

JOURNALISM: A PROMISING FUTURE

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It is obvious that journalism is going through difficult and worrying times. The crisis is having a big impact in the media, which is suffering the consequences of a dramatic fall in sales, especially in written press. Advertising figures have decreased considerably. Media companies, which had been continuously growing, have suddenly suffered difficulties in order to continue earning money.

The effects of economic difficulties are not less worrying. To start with, cuts in spending are creating serious difficulties to journalists. It is harder each time to inform properly and in depth about the crisis. To continue with, the number of unemployed journalists keeps growing at a very fast rate.

However, the crisis is nothing but the evidence of changes that could have been foreseen in advance. New technologies have always determined the evolution of media, introducing new and revolutionary devices, as it happened with the television decades ago. TV deeply changed things in communication, but it did not put an end to the radio and written press. That is why the forecast must be optimistic.

The radio, at first seriously damaged by the birth of the television, rapidly recovered, neglecting its entertaining aspect, and becoming the main music and information media. Therefore, the radio should be a positive and optimistic argument which ought to make us think that it will persevere in its information tasks.

Human beings and societies need to be informed. This is nothing new. They have always sought for information by whatever means and they will always do it as this an essential and basic need, no matter how things may change. The problem is, on one hand, how to inform and, on the other, to continue providing information in the same way as we have been doing it up to now.

Changes can be seen both in the infrastructure and in the way of presenting information. Both are interrelated and are still to be explored. Internet is open to the future; it is the media of medias, which has led to a world of new possibilities, still not properly evaluated.

Internet is altering everything, some times in a negative way. There are some fears about the adventurous way in which some information is presented, some times inexact, not serious and even deliberately untrue. But this is a transitory situation which will last until serious media and professionals realize it is the ultimate media and its contents become rigorously professional.

It is, indeed, not easy. Internet will always host unscrupulous people, but this something that also happens with printed pamphlets simulating newspapers or pirate radio and television stations: tricky initiatives trying to spread false information. Internet is young and it will mature. And not only between professionals, but also among users, who will soon distinguish between reliable contents and mere propaganda. It is not likely that Internet will kill traditional media. On the contrary, it can be the perfect support for them. The radio will continue to be the ideal tool for receiving urgent information and easy to follow analysis. The television will cope with the whole of image and home entertaining with important coverage of important events, and written press, with no future at all according to some people, will certainly keep an important role as an analysis device and influential tool.

The question now is how to live with Internet; to share out space. Our contribution, free of obstacles inherited from past times, will be critical. If we do nothing, our successors will, but we had better clear the way for them.