

INTRODUCCIÓN

La conjunción de la crisis económica mundial, la crisis de los medios tradicionales y el auge del Periodismo 2.0 obliga a replantear el rol social del periodista, los modos de aproximación a la realidad y la capacidad de la e-comunicación para crear un nuevo modelo que favorezca la consolidación de una nueva sociedad.

Periodística y web 2.0: hacia la construcción de un nuevo modelo se propuso analizar la situación actual de la profesión y de la investigación en periodismo en un escenario cambiante marcado por el desarrollo de los formatos digitales.

En ese contexto, durante dos días, los expertos reunidos procedieron a una profunda reflexión sobre las oportunidades que la nueva realidad presenta a los periodistas como analistas, intérpretes y narradores de la actualidad. Sus conclusiones se recogen aquí.

PARTE PRIMERA

PONENTES

A NEW INFORMATION LANDSCAPE. ARE CONVERGENCE, PARTICIPATION AND NEW DEVICES KILLING (OR SAVING) THE PRESS?

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1. INTRODUCTION

The extension of the Internet amongst the Western population, the possibility of access to the Net using a plethora of devices –from PC to the electronic tablets, from PDA to smart-phones–, their increasing capacity and decreasing price, and the advance of societies of those developing countries and emergent economies like China, India or Brazil, in which an increasing middle class is the basis of democracy and consumption, are provoking from approximately 1995 onwards a deep transformation in the form people communicate, the way humans offer and consume information.

The information economy in the last two decades, from the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, has established the value of intangible goods –news and entertainment, basically– as one of the pillars of modern societies, in which economy and commerce impose their own rules and, sometimes, superiority over national ruling and lawmaking. Not unusually, commerce law –and tax law as well– are conceived from a transnational point of view, and international agreements try to unify national legislation in order to do trade easier. Intellectual property is a clear example: organisms such WIPO or the European Union have achieved an harmonisation of laws all over the world. At the same time, enterprises and groups are no more national but transnational, since their operation field, strategies and capital come from different sources. Facility of information exchange has never been so easy and quick, offer is exponentially greater, but nevertheless power is concentrated in such few hands. Newspaper industry has changed as well; aside with mainly familiar property –*The New York Times* in the United States or *O Globo* in Brazil are some examples– magnates like Rupert Murdoch are changing –or trying to do so– the rules. He owns *The Times* and *The Sun*, he owns *The New York Post* and *Wall Street Journal*, and he owns Fox television channel. News Corp., his own group, is responsible of the contents and ideas all those media, and more others, offer to us¹. It is leader of complaint to aggregators and free information on the Internet, and the main voice of payment media. A variety of media does not necessarily means –which is obvious to be said– a variety of point of views. More channels do not necessarily mean more pluralism,

1 And he is responsible, as well, of a considerable scandal about illegal wiring practiced by their journalists that lead to the closing of *News of the World* in July 2011. Rupert Murdoch and his son, James, were called to declare at the House of Lords because of the affair.

nor more democracy. Such media are so influential, through news or through entertainment, that we have probably not known such an era in which press is so clearly the fourth power. At the same time, a boom of new forms of communication, linked to the flexibility and extension of the Internet, are changing the way people interact. From blogs to Twitter, from chat to Facebook, from mere comments to news to real citizen journalism, from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0 concepts, it seems that Internet has become a social network.

Journalism on digital networks, and specifically on the Internet², is a relatively recent phenomenon, whose spread began in approximately 1994, in parallel to that of the World Wide Web. Study of this new communicative phenomenon began simultaneously in several countries. This, in its turn, was helped by the new possibilities for communication amongst academics - electronic mail, predating the WWW, was, and is, one of the most widely used tools of the university community. The spread of these new forms of global communication helped to raise mutual awareness between research groups, making it possible to form increasingly broad and cohesive networks. This is also a question of inclusion and exclusion: “The fuzziness of inclusion/exclusion and the dynamic relationships of gatekeeper-gated may lead us towards a growing capability of users to exercise alternatives, specifically to exercise the right of exit from gatekeepers’ networks,” says Karine Nahon (Nahon, 2011: 769).

Research on this new communication phenomenon, digital communication through online networks –today it means the Internet, tomorrow no one knows–, and specially online news and online media, is being currently doing following two paths: general reflections on the Internet, and more specific research on media system and message. Names such as Manuel Castells, Armand Mattelart, Dominique Wolton, Derrick de Kerkchove or Steven Jones (Jones, 1999) are sufficiently known in the first field. We will concentrate on the second one, online media, and we will try to explain to which extent media system is changing, considering convergence, participation and some technical improvements as a starting point –and history as our main focus.

2. MEDIA TAKE A POSITION ON THE WEB

The World Wide Web was neither the origin of the Internet, nor of the online media. Bulletin Board System, common until the middle of the 1990s, was the main community online system, and some (not mainstream) media, but during the first years of the decade, some printed media (*Nando* in the United States, for instance) began to publish a BBS edition.

2 This is known by different names. In English the customary term is *online journalism*. In Spanish the most widely used term is *ciberperiodismo* (*cyberjournalism*), the one preferred by Spanish researchers. In Portuguese the term employed was *webjornalismo* (*webjournalism*), which is commonly used in German language as well (*web-journalismus*). More recently *ciberjornalismo* has also been widely accepted, both in Brazil and Portugal. A similar term is commonly used in French as well. In this re-search, we will use both terms, *online journalism* and *cyberjournalism*.

When the World Wide Web was launched, it became rapidly very popular, and then, in 1994-1995, some media companies all over the world began considering going through that service, and began to abandon Servicom or CompuServe. Some newspapers are considered to be the pioneers of Web journalism: in the United States, *Chicago Tribune* was distributed by AOL since May 1992, and then, in 1993, *San José Mercury Center*, Nando.net (an online version of the community local daily newspaper *Nando Times*) decided to go online, *The Boston Globe* decided some time later to create a community board and in Europe, one of the first was *The Electronic Telegraph*, an online version of *The Telegraph*. Some other prestigious companies followed, and by 1994 *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (now *Philly.com*) launched their digital editions on the Net, and, as consequence of a strike, two journalists from *The Chronical* and *The Examiner* launched from California *San Francisco Free Press*³. USA Today was launched on the Net in 1995.

Some experiments on tablets were also done at the moment. Roger Fidler, from Knight-Rid-der, propose the *flat panel* in 1994, but the research project was cancelled by the group by 1996⁴. The British Evening Standard also proposed a similar concept, the Newsbox, but it was never launched. Between 1994 and 1996, a research group headed by Mario Santinoli, then working for El Periódico de Catalunya, developed a prototype called NewsPad, which really worked, but was never commercialized.

Alliances began. The then dominant browser company, Netscape Communicator, made a joint venture with Reuter, ABC Television, *The New York Times*, The Boston Globe, Times Mirror and Los Angeles Times in 1996. That year, Microsoft and NBC created a cable and Internet television, MSNBC.

The online audience was also taking shape. William Casey, the director of computer-assisted reporting at The Washington Post, saw two group, the first consisting “of newspaper readers with a need to see publications to which they normally don’t have access”, and the second one consisting of “those with a specific interest in particular subjects or policy areas” (mentioned in Driscoll et al., 2005: 15).

The mainstream major media decided to take some time before placing a website. Le Monde Interactif (today LeMonde.fr) was placed in December 1995. *The New York Times* On The Web (now just *The New York Times*) debuted in January 1996. *El País Digital* (now *El País.com*) appeared for the first time on the Web in May 1996, when most of their competitors were already online. One of the most important online media all over the world, and a model in many ways, *BBC News*, went online only in November 1997 (Thor-

3 It was already accessible in November 2011: http://www.well.com/conf/media/SF_Free_Press/

4 See Williams, J. (2011) ‘The tablets’ long story’. *Wired*, <<http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2011/10/the-tablets-long-history/#more-91099>>. Accessed: November 25, 2011; Aumente, J. (1994). Panel Vision. *American Journalism Review* <<http://www.ajt.org/Article.asp?id=1257>>

sen, Allan & Carter, 2010), since the Web audience was growing 10% every month, “an initiative within the Corporation’s strategy to reaffirm its public service ethos in a multi-channel universe, and thereby be better placed to challenge rivals such as CNN [its website *CNN Interactive* was successful at the time], MSNBC, Euronews, and News Corp.” (Allen, 2006: 35⁵). In fact, there were conversations with Microsoft, which had led *BBC News* to be ‘MSBBC’ (Smartt, 2007). They began with just 40 journalists working for the Web⁶, but multi-skilled from the very beginning. In just one year, by 1998, *BBC News*, which was described by M. Smartt as a hybrid of formats or a dynamic newspaper, and also a third broadcast medium (Smartt, 2007) was considered the leading British Internet site.

3. A CONSOLIDATION PERIOD: FIRST STEPS TOWARDS AN ORIGINAL MODEL

The first years of online journalism on the Web were devoted to experimentation or, properly speaking, situation: everyone needed to be there and do that. Conception varied greatly from website to website, both in design and in contents. Anyway, by 1996 there were some professional models, not merely exploratory, but conscious of doing some steps towards a proper journalistic and business model. There was an emerging market, and an attempt to differentiate online versions from the print ones. *San José Mercury Center*, online version of *San José Mercury News* from California, published a report series on the sale of cocaine in Southern California, which created much controversy, and they gave birth to an interactive strategy with readers which is now a common practice in the online world. It was followed by *Dallas Morning News*, the first one in deciding to give a scoop online, “because they feared CNN would scoop” (Salwen, Garrison & Driscoll, 2005: 3-4). “Did we scoop ourselves? I don’t think so,” said Dale Perskin, assistant managing editor of the paper, instead, they got everybody repeating “a scoop heard around the Internet” (see it in Allan, 2006: 20). From 1996-1997 media companies confessed that they were seeking for a business model, so they needed to launch an attractive offer to consumers. Online editions are not merely *shovelware*, and newsrooms try to develop some specificity as well. A new question arose: convergence.

The term ‘convergence’ is, from the 1980’s onwards when Ithiel de Sola Pool applied the concept to communication, a fashionable word in research. Definition of the concept

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- 5 The Corporation of the BBC had launched previously, in 1994 and 1995, some special sites: The *BBC Networking Club* was launched in June 1994, and *Budget ’95* was prepared in 1995 in collaboration with the Press Association, another one in November 1996. The last test, so to be said, was the site *Election 97*, when prime minister John Major announce the next elections’ date (Thorsen, 2010: 216)
 - 6 “Or rather, there weren’t. A few bright, prescient individuals came from other BBC departments to work on the web, but most people in the organisation viewed the new setup as a bunch of anti-social nerds, doomed to failure. So text journalists - text and a few still pictures being the early staple of all internet news sites - were recruited from outside.” (Smartt, 2007). On the history of BBC News online, see also Butterworth, 1999 and 2007.

presents, however, some difficulties. Before it became an idea associated with journalism, the concept of convergence was employed in fields as disparate as mathematics, economics or biology (Gordon, 2003). Since the late 1980s, the term “convergence” has been used to refer to a variety of concepts related to the technological transformation of telecommunications; it has had heterogeneous meanings, complementing each other on occasions and elusive on others. This is due to the variety of approaches and perspectives adopted in studies on media convergence: business (Killebrew, 2005; Lawson-Borders, 2006), juridical, technological (Forgacs, 2001; Idei, 2002), multiplatform (Thompson, 1999) and cultural (Jenkins, 2006), all of which highlights the close relationship amongst technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences.

Around those years, at least in the United States, online media were not sure about where they were going to. During a seminar held in the Department for Continuing Education at Oxford University, in May 1999, I said:

Most newspapers on the Internet are a mere version of a printed newspaper or magazine. There are some exceptions, of course. One of them is the electronic magazine *Salon*, from San Francisco, U.S., direct competitor of Microsoft's own magazine, *Slate*, both of them with no printed version. *Salon*, which is weekly, has 33.000 visitors a day.

But some events pulled the online media to the necessity of embrace the potentiality of the digital language. “Even before Diana [of Wales]’s death had been officially announced at a news conference at Paris [...] online news coverage encompassed the globe” in August 1997 (Allen, 2006: 26). Matt Drudge’s *Drudge Report* was created, primarily as a collection of links to other sites, but with occasional flash news, a model which, with some modernized characteristics, has inspired much more online media, and even *Huffington Post*. When in 1998 Kenneth Starr presented their report on US president Bill Clinton’s sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky, *Drudge Report* posted for the first time a mention to it, and immediately, many media of the world reproduced, linked or translated the many pages of the Starr report through Matt Drudge’s site. “Newspaper readers will have to rely on summaries,” said in 2000 Hans-Jürgen Diller, because “the most obvious difference between the Internet and a printed newspaper is that no paper can afford to publish a document the size of the Starr Report (445 pages!)” (Diller, 2000: 208). The credibility of online media was failing, to some extent, but such documentary resources helped recover it.

Another characteristic, alongside with hypertext, multimedia or interactivity, became extremely important for online media: real time or immediacy. Immediacy, “the capacity for greater depth in online reporting”, the use of “previous articles [...] to help contextualize events” and interactivity were the major advantages that, as early as 1997, the editor of *WashingtonPost.com*, Jason Seiken, saw in online media (Allen, 2006: 25). A

newspaper is daily, weekly, monthly, it is periodical, because it appears sometimes in a concrete period of time. It is partly due to technical reasons. As physical things produced by press, they need to be printed and distributed. But an Internet newspaper had not. “It can be redone as news come”, again are words back from 1999. “Sometimes it is done: CNN Interactive, the Internet service of CNN, is a *continuum* of information. It is possible to give more and longer news, because we have no longer limitations as those imposed by a concrete number or printed pages, and it is possible to offer them very quickly. It is possible to send the user to the primary sources using the hypertext links.” (Díaz Noci, 1999). Today this words sound naive, but at that time it seemed a complete revolution for initiates.

At that time, there was not “a proper design for the Internet and news are presented with no hierarchy, not as a map, which the form in which news are presented in printed pages. On the other hand, sometimes news for the Internet newspaper are showed in a row, with no great order or strategy. The design is absolutely vertical.” (Díaz Noci, 1999).

The great debate of the times was if this was to kill that, if Internet would substitute the printed page. the report *The Future of the Printed Press challenges in a digital world*, whose title is meaningful, of the European Journalism Centre, pretended that the transmission of information was changing and focused on economics and the role of journalists in the new digital environment, nevertheless it was about giving some advices to newspaper industry to save its business. Anyway, the number of newspapers on the Internet was increasingly growing. A report by Bernardo Díaz Nosty, commissioned by the European Journalists Association, was presented in September 1998 in Porto during the 4th Forum Euro-Latin-American of Communications. The report said that all over the world there were more than 10,000 media with some presence on the Internet. 2,284 were daily newspapers. English was the main language (1,236 titles), more than 54 % of them all. The second language, quite far from English, was Spanish, 325 dailies from 22 Spanish-speaking countries, 14,2 % of all⁷.

As Pablo Boczkowski demonstrated in his PhD thesis, the culture of innovation of the media was based in a combination of reactive, defensive and pragmatic characteristics, far from the technological determinism, which came from Marshal MacLuhan and which was claimed to be superseded by, amongst other scholars, Neil Postman as well. At least, some other scholars prefer to substitute it for “a pluri-determinism”, because there are several driving forces leading all the process (Brügger, 2010: 31). Until at least 1997, on-line media were quite static and based on *shovelware*, mainly a reproduction of the printed contents with few adaptation to the digital language, but in that moment the media realized that a change was necessary and implemented the first content management systems for the html edition. At the moment, according to a report of 1998 by The Pew

7 *El País*, October 15, 1998.

Research Centre, 20 per cent of the Americans connected at least once a week to the Internet to get some news, 36 million people. That still seem not to have any incidence in the press business, whose readers and buyers were exactly the same that before, more or less. But, I remembered in 1999, “the American user believes more and more in the news he or she gets from the Internet. Probably it is a tendency all over the world” (Díaz Noci, 1999).

Online infographics were also common at that time. Online staffs grew up as well, and media webs were converted into portal, following a model began by Yahoo!, Netscape, America On Line (AOL) and Lycos. This is specially clear in Brazil, where Globo Group, one of the largest media-companies in Latin America (and all over the world) controls a majority of media in this huge country and determines the shape of many media-based websites (Herscovitz, 2009). In Europe, such model was not totally successful. One example is *Le Monde* which, through its trademark *Le Monde Interactif*, decided to launch a portal called *tout.lemonde.fr* in the Spring of 2000, and abandoned it in June of the same year.

A model for online media was *BBC News*, which by March 1998 had 8.17 millions page im-pressions and was offering 61,000 news items (Thorsen, Allan and Carter, 2010: 119), and in 1999 resisted the pressions to become a commercial operation. They did a bet on interactivity, and they won.

From 1998 to 2001, which have grown 120% during those years (Driscoll *et al.*, 2005: 6) online media were quite homogeneous, as the .com boom happened. The aspect of the webs were quite similar as well, and developments in the html languages, such as the cascade style sheets (CSS), were determining for entering a new conception of those media as database, in which contents could be showed in very different formats and sent to very different devices, and not only displayed on the PC screen. As cell phones –and pads or digital agenda, Apple’s Newton was the first one– were an increasingly widespread device and their technology grew up and they developed a computer in itself, able to show multimedia, online media had to adapt themselves to them as well.

The attacks agains the World Trade Center in New York durgin September 11, 2001, was a milestone for journalism, and online journalism had to suffer an ‘acid test’⁸. Most of the online news almost collapsed, CNN.com and ABCNews.com found themselves unable to display videos, *WSJ.com* became free of charge that day, but at the same time the millions of visits online media received (10.6 millions *The New York Times*, 17.2 million people *CNN.com*, for instance) proved the existence of a real demand of this kind of immediate and at the same time accurate information (Allen, 2006: 53-71).

8 Most of the websites dealing with September 11 can be consulted at the September 11 Web Archive (<http://september11.archive.org>), collected by the US Library of the Congress.

4. THE FIRST CRISIS: THE CHALLENGES OF THE MULTIMEDIA AND INTERACTIVE MODEL

Around 2002 began another period for online media, since some of them decided to explore payment models, seeking not for readers, but for economic profits; “news organizations have no incentives to produce original online news”, said Driscoll *et al.* in 2005 (Driscoll *et al.*, 2005: 47), and these new companies needed investments. Design was also renewed, and some moves in manager staff occurred in many media. The number of online newspaper reached in 2002 the number of 2,959 all over the world, as estimated by the World Association of Newspapers. At the same time, online media were “responding to the increased sophistication of online readers, providing more multimedia features, deeper content and frequent updates” (Greer and Mensing, 2003).

The attacks against Madrid, in March 2004, and London, in July 2005, marked another milestone in online journalism’s development. Online newspapers were prepared for covering such an event, and, for instance, *Guardian.co.uk* obtained 1.3 million unique visitors and served 7.8 million pages. Online media were able to react and satisfy the expectation created. First of all, as Fogel and Patiño remembered, the frontier between journalists and audience disappeared; just some minutes after the explosion in England, the BBC newsroom received the first images sent by the citizens. That day, Internet became the *primus inter pares* in media system (Fogel & Patiño, 2005).

Around 2006, the evolution of online media was clearer, as news were refreshed and as online media got some independence and were seeking for maturity. A research conducted in the University of Texas in Austin analyzed samples from more than twenty American online newspapers from 2003 to 2006, and registered an increasing number of service information which was consolidated in the World Wide Web (Tremayne *et al.*, 2006).

5. A PROPER MODEL

New facilities were offered by online media. Around 2006-2007, the use of RSS, reporter blogs⁹, video, comments and podcasts was a common practice, although the first documented use of blog—an edition platform appeared as we know it in 1994, but popularized in 1999 with the creation of the free Pitas platform—to cover a breaking news story was in 1998 in the *Charlotte Observer*, in occasion of Hurricane Bonnie (Tunney & Monaghan, 2010: 31¹⁰), and was the prelude for further witnessing journalism, of which an example is the coverage of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. But it was in two moments, during

9 For example, “In October 2004, *Le Monde.fr* opened a blog platform for subscribers, as well as their own paper columnists. One of *Le Monde*’s political news correspondents based in New York and Washington, Corine Lesnes, was one of the first to blog on *Le Monde.fr*.”

10 <http://web.archive.org/web/20010417195542/www.charlotte.com/special/bonnie/0820dispatches.htm>.

the Iraq War in 2003, when *CNN.com* correspondent Kevin Sites published his own blog giving his personal comments on situation, MSNBC used three blogs ('Weblogs are journalism', said Joan Connell, executive producer –see Allen, 200: 108), and freelancer Christopher Allbitton announced that he would cover the war using his blog, *Back to Iraq 2.0*¹¹ (<http://www.back-to-iraq.com/>), a model that was followed by some other journalist in the world, i.e., David Beriain, then working for the Spanish newspaper *La Voz de Galicia* and in 2004, during the US presidential campaign, that the use of this publishing platform became extensive amongst journalists. Blogs were used as a source as well, and were at the origin of witness journalism. Probably the most famous one was *Where is Raed*. Later on, social networks have been extremely useful to cover foreign affairs in countries where censorship already exists, but this has not avoided unethical practices on the Web and outside it.

Participatory journalism, a term which in 1970-1980 meant "journalists participating in the events" became a common expression now to refer to users taking part in the news process: media needed to offer, in spite of their initial reluctance, their readers' blogs, comments on stories, message boards, polls, Q&A, etc. (Thurman & Hermida, 2010: 48). Approximately 97% of the American online media were using RSS in 2007, 95% had reporter blogs, 92% of them used video, and 49% of them offered podcasts (the figures were of 76%, 80% 61% and 31% the year before, according to the World Association of Newspapers and the Bivings Group). Probably the most outstanding characteristic incorporated by online media, especially by newspapers' websites, was video, influenced by the emergence of YouTube in 2004¹². Some properly participatory or citizen-journalism devoted media (also called open source *reporting media*) appeared in the first years of the new millennium, like *IndyMedia*, *ObmyNews* and *Wikinews*. Financial problems have reduced the importance of at least the two last ones in the recent years.

By 2008, the WWW was the second information source for the American audience, according to *State of the News Media* (Nieman Foundation, 2009) and a report by the World Association of Newspapers and IFRA, and adoption of the social web was world wide-spread by this year as well; almost every online media in the world had its Facebook and Twitter facilities. At the same time, other information agents were consolidated and had introduced by that time major changes in the way news arrived to the audiences. Digg, for example, competed with the well-established media in news dissemination, but not production, and aggregators linked to search engines like YahooNews and Google News (created in 2002) posed news problems to a weakened newspaper industry. An increasing percentage of the audience of online media come from search engines, especially Google (Andrews, 2007). On the other hand, an also increasing percentage of the visit to online newspapers came from social networks; e.g., 8% of the visits to the *Telegraph.co.uk* came from Twitter in 2009 (Farhi, 2009; Arceneaux & Schmitz, 2009; Ahmad,

11 <http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2003/03/58043?currentPage=all>

12 YouTube was acquired by Google in October 2006.

2010). In spite of all complaints, it was only in Belgium that the judges recognized in 2010 that such aggregators were not doing a fair use of the news created by third parties.

The content offered by the online media tends to be more and more properly created for the Web, instead of being a mere adaptation of the printed (or even audiovisual, in the case of radio and television-based websites) material. Somewhere during the first decade of the 21st century, the division was between *digital natives*, “native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet”, and *digital immigrants*, “those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point of our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology” (Prensky, 2001), but between *visitors*, those who “see the Web as primarily a set of tools which deliver or manipulate content”, and *residents*, those who “see the Web as a place [...] a proportion of their lives is actually lived out online where the distinction between online and off-line is increasingly blurred” (White and Le Cornu, 2011).

If we translate this metaphor to media, this should be near to the attitude and strategy adopted by, for instance, *The Guardian*, which in 2011 decided to offer all its content “Web first¹³”. The decision was conditioned by the fact that only 4% of their readers confessed that they knew news for the first time reading the printed newspaper so, they concluded, they read the paper in a more calmed way, preferentially on the evening, as explained by Andrew Miller. *The Guardian*’s editor-in-chief, Alan Rusbridger, explained that “if I want to be conservative in order to protect *The Guardian*, my instinct says that I have to be more conservative for the online¹⁴”. Not surprisingly at all, because in June 2006 they also announced a similar strategy (“Guardian to offer news online first¹⁵”), but it was not to become fully operative until five more years were passed, when they appeared convinced that “digital rises as press power wanes¹⁶”. In any case, the timing of news production has changed over the years: in 2009, as published by the Newspaper Association of America, 62% of the newspapers in the United States were published to be sold around 6 am.

Even the most reputed (online) newspapers of the world did not refuse to publish more than 250,000 diplomatic cables discovered by Wikileaks in November 2010. Because of the selection and publication of those documents an old debate emerged, amplified by the immediacy and power of the Internet, which put on the hands of the world lit-

13 Web First: Guardian and Observer to adopt 'digital-first' strategy | Media | guardian.co.uk: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/jun/16/guardian-observer-digital-first-strategy>. See also <http://www.guardian.co.uk/gnm-press-office/guardian-news-media-digital-first-organisation>

14 Both Miller’s and Rusbridger’s words appeared in Echevarría, Borja (2011). “La prensa hace catarsis rumbo al futuro”. *El País.com* <http://www.elpais.com/especial/35-aniversario/el_pais_del_futuro/la_prensa_hace_catarsis>. Access: October 20, 2011. This article’s author believes in a hybrid model for the next future.

15 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jun/07/theguardian.pressandpublishing>

16 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/jul/19/mediaguardian-100-2010-overview>

teraly thousand of sensitive information with little mediation. In a first moment, Wikileaks creator Julian Assange advanced in June 2010 the next publication of those US ambassadors' cables, since Assange thought (which is a good indicator that newspaper industry is in good health condition "that this story would have a greater impact if he was willing to work together with newspapers" (Carvajal, García Avilés & González Esteban, 2011: 84). *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* accepted to publish the material, and some time later *El País* and *Le Monde* joined them. A huge amount of text needed to be revised, and then the media launched some special sections of their websites. At least two of them, *Guardian.co.uk* and *ElPaís.com*, created a database interface to facilitate users the search for information and display the documents. Even if the cables were considered "to be embarrassing, more than damaging," as Alan Rusbridger, editor of *The Guardian* said, the affair stirred considerably the Net and the public opinion, posed some ethic and professional problems, produced a debate on censorship, freedom of speech and state secrets, even on the nature of journalism, what was considered to be news, the opportunity of publishing such data, and finally the pressures led to the economic strangling of Wikileaks in November 2011, just one year after the so-called *Cablegate* exploded.

6. IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD (AS WE KNEW IT)

At the end of the first decade of 2000, a quite apocalyptic debate on whether the media system and journalism –especially the printed press- was disappearing emerged. For the last time, in April 2006, the American press industry collectively had benefits and an annual growing¹⁷. From then onwards, the trend was decreasing. In 2008, Mark Deuze, at the beginning of a lecture given in the University of Westminster, London, said: "Journalism as it is, is coming to an end", and he explained it this way:

The internet makes all other types of newsmedia rather obsolete (especially for young adults and teenagers), commercialization and cross-media mergers have gradually eroded the distinct professional identities of newsrooms and their publications (whether in print or broadcast), and by insisting on a traditional orientation towards the nation, journalists are losing touch with a society that is global as well as local (Deuze, 2008: 4)

The concern of the newspaper industry worldwide started at least in 2006, when a strategy report called *New Editorial Concepts* was published, in which the World Association of Newspapers mentioned some trends that influenced newsroom and journalists. The first one was the arising of participative journalism, or even community-generated content, as well as an increasingly deliver of personalized news sent to mobile devices. As a consequence, said the report, new forms of storytelling were being developed, especially

17 Data of the American Newspaper Association.

because a growing part of these news items was audience-focused. And, finally, newsrooms were reorganizing to adopt this focus.

During 2008 –when some media began to abandon print and embrace Web-only editions– and, above all, 2009, some influential names wrote on this subject. According to Bree Norderson, all it started with a report made for hire by Context for Associated Press, an in-depth study of young-adult news consumption around the world. The research concludes that “the abundance of news and ubiquity of choice do not necessarily translate into a better news environment for consumers,” concluded the researchers in their final report. “Participants in this study showed signs of news fatigue; that is, they appeared debilitated by information overload and unsatisfying news experiences.” This is a paragraph that appears to be a *motto* year after, since every report on the state of newspaper reproduces it literally¹⁸. Bree Norderson was convinced that “While it’s true that the Web allows the average individual to create and disseminate information without the help of a publishing house or a news organization, this does not mean journalism institutions are no longer relevant,” but, at the same time, he was in favor of “the flood of news created by the production bias of the Internet could, in the end, point to a new role for journalistic institutions,” and mentioned the example of the BBC, which, “by providing links to background information and analysis alongside every news story, gives consumers frameworks for understanding that generate an appetite for more information.” (Norderson, 2008).

From then onwards, the subject stirred on print and web pages. Philip Meyer, author of *The Vanishing Paper* (2004), a book in which he predicted the disappearance of the printed newspapers in 2043, wrote an article in 2009, in which he explained the difference between the two models:

The Internet wrecks the old newspaper business model in two ways. It moves information with zero variable cost, which means it has no barriers to growth, unlike a newspaper, which has to pay for paper, ink and transportation in direct proportion to the number of copies produced. And the Internet's entry costs are low. Anyone with a computer can become a publisher, as Matt Drudge demonstrated when he broke the Monica Lewinsky story in 1998 and countless bloggers have shown in the decade since. (Meyer, 2009).

Moreover, he predicted: “Newspapers would still have to worry about the Internet and its unbeatable capacity for narrowcasting. The newspapers that survive will probably do so with some kind of hybrid content: analysis, interpretation and investigative reporting in a print product that appears less than daily, combined with constant updating and re-

18 I.e., WAN/IFRA, 2011: <http://www.wan-ifra.org/articles/2011/01/14/the-ipad-lesson-creating-a-news-show-across-devices>.