

Introduction:

Are people ready to pay for the news?

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The question posed by Javier Díaz-Noci and Laura Pérez-Altable in the first chapter of this book is not only entirely pertinent as a nowadays question, but it is crucial for the future of the media industry to find an answer to it. After several attempts —most of them failed— to find a sustainable business model for this digital age, the media industry has been betting in recent years on convincing readers to pay for their news consumption.

Díaz-Noci and Pérez-Altable describe two movements that have gained strength in recent years in the media industry: the implementation of different kind of paywalls —the most applied— and the membership models, like the one used by *The Guardian*. Subscription models are increasingly growing, but with very dissimilar results all over the world. In some countries, like Spain, readers are not yet sufficient prone to pay for news. Like Pérez-Arozamena and Odriozola-Chéné enhance at the third chapter, younger generations tend to move away from traditional media, preferring to focus on alternative media and other new media actors, such as activists and celebrities. And accessing these new digital players is usually free.

In the second chapter, Ana Serrano-Tellería, Arnau Gifreu-Castells and Laura Pérez-Altable highlight the recent data from the *Digital News Report 2022*, which point to a further fall in confidence in journalism, after having risen in the previous year, largely because of the pandemic and the felt need to seek credible news. This trend is accompanied by another one: the progressive (and irreversible?) migration of readers from websites and news applications to social networks, especially those preferred by young people, such as Instagram, Telegram and TikTok.

For the authors, those trends are reversable, but to regain trust and to reactivate the relationship with the audience, the legacy media outlets need to return to the value of a good story (empathy, emotion, and solutions), using the most appropriate genre, language, and format.

At the current transition to hybrid, networked systems, Serrano-Tellería, Gifreu-Castells and Pérez-Altale suggest a set of transmedia ideals, values, and logics, to add to the ethical and deontological code of the fundamental values of journalism: (a) authenticity, credibility and transparency; (b) creativity, innovation and originality; (c) plausibility, quality and trust; (d) the importance of belonging to a community or society and feeling like part of the solution (journalism); (e) cultivating collaboration among professionals, projects, and users; moving from hyperlocal and local issues, scopes, and perspectives to those that are global; (f) enhanced user experience; (g) 360° augmented-virtual-mixed reality, internet of things, artificial intelligence, and big data; (h) interface design and information architecture-SEO; (i) media integration or combination (critical selection) and media literacy.

Finally, Rosa Pérez-Arozamena and Javier Odriozola-Chéné contribute to this analysis by referring the “side doors” (social networks, direct searching, and content aggregators) that are being used as the preferred way of consuming news, especially for those under 35 years old.

In this new hybrid media system, “outsiders in journalism” or “peripheral actors” emerge, in the form of bloggers, activists, programmers, hackers, web analytics managers or designers. Can those new actors be a threat to the (traditional) professional journalists/journalism? Can we be able to distinguish them? And —more important— can the audience be able to distinguish them?

As the authors point out, “whatever happens in the hybrid context, we should not forget this core idea: journalism serves people and not the other way around”.