



LYCEUM OF ALABANG
Km. 30 National Hi-way, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City
COLLEGE DEPARTMENT
College OF Computer Studies



A Report for the Social and Professional Issues subject

LYCEUM OF ALABANG INC.

Blogger's Freedom of Expression and the Libel Law

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I. Introduction

The growth of blogging as an influential platform has changed the way people share opinions, spread information, and connect with larger audiences. For many, blogs have become a space for expressing personal views, promoting social issues, and analyzing different topics. However, this digital freedom brings a level of responsibility, as the reach and potential impact of bloggers' words are now greater than ever before. The rising popularity of blogging has also extended the scope of defamation laws into the online world, making bloggers accountable for their content. As a result, individuals who feel harmed by statements made online are increasingly taking legal action to protect their names and reputations.

In the Philippines, the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, providing bloggers with the right to voice their perspectives. However, this right has limits it doesn't allow bloggers to damage others' reputations without consequences. Bloggers are expected to respect these boundaries, especially when their statements could be false or damaging to others. Additionally, Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) upholds the global right to freedom of opinion and expression, allowing individuals to share information and ideas across all forms of media, unrestricted by borders.



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As online platforms continue to grow, the balance between freedom of expression and accountability becomes more complex. Bloggers must navigate this balance carefully, recognizing that their words have significant influence and can lead to real life consequences. The challenge lies in protecting the right to free expression while also holding individuals accountable for harmful statements that may unfairly affect another's reputation. This intersection of free expression and libel law raises essential questions about the ethical responsibilities of bloggers and the broader impact of digital communication on public perception.



II. Main Concept

Blog and Blogger

A blog is like an online diary a place to post your thoughts, stories, or updates in a series of entries over time. The word 'blog' actually comes from "web log," a term created by Jorn Barger back in 1997. Each post usually includes a title, date, and content. Some bloggers add photos, videos, or links to make their posts more engaging. One of the cool parts of blogging is that readers can leave comments or share the post on social media, creating a conversation and connecting people online.

Blogs have evolved into much more than just personal journals. Today, they cover every topic you can think of from travel and fashion to technology and news. Some blogs focus on sharing knowledge and tips, while others serve as spaces for people to discuss issues they care about. Whether used by businesses to connect with customers or by individuals to share personal insights, blogs have become powerful tools for communication. This flexibility allows bloggers to reach specific audiences, share their voices, and even build their brands or careers, turning a simple online journal into a meaningful platform.

A blogger is someone who manages and operates a blog, which is an online platform where they share their thoughts, experiences, and knowledge on various subjects. They write posts to engage with a specific group of people, or audience, who



are interested in the topics they cover. Bloggers can write about almost anything, such as lifestyle, technology, education, travel, or even personal opinions. Their main goal is often to inform, entertain, or influence their readers. Additionally, bloggers may interact with their audience through comments or social media, building a community around their content. Some bloggers even make money through their blogs by partnering with brands or using ads.

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is the right to openly share ideas, opinions, and information. It includes the freedom to speak, be heard, and participate in social, artistic, and political life. This also means having the "right to know," or the right to seek, receive, and share information through any media.

This freedom is essential for allowing political dissent, supporting diverse cultural expression, and encouraging creativity and innovation. It enables us to develop our personalities and perspectives through open self expression. When people can freely exchange ideas, it fosters understanding, builds public knowledge, and strengthens communities.

A crucial aspect of freedom of expression is holding governments accountable. By allowing citizens to question and debate policies, societies benefit from improved



governance and stability. Freedom of expression is protected internationally, as seen in Article 19 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which obligates most countries to uphold this right.

It is essential that politicians and public officials create an environment that supports freedom of expression, enabling peaceful protest, free information sharing, and criticism where governments fail to protect rights. Violations of this right affect society broadly, undermining democracy and a free media. Freedom of expression ensures everyone, especially human rights advocates, can access information technologies and the media of their choice, including the internet, radio, and television.

Libel Law

Libel, as defined by Article 353 of the Revised Penal Code (RPC), is a public and malicious accusation of a crime, vice, defect, or any condition that causes dishonor, discredit, or contempt toward a person, or harms the memory of a deceased individual. Libel laws are in place to protect individuals from unjust attacks on their character and reputation. Libel is considered a crime against honor.



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The Constitution upholds freedom of speech and expression under Article III, Section 4, but this freedom is not absolute. The law allows certain exceptions, like libel, when an individual's reputation is unfairly harmed. Libel involves written or visual defamation, unlike slander, which refers to spoken defamation.

A libel case can be filed by a private individual, a corporation, a public official, or a public figure. However, not all government employees are considered public officials under libel law this usually applies to those in positions of authority or discretion in government functions.

Defendants in libel cases may include the author, publisher, editor, or anyone responsible for the defamatory publication. To establish libel, four elements must be present: (1) a defamatory statement, (2) malice, (3) publication, and (4) identification of the victim. If any of these elements is missing, the libel case may be dismissed.

Libel laws ensure a structured means to seek redress for reputation damage, while still respecting the freedoms that support open discussion and exchange of ideas essential to a democratic society.



III. Conclusion

In conclusion, the rise of blogging as a powerful platform for communication brings both opportunities and challenges. Bloggers are granted the freedom to express their thoughts and ideas to large audiences, yet they must also recognize the significant responsibility that comes with their words. While freedom of expression is a fundamental right, it is not without limitations, especially when the potential for harm through libelous statements exists. The intersection of free speech and libel laws raises important questions about the ethical responsibilities of bloggers, who must navigate the fine line between personal expression and the potential damage to others' reputations.

The significance of this balancing the two cannot be overstated, as it shapes how digital communication impacts public perception and influences social discourse. Bloggers, as modern communicators, have the power to inform, entertain, and even sway opinions. However, they must be held accountable for ensuring that their content does not unfairly harm others. Moving forward, it is essential to have a greater understanding of these responsibilities and for platforms to provide clear guidelines to help bloggers avoid legal pitfalls. By encouraging ethical blogging practices, we can continue to support free expression while protecting individual reputations and upholding the integrity of online communication.



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V. Questionnaires

1. **Age:**
 - ☐ Under 18
 - ☐ 18-24
 - ☐ 25-34
 - ☐ 35-44
 - ☐ 45+
 2. **Gender:**
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
 3. **Occupation:**
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Blogger
 - ☐ Employed (non-blogger)
 - ☐ Self-employed
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
 4. **Are you a blogger or content creator?**
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

Section 2: Awareness and Understanding of Freedom of Expression

5. How familiar are you with your right to freedom of expression under the law?
 - ☐ Very familiar
 - ☐ Somewhat familiar
 - ☐ Not very familiar
 - ☐ Not at all familiar
6. Do you believe bloggers should have the same freedom of expression as traditional journalists?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
7. In your opinion, does freedom of expression have limits in the digital world?



- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
8. Have you encountered or read about any cases where a blogger faced legal action due to statements made online?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
-

Section 3: Understanding of Libel Laws

9. Are you aware of what constitutes libel in online platforms?
- ☐ Very aware
 - ☐ Somewhat aware
 - ☐ Not very aware
 - ☐ Not at all aware
10. In your opinion, is it fair for bloggers to be held accountable for harmful or false statements online?
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
11. Should there be stricter libel laws for bloggers compared to other forms of media?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
-

Section 4: Bloggers' Responsibility and Accountability

12. Do you believe bloggers should verify the accuracy of their information before publishing it?
- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree



- Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
13. How much responsibility do you think bloggers have to avoid damaging someone's reputation online?
- Complete responsibility
 - Moderate responsibility
 - Minimal responsibility
 - No responsibility
14. Should there be more training or guidelines available to bloggers regarding ethical standards and libel laws?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
15. Do you think bloggers are generally aware of the possible legal consequences of their statements?
- Very aware
 - Somewhat aware
 - Not very aware
 - Not at all aware
-

Section 5: Personal Opinion on Free Expression vs. Accountability

16. In your view, which is more important for bloggers:
- Freedom of expression
 - Accountability for their statements
 - Both equally important
 - Neither is important
17. Do you feel that current laws around online libel in the Philippines are:
- Too strict
 - Just right
 - Not strict enough
 - I'm not familiar with these laws
18. What do you believe is the biggest challenge bloggers face regarding freedom of expression and accountability? (Open-ended)