

About journalism – Sur le journalisme – Sobre jornalismo

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Special issue. Call for papers

Online journalism and its publics

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Deadline for paper submission: **April 15th 2014**

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Discussion forums, comment spaces, fact checking, crowdsourcing, blogs and social networks have expanded the opportunities for the participation of Internet users in the news production process. The relationship between journalism and its publics has become more complex, with multiple levels of interaction that are not always easy to fit into professional practices.

In the last decade we have heard utopian discourses announcing a revolution in journalism and the end of one-way mass communication. But we have also lived through the normalisation of audience participation on online news media, with gatekeeping criteria and isolation from news production as key strategies. The moment calls for an in-depth analysis of the circumstances, motivations and habits of the production and consumption of news in a digital context. We know well the professional practices in the newsrooms, but we lack empirical evidence on their publics, how do they select the information they consume and why do they decide to contribute information through any of the available means.

The audience was until recently an imaginary figure in the minds of journalists, editors in chief, marketing or advertising managers, and consulting agencies. It has now materialised online under the shape of contributions, nicknames, arguments and conversations through the diverse socio-technical artefacts of online news media. While in the past the participation of the reader was circumscribed to the letters to the editor in the newspapers (later adopted through the audience ombudsperson in broadcasting media), citizen discourses are now legitimated by news producers. As the category of the “public-user” becomes more visible, we can formulate hypotheses about their consumption and production practices, their representations of journalism and its role in society. We can gather empirical evidence of the evolution of news flows and overcome the sterile cries about the end of journalism and resituate it within the context of the emerging practices in digital environments.

These changes in the journalistic landscape call for analyses from multiple backgrounds: sociology of journalism and news, reception studies, history of communication, discourse analysis, cultural studies, anthropology. Article proposals can focus on the following issues, around the figure of the public as:

- An **actor present in the newsroom**: the public lives in the mental and discursive representations of the journalists, but also in a more concrete way in the contributions of the users and the data generated by the monitoring of audience activity on news websites. It also involves the creation of new professional practices (such as the role of the community manager to deal with active audience participation). How do media companies adapt to this configuration (automated treatment of comments, new moderation tasks, outsourcing of moderation).
- An **economic actor**: news media try to monetise online audiences through support diversification of their products, recording increasingly complete consumer data, or developing production strategies that allow news consumption anywhere and anytime.
- An information producer, an expert: the public becomes an information source through comments in news and on the blogs embedded on the news websites. It is as well used by the media to legitimise some journalistic formats.
- A **discourse producer**: what are the features of the discourses of the publics? How do they engage in debates? What are their representations of the news products? To what extent do they challenge their reader's contract?

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- A **referee of social discourses**: the new configuration enables the citizens to challenge the established distribution of knowledge in the public sphere and allows them to collectively monitor the journalistic discourse and propose rectifications.

Articles may be offered in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese.

Submission of articles (30.000 to 50.000 characters, including references and footnotes) **before April 15th 2014** : <http://surlejournalisme.com/rev/index.php/slj/author/submit/1>

The articles will be subject to peer review.

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... is a **meeting point** of historically shaped intellectual traditions and centers of interests in journalism studies. The field of journalism studies has developed with different epistemologies, approaches and methodologies that inform national intellectual formations and linguistic territories. The journal provokes the encounter of these approaches and research results, by its clearly international positioning. In the context of globalization and relative homogenization of the mediatic systems and journalistic practices, the review also looks at the convergences and resistances of journalistic and scientific cultures.

The journal is a **space** dedicated to **science**. An editorial committee (of four editors) responsible for leading the exchanges, will build on the joint work of editorial boards that include European, Latin American and North American members. The boards are composed of figures known for the quality of their research and of the international and intercultural orientation of their approaches to journalism studies.

The journal is a **launching pad** for the publication of innovative works in transdisciplinary perspectives and publishes researches of both established scholars and students. Published on line and on paper, thematic issues are organized around precise problematizations of original theoretical and methodological findings. Thesis results, scientific reports and accounts, field and research notes, may also be included in any given issue.

The review is a **rendezvous** between diverse research curiosities and ways of looking at journalism in an arena of high scientific vitality.

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