, we have to be allowed to move past what happened. You eventually have to find a way to pick yourself up before the grief and the pain consume you entirely. It’s not healthy.

Fenian: Fair enough Outter. You raise some good points. If that works for you than god bless, but you can’t believe everyone works like you. There are some people who will never recover and they can’t be blamed for this or told to get over it. You just have to treat them with kid gloves because it’s the right thing to do [...]

Gothamist relies on its readers to generate about half of its content, according to Dobkin. Audience contribution can come in the form of images tagged “gothamist” on Flickr, links tagged “for:gothamist” on the social bookmarking site del.icio.us, and tips sent via email or the site’s “contribute” page. Some contributors, such as semiprofessional photographer Troy McCollough, are quite happy to see their work picked up by Gothamist. McCollough is a long-time reader who tags his photos for gothamist on Flickr, even though he routinely sells his photos to magazines and other websites. “It might seem counterintuitive for me to essentially give my photos away to a place like Gothamist,” McCollough says. “My logic is that their ‘one-off’ uses help to drive traffic my way and broaden my exposure, which in turns gets me more sales in the long run.”<sup>31</sup>

As for stories, having access to a loyal network of readers across the city has meant “when breaking news breaks, we’re able to get it up first—even when it’s just by a few minutes,” says Dobkin. Unlike traditional media, Gothamist’s editors are “happy to go up with just one line or a picture until we can get the full story.”<sup>32</sup>

Journalists or not, Gothamist’s editors are masters of the news cycle. Although the depth of their reporting is limited, the breadth and consistency of their coverage is impressive. Scooping the big boys is a point of pride for Dobkin. In May

2008, after two cranes collapsed in Manhattan, Gothamist posted the story within 10 minutes, beating the *New York Times*. Yet Dobkin views the company's relationship to traditional media as complementary, not adversarial. "Gothamist is not going to replace traditional media," Dobkin says, but acts as a mediator between mainstream media and a specific group of readers "that I think never existed before."

Although the site relies on institutional journalism for most of its hard news materials, it has also had an impact on the way some of its traditional media competitors work online. Gothamist's influence is manifested partly through imitation, partly by a remarkable record of appropriation—Tony Pierce is not the sole "–ist" editor to be poached by a mainstream outlet. SFist's former editor now runs online media for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Washington Post*'s online operations are in the hands of a former DCist editor. Once mainstream news organizations started hiring LAist contributors, Pierce points out, recruiting unpaid writers became a breeze. Dobkin says he and Chung are regularly solicited by newspapers to help them "re-invent their old media businesses," and have considered taking on consulting roles.

## Ethical and Legal Issues

Although none of Gothamist's staff has a background in journalism—"Everyone came out of the Internet"<sup>33</sup>—Dobkin sees the traditional Chinese Wall between advertising and editorial as sacrosanct. "All the things you wouldn't do in traditional media—like take a payment and then write an editorial, allow an advertiser to write an advertisement and not mark it as advertorial—Gothamist wouldn't do," says Dobkin.

Dobkin says he rarely posts, leaving editorial decisions to Chung and the other editors. Though public relations people frequently attempt to push stories onto the site, Gothamist's editors have become "very savvy about what you're willing to take and what you're not," says Dobkin. "A lot of time it's just stupid stuff—a band we're not going to cover, an art exhibit that has no news value."

Still, Bostonist's Rick Sawyer stresses that the site is "not the website of record" and although they try to adhere to journalistic ethics, editors do not hold their blogs to the same standards as established newspapers. This can mean shying away from controversial stories or negative coverage, especially if libel threats loom. Sawyer points out

that contributors lack the expertise, credibility, or resources to tackle touchy subjects, such as racial disparities in Boston. Generally, Dobkin and Chung encourage editors to foster civic pride and appreciation—not to muckrake. Positive coverage is both Gothamist's mission and its business strategy: "We're contributing 'service-y', upbeat, friendly coverage of the city," explains Dobkin. "We're excited to be here—it's that kind of attitude—so that doesn't usually lead to the kind of negativity that would offend advertisers."

The company keeps a lawyer on retainer and occasionally receives cease-and-desist letters and assertions of libel.<sup>34</sup> Company policy in such cases is to remove challenged posts immediately. "We're not journalists," Sawyer says. "We're not paid for that." At times Sawyer has also had to remove content, such as AP photos, posted by volunteer staff without permission.

It is an open question whether Gothamist's aversion to controversial material is the result of a chilling effect, or simply brand management. "If they're not seeking out stories because of legal threats, that's disturbing," says Wendy Seltzer, an expert in cyber law at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. On the other hand, Seltzer says, "there's room for people who have different motivations" on the Internet. Dobkin is clear that Gothamist is a business venture, not a journalistic one; hard-hitting investigative reporting may simply not jibe with the company's mandate of providing a lighthearted take on the news.

## TECHNOLOGY

Based on a basic blog format, Gothamist sites focus readers on content rather than Web 2.0 innovations. Each site's design and technical features are simple: standard blog style with a Spartan two-color color scheme.<sup>35</sup> Gothamist's technical director administers servers for the entire network. Dobkin says he and the technical director work closely with Six Apart, the San Francisco-based company that makes the Moveable Type software that powers the sites. Together they come up with feature ideas and test new software. To manage the host of information that pours in through RSS feeds, reader tips, and tags, editors across the network use style guides, wikis, listservs, "and other stuff we don't really talk about—secret tools of the trade," says Dobkin.

## CONCLUSION

Gothamist's founders have built a unique and successful participatory media empire by combining a low-risk business strategy with a laid-back management style that seems well pitched to benefit from the enthusiasm of the young urban population that make up both their audience and their volunteer staff. Dobkin's primary concern is building traffic in order to generate advertising revenue and expand the network. On the editorial side, Chung grants site editors almost complete freedom to set the editorial agenda—as long as they continue to increase traffic. This flexibility has allowed Gothamist's sister sites to forge their own, city-specific identity while benefiting from the resources, technology, and support of the network. Former LAist editor Tony Pierce considered this relationship ideal, remarking, "Jake and Jen were a dream to work with; all they cared about was the bottom line."

Gothamist's success is due primarily to satisfying the desire of a young, urban, well-off population to feel connected to their local community and their peers through shared interests in entertainment, consumer choices, and a superficial knowledge of local politics. However, given that the Gothamist sites are targeted at the age groups that—according to the Pew Research Center (see Figure 1)—are those most likely to get no news at all, it is not inconceivable that Gothamist readers are learning more about civic life in their cities than many of their peers. It would be worth investigating how regular "-ist" site readers in a given city compare to the rest of their demographic in their consumption of other news sources, their awareness of public issues, and their political engagement.

**Table 2.** Going Newsless

No news yesterday...	1998	2008	Change
Age group			
Total	14%	19%	+5
18–24	25%	34%	+9
25–29	17%	21%	+4
30–34	15%	22%	+7
35–49	14%	17%	+3
50–64	14%	14%	0
65+	6%	13%	+7

Source: Pew Biennial News Consumption Survey, August 2008<sup>36</sup>

With "-ist" sites reaching audiences many times larger than those of nonprofit sites with more traditional journalistic agendas like *Gotham Gazette*, *Chi-Town Daily News*, and others, it would be worth it for those sites to consider how to take advantage of Gothamist's popularity. If the "-ist" sites are a reliable conduit of the attention of a hard-to-reach demographic, then efforts to bring more local news to that audience might actively seek partnerships with them, rather than imagining it is possible to convert an "-ist" audience into regular readers of sites that focus on local governance issues.

There is no reason to expect the owners, staff editors, or volunteer authors of Gothamist to suddenly shift their editorial focus from what they think will be popular with their audience of peers to what they think might be higher-quality journalism. They are also unlikely to conduct expensive research or outreach aimed at ensuring that their audience is representative of minority or low-income communities, or discovering whether their readers have a secret yearning for more in-depth reporting on local zoning board meetings. But rather than dismissing the sites as superficial or lacking in news content, efforts to increase public attention to local issues or to promote broader representation would do well to accept that Gothamist editors have earned their positions as gatekeepers and work with them to attract their attention and that of their loyal readers.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.gothamistllc.com/mediakit/>
- <sup>2</sup> [http://ak.quantcast.com/p-11lnUnPOz\\_qQQ](http://ak.quantcast.com/p-11lnUnPOz_qQQ)
- <sup>3</sup> [http://www.college.columbia.edu/cct\\_archive/nov05/updates4.php](http://www.college.columbia.edu/cct_archive/nov05/updates4.php)
- <sup>4</sup> A third international site, *Sampans* (Sao Paulo), has branched off on its own.
- <sup>5</sup> Jake Dobkin, phone interview, June 17, 2008.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> [http://www.gothamistllc.com/mediakit/specs\\_rates.php](http://www.gothamistllc.com/mediakit/specs_rates.php)
- <sup>8</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/04/thanks\\_to\\_this\\_weeks\\_advertisers\\_3.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/04/thanks_to_this_weeks_advertisers_3.php)
- <sup>9</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/06/16/sponsored\\_post\\_whats\\_the\\_hottest\\_la.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/06/16/sponsored_post_whats_the_hottest_la.php)
- <sup>10</sup> Jake Dobkin, email correspondence, June 10, 2008.
- <sup>11</sup> <http://spinachdip.blogspot.com/2006/01/chronicles-of-pissing-match-jake.html>, <http://blog>

[blodgebrity.com/2006/01/the-perfect-shit-storm/](http://blodgebrity.com/2006/01/the-perfect-shit-storm/)

<sup>12</sup> Rick Sanyer, personal interview, June 25, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Tony Pierce, phone interview, July 2, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Pierce, phone interview, July 2, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> <http://laist.com/staff.php>

<sup>16</sup> <http://austinist.com/staff.php>

<sup>17</sup> Rick Sanyer, email correspondence, July 10, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.college.columbia.edu/cct\\_archive/nov05/updates4.php](http://www.college.columbia.edu/cct_archive/nov05/updates4.php)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/us\\_officials\\_talk\\_to\\_upstate\\_attack.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/us_officials_talk_to_upstate_attack.php)

<sup>22</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/van\\_leeuwen\\_ice\\_cream\\_truck\\_spotted.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/van_leeuwen_ice_cream_truck_spotted.php)

<sup>23</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/fed\\_will\\_try\\_to\\_keep\\_lending\\_to\\_wal.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/fed_will_try_to_keep_lending_to_wal.php)

<sup>24</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/timothy\\_wright.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/timothy_wright.php)

<sup>25</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/ground\\_zero\\_delays\\_may\\_be\\_criminal.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/ground_zero_delays_may_be_criminal.php)

<sup>26</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/hollywood\\_calling\\_for\\_spitzer\\_call.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/08/hollywood_calling_for_spitzer_call.php)

<sup>27</sup> An example: [http://laist.com/2008/07/06/week\\_around\\_the\\_ists\\_4.php](http://laist.com/2008/07/06/week_around_the_ists_4.php)

<sup>28</sup> Rick Sanyer, interview, June 25 2008.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.gothamistllc.com/mediakit/titles/gothamist.php>

<sup>30</sup> [http://gothamist.com/2008/07/09/bush\\_calls\\_g8\\_talks\\_very\\_productive.php](http://gothamist.com/2008/07/09/bush_calls_g8_talks_very_productive.php)

<sup>31</sup> Troy McCollough, email correspondence, June 27, 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Jake Dobkin, phone interview, June 17, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Jake Dobkin, phone interview, June 17, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Jake Dobkin, phone interview, June 17, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> The sleekness of the design is emphasized in each site's logo, which features the city's skyline in silhouette, hovering over the site's name, written in lowercase letters.

<sup>36</sup> The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, August 2008. *Key News Audiences Now Blend Online and Traditional Sources: Audience Segments in a Changing News Environment*, <http://people-press.org/report/444/news-media>.