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Introduction

During the years the technological discoveries like radio, television and, to a lesser extent, cinema, had already tried to doubt the unchallenged role of papery journalism.

The previsions were terrible for it, but as we know, this is not the way it ended. Eventually the “old” newspapers couldn’t be superseded by these revolutionary inventions, which, by the way, shaped differently the world of information.

Certainly the classic newspaper, thanks to the authority acquired in the years, has been able to resist and even benefit from the other technological forms of information.

From the beginning of the ‘90s the traditional journalism faces a new challenge. Internet has revolutionized the people’s lives, and at the same time it has challenged the traditional media since 1991 (the birth of World Wide Web), until nowadays, with social networks, blogs, Web TVs, Web Radio and in general the broad phenomenon of “Citizen Journalism”. Because of its unlimited possibility to expand and improve itself, it started to pretend the role of main character into the world of information. It is now the main opponent of traditional journalism, and the most pessimistic people now really think of a possible definitive decline of traditional publishing.

As a matter of fact this time the challenge seems really unbalanced.

After a severe diffusion of mobile technology, fast Wi-Fi connections and easy tools equipped with the possibility to publish, comment and record, everybody is now totally geared with all the essential instruments to become active subjects in the creation and diffusion of news.

Through the phenomenon of “Citizen Journalism” the public finally begins to have a main role in the informative process. People want to create, comment and criticize the information supplied from above by the newspapers reversing the hierarchic relationship between reader and journalist.

The public is tired of a system of information that doesn't meet anymore their needs. The Web gave these people the sufficient tools to become a part in the process of creation of information.

“What is going to be the future of information between traditional journalism and citizen journalism?” this is the main question from which we have to start in order to understand the implications in this issue and the possible consequences.

The aim of the thesis is to try to discover the future of the information world: what is going to happen to printed newspapers, and what could be the best solution for them to survive once again to this new wave of technology.

Chapter I

Almost immediately after their birth, the advertising became the fundamental engine of newspapers development. It was the only way for traditional media to survive until nowadays.

Consumer society asked advertising to find more and more costumers. The advertisers used to see newspapers as the fastest and most effective way for the

diffusion of their product. With the incomes made by these, the newspapers had a so big growth that they were basically the only carriers of information.

Newspapers had exceptional sales for long periods but this condition lasted only until the development of modern media: starting from the 20s the information and the entertainment began to get in touch with the households through radio, which allowed reaching more users than newspapers. Advertising agencies realized it and started shifting the focus on radio stations.

Print media without advertising revenues could hardly survive.

The crisis dimensions used to increase from half of the 50s with the birth of television, and in more recent periods with the Internet. With the first losses newspapers started to exploit the visual component to arouse feelings like Television did. In order to do that the editors started to increase the number of pictures in the releases. New forms of journalism were exploited too, like reportage and investigation. This, in addition to the authority and respect which newspapers used to have in the public opinion during the two wars, contributed to the domain in reliability that publishing had over the years until the beginning of 90s.

Television modified people's lives but the upheavals were less than expected and the decline of printed newspaper seemed prevented. Maybe it was too soon to make final judgments.

The worst blow for journalism is still in progress and began in 1991: the web, other than changing habits of million of people, revolutionized the preferences of public and the world of information at all; The cornerstones of this invention are concepts like participation, interactivity and sharing.

The innovation in which we are the most interested in is the blog. It was born at the beginning of 90s, and it's similar to an online diary. This permitted the diffusion of news all over the world and sanctioned the beginning of the "citizen journalism": the user is now the supplier of information. As the first news started to circulate in the web, the monopoly of printed newspapers risked to be interrupted.

Also the advertising companies realized the potential of the Web: indeed the Internet is available to a potentially infinite number of people. Therefore these companies moved their attention to websites, blogs and social networks reducing even more the revenues for traditional newspapers. Could this determine the end of newspapers?

The important role of traditional publishing and the historic importance that it embodies allowed it to survive until today.

So, why newspapers are always more slipping through an always more deep crisis?

Crisis of values in newspaper

Other than tell general news, the real role of newspapers should be the surveillance of politic class, like a sort of "watchdog" of the good work of government system. Unfortunately this is not the way it works anymore. The real crisis of newspapers has to be found more in their lack of credibility and in the disaffection with the political class than in the new technologies. Therefore it is a crisis of values. The journalist became an easily influenced tool in the hands of politicians instead of being an observer and guarantor of good politics.

So a good observer has to look for the origin of the crisis before the birth of Television and Internet. We can find the beginning in the first '60s when Italian editors were forced to give up their autonomy and subsequently accept the external political control or even sell their companies.

The trust towards the print media is rapidly declining, and this is the major risk for a premature end. The information on the Internet made by the citizens finds nourishment in the lack of objectivity and renovation of traditional media.

Citizens are now “superheroes” of information and try to give a truthful narration of events. It's not important if it is through articles, pictures or videos, what is really important is the objectivity to be guaranteed.

So this is the birth of a new form of journalism through the diffusion channels that the Internet provides us.

Chapter II

How did it born?

The birth of “citizen journalism” hasn't a defined date or a singular episode since which it started. Much of the credit has to be found in the increment of technologies available to citizens. The public now can finally say freely its opinion on every subject in an easy way. It is not anymore necessary to be experts to use the Internet: the expansion of new technologies allowed everybody to use it.

The technologic development is not the only factor contributing to the birth of citizen journalism. The increase of the web is about the potentiality of the tools that people have, but other factors helped the rise of the phenomenon.

The western capitalistic society pushes people into a frenetic lifestyle: stopping by and read a newspaper or watch an entire edition of television news is not a realistic routine for all the strata of population, in particular for the younger ones. The hectic paces of their lives take these people to look for quick news. The newspapers are not only a space where the daily news takes place; they supply a more deepening analysis made by the journalists, which by the way doesn't satisfies anymore the public as it used to. Speed is now put before deepening.

These data could be sufficient to explain the birth of citizen journalism, but the real reason is a crisis of values that led to the decline of the traditional ones, radio and television included.

Citizens realized it, and once they were endowed with the right tools, they changed the way things were done: Anyone who has a computer (but also a smartphone), can be part of the process of collection and diffusion of data. So this is the beginning of citizen journalism, where citizens play an active role in the process of gathering, reporting, analysis, and diffusion of information.

These citizen journalists didn't face only approvals; especially the professional journalists have raised many criticisms.

Citizen journalists can be animated by big ideas and precious ideals but unfortunately they haven't enough bases to act efficiently and reach their goals. What they miss is preparation: anyone can describe an event but only the one who has the capacity to analyse it through a good writing technique can really be

considered a journalist. But experience and preparation need time and a large amount of study.

On the other hand the citizen journalist has various qualities.

For first they aren't submitted to censorship, and they are able to publish in real time. Furthermore the articles may have a lack of technical skills, but they have an emotional load that can be given only by someone who is living the facts live.

In conclusion citizen journalists are all over the world, like a huge editorial staff with thousands of different thoughts on the same topic.

Chapter III

During these years the phenomenon assumed the characteristics of a real revolutionary wave with a major speech freedom; and this process was not only against traditional media, the citizen journalism was also born with the aim to support it in the difficulties: for example the narration of unreachable events which professional journalists can't witness for politic and logistic reasons.

An evident case of this process has been the s.c. "Arab Spring", a revolutionary wave that overthrown the northern Africa regimes at the beginning of 2011. Only the activists and bloggers were able to record the phases of revolutionary days. Those videos were amateur, raw and easy; these characteristics were the reason why they could transmit all over the world the sensations of those wars with incredible realism. The entire world could witness what was going on in northern Africa despite the governments of the rioting countries blocked the main Arab broadcasters.

At the end repression couldn't stop the revolutionary wave. The big power of citizen journalism lies in the impossibility of censorship.

In Europe it's common opinion that the only truthful and affordable information is the one coming from official channels. The approach to citizen journalism is suspicious, especially from insiders, who are basically scared for their jobs. Active journalism hasn't still been fully recognized. Like all the innovations, it has initially been seen as a threat.

Luckily in some parts of the world this pessimistic vision is not commonly shared. The participative journalism is seen as a precious resource to improve and stimulate: Big media companies such Al Jazeera realized the huge possibilities of people reporting news and immediately took advantage of this opportunity. During the "Arab spring" their reporters couldn't reach the places interested by conflicts because the local governments forbade it. So Al Jazeera provided a support service to all the citizen journalists of North Africa region for the broadcasting of users products; this interactive channel had a huge success.

There were pictures and videos that even became symbols of tragic events after being broadcasted by CNN, BBC and newscasts all over the world. This attitude has allowed the most famous Arab TV broadcaster to be seen by the world public opinion as a democratic media sustaining civil society.

Chapter IV and conclusions

The world of traditional journalism today faces a turning point: firmly oppose the phenomenon of citizen journalism keeping asserting their authority and superiority over the issue or experience an alliance and try to create a new form

of collaborative journalism, made up by professionals but also by simple eyewitnesses.

Collaboration could be the solution to all problems.

The meeting point for cooperation

The citizen journalism has many potentialities that already guarantee itself a major role in the world of information.

This phenomenon allows news constantly updated, it is branched in every part of the world; it was born as a phenomenon free from any political or idealistic pressure but especially it guarantees emotions and allows the active participation of the reader: if he is not satisfied he can criticize the content immediately. Being totally free enriches all this; conversely newspapers, which are increasingly swamped by high costs, will never compete.

But like all recent phenomena, in addition to the many qualities there are important gaps, which must be filled in order to ensure that this phenomenon takes the characters it deserves: the possibility for anyone to do journalism creates confusion and it can be responsible for serious errors, which can lead to the circulation of false information due to a non-reliability of sources and to the desire for someone to create a scoop even where it does not exist.

These deficiencies push citizen journalism to collaboration with traditional media. If it were a phenomenon devoid of inefficiencies in fact it would not have any advantage to be open to the traditional media.

Traditional media and newspapers are the perfect organs that can help citizen journalism to exceed these difficulties because they are authoritative and reliable.

Joining the best parts of traditional journalism and citizen journalism would allow the creation of a total information in every part of the world regardless of the borders with a recognition of truthfulness of news, with a good description and analysis of these: a sort of “perfect journalism”.

This project could seem impossible; but I think it can give birth to a new kind of journalism where the stories are narrated with the pathos and the speed of the people living the stories, and at the same time, with the technical support of people who studied and worked in order to become real professionals. In this way traditional journalists would keep telling incidents, exposing their vision of the things and experiences, without losing a major position in the analysis of facts; at the same time they would have an endless help from million of citizens ready to record and describe what is going on around the world.

This is the only way for journalism to open for new technologies and tell the “uncomfortable” news once again.

Everybody would benefit from this situation: the public will be finally heard and the traditional media would gain some trust of people, which would allow them to survive.