

# BEYOND PROPHECIES

A critique of “*new news’ retrospective: is online news reaching its potential?*”

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**ABSTRACT** From April 27 to 29, 1995, the Poynter Institute organized a seminar with specialists in the field to discuss the future of digital journalism. After a decade had passed since that seminar, Professor Nora Paul wrote an article for the *Online Journalism Review* in which she commented on the predictions made when digital journalism was barely starting to try out production models adapted to the world of the networks. In this joint article by members of the Online Journalism Research Group (GJOL)<sup>1</sup>, we intend to establish a dialogue with Professor Paul’s text, contributing new elements to the analysis of this phenomenon that, from our viewpoint, should be considered as a complex of continuities, ruptures and potentialities with respect to the conventional model of journalistic practice. Our text is especially centered on three topics that merit comments and criticism in Paul’s text: 1) the absence of an explicit methodological reference; 2) the biased evaluation centered only on part of the American production; 3) the very limited approach in dealing with the peculiarities of the new practice.

**KEY-WORDS** Webjournalism; online journalism; digital; multimedia; Nora Paul; Internet; NTC

## 1 ■ INTRODUCTION

After a decade had passed since the holding of the New News Products seminar, organized by the Poynter Institute from April 27 to 29, 1995, with some of the pioneers in the field to discuss the future of digital journalism, Professor Nora Paul wrote a text, ‘*New News retrospective: Is online news reaching its potential?*’, published in the *Online Journalism Review*, in which she commented on the predictions made when digital journalism was barely starting to try out production models adapted to the world of the networks.

According to the predictions of those guest specialists, journalism in cyberspace would be more contextual, would facilitate the work involved in checking, would take advantage of the connection of the articles through links, would stimulate interaction of the journalists with the public and would explore more expressive forms of reporting, with differentiated use of text and graphics.

Ten years later, Nora Paul tried to answer two questions:

- 1) Up to what point are the 1995 predictions coming true?
- 2) To what extent have the possibilities for new forms of online narrative and reporting increased?

And the author concluded that a large part of the promises have not been kept and that much of the content published in the digital media derives from the conventional journalistic organizations.

Nora Paul's text, which was the subject of a rapid, considerable dissemination through the Web, has been provoking the most varied types of reactions and criticism, and has served as a point of convergence for the discussion on journalism's current situation in view of the New Technologies. In this article, we intend to establish a dialogue with some of the ideas presented there, contributing with other elements to the analysis of journalism on the Internet which, from our point of view, introduces both ruptures as well as continuities and potentialities with relation to earlier journalistic practices. Our approach is structured around three topics, with relation to elements of Paul's text that merit criticisms and comments: 1) the absence of an explicit methodological reference; 2) the biased evaluation centered only on part of the American production; 3) the very limited approach in dealing with the specific aspects of the new practice.

## **1 ■ THE NEED FOR A METHODOLOGICAL CRITICISM**

A first point for emphasis is the lack of a contextual view of the process of appropriation of the New Communication Technologies (NTC) – both in the participations in the 1995 seminar as well as in Nora Paul's 2005 article, which on describing and evaluating the situation of Journalism on the Internet, ten years later, reproduced in its analysis the problems of the seminar which served as its starting point. Instead of an evaluation carried out in the light of a systematic analysis of the processes of incorporation of these technologies, a long list was made of aspects that could undergo changes with the advent of digital journalism. Without due support of facts or observation and description of concrete

cases, there was belief in or expectation of ruptures, without pointing out and discussing the continuities and potentialities that necessarily punctuate any technological transformation process.

A careful reading of academic works specifically directed toward these problems, produced in the last four decades (MORGAINE, 1971); (SMITH, 1980); (KOCH, 1991); (MACHADO & PALACIOS, 1996); (FIDLER, 1997); (MARTINS DA SILVA, 1997); (QUADROS, 1998); (MACHADO, 2000); (PAVLIK, 2001); (PRADO, 2002); (MACHADO, 2003); (MACHADO & PALACIOS, 2003); (MIELNICZUK, 2003); (SAAD, 2003), among many others, reveals that no new media causes a total rupture with the other technologies existing until then. Rather than from the negation of the social-technical structures in operation, the complex history of technological metamorphoses has resulted from the intricate relations established between the need for opening in order to incorporate the new media and the impossibility of a complete rupture with the institutionalized material structures, as well as with cultural and social practices and conventions.

A series of technological, political, legal, economic, cultural and professional factors confirm that the incorporation of a new technology is marked by continuities, namely:

- a) The more connections it maintains with preceding platforms, the more rapidly a technology can expand;
- b) Investment in a new technology largely depends on authorization by the constituted political power; outside legal bounds, it is improbable that a new technology could be disseminated in any society;
- c) Due to prior investments in the up to then mass media, there is a tendency to avoid ruptures with the technological platforms in use;
- d) The study of the social use of cultural products suggests the rejection of radical changes in technology consumption habits;
- e) The need for time in order to train professional people ends up by leading the new technology to have to depend on professional manpower trained for the media until then predominant.

In the book "Goodbye Gutenberg – The Newspaper Revolution of the 1980s", that we can label as the forerunner of studies on the practice of journalism in telematic societies (if we disregard the classic work "Dix ans pour survivre – un quotidien grand public en 1980", by Daniel Morgaine, more concerned with the future of the daily newspaper), Anthony Smith reinforced the association between the development of the printing press in the XV century and the social and cultural process known as the Renaissance (1980:323). And he added that the coincidence was noteworthy between the appearance of new ideas on

the nature of journalism, in the beginning of the 1980s, and the adoption of new methods for creation and dissemination of the written word. Smith concluded, correctly, as we can see two decades later, that there would be new mechanisms for disseminating the printed word and that the traditional system of printing would be transformed by the use of computers and by the industrial reorganization of journalistic companies (1980: 323). And, in order to avoid any excessive rapture, Smith warned that, although at the time of its installation it would be possible to foresee that the new technology could serve to radically change the communicational environment, permitting profound alterations in the systems for collecting, handling, classifying, censoring, circulating and storing information, inevitably the first uses of these machines would be directed to traditional tasks (1980:323).

Less than a year after the confirmation of the real potential for dissemination of journalistic information through the Web, with the coverage of the Oklahoma bombing in the United States (HALL, 2001:27), in April 1995, contrasting with the then frequent prophecies of a marvelous future for journalism on the Web, reality assumed a very different position from this technological boasting:

The specialists' projections that digital technology would permit the end of a one-way communication model, the so-called one to many, as occurs with commercial television or the traditional radio stations, are far from coming true, in view of the observation of the journalistic publications' form of operating on the Internet. Most of the time, there was a simple transposition of the printed versions' contents to the new supporting media, without any substantive modification, whether in form or in content (MACHADO & PALACIOS, 1996).

Almost at the end of the 1990s, in 1997, Roger Fidler was launching "Mediamorphosis – Understanding New Media", a work in which he intended to describe the nature of the transformation processes that society and, more specifically, journalism in the last years of the XX century were undergoing. For Fidler the transformations in the means of communication were the result of complex interrelations of perceived needs, competitiveness, political pressures, and social and technological innovations (1997:23). Fidler defined this mediamorphosis process as a unified way of thinking about the technological changes in the means of communication. Instead of studying each one separately, Fidler emphasized, the mediamorphosis principle encourages the examination of all the new means as members of an interdependent system, highlighting

the similarities and relations existing among past, present and emerging forms (1997:23).

In this book, that we can evaluate as one of the most systematic contributions to the comprehension of the specificities of the changes that journalism has undergone, Fidler (1997) presented the six principles he considered fundamental in the mediamorphosis process:

1) Co-evolution and coexistence: each new emerging form influences the existing forms;

2) Metamorphosis: older forms tend to adapt to new means;

3) Propagation: emerging forms propagate dominant features of old forms;

4) Survival: existing forms are compelled to adapt in order to survive;

5) Opportunity and necessity: the adoption depends on opportunity and social, political and economic motivation.

6) Delay in adoption: new means always take more time than was expected to achieve commercial success.

Four years before Nora Paul's article, we found in two published books, one in England (HALL, 2001) and the other in the United States (PAVLIK, 2001), new elements for understanding the contradictory characteristics of the digital journalism development process. Hall, in "Online Journalism: a critical primer" (2001:26), concluded that the priority given by the users to journalism on the Web resulted from factors such as the facility of access to exclusive information, convenience of consultations from home or from the workplace and facility of specific searches, without at all endangering the future of printed newspapers. In contemporary societies, Hall declared, the citizens had access to multiple sources of information and probably newspapers should survive as happened in the past, at the time of the expansion of the telegraph and photography.

In the case of "Journalism and the New Media" (2001), right away in the introduction, Pavlik, who had declared earlier that journalism was being submitted to a fundamental transformation, perhaps the most important since the appearance of the *penny press* in the middle of the XIX century, called attention to the fact that this process, due to its complexity, could not be defined as simple and much less as one-dimensional. In reality, Pavlik emphasized, a diversity of economic, regulatory and cultural forces, activated by the technological change, was converging to enable the emergence of a transformation in the nature of journalism. A journalism that, on one hand, could become better than the present form because it tends to incorporate and empower the audience, but that, on the other

hand, presented threats to journalism standards such as authenticity of content, checking of sources, veracity and exactness (PAVLIK, 2001).

As can be seen, it is important to establish a methodological premise in order to dispel any temptation to consider the Web, or other telematic supports, as representing opposition and a movement toward superseding the previous media formats. A more profound theoretical comprehension of the NTCs is needed, with a view toward elimination of the false opposition sometimes created between the so-called Traditional or Mass Media and the NTCs, which has led in some cases to a very simplistic evolutionary view and to the affirmation of a certain technological triumphal attitude (MACHADO, 2000; PALACIOS, 2001). Perception of the specificities of the various media supports does not imply placing them on opposite sides and much less underestimating the contradictory process of their social appropriation (WOLTON, 1999).

## **2 ■ EVALUATION CENTERED ON THE USA CONVENTIONAL MEDIA**

A second aspect to be highlighted is that, on restricting her comments to the experiences developed by the conventional media in the USA, however much one agrees that the country occupies an outstanding place among producers of cutting edge technology in this field, Nora Paul reduced the diversity of the cases. The excessive homogenization of the USA market, made it difficult to identify the contrasts in the process of incorporation of this technology in different regions of the planet (ZAMORA, 2001; DIAZ NOCI, 2001; GUNTER, 2002; DEUZE, 2004; MACHADO, 2003; ABDULLA, 2005).

By way of comparison, in a study published in 1996, Machado and Palacios evaluated publications from 16 countries on the five continents. To tell the truth, the criteria utilized in the definition of the sample can always be questioned – in this case only outstanding vehicles were included, whether it be for their innovative character, for being better known to the public in Latin America, or for being representative of the state of the art in a specific country or region – but it cannot be denied that the diversity contributes to increasing the study's representative character.

At the time of the 1996 study<sup>2</sup>, the disparity between the existing infrastructure, the appropriation models and the development conditions of Webjournalism in countries on different continents was obvious. The almost simultaneous dissemination of the technology concealed the

diversity of situations depending on the continent, on the country and even between regions of the same country. In May 1996, while the USA was the country with the highest number of journalistic publications (464), Europe occupied an intermediate position, with 166 publications, followed by Asia with 33. The least significant number was that of Eastern Europe, with only seven, below Africa and Oceania that had ten publications each (MACHADO & PALACIOS, 1996).

On centering her comments on the conventional journalistic organizations, Nora Paul made a broader comprehension of the phenomenon more difficult because several studies during the last decade (MACHADO & PALACIOS, 1996; MACHADO, 2000; DOTINGA, 1999; DIBEAN & GARRISON, 2005; SALWEN, 2005) have made it clear that the digital editions frequently are simple versions of the printed editions or spaces for divulging the contents of electronic means, in the worst case, or hybrid products resulting from the addition of original contents to those furnished by traditional means, in the best hypothesis. Since up to now no conventional journalistic organization has discovered a business model for Webjournalism that could be established as a standard, the doubt persists whether the digital editions are part of the parent companies or whether they maintain their own activity, competing with the conventional media for the market (DIBEAN & GARRISON, 2005).

The restriction of Nora Paul's comments to the conventional media has already merited criticism by John Roberts, director of *CNET*, one of the main products of the Webjournalism that emerged in cyberspace. In an ironic message, Roberts expressed his surprise that the *Online Journalism Review* was so far away from the online world. All the examples, Roberts complained, were concerned with how conventional organizations obtained advantages with the online media, disregarding the contributions of many projects that originated on the Web. It was obvious that more could have been done, Roberts suggested, concluding that an article centered on the conventional media, such as that of Nora Paul, revealed a limited view of what could have been a very interesting summary of the first decade of journalism on the Web (ROBERTS, 2005).

Besides these aspects, other relevant changes that were scarcely dealt with by Nora Paul should be indicated, even though it is impossible to furnish all the details in a single article. However, the relevancy should be emphasized of the following elements – among others – for understanding the specific dynamics of online journalism: a) the increase in the amount of information available 24 hours, in continuous flow; b) the growing importance of the incorporation of memory in the journalistic text; c)

the diversity of sources of information, especially with the impulse that blogs have been receiving; d) the reader's participation in the production of contents; e) the emergence and development of the portal format; and f) the growing importance of the incorporation of databases.

The dynamism of journalistic organizations originating on the Web such as *CNET*, *Salon*, *Baby.com*, all winners of the Columbia University award for the best contributions to online journalism (KAWAMOTO, 2003), demonstrates that Nora Paul's article, on preferring to judge the ten years of digital journalism by experiences that were probably more visible but less complex or creative, ended up by ignoring the peculiarities of the emerging models of information production on the Web. This is an attitude that, if we take into account one of the trends recorded in recent studies in the United States (QUINN, 2002, 2005; GORDON, 2003; THELEN, KAPLAN & BRADLEY, 2003), leaves aside one of the most relevant aspects of this phenomenon defined as convergence, that has as one of its results the interlacing of the offline and online experiences and that leads to the radicalization of cooperative actions among different media (NOGUEIRA, 2005).

As one of the consequences of this procedure which disregards experiences outside the traditional market such as, for example, the *Center for Independent Media* (DEUZE & PLATON, 2003; HOLANDA, 2005; SCHWINGEL, 2005), Nora Paul's article, even when it identified the phenomenon as relevant in the context of the last decade, dwells little on blogs (GILLMOR, 2004; LARA, 2004; HAAS, 2005), one of the most significant cases of information production on the Web, and on the appropriations of shared production technologies such as RSS by the journalistic organizations.

In one of the most complete summaries of this type of journalism, Dan Gillmor (2004) in "We the media" maintained that the blog was the technology that was lacking in order to allow any user of the Web to be transformed into an information producer. The decentralized system of postings permits a blog's success to rest on its capability to agglutinate collaborators, more than on the number of readers that the product might have, as occurs with the "centered page" model of the conventional media.

The dimension assumed by blogs is more obvious in the Columbia University annual survey of journalistic practice in the United States (*Business Wire*, June 20, 2005). In 2005, 51% of the journalists declared that they utilized the tool, most of them in their work, although the percentage that maintained their own blogs was small. The study

discovered that blogs have become essential in the journalists' work, with 70% of the interviewees utilizing them for preparing guidelines, quotations and research of sources. In the Brazilian case, an article by Alde & Chagas (2005) that analyzes political journalists' blogs, maintains that these spaces, offering political or personal comments in a colloquial manner, shun the logic of the journalists' cognitive authority. Through the interchange among the participants, the professional journalists are provoked and questioned by the readers and the readers themselves have the opportunity to debate between them, with or without the columnists' mediation (ALDE & CHAGAS, 2005).

For researchers such as Dan Gilmor (2004), Tiscar Lara (2004), Rosenthal Calmon Alves (2005), Ramón Salaverria (2005), Haas (2005), participative journalism, which presupposes the incorporation of the users as content producers, is the *tour de force* that leads digital journalism to a new state of development. Blogs are the most widely diffused format, but there are several examples of systems that stimulate the public's effective collaboration in order to create/modify contents: *wiki news*, *wikipedia* and CMI, among other initiatives, such as *Ohmynews<sup>B</sup>*, a Korean Webjournal that has more than 35 thousand citizen-reporters (MOHERDAUI, 2005).

Lastly, it is worthwhile remembering that some other formats were generated in these ten years of digital journalism, such as the portals (BARBOSA, 2002; KAWAMOTO, 2003). Perhaps the portals have been the first format for digital journalism without a similar one in printed journalism or broadcasting. The portal format attracted the traditional organizations because it represented an opportunity to unite the content of multimedia groups and even of partners to reinforce the online presence. The omission of the portals in Nora Paul's article is surprising, since the format caught on not only in Brazil but, at least in one of its variants (the regional portal) also has an outstanding presence in the USA, England, Spain and other countries.

### 3 ■ PECULIARITIES OF THE NEW PRACTICE

A third aspect that we would like to emphasize is that, on favoring the ascertainment of the degree of incorporation by the Webjournals of premises pre-established by the guest specialists of the Poynter Institute in 1995, Nora Paul, with the exception of narrative characteristics, ignored the peculiarities of the new professional practice, identified in various works of researchers from different countries (MACHADO & PALACIOS,

1996; 2003; MACHADO, 2000; 2003; MIELNICZUK, 2001; ZAMORA NAVARRO, 2001; HALL, 2001; PAVLIK, 2002; GUNTER, 2002; DEUZE & DIMOUDI, 2002; SINGER, 2003; GARRISON, 2005), among others. These researchers, instead of seeking to identify how the journalistic organizations are adapting to a previously established model of what appropriate digital journalism would be, made an effort, taking into account the peculiarities of the practice itself, to comprehend, define, identify and classify Webjournalism in its specificities.

In their 1966 work mentioned above, Machado and Palacios initiated, in a pioneering way in Brazil, the analysis of journalism in digital networks. Having in mind four basic parameters: 1) historical summary of the project; 2) information production system; 3) originality of the project and 4) interactivity with the public, they produced a charting of some peculiarities of the main journalistic publications on the Web. On the other hand, based on the results of the research, they developed an operational definition of the new emerging model of Webjournalism with identification of some differentiating characteristics of this professional practice. In a necessarily preliminary way, the work also discussed some emerging business models for leveraging Webjournalism.

With a different proposal, but which in the same way demonstrated interest in understanding the peculiarities of journalism in cyberspace, as can be seen in later works, Singer (1998) suggested four theoretical bases for the study of journalism on the Web and of Webjournalists: 1) gatekeeping theory, 2) innovation diffusion theory, 3) news production theory and 4) journalism's role as a force for cohesion in a fragmentary society (DIBEAN & GARRISON, 2005). Since the end of the 90s, various works have sought to transcend the paradigm of the normative studies of how Webjournalism should be, whether taking as a parameter the theory of uses and gratifications (LEUNG & WEI, 2000), or the theory of diffusion of innovations (GARRISON, 2001; ROGERS, 1995).

On reading Nora Paul's text, we could not help contrasting it with "A decade of progress in online news but we're still making some of the same mistakes", by Steve Outing (2003) published in *Editor & Publisher*, in which he called attention to what had been more outstanding in the first ten years of Webjournalism: the shovelware method<sup>4</sup> and the low investment in research and development of journalistic companies so that they could improve the quality of their products and of journalistic practice. While Outing was referring to another seminar (Internet World Conference, held in New York in 1993), he also pointed to the emergence

of blogs as a novelty. That is, written in different periods and dealing with different events, these works discoursed on similar points, while that of Nora Paul specifically perceived one of the essential aspects – that of journalistic narrative.

The forecast in 1995 was that the style based on the pyramid technique for the editing of news and articles could be amplified. To a large extent, the use of the link as one of the resources for a new reporting grammar, helps to better place events in their context; however, the format is still very linear on most of the news websites. It was the AP style, as Nora Paul declared, that prevailed – that is, short texts. According to Paul, some differential was encountered in the forums and blogs, mainly with relation to spaces for interaction between journalists (in general, columnists) and the users. While the reservations made by Paul are valid, reducing the innovations in the narratives almost exclusively to the issue of participation by the public in the text is oversimplifying the question.

It should be added that even in online versions of printed newspapers such as *The Washington Post*<sup>5</sup>, *El Mundo*<sup>6</sup>, *El País*<sup>7</sup>, *Clarín*<sup>8</sup>, *O Público*<sup>9</sup>, *O Globo*<sup>10</sup>, among others, there are sections, mainly of special articles, in which a greater contextual treatment of the information and spaces for comments by users/readers are included. In the websites of products without similar items in the printed media, greater use is perceived of links and characteristics of hypertext, memory, continual updating (PALACIOS, 1999; 2002; MIELNICZUK & PALACIOS, 2001; BARDOEL & DEUZE, 2000) for the construction of news and reports. The international MSNBC<sup>11</sup> and *Folha*<sup>12</sup> and *Portal Terra*<sup>13</sup> are examples of this type of use.

Special coverage, such as that offered, for example, by the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*<sup>14</sup> on specific subjects, each one with a different design from the others, and reporting in depth, as found in the BBC News<sup>15</sup> site, does consistently, contain a combination of news, background information and analyses. The reporting possesses a fragmented discourse structure and incorporates in the narrative multimedia elements such as photographs, videos, audio, infographs of various types. Interactivity with users occurs on different levels. The webjournalistic elements are utilized in a balanced way, producing a coherent discourse and making possible choices by the users with relation to the degree of depth of each subject within the narrative. The memory is also present in the form of an ordinary file, not incorporated in the narrative, but a clear element of potentiality is perceived there when this resource enters into each article in a systematized way. With respect to Nora Paul's comments regarding the durability of news, it can be said that

the online development brought a differential to this type of journalism, becoming a conceptual element of organization for the information.

For some researchers, the development of a differentiated language for digital journalism involves the modification (MIELNICZUK 2003; WILBER & MILLER, 2003) or even the superseding of the inverted pyramid technique (FIDALGO, 2004; SALAVERRIA, 2005) that would no longer apply to the new form of journalism, since the continuity of online information would require another process. This is a point that is still undergoing much discussion. John Pavlik (2005) declared that the immersed narrative (resulting from a differentiated narrative with relation to that of the traditional forms of journalism) is one of the ways to increase the users' participation.

For the coordinator of the interactive graphics sector of *El Mundo*, Alberto Cairo<sup>16</sup>, the differentiated language used by the association of the media's characteristics with the visual or audiovisual reconstruction of the events, enables the user to make the events "happen" again with a click of the mouse. Multimedia or interactive infography (RIBAS, 2004) makes possible this immersion by means of the sensation of participation that is obtained when the user recognizes, explores and decodes the environment in which he becomes inserted, succeeding in relating to the new subjects in a natural way. The existence of an interaction grammar determines the manner of "reading" a piece of news, and above all, the way to do it, in the new environment (SCOLARI, 2004:105).

In the case of companies active in the print and digital areas, files are an important source of revenue. It was not without reason that many digital products decided to charge for access to consult the files some years ago, being one of the first sections to be closed. This became a trend and part of the strategy of many digital operations, whether or not they had a well-defined business model. The financial feasibility of the journalistic websites, an aspect dealt with in works such as those of Machado and Palacios (1996); Machado (2000); Saad (2003); Barbosa (2002); Liebowitz (2002), was not taken into consideration in the 1995 forecasts, nor did it appear in Nora Paul's critical balance sheet.

Paid access to every type of content? Advertising financing open contents? Paid access only for prime (differentiated) type content or for files of previous editions? A mix of the various models? Which solution is most indicated? It is difficult to say a priori that one of them is the model to be followed. Each operation should study the best strategy based on what it offers or could offer the users (LIEBOWITZ, 2002; GARRISON, DRISCOLL & SALWEN, 2005).

Charging for access to the contents of publications is a business model that, for some companies, mainly those that offer specific products with high added value such as the *Wall Street Journal*, appeared to be successful, while for others, this was not true. *The New York Times* decided that this was the path, later changed its mind and now once again has reorganized its strategy, opening the contents based on registration<sup>17</sup> *El País*, which closed its entire website in 2002, on June 3, 2005 announced that it was opening part of the contents, in a strategy to attract more users and strengthen its online presence, since according to Manuel Mirat, director general of *Prisacom* (company responsible for the *El País* website, the leading media on the Internet should combine free content with content for subscribers. *Le Monde*<sup>18</sup> and *The Financial Times*<sup>19</sup>, among others, do this.

One thing seems clear: charging for access to contents is only justified if something extra is really offered; however, without any added value, would pay per view be a good strategy?

Another strategy that seems to have yielded good results is the one that has been utilized by Brazilian journalistic companies that have been active since the commercial opening of the Web as Internet access providers (IPS), as demonstrated in the case of the *UOL*<sup>20</sup> and *A Tarde Online*<sup>21</sup> portals.

#### 4 ■ CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this brief text, perhaps it would be interesting to emphasize that, from the methodological viewpoint, instead of highlighting the faults of these first ten years, it would be more useful to recognize that, while still under construction, Webjournalism is an established form. As such, on one hand, it already possesses some characteristic differentiated elements, and on the other, makes possible continuities, potentialities or corrections (BOLTER & GRUSIN, 2000; PALACIOS, 2003; BARBOSA, 2004) with relation to the conventional forms of journalism.

This type of perspective seems to be appearing in the works of a variety of researchers, of various nationalities, such as Machado and Palacios (1996); Palacios (1999, 2002); Quadros (1998); Wolton (1999); Machado (2000; 2002, 2003, 2004); Bardoel & Deuze (2000); Pavlik (2001, 2005); Hall (2001); De Wolk (2001); Quinn (2002; 2005); Diaz Noci (2001); Zamorra (2002); Priestiman (2002); Deuze (2002; 2004); Liebowitz (2002); Santos Alves (2003); Shin and Cameron (2003); Fidalgo (2003, 2004) Saad (2003); Kawamoto (2003) Paul and Fiebich (2002);

Gunter (2003); Diaz Noci & Salaverría (2003); Gillmor (2004); Salaverría (2005) Garrison, Salwen and Dybean (2005), among others.

The major merit of Nora Paul's article was, as had already occurred previously with the work of Steve Outing (2003), that of provoking reactions and reflections among digital journalism researchers. On presenting a systemization that, in some way, sought to place into context the development process of this new type of journalism, Nora Paul enabled and even encouraged other specialists to articulate counter-arguments that filled in the gaps in the text "New News' retrospective: Is online news reaching its potential?"

The extensive bibliography on the development of Webjournalism<sup>22</sup>, a large part of which is available in cyberspace and only a small portion is summarized in this article, reveals the undeniable importance of digital journalism as a professional practice and as a field for research. Among the many points that should deserve a more detailed examination in future evaluations, attention should be called to the urgent need for diversifying the subjects under study, until now very much centered on the reality of the United States, opening space for comparative works of an international character<sup>23</sup>. Equally important is the incorporation of experiences not linked to the conventional media (MACHADO, 2000; DEUZE & PLATON, 2003; ATTON, 2003), making an inventory of the peculiarities of the production processes (SHIN & CAMERON, 2003) and of the emerging business models (GARRISON, 2005) that are leveraging journalism at the beginning of this new century.

As generally tends to be the case in research on new subjects, in their initial stages, the chartings and analyses have been processed, for the most part, based on national perspectives and based on the viewpoint of individual researchers. It is expected that the second decade will mark the advance of research to wider and more collaborative horizons.

## NOTES

- 1 The Online Journalism Research Group (<http://www.facom.ufba.br/jol>) of the Communication Faculty at the Federal University of Bahia (Brazil) is linked to the Postgraduate Program in Contemporary Communication and Culture and to the Center for Cyberculture Studies and Research.

- 2 This study and a subject articulated around it were the starting point and the embryo for the creation of a pole of interest in Journalism on the Internet in the Communication Faculty at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and for the creation later of the Online Journalism Research Group.
- 3 See at <http://www.ohmynews.com>.
- 4 A method consisting of simply transposing the content of a printed or electronic vehicle (radio, TV) to the version on the WWW.
- 5 <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- 6 <http://www.elmundo.es>
- 7 <http://www.elpais.es>
- 8 <http://www.clarin.com.ar>
- 9 <http://www.publico.pt>
- 10 <http://www.oglobo.com.br>
- 11 <http://www.msnbc.com>
- 12 <http://www.folha.com.br>
- 13 <http://www.terra.com.br>
- 14 <http://www.estadao.com.br>
- 15 [http://www.bbs.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/default.stm](http://www.bbs.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/default.stm)
- 16 The blog that the editor maintains is an interesting source for research on infography. Access <http://www.albertocairo.com>, available in English and Spanish.
- 17 The New York Times has already announced the launching, starting in September 2005, of the Times Select paid service that will provide access to opinion columns, daily editions file, informative warnings and multimedia special items.
- 18 <http://www.lemonde.fr>

- 19 <http://www.ft.com>
- 20 <http://www.uol.com.br>
- 21 <http://www.atarde.com.br>
- 22 A small sample of the printed and online reference works compiled by the GJOL researchers can be found at <http://www.facom.ufba.br/jol/biblio.htm>.
- 23 A first effort in this direction, with respect to the GJOL, came about by means of our participation in an agreement between the Federal University of Bahia and the University of Austin, having as a preliminary result a collection of articles of a comparative character on the processes of application and appropriation of the New Communication Technologies in Austin and Salvador, including the field of journalism on the Internet. See Jambeiro and Straubhaar, 2004.

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