

# JOURNALISM AND CONVERGENCE

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The new word of command in business, professional and academic circles, **convergence** has been utilized to refer to a diversity of processes: concentration of the communication groups, initiatives for integration of newsrooms and distribution of content in multiple platforms, development of new language formats, reconfiguration of the relations between producers and audiences, etc. As the researcher Canavilhas explains in the opening article of this dossier, “We can ascertain an attempt to integrate the several facets of convergence, seeking an overall definition capable of covering all the fields of convergence”. In fact, beyond a mere technical description of the phenomenon, the concept of convergence has benefited from different approaches – economic, sociological, technological, normative – which explain the diversity of objects and scenarios described as convergent.

The interdisciplinary relation with many meanings that is established with regard to convergence can lead to a draining of the concept. It is sometimes confounded with a group of variables that explain the processes of transformation or reconfiguration of the entire media system. This explains the caution of the authors who participate in the dossier *Digital Media, convergence and journalistic practice: challenges and prospects*, in this edition of *Brazilian Journalism Research*. Some researchers prefer to utilize more precise terminologies to describe phenomena that emerge in this scenario. This is shown by the articles by Alzamora and Tarcia and also by Pase, Nunes and Fontoura on considering “transmedia narrative” to be a subject of research which is located in the ambit of convergent journalism. Canavilhas prefers to apply the concept of “remediation” to describe the transposition and adaptation of aspects of digital language by the traditional media, which would differ from convergence of content, defined as the utilization of “a particular language with unique and differentiated

characteristics with relation to the rest of the media”.

More than a play on language, this lack of precision with respect to the definition of convergence permits us to understand how the multiple versions of the concept can be utilized for producing what Pierre Bourdieu (1993; 1997) calls “effects of reality”. Convergence is also a discourse that provides the basis for concrete processes of reconfiguration of journalistic practice, in the relations which the media organization, the professionals and the audiences establish between each other and with the technological devices. In this case, the term “convergent” can be utilized to conceal processes of business concentration and of increasing instability in the profession. Or it can refer to the eternal search for narrative formats that bring about a more plural relationship between content and public – as Pase, Nunes and Fontoura describe in their analysis of the transmedia documentary *Inside Disaster*.

Seen from this socio-discursive viewpoint, the very definition of convergence seems to evolve in time and space. In a study based on the reading of the management reports of the Canadian group Québecor, Ancieux (2011) shows the various alterations in the use of the word convergence, frequently reutilized for the purpose of adapting to changes in the organization’s entrepreneurial strategies in the last two decades. The article by López Garcia, Límia Fernández, Toural Bran and Pereira Fariña on the media system of Galicia, Spain, shows to what extent the convergence process is also adapted based on the local context: “We perceive clearly that the convergent phenomenon is an entire reality which affects the media all over the world, However, it is a process which also necessarily conforms to specific local situations”.

Most of the time the term convergence is utilized to explain a set of innovations in journalistic practice. In this sense, it is important to understand in what way the discourse of convergence can be utilized to cover up what Ruellan (2006) calls structural realities in journalism which persist, despite the scenario of transformations. This relation between change and preservation in convergent journalism is present in the articles by Canavilhas and by López Garcia et al., and also in the text by Palacios, who applies the concept of Marginal Notes, originally the notations made by readers in the margins of a text, in order to consider the public’s comments on the Internet and their possible implications in the construction of memory by journalism.

### **Organization of the dossier**

Articles which discuss the concepts and scenarios of convergent

journalism open the dossier *Digital Media, convergence and journalistic practice: challenges and prospects*. The texts, “From remediation to convergence: looking at the Portuguese media” by João Canavilhas, and “Convergence and Transmedia: semantic galaxies and emerging narratives in Journalism” by Geane Alzamora and Lorena Tarcia, go beyond a mere operational definition of convergence and seek to dialog with more specific processes, “remediation” and “transmedia”, which permits the enrichment of the comprehension of the convergent scenario itself. Two articles deal with convergence in the Spanish context. “The State of Blogging in Spanish Mainstream Media”, written by Koldo Meso Ayerdi and Maria Bella Palomo Torres, shows that while the major media in Spain still underestimate digital journalism, journalist-bloggers already show they are prepared to enter the participatory production model. Xosé López Garcia, Moisés Limia Fernández, Carlos Toural Bran and José Pereira Fariña in “Convergence as a renovation/conservation tool for Journalism in Galícia: strategies and uncertainties” explain in what sense the relation between worldwide and local can give rise to a diversity of interpretations regarding the convergence process in Galícia.

Three articles develop empirical analyses of convergence based on precise subjects. In “One subject, many paths: transmedia communication in journalism”, André Fagundes Pase, Ana Cecília Bisso Nunes and Marcelo Crispim da Fontoura consider the transmedia narrative to be a cultural process that involves plural relations between content and audiences. On analyzing the documentary *Inside Disaster*, the authors show how a new narrative format offers the possibility of amplifying the news experience in journalism. The articles “The journalistic utterance on Twitter” by Mabel Oliveira Teixeira, and “Transformations of the journalism event in social networks: from the mobilizations against homophobia to the crisis of a country music duo”, by Ronaldo Cesar Henn, analyze the implications of the use of the social networks in the construction of the language and of the very idea of journalistic event.

To close this dossier, two articles of a more essayist character and that deal with the relation between producers and audiences were selected. “Liquid Journalism: trends in amplification of the field” by Anelise Rublescki and Alexandre Rocha da Silva describe a more global process of expansion of the field’s borders and analyzes the phenomenon of decentralized mediation in journalism. Marcos Palacios, in “Marginal Notes, Zeitgeist and Memory of the Present Time: Readers’ Comments in Cyberjournalism”, is especially interested in the memory-like character of the readers’ comments and their possible utilization in historiography.

BJR's free topics section offers three analyses of news coverage and resumes the debate regarding journalism's role in the construction of reality. Vicente Willam da Siva Darde and Valdir José Morigi, in "Sexual Diversity in Brazilian Journalism: a study of the representations of LGBT people in the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*", analyze the coverage of the approval of the stable union between people of the same sex by the Brazilian Supreme Court (STF). The authors conclude that the discourse of the press framed the topic from the perspective of hetero-normativity, reinforcing values and norms such as "marriage" and adoption of children. "Depression as a subject of journalism: exploring the Folha Group's files (1970-02009)", by Ericson Saint Clair, analyzes the reports disseminating scientific research works regarding depression, a subject which is little explored in journalism studies. The last article of this edition, "The city in cultural journalism: a perspective of Porto Alegre in the coverage of *Diário do Sul* (1986-1988)", by Cida Golon, Sara Keller and Everton Cardoso, shows how the newspaper constructs and represents the various facets of the city, seen from the viewpoint of culture as a space of novelty and updating.

The editors express their gratitude to the members of the editorial board who contributed in the process of selection of the texts, as well as to the entire editorial production team. We hope that everyone has a fruitful reading.

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