

DEFINING CRISIS AND ALTERNATIVES

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It is necessary to distinguish between the crisis of media corporations and the crisis of journalism. We have to avoid that the corporative crisis kill the journalism. Journalists must look for a new identity, but also act in the crisis of media, fighting for jobs and searching for new business models to ensure public interest.

CRISIS OF THE PRIVATE MEDIA CORPORATIONS

➤ Consequences of the present recession

- Drop in advertising
- Failing strategies based on stock values
- Bankruptcies caused by debts of the merger processes.

Alternatives

- Journalists have to denounce the merger as a major cause of the crisis. Denounce the law changes that boost media concentration (Spain).
- Journalists have to inform the public that media corporations remain highly profitable while they are justifying jobs cut in the crisis.
- We have to demand a “sustainable project” when public funds go to private corporation: no jobs cuts, better work conditions, ethical compromises, new bodies for the participation of journalists.

➤ New business model

- Media are evolving from an economy of supply to an economy of demand
- Advertising cannot now assure the economic independence of media

Alternatives

- Journalists have to explore non profit, low-profit and cooperative ways of organization. For instance, we should explore public foundations to support these new experiences.

CRISIS OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICES

- Drop in advertising due to the crisis and the audience fragmentation in the new digital landscape.
- European law on competition favors private operators.
- Collusion of governments with private operators. In France and Spain there are questions about stable funding as consequence of eliminating advertising. Public operators have now new limits to buy sports rights. The consequence can be to downsize these public services.

Alternatives

- Journalists unions must lobby in the European Parliament to modify audiovisual directives so that a) private operators assume harder public charges; b) there is less rigor in the screening of funding of public operators.
- Public Broadcasting Services must diversify programmes and platforms.
- Public Broadcasting Services must strengthen programmes for citizen participation.
- Public Broadcasting Services must make alliances with social organizations in order to find new items and services with more social value.
- In France and Spain Public Broadcasting Services must rethink programmes without advertising. Ads can be replaced in part by micro-spaces of citizen utility.
- Public Broadcasting Services must investigate new languages and formats.

CRISIS OF JOURNALISM

➤ Crisis of credibility

- War lies and collusions with governments.
- Attacks on personal rights of the public.
- Political sectarianism.
- Mix of news and entertainment (Infotainment).

Alternatives

- To promote debate about *The ethical journalism initiative*.

- To promote ethical codes where there are not.
- The journalist unions must promote ethical committees in newsrooms.

➤ **Technical changes and working conditions**

- Convergence and digitalization of newsrooms have cut jobs.
- Journalists need new technical skills.
- Some media corporations want replace news skills by technical skills.
- In this process, corporations have privileged economical productivity instead of news quality.
- Very often, working conditions are worst in integrated newsrooms.

Alternatives

- We must strength newsrooms as space for professional debate and editorial discussion.
- Integrated newsrooms cannot be content factories. Journalist must search news out the newsroom, without dependence of institutional and corporate source.
- It is necessary to keep the old information skills and the structure of specialist and skilled journalists. Unions have to get right training for reporters and writers.
- Journalist unions have to fight to define the new professional profiles to avoid that the journalists do not become technicians or content providers.
- Unions must fight to integrate these different profiles in an unique environment, with similar rights and sharing the same ethical values.
- In television is necessary to keep crews with journalists, camerapersons and video editors. Videojournalism is a good tool for the web and also television only in certain circumstances or for freelancers.
- Multimedia journalist can not be an orchestra man.

➤ **Crisis of identity**

- Internet has created a new information ecosystem where social mediations have lost importance.
- Journalists compete with users as creators of content.
- Gurus, many former media managers, sell that Internet will magically replace journalism.
- In the new ecosystem the public sphere is being fragmented.

Alternative

A new *civic* journalism

Civic journalism vs. Citizen journalism

Civic and *citizen* can be synonymous adjectives, but actually *citizen journalism* is information generated by non professionals. In that space there are lights and shadows, but citizen journalists are not bound by any social responsibility.

My proposal of *civic journalism* is the professional journalism in the new interactive landscape.

- Civic journalists come back to the sources, searching all sources and link to them so that the public can find information in deep and contrast different sources.
- Civic journalists open their content to other media, to citizen journalists and contents (photo, video, audio) generated by users. They links with other views and talk with them.
- Civic journalists compete, without prepotency, with this new voices for access to the sources and audience.
- Civic journalism is journalism of service to citizen. Civic journalists help in order citizens can find and create their own information.
- Civic journalists accept the screening of citizens. The *watchdog* now is controlled by millions of eyes in cyberspace. Civic journalists talk to and interact with their citizen controllers.
- Civic journalists are innovators, searching new interactive way for the news, with old and new languages.
- Civic journalism is professional journalism. Civic journalists have permanent presence as citizen journalism appear and disappear. Civic journalist have the public obligation of informing, social responsibilities and ethical compromises. Civic journalism can be as credible as ethical journalism.
- Civic Journalists map the cyberspace in order to create public spaces and link them with the real world.