

“Making news with digital stories: digital storytelling as a forma of citizen journalism – case Studies analysis in the U.S., UK and Portugal

Ana Boa-Ventura

Universidade do Texas – Austin

VoxPopulisPT

anaventura@mail.utexas.edu

Inês Rodrigues

VoxPopulisPT

Resumo

Propomos um olhar sobre “digital storytelling” nos espaços editoriais de seis das principais empresas de notícias no Reino Unido, E.U.A. e Portugal através de entrevistas realizadas com os jornalistas que trabalham nesta área. Todos os entrevistados são referências nos seus próprios países nas áreas de narração digital / multimédia áreas. Em alguns casos, este reconhecimento é internacional. Todos eles detêm - ou detiveram num passado recente - posições-chaves nas secções de narrativa digital e / ou multimédia divisões nas organizações em que trabalham.

Palavras-chave: Narrativas digitais

Abstract

We propose a look at digital storytelling in the newsrooms of six mainstream media outlets in the UK, US and Portugal through interviews that we have conducted with journalists working in this area. All interviewees are references in their own countries in the digital storytelling / multimedia areas. In some cases, that recognition is international. They all hold - or have held in the recent past - key positions in the digital storytelling and/or multimedia divisions in their organizations

Keywords: Digital storyteling.

“Everybody would be a reporter. Facts and opinions would flow without intervention, and most definitely without the blessing of journalistic gatekeepers, who in this new world must surrender control and share power.”

Katherine Fulton, 1993

I. Introduction

We propose a look at digital storytelling in the newsrooms of six mainstream media outlets in the UK, US and Portugal through interviews that we have conducted with journalists working in this area. All interviewees are references in their own countries in the digital storytelling / multimedia¹ areas. In some cases, that recognition is international. They all hold - or have held in the recent past - key positions in the digital storytelling and/or multimedia divisions in their organizations.

The authors bring to this discussion a spotlight given by their different expertise – journalism (Rodrigues) and digital media (Boa-Ventura). Both have a vested interest in understanding how this movement is evolving in their native country – Portugal – by looking into the current scenario there and in two of the countries where the digital storytelling movement arguably, began. We will note that Spain and Latin American countries like Argentina are currently a reference for journalists in this area but they are not part of this study.

We will construct six narratives about the place that digital storytelling and citizen journalism have in the mainstream media outlets with which our interviewees are associated. Our interviews focused on issues that we consider critical in assessing what that place is, such as the degree of acceptance of this type of journalistic work - both internally by peer journalists and management, and externally by the public - as well as the media outlet's openness to incorporating stories sent by readers in the online edition and for public view. We will be looking with particular detail at the Digital Storytelling movement and the degree to which mainstream media outlets are accepting it by incorporating it in their online components.

Some of our research questions are (1) Is the partial shift of content authorship from the media professional to the layman a calculated strategy to reach new audiences? Or is it the natural outcome of the user generated content (UGC) movement? By UGC movement we

¹ We will use both expressions in spite of their different meanings to cover the diversity of divisions' and sections' designations that we found in the media outlets that were part of this study. We are therefore using a very broad definition of digital or multimedia stories as any narrative content that is beyond pure text, whether it is contributed by the public or produced by journalists and whether it refers to facts or fiction.

mean blogging and media sharing services, both having created new channels for content distribution and new audiences. (2) How are journalists who have exclusively or partially worked with digital storytelling/multimedia regarded by peers and management? and (3) Are there individuals or “schools” influencing the work of professionals in this field?

We will start by clarifying the terms that we will use in this paper. We will then briefly characterize each one of the six media outlets covered by the study and summarize our interviews. We will finally, rather than generalize, share insights gained through our construction of six narratives.

II. Background

Digital storytelling, crowdsourcing, user generated content and citizen journalism – more than rhetorical distinctions

Digital stories are often tied to a type of reporting labeled Citizen’s Journalism (CJ) and/or tied to crowdsourcing. We believe that current journalistic practices regarding the degree of openness to multimedia content produced by the general public are the result of complex power structures that are the province of a Gramscian rhetoric of media production: those between producer and consumer, author and reader, professional and nonprofessional, mainstream and alternative content, among others. Each of the expressions that give this section its title engages some type of power shift from traditional hegemonic structures. We found it useful to do an overview of these concepts, while at the same time clarifying the terminology used.

When taken at face value, “digital storytelling” simply means using computer-based tools to tell stories. Those tools allow for the digital manipulation of content, which can be audio, text, still or moving images. Digital stories are the outcome of this process. They are usually published (or at least “publish-able”) online, often as short videos downloadable or streamed. However, “digital storytelling” should not be reduced to any techno-centric definition such as the one above, nor should it simply focus on which media can be used today to tell stories. The expression goes well beyond this. It also designates a movement born in California in the 1970s from Americana Road shows through the work of a small group of performers - Dana Atchley, Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen (Lambert, 2002). The movement has evolved into what is today the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) at Berkeley, and similar organizations that have spread around the world with a similar agenda - one of empowering individuals and communities by giving them the tools and skills to tell their own stories. The CDS developed

a workshop methodology with an emphasis on still images, narrator's voice as voice over and emotional content, among other principles compiled in a publication entitled "The Cookbook" and widely distributed partially because it is downloadable for free through the CDS website (Center for Digital Storytelling, 2003). This methodology has evolved in different ways and lost some of its popular roots when permeating newspaper walls or migrating to the Old Continent (Boa-Ventura, 2008).

DST organizations around the world have a media literacy agenda because they provide skills that, once appropriated, promote the development of a critical eye regarding the stories with which, as consumers of mainstream media, we are "hit" on a daily basis. For this reason, the DST movement, in its different forms, can also be seen as an alternative - if not even as an opposing - presence to that of mainstream media. We mentioned "different forms" as we are trying to keep the number of designations manageable but it is important to notice that many terms are used today to mean much the same phenomenon. As an example, the "Horizon Report", which since 2003 has been identifying the areas of emerging technology with significant impact on higher education within the next one to five years, identifies "grassroots video" as one of the tendencies with a greater influence. Examples of this trend are "digital case stories" and "user-created clips" (New Media Consortium, 2008:10).

In spite of the multiplicity of approaches and definitions, the Center for Digital Storytelling is credited with being the first systematic approach to organized training or workshops in this field. As one of our interviewees says:

I was already doing a Digital Storytelling class with undergraduates at Cardiff University but my model was clumsy and I was drawn to the workshop model for telling stories with still photographs and voice-over that was being pioneered at the Center for Digital Storytelling at Berkeley.

D. Meadows (personal communication, November 4, 2008)

Community empowerment was and is core to the agenda of the California-based digital storytelling movement. Though only a small part of the multimedia and digital storytelling efforts in mainstream media outlets have stemmed from CDS workshops, we suggest that a shift of power is intrinsic to this movement, and that this shift can be observed under a number of frameworks:

Economy

- content production by nonprofessionals (and we will return to this point when we discuss crowdsourcing) alters economical models by assigning tasks that were until now the province of professionals to unpaid, albeit talented, labor.

Empowerment

- by assigning virtually “anyone” the role of author and by offering a democratic channel of distribution, digital stories shift the power structure between producer and consumer in mainstream media outlets.

Technology

- trends such as open source and distributed computing, as well as the “trivialization” of those skills that used to be exclusive of professionals (such as video editing), had a tremendous impact on the production of digital stories. Jen Friedberg says that the Flash application “allows us to bring all [...] back together and tell a story with more depth than in any other medium”. (Zadrayec, 2008:10)

Hence, we meet again the Gramscian rhetoric with which we initiated this section.

Arguably the individual responsible for taking the CDS methodology to Europe and at the same time making it a multi-year commitment by one of the major media outlets – the BBC – was Daniel Meadows. However and as extensively explained above, the “digital storytelling” movement did not have its roots in journalism but rather in Americana roadshows. It evolved independently of journalism while occasionally overlapping notions of reporting, though in a fresh perspective imbued with that which is personal, local and emotional. In fact, the CDS methodology stresses the importance of emotional content (Center for Digital Storytelling, 2003) and there is no mention of objectivity and neutrality, which are so core to standard, traditional, news reporting.

Often associated with the User Generated Content (UGC) movement, citizen journalism (CJ), also called public or participatory journalism, refers to the process of collecting, analyzing, reporting and distributing news (Bowman & Willis, 2004). As Andrew DeVigal stressed in his interview, CJ is the process or input while digital storytelling is the result, the output.

“Crowdsourcing” was first coined by [Wired](#) author Jeff Howe as a play of words on the well-known practice of “outsourcing”. While outsourcing can mean looking for skills outside a company if and when it does not have that expertise internally, that is hardly the case of

newspapers. Other meanings of outsourcing refer to the practice of using cheap labor from other countries to cut costs at home. Likewise, in the literature reviewed and in the interviews conducted, we read and heard the term used in the context of the increasingly dominant practice of using unpaid or low paid skills of amateurs to create content for established businesses but also implicit was sometimes the fact that the “crowd” may have a talent that is valuable to the industry of which the crowd is not a part of. For instance Mark Brigger in his excellent “Journalism 2.0. How to Survive and Thrive” paper includes crowdsourcing under a section on new ways of reporting, noting that it “demonstrates how a large group of committed individuals can outperform a small group of experienced (and paid) professionals.” (Brigger, 2008:51)

The user generated content (UGC) movement is not independent from the open source movement, which in turn involves advocacy groups such as the open standards advocates and whose members are interested in that which is often called “community technology”.

Crowdsourcing and UGC are two ways of referring to content produced by the user. We often encountered during our interviews and also in our literature review a preference for using UGC in a technological context and crowdsourcing when referring to the reporting process. Again, we do not wish to generalize but rather pinpoint the contexts in which we have most found both terms.

One can argue that in citizen journalism the source is always the public (the crowd). However, it also true that the word `journalism` has a value of quality embedded, which is absent in “sourcing”. Likewise, “citizen” means a responsible, likely proactive, member of a society while ‘crowd’ refers to an anonymous, non-labile, collective. Nevertheless, and as explained above, crowdsourcing is equally used to mean the potential for a fresh view, which may complement that of content experts.

Journalists’ job titles and divisions’ designations vary greatly. They are a function of the journalists’ role in filtering the material contributed by the consumers. In our interview we found almost as many job titles and divisions names as interviewees.

III. Methodology

III.a Sampling

We interviewed six journalists who in their respective countries are important voices in digital storytelling or in their work in the area of citizen journalism. Half of them are also internationally recognized and their work is referenced in academic journals.

The interviewees' work (or, in one case, have until recently worked) for major media outlets in three countries: the US – The NYTimes and the Star Telegram - the UK – The Scotsman and BBC - and Portugal – Expresso and Público. In the case of the US and the UK one of the organizations has a national coverage and the other a regional one. Both regional newspapers serve a large geographic area: Dallas/Fort Worth area in the case of The Star Telegram and Scotland in the case of the Scotsman. In Portugal, both media outlets are national as there were no regional media outlets with a digital storytelling section significant enough to be part of this study. Scale in terms of readership and circulation is necessarily quite different between the three countries.

Our sample is partially a convenience sample: one of the authors has, in the context of her work, contacted most of these journalists in the past (with the exception of one). We say that this is partially a convenience sample because our interviewees are leading figures in the field: if they have not attained international recognition, they are nevertheless key national voices in the field.

In the case of Portugal, Miguel Martins is the editor for the online component of Expresso the largest weekly newspaper in Portugal. Alexandre Martins heads the multimedia division of Público's online component (whose editor is António Granado, also a key voice in the field in Portugal). Público is the most widely circulated daily newspaper of general information and a reference daily newspaper in Portugal.

In the UK, Daniel Meadows headed the digital storytelling project that is, to this day, the largest experience in digital storytelling undertaken by the BBC. Meadows was chosen for his role in the BBC Capture Wales project, which ended in 2008. Still in the UK, we chose Alan Greenwood, the editor for the Scotsman.com, identified in a recent study and from a sample of 12 British newspapers (including the Guardian, The Times and The Daily Telegraph) as being the only online newspaper with simultaneously a “your media” and “your story” features (Hermida, A. & Thurman, N., 2008). These were the only multimedia features analyzed in the study. The Scotsman has an audited circulation of 53,513 (ABC, 2008) and an award-winning website, redesigned in December 2007.

In the US, we interviewed Andrew DeVigal, who heads the Multimedia division of the New York Times, the largest metropolitan newspaper in the United States and with a national coverage. The *Times* website received over 14 million unique visitors in August 2008. He also maintains a very prestigious and informative website that is a repository of digital stories – most from online newspapers – interactivenarratives.org. Also in the US, Jen Friedberg is one of the two multimedia journalists of the Star Telegram, a newspaper that serves the Dallas-

Fort Worth area and that has recently launched several new online efforts, including the infotainment web series in 2008 - the DaFoWo Show (<http://www.dfw.com/>).

There are or have been several professional intersections between the interviewees, a confirmation that they are members of a relatively small network of pioneer journalists working in this area. As an example of these intersections, the two Portuguese journalists interviewed attended in 2007 the Symposium on Online Journalism, organized by Professor Rosental Alves at the University of Texas at Austin, arguably the most prestigious annual conference in this area. Andrew DeVigal of the New York Times was one of the keynote speakers at the 2007 Symposium. DeVigal maintains a website that includes most digital stories created by Jen Friedberg. There are others professional intersections such as the fact that some of the interviewees hold or have until recently held teaching positions at major Journalism Schools in their respective countries (e.g.: Daniel Meadows at the University of Cardiff and Andrew DeVigal at San Francisco State University)

III.b Instrumentation

The general script for the interview is included in Appendix A. Interviewees were asked to respond with flexibility skipping questions and/or adding thoughts, given the exploratory nature of this study.

III.c Procedure, instrumentation and time frame

We conducted the interview by email and/or in person and conducted follow-up interviews over email and/or by phone. We used a general script as a guide for our interview but we emphasized to the interviewees that they were free to drop any question that they might find of little relevance in the context of their media outlet and/or add any thoughts they considered pertinent. We conducted this study in late 2008. The interviews were fairly brief. Once we received them, we analyzed each interview individually and across individuals as to report aspects that most interviewees approached but also those that were unique to some of them.

III.d Scope and limitations

This is a brief exploratory study and in no way exhaustive. A thorough analysis of journalistic practices in digital storytelling in mainstream media outlets in Portugal, US and the UK would need to take into account the media landscape in the three countries and even recent political/economical events in these countries. Spain and Latin American countries like Argentina are currently references for journalists in the DST/multimedia areas (two of our

interviewees explicitly indicated those two countries as doing some of the best work in this area).

Most of the interviewees are prior professional contacts of the authors. Hence the study is based partially on a convenience sample. We have indicated under “sampling”, and in detail why we designate that convenience as only partial. However, the sample size as well as the choice of four anglo-saxon media outlets out of a total of six limits the scope of the study. Though the flexible structure of the interview, giving the respondent the freedom to skip questions and/or add thoughts, fits the exploratory nature of our study – as well as the diversity of structures we found in the media outlets covered – this flexibility compromised a horizontal analysis of the responses. Last but not least, the lack of global standards for combined print and digital measurements of newspapers’ readership – or of a “standardized, combined print and digital currency” (World Association of Newspapers, 2007:1) further impaired that cross-sectional analysis (though those metrics were only indirectly relevant to the topic at hand).

IV. Interviews

IV.a Alan Greenwood, The Scotsman

The Scotsman set a multimedia milestone when in 2007 it published one of the first UK online news business' video podcasts. In January 2008, the website recorded a record 3.8 million unique users and 22.3 million page impressions (ABC, 2008).

For Alan Greenwood, consumers today expect to have a two-way relationship with media outlets. Greenwood sees the growth in citizen journalism as a result of a change in consumer perceptions. Readers, listeners and viewers expect to be more than that and engage in a 2 way communication process. At the source of this change is the development of digital media, principally text-based websites that employ chatrooms, forums and newspaper websites such as scotsman.com. The development of handheld multimedia devices, particularly mobile phones and video cameras, have allowed digital to develop in new ways. Youtube, for instance, is essentially a chatroom with video, rather than text, as the means of communication.

The management of Scotsman Publications is overwhelmingly positive about Scotsman.com and the opportunities digital development offers. Initially regarded as a threat to the title's future, they are now regarded as a key part of any long-term growth.

For Greenwood, this sea-change is a result of several factors; namely:

- The introduction of a digital element to accredited UK journalism schools several years ago (graduates now hold influential positions with media organizations);
- The increase in prominence of successful newspaper websites.

Furthermore, Greenwood notes that journalists realized that those newspapers that excluded digital from their development strategy have fared no better in print circulation terms than titles which embraced it.

The Scotsman has been broadly receptive to reader and visitor input. The management's position is that the digital should continue to grow without impeding newspaper revenue, as print still constitutes the bulk of revenues to the company. On the other hand, the continuing integration of digital storytelling/citizen journalism is a way to target new audiences.

The multimedia section works across all departments but mostly with the news, sport and business sections, as they are, statistically, the sections that attract the most audience interest.

The newspaper has a dedicated team of online journalists, but staff from all areas are expected to contribute to the website.

Greenwood does not recognize any individual or international movement in his work or the type of digital storytelling work conducted by the Scotsman.

IV. b Daniel Meadows, former BBC Capture Wales project

Meadows identified the films of Dana Atchley on nextexit.com as his source of inspiration for BBC Capture Wales project. He clearly identifies his 2000 research trip to California, during which he became familiar with the Center for Digital Storytelling methodology, as a turning point in his approach to digital storytelling. Although he had been teaching it at Cardiff University, his model was "clumsy" (in Meadows' words). He was drawn to the workshop model for telling stories with still photographs and voice-over that was being pioneered at the CDS at Berkeley. Soon after that research trip, Professor Ian Hargreaves (Cardiff University), a former head of news at the BBC, introduced Meadows to a team at BBC Wales that was interested in experimenting with

the field know today as "user generated content" by getting "closer to its audience" through a community storytelling project.. That project was Capture Wales and lasted from 2001 to 2008. Meadows stresses that the project preceded Youtube by several years.

The unprecedented longevity of the project would not have been possible without very strong support by BBC Wales. In most cases, though, the workshops facilitators were not recruited

from the BBC. This was a conscious decision as the industrial model of media production is not very compatible with multi-skilling. The type of skills needed implied technical work, meeting high standards, but across disciplines (camera, editing, audio, graphics, post-production). Facilitators' qualities were equally important – the ability to support participants' work, be creative and able to teach. Those recruited went through a training period where these qualities of teaching skills and interdisciplinary work were leveraged.

Of all the interviewees, Meadows was the only one to note that his work generated some hostility from some (BBC) colleagues. They considered that Meadows' work was doing them out of a job, and that it was not the job of media professionals to help amateurs create stories (programs). The audience/participants in the workshops had great freedom in shaping the stories anyway they wanted to. BBC management requested only that they obey the same rules of copyright, compliance and duty-of-care as any other television, radio or online production at the BBC.

BBC management liked the experience for two reasons that happened sequentially. Initially, they saw in it a way to reach the “hard-to-reach”, those under-represented in the media. Then as the project progressed they realized that these stories engendered public approval, and not only of the participants directly involved in the workshops but also from friends and families. To this extent, the project was good PR for the newspaper.

Meadows worked with the New Media department of BBC as digital stories were published online. They were also broadcast on television and the 'audio stories' would also go out on radio.

The team working in BBC Capture Wales was 100% dedicated to running Digital Storytelling workshops across the country and posting them online. Most team members were full-time though some were part-time. Some spent part of the time on the road and part with the New Media web production team, making sure the website was up and running.

Since Capture Wales and a few more projects involving Meadows, the BBC has stopped any work in Digital Storytelling. Meadows' work continues at Cardiff University. His personal stories are part of his website Photobus (<http://www.photobus.co.uk>). His storytelling philosophy has not changed in thirty years and finds its roots mostly in Ivan Illich. This source of inspiration is acknowledged in Photobus.

IV.c Andrew DeVigal, the New York Times

For Andrew DeVigal, citizen journalism was not the result of wide-spread, low-cost technology such as video cameras or easy access to video sharing services. To this movement,

a growing tendency for user generated content (UGC) may have contributed, but only because UGC is behind what DeVigal considers to be the major factor influencing the entry to publish content on the web: the advent of blog tools such as Moveable Type and WordPress and the easy publication of video and photo content. DeVigal assigns the label of "citizen journalists" to some interesting individuals who surfaced and naturally became a voice for local communities.

The response of other NYT journalists to the Multimedia Division, which DeVigalAndrew heads, is extremely positive. NYT journalists are broadly very interested in a new form of storytelling that enables new ways of delivering journalism, and they have accepted it. DeVigal believes that the New York Times hardly sees newspapers as defining the rules of the game as far as integrating the input from the audience in the form of digital stories. Rather, the NYT sees itself as part of a conversation that is already happening and that citizen journalism is also part of that conversation. DeVigal believes that rather than the rules of the game, what the NYT offers is a unique perspective through its expertise on subject matters.

DeVigal's Multimedia Division works more closely with the news desks - metro, national and foreign. Out of 1100 journalists in the newsroom, 80 are dedicated to digital storytelling, while a handful of NYT reporters have explored working with citizen journalists or crowd sourcing.

DeVigal does not recognize any particular individual or international movement as influencing his work. The site he runs - interactive.narratives.org - well demonstrates that DST knows no language barriers. He identifies Spain and Argentina as two countries with fabulous DST work.

IV.d Jen Friedberg, StarTelegram

The Star Telegram is a Pulitzer Prize-winning regional newspaper serving the Dallas/Fort Worth areas. Its online component is the nation's oldest continuously operating online newspaper. The data for 2007 showed for the print component, 537,000 of daily readers and 819,800 Sunday readers. The website usage data for 2007 show a six-month average through June 2007 of 21.2 million monthly page views and 1.3 million monthly unique visitors. The newspaper's print and online editions together reach more than 1.1 million adults in the DFW area each week.

For Jen Friedberg of the Star Telegram, the primary reasons for the flourishing of citizen journalism were the ease of entry in the area and a growing audience. The low cost and easy access to video cameras and their pervasiveness from cell phones to computers makes it

technologically and financially easier for anyone to get started as a citizen journalist. This ease of entry occurred simultaneously with the development of Youtube, Flickr and social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook. These social network sites created outlets that enabled people to get their information out and at the same time they created an audience to receive it.

Friedberg notes that over the past couple of years her work has changed to more mimic that of the traditional short documentary. Her colleagues accept her work and often tell her that it says more than what print can say. As an example Friedberg mentions a short documentary she has recently completed about the local Fort Worth ballet group where she tells the story from the dancers' point of view. For Friedberg this way of telling the story goes beyond the "just the facts" that news in the print form takes. By putting a human face on the issue the newspaper was able to tell a more complete version of the story. As far as the openness of the newspaper to the new type of work, the Star Telegram and to what extent it lets the readers define the "rules of the game", the newspaper recognizes sees a place for both traditional and citizen journalism. In the past few months, Friedberg sees more and more editors and reporters making efforts to work with the multimedia department. The newspaper has recently launched several websites that rely heavily on citizen journalism. Often the strategy to promote public collaboration involves a cross-promotion where readers are invited to send in information that is the published either pictures or anecdotes. Initially the newspaper management incorporated digital storytelling/citizen journalism simply as a directive of their then parent organization - Knight-Ridder. Since that affiliation disappeared, that integration has been a more thoughtful process. The management sees it as a way to reach a wider audience. They also predict that future successful financial models will need to incorporate citizen journalism and digital storytelling. Friedberg does not work with any single department consistently, though most of her projects have been with the features department. Other departments she works with have been business, news and sports. The newspaper has staff who were hired for the online side of the newspaper but they may collaborate in the print version and vice-versa. The newspaper follows a strategy of not separating online and print staff as they see a better use of resources by having some online content ending in print and vice-versa. Everyone is supposed to contribute in some way to the online side of the newspaper, even if only to update the site more frequently. They do have about 10 people though dedicated exclusively to an online desk. The multimedia department includes two journalists (Friedberg is one of them) and 5 or 6 online-only columnists. The

newspaper has a new online effort - www.dfw.com - with approximately 10 more staff members.

Friedberg does not identify any single individual as an inspiration for her work, nor the work in digital storytelling produced at the Start-Telegram. However, Friedberg recognizes being heavily influenced by the interactive graphics area - namely some Latin American production. She keeps abreast of Media Storm and other organizations like National Geographic online. As she stressed several times, documentary film has been increasingly important in her work and hence she just tries to watch as many films as possible. For Friedberg, the language of cinema is the conduit to tell stories.

IV.e Miguel Martins, Expresso

The weekly newspaper circulation of Expresso was 140,000 for October 2008. In August 29 2008, this average was 123,000 according to the Portuguese Association print and circulation (APCT). The Expresso website has 2,4 million visits and 13,4 million pageviews per month from individual IPs (source: Netscope, an independent third party).

In May 2006, through an internal restructure, the weekly Expresso decided to give a priority status to its multimedia section. The task of renewing a site which at the time had very little dynamism was given to the journalist Miguel Martins. His title is Multimedia editor.

M. Martins saw this strategic decision as a natural consequence of “the simplification and spread of the use of Internet and its evolution towards what was called WEB 2:0, a citizen net where everybody can have a space, whether they are communication professionals or not”. Another decisive contribution was, in his opinion, the growing access to sophisticated technology, including mobile phones, which allow one to capture reality in real time and makes average people content producers. Newspapers face the trend, follow it and try to integrate this new reality. According to Pedro Norton, vice president of Impresa, owner of Expresso, this is seen today as a strategic wager of his group, not only due to the public’s actual expectations, but also because this type of collaborative contents “are the most efficient and low cost solution to make a website grow”, as well as being a privileged source of original information.

For M. Martins, the newsroom of Expresso has attained a total convergence between the multimedia section and the other editorial departments, all contributing to the website. The decisive factors in overcoming the journalists’ initial unfamiliarity to the new environment were the unconditional and daily support of the board of directors and also a receptive policy towards new technologies. M. Martins noted that even the most resistant finally surrendered

to the advantages of the WEB. The greater proximity of the public and its instant feedback was another factor of growing acceptance of the on-line environment.

As to the question of what content to select, M. Martins felt strongly that it would not make any sense to weed out material on a topical basis. Technical quality, moral decency and the newspaper's legal responsibility are the only editorial criteria. *Faits divers* and simple ideas have been requested from citizens in general, who contribute by sending photos of events that made the news, and by comments on the articles published. The opportunity for participation is well received by the public, who seem to be increasingly observant and collaborative.

Professional, technical and research work are the responsibility of the sixteen journalists who compose the multimedia section, where training is constantly required, as well as permanent attention to the main reference websites over the world, namely in the U.S.

IV.f Alexandre Martins, Público

Público is a daily newspaper of reference in Portugal with a current circulation of 59,251 in November 2008 (these are self-reported data as APCT had not published this information at the time that this paper was written). Público is the online newspaper of general information with the most visits. In October 2008, the number of monthly visits was 4.6 million unique visits and 26.5 million pageviews (source: Netscope, an independent third party).

In 2008, the online department of the daily Público started a specific section for multimedia contents. Alexandre Martins became responsible for the Multimedia section of the online component, which is in turn edited by António Granado.

For A. Martins, the evolution and spread of cheap and accessible technology are the main factors in the emergent participation of citizens in content production. According to him this evolution was also strengthened by some weariness related to the prevailing type of information, and by the need felt by the public to participate and give their contribution - with an individual perspective - towards the global design of the information landscape. This contribution was often in opposition with the models offered by traditional media corporations.

A. Martins' fellow journalists involved in the print component of Público recognize the value of the online environment and its actual importance, but they often ignore the process of content production involving multimedia. For A. Martins, they do not recognize the need to constantly feed the site with fresh material as a priority. The trend is to make the news for the daily printed issue. In fact, many actually fear to lose exclusiveness of the printed material

when publishing it to the site. For A. Martins this should not be a problem, as much depends on the way the work is presented.

Another issue that makes many journalists uneasy and feeling that their work is being questioned is the increased openness to the readers' feedback. Some though, are attracted to this new feature and try to benefit from its strength and speed. In A. Martins' opinion, the director clearly defends that the website must follow the unquestionable trend that is digital storytelling (though there are other reasons why he defends his newspaper investment in the new multimedia section). The management sees this new section as having a key role in increasing the citizens' role and contribution to the information the newspaper sends out, in a way that is constructive rather than merely cosmetic.

Budgetary restrictions have limited the growth of the area dedicated to content sent by the public, for this would mean more human resources to adequately verify the material's credibility and accuracy. This is a matter of principle and of responsibility that the newspaper absolutely maintains and wishes to protect. Unlike many other foreign newspapers, nobody has been exclusively assigned this task.

As to new projects, A. Martins noted that there are many ideas and a great will to grow, especially through innovative solutions that would truly "make a difference" as they would go beyond the simple adaptation of features from other websites, however budgetary considerations have delayed their implementation.

V. Conclusions

This study constructed six narratives about six journalists leading the way in his/her own organization in the area of digital storytelling and/or multimedia. Rather than building thick descriptions of each of the newspapers, journalists' work or their digital storytelling/multimedia divisions we wanted to get their perspectives on how the practice was born and evolved and how the area is seen today within the media outlet by both management and peer journalists and outside, by the public.

Across the three countries we found different names to identify the team / section / division responsible for the digital storytelling and /or multimedia effort in the organization. In our interviews, we found that that designation was a combination of the overall organizational chart and the degree of openness to public participation. By "team concentrating the digital storytelling/multimedia effort" we mean those teams with the largest input on the stories

published on the web, which go beyond text – using images (from slide-shows to video, sometimes including infographics) and often audio.

The newspaper division that takes up the production of digital stories is often called Multimedia division. The reason for the designation is likely to be efficiency on the basis of allocation of the appropriate resources (video editing room, audio lab, multimedia room) and/or the division of areas per type of medium, which is well entrenched in the media organizations. Stories that are not strictly text and that are part of the online version of the site are often called multimedia stories, digital stories (or other similar names such as “our media” in the case of The Scotsman.com) – they are always digital stories and not necessarily developed along the the CDS Berkeley methodology, which we succinctly described when defining the DST movement. In the case of Portugal we found two situations: in *Expresso*, this section oversees the online component of the newspaper, while in *Público* the multimedia section was created to process the increasing contributions from readers and with the objective of supporting the digital storytelling trend. After its inception, budgetary cuts may have limited the original scope, but the section was developed with the DST trend in mind. In the case of the BBC, which we found to be the media outlet that most democratically incorporated digital stories produced by the public, the division was called New Media. In the *Star Telegram*, Jen Friedberg’s job title has been “multimedia producer” since 2005. Before then her title was of staff photographer (her background being Photojournalism) and sometimes her work, especially if it included Flash, was credited as “Audio, Video and Web Design”. Finally, Alan Greenwood’s job position with The Scotsman is close to that of Miguel Martins (*Expresso*) as both are editors of the online components (respectively, *scotsman.com* and *expresso.pt*). Structurally, by overseeing the online components of their newspapers, they also oversee their multimedia features.

The opinions of our interviewees were split as to the extent to which cheap and easy access to digital video camera and technologies can be pinpointed as the cause for the CJ movement.

In the case of the BBC, it should be stressed that the integration of contributions by the public followed an unprecedented (and so far, unmatched) democratic process: anyone with a finished a story and willing to have it publicly available on the Internet would see his/her story published on the BBC website. All these contributions were from participants in BBC-led workshops conducted by facilitators with the technical skills, but who were intentionally not recruited from the typical BBC professionals. A different type of skill set was sought, including the ability to meet high standards of technical work across different areas of media

production, the ability to support participants' work, and creativity. These qualities, along with the ability to teach, were leveraged during a training period.

However, and with the exception of the BBC and their several Digital Storytelling programs, we found that mainstream media outlets are still cautious in incorporating multimedia content produced by the public or that this is not really part of their agendas. In the case of the NY Times and the Start Telegram, the media outlets that our US interviewees belong to, their creative and directing work in their multimedia teams involve technologies that are beyond standard skills (such as the use of a simple digital camera and basic video editing), namely Flash. The content is created solely by professionals. The Portuguese newspapers – Público and Expresso – present a similar situation. Although the Portuguese journalists Miguel Martins (Expresso) and Alexandre Martins (Público) acknowledged their - as well as their managements' – wish to incorporate more digital stories produced by their audience. Either budgetary cuts, limited human resources or the organizational structure have not made this possible yet. Last but not least, the Scotsman.com has two sections that are mostly multimedia content - “your media” and “your story”. The stories and media that get to be published are selected by journalists from the Scotsman.com, in a process that we would label of curating.

Appendix

Interview: general script

Note: The respondents were told that, given the exploratory nature of the study, they should feel free to skip any question that might not make sense in their particular organization and/or add any thoughts they might consider pertinent.

1. Do you think that the so called citizen journalism was the result of
 - wide spread of low cost technology namely video camera?
 - access to video sharing services like Youtube?
 - a growing tendency for user generated content?
2. How do your colleagues at the [name of media outlet] see your work? Do they accept it?
3. Do you think the [name of media outlet]'s Management was open to this type of work to the point of letting the readers shape it and ask what they want from it or will your newspaper be defining the "rules of the game"?
4. Do you think the [name of media outlet]'s management was open to digital storytelling/citizen journalism...
 - just because others were doing it
 - or because they see it as a way to target new audiences
 - they see a social value in it:
 - other reasons
5. With which departments/ sections do you work the most?
6. In the [name of media outlet]'s, what percentage of journalists are 100% dedicated to DST /citizen journalism (as far as salary and work load) or is something done "on the side" though credited by Management? In other words: is it expected from you (and others working in that area) that you also produce more traditional material?
7. From your point of view, what the [name of media outlet] does today in DST follows any international model? Do you recognize any influence/ inspiration for your personal work in this area?

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