(Google Maps and the Rise of the Hyperlocal Web)

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This Is CNN?!

Sure, she could pass for Lindsay Lohan, but Nicole Lapin is not just a pretty face behind a news desk. She speaks five languages, was valedictorian at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, and at 23 is one of the youngest anchors in CNN's history. Plus, as host of CNN.com Live Video (formerly CNN Pipeline), the network's 24-hour online news service, the SoCal native is charged with pioneering the organization's future on the Internet. We spoke to Lapin about being a reporter in the age of citizen journalism. —ERIC STEUER

Why take a job anchoring news on the Web? Doesn't everyone want to be on TV?
This is the future of news. It's what my children will watch. Plus, there's something great about being part of a venture like this from the start. Kurt Loder will always be associated with MTV News. Bernard Shaw will forever be synonymous with CNN—he started when people didn't think the network would last.

You're part of the first generation of reporters to arrive in the era of citizen journalism. How has this shaped the way you work?
Right now, I'm producing a series about influential young people, and some of the ideas I've used have come directly from suggestions readers have left on my blog. As an anchor in this new medium, what I do is a combination of traditional reporting and pointing people to where they can find the story told best.

You don't think of all those bloggers and cell phone photogs out there as competition?
No. What they do can be a great help to what we do, and vice versa. The only video of the Virginia Tech massacre came from a student, not a professional journalist. Even with all of CNN's bureaus, correspondents, and video journalists across the globe, we can't be everywhere.

What's the best part of your job?
It's fast-paced and requires a lot of quick thinking. Anchoring four hours a day, solo, you have to know your stuff. But I do. I'm a real geek.

A geek, eh? Let's see you prove it. What is the coolest gadget you own?
Easy: my white BlackBerry Pearl. It might as well be sutured to my hand. My friends want to stage an intervention.

And your favorite sci-fi flick?
Does *The Truman Show* count? If not, *ET*! It's brilliant.

Here's a good one: If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
The power to not require sleep.

PHOTOGRAPH BY Christopher T. Martin