

WORKING IN A DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SPACE.

Facebook and Twitter as journalistic tools
for European information pure-player
websites.

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ABSTRACT - Since the creation of the European Union, European information has been a very important issue of communication. Numerous Europe-specialized information websites were born in the first decade of the 21st century, thus creating a European informational landscape on the Internet. In a context of journalistic technological and economical evolutions, journalists have to adapt rapidly their ways of working. A new function in terms of management of socio-numeric networks has appeared: community management. This research aims at analyzing the uses of Facebook and Twitter in the community management of online European information websites. We will be specifically observing how information makers integrate these technologies, which originally were not part of the journalistic work patterns, and how they use these new means of communication to circulate European ideas through self-promotion practices.

Keywords: Journalism. Social networks. European information. Community management.

TRABALHAR EM UM ESPAÇO COMUNICACIONAL EM FORMAÇÃO.

Facebook e Twitter como ferramentas do trabalho do *community management* nos sites de informação *on-line* sobre a Europa

RESUMO - Desde a criação da União Europeia, as notícias sobre a Europa têm sido um tema importante para os estudos da comunicação. Nessa perspectiva, vários sites especializados na informação sobre a Europa foram criados na primeira década do século XXI, no âmbito da constituição de uma paisagem informacional europeia na internet. No contexto das evoluções tecnológicas e econômicas do jornalismo, os jornalistas precisam rapidamente adaptar suas formas de trabalhar. Desse modo, uma nova função em termos de gestão das redes sociodigitais emerge: o *community management*. Esta pesquisa busca analisar os usos do Facebook e do Twitter no *community management* de sites de notícia sobre a Europa. De forma mais específica, vamos observar como os produtores de informação integram essas tecnologias originalmente externas ao trabalho jornalístico, e como eles usam esses novos meios de comunicação na circulação de ideias sobre a Europa, por meio de práticas de autopromoção.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo. Redes sociais. Notícias sobre a Europa. *Community management*.

**TRABAJAR EN UN ESPACIO COMUNICACIONAL EN DESARROLLO.
Facebook y Twitter como instrumentos periodísticos de los pure-players
de información europea**

RESUMEN - Desde la creación de la Unión Europea, la información europea ha sido un asunto muy importante de comunicación. En los años 2000, numerosos sitios de información sobre Europa han aparecido, creando así pues un paisaje informacional europeo online, con muchos sitios pure-players (solo en línea). En un contexto de evoluciones tecnológicas y económicas que dan como resultado la aparición de nuevas técnicas de periodismo en línea, los periodistas tienen que adaptarse y vemos aflorar nuevas funciones de gestión de las redes sociales, que están designadas con la palabra inglés de community management. Esta comunicación estudia por consiguiente la utilización de Facebook y Twitter por los periodistas, mirando con precisión como los periodistas de los sitios web de información europea integran los formatos y los códigos de estos útiles que, al principio, no fueran parte de la esfera periodística, en una óptica de redacción auto-promocional de Europa.

Palabras clave: Periodismo. Redes sociales. Información europea. Community management.

The community manager might be the modern counterpart on the web of the sub-editor. He aims at shaping the online newspaper for the Internet by using every channel possible. So he might be on this frontier ... (Journalist, 28).

Journalists have always been using various techniques – tools and technologies – in order to work, without becoming either technicians of the book industry or computer engineers (CORNU; RUELLAN, 1993). They have nonetheless developed their own production techniques or routines (source selection, viewpoint) in order to rationalize their professional practice. Without getting into technological determinism by arguing the possibility of the emergence of a European public sphere thanks to the Internet, we have to acknowledge that the web promotes the circulation of scattered speeches and information about Europe (LE CAM; UTARD, 2011).

Numerous Europe-specialized information websites were born in the first decade of the 21st century, thus creating a European informational landscape on the Internet. The challenge for these pure-player websites, which were created in order to promote Europe to the citizens by means of online media, is to forge a reputation and remain visible while the specificity of their field of interest represents a disadvantage (GEORGAKAKIS; SMITH, 2004). Innovations regarding interactivity, especially with the boom of social networks and media, enable information producers to actively broadcast the content they create. In a context of journalistic hyper-

competition (CHARRON; DE BONVILLE, 2004), journalists have to rapidly adapt their ways of working. New functions in terms of management of socio-numeric networks have appeared: community management and social media editing (blog facilitation, social networks management, interactions with the audience etc.). Here we analyze the advent of new web journalism techniques. Taking into account technological and economic development, these new methods result from the concentration and re-appropriation of skills which used to be in the hands of different persons (writing, editing, broadcasting, promoting).

This research aims at analyzing the uses of Facebook and Twitter in the community management of online European information websites. We will be specifically observing how information makers integrate these technologies, which originally were not part of the journalistic work patterns, and how they use these new means of communication to circulate European ideas through self-promotion practices. The issue of the editorialization of information – processes of selecting and structuring content on the Internet – is at the core of our analysis of the practices of content circulation through a professional use of interpersonal communication networks. The European specificity of the three websites forming the core of our study material allows us to tackle the question of journalistic commitment in the perspective of the information and communication strategies of the European Commission.

We have conducted research (interviews and corpus analysis) on three European pure-player websites based in Paris, representative of the European online information landscape in France: Euractiv.fr, Touteleurope.eu and Cafebabel.com. The fact of journalists broadcasting information directly themselves appears quite interesting and places these media in a process of “European information activism” (ALDRIN; DAKOWSKA, 2011). Information and communication staffs work together in a size-restricted organization/structure, thus encouraging exchanges of information.

In a neo-weberian sociological perspective, we examine European online journalists as a group in order to understand what jurisdiction these new web content creators come under. Professions can be defined by building, supporting and defending technical knowledge in a given area, an “expertise” called jurisdiction (ABBOTT, 1988). We agree with Anderson’s (2011) suggestion that journalistic authority and expertise cannot be thought of as being the mere product of conflicts of jurisdictions between well-defined groups, but more as networks of expertise, as Latour (2012) argues. Sociology of journalism allows us to analyze production routines set up by

journalists in order to manage publication in social networks.

It also offers keys to understanding the weight of social broadcasting in the economy of the media. Understanding the interrelatedness of various fields created by social numeric networks, in which journalistic practices coexist with other communication practices, we observe how journalists integrate new codes initially on the fringe of their jurisdiction. We will use the concept of *informational activism* (militantisme informationnel) developed by Cardon and Granjon, which refers to “militant activities aimed mainly at producing or circulating information” (CARDON; GRANJON, 2003, p.2). We notice a mirror-effect between this definition and the journalists we interviewed. Their commitment dynamics and their “journalistic activities are aimed mainly at producing and circulating committed information”, which we will refer to as *activism of information*. The journalistic actions on the web of these “rallying agents” (LAGROYE, 2002) or “small Europe entrepreneurs” (ALDRIN; DAKOWSKA, 2011) are at the core of our study.

1 CAFÉBABEL, EURACTIV AND TOUTELEUROPE : FRANCE'S TRIAD OF EUROPEAN INFORMATION

We have been able to find the websites of this study thanks to our knowledge of the European information landscape of France which has allowed us to select “information-rich cases[...], those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (PATTON, 1990, p.169). Here follows a brief description of these websites.

1.1 Cafébabel'

Cafébabel was created in 2001 by four students of the Strasbourg Institute of Political Studies (IEP de Strasbourg) who wished to “create a virtual space in which they could share and debate on European matters”. Initially published on the Internet into four languages (French, English, Italian and Spanish), it represents the origins of a new model of “generational” information online, systematically multilingual. It is an association which gathers more than 2,000 volunteer editors and translators across Europe. The staff of the central newsroom located in Paris is composed of ten people. Four of them are in management and communication: the publication manager, a development manager/

director, a project manager and a graphic designer webmaster. The rest of the staff are journalists: three of them are editor in chief with a permanent contract (English, French and German versions) and three editors with an alternative civilian service contract (Italian, Polish and Spanish versions). The German editor in chief is responsible for editorial coordination and a couple of interns assist the team.

The European Commission is the main funder of the website, through its “Europe for Citizens” program. This funding is managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency Executive Agency (EACEA). They support numerous activities and organizations promoting an “active European citizenship”, which is to say participation of citizens and organizations in the process of European integration². *Cafébabel* also receives contributions from private actors (Fondation Hippocrène and Knight Foundation) and other public actors (Région Ile de France, French ministries).

1.2 Euractiv³

Euractiv's French website version was launched on May 9, 2007 in Paris. It is part of a network of fifteen national information websites dealing with European public policy. When we conducted our investigation in February 2013, the staff comprised seven people and two interns. On the management/communication side: a manager, a head of partnerships and communication and a project manager. On the editorial side: an editor in chief, two journalists and two journalist interns.

There are four sources of funding for the website: sponsoring companies; Euractor members (privileged partners who can benefit from special informational content); online advertising; and public projects (principally European institution calls for projects). In 2012, *Euractiv* was granted 90,000 euros in order to operate a website called *Vigie2012*, which consisted in fact-checking French presidential candidates' proposals for Europe.

1.3 Toute l'Europe⁴

In 2006, the European Union and the French State partnered up to create *Touteleurope.fr*, the online version of the late *Service d'Information sur l'Europe*, which aimed at reaching out to citizens through attractive and entertaining content in order to promote better understanding of the EU's functioning, its history and its activity.

The editorial staff consists of three journalists: an editor in chief and two web-editors, as well as two interns. The communication staff is composed of five people: three persons in charge of communication and partnerships, an intern and a community manager. The general purpose of the website is more instructive and informative than the two previous ones: it aims at creating general information on Europe, while focusing on the various stakes involved at European and national levels.

Toute l'Europe is an Economic Interest Group (EIG) funded by the French State and various public and private partners concerned with European matters, such as the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the SNCF – the National Rail Company. Organizing events and responding to calls for projects by the European institutions, such as “Le ShakEUR”, and promoting Europe to 17-34 year-olds on Facebook, insure other financial support.

These three websites were not created by European institutions and they have their own independent editorial policy. However, they are largely funded by the EU, directly or indirectly. Each of them regularly responds to calls for projects from EU institutions, especially since the “European Parliament resolution of September 7 2010 on journalism and new media – creating a public sphere in Europe”, which aims at developing a transnational European public sphere in order to for public policies in Europe to be better understood⁵. “New media” are at the center of this networked digital information and communication development strategy.

2 MANAGING THE DIGITAL INFORMATION CONTINUUM

Since the mid-1990's, the arrival and development of online information websites – which have to cope with continual innovations in this field – has disrupted journalistic organizational practices (DE CÉGLIE; PLEDEL, 2011). The professional status of journalists has not been directly affected by these changes. However, the development of online journalism has had an impact on how journalists think of themselves as a group, as well as how they apprehend their relation to their work. This occurs through an adaptation process resulting from socio-cultural and technological considerations and constraints (BOCZKOWSKI, 2004).

In this context, the appearance of pure-player websites is particularly interesting: methods of production are changing, the continuity of information flows and news are taken out of the usual

network of diffusion (newspapers, radios, televisions, news agencies). The emergence of social networks in the years 2000 and their exponential development during the past decade led to constantly increasing phenomenon of “*infomédiation*” or “social circulation of news” (REBILLARD; SMYRNAIOS, 2011; RIEDER; SMYRNAIOS, 2012).

This process is based on a threefold interaction between production and circulation of content, socially-oriented digital platforms and online communities interested in news information. First used as a means of private communication, which consisted of an online transposition of pre-existing social networks, the ways in which Facebook and Twitter are used rapidly outgrew the borders of ordinary interpersonal communication and became a digital extension of the public sphere (JOUËT *et al.*, 2011). Reference works on communication flows, in which interpersonal circulation of information were first analyzed (KATZ; LAZARFELD, 1955) take on a new dimension with the digital continuum created by the Internet, enabling the coexistence of the publication and communication spheres.

As individuals, journalists have progressively adopted these new means of communication, especially Twitter (LASORSA *et al.*, 2012). But the emergence of coordinators of social networks, working in the newsroom and referred to as community managers, is also to be observed. In this research, these “orchestrators and organizers of the ongoing conversation among internet users grouped around a trade mark or a company” (SCHÖPFEL, 2009, p.1) aim at promoting the website’s content and they expand their audience thanks to an elaborated presence in social networks. Taking into consideration the principle of recommendation, Facebook and Twitter accounts therefore become a kind of “opinion leaders 2.0” in an environment rich in informational content.

In February 2013, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with information workers of the three websites presented above. Questions revolved around three main topics: their professional use of Facebook, their professional use of Twitter and their definition of community management in conjunction with journalistic activities. All the interviewees define themselves as professional journalists, and claim a journalistic approach to information (four of them have a press card, issued in France or abroad). They are all in charge of social networks for their media. The positions are distributed as follows: six are journalist/editors, 3 are editors in chief and 1 is a manager. Ages rank from 22 to 35, and there is a correlation between

years of experience and level of responsibility. All the interviewed persons have a post graduate degree in political science, international relations, humanities or journalism (from a university or specialized schools). They all have had at least one work experience in local or national media (newspapers, radio, television, press agency) in France or abroad – most of them in both. Many of them have been mainly publishing online. Unlike European journalists of preceding generations, few of them have had any experience inside the institutions of the EU – only two out of ten.

Following this, a more quantitative research was undertaken with the analysis of content posted by the three media in their Facebook and Twitter official accounts. The period of analysis consisted of the two months preceding the interviews, from January 1 to February, 28, 2013. The 731 posts and 2,395 tweets collected were then thematically analyzed by format, type of speech, interactions, register and reactions.

This study is a first step towards a better comprehension of developing professional practices of a specific group of journalists and calls for further research on the topic.

3 TIME-CONSUMING PRACTICES

Due to dispersion of work practices and the need for multiple skills (DATCHARY, 2010), web journalists have to continuously integrate new codes and develop new practices to be able to adapt to the work load. They have to find a way to find some time for these new tasks which are added to their daily professional work. Hence, the temporality of production processes is a key factor in order to understand how journalists invest in social networks: the time-consuming aspects of Facebook and Twitter, especially managing interactions with the audience, which are seen by journalists as a sinkhole, and journalists' typical lack of time due to flows of immediate information, were spontaneously mentioned by our respondents. In terms of journalistic practices, the pressure of time results in different levels of personal investment in the social networks. This shows the ability of journalists to integrate these new spaces and their norms in their daily work with relative ease. Our analysis has shown that social network publishing does not represent an independent strategy. It is based on the journalist work routines and most of the time directly linked to the publication of content on the website.

The number of posts and tweets studied, quite interesting due to the “limited life span” of the information, makes up an important characteristic of social networks. Journalists start by publishing very little and progressively increase their participation. There are striking differences between the uses of Facebook and Twitter: there is more reluctance towards the micro-blogging website, relatively new and less commonly used, compared to Facebook, which has had time to be integrated as a daily means of communication. Writing posts and tweets can be standardized technically by computer assisted publication devices which enable journalists to ease their professional presence on social networks, for instance, thanks to synchronization of publication on different networks. This especially applies to Twitter: almost 30% of the tweets analyzed were computer-assisted publications.

Time investment is perceptible on Facebook through the editorializing of posts: formats range from the quite basic (short text or link) to the more extensive (text with media and links)⁶. Journalists spend time to add value to their social network publications. Resorting to pictures and sometimes videos, linked to written content, shows a certain autonomy of the post from the article published on the website. It contains genuine edited content, a kind of “mini-article”. The editorial staff of *Touteurope* created a publication strategy in consultation with the communication staff: by handing down the shaping of social networks contents to the communication department, they managed to neutralize the time-consuming aspect of social media sharing/posting.

A further step in allocating time to social network interactions is for the journalist to be able to spark and keep interactions going with online audiences. The Facebook posts of our corpus were coded according to three items depending on the tone used by the journalist: informative (transmission of information without a point of view), direct speech (appeal to the audience in the form of a question or incitement), derision or “LOL” (Laughing Out Loud, internet slang consisting in talking to the reader in a teasing or provocative way). As several levels of speech can be found in a same post, we have coded up to two items for the same piece of information. It appears that the informative tone, which is the more common in the media, is broadly used (80% of posts). Most of the time, this means that the journalist copy/pastes *in extenso* of the heading or a quote from the article.

Moreover, data shows that journalists sometimes try to set off debates with the audience, as a quarter of the posts falls under

the heading “direct speech” indicating that the original message was reshaped. There are few “LOL” posts, as it requires a much more important investment on the journalist’s part. The different editorial policies of the three studied websites can also provide an explanation for this fact. *Euractiv* is quite institutionalized and *Touteurope* reaches out to a general audience, so this level of speech does not match the targeted audiences. On the other hand, *Cafébabel* draws on a younger and a more multicultural audience which can be supposed to be more responsive to the “LOL” turn of phrase.

Last but not least, mentions on both Facebook and Twitter consist in addressing another network user thanks to the insertion of a hyperlink to the person’s profile in the post. Mentions are used in order to widen the circulation of published content insofar as the post is incorporated to the mentioned user’s news feed. Thanks to this, journalists enter the network dynamics: the links he posts or is tagged in appear thereby integrating a debate or a set of conversations. Implicitly he demonstrates his integration to the mediatized social networks system.

Logically, the more journalists add value to their post or tweet, implying better tailoring for circulation on a particular social media, the more time-consuming it becomes. Time is a key factor to understand how much work journalists put into circulating information on social networks. A good knowledge of these online spaces and how to use them have become distinguishing criteria for web journalists. Levels of mastery vary according to the will and the ability of the journalists to reset the balance between journalistic practices and communication practices.

4 JOURNALISTIC USES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS: CONSTRAINTS VS. LIBERTIES

The first step when opening a Facebook or Twitter account is to understand their codes and norms, otherwise messages produced are less valuable. It is a learning process that consists in an observation period during which the journalist doesn’t produce news and gathers as much information possible on the matter.

The Twitter’s writing constraint represents its very specificity: tweets cannot exceed 140 signs, which represent one or two short sentences. Journalists have to adapt their writing to this short format and find ways to convey their message in a concise manner. This

format underlines the immediacy of news information published and their quasi-instant obsolescence, each tweet being replaced by a newer, fresher and more exclusive one. Assimilation of the network's norms can also be observed through the use of hashtags. Using the sign # before a word or a group of words creates key-words that can be found through thematic researches on the network. The audience also immediately understands the main topic of the message. When using hashtags in a tweet, journalists understand one of the basic elements of communication on Twitter. If the @ sign is missing before a user's name, the message will not reach the user mentioned. There also should be a clear reference to the news source, whether by retweeting or by mentioning the source's user name in the tweet.

You don't write the same way according to which social network it is for: on Twitter, it is very limited, there's just a link at the end of the message, so the title of the article can be a good teaser. On the contrary, on Facebook, if you just write the title, it's ugly, it's not catchy, and the title already shows in the link preview at the bottom of the post [...]. You must adapt your writing to each specific social network in order to add value. You have to write in a different way because the norms of communication are not the same (Journalist, 28).

We studied the range of treatments of a single piece of news in different media.

- Web Article : « *Tsunami Grillo* » : *l'Italie aux mains de l'a-politique*

- Facebook : *Les électeurs italiens passés au Grillo* (the post is hyperlinked, with a picture, the title of the article and the beginning of the header).

- Twitter : *Tsunami #Grillo : l'Italie aux mains de l'a-politique*
<http://www.cafebabel.fr/article/43566/tsunami-grillo-italie-au-main-de-a-politique.html> ...

On Facebook, the news is written with a pun, along with the original title and the picture of the article. On Twitter, the journalist only wrote the title of the article with a hashtag and the link to the website. Facebook allows the journalist to be more creative, since there is a link to the web article, which includes a picture, the title and the header. Key information already shows, so there is more freedom to make a pun. On the other hand, on Twitter, space is quite limited so the journalist must go straight to the point in order to inform the reader. Thus each communication platform has its own rules which are interiorized during the learning process.

These online spaces are also writing laboratories for

journalists. Of course they must take into account that they are representing their media and not talking for themselves, but they have more freedom in the writing and circulating processes of information. Management sometimes produces guidelines for journalists to use their creativity within a frame of reference.

So I try to make it very personal. And I told the people criticizing me that the newspaper's Facebook page is not the [newspaper]. If they want to see [newspaper], they can go to our website. Facebook is more of a social page, for conversations and debates, funny and entertaining stuff. So it's more open, it's not only like the magazine (Journalist, 23).

The journalist juggles with several jobs: editing tasks, promotion of news, editorial writer and mediator. These multiple professional identities and personal leeway allow the journalists more freedom to define their own role in social networks. Two main types of messages are being circulated by journalists: diffusion of content produced by the media (self-promotion) and information from an outside source (news and reaction to current affairs)⁷. On Twitter, the latter consists of re-tweets or shared news with mention of the source. The original purpose of social network pages being self-promotion, journalist's leeway lies in sharing external content in his feed. This practice is called curation and contributes to the evolution of journalists' work routines.

Regarding online news, curation refers to news compilation, selection and promotion (DEGAND; GREVISSE, 2012). By making available to the audience a part or all of their personal curation practices, they personally get involved, and that has an effect on the editorial policy of the page. Thus, journalists use Facebook and Twitter to share personal opinions. The use of the "LOL" level of speech is quite representative of this phenomenon: journalists put aside professional objectivity and neutrality requirements and call out to the audience in a non-conventional subjective way which reminds us of gonzo journalism.

5 INTEGRATING PRACTICES ON THE FRINGE OF JOURNALISM: LEARNING OF STAGING INFORMATION

Nowadays, social networks belong to news websites means of broadcasting. Feeding social network has become part of journalists' essential tasks on a daily basis. According to the journalist's professional history, learning and integrating processes

of social information-sharing follow different rhythms. The period during which the person became a journalist is more determinant to journalistic investment in social networks, rather than the age group the journalist belongs to. Journalists who started their professional life before the development of social networks are more reluctant to use Facebook and Twitter professionally.

In fact we didn't even use the social media at the time. And then came a time when we had to join Facebook, for the magazine. We had to take a vote because we were against joining Facebook. But that was really in the early days of Facebook, when it started to come up. And I remember I didn't want to join Facebook, but I had too (Journalist/editor in chief, 30).

Initially, management made journalists use Facebook and Twitter, but quite rapidly, social networks were used more and more naturally to circulate information. Their younger colleagues do not raise this kind of questions, for these tools are already quite natural to them and do not contradict their vision of journalism. Their professional use of social networks works in parallel with a strong personal use. The youngest journalists were on Facebook before starting to work: questions of privacy do not bother them (unlike "older" journalists, who sometimes use a pseudonym). Position in the professional hierarchy also tends to influence their attitude towards social media: managers are more likely to be enthusiasts about social networks and strongly encourage their use to the journalists, for instance by creating social network guideline manuals. Sometimes though, this line of speech draws upon marketing ploys about the "miracle of new technologies".

Personal interest in social networks in terms of professional benefits for journalists remains an essential aspect. Several of them have underlined the need to construct and broadcast a personal brand on social networks. This online visibility is as important as professional experience and according to them, should be part of web journalists' CV along with blogs. Differences between personal and professional spheres are slim. The myth of the "24/7 journalist", when profession is part of someone's identity and lifestyle, is nurtured on a professional and personal level thanks to the time continuum provided on Facebook and Twitter. As a matter of fact, the staging of events on a personal time-line is an important feature of social networks (JEANNE-PERRIER, 2012).

Journalists are "learning by doing" and they are often

influenced by national daily newspapers' online practices, in which they take a great interest. Our interviewees seem to be quite conscious of the importance of knowing and mastering web journalism tools and practices. Whether they approve of social platforms or not, they believe that they have to keep updated with the latest digital innovations. There are two complementary dynamics for integrating social networks. First, we observed a top-down strategy: management compels journalists to use social networks professionally, for branding purposes. Then, once the learning phase has been completed, we noticed a bottom-up approach: journalists acknowledge the importance of social networks for media and journalistic economy. They understand the necessity to stage oneself as a trade mark on social networks: this phenomenon is called personal branding.

Staging and circulating information are the main purposes of social networks in the media sphere. The major challenge for European information websites' journalists consists precisely in staging Europe. Journalists have to tell meaningful stories to their readers, render visible what is happening daily in neighboring countries and illustrate how decisions made in Brussels impact them directly. They have to manage to clarify complex European issues and popularize them to a broad audience (TIXIER, 2011). In order to "be understood" and be "read" by the largest audience possible, they must comply with particular professional practices, typical of specialized journalists (LÉVÊQUE, 2000).

For European journalists, this means highlighting the realistic perspective of their work, enhancing useful aspects of European information for the audience, in opposition to the abstract institutional speech of European news. Journalists must make use of clear and informative language so that the reader does not feel lost with complex terminology and institutional verbosity. The not-so-formal quality of social networks makes it easier to stage information, in continuation with these particular practices and techniques. For instance, a catching lead with a picture and a link, questioning the reader directly or inviting him to click on a link invite the reader to interact, hence contributing to making European content more and more accessible. As Valérie Jeanne-Perrier observed, social networks provide more flexibility to information makers:

Social networks are being acknowledged by information professionals as a means to carry out their job in a smoother fashion, even creating an experimental/additional space for practices and reactions sometimes forbidden within a traditional media structure. Consequently, journalists in social networks have a style comparable to traditional media editorial columnists (JEANNE-PERRIER, 2012, p.154).

Journalists are doing experimentations and promotion of their content rather than really fostering interactions with the audience. They learn social media codes through which they then transpose journalistic writing methods. Thus journalists are in a phase of experimentation and adjustments of practices with this new kind of information production, which they confront with their own professional work routines.

6 FROM SKILLS TO EDITORIAL: A MOVING FRONTIER

Even though we have seen that the journalists interviewed for this research use social networks on a daily basis for their professional practice, they remain quite reserved concerning these new publication spaces. They all agree that a person other than a journalist could be in charge of the community management for an information website. However, they insisted upon the need for the community manager to possess “news judgment” (ANDERSON, 2011). They must be part of newsroom’s conversations in order to do a good job.

Somewhere in between would be ideal. Someone who likes communication stuff and all that, but who has journalistic standards of rigor, in order be able to double check information [...]. I do think there has to be a journalistic disposition (Journalist, 28).

By defining and integrating practices on the fringe of journalism, the notion of frontier appears within the definition of journalists’ profession (“*métier de frontière*”, RUELLAN, 1993). Community management of information websites lies between advertising and web journalism: neither a journalist nor an advertising professional, a community manager’s role remains to be defined. Originally not amongst journalistic tools, social networks have undergone an assimilation process. They have now become internalized work practices within journalists’ jurisdiction. Editorial treatment and financial necessity mainly justify journalists’ acceptance of additional duties which were not originally part of professional requirements. Accepting community management duties show their flexibility and commitment to continuous learning in the field of communication practices. This reactivity keeps them from being directly challenged by other information workers.

Reluctances still remain though, especially with the

promotional aspect of the task, which moves away from journalistic values and gets closer to advertising. By showcasing an editorialized treatment of information, European pure-player website journalists demonstrate compliance with the standards of their profession. They are insisting on a qualitative treatment of information, and also on sharing an internationalized information watch which is supposed to break the “circular circulation of information” (BOURDIEU, 1996). The core theme of these “European-friendly” websites gives an element of answer on the practices of community management: they are not promoting news contents but an ideal, the European ideal. They have chosen a symbolic position which protects them from marketing-driven critics and gives legitimacy to their discourse. This is why we designated them as small Europe entrepreneurs, “which is to say, actors statutorily outside the European institutions but committed to the integrationist cause, grasping people’s attention in order to expose, explain, and build a European image, consequently, legitimating it” (ALDRIN; DAKOWSKA, 2011, p.9).

We don't care about increasing our readership. But we do care that people will actually read our paper and spend time on our website. We don't have anything to sell so we're not interested in random visitors [...]. Both in our communication and editorial staff, we have people who want to talk about Europe, not just for commercial purposes but because they do care. I think it is also the case at [European online newspaper] and [European online newspaper]: we have to multitask and borders are quite thin (Chief Editor, 30).

Journalists are hence adopting an activism of information posture by promoting European information into the media sphere, and yet claiming to be neutral. These journalists insist on the fact that they are not pro-European or Euro-skeptical but Euro-critical, which is to say lucid Euro-enthusiasts. In order to justify this position, they rely – knowingly or not – on the normative explanation of the EU institutions for which the democratic deficit of the EU results from a communication and information deficit⁸. They also want to interact with the audience so that Europe comes alive, something that social networks make particularly possible. The journalist hence becomes the mediator of this politicized European information he relays in the media. In that regard, the possibly uninterrupted flow of publication in social networks is very important because European information pure-player websites

publish very little daily content compared to European institutions' hundreds of documents, images and videos and to traditional media. Social networks enable them to multiply posts and take up more room in the media sphere. They are consequently more present, more visible.

These practices of promotion of information in social networks by journalists relate to a process of social infomediaion (REBILLARD; SMYRNAIOS, 2011). Community-manager journalists produce and promote news in social networks (Facebook and Twitter) to communities (fans and followers) in a given context, European online information. Unlike classical social infomediaion which results from promotion of content by internet users with no added value, the journalist has control on shaping and adapting the content to a particular context. They add something to the news and try to foster interaction with the audience. The journalist goes from editor, information promoter, and editorial writer to information mediator: throughout the process, he aims at reaching an audience. This is why, by throwing themselves into the interpersonal communication sphere, journalists – via the media page – become a kind of opinion leader 2.0 to the audience. We define this process as editorialized social infomediaion. Further research will be needed to try to figure out how these messages are received by the audience and what impact they have.

NOTES

- 1 Retrieved from: <http://www.cafebabel.fr/about/history/>. Consulted on: 04 Apr. 13
- 2 Retrieved from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/about_citizenship_fr.php. Consulted on: 04 Apr. 13.
- 3 Retrieved from: <http://www.Euractiv.fr/a-propos.html#presentation>. Consulted on: 04 Apr. 13.
- 4 Retrieved from: <http://www.Toutteleurope.eu/fr/menu-rapide-haut-2/qui-sommes-nous.html>. Consulted on 04 Apr. 13.
- 5 Retrieved from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc>.

do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0307+0+DOC+XML+V0//
FR. Consulted on: 04 Apr. 13.

- 6 See appendices: Table 4
- 7 See appendices: Table 5
- 8 ALDRIN, Philippe. L'Union européenne face à l'opinion. Construction et usages politiques de l'opinion comme problème communautaire. *Savoir/Agir*, 7, 2009, pp.13-23.

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APPENDICES

Table 1 General data on Facebook and Twitter accounts

Facebook page name	Date of creation	Number of likes	Twitter account name	Date of creation	Number of tweets	Number of followers	Number of following
Euractiv.fr	09/05/2007	2185	@EuractivFR	17/02/2009	14 425	9983	1048
Touteleurope Ue	(13/09/2007) 02/05/2011	4855	@Touteleurope	16/02/2009	14 168	12 095	1307
cafebabel.com, the European Magazine	23/11/2009	4320	@cafebabel_ENG	12/01/2010	2802	2524	1797
Cafebabel.com, le magazine européen	29/03/2011	1112	@cafebabel_FR	01/04/2010	3395	1634	379
Cafebabel.com, das Europamagazin	29/03/2011	553	@cafebabel_DE	01/04/2010	1034	339	259
Cafebabel.com, magazyn europejski	29/03/2011	412	@cafebabel_POL	08/04/2010	784	105	54
Cafebabel.com, la revista europea	30/03/2011	610	@cafebabel_ES	08/04/2010	2039	249	791
Cafebabel.com, la rivista europea	30/03/2011	1139	@cafebabel_IT	08/04/2010	1237	893	526

Table 2 Twitter accounts data for the period of study

	<i>Cafébabel.de</i>	<i>Cafébabel.com</i>	<i>Cafébabel.es</i>	<i>Cafébabel.fr</i>	<i>Euractiv</i>	<i>Touteleurope</i>
Tweets	71	261	122	514	896	531
Tweets/day	1,2	4,42	2,07	8,71	15,19	9
Mentions	47	40	23	176	379	146
% Mentions	66	15	19	34	42	27
Links	74	212	94	294	377	135
Links / Tweet	1	0,8	0,8	0,6	0,4	0,25
Retweets	0	51	6	52	9	14
% retweets	0	20	5	10	1	3
Answers	0	28	13	34	18	64
% answers	0	11	11	7	2	12
Hashtags	38	0	210	135	877	602
Hashtags/tweet	0,5	0	1,7	0,25	0,9	1,1
Tweets retweeted	8	143	38	124	644	258
Retweets total number	11	206	48	217	1851	522

Table 3 Facebook accounts data for the period of study

	<i>Euractiv</i>	<i>Cafébabel.fr</i>	<i>Cafébabel.de</i>	<i>Touteurope</i>	<i>Cafébabel.es</i>	<i>Cafébabel.com</i>	Total
Number of posts	34	92	116	122	157	210	731*
Posts / day	0,8	2,1	2,6	2,8	3,6	4,8	2,7**
Number of links	33,0	33,0	81,0	112,0	98,0	187,0	544,0*
Links / post	1,0	0,4	0,7	0,9	0,6	0,9	0,8**

* : average / ** : median

Table 4 Posts format on Facebook

	Text only	Text + link	Text + picture	Text + picture + link	Other	Total number of posts
<i>Cafébabel.com</i>	5	179	17	5	4	210
%	2	85	8	2	2	100
<i>Cafébabel.fr</i>	28	28	26	4	6	92
%	30	30	28	4	7	100
<i>Cafébabel.es</i>	2	71	45	22	17	157
%	1	45	29	14	11	100
<i>Cafébabel.de</i>	2	61	30	16	7	116
%	2	53	26	14	6	100
<i>Euractiv.fr</i>	1	33	0	0	0	34
%	3	97	0	0	0	100
<i>Touteleurope.eu</i>	1	9	7	91	14	122
%	1	7	6	75	11	100
Total	39	381	125	138	48	731
Distribuição do total (mediana)	5	52	17	19	7	100

Table 5 Type of message relayed in the posts

	Call for contribution	Information / reaction to current affairs	Self-promotion	Other	Total
Cafébabel.com	13	16	135	46	210
%	6	8	64	22	100
Cafébabel.fr	2	50	35	5	92
%	2	54	38	5	100
Cafébabel.es	9	57	84	7	157
%	6	36	54	4	100
Cafébabel.de	11	20	65	20	116
%	9	17	56	17	100
Euractiv	0	0	34	0	34
%	0	0	100	0	100
Touteurope	0	20	100	2	122
%	0	16	82	2	100
Total	37	157	451	86	731
%	4,9	22,4	61,9	10,8	100

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