

## **Redefinition of the Relationship Between Media and Audience(s) in the Digital Context: The Guardian's Open Journalism Model**

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### **Abstract**

Technological and digital convergence has meant a real revolution in the 21st century society, and the media have been affected in their structures and contents. The convergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has led to the emergence of a new communicative context in which it is now possible to establish a positive relationship of equals between journalists and the audience, no longer conceived as a uniform and passive mass but as a critical mass formed by real *users* (rather than readers) of media.

This new digital ecosystem has led to the establishment of new power relations in communication processes. We are facing a real removal, bluntly a big revolution in the field of journalistic communication. The relationship between *users* (formerly known as the audience) and journalists (subject, more than ever, to public and constant scrutiny) has gone from being unidirectional to being bidirectional and egalitarian. Moreover, the term "audience" becomes outdated compared to more accurate concepts like *prosumer* or *producer* more in tune with the present moment in which the barriers between content producer and consumer have almost faded. The fact is that the ownership of the information seems to have returned to the hands of its rightful owners: the citizens. Hence the unstoppable rise of social networks as a primary instrument of transfer of the interests, concerns, emotions and feelings of the audience.

In this paper we conducted a case study of the British newspaper *The Guardian*, which has undoubtedly been one of the traditional media that best adapted to the digital environment. It is a medium that has always taken care of the relationship with their readers, encouraging their participation and the use of new technologies. Good examples of this attitude have been the implementation of the strategy known as "Digital First" in 2011 and the opening of the digital space *Open Weekend* in March 2012, among other activities. Undoubtedly, *The Guardian* is a perfect example of

adaptation to the social web and the potential it offers in terms of participation of the readers-users, who have acquired a more proactive role in the construction of information.

## **1. Introduction**

At present, we live in an ecosystem characterized by the irrepressible digital convergence of information technology and communication. It is a process framed in the context of great social, economic and cultural transformations that we can fit in the general framework of what Henry Jenkins calls Convergence Culture (2006). The technological revolution led by social networks can promote democratic processes of participation and deliberative conversation on the Internet. At present, we are witnessing the visibility of issues, dialogues and minorities that until recently remained hidden in the shadows.

Jenkins says that media in the digital age are accomplishing a process of convergence arising from two mid-1980s phenomena: the growth of new media technologies and cross-media ownership. But, in his opinion this is not a process only technological or human-based. For Jenkins, that convergence culture is the logical result of the industry's economic desire to distribute contents across multiple platforms too: "convergence culture is a paradigm shift –a move from the medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels" and is "driven by the economic calculations" of the media industry (Jenkins, 2006: 254). Finally, he points out the main reasons why industry has embraced convergence, including the necessary creation of "multiple ways of selling content to consumers" and of a platform for shaping consumer behavior, as well as a desire to cement consumer loyalty at a time when market fragmentation and the rise of file sharing threaten old ways of doing business (Jenkins, 2006: 254). As Vujnovic *et al.* (2010: 287) have noted, "in this context, media industry efforts to distribute their products across multiple platforms end up empowering the users to appropriate, reshape and redistribute those products".

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In the field of digital journalism, it is possible to note in recent years a growing scientific literature about participation and interactivity. The pioneering studies of the early nineties resulted in the early years of this century to a bibliographic explosion around participatory journalism, citizen journalism or user-generated content (UGC).

In that way, Mark Deuze (2001) refers to the new growing phenomenon as open-source journalism, while in a flagship essay Bowman and Willis (2003) use the

term participatory journalism. There are scholars that connected it to public journalism (Paulussen et al., 2007) too.

In this sense, it is necessary to clarify that, while many authors use the above terms interchangeably, in our opinion the term *Participatory journalism* is more comprehensive and includes specific practices as citizen reporting or user-generated content.

In any case, participatory and interactivity research studies have been very fecund, especially in three areas: Citizen journalism (Gillmor, 2004; Carpenter, 2008; Allan y Thorsen, 2009; Papacharissi, 2009; Singer y Ashman, 2009; Barlow, 2010), Participatory journalism (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Bruns, 2005; Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger, 2007; Deuze, 2009) and Public journalism (Haas, 2010; Rosenberry y St. John, 2010; Schaffer, 2010).

At the same time, it has been developed a line of research into what has been called UGC (cfr. García de Torres, 2010). User-generated contents are identified as an object of scientific study in the late nineties (Light and Rogers, 1999; Schultz, 1999, among others) and in the last decade have become a fetish object for researchers (Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Paulussen and Ugille, 2008; Lewis, Kawfhold and Lasorsa, 2010, among others).

In a field of knowledge as digital journalism, recently created and with a growing literature (besides the constant revisionism because of a mutable and evanescent reality), undoubtedly one of the short-term objectives is to achieve the necessary conceptual clarification. This task must be undertaken in a separate study of this, due to the limited nature of this paper. However, it is possible to detect some prospective classifications intended to standardize and classify the activity of the people formerly known as the audience (Rosen, 2006). It is so interesting a proposal made by Joyce Nip (2010), who distinguishes seven ways of connecting citizens with news production, depending on the degree of control exercised by journalists on citizens. This typology ranges from the mere incorporation of the reader to the media discourse or agenda to citizen journalism practices outside the media. Between the two types, Nip locates what she calls public response or interactive journalism. In this case, the audience members take the initiative to react to the news published by journalists, by providing information or comments.

### **3. A case study: The Guardian's open journalism**

*The Guardian* is a British newspaper owned by the non-profit Scott Trust Limited, that historically has adopted transparency as a core idea in its editorial policy

through the publication in Internet of both Editorial Code (2003) and its style book (The Guardian Style Guide), the latest version dates from. Its network of websites were launched in January 1999, and since then *The Guardian* has won a lot of web awards (in 2012 they won five prizes at Online Media Awards) for its pioneering and innovative activity in cyberspace.

Editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger has played a key role in turning guardian.co.uk into the forefront of digital media in the world. When Rusbridger was designated as editor of The Guardian, this was then the 9th biggest newspaper in the UK (with only a print edition). Now, it is the third online newspaper in the world, surpassed only by New York Times and Mail Online in terms of average daily unique browsers. The interactive web edition of The Guardian is read by over 4 million people across the world every day and now attracts 78 million unique browsers a month. Besides, as much as 25 per cent of its revenues comes from its digital edition.

The Guardian has developed an editorial strategy called Digital first. In the actual context in which financially print is still more lucrative than digital, in their mindset The Guardian is completely digital first. From the point of view of the editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger, they are “a giant website with a small team dedicated to the newspaper” (Goodman, 2012), and the paper reflects that, by offering analysis and explanations rather than news.

One consequence from this point of view is the openness and transparency through the pre-planned content for the print edition. *The Guardian* is aiming now for 30 percent of content in advance. This helps them even out production, saves costs and produces a more analytical paper.

### 3.1. The Guardian's open journalism

It is hard to explain in few words what Open Journalism is. In fact, we are talking about an attitude more than attributes or mandatory ground rules. This attitude is related to the *Digital first* strategy. In an interesting interview published by the Nieman Lab in 2012, Rusbridger explained what Open Journalism is by putting an anecdotal example:

“The simplest way I explain it is to think of the theater critic. *The Guardian's* got a wonderful theater critic who has been doing the job for 40 years, and no editor I can think of his right mind would get rid of Michael Billington or not have a theater critic. If you asked the question, “What about the other 900 people in the audience next door to Michael?” –it is conceivable no one else in the audience has an interesting opinion that

could add to your understanding? [...] it is generally better to try and harness multiple views" (Ellis, 2012).

Therefore, we are dealing with a completely new idea of journalism, brilliantly expressed in the well-known Three Little Pigs commercial, which is moving beyond a newspaper. In Alan Rusbridger's words: "The Three Little Pigs was an attempt at explaining the benefits of open journalism to the reader –that you get a more complete version of the truth- and to explain them this idea of a newspaper company is changing very, very fast" (Ellis, 2012).

That new idea of (open) journalism does require investment in staff, and The Guardian has now eight community managers and twelve moderators in order to deal with reader's participation. This philosophy based on Open Journalism has been developed by practicing successfully the following ten mantras or traits:

- a. It encourages participation. It invites and/or allows a response.
- b. It is not an inert, "us" or "them", form of publishing,
- c. It encourages others to initiate debate, publish material or make suggestions. We can follow, as well as lead. We can involve others in pre-publication processes.
- d. It helps form communities of joint interest around subjects, issues or individuals.
- e. It is open to the web and is part of it. It links to, and collaborates with, other material (including services) on the web.
- f. It aggregates and/or curates the work of others.
- g. It recognizes that journalists are not the only voices of authority, expertise and interest.
- h. It aspires to achieve, and reflect, diversity as well as promoting shared values.
- i. It recognizes that publishing can be the beginning of the journalistic process rather than the end.
- j. It is transparent and open to challenge –including correction, clarification and addition.

In short, Guardian's open journalism overcomes the constant negotiation between openness and control and open and closed paradigms in journalism. The openness of its web is "a critical factor in bringing a higher degree of transparency to world affairs, and makes individuals, companies, institutions and politicians accountable for their actions" (The Guardian, 2011).

### **The Guardian's open API**

As explained by Aitamurto and Lewis (2013), Open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) constitute a shift toward an open innovation paradigm and are an early manifestation of open innovation in the news industry. Following De Souza and Redmiles (2009), Open APIs serve as an interface between software programs, structuring the rules by which one program can access the information of another. Open APIs are software tools that enable seamless digital content-sharing between content providers and third-party developers (Bodle, 2011). In addition, Aitamurto and Lewis (2013: 315) point out that, with Open APIs, “companies such as Facebook and Google invite external developers to build services such as web applications around their content – for instance, by republishing the original content in a new environment”.

In short, APIs are “a set of rules by which one software program can communicate with another software program” (Aitamurto and Lewis, 2013: 316). In this way, Open APIs are a tool for internet companies to exchange their content efficiently with external collaborators (Bodle, 2011).

In relation to their characteristics, there are three core processes of open innovation (cfr. Chesbrough and Crowther, 2006; Enkel et al., 2009; Chesbrough, 2011a; Aitamurto and Lewis, 2013). Open innovation can be: *outside-in process* (when leverages the discoveries of others), *inside-out process* (when externalizes innovation processes by using partners while at the same time saving R&D resources) or *coupled-process* (in which companies combine the other two processes, commercializing innovations with partners and sharing complementary resources).

Although Open APIs is a relatively new phenomenon, the first news organization to launch one was NPR in 2008. The Guardian launched its Open API in March 2009, giving access to more than a million articles published since 1999. The existence of an Open API takes part of The Guardian's open platform strategy, in which the newspaper encourages developers (more than 3.000 developers at the moment) to build applications around their contents and data in order to generate revenue. This is a coupled-process strategy called “three-tiered model”: the first tier allows developers to present only the headlines of the article; the second tier allows developers to introduce their own ads and keep the advertising revenue; finally, in the third tier the revenue sharing must be negotiated between them. In this way, The Guardian, by applying an open innovation strategy, can move toward an open business model (also called a platform business model), in which the value (and revenue) is co-created with collaborators (Chesbrough, 2011b). According to Aitamurto and Lewis (2013), in open innovation around digital media, the core product would be information content rather

than hardware/software technology. That's the case of The Guardian's open innovation strategy.

With its open innovation model, The Guardian can reach new markets, create extended product portfolios and even meet the needs of increasingly fragmented audiences. The Guardian's open API has inspired some collaboration with Facebook and Google, among others, and has led to a notable increase in the number of newspaper readers.

One of the defining characteristics of the Open journalism practiced by The Guardian model is the use of crowdsourcing (which we will see several significant examples later on), especially in relation to user-generated content. In a sense, we can say that this newspaper is a pioneer in turning crowdsourcing into a key part of its business, and it was one of the first also to turn itself into a complete platform for data sharing.

A key benefit for using crowdsourcing "was that no other media entity was able or prepared to replicate the efforts of crowdsourcing, innovative online reportage and computational journalism. It secondly enhanced the reputation of *The Guardian* for investigative journalism, and enabled *Guardian* journalists to focus on investigation rather than low-level activities" (Daniel and Flew, 2010: 5).

### 3.2. The Guardian's open journalism examples

Over recent years there have been many proposals and examples of open journalism offered by the British newspaper. Below, we highlight some of the most significant (in addition to those already mentioned):

- a. **Open News Desk Live.** *The Guardian* has also developed an open news desk live as a visibility strategy for its contents. While this is a risky experiment, the fact is that it has been tested successfully by some other media, such as the Swedish regional newspaper *Norran*.

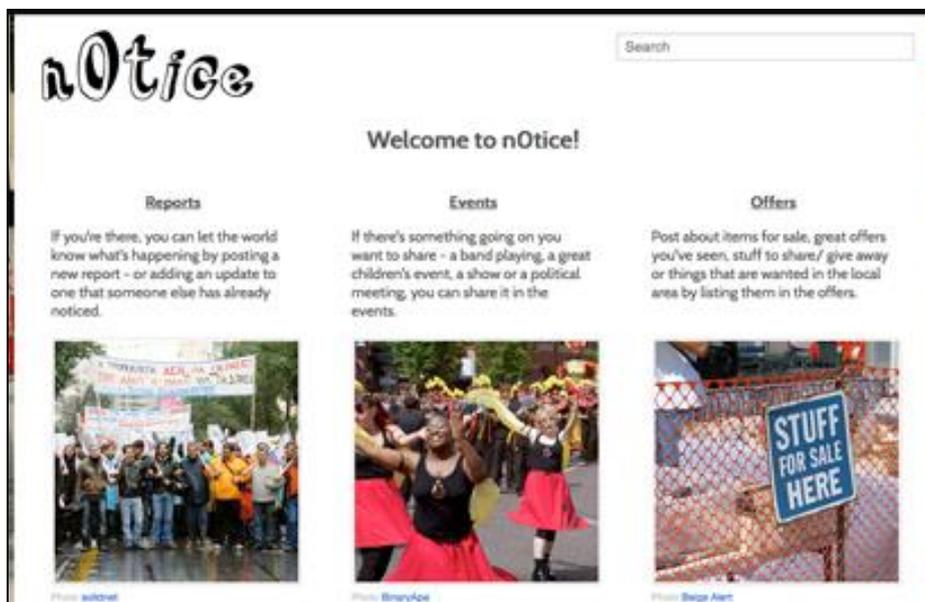
The experiment supported by The Guardian is publishing in the blog "Inside The Guardian" a part of the stories in which their reporters are working (restricted to National, International and Economy news), along with providing the Twitter account of the news writers. In addition, The Guardian proposes using the hashtag #opennews so readers can suggest news or research lines to the newspaper.

The aim of this open news strategy is explained at *The Guardian* website devoted to open journalism project [<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/open-journalism>]. This *News Desk Live* feature "goes over all the stories that the paper is trying to cover

in a specific day –complete with a version of the “story sked” that editor review –and allows readers to contribute ideas or suggestions about those topics” (Ingram, 2012).

**b. Notice. There** have been many tools and platforms implemented by *The Guardian*, following its open source strategy. In our opinion, one of the most interesting (since combines within itself the newspaper’s mutualised, open and collaborative nature) is *nOtice*. It’s a citizen-driven platform that allows people the ability to create their own noticeboards about local news, community events, etc.

It’s been a completely new kind of social platform in which users could customize the branding, the overall aesthetic, and even the subdomain of their particular noticeboards.



**c. Guardian open weekend.** On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2012, *The Guardian* developed an unprecedented activity: to open its doors to the public, hosting a festival of ideas, innovation and entertainment. Guest speakers from around, writers, editors, digital developers and photographers participated in over 200 programmed sessions on everything from the American presidential elections to the “Arab spring”.



d. **The Guardian's *Members of Parliament Expenses Scandal Reportage*.** In this case, we can see a paradigmatic example of crowdsourcing and computational journalism. *The Guardian* hadn't been the first news organization to initiate an investigation into expense claims by Members of the Parliament (MPs) in the UK. In 2009, *The Daily Telegraph* obtained two million leaked pages of documents relating to MP expense claims (Hicks, 2009) and began to investigate using internal resources. As related by Daniel and Flew (2010: 4), over the next month, the *Daily Telegraph* released news based upon a sample of claims they had reviewed. In response to freedom of information requests, Parliament then released over a million documents relating to MP claims for household and office expenses.

*The Guardian* built a computer application designed to interact with the audience via crowdsourcing. They published 400,000 scanned PDFs, of whom 200,000 were analyzed. In June 2010, about half of the 460.000 documents were reviewed by 26.774 registered readers. 170.000 documents were reviewed in the first eighty hours (Andersen, 2009).

This was a great example of using crowdsourcing techniques for basic fact checking and innovative data presentation. In this way, following Daniel and Flew (2010: 5), "a key benefit for The Guardian was that no other media entity was able or prepared to replicate the efforts of crowdsourcing, innovative online reportage and computational journalism".

- e. **Key investigations made by The Guardian.** There are a lot of examples, like *Wikileaks*, the phone-hacking at the *News of the World* or the *Arab Spring* coverage. All these initiatives have in common the openness of information, promoting collaboration and the establishment of a relationship of equals with the audience.



- f. **Comment is free.** In relation to the previously mentioned open and collaborative strategy, *The Guardian* has created a section called "Comment is free", which dates back to the famous words of CP Scott (former editor of *The Guardian*) in 1921: "comments are free, facts are sacred." It is a way to engage the reader in the creative process. The audience collaborates on elaborating book reviews, sharing photos or talking with the editor. In this sense, there have been a lot of paradigmatic examples of reader's fruitful participation (besides the MPs expenses) pieces like *Perspectives on unemployment* or *Mental health perspectives*. However, we should note that while the reader helps, collaborates,

and participates in the information, the responsibility of analyzing information and data remains with the journalist, who serves as curator *content*.

The screenshot shows the Guardian website's 'comment is free' section. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for various topics like News, Sport, and Comment. The main heading is 'comment is free' in large, bold letters. Below this, there's a 'Today's picks' section with several article thumbnails. The largest article is 'On benefit? The government are making cuts' by John Harris, featuring a graphic of a pair of scissors cutting through a pound sign. Other articles include 'The bedroom tax's authors were either careless or cruel – it must be fought' by Ellie Mae O'Hagan, 'Is telling your daughter to find a husband such a bad idea?' by Joanna Moorhead, 'How do churches get new bums on seats? Get rid of the boring old ones' by Andrew Brown, 'The £10,000 tax-free sop patronises the low-paid' by Lynsey Hanley, and 'Has feminism failed the working class?' by The people's panel. On the right side, there's a 'What are the world's biggest issues? Who is going to solve them?' section and a 'On Comment is free' section listing the most viewed articles.

### 3.3. Promoting user participation

*The Guardian* aims to establish a solid, stable and valuable participation for readers in the media discourse. They have even developed a style guide to encourage reader participation. There are 10 guidelines to establish community standards and participation guidelines:

- a. **We welcome debate and dissent, but personal attacks (on authors, other users or any individual), persistent trolling and mindless abuse will not be tolerated.** The key to maintaining the Guardian website as an inviting space is to focus on intelligent discussion of topics.
- b. **We acknowledge criticism of the articles we publish, but will not allow persistent misrepresentation of the Guardian and our journalists to be published on our website.** For the sake of robust debate, we will distinguish between constructive, focused argument and smear tactics.

- c. **We understand that people often feel strongly about issues debated on the site, but we will consider removing any content that others might find extremely offensive or threatening. Please respect other people's views and beliefs and consider your impact on others when making your contribution.**
- d. **We reserve the right to redirect or curtail conversations which descend into flame-wars based on ingrained partisanship or generalisations. We don't want to stop people discussing topics they are enthusiastic about, but we do ask users to find ways of sharing their views that do not feel divisive, threatening or toxic to others.**
- e. **We will not tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of hate-speech, or contributions that could be interpreted as such.** We recognise the difference between criticising a particular government, organisation, community or belief and attacking people on the basis of their race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.
- f. **We will remove any content that may put us in legal jeopardy, such as potentially libellous or defamatory postings, or material posted in potential breach of copyright.**
- g. **We will remove any posts that are obviously commercial or otherwise spam-like. Our aim is that this site should provide a space for people to interact with our content and each other, and we actively discourage commercial entities passing themselves off as individuals, in order to post advertising material or links.** This may also apply to people or organisations who frequently post propaganda or external links without adding substantively to the quality of the discussion on the Guardian website.
- h. **Keep it relevant. We know that some conversations can be wide-ranging, but if you post something which is unrelated to the original topic ("off-topic") then it may be removed, in order to keep the thread on track. This also applies to queries or comments about moderation, which should not be posted as comments.**
- i. **Be aware that you may be misunderstood, so try to be clear about what you are saying, and expect that people may understand your contribution differently than you intended. Remember that text isn't always a great medium for conversation: tone of voice (sarcasm, humour and so on) doesn't always come across when using words on a screen. You can help to keep the Guardian community areas open to all viewpoints by maintaining a reasonable tone, even in unreasonable circumstances.**

**j. The platform is ours, but the conversation belongs to everybody.** We want this to be a welcoming space for intelligent discussion, and we expect participants to help us achieve this by notifying us of potential problems and helping each other to keep conversations inviting and appropriate. If you spot something problematic in community interaction areas, please report it. **When we all take responsibility for maintaining an appropriate and constructive environment, the debate itself is improved and everyone benefits.**

Nevertheless, *The Guardian* is not limited to establishing standards of community behavior, but in the interests of transparency and to encourage participation has also published a journalist blogging and commenting guidelines:

1. Participate in conversations about our content, and take responsibility for the conversations you start.
2. Focus on the constructive by recognising and rewarding intelligent contributions.
3. Don't reward disruptive behaviour with attention, but report it when you find it.
4. Link to sources for facts or statements you reference, and encourage others to do likewise.
5. Declare personal interest when applicable. Be transparent about your affiliations, perspectives or previous coverage of a particular topic or individual.
6. Be careful about blurring fact and opinion and consider carefully how your words could be (mis)interpreted or (mis)represented.
7. Encourage readers to contribute perspective, additional knowledge and expertise. Acknowledge their additions.
8. Exemplify our community standards in your contributions above and below the line.

### **3.4. *The Guardian* and Social Media: Facebook “Social Reading” App**

Alan Rusbridger has always been a hard evangelist for getting people onto Social Media. Thus, with *The Guardian's* open API, companies such Google or Facebook have been invited to collaborate and expand the newspaper contents. Besides, *The Guardian's* editorial strategy is based on using social media because they enables reader participation. In Rusbridger's opinion, after switching to the use of social media as a professional tool and putting digital media first, *The Guardian* website has become the third-largest news website in the world. In 2011, 400 journalists used Twitter professionally and had 50 official accounts. In Facebook there were 30 different pages, and this social net generated the 5 per cent of *The Guardian's* website traffic.

Nevertheless, Guardian's open journalism is essentially experimental. So, after a year-long experiment with a Facebook "social reading" app that gained more than six million users (April 2012 data), The Guardian decided to take back control of its content (cfr. Ingram, 2012). Product manager Anthony Sullivan explained that decision: "The Facebook app has given us access to a hard to reach audience and has helped us learn much more about our new and existing readership which, as a digital first organisation, is crucial [but] we have decided to switch our focus to creating more social participation for our users on our own core properties."

The Guardian adopted the decision of taking off Facebook social Lecture app since the platform that is hosting the content (in this case, Facebook) arguably gets the lion's share of the benefits, and the content provider becomes a secondary player. Following Ingram's opinion: "it seems clear that *The Guardian* has decided the benefits of controlling the way that readers come into contact with its content –and how they interact with it once they have done so- outweigh the benefits of the social reader app" (Ingram, 2012). From our point of view, this is not a failure but a new step in experimentation way that defines digital context in 21th century.

### **3.5. The Guardian's Business Model**

In relation to the above, *The Guardian's* open journalism essentially articulates its view of future of journalism as free and open, in contrast to that media organizations in the UK and the US that are putting their content behind paywalls. For Rusbridger, doing that creates an impenetrable barrier to the free flow of information and ideas. In order to harmonize print and digital editions, *The Guardian* is altering the production of its print paper to adjust it to evening reading (and to be, consequently, a niche market) while online version would be open, free and collaborative.

However, there are also negative views about the viability of the business model of *The Guardian*, and it is fair to mention them. There have been many voices in the industry fiercely critical of the Scott Trust philosophy, because in a sense the group compensates The Guardian economic losses thanks to the substantial gains from *Autotrader* (a classified cars sales website and magazine). Even Heather Brooke, Professor of Journalism at City University's Department of Journalism in London and former collaborator of this medium has called Guardian's open journalism as "a failed business model."

While it is true that by the time the model used by the London newspaper has reported more losses than benefits to the Guardian Media Group, the newspaper industry as a whole is in a recession. Perhaps it is more appropriate to look to the

future and how to adapt to it. Nor should we neglect the fact that the digital platform of the paper now contributes to 25 per cent of revenue of *The Guardian* and this number is growing at a rate of 20 per cent every year.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Throughout the preceding pages, we have seen that we are immersed in a fully digital ecosystem characterized by the multiplicity of sources, information overload and the establishment of a new order of values. In addition, we have reviewed a case study, *The Guardian*, as an example of a new way of conceiving and practicing journalism for the nature, principles, values and potentials that define technological convergence.

By induction, after a detailed study on *The Guardian*, as a media that can be considered the standard of a new way of practicing and conceiving journalism activity in a fully digital and interactive scenario, we can establish a set of conclusions or inputs about the new relationship between media and their audiences in a fully digital, technological and convergent framework. Thus, we have identified a number of changes and removals of roles traditionally associated with journalism that, in large part, could be extrapolated to other media, areas and realities. All of them are related to achieving and promoting the participation of users in a media. They are the following:

##### **a. Changes in journalists role**

We've assisted to changes in the journalist's role. It exists a new *curatorial role* for journalists consisting in direct readers to the best contents, enhance the news experience and engage readers by constructing (niches) communities of interest. Journalists should encourage reader participation in media platforms and thus create an effective link between the two; for achieving it they can (and should) use all elements at their disposal, such as social networking. In a sense, the digital journalist becomes a professional content curator whose motto would be: "Encourage participation and invite a response". Finally, the journalist often aggregates and curates the works of others.

##### **b. Changing roles of readers/users**

In relation to the previous point, media users have definitely abandoned the traditional passive role that defined them until now. As we have seen in the analysis of

*The Guardian*, web users participate in a high level in the development of news production.

This shows the positive response to the encouragement of participation and success of *crowdsourcing* and collaborative strategies. *The Guardian* has not only increased its audience exponentially, but also built readers loyalty. Only this can explain that they get more than 70 comments per story. The achievement of a sense of belonging and identification has been demonstrated during the coverage of the Egyptian revolution, when individual Guardian articles were shared via social media (Facebook and Twitter) thousands of times as well as attracting thousands of commentaries in contrast with *The Times*, which were commented on or shared only a handful of times. In this sense, we should not forget that the online version of *The Guardian* receives over 500,000 comments.

### **c. News Making Huge Changes**

As noted by Meg Pickard, Head of Digital Engagement in *The Guardian*: "Embrace, not replace". Meanwhile, Alan Rusbridger refers to this phenomenon as the "mutualisation" of news. Journalists must cooperate with readers and communities to better understand, explore and reflect situations, perspectives and experiences of mutual interest for the benefit of all.

In this sense, after analysing *The Guardian's* strategy, we can say that the reporting process does not end with the publication of news. Journalists must produce information, encourage user participation and collaboratively enhance news. The establishment of joint communities of interest (a potential mode of revenue) directly influences the radical shift in the news making, now conceived as active, collaborative and collective.

### **d. Transforming News Organisations**

After studying *The Guardian's* open journalism model, we can say that journalism has definitely changed for traditional news organization. The future is here, and demands that in a 3.0 digital context media a platform for sources and readers to come together and interact must be provided. In some way, UGC or *crowdsourcing* make sense with this idea of a platform for data sharing, an idea promoted by *The Guardian*. As Alan Rusbridger said: "We are a platform for others people's content as well as our own". That is a distributive model of journalism defined by the journalist's curator role providing richness and diversity of content in the context of a collaborative open platform.

We are talking about open and collaborative projects and platforms, third-party developers and services, and open knowledge. Definitely, a newspaper successful in the the world of social media, collaborative knowledge and deliberative democracy must be a mutualised newspaper.

### **Open and participatory/collaborative journalism as the most logic way to succeed in the current digital environment**

*The Guardian's* editorial strategy is based in a two-way relationship between journalist and the people formerly known as the audience. A 21th century news organization needs to be more open and more dual-approach oriented. So, this new idea of newspaper is based on the existence of *openness*, transparency, participation and crowdsourcing.

Following this roadmap, *The Guardian* has managed to place itself at the head of the world journalism and become a spear blade of a sort of journalism focused on audience and viral-content oriented. In some sense, the tide towards digitalization is irreversible and journalists and newspapers have to adapt to the new reality of Open Journalism in a transitional (and mutable) digital context. Instead of saving the press or getting a profitable business model right now, media have to adapt to the present: digital, social, collaborative, open, and participatory.

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