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Interactivity in Latin American digital journalism. An analysis of the main digital media of Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador (2016)

Daniel Barredo-Ibáñez [CV]  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2259-0756> 
<https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=hJdDKdMAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao> Profesor de carrera principal. Escuela de Ciencias Humanas. Universidad del Rosario (Colombia) - daniel.barredo@urosario.edu.co

Elba Díaz-Cerveró [CV]  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0238-1498> 
<https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=BdKjEiMAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao> Docente investigadora. Facultad de Comunicación. Universidad Panamericana Campus Guadalajara (Mexico) - eldiazc@up.edu.mx

Karen Tatiana Pinto Garzón, Ruth del Rosario Gómez, Sebastián Pérez, Fabiola Elizabeth Nava, Niza Fernanda Quintero y Leticia Giselle Estrada

Abstract

Introduction: Latin America, in general terms, is a continent with several contextual levels, which depend on historic, economic, political and social characteristics. Despite all this, there are aspects – such as digital divide- that occur again, to a greater or lesser extent, in the different Latin American countries. This digital divide promotes partially disconnected –and thus, invisible- societies, and tends to slow down possibilities of innovation and development of digital journalism. **Methodology:** In this study, and from the methodology proposed by Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012), we have analysed the management of interactivity in the main digital media in Mexico, Colombia and Ecuador in 2016. **Results and conclusions:** The results show a generally low implementation of interactivity options in digital ecosystems in these three Latin American countries.

Keywords

interactivity; digital journalism; Mexico; Ecuador; Colombia.

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Translated by **Dixie Santana Villegas**,
Universidad Panamericana Campus Guadalajara (México).

1. Introduction. Interactivity, a structural factor of cyber communication.

The deepening of the concept of the public sphere, based on the generalization of ICT, favors a gradual activation of users in the information environment (Bowman & Willis, 2003; Bachmann & Harlow, 2012). For some five decades, there has been a growing activation of the options of participation between the senders and the receivers, since according to Rost (2006):

In the communication sciences, the term interactivity began to be used in an early stage during the 1970s, when the first media, entertainment and services emerged that brought about a remarkable change from the traditional mass media. The creation in the late 1970s of interactive television, teletext and, above all, videotex services were building the stage for a new communication model that began to question the predominantly unidirectional flow produced by traditional media (p.171).

From that moment, as explained in the work cited, interactivity developed in the media in terms of the technological advances characteristic of the past decades. This process has been particularly accelerated by the process of transformation of media mentioned by Varas & González (2016), given the emergence of new protagonists who, like social networks, not only share with them the symbolic management of public space, but also the benefits of advertising. Therefore, technological development, in conjunction with the progressive convergence of information technology in the media, favor the fossilization of those "passive users" observed by Bachmann & Harlow (2012, p. 42) and who essentially conformed with a passive reception of the information message.

The integration of the receivers into the configuration of the channel, the code or the message is stimulated with this phenomenon, that is, a participation is encouraged that Li (1998, p. 555) establishes in three levels: non-interactive, "Quasi-interactive" or "completely" interactive communication. Rodríguez, Codina and Pedraza (2012), meanwhile, propose six parameters - which contain 36 indicators - to evaluate interaction in the media; These parameters range from the communicative possibilities that a user can originate with the medium, to the capabilities to access or personalize the information, among others.

In global terms, Rost (2001) proposes the existence of two types of interactivity: *selective*, which identifies the links that are generated between the content and the user; and *communicative*, which explains the relations of the users to each other. These definitions, as can be seen, pose numerous problems, starting from technical, legal and social frameworks and which we will briefly describe in the following pages. In the first set, interaction involves a process of rethinking fully what journalism means and what the limits of contact and user participation are.

The contrast of sources, to cite an example, formed part in previous decades of the construction of a journalism which arrogated legitimacy from the search for the ideal of objectivity. In that sense, gatekeeping or gatewatching (Bruns, 2008) promote a partial suppression of sources, a progressive erosion of contrast, a departure from that myth of objectivity. In addition, it supposes the professional acceptance of citizen interference within the preparation of the message, something that substantially modifies the informational environment. In an analysis of the linguistic inaccuracies published by the main digital sports page in Spain, Barredo & Oller (2013a) concluded that the contributions made by these reader-authors constituted a new type of message, based on oralized written text, and had social consequences yet to be determined.

But the incorporation of interaction within the daily organizational activities demands also the reconfiguration of the journalist's role, having to integrate the audiences as symbolic co-creators, with the adaptation of the traditional genres or the appearance of new journalistic genres, as well as a redesign of information and a constant presence of *the other* within professional routines, since interaction is also related to aspects such as information architecture or usability (Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza, 2012). This presence links to the other set of problems resulting from interactivity, which is that of "responsibility" (Singer & Ashman, 2009, p.7), in the case of contributions made through some channels of total interaction, such as user comments.

In this case, authors like Montaña, González & Ariza (2013, page 838) warn of the need to "establish more effective mechanisms" to establish a regulation of those contents produced by the communities of readers, to avoid the spread of insults or aggressions, threats, rumors and other undesirable elements. And so it happens with other elements characteristic of digital journalism, such as videos or hypertextual links, which complete the information content and that is why, following Deuze (2001), it is possible to ask who is legitimately responsible for copyright in the cybersphere, because let us not forget that information companies receive income in exchange for content generated in some cases collectively.

And herein is the third main category we enunciated at the beginning of this section: the transformation of audiences, with a global preference marked by creativity and entertainment (Bowman & Willis, 2003), values that hinder the filtering or gatekeeping work that previously fell to the media. They are also audiences that reflect a cultural change by demanding greater transparency about information management processes (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001), and even direct control over the same management, as with some collaborative platforms, which constitute the frame of reference for digital citizenship.

It is precisely this constant quest for the sender that is one of the main metamorphoses of the reception process, although authors such as Mattelart & Tremblay (Garcia Galindo, 2009, p. 10) wonder if the incentive of interaction is due to an interpretation of democracy - as part of a general

process of progress towards governments based on participatory democracy, for example - or as a market solution, as an innovation of media systems, reflecting consumer development and increasingly sophisticated trends.

Other authors, such as Giordano (2004), warn of the problems involved in interactive media, because they are platforms of high technical complexity that must be reached after an assimilation of critical reading. Beyond these approaches that present interesting contrasts, many authors identify interactivity as one of the structural features of digital journalism (Dahlgren, 1996; Bardoel & Deuze, 2001; Larrondo, 2004; Deuze, 2004, Palomo, 2004; Frascaroli, 2005; Salaverría, 2005; Paulussen, 2006; Zamith, 2008; Micó & Masip, 2008; Palacios & Díaz Noci, 2009; Steensen, 2009, 2011; Larrondo & Díaz Noci, 2011; Barredo, Palomo, Mantilla & Gard, 2015). Based on this conceptualization, this proposal seeks to analyze the quality of the interaction in the nationally oriented digital media of Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador, in order to answer the following research question:

To what extent do the main Colombian, Mexican and Ecuadorian media outlets in 2016 favor the participation of the audiences within their information coverage?

This is an article framed in individual projects with which we seek to comprehensively understand the dynamization of the public sphere through the implementation of mechanisms for the participation of audiences. The first one is entitled "Public sphere and citizen participation: an approach to the construction of interaction in the main Colombian digital media (2016)", led by Professor Daniel Barredo and with funding from the University's Large-scale Projects Fund of Rosario (2017 - 2019). The second, on the other hand, is titled "The influence of the audience in journalistic innovation and participation management: risks and opportunities", with reference CSO2015-64955-C4-3-R, under the direction of Professor María Bella Palomo Torres and financed by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness of Spain.

The results obtained in this study will allow us to provide more empirical evidence to understand how interactivity is managed in the main digital media in Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador, an important area not only for cyberjournalism, but also in general terms for the democratic systems on which these three countries are based.

1.1. Colombia, Mexico y Ecuador: notes for a regional digital public sphere

The three countries studied are similar from historical, social and cultural trajectories. To begin with, both Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador, start from the context of global communication, where the media in the 21st century stand as one of the main focuses where public opinion is formed (Oller & Barredo, 2012), a role played in other times by gatherings in cafes or at the walls of the cities. In this sense, the widespread use of ICTs - in these three countries and, in general, in most of the world - has motivated the emergence of social media, which are those in which, according to Bowman & Willis (2003), the contents originate totally or partially from the users. In this epistemological framework, there are reference sources (Wikipedia), media (Indymedia), sources of funding (crowdfunding), free programs (free software), and countless platforms, goods and services. From the journalistic point of view, new professional roles have emerged in the three communication

contexts according to technological innovations, as Bruns (2008) explains, as well as the presence of novel genres and discursive hybridizations (Barredo & Oller, 2013a; 2013b).

However, these characteristics, coming from a globalization of information access and management routines, do not extend homogeneously (Howard & Hussain, 2011); rather, there are still causes related to infrastructure or digital literacy, among others, which create a digital divide between the countries of the same region, such as those that occupy us, and also within those countries, between their provinces and even in the neighborhoods of their cities.

According to the World Bank (n/d), Mexico (57.4%), Colombia (55.9%) and Ecuador (48.94%) had similar Internet access rates per 100 people in 2015, which show that almost half of the population in these countries do not. Even in the year 2015, in Mexico, there were 46.3 million people who did not use the Internet (INEGI, 2016, p.2), to statistic explained by causes such as age, educational level or economic stratum. In addition, in the same year, the Internet was not used for commercial activities: 87.2%, i.e., about nine out of ten users in the network acknowledged that they had not carried out any type of electronic transaction (p.5).

Likewise, in Ecuador, in 2015, only 50.5% of the population had used the Internet in the previous year (INEC, sf, p.14), and although, according to these official figures, 50.1% of the people had a computer in that same year, only 32.8% of Ecuadorian households had access to the Internet, while only 13.7% of households in rural areas were connected to the network, versus 41% of households in urban areas. The gap between rural and urban environments was invariably repeated in the other two countries. As can be seen in Figure 2, the fixed Internet connection rate in Colombia was mainly concentrated in only a dozen departments, while there were other provinces where penetration ranged from 0.1% to 3%. As can be seen from these figures, the broad digital divide marked the rise of two predominant groups: groups with low levels or means of digital literacy, and with no knowledge or great difficulties in establishing an online contact -still a majority in these three countries- and those other groups of experts, minority but with a great social influence, who knew the tools and optimized the strategies of digital participation (Barredo, Palomo, Mantilla & Gard, 2015).

In short, the digital divide was linked to inequality arising from the economic problems of these contexts (Torres and Infante, 2011, p.87), but also to educational and cultural causes that favored the disconnection of a good part of their populations. With regard to the specific case of digital journalism, the three countries studied have similar origins. In the case of Mexico, the first digital newspaper was *La Jornada*, which in 1995 and through a UNAM server, published its first digital version (Espinoza, 2015). In Colombia, however, the pioneering information portal was *eltiempo.com*, implemented on January 22, 1996 (Acebedo, 2015, p. 48), while in Ecuador, it was the digital version of the late *Hoy* newspaper in 1995, which inaugurated the country's digital journalism (Rivera-Rogel, 2011b).

However, the main difference that identifies the three media systems studied starts from the regulation of communication: although the cases of Colombia or Mexico can be described from the self-regulation and the predominance of market imperatives. In Ecuador, the approval in 2013 of the Organic Law of Communications was an attempt by the state to resume symbolic management (Ramos, 2013). With the creation of institutions, managed by public officials, such as the

Information and Communication Superintendence and the Council for Regulation and Development of Information and Communication in the past decade, the number of threats to the physical integrity of journalists has declined. But the national government has become the main focus of pressure for informants, together with economic power groups (Checa & Barredo, 2016). Together with the physical threats in Colombia or Mexico - two of the most dangerous countries in the world for informers - in the first of these contexts the biggest problem is the lack of "diversity and pluralism" of the media system (Zuluaga & Martínez, 2012, p.91).

For example, in the case of television - the most followed and most influential medium in the country with 85.3% national penetration (Zuluaga & Martínez, 2012) - according to the figures presented by Narváez (2013, pp. 54 - 60), two of the channels of this Andean republic - RCN and Caracol -, in 2010 held most of the interest of the audiences, with more than fifty points above the following medium, City TV. In addition, both channels were distributed around 92.5% of the country's television revenues.

1.2. Interactivity in Colombia, Mexico y Ecuador

Studies on interactivity in these three countries often encounter the problem of the existence of few empirical results, as Lerma (2009) emphasizes on Mexico; Montaña, González & Ariza (2013) on Colombia; or on Ecuador, where the lack of studies on this phenomenon is compounded by the scarce development of cyber-journalism underlined by Rivera-Rogel (2011a). In the Mexican context, we have noted above all an abundance of studies related to the analysis of the interactivity of *eluniversal.com.mx*, as for example can be compared in the works of Lerma (2009; 2011); Tejedor (2010); Díaz & Marrero (2011); Said & Arcila (2011); Said & Valencia (2012); Bachmann & Harlow (2012); Navarro (2013) and Castillo (2014a; 2014b). Although researchers such as Said & Arcila (2011) asserted that this portal, because of its quality and invitation to citizen participation, was in the Latin American avant-garde, for Navarro (2013), in contrast, this cyber medium denoted a low interaction with its users in highly representative elements such as comments on content. On the other hand, Castillo (2014), in evaluating three digital media (*eluniversal.com.mx*, *diario.mx* and *sinembargo.mx*) found that the first one was the most interactive, having a specific section, called Citizen Reporter, which helped stimulate citizen input. The main problem lay in the tight control exercised by the header on the front page, because, according to the work cited, the subjects originated by the users were never included in that symbolically important section (p.10).

In Colombia, the so-called post-conflict - the overcoming of the armed conflict with the FARC that plagued the country for decades, described by Gutiérrez Coba, Prada, Valderrama et al. (2010) - requires a redefinition of aspects vital to public space, such as the integration of audiences in the media. Perhaps that is why the users of that country tend to attach great importance to the possibility of participating with online headers:

... The reader gives much value to the practical use of information, likes to consult the medium according to his interests and preferences, and hopes to be able to communicate with the author of the journalistic note or make comments to feed back what he likes or dislikes about the information that he has received.

(Gutiérrez - Coba, Salgado & Gómez, 2012, p. 172)

However, the low interaction of Colombia's information portals has been remarked by works such as Llano (2005); Sánchez (2008); Zúñiga & Duque (2009); or Londoño, Vélez & Cardona (2015). This is despite the fact that according to Bachmann & Harlow's (2012) study, which included the examination of 19 important headers in the region, *El Tiempo's* online edition recorded the highest score and therefore quality. In a country where the public space until recent times was gripped by armed conflict, interaction platforms such as social networks have had a strong social impact, as explained by Zuluaga & Martínez (2012) in analyzing three paradigmatic cases of the country [1]

But these places of exchange are still infected by conventional participation routines, as shown by Acebedo (2015) in his doctoral thesis. This author, who inquired about the interaction of Colombian users in the 2011 elections in four digital media (*eltiempo.com*, *elespectador.com*, *semana.com* and *lasillavacia.com*), highlighted the progressive polarization of public opinion, perceived from the discussion of the comments of the users, where, rather than a discussion that led to the reach of shared opinions from argumentative rationality, what arose was the "symbolic dispute over political hegemony" (Acebedo, 2015, p.198). In Ecuador, due to a shortage of studies on interactivity, the lack of digital journalism that we discussed at the beginning of this section is linked to and highlighted by Banegas & Rivera-Rogel (2012). In one of the countries with the highest proportion of migrants, interactivity has been very important as a way of establishing contact between workers abroad, with their relatives or friends (Páez, 2009). According to this author, the Ecuadorian information headlines enabled technological options to favor the contact of the migrants with their environment of origin. For Aguirre, Odriozola & Bernal (2015), in Ecuadorian cyberjournalism, the option to disseminate content through networks, especially through Facebook, prevails above all. These results coincide with those of the study by Barredo, Palomo, Mantilla & Gard (2015), who observed that about nine out of ten Ecuadorian journalists surveyed used social networks to promote their content, while only about four out of ten used them to interact with the audience. The relative lack of interaction was mediated by the routines of participation in the conventional sphere, but also by the pressures established by the normative framework:

In the Ecuadorian case, we have observed a low interaction of journalists with their audiences, determined primarily by sociocultural factors: the low participation in the conventional public space ... inevitably infects the routines of participation in the digital public space. Second, the presence of regulatory restrictions - such as those introduced by the Organic Law on Communication - stimulates the emergence of an imaginary where informers tend to adopt strategies of passivity in the face of potential social demands.

(Barredo, Palomo, Mantilla & Gard, 2015, p. 72)

This lack of participation is also due to the "weak political culture of the population" highlighted by Luna (2014, p. 4), which is a reflection of the decades of corruption and distrust of the collective and, of course, is not particular to the Ecuadorian context, but also - to a greater or lesser extent - present in the other two countries studied. According to the elements above, we have set ourselves the main objective of this work:

To evaluate the management of interaction in the nationally oriented digital media of Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador in 2016.

This objective that will help us to evaluate the quality of this interaction, as well as to compare the similarities and differences of these three countries according to their journalistic cultures.

2. Methodology

This study has an exploratory scope, because we try to approach an object of study in which a lack of empirical evidence has been verified (Lerma, 2009; Rivera-Rogel, 2011a; Montaña, González & Ariza, 2013). To make the objective feasible and thus to answer the research question, we have used the quality evaluation model of interactivity proposed by Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012). It is an instrument that contains 36 indicators, grouped according to eight factors. This model has been applied through a content analysis, a quantitative technique that basically allows the dismantling of the properties of a given phenomenon in a systematic way, objectively and easily replicable by other researchers (Bardin, 2002).

Since our unit of analysis is composed of the structural characteristics related to the interactivity of the media, it has not been necessary to use some type of sampling. As a whole, we have produced censuses of nationally oriented digital media, considered prestigious (Moreno de Alba, 1996), a reference in their countries (Muñiz, 2015) and with a high impact on the local press (García Rubio, 2013). These are, therefore, headers that tend to have a higher quality in the journalistic cultures addressed, thanks to historical trajectories, the maintenance of higher incomes and, therefore, more diversified and professionalized employees.

For this part, we use as reference documents the media classified by the Presidency of Colombia (n/d); The list attached to Resolution No. CORDICOM - PLE - 2015 - 039, issued by the Council for Regulation and Development of Information and Communication, in Ecuador; and the Alexa.com database, in which we selected national digital media for the case of Mexico.

Fig. 1. Media which make up part of the selected sample

Colombia	Mexico	Ecuador
<i>El Espectador; El Nuevo Siglo; El Tiempo; La República; Revista Semana; Portafolio; La Silla Vacía; Kien & Ke; Confidencial Colombia; Revista Dinero; Caracol</i>	<i>El Universal; El Sol de Mexico; Revista Milenio; Televisa; Foro TV; Radio Fórmula; MVS Radio; Cultura Colectiva; Sin Embargo.mx; máspormás; El Financiero; La Crónica; Gatopardo; Canal 11; Canal 22; Grupo Imagen Informativa; Núcleo Radio Mil; SDP Noticias; Uno TV; De 10; Milenio; Reforma; Revista Nexos; TV Azteca; Efecto TV; Grupo Acir Radio; Grupo ABC Radio;</i>	<i>El Comercio; Extra; El Universo; El Telégrafo; Diario La Hora; Ecuador Inmediato; Ecuador Transparente; Vistazo; Ecuavisa; Teleamazonas; Telerama; Oromar; GamaTV; TCtelevisión; Mediospublicos.ec; CRE Satelital; Radio Sucre; La Radio de la Asamblea Nacional; Sonorama; JC Radio; 4Pelagatos</i>

Radio; RCN Radio; La W Radio; La FM; Blu Radio; Radio Santa Fé; Canal RCN; Caracol TV; CM& Noticias; Noticias UNO	mediotiempo.com; lopezdoriga.com; Excélsior; El Norte; Proceso; Siempre; Actitud Fem; Animal Político; La Silla Rota; El Deforma; El Economista; Grupo Radio Centro; La Jornada; Letras Libres; Proyecto 40; Publimetro; W Radio; Arístegui Noticias; Radio 13	
Source: Own		

The study, before its completion, included the following previous stages, which were articulated within the content validity phase between October and November 2016:

Stage 1: Researchers generated a data collection tool by studying the Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012) model. At this stage, in addition, aspects related to legibility, depth of responses and their relevance to the proposed Latin American contexts were taken into account.

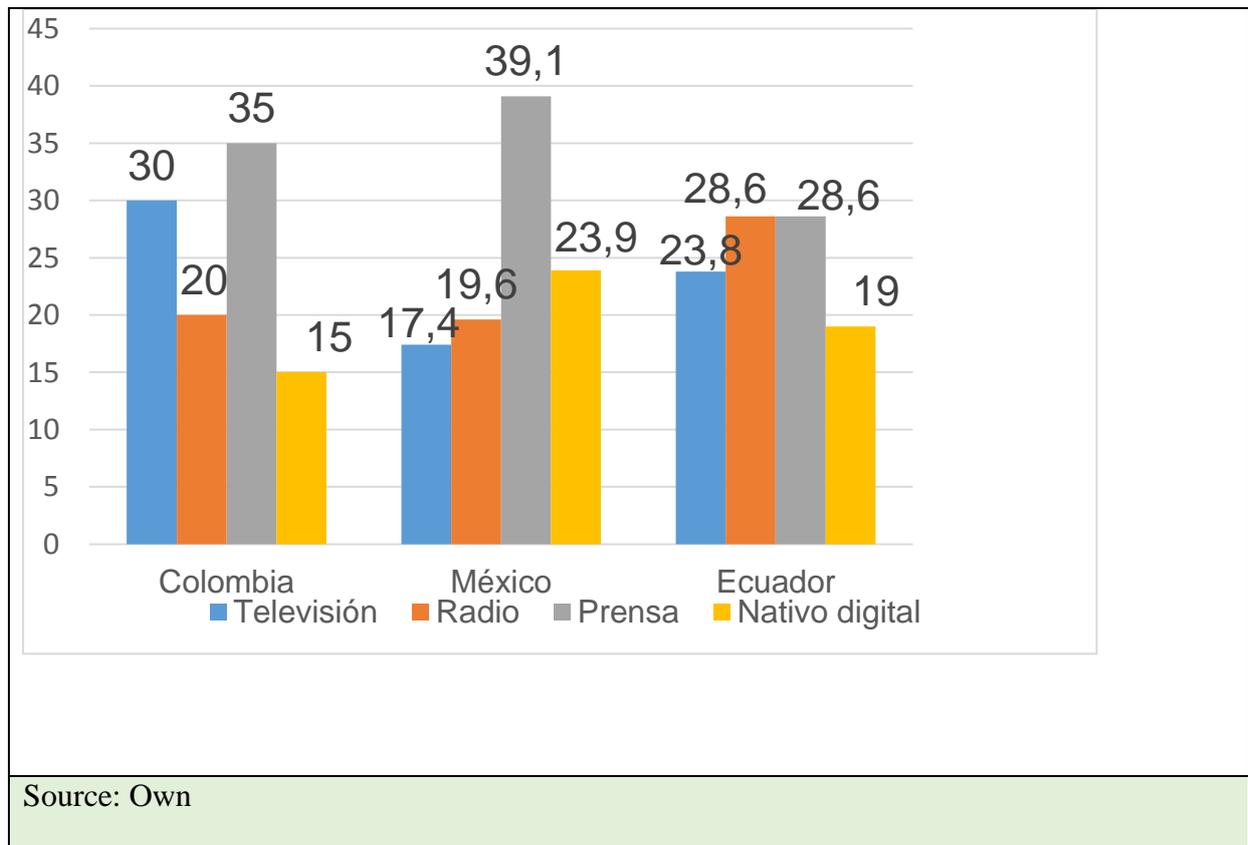
Stage 2: The quality of the instrument was tested from the Colombian context. For this purpose, a double codification was used. On the one hand, it counted on the advice of Professor Carolina Campalans (Chile). On the other, and after a specific training, it counted on the students of the course of Public Opinion and Social Media of the Journalism and Public Opinion program of the Universidad del Rosario (Colombia), who were in charge of quantifying the parameters of the interactivity of 20 nationally oriented Colombian digital media. In addition, and in order to receive suggestions from the academic community present, preliminary results were shown at the XXIII UNESCO Chair in Communication, an event held in November 2016 at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia).

Stage 3: After implementing the improvements of both previous stages, the information was collected: Dr. Daniel Barredo Ibáñez was in charge of addressing the Ecuadorian context and of coordinating the codification of the data of the Colombian context, Dr. Elba Díaz Cerveró organized the codification of data from the Mexican context [2].

2.1. Media analyzed

Overall, 87 media outlets were analyzed, 20 from Colombia, 46 from Mexico and 21 from Ecuador. The typology of headers, as will be seen next in figure 1, oscillates in each one of the contexts, although a great structural similarity can be observed:

Fig. 2. Types of media analyzed (in %) from Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador



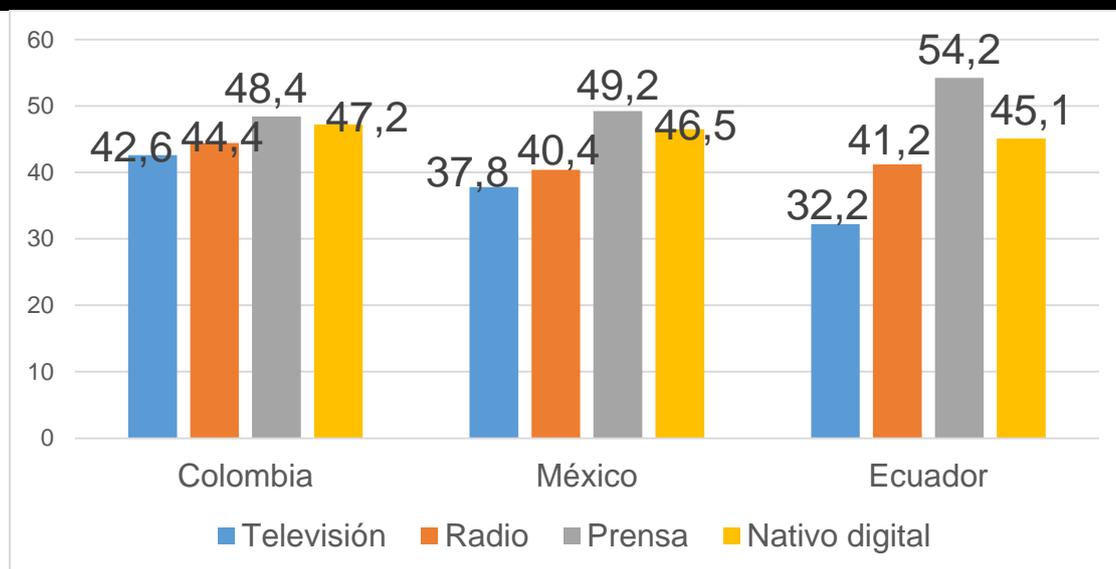
When we performed the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) on the data obtained in the three sample sets, we found that the highest coefficients appeared between the digital media of Ecuador ($\alpha = 0.72$) and those of Mexico ($\alpha = 0.71$), while those in Colombia recorded the lowest ($\alpha = 0.65$). However, we find these values acceptable because, as Huh, Delorme & Reid (2006) explain, reliability in exploratory research must be equal to or greater than 0.6.

3. Results

3.1 The global quality in the management of interactivity in the main digital media in Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador.

Overall, the 87 digital media studied barely incorporated one of two interactivity options. Thus, the most important digital media in Colombia only met 46% ($n = 329$) of the Quality Indicators proposed by Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012), versus 44.9% ($n = 743$) of the main information portals from Mexico and 43.5% ($n = 329$) from Ecuador's digital media. In the three countries, as will be seen below, the online headers linked to print media reached the greatest number of global interactivity options.

Fig. 3. Global options of interactivity (in %) in analyzed digital media from Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador (2016)

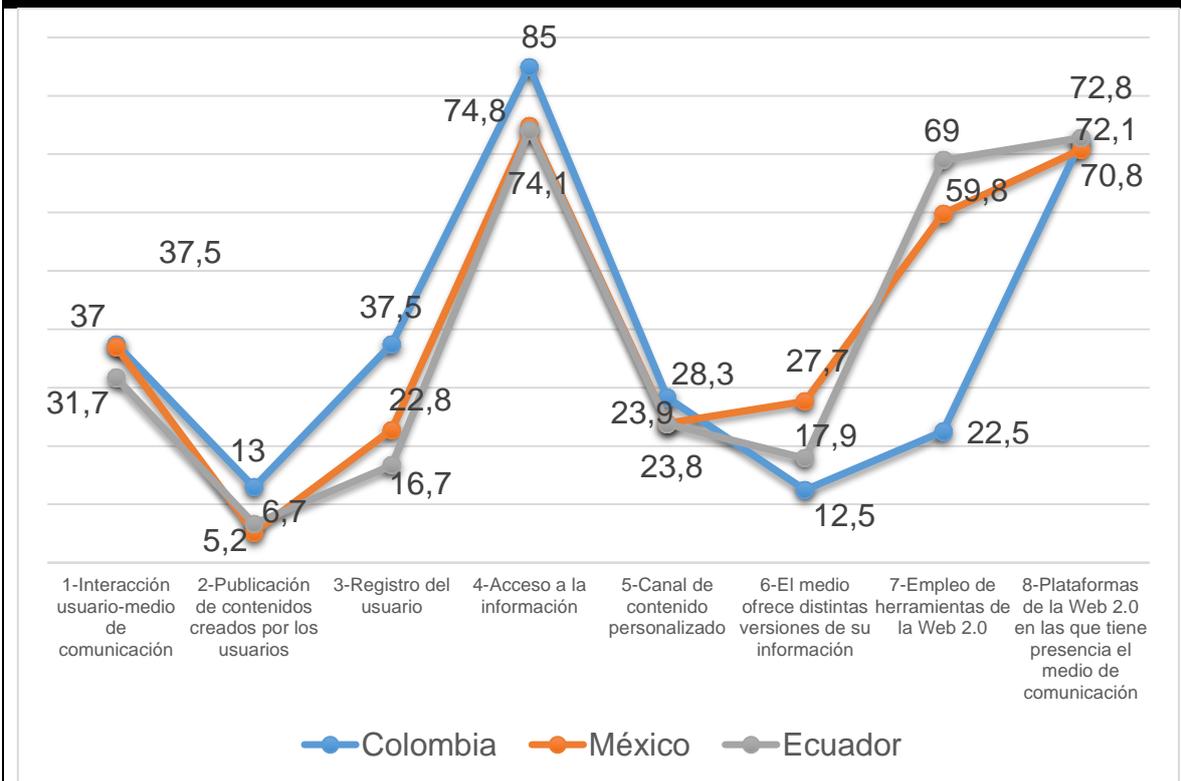


Source: Own

Secondly, in the three countries the most frequently interactive media were digital natives. Thirdly, the online portals associated with the radio media were located, and finally, the less interactive ones in Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador were the television ones. The digital media studied, and although they were the most important headers of their respective contexts, tended to incorporate in particular options of interactivity related to two important actions: the navigability through the contents of the portals and, simultaneously, the presence of the medium in social networks.

As can be seen in the previous comparison, there were internal divergences regarding the averages recorded by each of the parameters of the media systems. But, curiously, the three contexts coincided in extreme values: thus, the main digital media in Colombia fulfilled 85% of the indicators related to access to information, 74.8% of Mexicans and 74.1 % of Ecuadorians. Secondly, the most frequent quality indicators were related to the web 2.0 platforms in which headers were present: Ecuador's most important online media accounted for 72.8% of the Indicators, 72.1% of Colombians and 70.8% of Mexicans. Conversely, less frequent quality parameters were related to the publication of user-created content: Colombia's most representative digital media barely met 13% of the Quality Indicators in this section, against 6.7% in Ecuadorians and 5.2% in Mexicans.

Fig. 4. Factors of Interactivity Quality (in %) in Colombian, Mexican, and Ecuadorian media(2016)



Source: Own/ Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012)

Likewise, the other set of less frequent quality indicators was the one that promotes the possibility of consulting different versions of the information published in each header. That is to say, those indicators that favor, on the one hand, interaction with other international media, in facilitating the comparison of the treatment given by others to the topics on the medium’s agenda, and, on the other, the options that particularly help international audiences to receive the printed version of the medium and constantly updated and adapted to web 2.0. In this case, digital media in Mexico met 27.7% of the Quality Indicators, 17.9% of Ecuadorians and 12.5% of Colombians. As can be deduced, then, from the figures outlined, we could see a replica of the offline routines within the online management.

3.2 More and less frequent indicators in the management of interactivity in the main digital media in Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador

First, the most frequent interaction options in Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador allude, as we pointed out in the previous pages, to the accessibility of the contents; and, second, to the presence of the media in social networks that are eminently textual, such as *Facebook* or *Twitter*:

Fig. 5. Most frequent indicators of Quality Interactivity in Colombian, Mexican and Ecuadorian digital media (2016)

Colombia		Mexico		Ecuador	
<i>Indicator</i>	%	<i>Indicator</i>	%	<i>Indicator</i>	%
Presence of the medium in friends' social networks	100	Presence of the medium in friends' social networks	97,8	Presence of the medium in friends' social networks	100
Link between the medium's website and social platforms	100	Link between the medium's website and social platforms	97,8	Link between the medium's website and social platforms	100
Access to information through external Web 2.0 platforms	100	Access to information through external Web 2.0 platforms	93,5	Access to information through external Web 2.0 platforms	100
Presence of the medium on microblogging platforms	100	Presence of the medium on microblogging platforms	93,5	Presence of the medium on microblogging platforms	100
Access to the information through sections	100	Access to the information through sections	98	Access to the information through sections	95,2
Access to the information through the front page	100	Access to the information through the front page	96	Share information with other users	95,2

Source: Own/ Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012)

Coincidentally, and as we show below, in the three media systems there was a tendency to block the participation of users in the writing of content, through the disincentive of the dissemination of blogs, photos or videos:

Fig. 6. Less frequent indicators of quality in interactions in Colombian, Mexican, and Ecuadorian digital media (2016)

Colombia		Mexico		Ecuador	
<i>Indicator</i>	%	<i>Indicator</i>	%	<i>Indicator</i>	%
Adaptation of the web site interface of the media according to the contents of interest to the user	0	Adaptation of the web site interface of the media according to the contents of interest to the user	4,3	Adaptation of the web site interface of the media according to the contents of interest to the user	0
Global version	0	Global version	6,5	Global version	0
Blog creation by users	0	Blog creation by users	4,3	Blog creation by users	4,8
Contact with other registered users	0	Contact with other registered users	6,5	Contact with other registered users	4,8
Publication of user created videos	10	Publication of user created videos	4,3	Publication of user created videos	0
Publication of user photos	10	Publication of user photos	6,5	Publication of user photos	4,8
Printed version adapted to Web 2.0	0	Exclusive section for user created content	2,2	Printed version adapted to Web 2.0	0
Use of own social media	5	User can modify or correct published content	6,5	Use of own social media	0
Print version of the medium	5	Publication of user generated texts	8,7	Communication with text author	0
Communication with text author	10	X	X	X	X

Source: Own/ Rodríguez, Codina & Pedraza (2012)

However, the relative scarcity of options in the headers of the three countries related to the promotion of interaction among registered users on their portals was also of interest. Other less frequent indicators were identified with the blocking of the interaction with the support, that is, with the lack of adaptation of the interface or the version by the users.

4. Conclusions

The digital media studied, according to the results shown in the previous pages, showed a quasi-interactive behavior, in which the residual strategies of offline journalism prevailed, something that coincides with the evidence provided by studies such as that of Bachmann & Harlow (2012). If we consider interactivity primarily related to information design and accessibility, the media seemed to be aware that both factors, empirically demonstrated by Oh & Sundar (2015), strongly influence the "psychological responses" of users (Page 232). That is, they conveniently used interaction as a key process within the management of persuasion.

On the contrary, if we consider interactivity as a demand for social participation, the fact is that most of the almost ninety headers studied restricted to a great extent the creativity and the involvement of their users, starting from the professional routines associated with conventional supports. This was also due to the relative absence of requests for participation from the audiences, since, as Jenkins (2008, p.15) says, " some consumers have greater abilities to participate in this emerging culture than others".

In the digital journalistic cultures of these countries, strongly identified by the digital divide, interaction is possibly being progressively assumed, as aspects such as digital literacy are expanded, connection devices such as smartphones are generalized, and infrastructures improve. However, studies such as Milosevic & Zezelj (2017) have observed that the participation of reference sectors of the digital arena, such as young people, is still mainly capitalized through conventional scenarios.

The biggest problem perceived in our work, however, was the poor management of user communities around the headers, something that coincides with the results of Punin, Martínez & Rencoret (2014) on Ecuadorian digital media; While about the Colombians, Zúñiga & Duque (2009, p. 338) asserted that the interaction strategies were mainly related to "marketing". From this conclusion emerges, precisely, another line of research to be explored in the project that shelters this work: the financing of the medium, still linked to conventional mechanisms, could be the major determinant for both online innovation, and above all, management of user communities.

Not surprisingly, we have emphasized a higher quality of interaction in digital media associated with offline press headers, to the detriment of digital natives, as argued by Varas & González (2016) in their analysis of Chilean online media or by Aguirre, Odriozola & Bernal (2015), on Ecuadorian digital media. This also explains that digital audio-visual headers have fewer options enabled to interact with their audiences, since their business areas still concentrate on conventional counterparts.

Through the Internet, new opportunities to generate income appear, mainly from advertising segmentation (Barredo, 2013), although the advertising investment has also been distributed and sales and subscriptions have been reduced.

In conclusion, although digital is conceived as the future of the media, journalistic organizations are still immersed in the redefinition of the business model established during the twentieth century, as Marcos Recio, García & Parra (2014) explain. In this process of reconversion, interaction could exert a decisive influence for the opening of new scenarios for the organizations, favoring the integration of some population groups to a certain extent excluded from communication routines, such as people

with some kind of disability; by stimulating the uptake of resources from declining sectors in traditional advertising, such as cultural industries; by expanding the volume of media users, by not conforming to a localist approach; and, ultimately, by generating new business opportunities, with the opening of other areas not exclusively linked to the dissemination of information. There are many lines of research that, as can be observed, are of interest for the study of interaction, a differentiating factor in a highly competitive market of global proportions.

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5. Notes

[01] In the work cited, the authors exposed three cases that originated in the networks and which, however, had a high public impact in Colombia: the mobilizations against the FARC, in 2008, through a group created on Facebook by the engineer Óscar Morales; The case of Chiqui Locomoción, that is to say, of a murderer of a young woman of Bogota who was captured thanks to the evidence that he left in the social networks; and that of La Ola Verde, a political party created by the ex-mayors Antanas Mockus, Enrique Peñalosa and Luis Eduardo Garzón, and that achieved a huge digital impact that resulted in an activation of the mobilizations outside the networks.

[02]The following people collaborated in the application of the instrument: Ruth del Rosario Gómez, Sebastián Pérez, Fabiola Elizabeth Nava, Niza Fernanda Quintero and Leticia Giselle Estrada, students on the course in Contemporary Journalistic Industry at Universidad Panamericana, Campus Guadalajara (México). Our thanks to all of them.

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