

iPro User:
A Case Study of Pro-am Photographers
in Malaysia Travel Magazine

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>In the digital era, centralized media is moving towards de-centralized and globalized network. This development changes the relationship between mass media and their audiences, remodels the connection among media users and expands traditional roles of consumers. Consumer behavior changes blur the distinction between producer-consumer, professional-amateur, and work-leisure. With a title of 'iPro User' which refers to 'I am a productive and professional user', this paper is applying 'pro-am' model with a framework of 'prosumer' to investigate why and how a group of professional amateurs are networked together and utilize digital devices to participate as content contributors. This prosumption phenomenon is examined with a single case study in Malaysia travel magazine – Travelmate. Empirical data are gathered through in-depth interviews with magazine editors and non-professional photographers who actively contribute in imagery content production. Findings indicate that Travelmate has been functioning as a participatory platform for pro-am photographers to engage as prosumers. Pro-am identity was constructed during prosumption process whereby strong personalities and unique ethos are developed. Pro-ams portray complex behaviors, as their non-financial pursuit via vested interest and commitment creates knowledge and social distinction from non-serious hobbyists. They serve as marginal ethnics who balance social contradiction between wage and free labors, skilled and inexperienced players, unserious and innovative workers.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Behavior change, consumer, digital media, photographer, professional amateur, prosumer	
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Keskitetystä mediasta on tulossa digitaalisella aikakaudella hajanainen globaali verkosto. Tämä kehitys muuttaa joukkotiedotusvälineiden ja niiden yleisöjen suhdetta, muokkaa median käyttäjien välisiä yhteyksiä ja laajentaa perinteistä kuluttajan roolia. Kulutuskäyttäytymisen muutokset hämärtävät tuottajan ja kuluttajan välistä eroa, samoin kuin ammattilaisen ja amatöörin sekä työn ja vapaa-ajan välistä eroa. Tutkimuksen otsikon 'iPro User' viittaa ilmauksiin 'I am a professional' (olen ammattilainen) ja 'I am a prosumer' (producer+consumer eli tuottaja-kuluttaja; myös professional+consumer). Tutkimuksessa sovelletaan ns. pro-am-mallia (professional amateur, suomeksi esim. pro-amatööri, ammattimainen harrastaja), ja sen viitekehyksenä on 'tuottaja-kuluttaja'. Tarkoituksena on tutkia, miksi ja miten ryhmä pro-amatöörejä verkostoituu keskenään ja on mukana digitaalisessa sisällöntuotannossa. Ilmiötä tarkastellaan malesialaisen Travelmate-matkailulehden tapaustutkimuksen avulla. Empiirinen aineisto on kerätty haastattelemalla lehden toimittajia ja pro-am-kuvaajia, jotka ovat aktiivisesti mukana visuaalisessa sisällöntuotannossa. Tulokset osoittavat, että Travelmate on toiminut osallistavana toimintaympäristönä, jossa pro-am-kuvaajat ovat olleet tuottaja-kuluttajia. Kyseinen prosessi loi 'pro-am-identiteetin', omaperäisyyttä ja ainutlaatuista yhteishenkeä. Pro-amatöörin toimintatavat osoittautuvat moninaisiksi, sillä heidän taloudellista etua tavoittelematon harrastuksensa hyödyttää ja sitouttaa heitä, lisäten heidän asiantuntemustaan ja erottaen heidät vain hovin vuoksi harrastavista. He ovat marginaalinen vähemmistö, joka tasapainottaa yhteiskunnallista vastakkainasettelua palkkatyön ja vapaaehtoistyön välillä, taitavien ja kokemattomien toimijoiden välillä sekä innottomien ja innovatiivisten työntekijöiden välillä.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Digitaalinen media, kuluttaja, käytöksen muutos, pro-amatööri, pro-am-harrastaja, tuottaja-kuluttaja, valokuvaaja	
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1. INTRODUCTION

Introductory chapter discusses the practical issue that motivates this study. It presents the background, research areas, goals of the study and targeted audiences.

1.1 Pervasive Use of Non-professional Images in Malaysia

Recently I read an article proclaiming amateur photographers who offer 200 euros for a wedding photoshoot are threatening professional photographers' careers who charge five times higher for a similar service. This seems an endless debate. There is a participatory culture change which encourages citizen's contribution caused by technology convergence. The convergence of audio-visual technology with computing has transformed the way we record, interpret and share images with the world. Low cost, ease of operation, immediate result and manipulation capability not only motivate amateur photography activities, these also increase their expertise in image producing. Distribution capability enhanced by the internet allows non-professional, who may be able to offer lower prices with similar services, to be visible and reachable. Service lines are opened to those inside and outside the group, and therefore intense competition is increasing among the professionals, studios, and non-professionals who practice photography as a hobby.

Evidently, citizens' images are getting more attention due to the value of 'citizens witnessing'. Most of the well-known event pictures are coming from citizens rather than professional photographers. In UK, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a public service broadcaster, always encourages participation of citizens in journalism content creation. In Malaysia, massive pictures and videos are shared by ordinary people who joined the 709 democracy march.¹ Before the event ended, a lot of pictures taken by ordinary participants

¹ 709 march is a non-political campaign held in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia on July 09, 2011. Dressed in yellow, the 709 march was peacefully aimed at pushing for a fair election in the nation. The 709 rally was the biggest popular struggle for human rights and

have already distributed on the internet and personal blogs. They are widely broadcasted on the news and used on the front pages of newspapers and magazines the next day. Unlike most of the amateur images, they are good in terms of picture quality and rich of non-conventional viewpoint which illustrate political concerns raised by the citizens. For example, tear gas and chemical-laced water cannons were used extensively to prevent the peaceful walk for fair and clean elections. Through the sharing of photos, we realized that although the campaign was initiated in Malaysia however, similar campaigns were held in other countries, in front of Malaysia embassies in London, Washington, Taiwan and other cities. The amateur pictures and the new media let us see the world in a short time.

In addition, the popularity of de-centralized network such as self-published blogs and photo-sharing websites has increased the capability to share, communicate, express and distribute digitally. Competition is brewing among websites and smartphone companies to integrate their products with computer software, cameras and social network to become a multi-function device. Flickr, the most popular image-sharing website offers up to 300 megabytes of free storage space. The photo geo-tagging is automatic and images can be emailed to anyone, even to a non-Flickr user. Facebook, a giant social-networking site with more than 800 million users, allows photos to be stored and shared to other users. 500px, aimed at camera-lovers who have photography knowledge such as apertures, color temperature and shutter speed, has become a popular website for professional fine art, traveling and wedding photographers. Personal blog such as Blogspot allows users to gather video clips, images and texts in one page. The vacation memories end up online due to the ubiquity of digital cameras and internet. Blogs turned out to be quite useful for travel inspiration. Travelers not only share travel experiences online, but also use these websites to do trip planning, such as finding a travel spot or understanding the destinations from the

democracy in Malaysia for the past 54 years since Independence. It was estimated that more than 50,000 people from various ethnic groups participated in the rally.

photos. In Malaysia, a lot of bloggers share travel articles with pictures. In 2011 Malaysia Chinese Blog Award, 21% of bloggers join the competition as travel-photo blogs out of 16 categories, with a 60.6% increase compared to 2010.²

There are plenty of citizen photo-journalism awards and contests organized by commercial or non-profit organizations. For example, 'I Witness Citizen Journalists Award' organized by Nokia and the UK *Press Gazette* in 2006, is aimed to reward images of citizens witnessing events. The editor of *Press Gazette*, Ian Reeves said:

It is clear from the quality of the entries to these awards that citizen journalism, however you define it, is going to play an increasingly significant role in the industry.

(*Citizen Journalists Get Rewarded*. BBC News 2006)

This award was not opened to the public, but there was a term and condition applied, where the participated images had to have been published in a magazine, newspaper, personal blog, citizen journalism site or photo-sharing service. Malaysia has similar photo contests, for example KLPF Photo-creator of the Year organized by Photo Creator Publication in year 2010. It was aimed to encourage talented and emerging local photographers to develop and exhibit their works. The artwork of short-listed contestants have been printed, exhibited publicly and featured in *Advanced Images* and *Photo Creator* magazines. It was quite a surprise that half of the short-listed contestants were non-professional photographers.

Common to these examples is that new communication patterns are established for wider realignments and integrations. A numbers of non-professional media users, mostly freelance, temporary, underpaid or unpaid, are anxiously and innovatively using communication technology to change the community with their own content creation. They do not merely contribute on information circulation, but also produce valuable materials at

² The figures are based on statistic data of Malaysia Chinese Blog Award (<http://mybloggercon.com/award/2011-statistics/>)

professional standard for the industry. The organization and society take this opportunity to collaborate cheap or free resources to generate low cost content.

One might call them amateurs. However in certain circumstances, they differ from an amateur who pursue the interest as non-serious leisure. They also vary from a professional who seek opportunities to make money as most of the participants are underpaid or unpaid. Transformation of the meaning of 'amateur' has occurred and placed them somewhere between the amateur and the professional. One might say a new page of amateur images started after the event of September 11. This was not the case. It was not developed on that day. If we review the history of photography, we can easily notice the appearance of dedicated amateurs in the nineteenth century and earlier on other leisure activities. However, the lack of de-centralized and widely connected platform caused the small group or individual generated content to go unnoticed. In the new century, the roles and contributions are more visible as the mass media play a role in providing new opportunities to complement and collect new initiatives from citizen. Amateur photographers no longer keep their skills on producing family album which probably will never have a chance to get published. Their active participation in professional domain and their potentials and talents are noticeable by the public.

1.2 Research Question

With a title of 'iPro User', which is referring to '*I* am a *productive* and *professional* user', I suggest a digital culture study from a media user perspective. This paper is aimed to examine the motivation of non-professional users to involve in professional domain and their practices to create valuable content. By applying framework of 'prosumer' with a 'pro-ams model' introduced by Leadbeater et al. (2004), the study is focused on bottom-up energy, particularly

a special group of non-professional users who can produce their own materials at a professional standard for non-profit intention.

A single case study is conducted to study how a group of non-professional photographers participate as image content contributors in *Travelmate*, a travel magazine in Malaysia. The case study included a brief study of *Travelmate*'s publication practices and in-depth interviews with its editors and non-professional photographers who actively participated as imagery contributors. A preliminary study of *Travelmate* gives an overview of how *Travelmate* manage its content, layout and contribution from year 2006 to 2011, while an interview provides an insight on how non-professional photographers utilize digital technology to participate as prosumers.

Travelmate magazine has been selected as a research environment because the imagery contributors are a combination of professional and non-professional photographers from all fields. In year 2005, *Travelmate* published 77% professional images and 23% non-professional images. By year 2011, non-professional image contribution has risen to 55%. The publisher mentioned that the higher usage of non-professional contents will continue in the future. Hence, *Travelmate* provides a rich environment to study how a publication takes initiatives to incorporate non-professional images to generate low cost content.

Most of the non-professional photographers are *Travelmate*'s readers who love traveling and practice photography as a hobby. This paper studies these non-professional photographers as pro-ams where it suggests that some degree of professionalism is found in amateurism. Both professional and amateur characteristics are investigated from the publisher, personal and community perspectives.

The study also seeks to understand how and why specialism is developed. It suggests that the construction of specialism is an augmenting process and requires high density of personal effort and commitment. Non-professional photographers are interviewed to

understand their practices, behaviors and attitudes during the prosumption process. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations will be studied to comprehend why a pro-am identity is retained despite it requiring sacrifices and dedication. The result of the case study is used to discuss the current theories of pro-ams and prosumers.

This paper is targeted towards all interested in consumer behavior change, particularly how consumers utilize the digital media to change consumption culture to develop a prosumption model. I assume that the readers are those who have developed a special interest in the study of photography, prosumer, professional amateur or media users.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This paper consists of seven chapters. The introductory chapter gives an overview of the issues behind the choice of research area and topic. It explains the motives and purposes of the research followed by a discussion of research question and targeted audience. Chapter two introduces 'Pro-am' model with a theoretical framework of 'Prosumer' which this research is based on. Chapter three gives explanation concerning the procedures taken to conduct the research and collect information. It includes research approach, sampling, data collection and analysis for this paper. It also addresses the potential setbacks caused by methodology limitations. Chapter four presents the analysis gained from publication practice studies. It gives readers a glance of the case study environment and its background. In chapter five, I gather all the findings and analysis based on information collected through interviews and other information sources conducted during the research period. Chapter six focuses on key issues that have been interpreted and learned from the case study and its connection with the evolving literary contexts. This paper ends with a conclusion of the case study and proposes areas for future research.

2. iPRO: PRODUCTIVE & PROFESSIONAL USER

This chapter introduces 'prosumer' as the theoretical framework for this paper. It briefly reviews several theories suggested by previous scholars relating to this framework, particularly on digital culture environment. It also discusses the model of 'pro-am' which is adopted as a theoretical context to examine how non-professional photographers participate as prosumers in following chapters.

2.1 Immersive Prosumption Culture

As early as 1972, Marshall McLuhan and Barrington Nevitt had foreseen the potential of consumers becoming agent of cultural production in the near future. In *The Third Wave*, American futurologist Alvin Toffler (1981) introduced the term 'prosumer' when he discussed the consumer behavior change in modern life. Prosumer is a concept that brings together *professional*, *producer* and *consumer*. Toffler explains that as a prosumer, people do not respond as passive consumers to cultural object but actively create their own materials or contents at a professional standard. He divides human civilization into three parts or what he calls the 'three waves' – first agricultural-wave, second industrial-wave, and third info-techno-wave.

According to Toffler, the first wave begun when agricultural revolution replaced the hunter-gatherer culture, and brought the market into a small, semi-isolated & self-reinforcing production system. Agricultural-phase ended in the eighteenth century when industrial revolution broke the union of production and consumption. With the separation of producer roles from consumers, the second wave societies ran through technology standardization, operation synchronization, specialized occupation, resources concentration and network scale maximization. Schools, factories, press media, hospitals, music and movie industries have their own pyramid of power. Profit-motivation and result-orientation industrialism was shaped with social hierarchy where narrow, educated, knowledgeable and skillful professionals are at the top. Professionals monopolize the discipline by examination and state-run licensing

procedures (Stebbins 1992). Information, products and services are distributed via few centralized sources. The technological gaps between sender and receiver create the social division of producer and consumer. Professional communicators produced the information to passive audience. The interaction between sender and receiver is a vertical, limited, one way communication and always depend on the medium such as press and printed media. Slater (1997) calls these two types of consumers as ‘the hero’ and ‘the dupe’.

The third wave revolution arises when techno-sphere merged with info-sphere in the new century. The advent of de-centralized mass media alters our communication patterns, presenting a dazzling diversity of models and changes our societies. Gaps between sender and receiver have collapsed – the roles of consumer and producer emerged again. New lifestyle is being practiced. Rather than waiting for professionals to offer the goods and services, ordinary people equipped with many cheap mini-technology at home were willing to use their own hands to participate in cultural production. The third wave reveals a reversion, where prosumer culture is brought back with high-technology equipments.

Since then, the notions of prosumer have often been revisited by different study fields to examine various consumption pattern changes in contemporary life. The new behaviors of consumer have inspired scholars to introduce different terms and models. The rise of prosumer has been seen as an identity construction of lifestyle (Featherstove 1991, Campbell 2005) and cultural resource (Holt 2004). The idea where the shift of consumer to prosumer is driven by postmodernism has been discussed as well (Featherstove 1991, Campbell 2005). From leisure studies perspectives, the behaviour changes are explained as development and refinement of personal style as prosumption enables the hobbyiest to gain subcultural capital (Woermann 2009).³

³ Followed by the theory of distinction introduced by Bourdieu (1985), Thornton (1995) has examined cultural capital in subculture activity. Cultural capital will be discussed in chapter five.

2.2 Productive New Media User

Pervasive consumer behavior change is also noticeable in new media environment. Media scholars have responded to this change and suggested that the advent of prosumer-based participatory media enables everyone to produce and distribute their own products and services in a more convenient and professional way, and on a global scale. Here I gather several theories suggested by previous media scholars relating to this framework. Firstly, the concepts of prosumption which have been raised in new media studies are reviewed. Secondly, new behavior patterns observed by previous scholars are summarized. Thirdly, new definitions and terminology suggested by scholars are listed. Lastly, several participatory production models developed by scholars to reflect prosumption phenomenon are highlighted.

Lister et al. (2003) revisited the concept of ‘consumption’ and ‘production’ in new media environment. The authors suggested that the development of technology in new century has replaced a centralized network with a dispersed distribution system. The decentralized new media connected multiple input and output devices, enabled a large amount of information sent from many producers to many consumers. In addition, these high technology products are designed with prosumer technology features that allow consumers to customize their media use as per their needs and produce highly ‘individualized’ contents. Anyone “can now potentially publish” (Lister et al. 33), said the authors, by providing plenty of examples explaining how prosumer technology has closed the technological gaps between producer and consumer. For example, digital camera has created a new possibility for domestic photographers to take part in image creation through manipulation and distribution software; homepage and blog have brought producer and consumer together without regulatory controls; and digital games and hypertext have changed the traditional meanings of ‘consumer’.

New media has changed the way we communicate and therefore extend our roles as consumer to producer. New society becomes less uniform and broken into smaller pieces as

what Toffler (1981) has predicted. Instead of mass communication from few producers to large powerless consumers in the second wave, interactive communication technology enables each user to take part and produce information even from the outside. With little investment on technology devices, people can spend more times to pursue recreational goals. The distinction between work and leisure is blurred and every industry is filling up with unpaid, self-directed, self-monitored and voluntary labors. Conventional distinctions between consumer and producer have vanished. Customers do part of the jobs and consumers enjoy being involved in production. Principle of production for self-use is spread in all fields. Do-it-yourself (DIY) and self-service prosumer ethics make handwork respectable again.

The rise of prosumer changed the society. Today, we can see a number of skillful and knowledgeable people controlling nearly all forms of mass communication including news publishing and broadcasting, film-making, book and encyclopedias publishing. Many theories have assumed audience activeness. The technology turned the unnatural audience phenomenon into more concrete roles through their interaction with mass media. Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis (2003) suggested that 'we media' lets the audience participate actively in the creation and dissemination, and therefore 'audience' should be renamed as 'participant'. Blau (2004) noticed the way we tell stories through videos, texts, images or a combination of those have changed in 'independent media'. He thinks that our future society is being lead by media user.

The media landscape will be reshaped by the bottom-up energy of media created by amateurs and hobbyists [...] This bottom-up energy will radiate enormous creativity [...] A new generation of media-makers and viewers are emerging which could lead to a sea change in how media is made and consumed [...] (Blau 2004)

Dan Gillmor (2004) pointed out that prosumption culture has changed the organization of news reporting and production. Journalism is evolving from a lecture into a complex

'conversation'. Technology provides us a communication toolkit and allows everyone to act as journalist at minimal cost with global reach. New media blurred the distinction between news producer and consumer. Publishing sector has become a medium for everyone's voices, not just limited to printing press and professional. To Gillmor, this change is not a threat, but rather a democracy and liberation of citizen engagement. Personal journalism enabled larger conversation and context to be formed, filled up the gap which professional missed, and allowed us to listen to people's voices daily. Andreas (2006) declared that 'participatory media' will profoundly change both the media industry and society as a whole. Rheingold (2008) described that participatory media as a production and dissemination social media which obtained value and power through participation of many people. Rheingold thinks participatory media empower ordinary people to engage and apply their skills towards the process of democracy.

Some media scholars think that the new prosumer capability deserves a new definition. In White Paper entitled *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Jenkins and co-authors (2006) explained the activeness of prosumer with concept of 'participatory culture':

A participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices (Jenkins et al. 3).

According to the authors, participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that made it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and re-circulate content in powerful new ways. This concept challenges the traditional definition of consumer and suggests that the use of participatory media shifts the focus of literacy training from individual expression into

community involvement. As a participant in new century, we need to learn new social skills such as collaboration, networking, multitasking and interacting. Bruns (2005) introduces the concept of 'produsage', where 'prod-user' has dual personalities – to produce and to use the content.

Abundant media studies allowed the development of various participatory production models to reflect the creative works of new generation producers – from individual hobbyist to non-profit institution as a community. Prosumption will never happen in an individual circumstance; it will need to involve greater power, at a wider range of users. Tim O'Reilly (O'Reilly 1998), CEO of O'Reilly media, commented in his press release speech that low cost technology brings the development of free software in an 'opensourcing' model. Terranova introduced 'immaterial labour' in year 2000 and suggested that free labor plays important roles in contributing social and cultural knowledge to digital society. De Peuter and Dyer-Whiteford (2005) suggested a 'multitude' model to describe passionate, precarious and free networked game players. Professor Benkler (2006) used a new model 'commons-based peer production' to explain non-market production of information and culture where large numbers of creative citizen energy is gathered into meaningful projects without traditional hierarchical organization. In the same year, Howe (2006) shared the rise of 'crowdsourcing' model in *Wired.com* online magazine where organizations take technological advantage to collect talented amateur power to solve a problem or manage projects. All these models reveal the contributions of prosumers towards open source sharing, ordinary power and more to non-commercial community activities.

The concern I have with these theories is most arguments are related to the power of amateur. Howe (2006) thought that advanced technology closed the cost barriers between amateur and professional and now hobbyists, part-timers and dabblers have opportunities to participate as prosumer in a crowdsourcing model. It is true that our society is full of bottom-

up energy. However, are all of them non-serious hobbyist? To participate in production model such as Wikipedia (a commons-based peer production model), Linux open-source software (an opensourcing production model), or promoting Swedish independent music globally (Baym 2009), the prosumer roles require professional knowledge and skills, serious attitude and certain amount of time spent. These voluntary resources are notable not just for their ability to produce, but also for their expertise. They articulate a complex system of costs, rewards and connection to provide economic value for others. As Lister et al. (2003) explained, the overlapping between professional and amateur creates a new zone of media environment and they are neither professional users nor amateur hobbyists. It is a twilight zone shone by prosumer who not only have the capability to create and distribute content but are able to produce at professional standard in non-commercial market, as what Leadbeater and Miller described as 'professional amateur' in year 2004.

2.3 Professional Amateur

When Leadbeater and Miller (2004) shared their research findings about prosumption activity in the 20th century, they thought that to define the active prosumer as 'amateur' or 'professional' is misleading. Their study suggested that we call the people involved as professional amateurs (pro-ams). According to the authors, pro-ams is a situation where amateurs have merged with professionals. They are neither amateur nor professional, but a new social hybrid that bridged the two groups. Pro-ams pursue an activity as amateurs, mainly for the love of it, but they set a professional standard (Leadbeater et al. 20). We distinguish pro-ams from professionals in term of their knowledge and monetary relationship with the activity. While professionals are busy polishing their techniques and making a living with these techniques, pro-ams are enhancing their skills for self-development and sense of enjoyment and passion. The money pro-am earned is only contributed as part of their income

and most of the pro-ams have other career paths. We distinguish pro-ams from amateurs by their dedication and intentions. Amateurs spend less hours and efforts on leisure activity. Unlike amateurs, leisure activity is not only a rest or enjoyment for pro-ams. It can be rewarding for the person and society in general. Leisure activity is not only a passive consumerism, but an active participation.

Leadbeater and Miller believed that pro-am activities highlight the need to identify carefully the difference between serious and casual, active and passive, and in terms of leisure. They develop three attributes to describe pro-ams. Firstly, they are practicing the activities outside normal working hours as leisure for relaxing purpose. However, this leisure activity involves self-development, time sacrifice, and requires knowledge and skills. They suggested that pro-ams engage in scheduled activities such as practices and rehearsals but the level of engagement depends on their pleasure. Secondly, the authors suggested that pro-am sacrifices time and money for better productivity, therefore making the consumption as production. Through consumption, pro-ams build their identity and cultural capital. Finally, the authors emphasized that pro-ams are not professionals but they are aware of the professional standard and work hard to achieve it. Below is the diagram on how Leadbeater and Miller see pro-ams. Pro-ams operate at third-quarter of the line, consisting of serious and committed amateurs, quasi-professionals, which include pre-professional, semi-professional and post-professional.

Devotees, fans, dabblers, and spectators	Skilled amateurs	Pro-ams		
		Serious and Committed Amateurs	Quasi- professionals	Fully- fledged professionals

Figure 1: Hierarchy of knowledge discussed by Leadbeater and Miller (2004)

I do not agree with Leadbeater and Miller that “pro-ams are new social hybrid” (Leadbeater and Miller 20). Pro-ams do not appear suddenly in a new century. Pro-am is

rather a stage where skillful amateurs serve as professional after they reached professional standard. If we see the rise of pro-ams as a new social power, we might potentially miss the opportunities to study how they transform from amateur to pro-ams and how they retain their status as pro-ams.

In photography industry, media scholars have noticed the existence of amateur photographers who have professional standards as early as nineteenth century. The common understanding is that photography was introduced as a high end optical equipment to capture faces and their expressions in year 1839. In fact, the idea of capturing images has been worked on since the middle ages. In *Book of Optics*, scientist Alhazen (Ibn Al-Haytham) shared optics principles in 1000AD to explain upside down images. In the following 800 years, other scientists such as Leonardo da Vinci continued to develop the principles of pinhole. The first person who announced their findings publicly were Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre (France) and William Henry Fox Talbot (Britain). The France newspaper, *Gazette de Fance* announced Daguerre's practical process of images as a revolution of drawing art on January 6 1839, while Talbot presented his artwork samples to the Royal Institution in London on January 25 1839. In the same year, scientist Sir John F.W. Herschel successfully resolved the technical issues faced by Daguerre and Talbot and proposed the term 'photography', derived from the Greek words photos (light) and graphein (to draw).

Early photographers were mostly professional because it required technical knowledge, high cost,⁴ and bulky equipments. Early photographers are members of the intellectual and aristocratic elite, who had the passion, knowledge and leisure time to pursue this new art-science invention. They formed societies and clubs, published journals and organized exhibitions to share their discoveries and experiences. Along portraiture, the camera has used

⁴ According to Newhall (1982), a camera cost 400 Francs in 19 century, while better part of living is 6000 Francs per month (27). In 1890, New York Stock Exchange quoted Francs at \$0.19-0.20. From *Measuringworth.com*, 400 Francs were equivalent to \$76-80 in year 1890, or relative value of \$1,820-1,920 in year 2011.

by professionals to create global picture culture and to establish photography as the medium to record landscape and architecture.

Although the early photographic processes were so complicated that only professional photographers could afford to invest, there were a few avid amateurs choose to pursue the new artistic technology. The passion of non-professional photographers on photography had inspired Kodak owner, George Eastman to simplify photographic process and make it available to everyone. When handy camera was introduced in 1880s, photography started to be seen as a well-to-do leisure activity. In June 1888, a flexible, unbreakable and changeable roll-film camera was introduced by Kodak. This handheld Kodak camera could be carried easily during its operation. With the slogan “You press the button, we do the rest”, Eastman organized his company not only to market the camera, but also process and print the pictures for the consumer. The easy-to-use camera was sold in the market for only \$25.⁵ After the film was exposed, consumers return the camera to the Kodak factory. With only \$10, the film is removed, developed, printed and replaced with a fresh roll of film.⁶

In 1900, Eastman and Kodak continued the concept of “snapshot” and introduced Brownie camera for \$1.⁷ With advertising slogan “Any school-boy or girl can make good pictures”, the company redefined photography as an amateur practice that could easily be integrated into daily leisure activities, which everyone could aspire to (refer figure 2). In the next 60 years, Kodak continued to market Brownie camera as a personal tool for communication, story sharing and memories collection. This is how Eastman and Kodak expanded the roles of photography from a professional portrait taking equipment to a snapshot kind of tool for home consumer in the nineteenth century.

According to *Measuringworth.com*:

⁵ the relative value of \$25 in year 1888 was equivalent to \$578 in year 2011.

⁶ the relative value of \$10 in year 1888 was equivalent to \$231 in year 2011.

⁷ the relative value of \$1 in year 1900 was equivalent to \$23.30 in year 2011.



Figure 2: Advertisement of Brownie Cameras, Cosmopolitan Magazine, December 1900.

The concept of snapshot photography encourages civic engagement in photographic culture and speaks universal photography language. Everyone can take portraiture pictures at minimal prices, anytime and everywhere. Newhall (1982) described Eastman as an inventor who has brought the photographic technique to millions of people. An increasing number of amateurs were attracted to photography in the late nineteenth century. For example, the Photographic Society of London found that although its membership was offered to those who practice photography as an avocation or profession, the amateurs were more often heard. Followed by the popularity of camera and continual development of this technology, three types of photographers appear in the industry: first, professionals who worked almost exclusively in the studios; second, amateurs who took photos for fun; and finally, those serious amateurs who considered themselves engaged in the making of art and enmeshed in middle to upper-class leisure (Murray 2008).

In his book *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day*, Newhall (1982) discussed the rise of professional amateur in the nineteenth century. Newhall analyzed *The*

Letter from George Eastman to Myron G. Peck and pointed out that George Eastman recognized two classes of amateur photographers in 1982, outside of professionals. The first class is those who are lacking some or all of the requisites as an avid amateur. This type of non-serious amateur photographers take personal pictures or record everyday life, mundane objects, places or people that interest them in travel or other activities. This first class is limited only to those who have the facility for making the pictures they want. Eastman called the second group as 'true amateurs', who devote enough time to acquire skills in developing, printing and toning. This group is limited to those who have the time, skill and money to experiment and practice photography as an art. Many of the 'true amateurs' produced outstanding photographs (the examples will be discussed in chapter 5). They work for their own satisfaction and did not regularly exhibit their picture nor publish them. As a 'true amateur', they passionately believe photography is a fine art, deserving of recognition. However, they are not burdened with financial responsibilities, and could ignore limits self-imposed by professionals. They were free to experiment, and they had the imagination to break accepted rules (Newhall 136).

Stebbins (1992) noticed several types of amateurs within their own circles in terms of dedication. There are two important dimensions to identify the differences. The first dimension is the seriousness. He called the amateurs who are moderately interested in an activity as 'participant', and named those amateurs who are highly dedicated as 'devotees'. Second dimension is concerning career path. Player, dabbler and dilettante practice an activity as hobby. However, amateurs can be pre-professionals, who are interested to join the professional circle or post-professionals who shifted from the profession to part-time basis. Stebbins described this as 'modern amateurism' (Stebbins 46). Old definitions of professional and amateur remain and merge with the new discourses to construct 'modern amateurism'. Once amateurs are aware of the professional standards, they face a critical choice in their

participation. With the first choice, the part-time participant remains as a player, dabbler or dilettante. With the second choice, they attempt to meet professional standards and become a professional. It is also possible that part-time participants keep themselves away from “play” toward the status of ‘modern amateur’. In ‘modern amateur’, the participants practice the hobby as serious leisure. Stebbins defined serious leisure as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participation to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge” (Stebbins 3). Serious leisure enthusiasts are usually more obligated to engage in their pursuits than less serious amateurs. However, their overall impression of their involvement is of self-fulfillment, rather than treating it as a profession.

Therefore, I would argue that pro-am photographers are not the new social hybrid. Pro-am photography activities have begun when camera became a consumer product in the nineteenth century. What is different in the 21st century is that participatory media makes pro-ams activities more visible by providing various types of communication pipelines and participatory opportunities.

Although the existence of pro-amateur photographers has been noticed, no matter if it is ‘true amateur’ (Newhall 1982) or ‘modern amateurism’ (Stebbins 1992), their behaviors and practices have been categorized and analyzed as an amateur user. I think hastily putting amateurs and pro-ams with different intentions and contributions together in one circle are problematic. In photography studies, amateur images are normally distinguished from the professionally produced forms by lack of intention (Hirsch 1981), doing it for pleasure (Zimmermann 1992), using inexpensive and mass produced cameras (Chalfen 2002) and produce mundane object and daily album (Murray 2008). These assumptions are incorrect for most of the pro-am photographers and therefore will under-look the pro-am market segment. The efforts to distinguish professional-amateur, work-leisure and production-consumption

became blurred, confusing and challenging. The potential consequences and influences brought by pro-am photographers to the society and economy will be underestimated. This will also causes behavior studies centered on how individual photographer participates as passive audience, and ignore their contribution as prosumers.

Therefore, I would suggest that prosumer study does not limit to productivity (quantity). The degree of professionalism (quality) should not be put aside. 'Pro-am' with a framework of 'prosumer' is well explained in *Travelmate*, who connects the partnership with corporation and wider community users. Firstly, it enables this special group of prosumers to be separated from amateurs and professionals. The separation enables us to study how the pro-am identity was constructed during prosumption process and how pro-am photographers retain their pro-am status. Secondly, the interface between pro-am and prosumer allows us to examine the whole prosumer process as a community, rather than focusing on contribution as an individual audience (Bruns 2010). In the pro-am model, pro-ams do not contribute as an individual, but their contribution and power are managed through a pro-am community. "It is virtually impossible to engage in a pro-am activity solo", said the authors (Leadbeater and Miller 44). Only pro-ams networked together can bring consequences and changes to our culture that only professional organizations could achieve in the past. *Travelmate's* pro-ams obviously do not act as individual senders to reach their receivers. They use networks and traditional clubs to coordinate their activities among pro-ams, with professionals, corporate and wider users. Therefore, *Travelmate* provides us a rich case study to examine how these pro-ams are networked and how they utilize mass media to connect the whole community members in a many-to-many pattern.

3. METHODOLOGY

Methodological chapter lays out the procedures that have been used to conduct research and collect information. It explains why a particular approach is selected, how sampling is retrieved from the population, how useful data is collected and analyzed, and what components are addressed in the research design to reduce potential methodological threats.

3.1 Research Approach

This paper performs a qualitative research to gain an in-depth understanding of how pro-am photographers are empowered by digital technology to contribute their images and actively participate as information producer in the professional domain. Qualitative research is used because it is a grounded system which is broadly ‘interpretivist’ and concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and produced (Mason 4). This method enables a flexible analysis to produce explanations for a complex environment in ‘younger’ disciplines such as digital culture.

Descriptive case study approach is chosen to investigate the participation of pro-am photographer as content contributor in Malaysia travel magazine, *Travelmate*. Case study approach enables researcher to explore and describe pro-am phenomenon over time through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple data sources of information, and also is aimed at corroborating the same facts within the phenomenon.

An instrumental case study is selected because it allows a researcher to investigate a particular phenomenon (Pickard 2007). The case study of *Travelmate* attempts to provide a detailed and comprehensive understanding of pro-am photographer’s experiences in the digital era, in narrative form. Single case study is selected due to time constraint as well as its ability to provide insight into a phenomenon which focuses on an issue or a concern. The case study is interpretive-based and results of interview are functioning as a vehicle to discuss, support and challenge theoretical assumptions of pro-am and prosumer.

Travelmate magazine has been selected as the research environment as it is the best seller and most influential travel magazine in Malaysia. Firstly, differing from other travel magazines which target on professional images, *Travelmate*'s content contributors consist of a combination of professional and non-professional photographers. Most of the non-professionals are originally *Travelmate*'s readers who love traveling and photographing. Photography seems a passion for them, rather than a profession. Secondly, as one of the photographer of *Travelmate*, I am familiar with the background, structures and participants of this magazine. This allowed me to collect and analyze information in an easier, faster and consistent way; at the same time build up trust and rapport with all the stakeholders quickly.

3.2 Research Sample

It is not practical to conduct the research to the entire population of *Travelmate* due to time limitation and therefore a research sample is identified to obtain a representative sample from a population with clearly distinguishable strata. To match the framework, the sample of case study is focused on pro-am photographers who actively participate as content contributors, with a preclusion of professional photographers who trade images for livelihood and readers who do not contribute to the magazine's contents.

I use purposive sampling to identify information-rich respondents, who understand the research problem, framework and are able to provide an insight into the issues. The purposive sampling can create some boundaries by a more rigid structure (Pickard 2007). The respondents in this study are five pro-am photographers, aged 28-34 years (Figure 3). Three of them are males and two are females to present a non-gender related research. They are selected due to their active participation as image contributors to *Travelmate* magazine, with minimum experience of 1 year. The respondents are self-employed or employed in upper-level white-collar positions, including the field of translation, financial, IT and engineering.

Photography is neither a full-time nor part-time job for them. In other words, financial return gained from participating in *Travelmate* is never a main income. They are skillful photographers, but they are practicing photography as a hobby, rather than as a commercial trade.

No	Respondent (Nick name)	Gender	Age	Profession	Years of participation (in Travelmate)
1	Zok	Female	32	Translator	1 year
2	KY	Female	32	Financial controller	1.5 years
3	Oldcat	Male	31	IT Consultant	2 years
4	CS	Male	28	Project Manager	4 years
5	Low	Male	34	Engineer	4 years

Figure 3: Pro-am photographers participating in the research.

The editors of *Travelmate* are also involved in the research (Figure 4). Ernie is the editor of *Travelmate* and Derek is her coverage when she is out of office or on vacation. They served *Travelmate* for 2-3 years and are responsible for the contents of the publication. Editing roles include setting publication standard, searching for talented content contributors, deciding the contents and themes, filling up details that contributors missed and keeping good contact with contributors. They provide rich information because they know the operation, contents and contributors well.

No	Respondent (Nick name)	Gender	Age	Profession	Years of participation (in Travelmate)
6	Ernie	Female	36	Travelmate Editor	3 years
7	Derek	Male	26	Travelmate Editor (coverage)	2 years

Figure 4: Travelmate's editors participating in the research.

I know *Travelmate* photographers and editors listed above for quite a long time, even before the research plan is developed. The relationship helped me to build a friendly and comfortable interview environment to produce sufficient and accurate data in a short period of time. I requested all respondents to disclose their real names, contact information and nick

names to be used in research. However, they are treated as autonomous agents, who decide for themselves whether they wish to participate in this research project. Initially, there are seven pro-am photographers and two editors identified for the interviews. Unfortunately, two of the photographers are unable to be reached. The final list of respondents is then reduced to five non-professional photographers and two editors.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection of this paper uses the normal case study practices of multiple information sources with the intention to outline consistent and reliable results. I have 6 years of direct experience as a non-professional photographer in *Travelmate*. However, I do not take part as a respondent or observer in this research, but just use my experiences to understand the background and phenomenon. My primary data comprise of publication practices study and interviews. Secondary data consists of research journals, press news and online articles written by various authors in digital culture fields as a supplementary to the primary sources to generate explanation of studied phenomenon.

3.3.1 Publication practices study

A brief study of publication practices is performed to showcase the overall picture of *Travelmate*. One issue of the magazine publication was randomly selected per year to investigate the contents and strategy of *Travelmate* in a period of six years:

2006 June/July issue (first issue of *Travelmate*)
2007 June/July issue
2008 February/March issue
2009 August/September issue
2010 June/July issue
2011 December'2010/January'2011 issue

Firstly, professional and non-professional images in these six issues are distinguished and counted one by one (refer appendix B). This analysis objectively gives an overview trend of

the usage of non-professional images in the magazine. Then, the proportion of the contents is studied. The contents are counted by pages and categorized into seven groups (refer appendix C). Next, the travel articles published in *Travelmate* from 2006-2011 are studied by continent (refer appendix D). The results of publication practices study are reported in chapter four.

Brief study of publication practices tells us that *Travelmate* has rich content, covering travel guidelines around the globe and other information. Non-professional users have more and more opportunities to be involved in professional publication. However, publication practices study is done briefly due to its limitation to portray a rich understanding of the context where the meanings emerge from.

3.3.2 Interview

Subsequently, by adopting a phenomenological orientation, empirical information is gathered via interviews with five pro-am photographers and the editors of *Travelmate* who have experienced the phenomenon. The intention of interview is to develop an in-depth understanding of the context in which respondents work. Interviews with pro-am photographers are mainly focused on their practices, experiences, participation, intention and motivation as content contributor. Conversation with editors is centered on publisher's strategy, content selection, requirement and their relationship with imagery contributors.

Consent form (refer appendix A) is distributed and signed to ensure the participants understand and are comfortable with the purpose and focus of the study, research activities, potential risk in answering the questions and the intended use of data they are providing. Interviewees are informed that the result will be reported anonymously and no individual respondent can be identified.

From June 2011 to March 2012, most interviews are conducted two to three times, lasting about 30 minutes each. Questions are answered mostly via face-to-face. However

email and instant messenger are used for follow up questions, further clarification and contact interviewees who are unable to be reached face-to-face. To create a friendly conversation environment, all the interviews are not recorded but notes are taken and later converted into transcript for analysis. Examples of transcripts are attached in appendix E (part of the conversation with photographer) and appendix F (part of the conversation with editor).

In order to achieve a conversation which is strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual, semi-structured interview is used. A list of important questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation is developed. However, respondents are encouraged to open-up topics and express their opinions freely. Mostly, open-ended questions are asked, with no indication and restriction to the possible answers.

3.3.3 Inductive analysis

Afterwards, I used the inductive analysis process to gain an understanding of the phenomenon. The qualitative analysis process that recommended by Morse (1997) is practiced: 1. comprehending the phenomenon; 2. synthesizing connections and relations within the phenomenon; 3. theorizing how and why these relations appear as they do; and 4. recontextualizing the new knowledge learned from the phenomenon.

Analysis of collected data is ongoing during interviews. Short interview summaries is written and data from other sources is documented to develop an initial description. The initial description describes each photographer's own perspective and outlines the major activities that occur. Data is then compared and rearranged to draw a pattern, similarity and difference. The steps above are repeated until a final description is developed. After the final description is completed, I focused on few key issues to interpretate what is going on and what I have learned from the case study. Finally, the findings are connected back to the context of how other scholars articulated the evolving knowledge.

3.4 Methodological Problems

No research can be perfectly controlled and no measuring instrument can be perfectly calibrated (Kirk, Jerome and Marc L. Miller 1986). There are few components considered in the research design – first is validity, how the research is performed accurately, neutrally and objectively; secondly, reliability, which is referring to the consistency of the method to generate reliable observation and result; lastly, internal generality, which is concerning whether the result and conclusion can be internally generalized within the group studied.

3.4.1 Validity

According to Maxwell, qualitative researchers rarely have the benefit in terms of planned comparisons, sampling strategies or statistical manipulations that are able to rule out validity threats (Maxwell 2005). Therefore, the goal of this qualitative research is not to eliminate the threats, but to understand it and to deal with it productively. There are two validity threats that I am dealing with – bias due to researcher's expectation and the influence of the researcher on the group studies.

Validation of data is achieved by triangulation of methods, comparing perspectives from different photographers and editors. Triangulation is a strategy to collect information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods. This strategy will help to reduce the risk of chance associations and systematic biases due to a specific method (Maxwell 2005). Multiple sources of data provide full and revealing picture of what is going on. To reduce the potential bias and researcher influences, I do not include my direct experience in the data collection stage.

Respondent validation is enhanced by documenting their opinions and sharing in every interview. Collaboration with interviewees by informing them my observation and finding helps to increase the validity of work and reduce misinterpreting of the meaning of what they

have said and practiced. Revisiting the respondents (average 2 to 3 interviews per respondent) and long-term involvement provide more complete data about exogenous events.

Theoretical validity is achieved by regular presentations and discussions with course-mates and teachers who familiar with the setting and theories.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability depends on the effectiveness of explicit observation procedures (Kirk, Jerome and Marc L. Miller 1986). In this paper, reliability is enhanced through the analysis of *Travelmate's* practice up to 6 years, which increases the length of observation and yields an unvarying measurement. To make the interviewees comfortable and being honest with me I assured their anonymity. Researcher's memo and methodological log recording decisions throughout all phases are used to enhance the trustworthiness and make sure the study is confronted with the standard practice and is being ethically conducted. Other information gathered from news, journals, and reports are only selected from official and reliable sources.

3.4.3 Generality

According to Maxwell (2005), external generality is the possibility to apply conclusion of a study to other scenarios and population beyond the research setting; while internal generality refers to application within the group studied. Single case study, small number of interviewees, purposeful sampling, and narrow studied site caused the result of this paper to lack external generality. Therefore, the study does not aim to obtain external generality but try to achieve internal generality instead.

Internal generality of this paper is applied to see if its findings can be applied to other *Travelmate's* pro-am photographers or newcomers whose characteristics are different from those photographers involved in the interviews. To enhance the internal generality, I

intentionally interviewed pro-am photographers from different backgrounds (from engineering to financing fields), genders (40% females and 60% males), geographical locations (from different cities in Malaysia and currently staying out of Malaysia) and years of participation (1 year experience to 4 years experience) to ensure different opinions and perspectives are collected. Since there is only one editor assigned to *Travelmate*, I had a conversation with editor's coverage while she is out of office to reduce the potential bias caused by individual work style preference.

4. TRAVELMATE: A LIBERAL MAGAZINE

This descriptive chapter presents case study environment – Travelmate magazine in detail. It gives readers a brief idea of the essence and vitality of the magazine, including its publication goals, business practices, magazine's layout, contents and contributors.

“Magazines are fragile plants”, described Matthew Rothschild (Rothschild 3). Unlike newspaper, radio and television which have a wider scope of audience, factors such as mishandling, poor organization, high cost and low margin can easily put a magazine, which targeted certain group of readers at risk. How does a printed magazine survive in contemporary life, especially when free magazines, personal journalism and blogging are blowing everywhere on the internet?

From the publication practice study, the observation revealed that *Travelmate* is struggling to incorporate non-professional images to achieve low cost, diversity and quality contents. They realized the developments of new media and took the innovations to bring together the ideas of photography and traveling. As a travel magazine, the publisher thought that the interaction with readers is important for long term relationship. Besides encouraging their readers to actively take part in content contribution, they arrange meet-ups, travel talks, short trips and other activities.

4.1 The Founder and Goals

Travelmate is founded in 2006 by Kim Teoh as a Chinese travel magazine under Photo Creator Publication (PCP). It is a bimonthly travel magazine in Malaysia, with estimated sales of 10,000 copies per publication. In 2009, the first English version was published to cater for a wider spectrum of readers. Only Chinese version travel magazines have been analyzed in this paper due to time limitation. Furthermore, this version enabled a longer observation period.

“The publication of *Travelmate* has always been more than a magazine”, said the editor. Before it was published in the year 2006, the magazine articulated a few missions and visions:

- Opening the gates to local emerging travel-photographers to develop their skills and publish their work.
- Represent cultural diversity.
- Strengthen regional identity and assisting the development of cultural tourism in the region.
- Nurture and raise the profile of non-professional talents.

Travelmate is printed in 210mm x 275mm dimension, a standard size for design and layout preference. It contains on average 114 pages and roughly 20 travel articles per issue. The magazine has targeted audiences who love traveling and photography and has aimed to inspire a fun, relaxation, appreciation, discovery and harmony in photo-traveling. Figure 5 presents examples of *Travelmate*'s cover page, which reveals various themes covered in the magazine, including culture, heritage preservation and environmental issues.



Figure 5: Different cover pages of *Travelmate*.
(From the left: Apr/May '2011; Aug/Sep '2009; Feb/Jan '2009; Oct/Nov '2008)

According to the publisher, interaction with readers is significantly crucial for long term subscription. Therefore, the magazine kept good contact with its readers through multiple social media. The editorial team can be reached via traditional media such as face-to-face, mailbox, telephone, fax and email for conversation, management and routine operation (such as magazine subscription). An official website (<http://pcp2u.my/>) is maintained regularly to keep the company's profile and progress updated. *Travelmate* started to setup a Facebook profile in 2010, mainly for interaction purpose. Topics that appear on Facebook are usually comments or complains from the readers, replies from the publishers, event notifications, new product introductions, news and other information. In Jan 2012, the magazines, both Chinese and English versions, went online (<http://www.ilmag.com/>) for iPad users. Despite other social media that excluded from this paper, it is important to know that this magazine is operated in multiple channels.

4.2 Content

Travelmate has information-rich contents. It prints the sharing from authors after selection and ultimate filter. Figure 6 gives us an overall picture of content *Travelmate's* average consists in six years (refer appendix C for six years data). Professional photographers contributed most of the contents in the first four years. However, the usage of non-professional articles have increased and eventually superseded professional content in year 2010 and 2011. The magazine does not carry bulk advertisement. It contains 9% of advertisement to reduce financial risks. The magazine also consists of events and activities related to photography (4%), notices and results of photography or traveling contest (1%), cameras, equipments and other consumer product introduction (2%) and general information (9%).

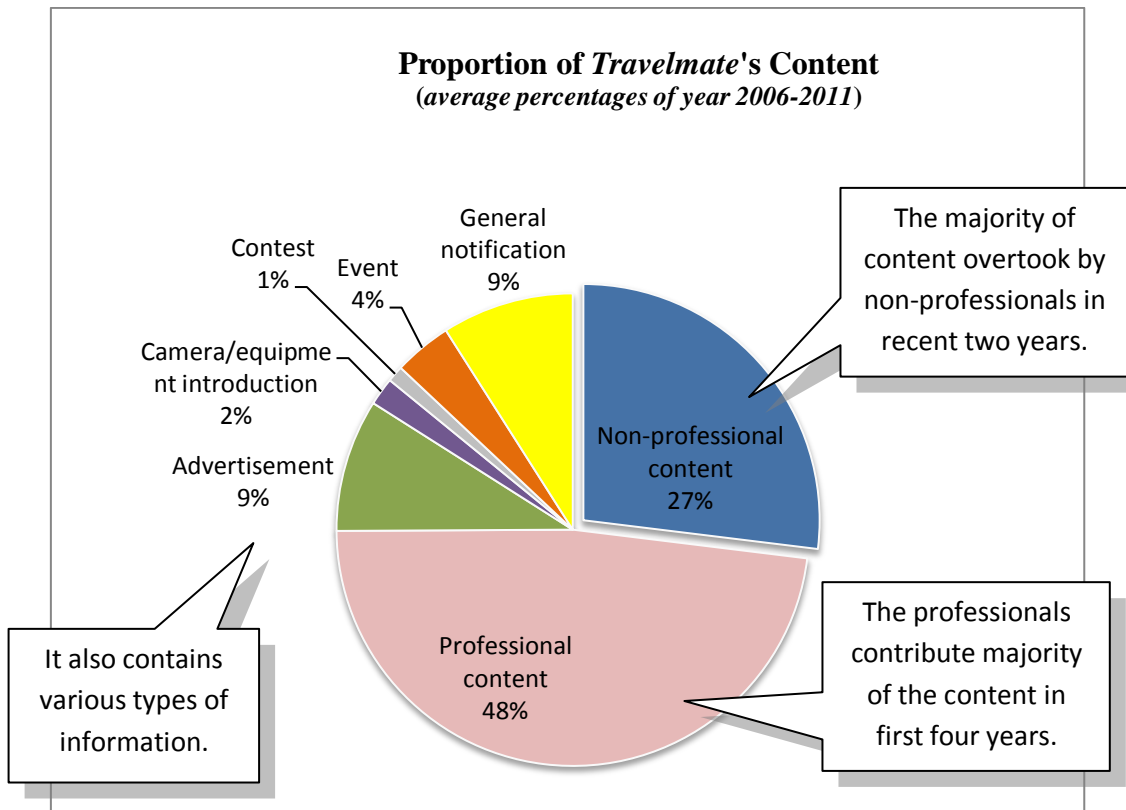


Figure 6: Average percentages of six years' contents.

Travelmate gives its contributors freedom to produce content creatively. As a travel magazine, it welcomes any travel articles which have interesting topics, own perspectives, attractive destinations and amazing stories. There is no limitation on topic selection, from culture, cuisine, people, landscape and nature. This magazine publishes both Malaysia and oversea travel articles. Figure 7 presents average percentages of six years travel articles which have been published in *Travelmate* by continent (refer appendix D for six years data). Almost half of the articles are sharing about other Asian countries, 35% of the articles are promoting Malaysia tourism, 14% European countries, 6% North America, and the remaining 5% are related to other regions.

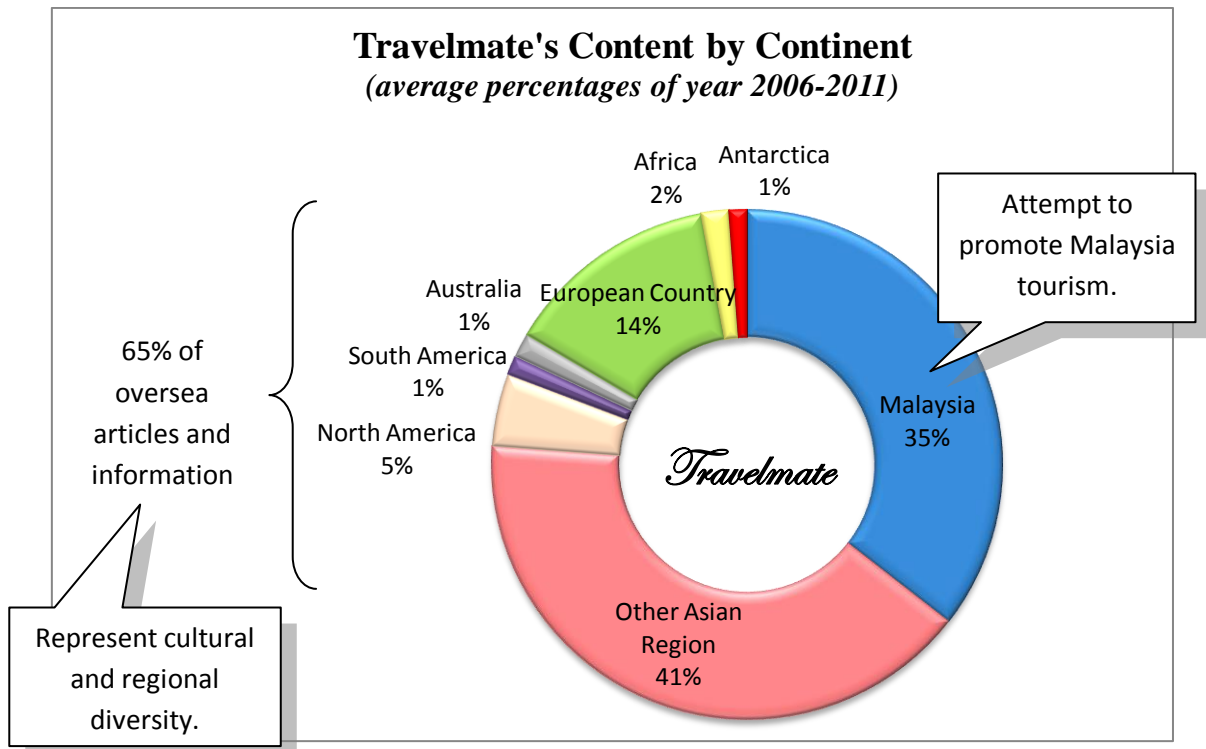


Figure 7: Average percentages of six years' contents by continents.

Travelmate illustrates pictorial publication. Figure 8 presents an example of a three page layout of *Travelmate*. Images are published alongside with texts for greater meanings – while text is to provide accurate, detail and useful information, attractive images characterize one of the main goals of visualization, making audience absorb large amounts of data quickly. It is estimated that *Travelmate* uses approximately 280 pictures in each issue of magazine, with an average of 2 images per page. The visual materials included photographs, advertisements and information-graphics such as charts, diagrams, tables and maps.

The photographs are used to visualize landscape or cultural events that are shared in the travel articles. *Travelmate* thinks that photography is related to tourism because it makes the traveling experience real. To achieve high quality content, the photographs are being selected carefully by both the photographer and editor to ensure synchronization between picture and textual information. There are some selection criteria for the photographs. Pictures

need to be clear, with good composition, in correct exposure, and taken in sufficient sizes for standard printing (for example 3000 x 2000 pixels) to ensure quality content.



Figure 8: Example of three pages magazine layout. "Burano Island, Venice".
Travelmate No. 22, Dec'2009/Jan'2010, page 101 – 103.

Although 'a picture is worth a thousand words', the magazine thinks that textual information is as important as pictures. *Travelmate* prefers a contributor who is good in both writing and taking pictures. Unfortunately, due to time and space constraint, this paper only focuses on the non-professional photographer's perspective, and put aside the text and other visual materials as explained in the methodological chapter. It does not cover an analysis of visual culture as well. No content analysis is performed to describe the value and quality of images in details.

4.3. Image Contributor

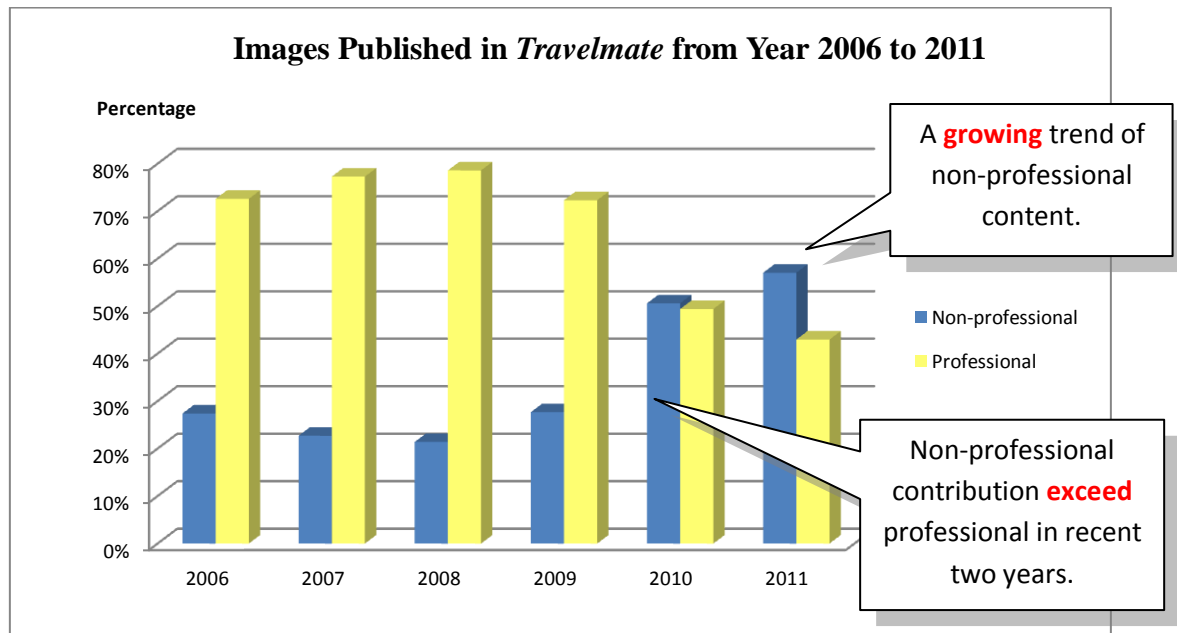


Figure 9: The usage of professional and non-professional content in *Travelmate*

Travelmate welcomes any type of travel images, including pictures from a backpacking, family or company trip. The contribution happens with various methods, including write-in, approached by editorial team, images selected from a contest or through a long-term relationship. Its imagery contributors are best portrayed in two categories. One consists of permanent staffs whose salary is paid by the publisher and experienced and reliable professional photographers who have contract with the magazine. Second group is pro-am photographers who come from all fields and are able to contribute at professional standard. However, according to *Travelmate*'s editor, the beginners who lack of professional standards are encouraged to take part as well.

Figure 9 presents the trend of professional and non-professional images used in *Travelmate* in a 6-years period. From the chart, we could see that non-professional photographer participation is an increasing trend and exceeds professional participation in the last two years. Figure 10 is an example of an image by a professional photographer promoting

Malaysia tourism. Figure 11 is an image taken by a pro-am photographer when she was attending six days 'Art of Living Ashram' meditation class at Bangalore, India. From the pictures, we can see that both professional and non-professional photographers produce high quality of images.



*Figure 10: Kim (professional photogrpaher). "Sabah Tea Garden, Malaysia."
Travelmate No. 16, Dec '2008/Jan '2009.*



*Figure 11: Zok (pro-am photogrpaher). "Art of Living Ashram, India."
Travelmate No. 26, Aug/Sep '2010.*

5. PRO-AM PHOTOGRAPHERS

Chapter five gathers the information gained through the interviews and other sources. It begins with the examples of pictorial publication in the past, and then proceeds with the findings in the case study. The research disclosed that Travelmate magazine has been functioning as a participatory platform for the pro-am photographers. A complex pro-am identity is developed along the prosumption process where some degree of professionalism is found in the amateurism. The development of pro-am identity is an incremental process and it requires continual effort and commitment. The motivations and the challenges to participate as content contributor are studied to frame a fundamental picture of the pro-ams.

5.1 Historical Review of Pro-am Photographers and Pictorial Publication

As suggested in the theoretical chapter, pro-am is not a new social culture, but the activities have begun since photography has been publically introduced in year 1839 by Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre (France) and William Henry Fox Talbot (Britain). In *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day*, Newhall (1982) laid out plenty examples of outstanding pro-am photographer works when he traced the history of photography. We could notice that magazines and newspapers play pivotal roles in affirmation and reinforcement of non-professional photography in the past two centuries. Regardless of architecture, people, culture and landscape, traveling pictures which disclose discoveries along the journey have received vast attention and gained huge market value.

The main reason besides carrying visualization function, travelers' camera also defines the travelling experience and establishes the definitions of reality. Sontag classified photographs as a collection of the world, mainly by travelers and the way we experience it. For her, the art of photography is as much as an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are. Hoelscher (2008) argues that "acquiring photographs gives shape to travel as it informs what the viewer should see, how it should be seen, and when it should be seen all in a matter-of-fact and seemingly 'unmediated' way" (150).

In France, M. Daguerre called his graphic medium as ‘The Daguerreotype’ (Newhall 18). In the nineteenth century, massive daguerreotypes were taken by non-professional photographers for publishers such as *N. M. P. Lerebours*⁸ and *Imprimerie Photographique*⁹. Early competent amateur daguerreotypists consist of ambassador (Baron Jean Baptiste Louis Gros) and archaeologist (Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey). In Britain, Talbot called his photogenic drawing ‘Calotype Negative’ (Newhall 43). Pioneers of calotype images include painter (David Octavius Hill) and surgeon (Thomas Keith), both who are non-professionals.

Following by the introduction of hand cameras in 1880s, cameras became portable, compact and small. New photography concepts are practiced. More natural and spontaneous based pictures have superseded traditional posed studio portraits. Documentary, anti-aesthetic war pictures and candid photographs were getting popular. Photography has shifted from personal artwork into a collaboration work, where photographers participate, contribute and work together in a project to resolve common problems.

Photojournalism is one of the first fields to make use of miniature camera. After photojournalism was born, magazines and journals flourished around 1850s – twenty years after Daguerre and Talbot announced their discoveries publicly. According to Newhall’s research, twelve magazines are found in America, ten in England, nine in France, seven in Germany and Austria, one or more in other European countries. Early publications included *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (France); *Die Photographische Rundschau* (Germany); *American Annual of Photography* (America); and *Amateur Photographer* (Edinburgh) which is still being published in present day. The first magazine that has gave priority to pictures over texts was *The Illustrate London News* and this practice

⁸ *N. M. P. Lerebours*, a French publisher in year 1807-1873, was one of the first publishers associated with Daguerre’s endeavors and published extensive daguerreotype artworks. Publisher’s full name was *Noel Marie Paymal Lerebours*.

⁹ *Imprimerie Photographique* is first large scale publisher in Lille France. It was founded by Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard in 1851.

was quickly disseminated to other illustrated magazines around the world. The contents of these magazines comprised of how-to-do-it articles, exhibitions, new product announcements, question and answer columns. They promote amateur photography with publication of famous professional and unpopular non-professional photographer's images.

Journalist, writer, artist and citizen who had no desire to pursue photography as a profession began to use pictures as an useful adjunct for their works. For instance, a police reporter, Jacob A. Riis shot crime pictures and twelve of his collection had been published by New York newspaper *The Sun* in 1888. Family portraits and photographs of Paris appeared in Emile Zola's novel. British parliament, Sir Benjamin Stone used camera to record folk festivals in his country.

Newhall thought that these pro-am photographers are free to experiment and put aside the limitation and rules imposed against professional photographers. In 1893, during the first international exhibition of amateur photographs, the Hamburg organizer, Alfred Lichtwark suggested that only skilled amateurs produce great picture as they do not have financial burden and time limitation.

5.2 *Travelmate* as Participatory Platform

Travelmate seems to continue the vision of traditional magazines – a responsibility to disseminate the expansion of photographic knowledge; at the same time illustrate modern pictorial press which successfully adapted new media culture and utilized digital media to expand the traditional pattern of press. The only difference we could notice is that traditional magazine is a one-way communication medium where information is passed from producer to consumer through the publisher. The interaction between information creator and receiver is rather vertical and limited. Publisher play important role to gather, filter and decide the contents to its reader. Technology convergence alters this passive culture. Instead of a few

photographers competing among themselves, *Travelmate*'s readers seeks for more exposures and opportunities in deciding contents they want to receive by interacting, participating, collaborating and producing their own materials.

Jenkins et al. (2006) described the activeness of online users as 'participatory culture', a culture that reflects and responds to the explosion of new media technologies. I would suggest that participatory culture not only happens on online environment but also reflects on other media. *Travelmate* is an example of printed media that is practicing new culture that broadens the communication pattern from individual expression into crowd involvement. This magazine functions as a medium that proliferates participatory culture and help people to engage and apply their skills, both online and offline.

The research revealed that *Travelmate* gives pro-am photographers a platform to participate as prosumers. The editor said: "*Travelmate* is a channel for reader to participate in content contribution". Since its establishment in year 2006, *Travelmate* has encouraged its readers to participate in magazine content creation. The majority of content contributions are the pro-am photographers and writers. Percentages of pro-am images published in *Travelmate* have steadily increased from 23% in year 2006 to 55% in year 2011 (refer chapter four, figure 9). The contribution of non-professional exceeds professional in the recent two years. *Travelmate* editors noted that using majority of citizens' images aligned with their original vision and they will continue this practice in the near future.

Besides the bi-monthly magazine publication, *Travelmate* also caters to their elite readers through various events. For instance, the publisher organizes regular introduction and trial use of new camera and equipment, conducts slide-show and exhibition for readers to share their experiences and works; arranges meet-ups (such as lunch, forum and discussion) to gather a group of people with the same interest. In addition, the publisher also promotes peer-

learning environment where workshops, photography courses, travel talks and contests are arranged regularly for the readers.

From the interviews, pro-am photographers think that *Travelmate* serves as a space for civic engagement. It allows non-professional photographers to share their travel experiences and visual artwork in voluntary basis. Several respondents suggested that *Travelmate* is a medium for different purposes. It is not only supporting self-creation and self-expression but also provides a rich social connection for pro-ams to engage and reach larger society. They do not see this magazine as personal showroom but more to a co-produce space. Pro-am photographers think that their participation in *Travelmate*'s content creation provides them a sense of production. They also discover mentorship during their participation which grants them the opportunities for new skill learning, competency building and knowledge enhancement.

5. 3 The Degree of Professionalism

Stebbins (1992) discussed the PAP system (public-amateur-professional) with the leisure community. In the PAP system, public are sets of people with common interest, served or entertained by professionals and amateurs. My research suggests a more complicated picture as the respondents see themselves neither as public, amateur nor professional. The research exemplify *Travelmate*'s image contributors generally understand and are able to distinguish between amateur and professional roles:

Amateur is someone who is into photography and seek to invest time picking up related knowledge trying to possess certain level of recognition ability and skill to produce decent photography work. – KY

Amateurism does not exist in the field of photography because today anyone is able to take good photographs. – CS

When asked how the *Travelmate*'s image contributors place themselves in the leisure community, 50% of the photographers positioned themselves as 'enthusiast':

I am neither a professional nor amateur. I would say I am an enthusiast. – CS

I am not a professional because I do not earn a living through photography. But I am serious about photography. I try my best to provide good quality images with different effects, instead of point-and-shoot only. – Zok

I shall never become a professional due to photography trades; it is just a sharing of travel experiences and stories. – Oldcat

I am neither a professional nor amateur, but an enthusiast. I take photographs at least once a month. Traveling and photography always come together for me. – Low

The interviewees of this research do not see them as public because they not only consume but also produce cultural information. They do not fit in the professional group because photography was never a main income, and this activity is a passion rather than a profession for them. They pursue photography out of their working hours with high investment of time and money, dedication and commitment with low financial returns. On the other hand, they do not want to be judged as amateurs. In everyday life, people tend to describe amateurs to be lacking professionalism. Several photographers think that they have high quality standard of works and skills, therefore they want to be judged by their professionalism.

It seems like the identity of pro-am better describes the *Travelmate*'s image contributors. Pro-am identity reveals a complex yet multilayered epitome as shown in Figure 12. Both the non-professional and professional features are found in *Travelmate* photographers make up their pro-am identity. This pro-am identity is constructed during proscription process and formed a complex system of reward, authorship, cultural, lifestyle and personality. This distinctive identity distinguishes the pro-am from the professionals and amateurs.

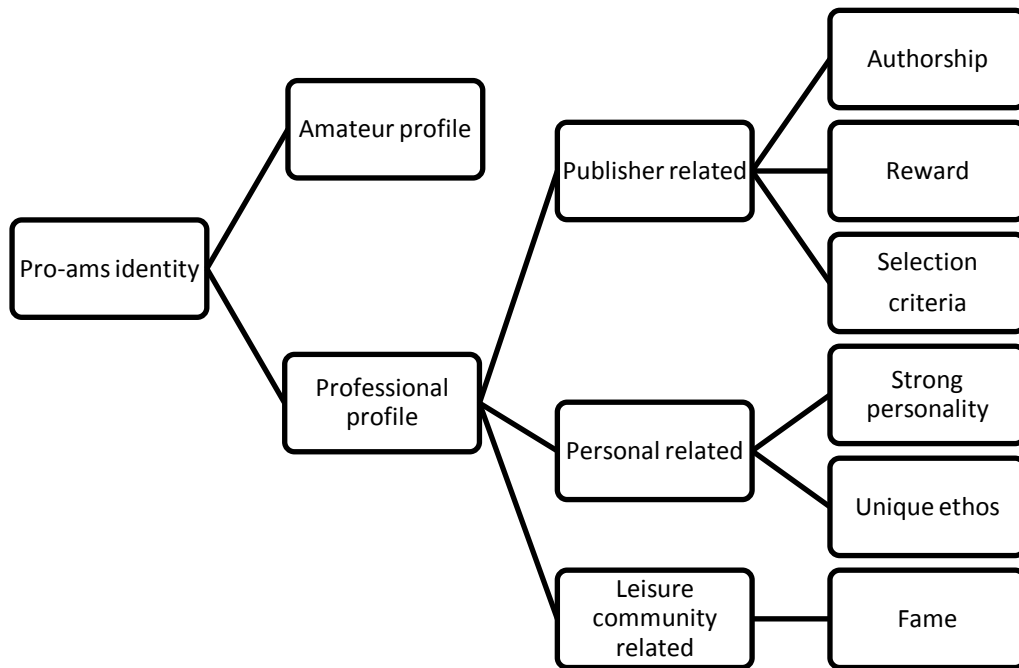


Figure 12: The pro-ams identity

5.3.1 Amateur profile

Amateurs can be understood as an “inexperienced person (i.e. a player) and the patent fact that devotees of an activity quite naturally put in much time at it, thereby achieving remarkable competence in it” (Stebbins, “*Amateur*” 22). Amateurs practice their leisure activity without the right systemic knowledge and technique while professionals are recognized on the other hand through their qualified certifications.

This amateurism is visible on pro-am photographers. It is hard to differentiate an amateur or professional identity from the image content as pro-am photographers produce excellent quality of pictures (refer figure 11 for example of pro-am’s work). However, the readers are able to tell the contributor’s profession from the introduction column in the article. Figure 13 is an example of the introductory column in *Travelmate*.

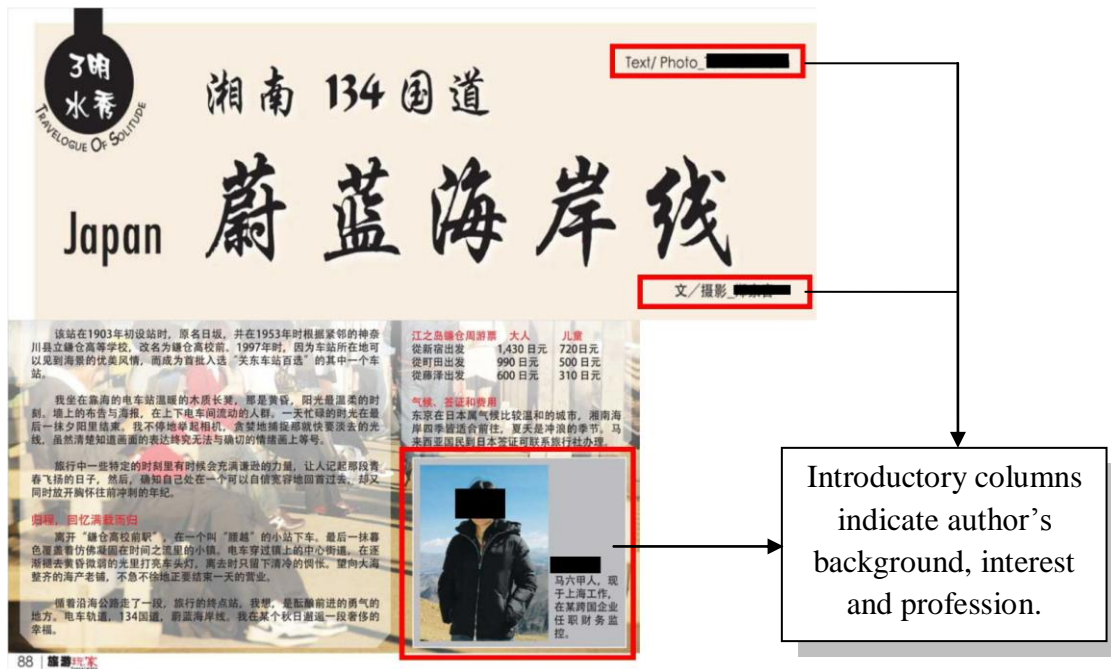


Figure 13: Introductory columns in Travelmate's article.

The author's introduction column can be found at the bottom corner of the article, where it tells of the author's name, background, interest and profession. The short introduction intends to respect the authorship, however, it also consists of a non-professional profile where photographers are come from different career fields. Both the publisher and the pro-am photographer are happy to let the readers know the contents are contributed by non-professionals. The main reason is the understanding towards amateurism is changing and people no longer seek for expertise. They believe amateurism allows them to listen to the voices from ordinary people and bring rich information. Many readers cannot distinguish between professional and non-professional author. In fact, for them it hardly matters whether the contributors are professional photographers or not. They are merely looking for authors who can share and give valuable traveling advice and therefore, intriguing, attractive and creative pictures and contents are more important for most of the readers.

5.3.2 Professional profile

Grijp (2002) conducted multiple case studies of passionate amateur in philately trade in France. His data showed that the degree of professionalism of amateur dealers can be measured by time of investment, trading quantity, content and turnover. For pro-am photographers, time of investment is more likely a measurement to examine the level of commitment rather than professionalism. In contrast, the expertise of pro-am photographers is noticeable through few aspects. Parts of the professional profile are granted by the publisher during their participation as magazine content producer. Pro-am photographers themselves also unceasingly establish their expertise with distinctive personality and style. The remaining parts are from *Travelmate*'s readers, who appreciate their contribution.

This case study of *Travelmate* reveals that all these pro-am photographers are being treated as 'skilled writer', equivalent sociological strata as professional in *Travelmate* magazine. First of all, their authorship is defined by copyright. According to the *Travelmate*'s editors, there is no long-term or short-term written contract between the publisher and pro-am photographers. However, pro-am photographers deserve the copyright and the photo will not be re-used or distributed without the consent of photographer. Copyright is referring to author's right to copy. It protects creative and artistic forms of images from reproduction, resell to other parties, public displays and transmission to other media forms. Copyright which formerly was exclusive to professionals in the past, is now applicable to pro-ams and hence their expertise is being protected. Secondly, pro-am photographers who were often being underpaid with small financial returns, they are now rewarded with respect and recognition to their professionalism. Thirdly, to participate as imagery content contributor in *Travelmate*, the quality of images has to meet a certain selection criteria and expectations set by the publisher. The selection criteria are complicated and demanding in procedure. According to the editors, the pro-am photographers must have basic knowledge about photography such as aperture, F-

stop, color temperature and printing standard. The images need to have the correct exposure, ideal composition and own visual perspective. The contents need to be detailed and rich in information. These selection criteria are set to ensure high quality of content is produced.

On the other hand, we can also notice the professionalism on individual attitude. Strong personality is built during the contribution unlike non-serious leisure participant. Pro-am photographers are more confident in discussing their avocation. Pro-am photographers speak proudly, excited, express and present their ideas well in the public. Most of the pro-am photographers involve in public activities such as photo exhibition, slide show and contest. Pro-ams are comfortable to share their work and experiences in front of the public. They handle challenges well and accept all type of challenges as opportunities for learning and competency development.

Pro-am photographers also have recognizable unique ethos. Pro-ams have their own beliefs, creative ideas, cognitive themes, difference styles and performance standards to comply. Photography is practiced as a serious leisure to develop tastes and styles and this enables pro-am photographers to dominate at a higher level than the amateurs. Pro-am photographers compensate what the professionals missed with their own perspectives and most of time even at a greater level of commitment than professionals. They are able to provide travel photos for hard to visit destinations which could be due to time, cost or geographical constraints.

Professionalism of pro-ams is also visible in the leisure community.¹⁰ Pro-am photographers do not feel that their participation in *Travelmate* will create any fame to them however, according to the editor, the pro-am photographers have already gained fame through the prosumption process. When television, radio, video and internet have grown as the preferred medium for news and information, fandom is no longer limited to movie stars.

¹⁰ The notion of community is used in leisure to describe a group of people that are bound together by common interests (Walmsley et al. 62).

Andy Warhol (1968) suggested that anyone can get 15 minutes of fame in digital age by being in the right place at the right time. Turner (2004) called this phenomenon as 'DIY celebrities'. Senft (2008) thoughts that 'micro-celebrity' is best described the new style of online performance that involve smaller group people getting their popularity over the online social media. Pro-am photographers are micro-celebrity in that sense because they have fans and followers to read their blogs about their travel sharing and photo slide-show.

5.4 Distinctive & Sustainable Pro-am Identity

Pro-ams identity is developed over many years; not within three days, three weeks or three months. Pro-ams usually begin as a dabble or a hobbyist and they move on to develop their competency once the activity is substantially worthy to be pursued. Pro-ams are not a portmanteau of a professional and amateur. They represent a situation whereby proactiveness, seriousness and professionalism are maturely developed by an amateur.

Pro-am photographers have a clear sense of identity, and therefore efforts are invested to sustain their expertise in photography field. A complex system of commitment, investment of time, energy and money, rewards and skills are articulated to make profound contribution to commodities and public. The research suggests that pro-ams persevere to constantly and continuously pursue an activity through long period of time (refer figure 14). In general, we can see the construction process at four development stages: 1.) the start of photography as a hobby; 2.) photography becomes a serious leisure; 3.) commitments are invested to develop expertise; 4.) technological and sociological distinctions are created between pro-ams and passive hobbyists.

The stream of leisure development is incremental, repeated and continuous. Hence, not all the amateurs will progress to becoming pro-ams. In fact, only small number of avid amateurs will choose (success) to pursue an activity as serious leisure as the process requires

certain degree of dedication, obligation and sacrifice. Pro-am photographers need to handle different challenges and tensions during the construction process. These challenges and pressures might be the constraints that limit people to participate in a pro-am activity. The challenges faced by the pro-ams will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

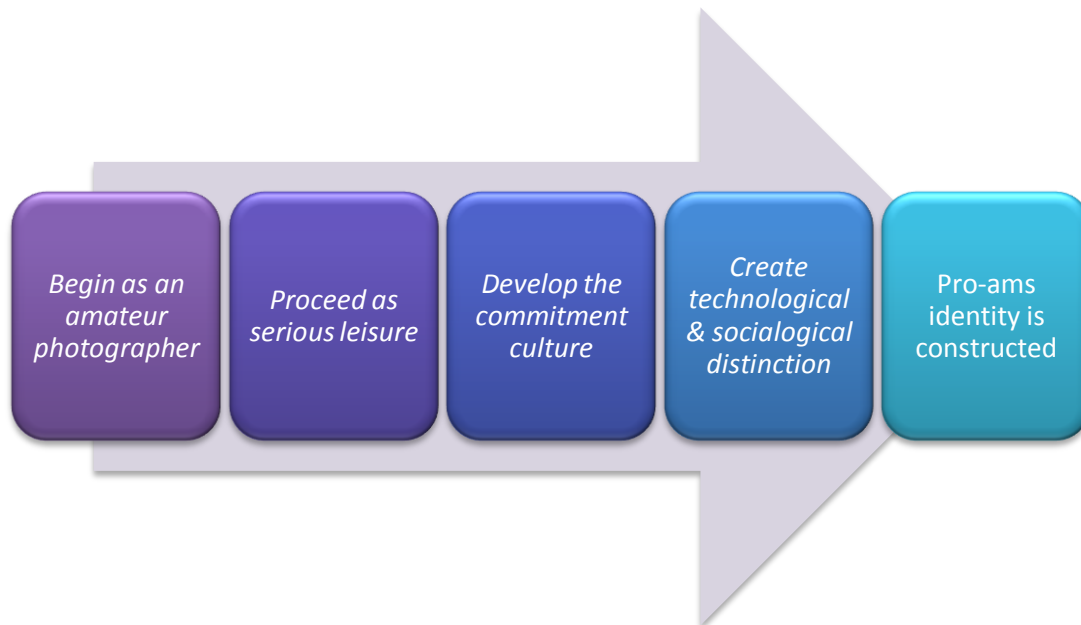


Figure 14: Pro-ams identity construction

5.4.1 Beginning as an amateur

One of the pro-am interviewees, Low shared his experiences and motivations to seek for formal photography instructions. At the present age of 34, Low is working as an engineer in a multinational company. He started photography with a compact camera for a long time but was unsure of the right professional camera without the right knowledge. In year 2004, he attended a short photography course for six months and decided to upgrade his camera to D70, a DSLR¹¹ camera produced by Nikon for pro-am photographers. Low has been a *Travelmate's* reader since its first issue in year 2006 and he has been contributing his travel

¹¹ DSLR is a digital single-lens reflex camera that use a mechanical mirror system to collect light from the lens to an optical viewfinder. DSLR cameras are preferred by professional for larger sensors and accurate exposure compared to compact digital cameras.

photos to the magazine when he was approached by the editor then. Six years later, he upgraded his equipment to D300, an intermediate DSLR camera introduced by Nikon. He also uses a mobile phone with camera function and a digital compact camera to capture everyday events. According to Low, low cost and immediate view of images, user-friendly digital technology and mass media are the main reasons for him to be involved as a prosumer in *Travelmate*. He feels that his contribution in *Travelmate* as a prosumer has improved his photography skills and connected him with a community of the same interests. Low maintains his skills through practice, websites surfing, participation in online discussion forum (such as photomalaysia.com) and through other readings.

Low's story indicates a progressive augmenting photography activity which reflects a general pattern of a pro-am photographer who begins as an ordinary amateur. Amateur is the precursor of pro-am photographer. An amateur photographer can be a dabbler, who loves to take pictures but do not possess good knowledge and skill; a novice, the beginner in photography; a fan, the aficionado or supporter who has strong interest and enthusiasm to promote objects (such as photographers or their artwork) of interest; or a spectator, who passively looks on or watches as an observer.

Along with the popularity of digital camera today, almost every family has a camera and almost everyone is able to take pictures with it. New generation increasingly choose to present them and record their life visually with digital cameras. Dijck (2008) studied personal photography and suggested that taking photograph is no longer an activity of memories recording, but also an instrument for self-identity formation, experience sharing and communication. Digital camera has made everyone an amateur in photography. As amateur photographers, we take travel and vacation photos, family album, self-portraits, photos of friends and other events. These snapshots are most often taken spontaneously and quickly, without artistic or journalistic intent. As snapshot hobbyists, we are equipped with lightweight,

small, inexpensive, point-and-shoot cameras for immediate reaction moments. This type of camera includes compact camera and mobile phone, which contains automated flash, focus, shutter speed and other camera functions to make simple shooting simple.

These easy-to-use equipments are convenient, user-friendly and averagely produce great live pictures with minimal skill; hence this drives avid and inquisitive amateurs to extend much further in seeking formal photography techniques. Satisfaction, enjoyment, technology, cost and other factors may inspire an amateur to increase the frequency to participate in a leisure activity and then embarking onto a more serious leisure practice. For example, a great photo exhibition might inspire a teenage who uses a compact camera with minimal skill to seek for formal photography knowledge.

5.4.2 Practicing as 'serious leisure'

When pro-ams developed deep interest in photography, they tend to seek formal knowledge and to improve their photography skills and subsequently will pursue photography seriously. I concur here with Stebbins's idea of 'serious leisure' as it allows us to discuss how 'serious' pro-am photographers are in pursuing their high-valued activity and how their dedication has distinguished them from amateur users.

In his book *Serious Leisure*, sociology scholar Stebbins (2007) divided leisure activity into three types: casual, project-based and serious leisure.¹² According to Stebbins, casual leisure is referring to a spontaneous activity with discretionary time and generally no long-term commitment is required. Project-based leisure is referring to a short-term nature of activity which has certain schedules and responsibilities to meet, but is limited to a known and definite period of time and does not involve long haul developing and maintaining skills.

¹² Leisure is "uncoerced activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both), use their abilities and resources to succeed at this" (Stebbins, "*Serious Leisure*" 4). Refer appendix G for three types of leisure activities suggested by Stebbins.

Stebbins defined 'serious leisure' as a "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (5).

With little investment on mass produced but highly customized devices, do-it-yourself and self-service activities seem to be achieved easily. People enjoy and spend longer time to pursue recreational goal. Leadbeater and Miller commented that pro-am activity "thrives in an open, liberal, well-educated, affluent and democratic society in which people have enough time outside work and the resources they need to cultivate their pro-am activities" (57). I would say that pro-am photography falls in the 'serious leisure' category – a zone between work and free time. Pro-am photographers pursue photography and participate in *Travelmate* image content production as a serious leisure because their practices are precisely contrasting as compared to 'casual' and 'project-based' leisure.

The lifestyle of pro-am photographers is such that they allocate long hours of free time to participate in their leisure activity. Secondly, they are extremely passionate about photography and finally they show positive attitudes such as sincerity, adherence and carefulness. Long term time commitment and financial investment are noticeable on pro-am interviewees. Even though some of the pro-am interviewees are involved in *Travelmate* content contribution for just one to two years, they have practiced photography for a long time since they were young.

Stebbins (2008) suggested that people spend time on 'serious leisure' because it helps the participants to realize their human potential, leading to self-fulfillment and achieve 'optimal leisure lifestyle'. However, I notice that pro-am photographers do not sacrifice their full-time career to achieve this optimal leisure lifestyle. There is a clear line to separate working hour and leisure time for pro-am photographers. The pro-am interviewees make it

clear that work comes first in all circumstances and the leisure activity takes place during free time or outside of working hours, in the evening, during the weekends or vocation. Pro-am photographers spend several years to gain photography knowledge and spend ample time to polish and maintain their skills. They spend time on learning new product and equipment, arrange meet up sessions, read photography books and journal, search attractive places to visit whilst continuing to experiment with different camera functions. Pro-am photographers are also willing to spend money to buy new equipments and to maintain a collection of photo albums.

If the activity generates enough attraction, is highly rewarding and engrossing, then the individual is willing to spend productive time engaging in it. This will then lead to create passion and enthusiasm. Grijp (2002) described it as 'common passion'. Common passion motivates pro-ams to participate and contribute in an activity. One of the pro-am interviewees mentioned:

The investment I spent on the camera and other equipments is more than I can get from the publication. – Low

In general, satisfaction is not the end result of a production, but pleasure also appears during the engagement. Pro-am photographers do not see the sacrifices as a burden and forcing cone, indeed, they are more than happy to spent time and money on photography. Sacrifices here are just pleasantries. This is aligned with Grijp's study (2002), where passionate pro-ams opine that investment of time, money and energy are just 'pleasant sacrifices'. Unlike casual leisure, pro-am photographers mostly have to deal with a fair amount of challenges and stress. They have certain schedules to be met such as the article deadlines and photo submission for *Travelmate*. However, pro-am photographers are joyful, gleeful and delightful when carrying out their tasks to meet the schedule. During the interviews, they mentioned that they were very positive overcoming certain challenges rather than feeling depress, anxious or pressured.

In addition, attitude such as sincerity, adhere and mindful are visible on pro-am photographers. They are earnest in developing their own style, photography knowledge and social skills. Pro-ams are very careful and demanding in producing imagery content for *Travelmate*, hence aware of the existence of other professional counterparts and the understanding of professional standard is crucial. Professional photographers are the role model and professional standards function as a guideline. Serious leisure engenders a desire to carry on the activity beyond enjoyment.

5.4.3 Developing the commitment culture

The passion and enthusiasm will lead pro-ams to a greater dedication to develop and improve their skills. The theory of specialization is introduced by Bryan H (1977) in *The Journal of Leisure Research*. Bryan suggested that the more immersed the recreational participants are in, the more involvement and propensity for specialization. The specialization from the involvement demonstrates distinctive behaviors. The specialization can be seen during equipment selection, resource management, activity setting, leisure patterns, and experience collection.

For pro-am photographers, high level of commitment can be identified during skill development, knowledge gathering, goal setting and pursuit of higher quality standards. They ensure high quality is remained through various efforts even though they have little hope of getting a profit. The learning curve and level of commitment might be different for each individual as some people need longer time than others. The investment of time, money and personal effort on leisure activity formed a culture of commitment. As Stebbins analyzed, 'serious leisure' is "characterized empirically by an important degree of positive commitment to a pursuit" (71). Serious leisure can be substantiated with evidence through the level of commitment, and this level of commitment is the amount of various investments.

Normally, pro-am photographers are aware of their amateur and professional counterparts. They do not see their professional counterparts as competitor but rather a mentor, role model or someone who has same interest. The relationship between professional and pro-am takes a variety of forms. They learn about professional standard through navigating professional work online, visiting photo-sharing websites, joining photography exhibition, reading professional magazines and journal, participate in contest and workshop. The opportunities forced pro-ams to compare and set a standard they would like to achieve and work hard in developing their skills toward specialization.

In a field they must compete with professional counterparts, pro-am photographers improve their skills and knowledge through self-learning and participate as prosumer in a cultural content production. A lot of personal efforts are invested in enacting their professional roles:

- They improve their skills through training, regular rehearsal, reading and researches.
- They often spend time traveling plus photography.
- Money spent on upgrading equipment, developing picture, arranging tour, buying books and magazines.
- They are not hesitating to take part in photography competition and contest.

Pro-am photographers see their engagement in *Travelmate* content production as opportunities to train and practice photography skills.

5.4.4 Creating distinction

The personal efforts devoted by pro-ams in photography will create social division between them and amateur hobbyist. A hierarchy is constructed in this landscape where professionals sit at the top and amateurs who pursue photography as a casual activity at the bottom. Meanwhile the pro-am photographers make up the middle group. For pro-am photographers,

their engagement as prosumers in *Travelmate* is more than photo shooting. Pro-ams undertake photography via digital media and also need to be competent in other alternative media apart from digital media to share their work.

Digital cameras are staple equipments for pro-am photographers mainly driven by the fact that digital cameras are flexible to use, enable direct personal computer connectivity for easy download and low cost to produce high quality photos. Pro-am photographers are equipped with mass produced, inexpensive digital camera and tools. All the respondents use intermediate cameras and they are equipped with different types of toolkits such as zoom or wide angle lens, high performance flash light and lens filters. Pro-am photographers consistently upgrade their cameras and equipments for advanced features to produce better image quality. They understand the image principles, camera features and know-how to set or adjust the camera functions to produce good pictures with different effects.

Most of the pro-am photographers also have a camera mobile phone. According to them, even though a mobile phone does not have advanced camera features, is low on resolution and lacking quality to produce good pictures; nevertheless it is portable and comes handy to enable them to become an everyday photographer. They only use the camera phone to capture adhoc moments in the case when a proper camera is not available. Smart phone is their choice as it has integrated with photo editing software (such as lomo and lemeleme effect) and other online accessibility to instantly upload images and be distributed after a photo shot.

Other digital devices are equally important. Pro-am photographers use online websites such as Multiply, Flickr, personal blog and Facebook for e-learning and e-sharing. Besides providing an open source learning spaces, these social media have interactive functions which allow them to share, to comment and to discuss. Pro-am photographers welcome both criticisms and recognitions. Online journal contains interactive features that allow posted

comment, search and reference hyperlinks. They use network media such as Facebook, MSN, SMS for e-communication. In the past, publishers will sign a long term contract with the regular professional photographers; while non-professionals will have to send their pictures to the publishers for selection. Today, pro-ams upload their pictures online. This allows the publishers a more direct approach to locate talented photographers. For example in *Travelmate*, editors revealed that they found most of the pro-am photographers are online. Network media enables *Travelmate* to detect talented people by observing the contents they have posted online. No hardcopies of photograph need to be developed or sent via post; instead all the pro-am photographers today email their softcopy photographs to publisher. Email enables pro-am photographers to participate in prosumption anytime and anywhere even during journeys. They also use communication applications such as SMS, Skype and instant messenger to maintain relationship and setup meetings with pro-ams and share news about the industry. These applications provide self-organizing features and allow users to send text and visual messages over their mobile phone or internet.

In addition, pro-am photographers have great knowledge on image post-editing software such as photoshop or open-source software like Picasa. With editing software, images can be corrected, resized, remixed and manipulated easily at a minimal cost. Even though pro-am photographers are not encouraged to redefine the images as they constitute the natural, authenticity and spontaneity of the photo, nevertheless the pro-am photographers revealed that knowledge on image editing software is still important. They learn the process of formal editing from magazines, journals and forums. The knowledge will help them to understand the current development in photography industry and the ability of new technology way more effective.

5.5 The Motivations of Pro-ams

When pro-ams failed to sustain their professionalism or when new comers successfully replaced them, they might go back to being an amateur or completely leave the field. Therefore, it is important to sustain their status. There are many factors that which encourage people to maintain as pro-ams even though the process is lengthy and painful.

Stebbins (1979) elaborated further on the amateur commitment in a screen play. His investigation suggested that rewards (both financial and non-financial return) of a pursuit are values that attract an amateur in an activity. Grijp's investigate what moves philately amateur trade in France (2002), his study revealed that amateur philatelists are not in it solely for the money. The money earned is not aim in itself, but as a mean of acquiring the much desired precious and prestigious stamp collection. The passionate traders search for authentic means of communication, look for possibility of exchange, obtain an identity of a well-respected member, increase knowledge, have fun in possessing something interesting, create friendship and social networking.

The same goes to pro-am photographers. Monetary reward is not the reason to participate in *Travelmate's* content production. Despite the pro-am photographers being paid for their contributions, this type of reward hardly constitutes the main source of income. The pro-am photographers make a living from other fields and never neglect their actual career or work. As suggested by Grijp, the relationship of most amateur and their passion is "economically saturated, but not economically directed" (42). Career is not the motive either. One might think that pro-am photographers are taking the chances to enhance their skills, attempt to meet professional standards and become a professional in near future but on the contrary. When discussing about serious leisure, Stebbins (2007) pointed out that developing a specialty is a career turning point. However, this is not always right for pro-am photographers. The research demonstrated that none of the pro-am photographers have ever

thought of switching photography from a serious leisure into career even they are competitive with professional photographers. When asked about monetary and profession motivation, the pro-am photographers pointed out that:

The reward from magazine is just a pocket money; I will never get rich from it. –

Oldcat

Knowledge and friendships gained do not count in money. – Low

It has been a good motivation to push me to continue involve in writing and photographing. No plan to be a professional for now. If your work is being appreciated, the satisfaction gained can be very encouraging. – KY

I am not in photography for fame. It is not a fame-chasing art. It is one of the ways for self-expression. – CS

There are other reasons apart financial and career intentions for pro-am photographers which are mostly non-economy related. The following section discusses pro-am motivations from six aspects: social benefits, cultural capital, quality of life, publisher's strategy to use pro-am content, production cost and digital devices.

5.5.1 Social benefits

Leadbeater et al. suggested that pro-am leisure generated more social benefits than casual leisure. The benefits include a sense of self-worthiness and a sense of belonging. Stebbins (1992) also suggested that serious leisure which involved higher level of intensity and commitment brought more social merits to participants. Stebbins disclosed eight durable benefits can be found in serious leisure:

1. self-actualization
2. self-enrichment
3. self-expression
4. recreation or renewal for self
5. feeling of accomplishment
6. enhancement of self-image

7. social interaction and belongingness
8. lasting physical products of the activity

Pro-am photographers are working hard to continuously sustain these benefits.

For Low as one of the experienced pro-am photographers, participating in *Travelmate* is a combination of possessing interesting experiences, creating friendship, developing knowledge and having fun. Zok's main motive for being actively engaged in content contribution is experience-sharing. CS is more interested in gaining photography knowledge, sharing and networking. For KY, the pleasures of participating are to tell interesting travel stories and to create a portfolio for self-development.

Self-enrichment is noticeable on pro-am photographers when they are trying to be more creative, capable, responsible and knowledgeable. The pleasure of participating in *Travelmate* is a combination of three factors: the opportunities to develop photography knowledge and skills, regular practice to apply technical abilities and to fulfill the curiosity about professional standards and the works of others. These pleasures will enable one to develop recreational specialization and competency. The participation also stimulates visual senses and taste. The environment of *Travelmate* trains pro-ams with positive reinforcement as the photography skills need to be developed.

Self-renewal can also be identified during participation. The engagement in *Travelmate* is a pleasant recreation or refresher after working hours. It is a cherished experience as pro-am photographers enjoy meeting people of the same interest. Pro-ams see photo shooting and traveling as relaxation. These activities not only provide fun to the pro-ams but also help them to reduce work pressure, allow them to explore new places and enable them to understand the world.

Self-expression is another advantage for participating in magazine content creation. Photography has long served as a medium for communication, from portrait taking, family album, documentation to photojournalism. Photo shooting, organizing and sharing images can

construct stories and visual sensation to audience. Story telling will connect people of the same interest, results in friendship and networking, forming acquaintances and bringing conviviality to others. For examples, pro-am photographers use images to disseminate the importantcy of cultural heritage preservation and highlight environmental issues.

We can also confirm that social interaction plays a major part in motivating pro-am photographers to contribute to *Travelmate* on a regular basis. The partaking creates strong social interaction and a sense of belonging to the participant. It connects individual to a larger society. *Travelmate* will generate a sense of accomplishment to the pro-am photographers when they sucessfully accomplish a group project. They are helping each other as means to complement to the group. It also allows the participant to feel that they are needed in the group and being appreciated.

Pro-am photographers actually build a networked community and friendship through *Travelmate*. They keep contact so that photography trips, lunch or dinner talks can be organized. They chat on online or at forum to form a digital community without having to live next door.

5.5.2 Cultural capital

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu suggested that some social activities do constraint people from partaking and the limitation is not only determined by economic resources in different social class, but also non-economic resources such as social and cultural capital. Bourdieu explains that “there are relationships between groups maintaining different, an even antagonistic, relations to culture, depending on the conditions in which they acquired their cultural capital [...]” (12). Cultural capital is referred as the ability and competency such as knowledge and skills apart from their social origin (family and tradition). People accumulate different forms of capital to gain power and status in society and a high investment of cultural

capital is required in serious leisure to prepare, decide, organize, maintain and use different equipments.

Leadbeater et al. (2004) mentioned that pro-ams are rich in cultural capital and they enjoy acquiring cultural capital. This gave them the ability to take part in cultural production. In fact, pro-am photographers are not only rich in cultural capital, but their participation in content production is to invest and obtain other forms of capital. They are curious about other specialist and experiences; and they have strong desire to listen different opinion and critiques. The more they learn and listen, the more they will enhance their learning curve on photography techniques. All of them are expecting that the participation in *Travelmate* will enhance social relationship and network. They wish to create friendship, enhance greater circle of contacts and get know about the professionals.

5.5.3 Savour and quality of life

Besides social and cultural benefits, savour and quality of life also radically motivates pro-am photographer in a cultural production. As discussed in part 5.2.3, pro-am photographers have unique ethos, distinctive style and strong savour. They have the ability to judge what is beautiful and precious. The cultural pattern of choices and preferences formed during the prosumption process produce pleasure in participation and stimulates the need of engagement. The preferred savory distinguishes mass culture, distances them from hardship of highly standardized and mass-produced images. As a consequence, pro-am photographers enjoy creating their own content which that will manifest, reflect and elucidate their judgment of taste.

Campbell (2005) connected cultural production to individual lifestyle and expression. He defined that prosumer who engages in creative activity with excellent skills and passion as 'the craft consumer'. Craft consumer takes ownership of resources, involves directly in design

and creation of a product (service) through personalization and customization. This type of consumption is characterized by mastered skills, where individual creativity and ideas are expressed liberally. The craft consumption is essential for its representation of valued human qualities and widespread of aesthetic judgment among ordinary people.

Quality of life is different with standard of living which is correlated with financial income. Quality of life is driven by various factors including recreational satisfaction and social belonging. The leisure pleasure that generates aesthetic value, enjoyment and life satisfaction is one of the reasons pro-am photographers participate in *Travelmate* content contribution. The publication of images in magazine providing a heavy dose of satisfaction – gives birth to a sense of achievement and sense of belonging in one's community and one's potential. These make pro-am photographers feel that their creation is priceless, meaningful and a way of self-presentation.

5.5.4 Publisher's strategy

The growth of prosumption culture in travel magazine has tightened the publisher's policy. When asked about non-professional images, *Travelmate's* editor mentioned that pro-am photographers are an alternative professional source. Main reasons are:

First, professional photography is not so matured to support current requirement, especially traveling photos. Professional photographers normally are not willing to contribute in travel magazine. Secondly, professional photographs are being sold at a high price and we lack the budget for professional image trades. – *Travelmate's* editor

Professional photography market in Malaysia is not matured enough to support the demand of media. High professional standard of images are expensive, limited in supply and most of the professional photographers have no intention to contribute in less popular channels such as travel magazines. In fact, travel magazines do not require high standard of professional

images. For the magazines, the location and experiences are more important. Hence, searching for non-professional images with professional standard at the same time at a cheaper cost become an alternative and crucial trend in contemporary practice. The usage of pro-am images can ensure high standards, reduce risk, minimize cost, at the same time avoid the restriction of membership, monopoly, abuse of power, and overpriced issue.

From the editor's point of view, pro-ams sometime produce better pictures in terms of quality, creativity and themes:

Professional photographs are usually limited to certain themes and styles. I would say they are commercialized images as they have been produced for commercial trades. –

Travelmate's editor

According to the editor, professional works are limited and pre-fix to their work requirement and therefore they focus on techniques. Professional amateurs are out of the industry guideline. They have more freedom to produce what they like and therefore pro-am images not only provide deeper and various in-depth perspectives, but they are also enhance the comprehensiveness, room for imagination and visualization.

In addition, *Travelmate* sees the engagement of pro-ams in content production as a readers' participatory culture. They aimed to produce 'a magazine about readers rather than a magazine for readers'. They think that people generally love to show and share their creative thoughts. The creation process can generate pleasures and satisfaction to the pro-ams especially they read the magazine that they work for. The engagement of the pro-ams in this production can also help to ensure contents, services and information accommodate to readers' needs. Therefore, the best way to recognize, appreciate and build relationship with the readers is to exhibit, publish and help them to reach a wider range of community members.

However, as Jenkins et al. suggested that in participatory culture, "not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they

contribute will be appropriately valued” (7). Not all the readers of *Travelmate* participates in a cultural production, many of them remain as observers or dabble, some of them engage actively to interact with other community members and few of them master the skills that are strongly appreciated by the leisure community. Pro-am photographers are the example of a small group of people who have the ability to express own creativities. The desire of *Travelmate* to incorporate non-professional images in content production has opened the gate to pro-am photographers to publish their work in a professional domain.

5.5.5 Production Cost

Lower cost of operation in the digital era is encourages pro-am photography. Lister et al. (2003) pointed out that the decline of professional and amateur user is a matter ultimately cost. The early photographic process was too complicated and expensive that only professional photographers and very few avid amateurs could afford to pursue this art-science technology. When Eastman simplified the photographic process, smaller size, lower cost, better performance and more choices of cameras began to sell in the market.

In 1996, the idea of digital photography was brought to the public under a multinational collaboration between computer and camera companies such as Kodak, Nikon, Canon, Fuji, IBM and Microsoft. At a price that consumers could afford, this multinational collaboration offered photographers a camera that could be program, store, edit and print. This invention enabled images to be viewed and processed immediately through personal computer. The pro-am photographers highlighted that digital camera is one of the reasons to participate as content contributor in *Travelmate*:

Softcopy of pictures are better than hardcopies as the printing cost would be very high if I develop all the pictures I took. – Low

My first camera was a digital camera. I do not worry about wasting films to get a good photo. Digital technology turns my interest in photography into an affordable hobby. –

KY

The digital market is growing therefore it cuts down the cost of professional cameras. Upgrading a camera and toolkit for better images is no longer an expensive investment as in the past. Advanced cameras, good equipments and regular practice indirectly help pro-ams to improve their skills and motivate them to actively participate in cultural production.

Forecaster website *Trendwatching.com* observed a trend of consumers-created content in March 2004 and disclosed that more companies are competing to equip creative consumers with professional tools at a cheaper price. This website described this phenomenon as ‘Generation C’, whereby C is referring to ‘Content’. It suggested that this presumption trend is driven by two major reasons – first is the creativity of consumer that motivates them to take part; and secondly is the manufacturing of cheaper and powerful technology gadgets and gizmos which in turn drives the creativity. Instead of asking consumers to watch, listen, play or to passively consume; the new challenge is about to get them to create, to produce and to participate. Canon declared to their consumers that its camera products “leave one difference between you and a professional – they get paid”. Sony, HP and other brands are also massively investing into digital technology to inform their users that professional digital photography is no longer just for the professionals.

5.5.6 Digital devices

In parallel, the versatility of various digital devices helps pro-ams to sustain their expertise easily. Von Hippel and Katz (2002) disclosed that manufacturers are outsourcing innovation tasks to users by providing user-friendly tools that enable them to product their own contents.

They provide this freedom to users to produce and customize creative materials via trial and error at a minimal cost.

New generation of personal computers enable digital images to be transferred and viewed on the computer screen. Images can be kept in the computer hard drive or a compact disk for future printing, viewing or editing. Since the picture can be viewed immediately on the personal computer, it eliminates the hard copy printing and therefore reduces chemical, film, silver salts and paper processing. Compared to the past, images have to be developed into hardcopies first to confirm the image quality; today pro-am photographers do not develop all the images they take. Instead, they can now review the images on the computer screen. Low production cost enables non-professional photographers to practice and experiment without further financial burden.

In addition, the popularity of internet as a social network since the 1990s has offered new ways of sharing and distributing images. The internet connects the world, promotes globalization and accelerates new forms of human interactions through instant messaging, forums and social networking. There are plenty of free image sharing websites offered online such as Flickr, Multiply, Facebook, Blogs and Tweeter. Rather than developing a photo album, images are now broadly uploaded, shared and distributed online. Rich informative sources are also found on the internet and help pro-am photographers to understand professional standards easily. Software developers market various types of image-processing software for personal computer users at a low price. This gives pro-ams greater chances to practice at a lower cost to enhance their images.

The shift from traditional printing technology to digital format is another wave that reshaped publication. First image scanner was developed to connect with a computer in 1957 by a team led by Russell A. Kirsch. It enables images to be scanned into a digital format. The conventional way of processing and printing photographs previously offered by printing shops

and photo factories has reached a wide community of artists, designers, photographers and home-users. Image generation is no longer time-consuming, expensive chemical and highly required skill.

All the pro-am photographers regularly write blog and share images online. At the same time, they learn about professional standard to be inspired, to understand the industry better and to be tech-savvy too. Even the general folks with average aptitude are able to develop themselves to a level higher than that of the typical part-time participant.

Good learning by visiting professional sites. Fast and instant. You know what is happening out there and what your counterparts are achieving. – KY

I share images online and visit other websites. I think this inspires people and get inspired by others. – Low

Digital devices fulfil the desire for curiosity and exploration. Katz et al. (2003) defined satisfaction of media user as ‘gratification’ and suggested that audience gratifications can be derived from media content, exposure to different media and the social context of exposures.

5.6 The Challenges of Pro-ams

Challenges and limitations are a norm in recreational activities. *Encyclopedia of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation* defined the challenges as ‘leisure constraints’ which refer to “the factors that limit people’s participation in leisure activities, use of leisure services, and satisfaction or enjoyment of current activities” (Scott 75). This research was not designed to study why newcomers fear or fail to enter the pro-am field however; it reflects how pro-am photographers need to handle different challenges, disappointments and pressure before they can master the skills.

The publisher reveals that the magazine is lacking or deficient in fresh ideas and resources. The number of pro-am photographers who are skillfully matured to produce high

quality of images is low in the market. In the photography field, we can find thousands of amateurs compared to few professionals and pro-ams. The low number of pro-am photographers participating in *Travelmate* content production is because it requires sheer dedication, obligation and sacrifice.

Generally, a small number of amateur photographers might finally end up being pro-ams. The start of a new hobby or leisure has its challenges that weigh down on the shoulders of a beginner or amateur. If they finally overcome these burdens they are en route to being a pro-am. They have to first be acclimatized to what the leisure is all about. But once they are there and finally being a pro-am, it is just a matter of self sustenance.

The pro-ams might face tedious workload and heavy work pressure due to the expectations but the amateurs need to have a quick learning curve if they wish to be pro-ams. The pro-ams enjoy photography as their passionate hobby or leisure activity while many of the amateurs just stop in the middle as they do not see the rationale or benefit behind it. The pro-ams might see that the initial investment in digital photography as a constraint and they still continue the hobby as they are passionate enough to see the end in mind. The amateurs on the other hand might not see the bigger picture at all and with such initial investment they totally might just abandon the hobby because there are no quantifiable gains. In addition, the pro-ams have to be competent in photo editing software, understand the expectations of a photo shoot but the amateurs might not have the luxury to be taught, rather they have to self teach which will deter them in the long run. Simply said if one starts off on a wrong footing, it cannot end on the right footing.

It can be deduced from the research that pro-am photographers are willing and capable to sacrifice to invest in digital photography. They possess an attitude to overcome work stress or pressure and more importantly they are motivated and passionate enough.

6. THE IMPLICATIONS OF PRO-AMS CULTURE

This chapter focuses on the key learning gained from the case studies in the previous chapters. With few examples, it suggests that pro-ams sit in between the hierarchy of knowledge. In this twilight zone, they balance the antagonistic relationship between professionals and amateurs; career-to-casual leisure; wage-free labor; quantity and quality orientated product.

6.1 Praises and Concerns of User-generated Content

At this point we have learned that pro-ams have complex identities where professionalism is notable on amateurs. We have also noticed that pro-ams go through a long and intricate process to develop their specialty and retaining their identity. We now proceed by discussing the implication of pro-ams culture.

In general, there are two types of prosumption culture effects that were discussed by the social and media scholars. The first type of cultural effect is the positive changes where user-created contents are liberal, open, creative and resourceful. The second type of cultural effect is the user-created contents lowers down the standard of excellence.

New media allows ordinary people to broadcast their own news. For example, citizen journalism has included amateurs as co-authors for news creation and distribution.¹³ The growth of community-generated content enables the dissemination of news towards new audiences and new channels. Kluth (2006) suggested that the young generation has more choices as they can rely on human editors or the collective intelligences in the new form of filtering and collaboration technology. Deuze (2007) has similar opinion on amateur power. He described personal journalism as ‘grassroots journalism’ and stated that it has changed news outlets, sought out sources from a variety of viewpoints and therefore making news reporting more informative and liberating.

¹³ A freelance journalist, Glaser (2006) explains that the idea of citizen journalism is that “people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others”.

Other media scholars suggested that amateur contents envision a change from monopoly resource into economy exchange and gift culture. The information distributed and exchanged online has made internet into a free land knowledge. *Trendwatching.com* pointed out that co-operation between corporations and experienced consumers to creative goods and services allow the participants to increase their intellectual capital. In addition, the exchange gives users opportunities to decide what to be produced, manufactured, developed and designed.

In contrast the erosion of the following such as media, cultural values, professionalism and moral standards due to uncontrollable distribution of the amateur content is being questioned as well. One of the setbacks in amateur culture is the false information. For example, leisure industry is increasingly worried about the potential misuse of holiday review websites. Online travel website *TripAdvisor* is an essential travel planning reference for many travelers however, it also being blamed for fake reviews. Nancy Keates, reporter of *The Wall Street Journal* commented that “relying on the wisdom of crowds can be dangerous”. She suggested that the deconstruction of user review is necessary because fake reviews could be the cause of different expectations by different travelers.

Comor (2010) shared his concerns that the dependency of users on the corporate designed and mass-produced media tend to “leave little room for genuinely autonomous development” (450). Customized interface provide an easy-way out to users where they have multiple options to choose from such as set of fixed themes, process templates and other given tools. Independent thoughts are filtered by programming and software. As a consequence, products created in this organized environment will lack creativity and uniqueness. Users who rely on easy-to-operate devices will stop making exploration.

In his book, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture*, internet critic Keen (2007) commented that user-generated contents in fact brought cultural

disaster. New media does not only brought legal challenges such as copyright issue but it also destroyed authorship and intellectual property. Social media allows user to reuse, reproduce, revise, translate and distribute without the author's consent, hence the new society is full of mashed-ups, remixes and cut-and-paste jobs. Wikipedia postings are unverified. The quality of mass produced amateur videos, pictures and writings been circulated online indeed lack of deep analysis and considered judgment. Unlike professional group, amateur users do not take social responsibility or accountability on their creations. Inaccurately and unreliably non-professional data reduce the quality of excellent, challenge the professionalism and judge down the market price.

6.2 A Balancing Point

Studying pro-ams enable us to see different perspectives on user-generated contents. Despite pro-ams needing a complex and lengthy process to develop their expertise and other challenges faced, the mega-trend of pro-ams is a revolution of amateurism.

This phenomenon can be seen both online and offline. Leadbeater et al. (2004) suggested that this phenomenon forces the pro-ams to distinguish from serious-to-casual leisure to professional amateurism. In fact, pro-ams are like marginal ethnic groups who balance between professionalism & amateurism; casual leisure & work; wages & free labor and quantity & quality orientated creations.

6.2.1 The marginal zone

The case study of pro-am photographers envisions a process where amateurs are unceasingly establishing their specialty and expertise with distinctive personality and style. They can be situated between the amateur hobbyists and the professionals; which is located at the centre of the knowledge hierarchy as shown in figure 15.

Amateur photographers compose of devotees, fans, dabblers, spectator and other novices who lack professional ego and they are practicing photography as a hobby. They usually produce mundane, spontaneous and everyday images in professional domain and do not have the intention to compete among one another. Skillful professional photographers involved in photography trades for financial income. Photography is either a full-time career or part-time avocation for them. Hence, the monetary rewards can be a main income (for full-time professional photographers) or side income (for part-time professional photographers).

Conversely, pro-am photographers carry a more complex behavior than both amateurs and professionals. They do not engage in cultural publication for financial reward but embrace it as a platform for self-enrichment. They are aware of the existence and quality standards of amateur and professional counterparts. Their activities manifest a combination of confidence, excitement and dedicated attitude which make them a complex and unique players. Pro-am photographers are digital creatures, expert in various digital devices and mass media and they unitize them for publications and dissemination of own created information. Effort to distinguish amateur, pro-am and professional photographers is somehow challenging as the motivations and the constraints to participate in leisure activity are varying from time to time, hence people do not always stay at the same social division.

Principle	Amateur photographers	Pro-am photographers	Professional photographers
Who	Devotees, fans, dabblers, spectator and novices	Serious, committed and skilled amateurs	Matured and skilled professionals
Activities	Casual and short-term based leisure	Serious and long term based leisure	Profession, career or avocation
Rewards	Hobby, play, entertainment	Enrichment, gratification, accomplishment	Main/side income
Characteristics	Despicable to find distinctive identity	Unique and complex ethos	Professional profile
Productions	Mundane, memes, fleeting, commonplace, spontaneous images	Unique and own style, quality-oriented images	Professional standard images

Figure 15: Principles that distinguishes amateur, pro-am and professional photographers.

6.2.2 *Quality control and assurance*

With a middle social and knowledge division, pro-ams bridge amateur and professional, converge each group with the practice and concept of another group. According to Stebbins (1992), numbers of social studies from Ernest Greenwood (1957), Parsons (1968), Gross (1958) and Kaplan (1960) led to the development of nine attributes describing the “professionalism”. One of the attributes is that the professionals serve public with non-customized products and they are recognized by their clients for their knowledge, experience and technique. Consistent application of a standard, quality and provision is a primary concern for the professional group. In contrast, the amateurs are participating for pleasure, hence positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy. They are more quantity inclined rather than quality.

Pro-ams constantly and actively use their knowledge and core skills to avoid degeneration. They produce large quantity of images for rehearsal and development, they also insist on the retention of quality at the same time. In the amateur circle, pro-ams are proliferating concept of quality as an uncompromising responsibility. In the realm of professional, pro-ams restraint from overemphasizing technique and pay more attentions to more meaningful and creative production. Pro-ams see professionals as mentor while pro-ams see themselves as a role model to unserious hobbyists. In most of the cases, pro-ams play a role to widespread professional knowledge and technique in amateurism.

Quality is an ongoing process of building competency and sustaining principles by valuing, assessing, anticipating and fulfilling customer needs. According to Quality Trilogy (cited by Crilley 2003)¹⁴, quality management consists of three core processes: quality

¹⁴ Cited in *Encyclopedia of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation*, ‘Quality Trilogy’ is a quality management model developed by Juran, J. in his book, *A History of Managing for Quality: The Evaluation, Trends, and Future Directions of Managing Quality*, published by ASQC in Milwaukee, year 1995.

planning, quality control and quality improvement. The study of pro-am photographers showed that they actually have organized and systematic quality management.

In quality planning, pro-am photographers have to understand the needs of the magazine and its readers as well as benchmarking professional standards. It is important for pro-ams to plan ahead and understand the requirement that will lead to the best possible results.

Pro-ams also have quality assurance which attempts to improve and stabilize image production. In the pre-production phase, pro-am photographers control the quality of the photographs through careful equipment and tool selection. They will also understand the shooting location and weather that affect image quality. During the production stage, pro-ams manage several variables through their knowledge and experience of lighting, lenses and film sensitivity to create appropriate mood, atmosphere and visual styles for every shot. Pro-ams will perform quality inspection after every shot and digital cameras allow them to view the photos immediately. In post-production, images will be transferred into personal computer for post-editing. Color correction, contrast enhancement and other visual effects can be performed in digital post-production.

Finally, pro-ams photographers instill a sense of continuous improvement to increase their performances. Image improvement is achieved by taking multiple copies of image with different angles, visual effects and compositions. This will help to reduce the risk of low resolution images due to incorrect shooting decision. Knowledge improvement is achieved by professional standard survey, books and journal reading and contest participation as discussed in chapter 5.4.

With the intensity and passion continuous quality improvement in order to achieve better standards, pro-ams ensure that user-creations come with quality assurance. Patricia Zimmerman (1995) studied amateur film in *Reel Families*. From Zimmerman's research, it is

translated that the camera invention was an entrepreneurial legend in the beginning. Later, video camera has become a consumer product. Now, developing a video camera has turned home video from a leisure activity into a professional practice.

When discussing grassroots journalism, Gillmor (2004) disclosed that talented citizen journalists will not reduce the quality of news they produced and their collaboration with professional journalists has been better in some aspects. Pro-ams can offer better and wider scope than the professionals who are limited by reporting dateline and publishing space to publish what they learned.

6.2.3 An alternative professional source

Pro-ams are able to differentiate and balance between wage labor and free labor. According to Stebbins (1992), the “professionals” spend more time in a particular activity, share a sense of being ‘in-group’ members and they dominate the market by examination and state-run licensing procedures. Firstly, the professionals are highly paid in wages as opposed to the amateurs who come at no cost. Secondly, the amateurs accommodate to the public, therefore they have more freedom to produce their own materials. Zimmerman (1995) described that “professional film signifies rationalized, specialized, wage-labor and economic control, whereas amateur film represents marginalized, yet integrated, production wedged within the private sphere” (5).

Pro-ams compliment the society with filling up the vacuum left from these two groups. They cover areas that professional missed out or are not willing to participate due to constraints. In addition, pro-ams accomplish tasks that cannot be completed by amateurs due to economy, space, ability or resource limitation. Besides create larger and valuable conversation, pro-ams become an alternative professional source.

Baym and Robert deduced how pro-ams leverage on online tools to promote Swedish independent music internationally. They described these voluntary fans as ‘gatekeeper’, ‘filter’ and ‘influencers’. Pro-ams are a group of outsiders who distribute information about indie-music proficiently as (even better than) major label, radio station, music company and press. Other than low distribution cost, fans with expertise can simplify the music promotion as they have specific favorite channels to exchange, build relationship and recommend music to larger audiences around the globe.

Khan Academy (<http://www.khanacademy.org>) is another example of a passionate non-expert using technology to make a profound contribution from a free resource. The website supplies online collection of Youtube videos which provide learning tips for different topics such as mathematics, finance, science, economy and other subjects. The creation of the website was unintentionally when a financial analyst, Khan began tutoring his cousin in mathematics. The users think that the teaching method is interactive, interesting, quick, free, and easy to understand. One of the students said:

I always felt that a solid foundation for higher education was something I couldn't afford - that I would have to scrape by with figuring things out for myself or making the most out of the poor conditions I could afford. *Khan Academy* has made subjects like Calculus and Chemistry accessible to me. Despite what I am financially limited to, I have a means to reach beyond what I am given in class and explore larger concepts. I'm typically a C- math student. Now I'm getting A's and B's...

The success of *Khan Academy* marked an educational transformation that de-emphasizes classroom, professional instructor and well organized institution.

6.2.4 Innovative resource

Stebbins (1992) commented that the professionals dominate a field by passing an appropriate test and by receiving lawful license or certificate. Zimmerman (1995) explained that in order to protect the monopoly realm, the professionals “standardize not only procedures but also producers” (4). This results in the professionals having a standardized guideline to follow and hence they offer a reliable but predictable products or services.

In contrast, pro-ams illustrate freedom in terms of creation, competition and distribution of content in open market. Pro-ams bring user and content innovation and reveal a compilation of the best material in new, fecund and less expensive ways.

In *Collective Intelligence*, Levy (1997) observed a potential development of knowledge space as mass media brought new pattern of communication and broader participation in collaboration, production and information exchange. In his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2002) declared that a ‘creative economy’ was emerging. Creative ethos was increasingly dominant and was changing the workforce, leisure, community and everyday life in America, Europe countries and Asia.

The film industry is witnessing a gigantic leap in professional and amateur production. Finnish director Timo Vuorensola and team together with few hundred fans co-produced a motion picture *Star Wreck: in the Pirkinning* in 2005. Afterwards, Vuorensola and his team released *Iron Sky*, a Finnish-German-Australian co-production film in the year 2012. Vuorensola launched *Wreck A Movie* (<http://www.wreckamovie.com/>), a website to manage this project since early 2006. This independent film is a combined-funding from both traditional film channels and voluntary crowd. This goes to show that wider collaboration was made possible with enthusiasts who have creativity, skill, experiences and passion in film-making. Despite the final film-editing is decided by the professional production team, the community indirectly takes part in the process by suggestions and promoting the film online.

American media executive, Chris Albrecht (2008) portrayed that *Iron Sky* as opening up the film production process to the world. Vuorensola described the citizen participation as 'community-wise', through the interview with Albrecht, he said:

Wreck A Movie is a collaborative film production platform. The big idea behind is to create a place where anybody can join in and bring their creativity to existing film productions. Later on, we'll start opening the system up so that anybody can also set up their own production there and find a collaborating community around it. The reason why we did *Wreck A Movie* is because we wanted to find out a way to take advantage of the Internet communities into film industry, and bring resources otherwise unavailable to the hands of independent filmmakers.

Star Wreck: in the Pirkinning and *Iron Sky* illustrate a new wave of participatory cinema culture and a celebration of pro-ams engagement in film production.

In short, studying pro-ams as a separate circle from amateur allows us to revisit concept of prosumption and draw a new direction in amateurism and leisure culture. The key word is produce – pro-ams produce distinctive product and service with unique ethos, personality, innovation and passion rather than exchange or reuse other materials.

7. CONCLUSION

The last chapter summarizes the main principles and important interpretations from the research. It then points out the remaining uncovered issues and proposes the areas that need further clarification and research.

‘Prosumer’ as a framework to study productive media users reminds us that production is impossible to be separated from consumerism in the new media environment. We are at the beginning stage to understand the effects of the technology development and it is forcing us to adjust our assumptions to the behavioral change of these media users regardless they are an audience, a reader or a player.

Part of the attractions of prosumption study is that the digital products have fulfilled the desire and ability of media users to produce their own materials with matured skills. This participatory culture has altered the citizen engagement pattern from non-serious leisure to more serious practice. We have learned from the research that this phenomenon is not only happened online but traditional media is also adapting this culture to cater more ordinary voices in new, fecund and less expensive ways.

This mega-trend can be justified from the case study of *Travelmate* magazine. A group of dedicated photographers have changed the form of amateur photography from lack of intention record to artful creation; from produce mundane objects to rich perspectives images. The participation of pro-am photographers in content production is lucid, passionate and no financial gains attributed. They use mass-produced but well performed cameras and other digital devices to create valuable contents for *Travelmate*. According to the publisher, pro-am works do not only present a fairly good quality but also rich of interesting individual perspective.

Pro-am activities are not new social practice and they have long existed in the history of traditional recreational activities. The advent of technology provides a new participatory

platform, helps pro-ams layout a publication in a more visible, easier and cheaper way. New social integration and interaction opportunities have been made possible by the digital media. In this current era, pro-ams equipped with customized products participate in prosumption culture at a level they never were before the development of information technology.

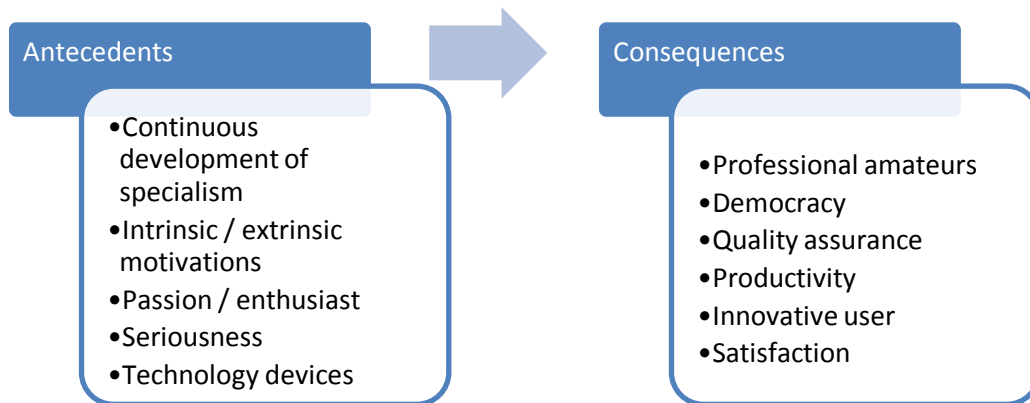


Figure 16: Implication of pro-ams culture.

Figure 16 is the summary of pro-ams culture. The study of pro-ams tells us that most of them started as an amateur user. The enthusiast and passion to produce own creations motivate pro-ams to specialize their knowledge and skills. The development of specialism is an augmenting process which requires massive investment of time, money and personal efforts. During the development of skills, pro-ams exhibit distinctive behaviors compared to non-serious hobbyists. Pro-ams pursue an activity as a serious leisure with full concentration to create knowledge and social distinction between them and amateurs. These distinctive behaviors can be seen during equipment selection, resource management, activity setting, quality control and experience sharing. The seriousness of pro-ams to develop specialism made pro-ams a productive and innovative user.

Therefore, this paper suggests that pro-ams deserve to be an independent object of study in their own right given their different implication of culture and values, apart from the

professionals and the amateurs. The separation of pro-am from the study of amateur enables us to switch our attention from what pro-ams produce to a how they produce and the level of their seriousness and dedication in the content production. The study of pro-ams' motivation also sets a framework for people to provide quality work without financial rewards.

I believe that eventually more and more amateurs will join the pro-ams pipeline. Rather than criticizing amateur work as a cut-and-paste culture in new media, which most of the time the contents are being shared and circulated illegally, we should see pro-ams as a revolutionary group of amateurs trying to achieve specialize skills, knowledge and techniques. The general folks no longer remix, revise, reproduce or distribute contents of others instead they are creating their own material through their developed skills and knowledge.

I hope I have provided the background and motivation of a pro-am user to participate in a content production. However, there are still many unexplored areas. While this research is theorizing the pro-ams, this may not be the final outcome as this area should be allowed to grow and further explored.

Although the research is not designed to examine the concept of community, the study reveals that there are some features of leisure community being identified. Pro-ams do not contribute individually but their power and value are gathered as alternative professional resources in a community. In addition, in all community, there will be a hierarchy. In the case study, hierarchy of knowledge is identified, where the degrees of expert and amateur are recognized. Pro-ams are aware of amateur and professional counterparts. Pro-ams see professionals as mentor and they try to be a role model for other amateurs.

Therefore, to complete the picture of pro-ams, attention can be paid to the full participate hierarchy in an community – where the pro-ams are in the middle; the amateurs, who do not have intention to build up their skill on the left; and the professionals, who participate in an activity mainly for commercial purpose on the right side.

There are four advantages to study pro-ams phenomenon with the concept of community. Firstly, it enables us to explore who is inside or outside the group. Secondly, it can help the researcher to understand how professionals judge their counterparts and vice versa. More likely the professionals view the pro-ams activity as a threat but it is possible that professionals take it as a challenge and learning area. Thirdly, to include an amateur in one circuit will help the researcher to examine what are the leisure constraints and challenges that keep an amateur out of the pro-ams circle. Lastly, it is also possible to consider that pro-ams are in the twilight zone for one's hobby, for commercial trading, and for one to develop portfolio for future career path.

I conclude by reinforcing the question in the first paragraph of the introductory chapter – professional career will not end because of amateur activities. There is at least one thing we can observe – the public do not simply go to amateurs who cannot make good quality of pictures. In fact, they go to skillful and talented amateurs who offer price efficient materials. The ability to produce contents extends to each of us regardless of gender, race, country and social class by the high-technology devices. However, the knowledge, skills and quality remain as important elements that affect customer's judgment and decision. As a smart consumer, we are not only looking for development of professional equipment rather we are actually pursuing for specialized amateurism.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample of Informed Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

1. Title of the study

The Rise of Pro-am Photographer as Content Contributor in Malaysia Travel Magazine.

2. Aim of the study

This paper performs a qualitative research to gain an in-depth understanding of how non-professional photographers are empowered by digital technology to contribute their images and actively participate as content producers in professional domain.

3. Description of research activities

As a participant you will participate in an interview that will be documented and analyzed for research purposes. A list of important questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation is developed. However, you are encouraged to open-up topics and express your opinions freely.

4. Risks/discomfort involved

No risk is anticipated in answering the questions. If any question/s make you feel uncomfortable you may choose not to answer.

5. Expected impact

The information will help me to understand how non-professional photographer shift from information consumer to content contributor and how they use participatory media for the purpose of creative expression.

6. Dissemination of results

Your participation in this study signifies that you agree for its data and findings to be published upon the condition that information provided will be reported anonymously. The information will be presented with nick name that no individual respondent can be identified.

7. Further Information

Do not hesitate to make questions regarding the aim of this study or the implementation of study design. If you have any doubts or questions, do ask for clarifications. Researcher can be reached via chye_teh@hotmail.com.

8. Freedom of consent

You are a volunteer participant. You are free to withdraw your consent now or later.

Participant's declaration

I read this form and I understand the procedures involved. I agree to participate in this study.

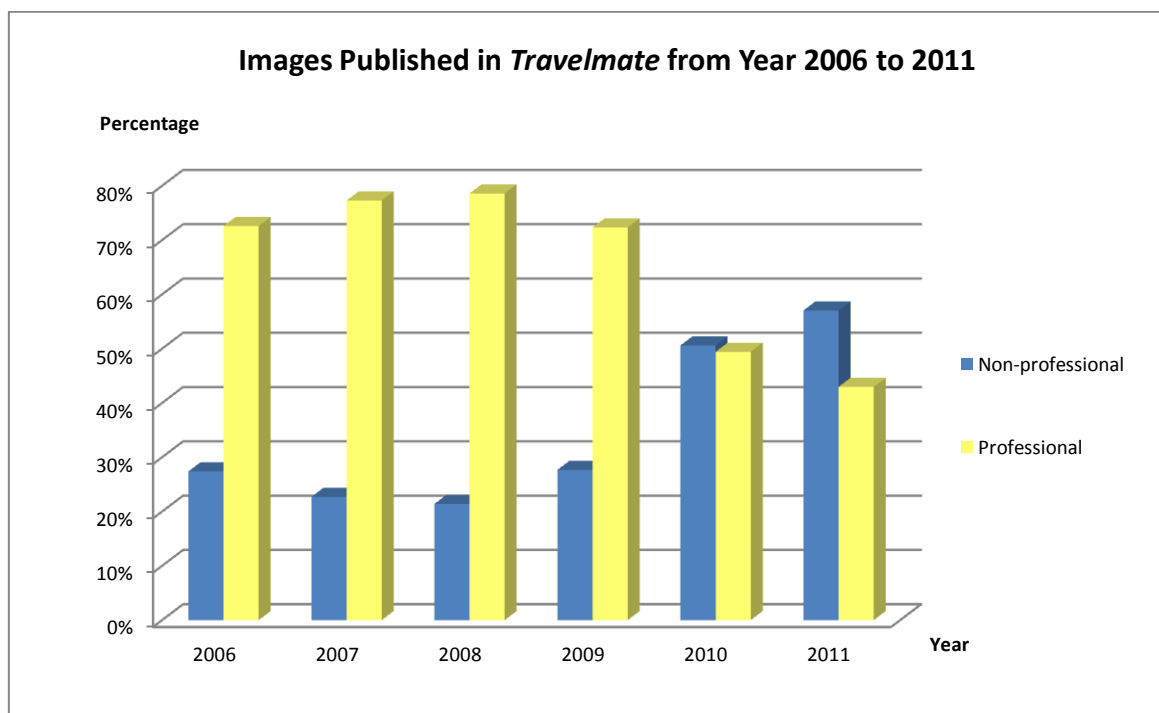
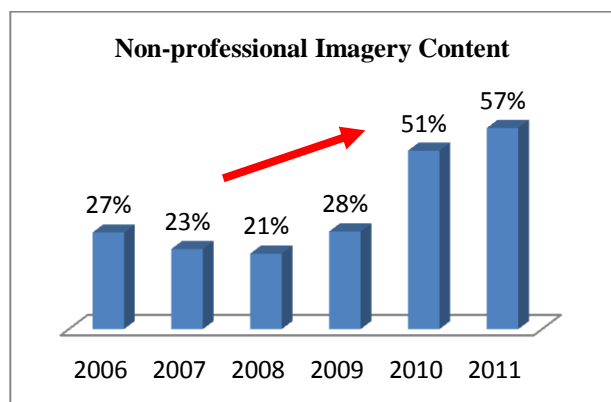
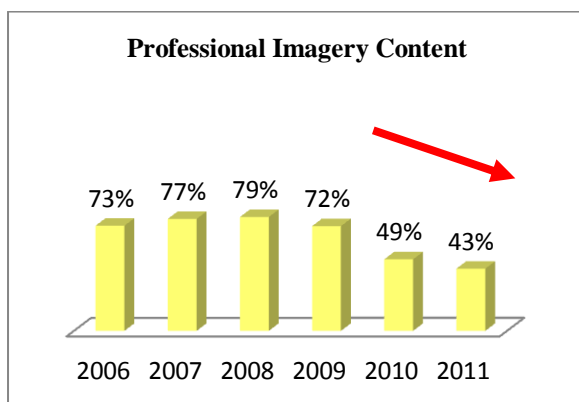
Date: __/__/__

[Name and signature of participant]

[Name and signature of researcher]

Appendix B: Professional/Non-professional Images in *Travelmate* in 2006-2011

Month	Year	Non-professional		Professional	
		Qty of images	%	Qty of images	%
Jun/Jul	2006	60	27%	159	73%
Jun/Jul	2007	57	23%	194	77%
Feb/Mar	2008	58	21%	213	79%
Aug/Sept	2009	93	28%	243	72%
Jun/Jul	2010	169	51%	165	49%
Dec/Jan	2011	154	57%	116	43%

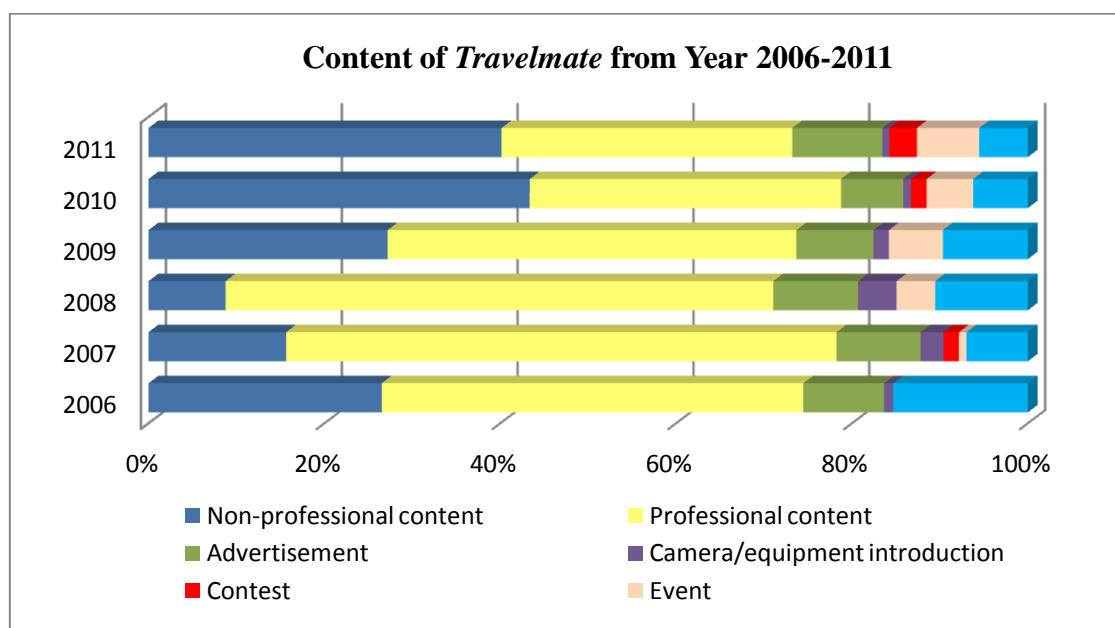


Appendix C: The Proportion of *Travelmate's* Content in 2006-2011

Content \ Year	Jun/Jul'2006		Jun/Jul'2007		Feb/Mar'2008	
	Qty of pages	%	Qty of pages	%	Qty of pages	%
Non-pro content	26	27%	18	16%	10	9%
Professional content	47	48%	72	63%	71	62%
Advertisement	9	9%	11	10%	11	10%
Camera/equipment introduction	1	1%	3	3%	5	4%
Contest	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%
Event	0	0%	1	1%	5	4%
General notification	15	15%	8	7%	12	11%
Total	98	100%	115	100%	114	100%

Content \ Year	Aug/Sep'2009		Jun/Jul'2010		Dec'2010/Jan'2011	
	Qty of pages	%	Qty of pages	%	Qty of pages	%
Non-pro content	31	27%	49	43%	51	40%
Professional content	53	46%	40	35%	42	33%
Advertisement	10	9%	8	7%	13	10%
Camera/equipment introduction	2	2%	1	1%	1	1%
Contest	0	0%	2	2%	4	3%
Event	7	6%	6	5%	9	7%
General notification	11	10%	7	6%	7	6%
Total	114	100%	113	100%	127	100%

Average 114 pages / issue
 Average 280 images / issue
 Average 2 images / page

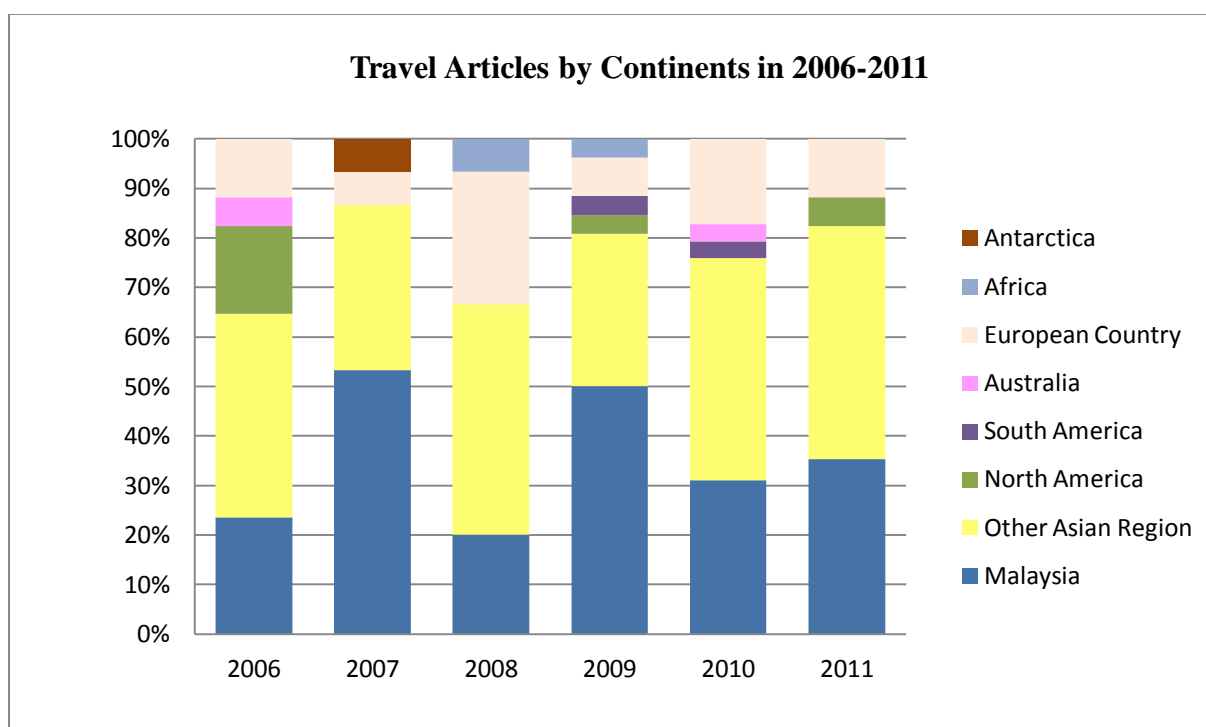


Appendix D: Travel Articles in *Travelmate* by Continents in 2006-2011

Continent \ Year	Jun/Jul'2006		Jun/Jul'2007		Feb/Mar'2008	
	Qty of articles	%	Qty of articles	%	Qty of articles	%
Malaysia	4	24%	8	53%	3	20%
Other Asian Region	7	41%	5	33%	7	47%
North America	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%
South America	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Australia	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
European Country	2	12%	1	7%	4	27%
Africa	0	0%	0	0%	1	7%
Antarctica	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%
Total	17	100%	15	100%	15	100%

Continent \ Year	Aug/Sep'2009		Jun/Jul'2010		Dec'2010/Jan'2011	
	Qty of articles	%	Qty of articles	%	Qty of articles	%
Malaysia	13	50%	9	31%	6	35%
Other Asian Region	8	31%	13	45%	8	47%
North America	1	4%	0	0%	1	6%
South America	1	4%	1	3%	0	0%
Australia	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
European Country	2	8%	5	17%	2	12%
Africa	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Antarctica	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	26	100%	29	100%	17	100%

* Average 20 travel articles per issue.



Appendix E: Example of Interview Transcript (Photographer)

Following is a part of the conversation with one of the pro-am photographers.

Researcher: Thank you for participating in the interview today. This interview should take about 30 minutes. I am going to read a document for your own protection. Just stop me at any point if you do not understand or disagree with something.

Respondent: Ok.

Researcher: I am currently a master degree student in the Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. I am conducting a research regarding the rise of non-professional photographer as image-content contributor for Malaysia's travel magazine – *Travelmate*. The purpose of this research is to perform a qualitative research to gain an in-depth understanding of how non-professional photographers are empowered by digital technology to contribute their images and actively participate as content producers in a professional domain. You have been identified as one of the respondents because you understand the background well and are able to provide an insight into the issues. Our conversation will be documented and analyzed for the research. I will ask you a couple of questions, but you are encouraged to share any open topics and express your opinions freely. No risk in answering the questions, but if any of the question(s) make you feel uncomfortable you may choose not to answer. The results will be reported anonymously for your own protection. Do you have any questions regarding the research before we start the conversation?

Respondent: No. Fine with me.....

Researcher: Can you do a brief introduction?

Respondent: You can identify me as KY in your research. I love traveling and photographing since I was young. I am currently 32, working as a financial controller in a multinational company located in Shanghai, China. I have participated as Travelmate image-content contributor for one and the half years already.

Researcher: What are your preferred photography themes?

Respondent: Well...depending on the geographical location. I personally like taking photos of people and their life but it normally works easier in less developed places. In developed countries or cities, people are usually more sensitive towards being photographed. Hence as a matter of ethical travelling, I choose to respect the local culture. I am bad at landscapes, and photographing culture is the most difficult of all ... personal thought.

Researcher: Do you consider yourself as a professional or an amateur photographer?

Respondent: Amateur for sure.

Researcher: How do you define an amateur photographer?

Respondent: Someone who is into photography and seek to invest time picking up related knowledge trying to possess certain level of recognition ability and skill to produce decent photography work.

Researcher: What kind of device do you use to take photographs? Can you tell me the brand and model?

Respondent: I use a Nikon D80 DSLR. Nowadays too, I shoot a lot with my iphone 4.

Researcher: Interesting...why did you switch to iphone?

Respondent: Not really switching. iPhone is not a serious photography tool but it's more for convenience. There are times when you come across moments worth recording but you are without a camera so a smart phone will help accomplish the job then. And there is more fun come with the smart phone applications one can use to edit pictures eg lomo, Lemeleme etc. It depends how one defines photography. To me it's a tool to convey one' thought.

Researcher: From your point of view, how is the performance between iphone 4 camera and D80?

Respondent: They are non-comparable items serving different purposes.

Researcher: Does digital technology help your participation in *Travelmate* content production?

Respondent: Yes. My first camera was already a digital compact. I don't have to worry about wasting films by taking lousy photos. It enables me to turn my interest in photography into an affordable hobby.

Researcher: What else?

Respondent: I frequently visit online websites to see other people's photographs. It is a good learning by visiting professional sites, to know what professionals and non-professionals are sharing at their personal blogs or social media. I use blog, Facebook, Flickr and other websites to share my photos. They are paperless and hence environmentally friendly. Fast and instantaneous to share the moments within the network.

Researcher: When and how did you engage in *Travelmate*?

Respondent: I started in mid-2009 by contributing columns (6 issues in total). In mid-2010, I started contributing travel article (~ 4 pages with 10 photos)...3 issues in total.

Researcher: How did you get involved?

Respondent: Through a friend who knows the editor.

Researcher: Do you contribute your photos to other magazines similar to *Travelmate*?

Respondent: Yes, but probably not a magazine in similar nature. I am currently contributing to ￦, a Public Mutual Trust member subscription issue.

Researcher: What are your intentions to contribute in *Travelmate*?

Respondent: As a hobby and also viewing it as another channel to share my photos and travelling experience apart from the social media. I was also planning to take up a portfolio to further progress in the related area.

Researcher: From your point of view, what are the values of your images as visual text connection to *Travelmate*?

Respondent: The images enhance the comprehensiveness of what the contributor is trying to convey in writing. They also provide room for imagination and visualization.

Researcher: In your opinion, why did this magazine use your photographs rather than professional images?

Respondent: The professional market in Malaysia is not totally matured to support the demand of media. Good ones are too expensive and are less willing to contribute to less popular channels. Hence looking out to identify amateur players has been an effective alternative.

Researcher: Do you think your involvement in this magazine has garnered you any fame?

Respondent: No.

Researcher: Does *Travelmate* pay for your photos?

Respondent: Yes. Around RM- per photo or less...but amateur photograph trading is not my main income.

Researcher: If you do not get sufficient financial returns for the images, will you continue to participate in *Travelmate*?

Respondent: No, I'm not going to continue to participate. A returning contribution represents the publisher's respect to the contributions unless the contributor voluntarily opts out.

Researcher: How has participation in *Travelmate* affected your life?

Respondent: A lot...it has been a good motivation to push me to continue writing and produce photographs. No plans to be a professional for now but if your work is being appreciated the satisfaction gained can be very encouraging.

Researcher: We end the conversation here as we are running out of time. Sorry for taking so long, I appreciate the time and information you gave. I will schedule another session sometime next week. I will update you the progress and findings via email and will send you instant messenger if I need some clarifications.

Respondent: No problem. Feel free to let me know if there is any questions. Good luck with your assignment.

Appendix F: Example of Interview Transcript (Editor)

Following is a part of the conversation with one of the *Travelmate*'s editors.

First conversation:

Researcher: Thank you for participating in the interview today. This interview should take about 30 minutes. I am going to read a document for your own protection. Just stop me at any point if you do not understand or disagree with something.

Respondent: Ok.

Researcher: I am currently a master degree student in the Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. I am conducting a research regarding the rise of non-professional photographer as image-content contributor for Malaysia's travel magazine – *Travelmate*. The purpose of this research is to perform a qualitative research to gain an in-depth understanding of how non-professional photographers are empowered by digital technology to contribute their images and actively participate as content producers in a professional domain. You have been identified as one of the respondents because you understand the background well and are able to provide an insight into the issues. Our conversation will be documented and analyzed for the research. I will ask you a couple of questions but you are encouraged to share any open topics and express your opinions freely. No risk in answering the questions, but if any of the question(s) make you feel uncomfortable you may choose not to answer. The results will be reported anonymously for your own protection. Do you have any questions regarding the research before we start the conversation?

Respondent: No.....

Researcher: Great! Today I have few questions regarding *Travelmate*. Can you do a brief introduction about your role in *Travelmate*?

Respondent: You can identify me as Ernie in your research. I joint this publishing agency since year 2002 and took up Travelmate's editor role in year 2008. Editing roles including setting publication standards, search for talented content contributors, decide the content and themes, fill up details that contributors missed and keep good contact with contributors.

Researcher: Can you share the history of *Travelmate*?

Respondent: Travelmate is one of the magazines published by Photo Creator Publication (PCP). PCP has five different types of magazines, two in English, two in Chinese and one in Malay. Travelmate was founded in 2006 as a photo-travel magazine. Travelmate is signature travel magazine for domestic and overseas reference. Travelmate has long term subscription from readers and estimated sales of 10,000 copies per publication. It has good reputation since the first issue in terms of creativity of the content, diversity of the authors, accuracy of information, standard of the image and printing quality and coverage of wide scope of tourist destinations. We received good feedback from readers and they describe it as a useful travel guide book to be carried along the journey. Because of this, we started our first English publication in 2009 to cater for wider spectrum of readers.

Researcher: Please tell me about *Travelmate* goals.

Respondent: For the publisher and readers, Travelmate has always been more than a magazine. When Kim Teoh (Editor in chief) founded Travelmate, he wanted to open the production gates to local emerging travel-photographers to develop their skills and published their work. We hope to raise the profile of non-professional talents. The editorial team wished to develop this magazine to present cultural diversity, strengthen regional identity and assisting the development of cultural tourism in the region. Travelmate has been a channel for readers to participate in content contribution since its establishment in year 2006.

Researcher: Sounds challenging.

Respondent: It is hard to maintain the quality of printed magazine especially in the digital era when you can find anything on the internet for free. You need to have a good connection with readers, advertisers and find wider sources to ensure low cost.

Researcher: What are the activities that *Travelmate* conducts?

Respondent: Besides publishing bi-monthly magazine, we arrange meet-ups, conduct photography workshops and courses; travel talks and semina; equipment test and review; organize travel (local and overseas) for photography events, organize annual photography festival and others.

Researcher: How does *Travelmate* connect the readers?

Respondent: Our editorial team can be reached via traditional media such as face-to-face, post, telephone, fax and email for conversation, business management and routine operation.....such as magazine subscription. We also have an official website (<http://pcp2u.my/>) which is regularly maintained to update company profiles and progress. Travelmate started to setup a Facebook profile in 2010 mainly for interaction purpose; it is much easier to make announcement for activity and events.

Researcher: I will take a look at the official website, the Facebook profile and the magazine before I arrange our next conversation.

Respondent: Alright, talk to you next time.

Second conversation:

Researcher: Today we will talk about *Travelmate*'s practices. I have done a brief analysis on *Travelmate* publication, I can see that the percentages of non-professional images have increased from 23% in year 2006 to 55% in year 2011. Are you aware of this?

Respondent: Yes, incorporating non-professional resources into the magazine is what we want to do currently.

Researcher: Are amateur images aligned with the magazine original vision and goal?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Will *Travelmate* maintain its current strategy in the near future?

Respondent: Yes, we will continue to use majority of non-professional images.

Researcher: What is the reason *Travelmate* uses majority of the non-professional images?

Respondent: Non-professional images are an alternative source. Firstly, professional photography is not as matured to support our current requirements especially traveling photos and professional photographers normally are not willing to contribute to a travel

magazine. Secondly, professional photographs are selling at a high price where we lack of the budget to pay for.

Researcher: What else?

Respondent: Professional photographs are usually limited to certain themes and styles.....I would say they are commercialized images as they have been produced for commercial trades. Travel magazine does not require high standards of professional images and for us, the location and experience-sharing are more important. In fact, non-professional photographers can produce good travel pictures.

Researcher: Are there any differences between professional and amateur photographs?

Respondent: Sometime amateur produce better pictures than professional.....in terms of quality, creativity and themes. Professional works are more limited, standardized and they focus more on technique. Amateurs have more freedom to produce what they like.

Researcher: What are the values and roles of amateur images as visual text connection to *Travelmate*?

Respondent: They are important. Pictures can give quick visual output. I think amateur images fill up some gaps where the professionals are unable to reach due to lack of time, workload, budget and others. Nowadays we have budget airlines and other options where everyone goes traveling and holiday. The pictures taken and experiences gained during personal trips are more interesting. By collecting these travel stories and experiences, we no longer need to purposely send a professional photographer to go somewhere. It save a lot of money.

Researcher: Do you welcome all types of reader-generated images?

Respondent: We welcome readers to submit their pictures but to ensure good quality of the magazine, we have to filter and select the content that is best suited.

Researcher: Are there any selection criteria for the pictures?

Respondent: Oh yes. The pictures have to be creative, represents personality, rich of ideas and individual perspectives, themes and the location must be interesting and attractive. We

prefer photographers who can write and take photograph (picture & text need to be synchronized) as well. The photographer needs to have basic knowledge of photography to produce sufficient quality for standard printing. For example, the picture needs to have sufficient pixel and at least in the size of 3000 x 2000 pixels. Type of camera is not important. You do not have to use DSLR as current compact camera works well. Iphone is acceptable but not preferred at this point of time.

Researcher: We end the conversation here today. Thank you for the information.

Respondent: You are welcome.

Third conversation:

Researcher: This time I have some questions about the relationship between *Travelmate* and non-professional contributors.

Respondent: Ok.

Researcher: Do *Travelmate* have regular amateur contributor?

Respondent: Yes we do. Non-professional photographers are normally readers of Travelmate, who have good and close relationship with the publisher and the editorial team. Our relationship is more like 'friend' rather than commercial trading.

Researcher: Has there been any written contracts signed between *Travelmate* and amateur photographers?

Respondent: No, we do not have. We paid some money and gave free magazine to non-professional photographers. They deserve the copyright. The photographs will not be re-used or distributed without the consent of the photographer. Even though the non-professional photographers are often underpaid and the financial return is small, they are still willing to contribute to Travelmate. I think they are not participating for financial reward. All of them have other full-time jobs; they are highly educated and they have a stable financial income. Hence, contributing to Travelmate is a hobby. However, they are rewarded with respect and recognition to their professionalism.

Researcher: How does *Travelmate* search for a contributor?

Respondent: In the field of photography we have long-term relationship with few professional photographers. Part of the contents is contributed by PCP permanent paid staff. For non-professional photographers, we encourage our readers to submit their travel pictures and articles.

Researcher: Does this meet all the requirements?

Respondent: Actually they do not. We are always lacking articles and pictures. Most of the pictures and articles submitted by the readers cannot meet our selection criteria, bad quality of pictures, bad composition, bad writing or the article is about a location we have published before. We need fresh topics for readers.

Researcher: How do you find potential contributors then?

Respondent: Sometimes through recommendation. We can find talented photographers from competitions, talks, and activities that we organized. I always search for talented traveler online – they write blogs and they share their pictures online as well. When you read their blogs and view their pictures, you know what kind of pictures they can produce.

Researcher: Which websites are you visiting?

Respondent: Blogspot, Facebook, flickr, Multiply and other online websites. One of the advantages is that people link other blogs with a hyperlink, it is like a snowball effect.

Researcher: How do readers differentiate professional and non-professional photographers?

Respondent: They cannot differentiate. However, you can guess from the introduction column in each article, where you will find the author's information.

Researcher: The non-professional photographers who participated in my research mention that they do not gain any fame.

Respondent: This is not true, they have fans and the fans will follow blogs and join the travel talks to support the authors they like.

Researcher: Are there any challenges you faced in incorporating amateur images in content production?

Respondent: One of the challenges is lack of channels to find talented non-professionals. We have regular non-professional photographers who are willing to contribute, but the readers need fresh air. We are having difficulties to find more and new non-professional photographers under a low budget. Only small number of non-professionals can produce excellent pictures. Very few of them can write and take pictures. Some of them do not publish their work publicly.

Researcher: What do you think about the use of amateur images?

Respondent: To reduce the cost and to create fruitful magazine content. I think that by incorporating a reader-generated content is a right move and we will continue this practice in future. Actually, it is also an interaction between the publisher and its readers. We are producing a magazine about readers, not a magazine for readers. We let the readers make a call of what information they want to read and receive, even though the final selection and decision is still at the publisher. As a professional photographer, I think that the growth of amateur images is definitely a threat for the field press. There is a group of enthusiasts who can produce good quality of images at a low cost. However, it is a healthy competition, you can learn something from non-professionals.

Researcher: Thank you for participating in this research, I appreciate the time and information you have provided. I will send you an email if I need further clarification.

Respondent: Welcome. Please let me know if there is any question.

Appendix G: Three Types of Leisure Activities Suggested by Stebbins (2007)

