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See you on Facebook or Twitter? The use of social media by  
27 news outlets from 9 regions in Argentina, Colombia,  
Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Venezuela.

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## Abstract

The aim of the present study is to examine the use of social networking tools by news outlets from 9 regions in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Venezuela. It builds on research by Thurman and Hermida (2010), Vujnovic et al. (2010), Jerónimo and Duarte (2010), Garcia de Torres et al. (2010), Lewis et al. (2010) and Díaz Noci et al. (2010). We seek to determine if the dynamics involved in the production of local news is affected by the use of social networking tools through a combination of observation of news outlet profiles on Facebook and Twitter, as well as using semi-structured interviews.

**Key words:** UGC, Online Journalism, Regional, Social Media

According to Cardoso (2011), a fourth model of communication is emerging as a reflection of the current information model, exemplified by P2P distribution and the role of social networks, where Mass self-communication and computer-mediated communication gain prominence. Data on the use of social media provides a solid argument: In the US, nearly 1 out of every 8 minutes online is spent on Facebook, social networking is the foremost online activity in Chile and second in Argentina. Europe experienced the highest increase in the penetration of social networks in 2010 (10,9) with Facebook being the largest social networking site in 15 of the 18 markets examined by Comscore (2010, 2011, 2001a).

In 2007, as a result of viral response and the mixture of professional and amateur coverage of London's bombings and Burma's protests, Emily Bell, editor-in-chief of Guardian Unlimited wrote: "...now the job is a different one - to find and help the people with the best stories tell them to the outside world. And who is the best placed to do that? A journalist or You Tube? A journalist or Blogger? A journalist or Flickr? A newspaper publisher or Google?" (Bell, 2007). Two years later, in August 2009, Jeff Reifman (2009), founder of NewsCloud, referring to small markets, argues that without new approaches most local news sites would be consumed by Twitter.

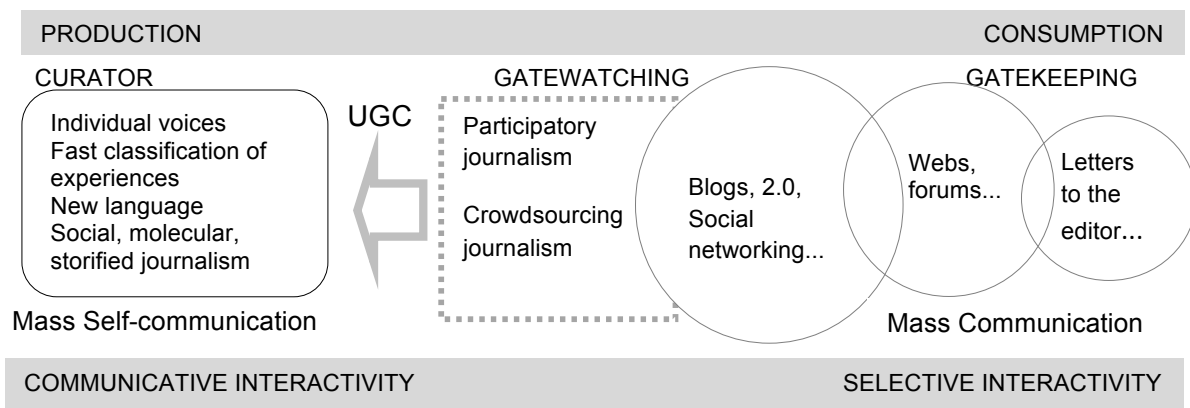
Recently, Boston.com has built the application "Your Boston" and Rockville Central has migrated to Facebook. The paper will not host its own ads but still, Brad Rourke, founder and publisher of Rockville Central considers it worth it:

"...we are trying to be a "Community Hub. That is not a news source - though it can include some news. It is not a comment space - though it can include comments. It's a locus where all these things come together (...). Seen in that regard, the fragmentation on FB is a good thing, since it means little dribs and drabs of RC are going to always be floating around...". (March, 2011).

It is uncertain what role Mass Media is to play in such an environment at micro, meso and macro-social levels, or indeed, which will be the prevalent model of journalism. In a self-centric system, Journalism will survive but in a different way (Calmon Alves, 2010).

Gatewatching appears to be inefficient in processing massive data, and there is no more gatekeeping (Bruns, 2008, Singer, 2007, Kovak and Rosenstiel, 1999). As a consequence, new roles are being defined to "help the people with the best stories tell them to the world", namely "Community manager" and "curator". The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is to close "Have your say", as they plan to integrate User-Generated Content within the news stories; the notion that every journalist should be a Social Media Editor is expanding. *The New York Times* columnist David Carr observed that media organizations are beginning to look more like a federation of individual brands or a collection of individual voices (Myers, 2011).

Figure1. Towards Mass Self-Communication



Source: Based on Rost (2007), Bruns (2007), García de Torres (2010) and Cardoso (2011).

Many years ago corporate blogs, the first popular Mass self-publication platform, sent alarm signals to media companies (Palser, 2003). With or without guidelines, in 2010 at least two reporters faced serious trouble related to the use, or abuse, of their Twitter accounts; a sports journalist was suspended for a month after he published a false story in his personal Twitter account.

On the other hand, collaboration such as the one promoted by the hashtag #give4andy, created by reporter Andy Carvin to collect funds for NPR stations, shows "a kind of reconciliation for that personal/organizational disconnect" (Garber, 2011).

Figure 2. Symbiotic relationships as Andy Carvin asks for (micro-tasking) help



Source: <http://twitter.com/acarvin/>

Research by Wardle and Williams demonstrates (BBC) that users are in favour of targeted calls for contributions rather than general pleas, and that they prefer specific content-related requests over broad calls for opinion (Kelly, 2009). Language is affected as interactivity calls for relational and meta-communication messages and news stories are referential (who, where, when...). Macro-level structures are also affected. It is a big change, explains Mario Tascón, who leads the innovative *Spanish Internet Styleguide*, a project by Fundeu:

"Public communication generally makes people care more about the expression because there is a desire to communicate with others, and to do well. Another difference from the pre-Internet is that it is easier and faster to adjust and reduce the differences between speakers of the same language. All see, learn and immediately incorporate changes that occur from North to South at the other side of the Atlantic".

In the past ten years, different models of user-producer relationships have been adopted by news media. Tomaiuolo (2009) distinguishes media that support content produced by the users, local sites that allow contributions, monitored in most cases by professional journalists and, finally, traditional sites that support marginal interaction.

Overall, research on User-Generated Content on mainstream news media websites reveals practical reasons behind the model of participatory news - traffic, brand projection, fidelity or content production (Lewis et al (2010; Vujnovic et al., 2010). Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger (2007: 333) mention explicitly the pursuit of additional sources of revenue, the potential to sell targeted advertising across online and offline media and winning back non-reading newspaper audiences. An international study of 80 news websites coordinated by García de Torres (2011) shows a standard visibility of the user's content at the homepage (polls, most viewed contents and the blogs' section), greater options to participate around news stories produced by the journalists and infrequent requests to provide content (46% "send your ideas" and 16,2% "send your story" in the homepage).

These findings are consistent with previous research (Domingo et al., 2008; De Kayser and Raeymackers, 2008). During this same period, the evaluation of the users' performance in the news media websites or citizen's journalism websites offers poor results: dialogic and civic engagement seems not to be a priority and there is a lack of continuity or expertise in managing information (Díaz Noci, 2010; Acosta, 2008; Reich 2008) and Lacy et al., 2010). Rost, Reta and Apesteguía (2008) discovered some users' reluctance to participate due to distrust towards news media and journalists, as well as technological difficulties or lack of interest. Not surprisingly, Rebillard and Toubououl (2010) argue that empirical verification of changes in participation-as it remains at low levels- does not support the thesis of the digital revolution.

Meanwhile, pioneer crowd-sourcing projects and organizations such as Ushaidi, Spot.U.s, The Guardian or the BBC Hub have devoted efforts and resources to explore either a citizen or a symbiotic *modus* of reporting (Bradshaw, 2007, Muthukumaraswamy, 2009) before the upcoming of social networks. In August 2010 though, OhMyNews International closed down and became a blog:

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication, March 2011.

"We lacked a specific focus. With citizen reporters from every corner of the world writing on every topic imaginable, it became increasingly difficult to cover stories consistently. The broad array and frequency of topics was also intimately tied to our second problem: editing difficulties (...), it was impossible for our editors to accurately check each story. Fact-checking is one of our core principles".

Mainstream media presence in social media received quite an impulse by the 2.0 angle of the 2008 campaign. *The New York Times* made an active effort to increase its audience via Facebook with outstanding results. The rest is history: the aeroplane in the Hudson, Honduras, Iran, Haiti, Chile, Egypt, Lybia, Japan... The benefits of SM coverage are evident. Stassen (2010:13), who interviewed four members of the staff of News 24, a South African online publication, concludes that "... social media facilitates a type of journalism in which the audience is much more involved in the news-creation process". Some of the advantages mentioned by the respondents were: brand loyalty, audience research, source for story leads and references, content promotion, community building, customer services and sustaining and broadening attention.

Table 1. US Newspapers Fan/circulation ratio

NEWSPAPER	FANS	CIRCULATION	FAN/CIRCULATION RATIO
<i>Washington Post</i>	100589	545345	0.18445021
<i>Chicago Tribune</i>	23397	441508	0.052993377
<i>Arizona Republic</i>	19830	308973	0.064180365
<i>Denver Post</i>	36557	309863	0.117977945
<i>San Jose Mercury News</i>	8423	477592	0.017636393
<i>New York Times</i>	1001502	876638	1.142435076
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	28835	600449	0.048022397
<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i>	6962	252608	0.027560489
<i>USA Today</i>	38578	1830594	0.021074034
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	176896	2061142	0.085824266

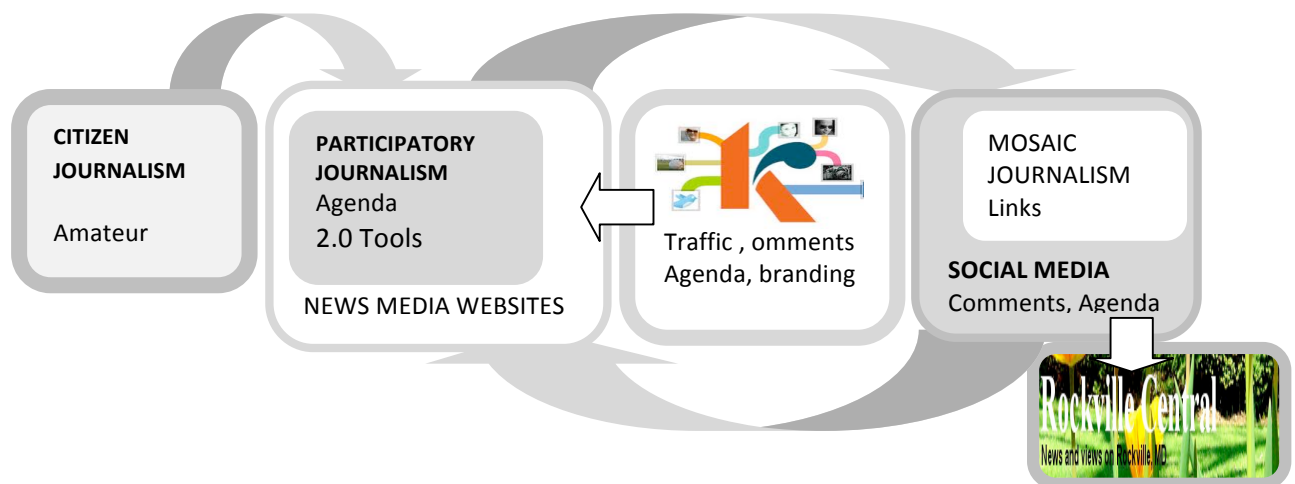
Source: Bivings Group (December, 2010).

However, several studies on the use of social media by news outlets show little use of conversational modes on Twitter or Facebook. The Bivings Groups' findings on the use of Twitter by America's Newspapers in 2009 found that many of the accounts rarely interacted (15% of the accounts never replied and 33% less than 1%) or re-tweeted other users. Noguera (2010) found in 13 Spanish news media, Facebook's profiles headlines and little interactivity (only 30.7% of the sample published interactive messages in the wall). Jeronimo and Duarte (2010), after examining the use of Twitter by regional Portuguese news outlets through observation and questionnaires, pointed out that the micro-blogging tool is apt for massive shovel ware in 140 characters and little updating (with some exceptions). Some answers to the questionnaires produce interesting illustrations of the perceived value of SM: Twitter gives scoops but it is Facebook where politics and official sources are found, as well as interaction.

Revenues and dependence on the providers are the biggest challenges. further, competing and symbiotic relationships between journalists and citizens through Twitter and other micro-blogging sites (Cardoso, 2011) and the reinforcement of the corporate discourse of

the new generation sites (Ahmad, 2010) remain to be overcome. Regardless of SM impact on newsgathering and reporting, Picard (2009) recommends a careful examination of media strategies: "Merely because a technology is popular with some users and journalists does not mean that its use will be beneficial to the news enterprise as a whole".

Figure 3. The New Battlefield



In June 2010 *El País* presented Eskup, its social network, as a part of a strategy to produce exclusive contents for the website. The paper maintains a strong presence in Twitter (69.978 followers) and Facebook (456.538 fans). Data from Alexa.com (March, 2011) indicate that 1.9% of the visitors go to Eskup and 8.34% of one-off visits come from Facebook. In Spain, 17,8 out of 21 million of Internet users per month are users of Facebook (nearly 3 of Twitter), but Facebook and Twitter are the source of only 5.8% of traffic for the websites of *El Mundo*, *El País*, *2o Minutos*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*. From time to time, there is a hit, such as the 20% of traffic that came from Facebook on Monday 21 to "Slow goodbye to compliment", published by *El País* (Asegovia, 2011). With Eskup, the newspaper regains autonomy to decide on the shape, time or length and technical quality of news messages, decided otherwise by the SM hosts; only some months ago, YouTube decided to extend the video limit to 15 minutes.

As The State of the Media 2011 reports, organizations that produce the news rely increasingly on aggregators or social networks such as Facebook to bring in a substantial part of their audience: "The future will belong to those who understand the public's changing behavior and can target content and advertising to snugly fit the interests of each user. That knowledge — and the expertise in gathering it — increasingly resides with technology companies outside journalism" (Rosenstiel and Mitchell, 2011).

The impact on content is not a minor problem from a macro-social perspective. After examining UGC practices at the BBC, Harrison (2010: 255) notes: "...The paradox of UGC might be that by extending reach and audience involvement, in the long run, it diminishes the public service standards of BBC news through the spread of soft journalism". This and other involuntary distortions in the news-making process might occur if dependence on UGC to produce news increases. A survey by NPR (2010) to check the preferences and habits of NPR Twitter followers in comparison with Facebook fans revealed that fans wanted more hard-hitting, breaking news as well as international news, offbeat stories and

stories about interesting people; Twitter users wanted more hard/breaking news and updates on events already in progress. The Report "New Media, Old Media", carried out by Pew Center in 2010 in Twitter, concluded that only half of the links went to legacy outlets as 40% went to web-only news sources and 10% to wire stories or non-news sources. In traffic-centered media this might add another distortion to the news-gathering process.

## Methods

The aim of the present study is to examine how social media, specifically Twitter and Facebook, are managed by 27 news outlets from 9 regions in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain and Venezuela.

Research questions are:

- (1) What kind of (local) information, if any, is delivered and gathered through social media?
- (2) What are the opportunities, benefits, and risks of social media?
- (3) How many resources are used?

To give an answer to these questions, a method based on a combination of the analysis of SM messages as well as semi-structured interviews was designed.

Following Kaplan and Hanlein (2010), who define social media as a set of applications namely blogs, micro-blogs, collaborative projects or content communities, Twitter and Facebook were selected for the analysis because of their potential for conversation, attributed impact on news reporting (Jeronimo and Duarte, 2010) and presence in all the markets being studied.

Recent developments such as the January 25 Revolution and uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East or the earthquake in Japan have appointed Facebook an excellent tracking or monitoring tool, as well as an effective UGC repository (Lavrusik (2011). Regarding Twitter, Arceneaux and Schmitz (2010: 1273) have examined three years of media representation of the micro-blogging site and find "... journalists have been primarily positive in relation to this particular micro-blogging service. While a great many jokes and derogatory comments have circulated online and among professional comedians, articles in newspapers, magazines and blogs suggest a largely supportive tone". Presently, Eltringham, (2011) considers Twitter is becoming mainstream: Judge Howard Riddle allowed journalists to provide twitter updates from Julian Assange's bail hearing, legal claims against streams of tweets explode and WENN has made agreements to sell pictures through Twitter client site Plixi. In the future, Honeycutt and Herrig (2009) predict the micro-blogging site will soon be used in formal collaborative contexts and explain communicative interchange for collaboration and coherent conversation is possible in a narrow scale.

To make the analysis feasible we selected three newspapers by region. The papers sampled are local and generalist, except for areas where national newspapers cover the regional district as in Madrid, Mexico D.F., Caracas or the Caribbean Region. In those cases, local tweets or Facebook messages are taken into account for content analysis; interviews are oriented to explore the dynamics of the Metro desk. When possible, the two papers with the highest circulation in the region and a web-based journal were selected.

The period of analysis of the profiles was set between February 5-11 - alternative dates were established for *Más por Más* and 2001, which joined Facebook on February 9.

It has not been possible to establish circulation and online audience for the whole sample due to the absence of data from reliable audit bureaus. An exceptional case is *El País*, which has not been computed by the Spanish audit bureau OJD for some time.

This is an exploratory study: Variability in the markets is so high that it is extremely difficult to construct a representative sample. The number of newspapers examined in each market is too low to produce solid comparative analyses but a preliminary examination will be presented here.

Table 2. Sample

Code/Region/URL	Pageviews /month	Followers	Fans
ARG1 - Norpatagonia <i>Río Negro</i> <a href="http://www.rionegro.com.ar">http://www.rionegro.com.ar</a>	6,820,778	820	21,228
ARG - Norpatagonia <i>La Mañana Neuquén</i> <a href="http://www.lmneuquen.com.ar/">http://www.lmneuquen.com.ar/</a>	3,290,008	810	6,536
ARG3 - Norpatagonia <i>Roca Digital</i> <a href="http://www.rocadigital.com.ar">http://www.rocadigital.com.ar</a>	400,366	468	1,201 2,097 friends
COL1- Región Caribe <i>El Heraldo de Barranquilla</i> <a href="http://www.elheraldo.co/">http://www.elheraldo.co/</a>	3,256,740	16,139	6,343
COL2 - Región Caribe <i>El Universal de Cartagena</i> <a href="http://www.eluniversal.com.co/">http://www.eluniversal.com.co/</a>	225,480	3,564	4,430
COL3 - Región Caribe <i>Zonacero.info</i> <a href="http://zonacero.info/">http://zonacero.info/</a>	10,050	441	966
ESPCV1- Comunidad Valenciana <i>Las Provincias</i> <a href="http://www.lasprovincias.es">www.lasprovincias.es</a>	12,893,855	2753	4,836
ESPCV2- Comunidad Valenciana <i>Levante-EMV</i> <a href="http://www.levante-emv.es">http://www.levante-emv.es</a>	9,337,511	2,899	3,200
ESPCV3 - Comunidad Valenciana <i>Hortanoticias</i> <a href="http://www.hortanoticias.com">http://www.hortanoticias.com</a>	66.494	873	225 4,509 friends
ESPPV1- País Vasco <i>El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco</i> <a href="http://www.elcorreo.com/">http://www.elcorreo.com/</a>	6,716,547	1891	2,124
ESPPV2 - País Vasco <i>Deia</i> <a href="http://www.deia.com/">http://www.deia.com/</a>	1,112,178	615	3,085
ESPPV3- País Vasco <i>Basauri.tv</i>	18,910	58	514 friends
ESPM1 - Madrid <i>Diario de Alcalá</i> <a href="http://www.diariodealcala.es/edicion/general">http://www.diariodealcala.es/edicion/general</a>	NA	290	2,869
ESPM2- Madrid <i>Madridiario</i>	661,640	4,386	1,401

ESPM3- Madrid @el_pais_madrid <i>El País</i> <a href="http://www.elpais.com">http://www.elpais.com</a>	NA	6,022	69,978
MEX1- Mexico DF <i>ESTO</i> <a href="http://www.oem.com.mx.esto">http://www.oem.com.mx.esto</a>	5.,110	6,747	1,288
MEX2 Mexico DF <i>Más por Más-</i> <a href="http://www.maspormas.com.mx">http://www.maspormas.com.mx</a>	1,017,528	15,688	206
MEX3 Mexico DF <i>La Silla Rota</i> <a href="http://www.lasillarota.com">http://www.lasillarota.com</a>	175,000	15,397	763
PER1- Región La Libertad <i>La Industria de Trujillo</i> <a href="http://laindustria.pe">http://laindustria.pe</a>	190,000	131	5,002
PER2 Región Piura <i>El Tiempo</i> <a href="http://www.eltiempo.pe">http://www.eltiempo.pe</a>	290,000	846	307
PER3- Región La Libertad <i>noticiastrujillo.com</i> <a href="http://noticiastrujillo.com">http://noticiastrujillo.com</a>	300,000	339	815
POR1- Distrito de Leiria <i>Região de Leiria</i> <a href="http://www.regiaodeleiria.pt">http://www.regiaodeleiria.pt</a>	105,819	835	2,723
POR2- Distrito de Leiria <i>Jornal de Leiria</i> <a href="http://www.jornaldeleiria.pt">http://www.jornaldeleiria.pt</a>	51,200*	1,069	4,697
POR3- Distrito de Leiria <i>Tinta Fresca</i> <a href="http://www.tintafresca.net">http://www.tintafresca.net</a>	300,000	92	1,133 friends
VEN1- Caracas <i>Últimas Noticias</i> <a href="http://www.ultimasnoticias.com.ve">http://www.ultimasnoticias.com.ve</a>	NA	4,994	134
VEN2- Caracas <i>Diario 2001</i> <a href="http://www.2001.com.ve">http://www.2001.com.ve</a>	NA	131,967	14,159
VEN3- Guarenas_Guatire <i>La Voz</i> <a href="http://www.diariolavoz.net">http://www.diariolavoz.net</a>	153,000	13,297	

\*August, 2008

The circulation of newspapers as *El País*, *El Correo-Español-El pueblo Vasco*, *Más por Más* and *Esto* is above 100.000 copies; between 30.000 and 40.000 copies are *Rio Negro*, *EL Heraldo de Barranquilla*, *El Universal de Cartagena*, *Las Provincias* and *Levante-EMV*; under 20.000, *Deia* (18.365) *Região de Leiria* (15.000) or *Jornal de Leiria* (15.000). The number of page views per month, followers and Facebook fans or friends figure in table 3. Hypotheses, based on previous studies, can be stated as follows:

- (h1) High variability in the assessment of social media
- (h2) Low scores for conversational messages both in Twitter and Facebook
- (h3) Lesser resources devoted to social media management as circulation decreases.

Previous research on the uses of social media by newspapers and the addressivity functions of the @, relevant to the present study, point to specific methods:

In Portugal, Jeronimo and Duarte (2010) have analyzed the use of Twitter by 20 regional newspapers; 200 tweets per media -only 10 were active on Twitter- are analyzed in terms of frequency and conversation; results include data from 11 questionnaires on the impact of

Twitter on the coverage and local journalism, the number of journalists that use Twitter and the potential of the micro-blogging site.

Thirteen Spanish newspapers Facebook profiles were analysed by Noguera (2010); messages posted in December 1, 2009 were coded for participation, contents, dynamics and connection.

Honeycutt and Herrig's (2009) method was designed to analyze the functions and the uses of the '@' sign where a sample of 200 tweets collected in four periods during a 24 hour period, using Twitter Scrapper. Messages were coded as: (1) About addressee; (2) Announce/advertise; (3) Exhort; (4) Information from others; (5) Information for self; (6) Meta-commentary; (7) Media use; (8) Opinions; (9) Other's experience; (10) Self experience; (11) Solicit information; (12) Other. Longer exchanges were analyzed using the Dynamic Topic Analysis.

Finally, a study of the use of Twitter by the Bivings Group in 2009 deals with a corpus of tweets extracted during an eight-and-a-half-hour period from midnight Sept. 20 until 8:30am September 21. TweetStats provided the following data: "Followers", "Following", and "Tweets" were lifted directly from the Twitter pages; "Tweets/Day", "Primary Interface", "Replies to Followers %", and "Retweets Others %" from TweetStats. Also, the Interactivity Quotient (Twitter IQ), a formula resulting from combining percentage of replies and retweets, was applied.

In the present study, a coding scheme was designed for the analysis of messages published in Twitter and Facebook by the news media studied. Items were selected for data of conversational activities and, specifically, requests of information. Regarding Twitter, two types of messages were coded: messages to all the followers and messages to specific followers (@). Findings by Honeycutt and Herrig (2009) suggest that tweets with @ (on the grid, "Messages sent to certain users") respond to "About addressee: solicits or comments on information relating to the addressee".

In addition, a set of mentions to the newspapers were examined - up to 50 mentions per newspaper though retrieval was limited or negative in some cases because of technical reasons. Facebook messages were coded taken into account the number of comments and "Like" they received. It was noted, also, if users wrote on the Wall and whether comments on the Wall were answered by the news media.

Table 3. Items for the analysis of Twitter and Facebook messages

Headline plus link (total correspondence)	Users write on the Wall (FB)
Headline plus link to the website	The outlet answers to comments (FB)
Headline plus link to other sites	Other
Headline	<b>Messages sent to certain users (Twitter)</b>
RT (Twitter)/ Share (Facebook)	Headline
Greetings	Greetings
Invites participation/asks for opinions	Asks for contents or information
Invites participation/asks for opinions plus link	Other
Requests information or contents	<b>Mentions (Twitter)</b>
Requests information or contents plus link	A link is retweeted
Offers help, information or contents	A link is published
Offers help, information or contents plus links	Comments on contents

Informal message	Addressee
Announces/invites to live coverage	#FF
Announces/invites to live coverage plus link	Other

Alongside the analysis, 22 face to face interviews were conducted by locally based researchers in March, 2011 who had a script with six general questions combined with specific enquiries. The questions that guided our thematic analysis for the present study included: What is the value of social networking for local news? and How networking sites contribute to news-making in regional newspapers (or local news desks) as well as management and benefits. In this phase, variations in the organizational structure of each news outlet explains the selection of the profiles. At *El país*, Ana Alfageme, currently Social Media Editor is the former Metro Desk Editor for Madrid.

Table 4. Interviews

Horacio Lara. News editor for the Web/ Andrea Marcilla. Website manager ( <i>Río Negro</i> )
Nicolás Bustamante. Newsroom Manager ( <i>La Mañana Neuquén</i> )
Fabián Cardozo. Editor and owner ( <i>Roca Digital</i> )
Karen de la Hoz. Website Manager ( <i>El Herald de Barranquilla</i> )
Laurean Puerta. Editor ( <i>Zonacero.info</i> )
Silvia Guillén. Community Manager ( <i>LasProvincias</i> )
Manuel Furió. Editor ( <i>Hortanoticias.com</i> )
Gorka Cabañas. In charge of of projects for the Web ( <i>El Correo Español-El Pueblo Vasco</i> )
José Antonio Rodríguez. In charge of social media and the Web ( <i>Deia</i> )
ÁlexCerdeño. Webmaster and founder ( <i>Basauri.tv</i> )
Antonio Naranjo. Editor ( <i>Diario de Alcalá</i> )
Pedro Montoliu. Editor ( <i>Madridiario</i> )
Ana Alfageme. Social Media Editor ( <i>El País</i> )
Jackov Camino. Community Manager and reporter ( <i>La Industria de Trujillo</i> )
Manuela Mejía. Journalist in charge of Social Media ( <i>El Tiempo</i> )
Carlos González. Editor ( <i>Noticiastrujillo.com</i> )
Manuel Leiria. In charge of the online version Online and journalist ( <i>Região de Leiria</i> )
Jacinto Silva Duro. In charge of the online version Online and Journalist ( <i>Jornal de Leiria</i> )
Mario Lopes. Editor and Owner ( <i>Tinta Fresca</i> ).
Danisbel Gómez. Manager of the unit for citizen participation ( <i>Últimas Noticias</i> )
Julio Naranjo. Web Content manager ( <i>Diario 2001</i> )
Richard Sanz. Metro Desk Editor ( <i>La Voz</i> )

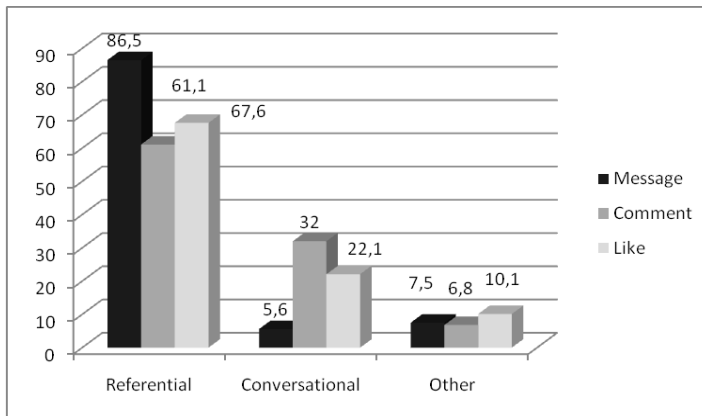
A codebook provided definitions, descriptions and illustrations. Following procedures established for comparative analysis with several coders (Shoemaker, 2003; Lombard et al, 2004) training sessions took place before entering the coding process. Intercoder reliability of 88 percent over 50 messages was considered sufficient to proceed to the next step.

## Results

A total of 5010 messages were analyzed. 1634 messages were published on Facebook and 3376 on Twitter by 26 news outlets (*La Voz* does not have a Facebook page and *Journal de Leiria* is not on Twitter).

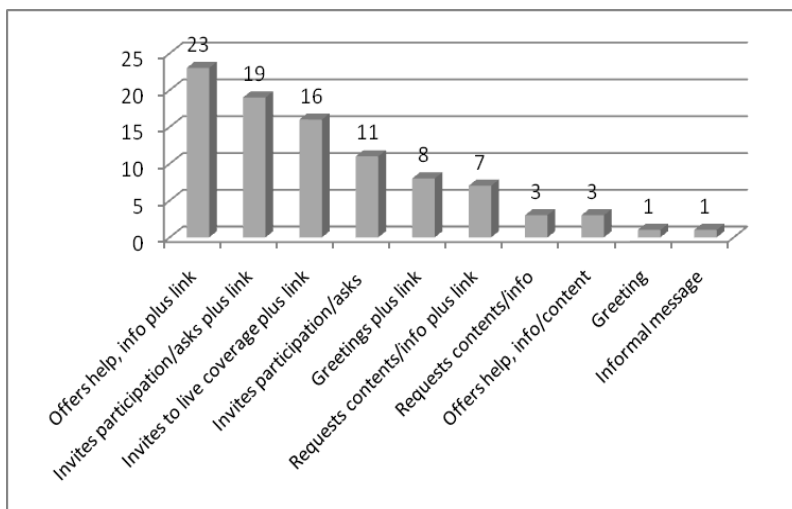
Overall results from the Facebook sample are shown in table 1. As shown, conversational messages have more potential to engage comments. Referential messages based on headlines are also appealing however. Facebook messages consistent with headlines that reproduce the exact title of the contents published on the web get 38,6% of comments and "Like it" responses and represent the 68,1% of the sample.

Figure 1. Comments on conversational and referential messages (%)



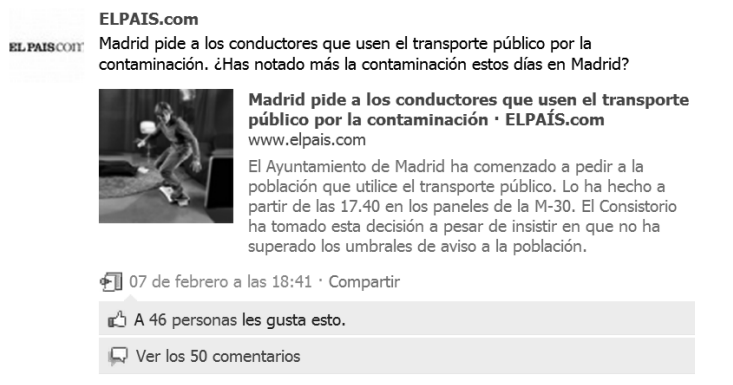
Conversational messages represent 5,6% (92 out of 1634), most of which (92%) have links to the web. Requests for information represent only 11% of conversational messages and 0,6% of total messages.

Table 2. Conversational items on Facebook (number of messages)



The median comments per message is 0,4. and for "like" is 0,9. Most of the 23 messages with more than 4 comments were conative, especially those with the highest number of comments. The most commented message was published by El País - the only one directed to local users living in Madrid: "Did you notice more pollution these days in Madrid?".

Figure 4. Most commented on message



The answer to Basque country publication *Deia* (3,085 fans on Facebook) is striking as 13 had 4 comments or more (and many of them referential, concerning politics, generating intense debate); *Região de Leiria*, a Portuguese news outlet with a circulation of 105,819 and more than 2700 fans also had two messages with 4 comments. Other news media with popular messages were *El País* (with the afore mentioned question to Madrid's inhabitants on pollution), *El Heraldo de Colombia*, *Las Provincias* and *Últimas Noticias*, though in some cases comments were also published by them. Six out of the 11 outlets which offer a wider variety of conversational items are from Spain.

Table 6. Newspapers with two or more conversational items

Newspaper	Country	No. Items	No. Items conversacionales	Page views	Fans
<i>Diario de Alcalá</i>	ESP	7	5		2869
<i>Más por más</i>	MEX	6	5	1017528	206
<i>Deia</i>	ESP	7	4	1112178	3085
<i>Río Negro</i>	ARG	4	3	6820778	21228
<i>Levante-EMV</i>	ESP	7	3	9337511	3200
<i>El Heraldo</i>	COL	3	2	3256740	6343
<i>Las Provincias</i>	ESP	6	2	12893855	4836
<i>Hortanoticias</i>	ESP	5	2	66494	225
<i>La Industria</i>	PER	4	2	190.000	5002
<i>Região de Leiria</i>	POR	1	2	105819	2723

5 newspapers engaged in conversation with users on the Wall: *Río Negro* (Norpatagonia, Argentina), *Diario de Alcalá* (Madrid, Spain), *Hortanoticias* (Valencia, Spain), *Más por más* (México D.F) and *Região de Leiria* (Leiria, Portugal). Users left messages on the Wall of 12 outlets out of 26: *Río Negro*, *La Mañana Neuquén*, *Roca Digital*, *Hortanoticias*, *Diario de*

*Alcalá, Basauri.tv, Más por más, El Tiempo, Noticias Trujillo, Regiao de Leiria, Journal de Leiria and Tinta Fresca.*

Figure 5. Answers on the Wall

### Máspormás

Hoy de promoción: 40 pases dobles para "Defendiendo al Cavernícola"... ahora sí hay muchísimas oportunidades de ganar. Visiten:<http://www.maspormas.com.mx/>

Pablo Perez Pacheco como se si gane??

Miguel Palacios yo me hago la misma pregunta, nos notifican por correo o nos llaman al cel?

**Máspormás** Generalmente se manda una notificación al correo, ese mismo día por la tarde/noche

### Diario de Alcalá

Los datos de contaminación del aire; el Parador cuando era una cárcel, la historia de un joven que busca a su gemelo que presuntamente fue robado, los artículos de Antonio R. Naranjo y Xavier Colás; un repor de un nuevo club de bici de montaña o una nueva entrega del colectivo Pedro Gumiel de la UAH. Y de postre, la semana gastronómica y ofertas de empleo. El menu de hoy del Diario es completito. **¿Te gusta?**

A 5 personas les gusta esto..

Lourdes Ortega ¿Dónde puedo leer más sobre el nuevo club de bici de montaña en la página web? 10 de febrero a las 10:32.**Diario de Alcalá** En la edición impresa del Diario viene un reportaje muy detallado. En la página web todavía no está colgado. Un abrazo!

10 de febrero a las 10:48 · 1 personaA Lourdes Ortega le gusta esto..

Víctor Llanos ¿vais a colgar el documental de la cárcel en la página web? Hoy no puedo coseguir la edición impresa y me interesaría porque mi bisabuelo estuvo preso tras la Guerra Civil.

10 de febrero a las 12:06.**Diario de Alcalá** ok, lo hraremos pues.

11 de febrero a las 19:11.**Diario de Alcalá** El artículo colgado en Internet.

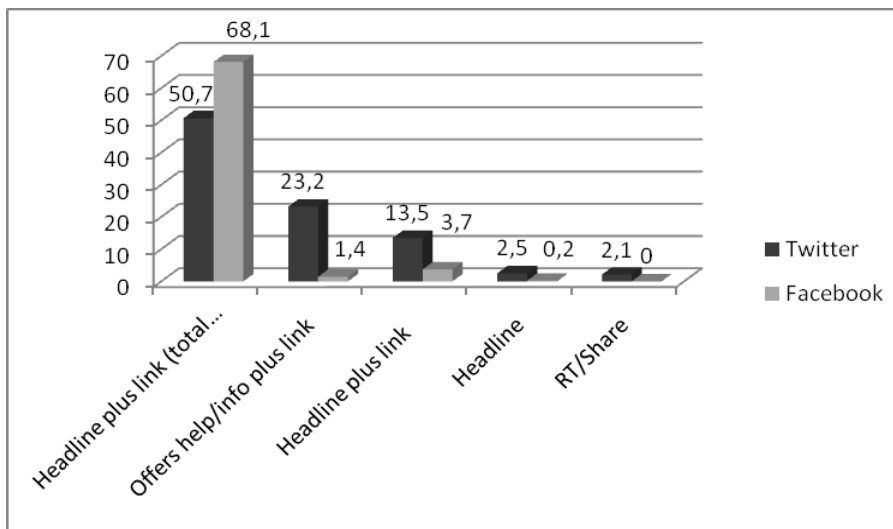
Results obtained after processing 3376 Twitter messages published by the 26 news outlets analyzed (*Journal de Leiria* does not have a Twitter account) show also a heavy presence of "headline plus link (total correspondence)" (50,7%).

Table 7. Typology of twitter messages vs. Facebook messages 3376

Item	Twitter	%	Facebook	%
Headline plus link (total correspondence)	1713	50,7	1113	68,1
Headline + introduction	-	-	237	17,3
Offers help/info plus link	786	23,2	23	1,4
Headline plus link	458	13,5	61	3,7
Headline	87	2,5	4	0,2
RT/Share	71	2,1	0	0
Announces/invites to live coverage	22	0,6	0	0
Invites participation/asks plus link	20	0,5	19	1,1
Offers help, info/content	18	0,5	3	0,2
Requests contents/info	7	0,2	3	0,2
Invites to live coverage plus link	7	0,2	16	0,9
Greetings plus link	5	0,1	8	0,4
Informal message	3	0,08	1	0
Requests contents/info plus link	2	0,05	7	0,4
Headline plus link to other sites	2	0,05	0	0
Invites participation/asks	2	0,05	11	0,6

Differences are shown in detail in figure 6

Figure 6.



Addressivity on Twitter is not high, but some streams of messages have been found when analyzing mentions by users as well as conversations around hashtags and active conversation. For example, on February 2011 *El Herald* asks "Dear reader: if anyone is near the fire at San Felipe, please share picture. Journalists are on their way" and later "Any reader to report on possible fire in San Felipe. Also, at the end of the week, through the hashtag "mototaxi" (strike): "Send us your pictures showing the main roads in #barranquilla", retweeting users, offering polls and giving information. In Roca Digital (Argentine) concerning the hashtag #eleccionessucr, a user asks were the elections take place; @RocaDigital sends "Independents in the School 42. Affiliated to CEM 1" and it's retweeted with thanks.

Table 8. Adressivity: @ and mentions by the users

@ messages	
Greetings	1
Info request	2
Informal message	36
Mentions	
RT, Publish, comment	391
DM	92
#FF	2
Others	7

Interviews were coded regarding the assessment of social media, the specific assessment of Facebook and Twitter, social media management and benefits. According to our results most media networks prefer to use Facebook and Twitter, with comments such as "We primarily use Facebook and Twitter", for the profile of our public Twitter and Facebook are

the best tools, "or" The most widely used are Facebook and Twitter. "With regard to its implementation, the participation in courses or conferences in some cases as a reference source to learn about new tools is mentioned. The director of the Media or technical or even the marketing team are often the first ones to act.

Some respondents indicate that once their presence is consolidated in these networks, they would consider entering others or discarding them for allowing little customization or the publication of certain messages. Other networks mentioned are LinkedIn, YouTube or local networks; some respondents are not familiar with Quora, some have a negative opinion of the language barrier and those present are exploring the tool.

### **The assessment of the social Media**

Social media are highly appreciated for a number of reasons, among them information gathering and the possibility of its dissemination, both in quantitative and qualitative terms : reaching readers located outside the region, young people or those who are not otherwise going to read the newspaper in traditional format:

- "It allows us to reach more users with different characteristics, a younger audience" or "people living in a faster, more immediate world, and who are technology fans ,
- "It offers the possibility to reach readers more quickly, to show what we do."
- "It's more user friendly for people, and easier to do"
- "The information is new, in the sense that it may be a big exclusive news release ."
- "It allows us to be alert and seek new sources "
- "And that brings an incredible Live situation"
- "We want people to see and say, ' look, how cool, I was immediately informed"
- "Twitter is on hand, constantly on hand. Because people do not look ahead , they are looking down, because of the mobiles"
- "We think that many people are readers only through Facebook"
- "That alertness is for me the most striking aspect of the social networks and is the one we should channel best. Nowadays 5% of the people that follow us alert us. If we could convert it to 25% for the local newspaper it would be great.
- "Especially on Facebook there are many trails. There are always small leaks of information in social networks"
- "They are a prime source of information"
- "They are very important in the spreading of the *oil slick*"
- "We are becoming aware that it is a tremendous resource that we must use more of and that is changing from day to day ..."

In the production of local information, several uses were mentioned, although news did not seem to come frequently from Twitter or Facebook; there was a hint of frustration in some answers. On the other hand, the active search or scoops is widespread both in Twitter and Facebook. Where news reported by citizens are concerned, the ones mentioned are the unexpected ones (not programmed) : fires (repeatedly), riots, strikes, food shortage, floods, building collapses, or weather (rain) and local elections:

#### a) Development of public maps (crowd sourcing)

- "... we reconstructed the map of difficulties in the area - road closures, schools that may be wouldn't open, delays in transportation services ..."

- "We have drawn a map with the information we could get and the information people alerted us to..."

b) Active search of information

- "It has helped me tremendously, because having joined several key accounts it has helped me to know, for example, when there is a demonstration at a particular site."
- "We do a lot active search on Facebook"
- "I follow certain accounts that are interesting to me such as the Judicial Information Center"

c) Obtaining documents, mainly photographs such as photo-news or to illustrate information

- "Sometimes there are reports that lack pictures and photos on Facebook and many people usually upload a lot of information."
- "Facebook is fundamental for us: it has faces. And we need the face of the person who does ... who won a prize or traveled abroad, who excels for some reason. (...) The more faces, the closer, the more identified readers feel and possibly more readers recognize the person from their city or street. "

Social media provide scoops, alerts, a service to the community, information to write reports (from comments or reactions to news published on the Wall) and the ability to promote their own events (such as forums) or report live.

Facebook fans do use the media to publicize their own activities, depending on whether the walls are open. Only in one case, a medium eliminates these contributions on the grounds that the user wants to use them. In other cases, users ask the journalists to cover a topic of their interest.

The symbiotic relationship model between producers and users is present all the time during the conversations, as well as in individual voices, something that most of the analyzed media does not consistently process. . Some respondents used the word "help" to refer to the work of citizens.

- "because often they are there before we are and, you understand, they are giving us the information first."
- "it provides proximity , in the end, lost of news items you were not aware of a closeness to the people around you and eventually the citizens themselves become journalists"
- "users contribute more than it was expected. For example, the earthquake in Japan (...) They sent us recorded videos, they worked as informants reporting live, telling us what the Japanese TV was saying..."
- "People helped us to know where roads were cut off"
- "Users provide everything: content, discussion, hints"

As for the drawbacks, some media highlight the lack of responses, the problem of handling so much information and finding something of interest, the difficulty of connecting with the community and the lack of training of the users. One of the outlets is considering to hold workshops for people who lack technological literacy.

- "We want people to come to us for this more often, which they are not doing"

- "Because of the increasing number of people in social networks I hope we can have more cooperation. And that will require a careful selection not of the people that read us but of the people we read."
- "One thing we have not understood is the development of the community, the idea that we really are a family. We are not dealing with this and we don't know how to."
- "We would perhaps have thousands and thousands of users and that would be flood us, we would accumulate too many in our account"
- "And we received a Twitter message that said "I have a video (...) And we said send it over here, I don't know how to send it, the person said."
- "We do not know how to get to the source. We have to contact that person and it is much more difficult because it is not something usual."
- "One can be present without the need to engage or connect."

### Specific assessment of Facebook and Twitter

There is greater preference for Facebook both to obtain and to disseminate information. Its use is more generalized. Qualitatively speaking Twitter is valued more highly by some ("Twitter is the ultimate") and in contrast some media rarely use it ("From Twitter we have never had a great response" or "Twitter is no big deal." There are Media that "are" more Facebook, but Twitter cannot exclusively be associated to the Media with the most circulation, this is a question that would require further study. Those who prefer Twitter refer to Facebook as a personal-communication space in which news are also discussed.

Regarding their influence in the Twitter is mentioned more often, but an interviewee said he wanted to "make a newspaper only with Twitter (...) but thought that Facebook had then developed more applications." Specifically, for each tool the following is highlighted:

#### *Twitter*

- "It brings speed, immediacy. It forces you to be straightforward and very clever"
- "I can send my FB followers my recommendation to read a report and depending on when they connect they can see it maybe within a week. However, a Twitter follower will see it straight away."
- "It's more professional, more mature"
- "is the network where people are more ready to receive information"
- "We can be loading data without having to upload it to the web"
- "Twitter is the flash of the moment"
- "The quality of what is there serves me well"
- "95% of the information we have from the social networks comes through Twitter"

#### *Facebook*

- "you get to the right person, ie the person who may be interested in your content. For a small medium this is interesting."
- "It's mostly entertainment"
- "It is our eye on the city"
- "To the local newspaper Facebook is more valid than Twitter because it gives a richer, more personalized collaboration, (...) We "are" more Facebook."
- "Engaging the readers in a place where you are not accessible"
- "It is the space where you are with your friends, share photos and funny things with them and is more or less what a medium should be."

- "More than anything we get feedback"
- "It's different because you can be present without the need to engage or connect"
- "It also serves as the entrance to the site"
- "Facebook allows us to see all the news that have been published by the newspapers."

Some tools that respondents believe would be of interest to them would be a local communication network, applications for mobiles, vertical networks, networks that integrate everything and reach the neighborhood, to do experiments with the hyperlocal, blogs such as the City of New York Times or to have a network of sources you know.

### **Social Media Management**

No media has specific rules for social media, one of them is working to develop them. If anything, there are general unwritten guidelines, such as not to publish massively so as not to overwhelm the user, not to post URLs of others, not to mix the personal and professional and to follow the editorial line. In the media in which journalists indicate in a general manner that social media are used, they often have gone through a training process - in one case because the community manager left and they chose not to be dependent in the future.

- "At least the *New York Times* has eliminated the post of community manager. and before it did it taught all its staff how to do the job, I think that's the most viable way to manage social networks."

In some Media, reporters only write in the accounts of their own medium because it has been so established, others publish in their accounts without supervision others encourage journalists to do so, and in other cases the editorial staff decide on the go, what is to be published and if no agreement is reached, they ask their superiors or even the reporters themselves ask the people responsible for the accounts or for the medium to use the networks to publish some content or to create a group in Facebook or else they ask to be allowed to report live from their accounts. In one case, journalists add their initials to the tweets so they can be identified later. Regarding integration of individual voices with corporate voices, in general there is no pattern or design or programme:

- "And that I put in my personal Twitter. I immediately said: " No, this I must put in and I must connect to the portal, to the online newspaper and indeed I did so. "
- " Journalists publish in Twitter, through their blackberry. Let's say that the editorial line is this: publish news"
- "And there were two journalists who were devoted to festivals and they themselves said that the information had to be on Facebook."

The figure of the community manager is not implemented; it does not exist or it is not recognised by that name. During the interviews, in some cases the fact that someone was going to be working as such was mentioned. The task is mostly associated with the management of Facebook (as administrator), especially to control the comments. They tend to be professionals who are responsible for the digital version but in some cases, in small Media, the director himself is the person responsible. Generally, the people responsible for managing social media are free to decide what is published and, at any rate, the fact that they are asked to publish something is mentioned but not the opposite.

The Media with the most circulation have specific individuals whose sole responsibility is the social media (between 2 and 4). In other cases, there is a strict rota during the week and at the weekends, and either reports are fed automatically every day or on weekends. . One of Media that has an automatic feed states that that the results in terms of users are better than those of their competitors doing it manually. The advantage of automatic feeding mentioned is that there are no informative "bumps". "

- "We cannot work 24 hours every day of the week. I work from Monday to Friday as well because as well as managing social networks I have to do other things"
- "It is, of course, a full-time job and, as I say, the teams are very small at the moment because there are no returns."

Some media opt for semi-automatic feed, so you have to authorize each of the messages if the accounts are synchronized.

### Benefits

Only in one case it was suggested that they may be obtaining financial benefit ("there is publicity, we have advertised on both Twitter and Facebook). The benefits they mention are intangible, i.e. to get more readers, an "indirect profit"

- "The profit is not palpable in money terms.
- "We expect overall profitability (laughs)
- " Financial profitability is not expected."
- "In a way it is free and why question something that is free."
- "But nowadays advertisers are finding it difficult to understand what a digital medium is, so they will find it even more difficult to understand how to attach it to social networks
- "I do not have an opinion on the subject. We do not even know how to make digital media profitable."
- "That has not been exploited here"
- "This question could be extended without referring it to social networking (laughs).
- "We have not explored it. We are not selling anything!
- "that they generate money I cannot see too clearly, but I think the media cannot afford to ignore them simply because they are not giving you money"
- also businesses, our potential customers, are a little skeptical "

About the future, in some cases they leave the door open:

- "We have been to several Conferences and we can see that the business model is being stretched to mobiles"
- "However, it is something to be explored, in fact we now have a mobile version
- "... when the dust settles we will have to see how to make social networks profitable"
- "Obviously, we realize that this is a mine that has not been exploited, but we have to have someone to help us to do that"

Applications and campaigns on Facebook or mobiles have been pointed out as an option.

## Conclusions

Social media have entered the Iberoamerican newsrooms to challenge old agendas and traditional newsgathering and editing culture. The doors are wide open in some news media - who are inspired by them and urge the journalists to twitter and post, and no so much in others, where the lack of training and/or personnel makes it difficult to explore the tools and connect with the community via social media. Hashtags are key to embrace the community.

Twitter and Facebook are the "kings" in the realm of social media in the newsrooms of the media analyzed in this study, though some of them such as *El País* (Eskup) or *El Correo Español-EPV* (Objetivo Vizcaya) have developed their own networks. The reasons why some news media declare a preference for one or another should be explored; cultural factors, as one of the professionals we interviewed said, should not be ignored. Old and new sources merge on social media: official sources are located by active search and, at the same time, users irrupt with outburst from fires, floods or riots. There are no rules, nor training. Each news media has reacted creating teams (not many), turns, with automatization (partial or total) or abandon; in other cases, interactivity depends on the personal compromise of editors or journalists.

We can talk of a certain "fascination" over the possibilities of social media as news sources and hyperlocal coverage, but of impotence also, as resources are scarce. It is not social media but the webs which are looking for a suitable business model. Hyperlocal, mobile, ads and applications for Facebook (in Facebook) might be the answer -though advertisers are reluctant.

Conversational messages are interchanged between users and producers but also colleagues from the same or different media. These kind of messages are by now a drop in the ocean; some media do have a conversational profile, regardless circulation, page views or number of fans. Twitter ranks higher in immediacy. The selection on Facebook's is higher and its best assessments are participation, reach and images.

At the regional level training for journalists (and the users) is necessary to ensure the quality of shared content and prepare the newsrooms to produce news in a mass self-communication environment.

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