

# The possibilities of user participation in the main Mexican national cybermedia

## Las posibilidades de participación de los usuarios en los principales cibermedios nacionales mexicanos

### As possibilidades de participação dos usuários nos principais cibermeios nacionais mexicanos

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#### ABSTRACT

In this research, we raise the question of which are the real possibilities of participation offered by Mexican cybermedia to their users. As an evaluation method, we applied an adaptation of the matrix created by Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012) to a group of 46 Mexican national cybermedia. The results indicate that the more interactive Mexican cybermedia are *El Universal*, *Milenio* and *Excélsior*, paradoxically three media which are not digital natives. As a conclusion, we identified a tendency to partially block the options related to the users' creativity, something that is also found in conventional journalism, which restricts the development of communities of readers around the cybermedia evaluated.

**Keywords:** interaction, user participation, interactivity, Mexican cybermedia, digital journalism.

#### RESUMEN

*En esta investigación, nos preguntamos qué posibilidades reales de participación ofrecen los cibermedios mexicanos a los usuarios. Como método de evaluación, aplicamos una adaptación de la matriz diseñada por Rodríguez, Codina y Pedraza (2012) a un conjunto de 46 cibermedios mexicanos de orientación nacional. Los resultados señalan que los más interactivos son El Universal, Milenio y Excélsior, paradójicamente, tres medios que no son nativos digitales. A modo de conclusión, identificamos una tendencia a bloquear parcialmente las opciones de participación vinculadas a la creatividad de los usuarios, lo que restringe el desarrollo de comunidades de lectores alrededor de los cibermedios evaluados.*

**Palabras clave:** interacción, participación de los usuarios, interactividad, cibermedios mexicanos, periodismo digital.

#### RESUMO

Nesta pesquisa, perguntamo-nos quais são as possibilidades de participação que os cibermeios mexicanos oferecem aos usuários. Como método de avaliação utilizamos uma adaptação da matriz desenhada por Rodríguez, Codina e Pedraza (2012) a um conjunto de 46 cibermeios mexicanos de orientação nacional. Os resultados apontam que os cibermeios mexicanos mais interativos são *El Universal*, *Milenio* e *Excélsior*, paradoxalmente, três meios que não são nativos dos meios digitais. Como conclusão, identificamos uma tendência a bloquear parcialmente as opções de participação ligadas à criatividade dos usuários, um vestígio do jornalismo convencional que restringe o desenvolvimento de comunidades de leitores em volta dos cibermeios avaliados.

**Palavras-chave:** interação, participação dos usuários, interatividade, cibermeios mexicanos, jornalismo digital.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the appearance of the Internet, and even more so with the implementation of web 2.0, citizens have the opportunity to interact in a different way with the media. Newsreaders are now more than passive consumers of a message (Bachmann & Harlow, 2012). All this is thanks to interactivity. Presented in a superficial way, this proposes the participation of the audiences so that they can approach the digital media, to a greater or lesser extent, through comments, forums and even with content elaborated by the users themselves. Rost (2004), rather than referring to users and their ability to target the media as active audiences, coincides with Carpentier (2011) by focusing on the empowerment that the media allows its users to both choose content, as well as to interact with other users on a website:

Interactivity is the gradual and variable capacity of media to give users/readers greater power both in the selection of contents (selective interactivity) and in the possibilities of expression and communication (communicative interactivity). (Rost, 2004, p.5)

As we see, Rost distinguishes between selective interactivity, established between the individual and the contents, and communicative interactivity, which is established among the individuals themselves. In addition to providing the definition, Rost stipulates on what depends the degree of interactivity of a media, and indicates that the more it fosters the active and critical participation of the readers in the construction of the present time, the more interactive it will be (Rost, 2004, p. 9).

To Rost's selective and communicative interactivity, Castillo (2014a) adds the concept of convergent interactivity, which occurs when the social network is added to the relationship with the digital newspaper (already mediated by the Internet). In addition, in line with these three concepts, he alludes to automated participation, which basically consists of sharing, without comment, the content of a media, from the social network page itself, through other people or through email. It also contemplates the possibility of indicating the effect created or the sensation caused in the user by that content (Castillo, 2014a and 2014b).

In fact, there are many definitions that, coincidentally or not, conceptually explore the predominant dimensions and domains of interactivity, although it

is commonly accepted that this is one of the structural features of digital journalism (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001; Barredo, Palomo, Mantilla & Gard, 2014; Dahlgren, 1996; Deuze, 2004; Frascaroli, 2005; Larrondo, 2004; Larrondo & Díaz Noci, 2011; Micó & Masip, 2008; ; Palacios & Díaz Noci, 2009; Palomo, 2004; Paulussen, 2006; Salaverría, 2005; Steensen, 2009, 2011; Zamith, 2008).

If we consider that interactivity is a defining feature of cyberjournalism, along with hypertextuality and multimedia, we must consider that the concept that occupies us is the one that has evolved the most, depending on the technological possibilities of the web. During the last years of the twentieth century and the first years of the 21st, when the Internet began in the so-called web 1.0, users found quite static reading pages, which in digital media was a monological discourse, very similar to the one of traditional newspapers. The webpages of the web 1.0 did not offer the possibility of commenting; the dissemination of the contents and the creation itself were largely conditioned to the disposition and desire of the administrators of the website, as García Aretio (2014) describes.

In 2004, O'Reilly coined the term web 2.0, characterized by interactivity, collaborative learning, multidirectionality and freedom of editing and dissemination. All these new possibilities materialized in the emergence of social networks, online applications and collaboration tools. There also seems to be a consensus among researchers when it comes to depicting the web 2.0 as the one in which content produced by users began to proliferate (Codina, 2009), which, in turn, led to calling these consumers prosumers<sup>1</sup>. About this word, however, it is necessary to make two clarifications. The first is that it is not new: it was created in 1970, by McLuhan and Alvin Toffler, linking its postulates with some of the new media, such as social networks (Sánchez & Contreras, 2012). The second is that, in the field of digital journalism, it still has a very scarce implementation nowadays.

The current era is web 3.0, created by Phil Wainewright in November 2005 (Codina, 2009). This web differs from 2.0 in that it includes the semantic web –oriented towards the protagonism of the computer engines and information processors that understand the descriptive logic–, which is managed from the cloud and

	WEB 1.0	WEB 2.0	WEB 3.0
Year of emergence	2004 (the concept is born, simultaneously to that of web 2.0, to refer to all of the above)	2004	2005, although the term "user 3.0" begins to be used in 2007 (Castillo, 2014b)
Creator	—	O'Reilly	Phil Wainwright
Dissemination of content	Conditioned to the willingness and desire of the site administrators	Free	Free
Web management	Administrators	Own	In the cloud or cloud computing (executed from any device)
Type of content	Static reading pages	Multimedia, multidirectional and multiplatform	Multimedia, multidirectional and multiplatform
Type of speech	Monological	Dialogical or collaborative	Dialogical or collaborative
Type of interactivity	Limited (there is barely the possibility of commenting)	High	High
Social networks	No	Yes	Yes
Ability to create content	No	Yes (emergence of citizen journalism)	Yes

Table 1: From web 1.0, to web 3.0: a comparison

Source: Own elaboration.

executed from any device that, based on the user's profiles on the web, discovers information for us (Küster & Hernández, 2013).

Considering the above, in this article we ask ourselves about the relationship between the technological possibilities and the options of participation that are really being offered to the users of national cybermedia in Mexico. It should be mentioned that this exploratory work is part of the activities of a long-range project with which we seek to understand the management of participation in cybermedia<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, for this study we have set ourselves the answer to the following general research question:

- RQ1 What are the options associated with the interactivity offered to their audiences by the most important cybermedia in Mexico?

We have also set the following specific questions:

- RQ2 Are there differences in the management of interactivity depending on the type of support in the case of the main Mexican cybermedia?
- RQ3 To what extent do the information platforms in the referred context tend to integrate users into their coverage?

These questions will be answered on the basis of a content analysis conducted on Mexican digital media with the largest number of users, according to a consultation held in November 2016 on the Alexa.com database in the absence of an official census which covers the main national cybermedia.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As stated above, and as can be seen in its features, web 2.0 offers enough technology to provide the maximum

degree of interactivity to the user of digital journalistic media. Even so, the user who has a high interactivity—that goes beyond comments and is able to create his or her own content—is known as user 3.0. A study related to the Mexican digital press indicates that this term began to be used in 2007, when the media already relied on feedback from users in their coverage, with the consolidation of social networks and microblogging (Castillo, 2014b).

#### CYBERJOURNALISM IN MEXICO

In a country with a population of 120,286,655 inhabitants and 52,276,580 Internet users (Salaverría, 2016, p.25), most of the websites to which users connect in Mexico are cybermedia (Espinoza, 2015). Two decades ago, the press was one of the first media to join the Internet in this Latin American country. The first newspapers to incorporate the transmission of the printed information to the online system were *La Jornada*, through a server of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in 1995 and *El Norte de Monterrey* in 1996 (Espinoza, 2015). The first social use of the Internet in Mexico was a protest by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which campaigned on the Internet because it considered that the signing of the Free Trade Agreement violated the rights of the people of Chiapas (Gómez & Sosa-Silver, 2011, in Espinoza, 2015).

#### INTERACTIVITY IN MEXICAN CYBERMEDIA

If we look at the publications on interactivity in Mexican cybermedia, we find that the participation of Internet users is a subject little studied in general. According to Lerma (2009), most of the studies that have been carried out in Mexico on the subject are confined to online journalism and its effects on content, Internet development, readership or history; but few have focused on the implementation of the elements of interaction and their use. The same author has based her work on the interaction with the users of newspapers and magazines registered in the National Print Media Registry under the Ministry of Homeland in Mexico. Her study concludes that *El Universal*, in 2009, was the Mexican medium with more interactive elements between the media itself and its audience<sup>3</sup> and between the journalist and his audience<sup>4</sup>; likewise, it states that almost 50% of Mexican publications did not have a way of communicating with their audience in 2009 (Lerma, 2009).

In a later conference, Lerma and Cobos (2011) highlight the benefits of interactivity for journalism:

If it is thought that participatory media and their multiplication in the network facilitate the task of disseminating news, using interactive, collaborative and free technology tools facilitates the task of those who want their ideas to have transcendence. (p. 3)

In this second study, these authors perform a review of the interactivity proposed by the main Latin American newspapers: *El Universal*, from México (www.eluniversal.com.mx); *El Tiempo*, from Colombia (www.eltiempo.com); *Clarín*, from Argentina (www.clarin.com) and *El Mercurio Online*, from Chile (www.emol.com). To each of these cybermaterials, the researchers applied a matrix of analysis that included if they had blogs, contact section, comments zone, evaluation, possibility to send a note, surveys, chats, forums, registry, content given by the public, services for mobile phones, social bookmarks, RSS and widgets or applications that gave quick access to frequent features. Of all these elements, *ElUniversal.com.mx* did not comply with three: it did not provide the user with the possibility to evaluate contents, to register and to accede quickly to frequent functions (Lerma & Cobos, 2011).

Arturo Barrios (2013), on the other hand, analyzed in his doctoral research the characteristics of the online versions of the Mexican printed newspapers, and one of his findings was that they had had a

poor use of the advantages that the Internet intrinsically offers as a new form of communication. The overlapping coincidence is that there have been very timid and sporadic steps to go beyond the mere presence on the network. (p. 84)

When referring to interactivity as a concept that implies the direct participation of people in digital newspapers, if Crovi, Toussaint and Tovar (2006) had already warned of their wastage in 18 Mexican cybermedia, the Barrios thesis (2013) concluded again, five years later, that it had a limited scope. “In few media there is a real interaction between the readers and the journalists themselves” (p.205).

#### ELUNIVERSAL.COM.MX, THE MOST STUDIED MEXICAN CYBERMEDIA

Before continuing, it is worth noting that *ElUniversal.com.mx*, as the main cybermedia in terms of number of visits according to the Alexa database, is the most analyzed Mexican media in interactivity research in

Latin America (Bachmann & Harlow, 2012; Castillo, 2014a y 2014b; Díaz & Marrero, 2011; Lerma, 2009 y 2011; Navarro, 2013; Said & Arcila, 2011; Said & Valencia, 2012; Tejedor, 2010). As for the degree of interactivity it offers its users, Bachmann and Harlow (2012, p. 47) conclude that, of a sample composed of 19 Latin American cybermedia, *ElUniversal.com.mx* was in 2012 the fourth with the highest percentage of multimedia, interactive and participatory web elements in their home pages and stories.

Said and Arcila (2011) recognize *ElUniversal.com.mx* as one of the Latin American cybermedia that are betting on quality and citizen participation, although the difference between these and their equivalents in the queue of the ranking is very appreciable, which could lead to think of the formation of a road map for the media in the region, “especially if we pay attention to the indicators that have to do with the active participation of the users” (p. 131).

On the other hand, Navarro (2013), after analyzing a hundred users’ comments on contents of *ElUniversal.com.mx* —along with others of *elpais.es*, *elmundo.es* and *The Washington Post*— determines that there is no interactivity as such between the journalist or the cybermedia and the user. For the researcher, this is a problem also originated from the passivity assumed by the audiences themselves:

The problem lies in both parts: the cybermedia and the users. On the one hand, the cybermedia does not answer the comments it receives from its users. The contact between cybermedia and users is very weak, it is more consolidated through social networks, it is a more direct form of interactivity. (P.358)

When comparing the interactivity offered by the same cybermedia in different supports, the author pointed out in 2011 that mobile tablets had similar interactivity to that of a computer, while in the mobile phone it was minimal, due to the way in which the contents were presented at that time. However, independently of the support, in another paper, Navarro (2011) strongly criticized the lack of implementation of a real interaction, because —according to this author— “this seems to be of no interest to the media or to the issuers of the messages” (p. 393). On the other hand, in the study to which we alluded earlier, Castillo (2014) determines that, of the three newspapers analyzed —*ElDiario.com.mx*, *ElUniversal.com.mx* and *Sinembargo.com.mx*—, the second

was the one that allowed greater interactivity, since, for example, through its *Citizen Reporter* section, its users could participate with the generation of contents, which basically consisted of reports of anomalies of public services or requests for help in locating people or pets. The author stressed that these issues, despite their obvious public interest, were not transferred to the media agenda; that is, they never appeared on the cover (p.10).

#### OTHER STUDIES ON INTERACTIVITY

On the other hand, García de Torres et al. (2011, p.661) have analyzed, along with 24 other Ibero-American cybermedia, the use of Facebook by media such as *Esto*, *La Silla Rota* or *Más por Más*. The study concludes that *Más por Más* is one of the five Ibero-American newspapers that, along with *Río Negro* (Patagonia, Argentina), *Diario de Alcalá* (Madrid, Spain), *Hortanoticias* (Valencia, Spain) and *Região de Leiria* (Leiria, Portugal), during the period under study, had some kind of conversation with their users on Facebook.

On the other hand, Hernández (2012) analyzes, among other parameters, the interactivity offered by ten Latin American digital newspapers, two of them Mexican: *Reforma* and *El Norte*. It is a work based on surveys to the professionals of the newspapers, whose results are descriptive and auspicious, but inconclusive.

Before all these studies, in 2008 López (2009) had analyzed the e-Communication services offered by 48 Mexican cybermedia, almost all of them local or regional. These services were defined as the “set of utilities that seek to favor the communicative processes mediated by technology and to satisfy the communicative needs of the user of cybermedia” (p.31). In order to study the interactivity that these 48 cybermedia made possible to their users, López applied a code sheet that measured the services of communication with cybermedia, participation services with cybermedia, services of interaction with cybermedia, and the interaction services between users of cybermedia<sup>5</sup>. Among the conclusions of this study stands out the fact that interactivity was exploited by fewer than 30% of Mexican cybermedia in 2008 (p.57).

The most recent of all the works that deal with interactivity, in this case in twelve international reference cybermedia, is that of Linares, Codina, Váñez and Rodríguez-Martínez (2016), from the Active Audiences

and Journalism group. It is based on four parameters –cybermedia-user relationship, user generated content, searchability, navigation and SEO (search engine optimization), and social web– the study concludes that, according to these parameters, *Propublica* is the medium that promotes its relationship with the user (parameter 1) the most, while *The Guardian*, *La Nación* and *The New York Times* are the ones that promote the contents generated by users (parameter 2) the most. *El País*, is the one with most searchability and navigation (parameter 3), and *The New York Times*, has the most use of SEO and social web (parameter 4) (Linares et al., 2016, p.43).

## METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the research questions established, this exploratory study will use content analysis, a “systematic and objectified” quantitative technique (Bernete, 2014, p.222), of great utility to carry out a comparative exercise such as the one proposed. This procedure favors the interpretation of various “communicative products” (Piñuel, 2002, p.2), thanks to aspects such as their relative instrumental flexibility, the possibility for other researchers to replicate the steps followed, or the objectivity with which the analysis is faced. It is also true that, as described by Barredo (2015), this technique has some disadvantages, such as those derived from the limitation of reducing to figures and statistics a phenomenon as complex as that of interactivity in Mexican cybermedia<sup>6</sup>. According to Bernete (2014), a content analysis consists of three stages: the prolegomena of research, the gathering of information and, finally, the analyses conducted on the data collected. In this methodological section we will focus on the first two, while the third will be developed in the results section.

## PREVIOUS STEPS

At this point of the investigation, we began the prospection of theoretical data that would allow us to understand both the state of the art about the object of study and its conceptualization. As fruit of this first work, we concretized the problem from the questions enunciated in the introduction of this paper. In order to be able to answer them, we developed a tool based on the model proposed by Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012), which includes eight factors –described by 36

quality indicators– that state global parameters such as the possibilities of interaction between the environment and users, the dissemination of the contents of the users, the interaction with the support, the access to the information, the presence of the media in the web 2.0, among others.

The validity of the instrument was first calibrated through the codification of a small sample of media, a process that examined the quality of the categories derived from the model of Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012), as well as the potential problems during the implementation phase. Secondly, the results of this pre-test were shared with the audience of experts of the XXIII UNESCO Chair in Communication, held between November 2-4, 2016 at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, Colombia. The opinions and suggestions received were of great help in completing the adjustment of the codebook finally employed.

On the other hand, once the tool was prepared, the choice of the corpus was based on a double criterion: a) that the media were journalistic; and b) having a national scope. In the absence of a census to help us determine the sample, in the second week of November we consulted the Alexa.com database; in this complex task, all those platforms that were not journalistic or that were destined to a local or regional public were discriminated, regardless of if their number of visits was greater to one of the selected ones. All the supports were considered and the sample was composed by the following 46 newspapers: *El Universal*, *El Sol de México*, *Revista Milenio*, *Televisa*, *Foro TV*, *Radio Fórmula*, *MVS Radio*, *Cultura Colectiva*, *Sin Embargo.mx*, *máspormás*, *El Financiero*, *La Crónica*, *Gatopardo*, *Canal 11*, *Canal 22*, *Grupo Imagen Informativa*, *Núcleo Radio Mil*, *SDP Noticias*, *Uno TV*, *De 10*, *Milenio*, *Reforma*, *Revista Nexos*, *TV Azteca*, *Efecto TV*, *Grupo Acir Radio*, *Grupo ABC Radio*, *mediotiempo.com*, *lopezdoriga.com*, *Excélsior*, *El Norte*, *Proceso*, *Siempre*, *Actitud Fem*, *Animal Político*, *La Silla Rota*, *El Deforma*, *El Economista*, *Grupo Radio Centro*, *La Jornada*, *Letras Libres*, *Proyecto 40*, *Publimetro*, *W Radio*, *Aristegui Noticias* y *Radio 13*<sup>7</sup>.

## FIELDWORK

Before starting the fieldwork, a group of students from the Universidad Panamericana, Campus Guadalajara (Mexico), was trained to be in charge of the codification in the last two weeks of November 2016. As will be seen below, of the 46 information platforms



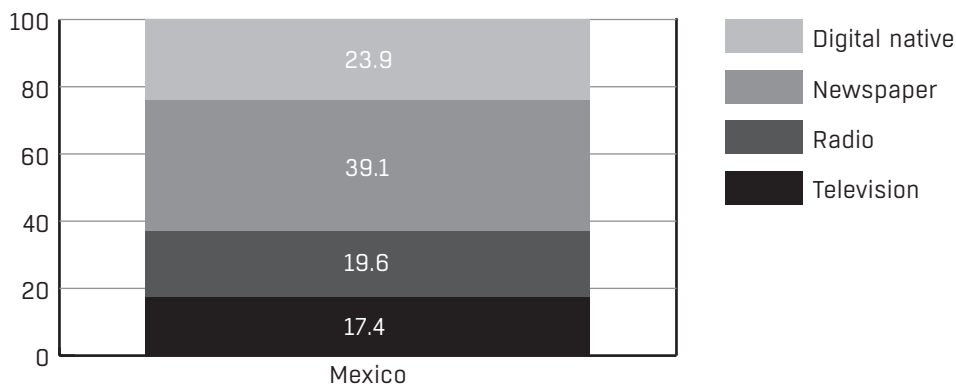


Figure 1: Types of Mexican cybermedia (in %) evaluated (2016)

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).

analyzed, 39.1% (n=18) of the selected media corresponded to online versions from print newspapers, 23.9% (n=11) of digital native media, 19.6% (n=9) of radio media and, finally, 17.4% (n=8) of digital television channels. In the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), performed on the coded data, we obtained a coefficient of  $\alpha=0.71$ , which is considered acceptable, as described by Huh, Delorme and Reid (2006).

Finally, following the procedure indicated by Rodelo and Muñiz (2016), the inter-judge reliability was tested by coding 10% of the media of the sample, selected in a simple random manner, by two judges. It is important to note that, in the Cohen kappa, we obtained an agreement rate of 0.65, which can be considered as strong, according to the classic definition of Landis and Koch (1977).

## RESULTS

### STRUCTURAL TRENDS IN INTERACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

In general terms, according to figure 2, the online versions of printed newspapers tended to offer the greatest number of interactivity options, since they met 49.2% (N=319) of the quality standards evaluated; the digital natives, 46.5% (N=184); radial media, 40.4% (N=131); and, finally, online TV channels, 37.8% (N=109). As can be seen in the figure below, the Mexican cybermedia studied used to adapt the parameters of the quality of the interaction according to some of the distinctive elements associated with their conventional supports. For example, in the first set of indicators, a more abundant

number of options for interaction between the platform and the user appeared in digital native media, just as these platforms were also the ones that presented greater accessibility to the information.

Online versions of printed newspapers, on the other hand, facilitated a greater comparison of their version with those appearing in other media, a distinction not only of quality, but a vestige that exhorted the search for greater narrative depth. In addition, these media incorporated more options related to user registration and content customization, two features that underlined a greater propensity to manage a community of users around the media. But, in general, our results are in agreement with those of Garcia de Torres (2010), who assures that the importance that the media give to the contributions of the users and, therefore, of the citizen influence in the media, is minimal. In our case, the portals studied limited participation since more than nine out of ten media analyzed avoided the publication of the contents generated by the audiences.

### DISTINCTIVE PREFERENCES IN INTERACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

In the following pages, we will describe the results obtained –depending on the type of support– for each of the proposed factors. In the first set of indicators, related to the quality of interactivity between the media and the user, we observed that the radio cybermedia recorded the lowest percentages; as will be seen below, the cells with the minimum values have been marked in light gray, while the maximum values of each indicator are indicated in dark gray.

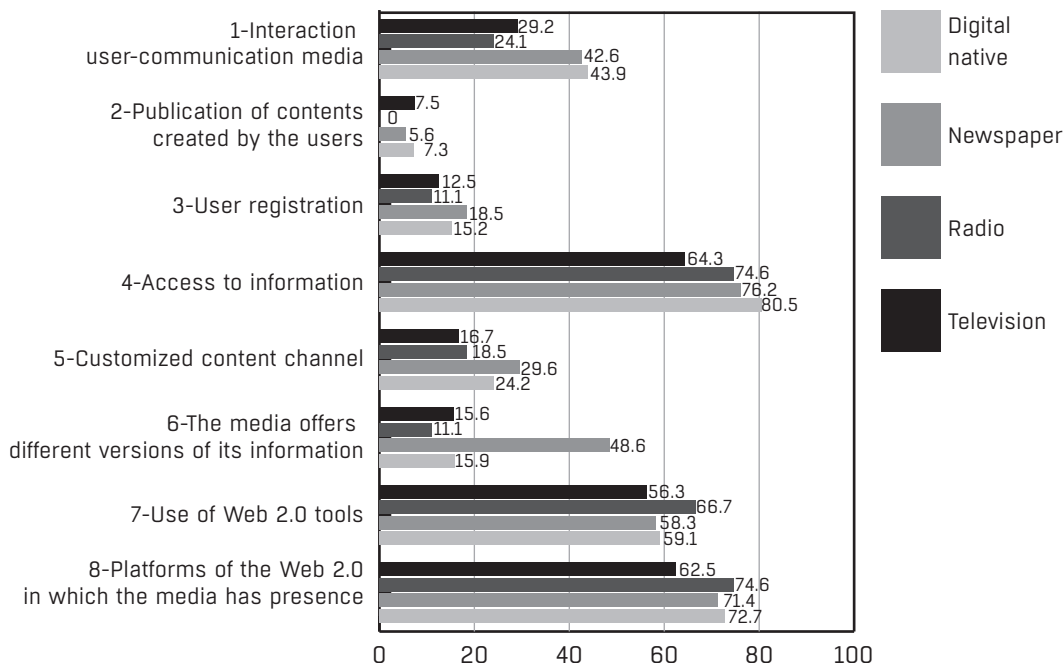


Gráfico 2. Factores de calidad de la interactividad (en %) en los cibermedios mexicanos evaluados, según el soporte (2016)

Fuente: Elaboración propia / Rodríguez, Codina y Pedraza (2012).

Indicador	Television		Radio		Newspaper		Digital native	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.1. Communication with the author of the news	0	0	1	11.1	8	44.4	4	36.4
1.2. Contact with media newsroom	6	75	2	22.2	13	72.2	8	72.7
1.3. Comment on the news published by the media	5	62.5	5	55.6	11	61.1	11	100
1.4. Voting on the news published by the media	1	12.5	0	0	2	11.1	3	27.3
1.5. 1.5. Comment posts posted on media blogs	2	25	5	55.6	10	55.6	2	18.2
1.6. 1.6. The user can modify or correct content published by the media	0	0	0	0	2	11.1	1	9.1

Table 2: Indicators of quality of the average communication-user interactivity in the evaluated Mexican cybermedia. according to the support media (2016)

Note: Dark gray cells = maximum values; Cells in light gray = minimum values.

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).



The print cybermedia, on the other hand, had three of the six highest percentages of options enabled in this factor. Curiously, none of the audiovisual digital media allowed their users to modify or correct the content published, and both restricted aspects such as communication with the author of the news. However, the lowest results, from the global scale of indicators, appeared in the habilitation of options related to the publication of contents created by the users.

In the case of the cybermedia identified with conventional press, and although they were the most abundant in the sample (18 such portals were selected), only one newspaper, that is, 5.6% of the total set of printed journals, offered its users the propagation of their informative ideas. None of the nine online radio stations analyzed had such options activated, while only two digital television media out of the eight studied allowed their users to post videos, photos or blogs. In this section, the digital natives stood out particularly in the publication of texts written by the readers-authors: about three out of ten portals of this media allowed their audiences to send written stories. The third factor, which refers to the registration of users within the cybermedia, is key to fostering the development of a community around the media. Therefore, half of the printed portals facilitated user registration, that is, 50% (N=9); the digital natives, 36.4% (N=4), the radials media, 33.3% (N=3) and 25% (N=2), television. However, online journalism organizations were reluctant to facilitate contact with other registered users:

no digital radio media had this option enabled; print, 5.6% (N=1), digital natives, 9.1% (N=1) and television, 12.5% (N=1). In the case of the fourth set of indicators, which explains the quality of interactivity based on access to information, we find that television media reached the worst percentages by obtaining five of the seven lowest frequencies.

In this section, the native digital portals showed the greatest accessibility to information. However, as can be seen in the table above, navigability through contents was one of the factors most used by the four supports. On the contrary, the fifth factor—the customization of information— received little attention from the studied cybermedia. In general, users could not adapt the portal interface based on their editorial interests in the media associated with television or radio content, and this option was only provided in 5.6% (N=1) of digital newspapers and 9.1% (N=1) of digital natives. Similarly, less than half in the case of print media, and barely a third in other media, promoted the syndication of content from email or mobile phone. In this regard, 44.4% (N=8) of online newspapers had this option, 27.3% (N=3) of the digital natives, 25% (N=2) of the television and, finally, 22.2% (N=2) of the radials. Only about a third of the media in the sample provided the subscription to alerts or electronic bulletin: 38.9% (N=7) of digital print media, 36.4% (N=4) of the digital natives, 33.3% (N=3) of the radials and, lastly, 25% (N=2) of television.

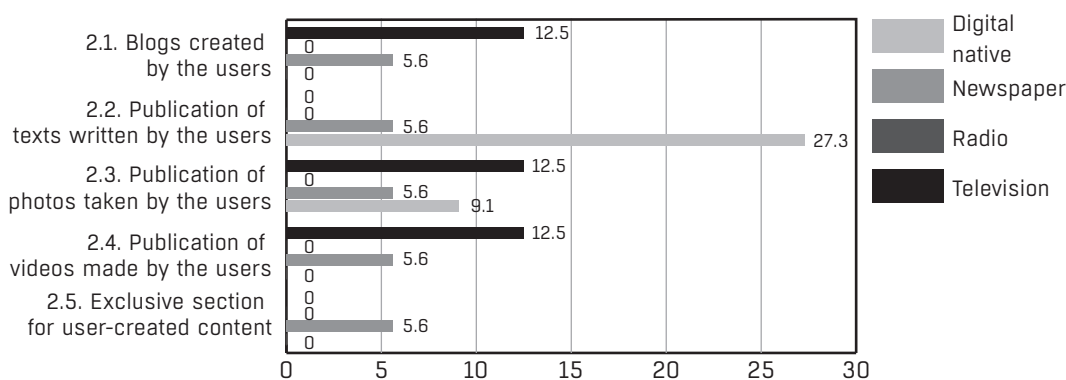


Figure 3: Quality indicators of interactivity in the publication of user-created content in the evaluated Mexican cybermedia, according to the media support (2016)

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).

Indicator	Television		Radio		Newspapers		Digital native	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4.1. Access to information through the front page	7	87.5	8	88.9	18	100	11	100
4.2. Access to information through sections	8	100	9	100	17	94.4	11	100
4.3. Access to information through related news	4	50	8	88.9	14	77.8	10	90.9
4.4. Access to information through the search engine	6	75	9	100	16	88.9	10	90.9
4.5. Access to information through the web map	2	25	0	0	4	22.2	3	27.3
4.6. Access to information through users' recommendations	2	25	4	44.4	11	61.1	6	54.5
4.7. Access to information through external web 2.0 platforms.	7	87.5	9	100	16	88.9	11	100

Table 3: Interactivity quality indicators on access to information in the evaluated Mexican cybermedia, according to the media support (2016)

Note: Dark gray cells = maximum values; Cells in light gray = minimum values.

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).

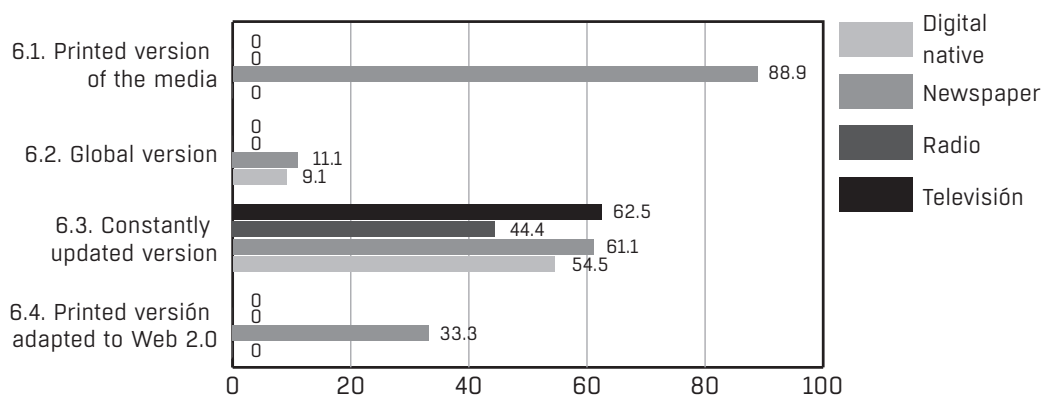


Figure 4: Interactivity quality indicators on the media offer of different versions of their information in the evaluated Mexican cybermedia, according to the media support (2016)

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).

The studied cybermedia, as can be seen in the previous figure, were reluctant to allow a contrast between their coverages and those of other international media: only 11.1% (N=2) of online printed media appear with this option enabled and 9.1% (N=1) of the digital natives.

Some of the indicators examined, however, depended on media support. For example, 6.1, which referred to the existence of a printed version of the medium and,

also, 6.4, which described the adaptation of the same version to web 2.0. However, digital natives that did not have a printed edition, targeted audiences specifically identified with online information consumption routines. Perhaps, by enabling this functionality, such media could attract a larger number of older users, for example. On the other hand, while about nine out of ten printed online newspapers had the offline version available on their portal, the truth is that only a third

Indicator	Television		Radio		Newspapers		Digital native	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8.1. Presence of the media in audiovisual platforms	5	62.5	7	77.8	15	83.3	9	81.8
8.2. Presence of the media in images platforms	3	37.5	5	55.6	11	61.1	7	63.6
8.3. Use of own social networks	2	25	6	66.7	3	16.7	3	27.3
8.4. Presence of the media in external professional social networks	2	25	3	33.3	10	55.6	4	36.4
8.5. Presence of the media in friendship social networks	8	100	9	100	17	94.4	11	100
8.6. Presence of the media in microblogging platforms	7	87.5	8	88.9	17	94.4	11	100
8.7. Linking between the media website and social platforms	8	100	9	100	17	94.4	11	100

Table 4. Interactivity quality indicators on the web 2.0 platforms in which the Mexican cybermedia evaluated are present. according to the media support (2016)

Note: Dark gray cells = maximum values; Cells in light gray = minimum values.

Source: Own elaboration. / Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012).

of them implemented in this version the functionalities of web 2.0, even when the media used the tools of Web 2.0, as, for example, noted in the seventh factor, which precisely evaluated this issue. The possibility of sharing the information published by the media with other users was active in 100% (N=11) of the digital natives, 88.9% (N=8) of the radials, 87.5% (N=7) of television and, lastly, 66.7% (N=12) of the printed media. On the other hand, the information content was still written from conventional journalistic genres, to the detriment of its propagation through blogs or sections specifically oriented to the web 2.0 that allowed greater contact with the media informants. Thus, only 50% (N=9) of online print media owned blogs linked to their newspapers, 44.4% (N=4) of the radials, 25% (N=2) of television and 18.2% (N=2) of digital natives. According to the interpretation of the results of the last factor, allusive to the management of interactivity on the web 2.0 platforms in which the evaluated cybermedia were present, we find an abundant representation of the various supports in friendship social networks and, also, in the link between the portal and these networks,

an indication of the extraordinary importance granted by the media to the promotion of content through social media users.

In this factor, the use of own social networks registered the lowest percentages, because in spite of the potential benefits in terms of fomenting a community of users that intensify their experience with the media by means of dialogical exchange, the development and the maintenance of this type of applications is very high economically.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results presented in the previous pages have some implications for the knowledge of interactivity management in Mexican cybermedia. Beyond the preferences associated with editorial tendencies, design and the historical trajectory of the media, there has been evidence of an irregular management of interactivity in these media, which, as explained, were the most important in Mexico, a country where in 2015 there were 77.7 million people using mobile phones,

of which three quarters used a smartphone Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], 2016, p. 1).

This irregularity was observed, in the first place, when associating the implementation of this structural characteristic of cyberjournalism depending on the type of support of the offline media. Thus, digital natives and print media showed a more pronounced tendency to incorporate options linked to the promotion of user participation. In contrast, audiovisual media provided poorer interaction, perhaps because their business areas were focused on a conventional space, while online counterparts exert a replicating function rather than a distinctive role.

This conclusion is related to the second set of factors associated with interactivity management: the enormous influence of media financing, since the habilitation of the facilities listed above required a greater number of professionals associated with information production, innovation of the supports, community management and, in general, product quality management.

Third, the routines associated with offline journalism affected the qualitative development of new online media, that is, they alluded to a professional conception heavily mediated by conventional values. In this regard, we could say that aspects such as not being able to contact the authors of the news, not being able to modify or correct their contents, denoted restrictive actions that,

in addition, limited both the personalization of content and the consultation of other versions different than their own, while stimulating the circulation of their information through the social networks of the users.

Precisely, this last conclusion motivated a dimensioning of the digital audiences related to the one of its conventional homologues. That is, a passive experience was favored, to the detriment of the activation of the users from the creation or co-creation of contents; the encouragement of communities that interact with editors and managers, with the support and with each other, with the stimulation of web 2.0 adapted genres—such as blogs—that allow for greater contact and, to a certain extent, tend to dilute the relations between the transmitters and the receivers, since the elaboration of the message incites the collaboration of its users. On the contrary, promotion was fostered, rather than the creation of ideas and, ultimately, the assumption of a monopolizing media of public opinion, located at the heart of symbolic management.

In future works, it would be useful to contrast the results obtained from the quantification of the interaction options, with the perception of professionals on this same phenomenon, along with the view of the audience. These are tasks that, in any case, can be fundamental to finish understanding how the processes of participation in the contemporary digital public space are managed.

## FOOTNOTES

1. The term, as can be presumed, is a combination of the words 'producer' and 'consumer', in reference to the fact that the latter has also become a producer of content on the Internet.
2. This article is part of the project "Public sphere and citizen participation: an approach to the construction of interaction in the main Colombian cybermedia (2016)", financed by the Fund of projects of Great Amount of the Universidad del Rosario (2017-2019).
3. From a code sheet in which one could choose these options: blogs, comment box, rating the story, chats, comments in the story, multimedia contributions, surveys, forums, podcasts or none.
4. From a code sheet in which one could choose these options: by blogs, chat, email, contact page, RSS or none.
5. Although the sample of analysis is not specified—the link that directs to it is no longer active—, at least three media of national scope are analyzed: *Reforma*, *El Economista* and *El Financiero*.
6. However, let us remember that this is the first stage of an R & D project that will run for 36 months.
7. We had to exclude from the sample the medium *Cadena 2*, since we observed that it lacked any kind of interaction possibility.

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