

## **From *Mass* to *Networked Communication*: Communicational Models and the Informational Society**

GUSTAVO CARDOSO  
University of Lisbon — ISCTE

Focusing on the analysis of the more widespread media in our societies — television — this paper addresses what is considered to be the basic characteristic of the current media system, that is, the networking between interpersonal and mass media. During the last 15 years, we have witnessed a vast change in the media landscape. A change, not only due to technological innovation in mediation devices themselves, but also in the ways users have chosen to socially appropriate them, and consequently, how they have built new mediation processes. Change in mediation has been, during the last few years, the focus of the analysis of many scholars in the social sciences. We have gone beyond a communication model based in mass communication and into a communication model based in networked communication. This paper addresses what it is suggested to be the *networking communicational model* of informational societies. A communicational model shaped by three main features: 1) Communicational globalization processes; 2) Networking of mass and interpersonal media and consequently, networked mediation; and 3) Different degrees of interactivity usage. The second part of this paper deals with what is argued to be the *new communicational paradigms* giving rise to a new media system: 1) Rhetoric mainly built around moving image; 2) New dynamics of accessibility of information; 3) Users as innovators; and 4) Innovation in news and entertainment models.

### ***Introduction***

As Roger Silverstone argues (2005), the growing centrality of the media in the exercise of power and in conducting our daily life, places the study of mediation at the top of the agenda of social research, requiring the understanding of how the processes of mediated communication shape both society and

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Gustavo Cardoso: [gustavo.cardoso@iscte.pt](mailto:gustavo.cardoso@iscte.pt)

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culture (Silverstone, 2005), but also how mediation shapes the media system<sup>1</sup>. In other words, Silverstone posits how the media system is organized and how we configure it through mediation.

Change in mediation has been, during the last few years, the focus of the analysis of many scholars in the social sciences, from the legal perspectives subscribed by Lawrence Lessig (2004), to the economic analysis proposed by Yochai Benkler (2006), to the cultural analysis of Umberto Eco (1985) and Fausto Colombo (1993) and to the overall encompassing social theory of the Information Age developed by Manuel Castells (2000). Having chosen to name the work of Manuel Castells last was a deliberate choice, because his work allows us to unveil two important dimensions for the understanding of the current media system: the network organization of society (Castells, 2000) and the process of auto-mass communication (Castells, 2007). Nevertheless, this paper expresses the need to go beyond such contributions and to address a fundamental issue in media theory: communicational models. Given that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have, theoretically, linked both new technologies and new media uses with communication models (Ortoleva, 2004), can we assert the current model to be still framed under the concept of mass communication? Or should we question its current validity as to explain our mediated communication world?

This paper argues that we have gone beyond a communication model based in mass communication and into a communication model based in networked communication. The following pages will frame this argument and argue that more important, than technological change, for the change within the media system, has been the way in which media users, in their private, public or business mediation processes, have moulded their media diets and media matrixes.

The first part of this article addresses what it is suggested to be the *networking communicational model* of informational societies. A communicational model shaped by three main features: 1) Communicational globalization processes; 2) Networking of mass and interpersonal media and consequently, networked mediation; and 3) Different degrees of interactivity usage.

The second part of this article deals with what are argued to be the *new communicational paradigms* giving rise to a new media system: 1) Rhetoric mainly built around moving image; 2) New dynamics of accessibility of information; 3) Users as innovators; and 4) Innovation in news and entertainment models.

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<sup>1</sup> *Media system*, as formulated by Peppino Ortoleva, refers to the set of interconnections between technologies and organizations that guide the diverse forms of communication. It is a category of an essentially institutional and economic origin that helps us to explain, on the one hand, the evolutive dynamics of the media and, on the other, how each society establishes, amongst the diverse media, a division of the function, which is born out of the complex socio-cultural processes but later finds its legitimacy in the institutionalization of companies and legislative frameworks (Ortoleva, 2004).

### Communicational Models and the Informational Society

The initial hypothesis for characterizing the media system in our current society is, contrary to what is often suggested (Ortoleva, 2004), not so much technological convergence, but the networked organization of the system. That organization takes place at various levels, from the technological dimension to the economic organization and the social appropriation.<sup>2</sup>

The argument put forward here is that what can be considered to be truly distinctive in the way the current media system is organized is its network organizational form. But it is also remarkable that, in the network society, the organization and development of the media system depends, to a large extent, on how we socially appropriate the media and not just how media companies and the state organize communication<sup>3</sup>. From a world of mass communication organized by mass mediated content distribution organizations, we are moving into a world of network mediated communication still built by big media conglomerates (Hesmondhalgh, 2007), but also by the way people network different mediated technologies, combining interpersonal mediation devices with mass communication ones.

It is through the way in which we attribute social roles — of information, entertainment, action and organization — to each of the media that we design the networks of interdependence between them. However, although the media have accompanied us since we organized the communication codes in a systematized form (Eco, 1977), it is only in this moment of our history that we find a network-based media system organization. Why is this? It is suggested that it happens now because, in an initial phase, the emergence of the Internet has allowed for the migration of the traditional mass media from analogue to digital technologies, thus building the necessary bridges between the old and the new media. In a second phase, the Internet and, to a certain extent, mobile phones and SMS technology, have enabled the establishment of a growing number of interconnections between all the media (Karlsen & Sundet, 2007;

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<sup>2</sup> Using a suggestion by McLaughlin (Ortoleva, 2004), one can describe convergence as the overcoming of the technological, economic and institutional barriers, made possible by digital technology. These barriers divided the media into four main sectors: the editorial sector dominated by the private press and governed by copyright; the transmissions sector (i.e., the distribution networks) which includes the postal and telecommunications sector and the Internet; the broadcasting sector, based on advertising; and the hardware sector based on the production and distribution of the communication equipment (video cameras, stereo systems, cassettes and peripherals). But convergence as it is addressed here focuses mainly on the idea that technology has allowed several hardware systems previously used separately by the final user to converge into technological units. It has been this idea that has in the last ten years been the "buzzword" or "killer application" within the business community. What this article wishes to question is the validity of such a concept to explain the main driver/feature of change within the communication and mediation processes in our societies. (See also Storsul & Fagerjord, 2007, 2008; Storsul & Syvertsen, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> For analysis of the role of the state in regulating markets or acting as one of the economic players see Iosifidis (2007); Mancini and Hallin (2004).

Jenkins, 2006; Livingstone, 1999; Slevin, 2000), be they digital or analogue. Those bridges have been socially appropriated by citizens and have moulded the way in which media interacts with our life.

The business world has voiced systematically over the years that we have been witnessing a trend toward convergence in diverse dimensions of the media universe (Storsul & Fagerjord, 2007, 2008; Storsul & Syvertsen, 2007). Convergence would have evolved from the pure hardware convergence, into a multilayered technological convergence, built of three different layers: device convergence, network convergence, and service software convergence. However, a check as to the truth of those assertions leaves us many doubts in answering the question as to what extent that convergence has been a real achievement (Storsul & Fagerjord, 2007, 2008; Jenkins, 2006). Although the mergers of media giants, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as AOL and Time Warner (Castells, 2000) have given rise to diverse mimetic processes the world over, in reality, the management essentially continues to be based on the logic of differentiated technological management<sup>4</sup> units (Kung, 2002, 2007; Dubini & Raviola 2007; Fee, Jr. 2007; Achtenhagen, 2007). Also, in the technological hardware dimension, the endeavours to incorporate different, already socially appropriated media technologies (such as television and the computer) into one single piece of equipment have met with different levels of success (WebTV was a failure, but MP3 technology has transformed mobile phones into the Walkman). Mobile phones, together with the iPhone from Apple and similar technological offers, seem to be the only dimension of hardware where we are able to find successful technological convergence. The reasons for such success have both to do with mobility and the relation established with our senses, namely audition. Mobility explains why video viewing and listening to music have been able to be brought together in our daily media consumption habits: We have given such practices new spaces and new times. Consequently, the distinctiveness of the mobile phone in having achieved success in bringing together music, radio and oral mediated conversation in a single hardware technological apparatus, owes more to the fact that the three interact with the same sense: audition, than to technological convergence as a facilitator of aggregation of different media. Although many other functions have been, and are being, added to mobile phones, it is also true that users tend to concentrate their uses on the core communication facilities: audio and textual conversation (Cardoso, 2007; Castells, 2006; Caron & Caronia, 2007; Silverstone & Osimo, 2005).

Hearing MP3 and radio music and viewing movies or music clips on the mobile phone hasn't replaced radio players, MP3 players or other screens, it has just given users of such mobile technology other listening times, and places, by networking already existing uses. The same could be argued regarding the incorporation of cameras, in a corollary of the historical evolution of photographic representation (Colombo & Scifo, 2006), but now allowing networking the camera with the Internet and personal computers in mobile environments.

Convergence might have failed as a business and technological hardware concept but it had a side effect — the building of an innovative environment well fit for experimentation and interplay between media companies, telecom companies and the final users. The media system provided contents, or the need to try new contents; the telecom companies brought in the will to connect more and more different

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Sony Records and their processes against the illegal exchange of music in the Internet and the simultaneous promotion of MP3 by the Sony hardware division.

transmission networks; and the users set new standards by adopting mobility through the use of mobile phones and Wi-Fi networks. The side effect of the failure of "convergence" has been the rise of the networking of different media, contents and networks, and the adoption of a new single standard for communicating: the Internet Transfer Protocol and Internet addressing, the well-known TCP-IP.

The argument put forward here is that the current media system seems to be organized not around the idea of "convergence," made possible by digital technologies, but around networking. Even in cases of wide adoption of use, such as mobile telephones being used to listen to music, MP3s or take photos, capability continues to depend on the establishment of a network connection with a PC, Mac or the use of a Smartphone with Internet connection for downloads or uploads. Such connectivity places them in a network relationship either with their own personal computer, online stores or online social networks.

Another example of this networking might be found at the so-called media servers. Despite there being a convergence of signal in the network over IP protocols (Taplin, 2006), the diffusion in the home is made via wireless technology (Bar, 2006), the destinations being the music player or mobile phone for MP3s, the television for movies or for broadcasting, voice over IP for the telephone and the Internet for the PC. Different technological apparatuses that can, if the user chooses such facilities, talk to each other giving rise to networking of devices, content and uses. What we find both on our streets, offices or homes is not convergence, but rather the networking of media and their uses.

How is this networking structured? The hypothesis argued herein is that the media system is structured more and more around two main networks that communicate between each other using various communication and information technologies. These two networks are based both on the television and the Internet, establishing nodes using various communication and information technologies such as the telephone, the radio, the print press, etc.

Why two main nodes, one built around TV and the other around Internet? The answer is a complex one and it will be the object of in-depth analysis on the following pages. Nevertheless, one can put forward the hypothesis that this has to do with the dimensions of interactivity made technologically possible by each one of the technologies and how we socially value those different interactive dimensions. This is an interpretation that results from analysis of the fruition practices, for which the concept of media matrix is a fundamental one.<sup>5</sup>

According to Aroldi and Colombo (2003), one of the reasons why we self-limit our capacity for understanding the true role of the media in society has to do with our own theoretical analysis choices, which tend to concentrate too much on an individualized idea of the media. In other words, the isolated study of radio, newspapers or the Internet, limits our comprehension of the power and imprint of the media as elements of social change (Fornas, 2007). As social beings, we do not use only one single medium as a source of communication, information, action and entertainment we combine them – we

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<sup>5</sup> A term originally used by Meyrovitz (1985) to underline that fact that we all subjectively tend to create a mental hierarchy for the different types of media and the importance of them in our lives. These hierarchies are strictly individual but also shared socially.

network them. Only an in-depth analysis of the media diets can reveal the complexity of our uses and representations of society *through* and *with* the media. We must go beyond, in order to understand the social change in the media landscape and on the media users' relationship with everyday life, that is, the new mediation processes that give meaning to our reality (Silverstone, 2005).

All of us deal with the media in our daily lives, in written to moving images and from still images to oral communication. We are permanently interpreting and incorporating information in the decisions we make, in a reflexive process (Giddens, 1991). The networking nature of the current media system needs to be addressed and discussed. If the culture of our network society is a real virtuality culture (Castells, 2000) and if mediation (Silverstone, 2005) is a key concept for understanding the characteristics of communication, how can we characterize the dominant communicational model of our societies? First, and foremost, our dominant communicational model is built around the globalization of communication, the networking of mass and interpersonal media and consequently, networked mediation and different degrees of interactivity usage.

### ***Communicational Globalization in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

The society in which we live today is itself the product of the historic confluence of developments that took place in diverse areas of human activity (Castells, 2000). But that moment of confluence is also an arrival point for a process that began early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the centrality of communication in our societies (Silverstone, 2006).

The centrality of communication is a relatively recent phenomenon, for up until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rantanen, 1997), the idea of *communication* as an autonomous and independent entity within the more general concept of transport (just like the idea of media as something distinct from other instruments useful for exchange or travel) was not generally discussed (Ortoleva, 2004; Winston, 1999; Richeri, 1996; Silverstone, 2005). The births of the new means of communication — such as cinema, radio, the comic book, the gramophone, and the telephone line — were not seen, at the time, as unitary phenomena that could be grouped together in one single concept (Silverstone, 2005; Ortoleva, 2004). However, the idea of communication and information not only imposed itself in its specificity and autonomy, but also asserted itself as a central idea of social life, before becoming, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, an objective in terms of economic development (Cardoso, 2006). Today we have an unprecedented variety of communications at our disposal and also an unprecedented choice between apparently equivalent media (Eco, 2001; Silverstone, 2005). These are the two bases for our life at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the developed world (Ortoleva, 2004; McPhail, 2005; Lull, 2007). Another fundamental contribution for the contextualization of this discussion is the fact that, in relation to other periods of the history of humanity, the century just passed is an exceptional moment, for communication has traditionally been one of the most stable resources and the object of prudent and conservative management (as demonstrated by the whole history of writing from ancient China to the Egypt of the pharaohs and the Middle Ages).

What types of social demands and processes have resulted in the formulas and techniques of communication? And why were they privileged with large resources with a view to sustaining the intensity of development that was registered? One possible answer is given by various researchers when they refer to the discontinuity that took place from the 1970s onward (Castells, 2000; Cardoso, 2006). Contemporary societies have witnessed a change in the economic paradigm that gave rise to a model based on information. Indeed, information seems to have replaced energy as the central element in economic life — first in the more developed countries — before expanding to all areas of the planet following market economy rules (Himanen, 2006). But something more is changing. When one speaks of the informational economy (Castells, 2000; Lehman, 2007) at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one understands not only an economy in which the free circulation of information is a pre-condition for the existence of a market, but also an economy in which the sector that produces communication also takes on a driving force role in relation to the industrial sector that, traditionally, dominated the markets: the manufacturing industries. In this analytical context, Giddens (1997) and Silverstone (2005) offer some important starting points. Giddens, when asked if the concept of *Information Society* could be correctly used to characterize the changes going on in our societies, responded: “Not really, no (...) Information Society does not give us much perception of what is happening” (1997). A similar argument is made by Silverstone when asked the same question, he replied

“we should no longer be thinking of something called Information Society (...) but rather a Communicational Society (...), because it is in our communication with each other that ICTs intrude most directly into the core of social existence.” (Silverstone & Osimo, 2005)

Economic and communicational globalizations, and not the information society concept, are, for both Giddens and Silverstone, the most visible trends of a society in change as a result of the increasing fusion of information technologies, communication and computerization.

As our modern society gradually becomes more complex, thanks to specialization and symbolic guarantees (Giddens, 1991) and configures itself as a system, relying on organizations of the systemic type, the need arises for instruments that interconnect, as rapidly as possible, the different points of the system itself (Ortoleva, 2004; Silverstone 2005). These processes may be visible in the development of the transport network systems, which had, as a prerequisite, the development of the telegraph and the timetable systems unified on a national and then global basis or, for example, the adoption of the naval telegraph by the navies only after the introduction of steamships visible from a great distance (Winston, 1999). Or, finally, the development of advertising made necessary and possible through the development of another system, that of large-scale distribution (Ortoleva, 2004).

The spatial and temporal complexity of the social organization is the starting point for the analysis of communication models in the informational societies, because it has given rise to communicative globalization. One of the dimensions of the spatial and temporal complexity that contributed most to this communicative globalization, was the economic dimension and the evolution of markets. As Castells (2000) demonstrates, the need for a restructuring of capitalism provided the impulse for the adoption and diversification of the media, the development of the information technologies and their articulation in networks. However, one must point out that the relationship between market and

communication was a constant throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, taking on different characteristics depending on the moments in which the relationship manifested itself. During a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it assumed different shapes than that of the current configuration in networks, having focused mainly in a hierarchical concentration model. Between the crash of 1929 and the oil crisis of 1973, a development of communication models took place that was characterized by broadcasting and experimentation with radio and television, simultaneously with an impulse toward an expanded and mass consumption economy (Winston, 1999; Colombo, 1993). Our social reality in terms of communication models is thus a product of these historic movements that have taken place throughout the last century.

The ties between the media and society have been diverse in nature throughout history. On the one hand, there are those who point out the deterministic cause/effect relationships, such as the idea that the mass media "create" the mass society. That is, for example, the idea of a group of analysts defined by Umberto Eco (1991) as "apocalyptic," which establishes almost direct connections between the information and entertainment model originated in the media and processes of social massification and cultural homogenization of the 1970s (Ortoleva, 2004; Aroldi & Colombo, 2003). In accordance with the deterministic theories — for example, traditional Marxism — mass communication would be the expression of an authoritarianism produced by the reduced power of control over technical development (Poster, 1999). That same view re-emerges in technocultural discourse (Robbins, 1999) in the context of the information society at the end of the last century, in particular, in the opposition between interactive media and the passive media, or, if we prefer, the new media (such as the Internet) and old media (such as television).

Another approach is taken by those who argue that the media express, both through their structure and in contents, is the very nature of the society in which they are generated. This is the case for analysts such as Poster (1999) and McLuhan (1997). According to Poster, there are three main phases in the *Mode of Information* which coexist with each other as they are not consecutive. These are the symbolic exchanges mediated orally, in writing and electronically. In each of these stages, the relationship between language and society, the idea and the action, the *self* and the *other* is, therefore, different. Just as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the print media played a fundamental role in forming the notion of the independent and rational subject by constituting a sphere of public debate — which, according to Habermas (1996), created the basis for the democracies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century — the new media, and in particular, the Internet, are promoting, through their characteristics, a multiple, decentred and disseminated subject. According to McLuhan (1997), one cannot speak of one single model of society corresponding to all the mass media, but of two distinct models. The first, the model of the press, and later, cinema and, to an extent, radio, which was based on a clear division of roles and a strongly hierarchical order. The second, which emerged with television and was reinforced in the ulterior forms of electronic communication (informatization and automation), was based on a system of horizontal and strongly interactive relations. The central presuppositions of the analyses of Poster (1995) and McLuhan (1997) thus refer to the view of the non-neutrality of the media and to the idea that technologically different media are the fruit of the society in which they emerge and which promotes, through their use, differentiated socio-cultural realities.

A third approach, identified by Ortoleva (2004), argues that a re-equation of the effective reach of the mass communications takes place with its denominated "effects" (Wolf, 2001), and underlines that

the users of the media find correspondence in a network of interpersonal relations that condition and filter the reception of the messages. A complementary approach is taken by Pierre Levy (1997) in proposing for the relationship between technology and society the notion of *influence*, in opposition to *impact*. The action of any form of technology, such as the media, cannot be considered outside of culture and therefore it interacts with a culture, which hosts it and modifies it from its birth (Fornas, 2007).

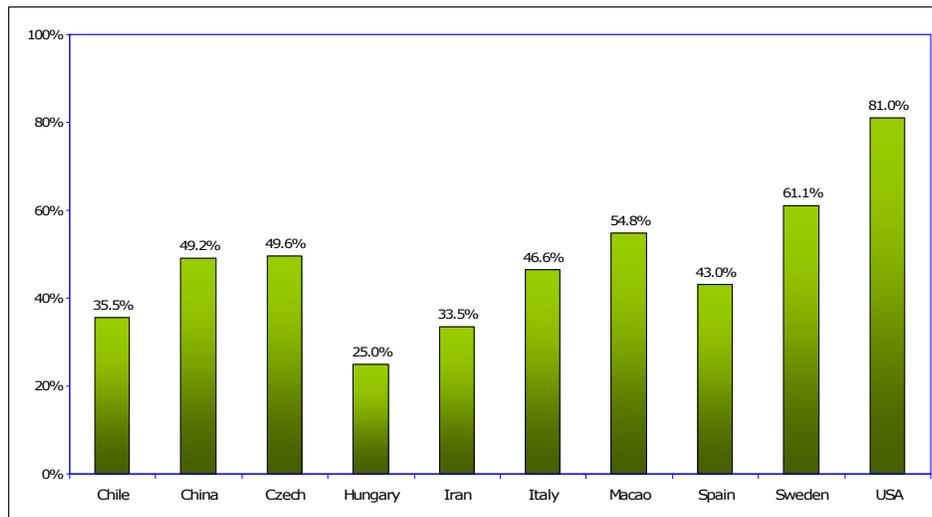
Considering the three dimensions depicted above, the position that prevails in this analysis of the current communicational model of our societies, roots in the analytical approaches to the media stated by Wolf (2001), the relation between technology and the social suggested by Levy (1997), and the role of reflexivity analysed by Giddens (1991). Reflexivity, enabled by the information and communication technologies is a fundamental element in individual decision making and life construction, but it, too, demonstrates that it is not only through technological development and scientific innovation that we can, in some form, control or define what the future will be. The future is opaque and problematic, and we know that what we say also contributes to those scenarios. It follows that the future itself also has a very reflexive and problematic dimension (Giddens, 1999; Kaivo-Oja, 2003). If we wish to typify the relational process between communication, information and society, it can be argued that it is essentially a bi-univocal relationship. Bi-univocal in the sense that, on one hand, communication facilitates different models of social organization (Castells, 2004) but at the same time, there are supervening social needs (Winston, 1999) that also foster new forms of communication. In this sense, taking into account the interplay and interaction between both media and society under a reflexive process of interdependence, one can speak of correspondence between communicational models and social models.

Bearing the preceding definition in mind, how can we define the communication model that characterizes an informational society? Both Giddens (1999) and Castells (2000) point out that much of what we have witnessed over the last three decades is a consequence of the networking of different technologies, i.e., the information technologies, communication technologies and computerization. Their economic and social appropriation results in an interesting relationship between the market and democracy. Although the economic dimension of globalization is fundamental, it must not be seen as an economic phenomenon only, but also as a communicational one (Giddens, 1999; Lull, 2007). When we live in a world in which the news take on an almost instant character (Sparks, 2007; Mazzoleni et al., 2004; Tremayne, 2007; McPhail, 2005; Silverstone, 2006; Shoemaker, 2006; Volkmer, 1999), and in which the diversity of information contexts is the rule (see, for example, the differences in the satellite television coverage of the Iraqi insurrection of April 2004 by CNN and Arab television channels such as Al Jazeera), we have to accept that globalization also means a change in the communication systems. That change transforms the local lives of the people at the same time as it modifies the economic structure of life itself (Lash, 2007; McPhail, 2005).

The media, in general, have a double role to play in the modern world. First, they are instruments of democracy, as illustrated by the role of the television channels in the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe, the Russian putsch against Gorbachev and Yeltsin's rise to power (Giddens, 1999; Castells, 2004) and later, by the generalization of the Internet, the awareness given to the drama of the people of East Timor in 1999 (Cardoso, 2007). On the other hand, media such as television also tend to subvert the spaces they open, pursuing rhetorics of personalization and trivialities in a process of preoccupation with

personalities and the trivial — something that often has a negative effect on the social dialogue (Dahlgren, 2001; Lull, 2007; Sparks, 2007; Bang & Esmark, 2007). As a result of that duality, the present time is the first time in history in which governments and citizens coexist in the same information environment, and this is taking place as a result of technological change in addition to other developments. When governments and citizens live in the same information environment there are many things that the citizens cease to tolerate — they have much less toleration for corruption, negotiations in the wings, secret deals and the use of personal connections. The more the same environment is shared, the less all that seemed normal in politics up to a few years ago is accepted as normal (Giddens, 1999; Castells, 2004; Thompson, 2000)<sup>6</sup>. In the current context, one must look at the media as a whole and think of them in terms of their agency functions and territorial reach, since it is through that double dimension that it is possible to understand how they articulate with each other.

Figure 1. Percent of Internet Users in Selected Countries (The WIP Project 2006)



Source: The World Internet Project (2006)

<sup>6</sup> Although agreeing with Giddens' (1999) diagnosis of commercial television as seeking dichotomies (for example, by resorting to dramatization in providing information and distorting the narrative pattern, seeking to present the *good* and *just* in opposition to the *bad* and *unjust*), one must also call attention to the hypothesis of the so-called multiple effects associated with the media. Communication may take place as a process of free and equal exchange of meaning, development of communities and advancement of social solidarity between nations and individuals or it can systematically distort perceptions and create fantasy enemies, fabricate consensus and consent for wars of aggression and target particular ethnic groups or nations into sub-human categories (Tehrani, 1999). This possibility of multiple effects, already present in televised communication, has been added to the new media, but modern communications make dualistic explanations more difficult, or even unfeasible.

Global communication is a fundamental element for the creation of a global market. Global communication has enabled infrastructures for the communication of data, news and images and thus increased the desire for the ownership of products and access to services. But this process of association between communication and market has also given rise to a side effect: It has given power to the silent voices of those who claim self-determination and social justice and have responded to the consumerism through the assertion of identity (Castells, 2004; Tehranian, 1999; Hoff & Hansen, 2007). Global communications, from the press to the Internet, have played a multiple role in these processes. The global media simultaneously promote the homogenization and differentiation of markets — they promote the centralization and, at the same time, they also promote dispersion of power while they implement cultural integration and pluralism.

The globalization of communication at a global spatial level, but also at a local level by allowing different people within the very same community to share subjects, is probably the most important novelty of the current changes brought through communication to our daily life. Having brought communication to a global level through broadcasting, and later having allowed people to go global through the use of global technologies, such as the Internet and the mobile phone networks, we have built a communicational network that can be molded to the needs of its users, be it access to contents, people, or both.

The practices of the social agents in the network society are practices that combine media in the endeavor to obtain results. They are not isolated uses of a specific medium. We should look at the media not as isolated technologies, but rather as objects of social appropriation that are diversified and combined depending on the objectives set to reach by the user. Contrary to discourses on the information society (Karvonen, 2001), in which one proposes a hierarchization of the media or subordination to the most recent one, the media constitute a whole, a media system (Ortoleva, 2004), articulating with one another in networks, built on the dialectics of objectives among those who appropriate them and those who manage them. A media system, which is appropriated on the basis of individual choices that are shared socially, thus, constitutes what we can call a media matrix (Meyrovitz, 1985).

The media are not isolated elements. We do not limit ourselves to listening to the radio, or reading newspapers, or surfing the Internet. The *practice* is one of articulation, or if we prefer, of networking of various media in everyday life at home, at work, at school or in getting from one place to another (Cardoso, 2007; Castells, 2007; Colombo, 2003; Caron, 2007).

### ***Networking Media through Interactivity in a Media Global Environment***

Examples of media networking use and of the interdependence between media and individualized, but socially shared, appropriations can be found in many accounts product of research in different national environments. For its impact worldwide and for its genesis, a good example of two dimensions that characterize the current communicational model, the networking of media and networked mediation, can be found in the analysis of the communicative processes that took place in Spain between the attacks of March 11, 2004 in Madrid and the day of the Spanish general elections, March 15, 2004

(Castells, 2006). In Spain, the March 11 attacks at Atocha train station in central Madrid took place in an era that was no longer that of just television or radio, but during a time in which the media included, through appropriation by a vast portion of the population, the mobile phone and the Internet. The contemporary semiotic guerrilla tactics (Eco, 2004), exemplified by the social appropriation of media in the following days to the March 11, 2004 all over Spain, developed in a network process, a process of the creation of spontaneous nodes echoing the messages originated through interpersonal communication. This time the mobile phone, mainly through the use of SMS, was used with the aim of spreading the message that the "government was lying as to the involvement of ETA, because it was Al-Qaeda and inviting people to gather at the headquarters of the party in government, the Partido Popular, or public buildings in protest" (Eco, 2004). This is an example, among others, of the search for alternative communication channels, using interpersonal communication devices in a mass communication process with a view to establishing an alternative to the broadcast communication of the television or radio stations. Our interpersonal communication can be transformed into a mass medium when it takes place in an electronic network (such as that of the mobile phone). Interpersonal communication thus took on a collective phenomenon dimension. The people watched television and read newspapers but at the same time communicated with each other and asked whether or not what was being said was true. They answered such questioning by comparing the news, they read and heard on the national broadcasting channels, with the information they were able to obtain on the Internet and through foreign newspapers and satellite television channels (Eco, 2004; Cardoso, 2007).

Several other examples of the networking of mass and individual media can be found in the last decade all over the world. The television and Web reporting of the London Bombings, the so-called 7/7 bombings of 2005, give us another example of such networking of interpersonal and mass media. The news that broadcasted depended in great measure on images sent via mobile phones by passers-by and victims, having as a result the incorporation of the individual, but technologically-enhanced, everyday life in the flow of global events and discourses (Silverstone, 2006). The combination of e-mail and television was also paramount to the success of the protest in Seattle at the time of the World Trade Organization (WTO) "Millennium Round" in 1999 or at the East-Timor World demonstrations in the same year (Cardoso, 2007). As highlighted by diverse analysts (Rodotà, 2000; Castells, 2004; Wieviorka, 2003), the Seattle protests were organized via the Internet, mainly through e-mail and Web sites for posts, but they only gained visibility and power of mediation with the images divulged by television channels the world over. Here, the Internet took on the role traditionally played by personal structures in local networks, i.e., making it possible that people with similar interests, but dispersed geographically, could coordinate their actions. The participants in the protest actions around the "Millennium Round" also understood that the use of the Internet alone, would not give them the legitimacy or the necessary force to achieve a stand-off (Cammaersts, 2003), hence, the need to take to the streets in protest actions which were organized via the Internet but divulged by television — still the more widespread mass medium to reach other people eyes and minds.

But network mediation is not only a tool used in political autonomy, it is also an important element in the fulfilment of communicative autonomy (Castells et al., 2003; Cardoso, 2007), that is, the fulfilling communication goals defined by the different individual in order to inform ourselves or achieve some kind of entertainment. The following tables exemplify the use of SMS and e-mail in TV and radio talk

shows, contests and surveys in Portugal and Norway (Karlsen, 2008) exemplifying the use of communicative autonomy for public participation purposes.

Table 1. SMS sent to TV Programs in Portugal and Norway (Percent of Population)

	<i>Participated</i>
SMS to TV Contests (Portugal)	5.7 %
SMS to TV Surveys (Portugal)	2,1 %
SMS to TV Football Shows (Portugal)	2,4 %
SMS to TV debates or talk show (Portugal)	3.2 %
Have sent SMS or MMS to TV (Norway)	14%

Source: Cardoso, Gustavo, Rita Espanha and Carmo Gomes (2006) "The Network Society in Portugal; Karlsen, Faltin; Schanke Sundet, Vilde; Syvertsen, Trine; Ytreberg, Espen (forthcoming). Non-professional activity on television in time of digitalisation, Nordicom Review. Note: In Portugal, only 14.8% of those that have sent an SMS have actually seen it on the TV Screen.

Table 2. E-mail sent to Programs in Portugal and Norway (Percent of Population)

	<i>Sent/Use</i>
Sent e-mail to TV Shows (Portugal)	4.3%
Browse TV or program Web site (Portugal)	12,3%
Have sent e-mail, phoned or letter (Norway)	5%
Browse and interact with TV program Web site (Norway)	6%

Source: Cardoso, Gustavo, Rita Espanha and Carmo Gomes (2006) "The Network Society in Portugal 2006 Survey," CIES; Karlsen, Faltin; Schanke Sundet, Vilde; Syvertsen Trine; Ytreberg, Espen (forthcoming), Non-professional activity on television in time of digitalisation, Nordicom Review.

As previously suggested, interactivity has become one of the three defining organizational characteristics of the networking communicational model. Like networked mediation, the different ways in which we use interactivity with the media have shaped the media themselves and, by doing so, they have transformed the organization of the media system and society's communicational models.

According to Kim and Sawney (2002), there are two main approaches to interactive communication in the context of the new technologies applied to the media: the *communicational approach* and the *environmental approach* of the media.

The communicational approach sees interactivity as the relationship between communicators and exchanged messages. In this sense, not only the electronic media, but also letters to the editor, telephone calls to television programs and audience participation in the programs are regarded as forms of

interactivity. In this perspective, the interactive media are those that can simulate interpersonal exchanges through their communication channels.

In contrast, interactivity in the environmental approach is defined as "a technologically offered media experience in which the user can participate and modify the forms and contents of the media in real time" (Steuer quoted in Kim & Shawney, 2002). According to this definition, characteristics such as interaction in real time and immediate response are considered of vital importance for the creation of an interactive environment. Characteristics such as one-to-many and many-to-one communication, flexibility of use and communication through voice, text and video, both between individuals and in groups, the use of the medium as a platform for the production and processing of information and the potential for the creation of own messages have much more to do with what can be found today in the computer networks, such as the Internet, than with the interaction currently provided by television.<sup>7</sup> We can then argue that our current media system offers society two very distinct approaches to interactivity within the two more widespread networks of delivery and transmission of audiovisual communication: TV and Internet. Due to its organizational structures, the interactivity offered today by television is mostly based on the simulation of interpersonal exchanges, through the characteristics of the program or through the role conferred upon the presenter or journalist. On the other hand, due to the characteristics already mentioned, interactivity on the Internet is closer, although not fulfilling it, to the concept of interactivity proposed by the media environment approach (Kim & Shawney, 2002).

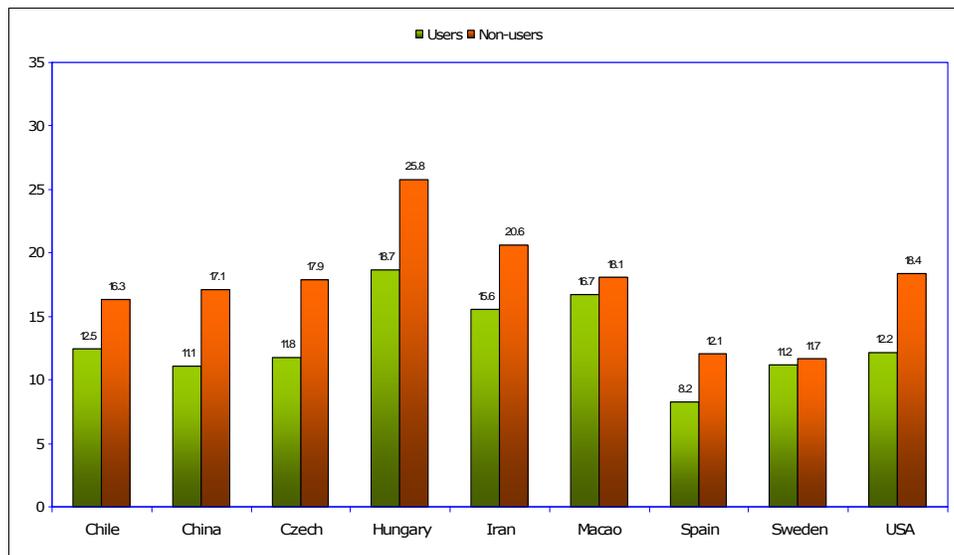
During the last decade, we have witnessed the arrival of the Internet to the media system, while changing it, but not replacing any of the previous media. The data gathered in different countries around the world show that, although in different degrees per country, TV has been losing ground in time consumption and simultaneously browsing the Internet has been gaining preponderance in people's daily lives.

Given that a significant percentage of the population in more developed countries has access to both Internet and television, we can argue that the available data on usage, showing decrease on TV-viewing among Internet users, might lead us to conclude that people are using Internet for more interactive purposes and choosing to use the television when interactivity is less sought.

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<sup>7</sup> The experiments in the so-called, interactive television over the last two decades can, in almost all cases, be reduced to the creation of platforms incorporating various technologies allowing the users, through payment of a fixed rate or pay-as-you-go rates, to choose from different camera angles in a football game, vote in talk shows or similar programs or choose their own film (Richieri, 2002).

Figure 2. Average Hours per Week Spent Watching Television: Users vs. Non-Users — WIP Project 2006 (Number of Hours)



Source: The World Internet Project (2006)

The following tables give us another insight into the relationship between Internet and TV. They exemplify the multi-tasking behaviour of young people aged 8 to 18 years old in Portugal, but similar results can be found in other realities like the USA or Chile. Indeed 64% of Chileans listen to music, 25% speak on the phone and 14.6% watch TV while browsing the Web, it was also detected that almost 43% of Chilean users are instant messaging while using the computer (Godoy, 2006). In Portugal, the most common multi-tasking activities performed while watching TV are sending SMS or talking on the phone, while using the Internet the most common are listen to music and Instant Messaging through the Internet. In the U.S., similar trends were found by Foehr (2006).

Table 3. While you are using the Internet, how frequently do you . . . ? (Ages 8-18)

	%
Listen to music	56,0
Listen to radio	13,1
Use chats (Ex: Msn; Google talk, etc.)	20,8
Watch Television	11,8
Talk on the phone	15,6
None of the Above	8,8

Source: Cardoso, Gustavo, Rita Espanha and Carmo Gomes (2006) "The Network Society in Portugal 2006 Survey," CIES.

Table 4. While watching TV, do you . . . ? (Ages 8-18)

	Yes (%)	Never (%)	Don't know/Don't reply (%)
Browse the Web or send e-mail	31,5	65,0	3,5
Read Newspapers or magazines	20,3	76,8	3,0
Send SMS by cell phone	42,9	54,1	2,9
Interaction with TV	29,9	65,6	4,3
Talk on the phone	43,9	53,2	2,9

Source: Cardoso, Gustavo, Rita Espanha and Carmo Gomes (2006) "The Network Society in Portugal 2006 Survey," CIES

Like the data portrayed in the above tables show, multi-tasking combining television and Internet lose ground to both the multiple combination of use between TV or Internet and telephone or SMS text messaging<sup>8</sup>. This shows us that not only those two technologies (TV and Internet) compete among both of them for user attention in an almost exclusive way, but also that the multiple combinations available for

<sup>8</sup> Other similar and likewise complex examples of networked appropriation of the media can be found in other studies and countries, for example in Japan (Mikami, 2004), Canada (Caron, 2007), Italy (Aroldi & Colombo, 2003) and Catalonia (Castells et al., 2003).

the networking of different devices might also be related to the degree of interactivity they might provide to the users' needs. Users, while watching TV, seem to privilege interpersonal communication through the use of another device, namely the mobile phones and while using the computer to foster computer embedded applications for listening to music and interpersonal communication by using instant messaging.

Nevertheless, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis and the empirical data presented here is the decisive role played by the articulation of different media in our everyday life. This is the needed ground for the networking of mass and personal media, which, when networked, can also become mass media through their flexibility and mobility features. Consequently, any analysis of media-related individual empowerment has to take into account not only television, radio, newspapers and the World Wide Web but also the telephone, the mobile phone and Internet messaging (e-mail, newsgroups, chats, instant messaging, etc.).

The new networked communication model, described in the last pages, refers to a media system in which interactivity gives shape to its organizational model. This media system offers two central nodes, one centered on low interactivity where television rules; and another where the center is the Internet offering high interactivity. Those different media nodes are connected mainly through interpersonal media which can also be used as mass media, namely: mobile phones (e-mail), iPods and similar offers enabled with Wi-Fi, etc.

Given that communication is a human ability, we as humans, involved in social processes, tend to maximize the use of communication to achieve our goals, be it individual or collective ones. In a network society, the media system shaped, by our media mediations uses, has evolved to a system based in networking different media. Whenever media devices, by will of media and telecom companies — or even hackers - allow the networking of communication or uses, people try them out and, if the experimentation fulfills some of their needs in terms of autonomy and/or empowerment objectives, they are socially adopted. Such a social adoption when diffused throughout large portions of society tends to change the media itself, changing its organizational, technological and networking characteristics. This is how the networking of mass and interpersonal media and consequently networked mediation is being socially shaped by interactivity in our societies.

### ***New Communicational Paradigms in a New Media System***

Because technological development and the appropriation of the media place in coexistence mass media, interpersonal communication media and media that combine the two, such as the Internet, the principle characteristic that pervades the whole sphere of communication is that of networking. But networking is not the only dimension shaping communication. We are also witnessing a change in the communicational paradigm that shapes the media system. The change in our communicational paradigm can be witnessed through the analysis of four dimensions: 1) Rhetoric mainly built around moving image; 2) New dynamics of accessibility of information; 3) Users as innovators; and 4) Innovation in news and entertainment models.

*The centrality of the moving image rhetoric in the Information Age*

Our mediated world is dominated today by a media rhetoric mainly built around the visual component (Howell, 2003). The visual has gained increasing importance over the textual, even within the Internet realm. Not just because of broadband allowing streaming video and the multiplication of new "YouTubes," but also because of the role that the visual plays within computer mediated communication. We should acknowledge that, even when we refer to aural or verbal modes of communication within the Internet, we are analysing a mediation process that combines both visual and textual or visual and aural. Skype and other VOIP programs, or verbal script media like instant messaging, programs or even e-mail are increasingly combining the use of visual modes of communication, too. So what we are witnessing is not an overwhelming victory of visual over other mediated communication modes, but the increasing mixture of the visual with other modes of communication (Fornas, 2007), a trend that we can trace back to the 1980s experiments on the relationship between music and moving image and the worldwide success and expansion of the MTV genre and video clip production (Frith, 1993).

Clearly, instead of trying to conflate the verbal/nonverbal and visual/aural polarities, we should focus our attention on the multidimensional complexity of human communication faculties, in order not to oversimplify historical trends or momentary transitions (Fornas, 2007). Inside and outside the Internet, we find an overwhelming rhetoric based on visual culture, a culture founded on a mode of communication based on simplicity, rapidity and emotions in which "to see is enough to be" and where "to repeat is to inform" (Ramonet, 1999). We are witnessing, all around the world, live experiments fostered by television companies, radio stations, newspapers and Internet companies — such as Google or Yahoo! — on how to combine verbal script and aural rhetorics of communication with the use of chats, SMS, e-mailing, podcasts, video, etc. Although not being yet able to ascertain what the media world will innovate in this domain, the trends seem to indicate that traditional media, as newspapers and radio, and also individual users are trying to explore how video can complement their traditional textual script and aural rhetorics, by enhancing their growing Internet presence with moving images, broadcast and downloads. Television's Internet presence is also trying to evolve, using the World Wide Web or the P2P networks, from more textual and aural approaches to the full broadcast of moving images.

*New Dynamics of Accessibility of Information*

The current communicational paradigm is also built around the changes and new dynamics of accessibility of information. We can identify four trends that are shaping the way in which we relate to information: 1) greater accessibility through new Gatekeeping models; 2) Open source; 3) Open access and 4) Mobile accessibility to information.

A greater accessibility of information allows for a new cultural democracy (Jensen, 2005), in traditional societies the cultural world was divided into two parts: producers and consumers, people who write books and people who read them (Eco, 2000). The information technologies, in general, and the Internet, in particular, have changed this in a positive way, making it possible for everyone to write about

everything (Castells, 2007; Lessig, 2005). Such changes bring with them new models of gatekeeping that are building new models of accessibility to information. Traditionally, filters have always been a part of our experience, providing a basis for classification. That is true for book and magazine publishing companies, record companies and film and game production companies, the television and radio program directors, but it is also true for journalists, editors, churches, scientific institutions, etc. — entities and persons who have the function of filtering and reorganizing knowledge and information (Eco, 2000; Lessig, 2004). In the relationship between the filter and user, there is a restriction of intellectual liberty, but access of the user and the community to the essential information is guaranteed. With the development of the Internet, the matrix of the relationship between filters and user has also changed and, consequently, the communicational paradigms as well. On the one hand, the Internet has reduced institutional filters, because it is possible to select information without going through the institutions and it allows one to compare the filtering carried out by states, churches, teachers, librarians, doctors, opinion leaders and entrepreneurs. On the other hand, it repeats the filtering online already carried out by newspapers, radio and television. The Internet, when looked at through the search engines, shows us a filtered reality that continues to give an out-of-proportion voice — considering the number of media online — to the newspapers, radio and television stations (Cardoso, 2007). The Internet has thus introduced new classification agents for the experience, such as the search engines and portals, giving rise to a new selection and classification phenomenon — Internet Gatekeeping (Cardoso, 2007). Nevertheless, even if it brings in new rules of access, the Internet has increased exponentially our access to information when compared to the pre-Internet media system accessibility.

Open access and open source, two other dimensions of analysis addressed here can be thought as interrelated trends. Open access can be traced as far as the 1960s, with Ted Nelson's hypertext system, or the early 1970s with Michael Hart's Gutenberg Project (Suber, 2004). However, until the birth of the World Wide Web and the launch of the first browsers in the 1990s, the inexistence of a technological apparatus capable of delivering codified knowledge at low cost to vast audiences had confined open access initiatives to relatively small audiences (Meikle, 2005; Lull, 2007). For the purpose of analysing open access, we can define three different historical stages:<sup>9</sup> the *paleo-conceptual*, the *neo-experimental*, and the *social movement* stages. The *paleo-conceptual* phase can be traced back from 1963, with Ted Nelson, until 1979 with the birth of Usenet and is characterized by the early developments of networked digital technology and the mutual influence that developments both in science and conceptual communicational thought had one on the other. The *neo-experimental* phase very much encompasses the two decades from 1980 until 2000. Those were two decades characterized by experimentation and the social diffusion of what Himanen (2001) termed as the "Hacker Ethic," Experimentation of technological possibilities, under a trial-and-error approach, led to the development of applications and their diffusion to large audiences, fostering large scale online cooperative work under an Open Source approach (Stevens, 2004). Examples can be found in the operating system Linux, the Human Genome Project, the Wikipedia (Auray, 2007) or within the online academic journals born during those two decades.

The *social movement phase* of open access can be said to have started with the Budapest, 2002, Bethesda, 2003 and Berlin, 2003 initiatives. These three events constitute a decisive turning point

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/timeline.htm>

because it was there that the definition of what open access stands for was agreed upon and subsequently diffused within the scientific community. The events also signalled the existence of two complementary strategies (Amory et al., 2004) within the open access movement: open access journals and institutional repositories. Both are strategies toward increasing accessibility to academic publications. Academic journals were the main scientific communication instrument (Medawar, 1963) which the open access movement chose as the spearhead of the movement to lower the barriers of price, legal access, or technical barriers. In the last five years, open access journals have flourished<sup>10</sup> within the international community and many traditional publishers have adopted, partially or fully, the overall principles, ultimately changing their business models. Although focused on science production and dissemination of knowledge, the implications of open access go beyond the scientific community. Since it's within the research environment that much of the scholar teaching takes place and that university teaching models tend to influence lower grades teaching, it is expected that the way we look at information availability in the media in our societies will also change.

The combined use of Open Access approaches and Open Source software led to a growing presence of open source software tools in our daily communication environment (Castells, 2005). Those tools range from the Internet servers to blog tools and from television editing and broadcasting software to journals publishing kits. Open source has allowed individual producers, or small teams, to emulate the online presence of big media and publishing companies and, by doing so, changed the range of choices available to the media user and media producers. Open Access approaches, by its turn, have brought us new types of online journalism, entertainment and information contents characterized by not requiring the payment of fees by the users in accessing the contents and also by allowing the user to build, by themselves, contents or to transform the already available ones.

Mobile accessibility to information is the fourth element of analysis addressed here. Mobility refers to the ability to access information in every given moment or location. Up until recently, computers were seen as a static tool to be used at one's desk, but technological innovation changed that view (Castells et al., 2006; Cardoso, 2007a; Caron, 2007; Katz et al., 2002). Laptop computers and Wi-Fi devices together with mobile telephones have allowed users of these technologies, not only to communicate between themselves but also to participate, play (Beyer, 2007; Enli, 2007) and access information outside their traditional work environments. From mobile TV broadcasted or streamed to one's mobile phone (Silverstone & Osimo 2005; Prario, 2007) to the Apple's iTouch providing Wi-Fi connectivity handheld devices are changing the way in which we communicate and access information, giving shape to another trend in the communicational paradigm, mobile accessibility to information. The partnership established between "mobility" and "accessibility" produces a new environment for the current communicational paradigm giving it a new spatial and temporal frame. Although we know the refrain "anything, anytime" is not applicable to every person for every situation (because our choices regarding information access are socially framed on our personal and shared representations), it is nevertheless true that mobility redefines how our daily work and leisure decisions are made, how personal and family management is run and how networking becomes even more pervasive as our main mode of social organization.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.doaj.org/>; <http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs>

*Users as Innovators*

The new communicational paradigm of our societies is also built around the increasing role of the user as media innovations developer and innovator in media content to be read, heard or viewed by others. Users have been increasingly addressed as innovators in media, not only because of dissemination of the Internet and open source technologies but also because of individualization of media namely (mobile phones, video cameras and handheld MP3s and video players).

Innovation has to be understood as a dialectical process between participants of unequal power and influence in the marketplace and in the ongoing patterns of consumption and use (Silverstone, 2005). As Silverstone (2005) argues, SMS and file sharing have gained almost an aura of mythology in ICT innovation given that both are seen as signs of a radical shift in how innovation takes place, by rebalancing the way producers (technologist, designers, packagers, market analysts, investors) and the consumer interact. The mobile phone industry, taking notice of the SMS uses by youngsters incorporated such knowledge on new mobile phones and services offered (Colombo, 2006; Silverstone & Osimo, 2005). Subsequently, the user started to be seen by the industry as a "trend definer" or "active tester of innovation" (De Marez, 2007). The innovation processes become less confined to the industrial environments because the quality of experience is measured through the launching of a high number of models into the market and by monitoring the user's choice, in order to redefine which models to improve and which to drop.

When users innovate they become, no longer "end-users" (Slot, 2007) because they move into the heart of the very own value chain, that is, to the creativity arena. Creativity in a user centric approach, as the one that we are witnessing, depends on the ability of people to organize informal networks (be it companies or organizations that develop beta services/products) and then being able to attract users that will contribute to the definition of the next stage. Such attractiveness depends, in great measure, on the ability to "open up the floor" and work on the environment, hoping that such an offer will create the conditions for experimentation and creativity to develop among a given growing mediated community, usually Web 2.0 sites, but also allowing to monitor the feedback. But the continuity of innovation by users seems to depend also on the development of a group of core members that can motivate the passerby contributors and, by doing so, to sustain the evolution from episodic networking into structured networking during a given timeframe (Auray, 2007; Verhaegh 2007). Nevertheless, the business success of the social appropriation of users innovations processes, such as MySpace or Facebook, seem to better develop under organizational cultures that are less structured and that rely more on innovating the ways in which they present themselves, that is, where the "we" is predominant instead of the typified mediated relationship between "we," the site management, and the users, being the "other" (Silverstone, 2006). Examples of such relationships between opposing organizational cultures have been found in experiments of "citizen" and "participatory" journalism where the journalistic culture is, usually, conservative and not innovation driven toward experimenting new relationships with other content producers outside the newsroom, and where marketing and business cultures seem to be more open to those innovations (Paulussen, 2007). The success of the innovation performed by users in 2.0 Internet environments is then seen as somewhat dependable on the model of self-presentation and

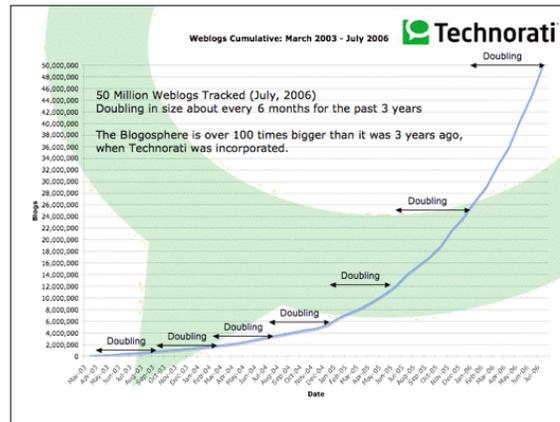
intercommunication (Koskela, 2007) offered by the software platforms or the ways in which the user is allowed to modify them.

But “users as innovators” are not confined to the Web 2.0 successes. Other innovation areas for the user seem to be found almost in every area of dissemination of ICT’s software or hardware. The multiplication of personal, mobile and video hardware brings to the user the ability to domesticate new kinds of audiovisual content and, subsequently, to introduce time-shifting domestication processes, that is, the capacity of individual and societies to tame the unfamiliar and the threatening, and by doing so, mould these new technologies to the values and habits of their everyday life’s (Van Den Broek et al., 2007; Urban, 2007; Silverstone & Osimo, 2005). As an example, the user can also become innovator when it appropriates interpersonal communication devices, such as SMS, for organizational purposes facilitating knowledge and allowing planning differently their lives and increase the cohesiveness within a given group (Byrne, 2007).

The second major area of innovation by users is content. The content originating from the processes of content innovation, driven by the users, has two major types of appropriation. Either they are fuelling the overall offer of newspapers, radio and TV, that are running Internet operations. Or we have individual, and collective, projects of content generation primarily developed for the Internet, although they might evolve in the future for other distribution channels — like the U.S. Rocketboom news, starting online and being now downloadable for the home TV sets through cable networks. In the first alternative, through the online environment the user establishes with the newspapers, radio and TV, multiple relationships that range from the writing and publication of articles, opinion columns or videos to the participation through comments, rating or sharing of contents (Pikone, 2007). The second alternative seems to be where the user is allowed more freedom of creativity and, consequently, where innovation is more attainable and valued.

Although, recognizing the innovating role performed by users in terms of the new availabilities of content, user generated content is not yet being produced by the majority of the world’s online users. The analysis of data shows that, in the USA, only 8% of Web users had, in 2006, edited a blog (Idate, 2006). Similar figures are found both in France, where only 7% of the population had ever built a blog (Idate, 2006) and Portugal with 12% (Cardoso, 2006).

Figure 3. Weblogs Cumulative March 2003-July 2006



Source: [www.technorati.org](http://www.technorati.org)

Other examples of user-generated content, now regarding video production, can also be found. For example, YouTube, where more than 5 million videos were available in late 2006, had around 30 million of unique users each month, with more than 100 million video streams per day. Nevertheless, YouTube uploading of videos seems still to be involving less than a tenth of people editing blogs (Auchard, 2007). User generated content can also be found in social sharing, or Web 2.0 so-called sites. Web sites like MySpace were, in late 2006, generating more than 270,000 new members per day (Auchard, 2007).

Another channel for distribution of user-generated content is the P2P networks. Such networks were in Europe, in 2006, attracting between 15% and 35% of Internet users and, in the USA, 25% of users, mainly teenagers and young adults were using its services (Idate, 2006). Although better known for the piracy of copyright contents that regularly hits the pages of newspapers, P2P networks offer many non-copyrighted material or, sometimes, remixes of audiovisual contents (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). In some specific areas of copyrighted material, like continental European cinema, P2P networks even have a good chance of evolving toward being the main distribution channel. European cinema, both financed by the national European cinema boards or by the very European authors, doesn't have, in many countries, access to good distribution, being P2P a good alternative to reach audiences.

Users have become main innovators in the network society, but the user is also very different one from the other. So we can characterize one of the main trends of the new communicational paradigm to be the innovation performed by users, but we must understand that specific users innovate in specific areas, the ones where communication is seen as most important for them, be it SMS, video content, blogs, etc. (Silverstone & Osimo 2005; Lull, 2007).

*Innovation in News and Entertainment Models*

The last dimension of the *new communicational paradigm*, here analysed, is the Innovation in News and Entertainment Models. The question that drives this analysis is the very same that has accompanied the writing of this article: What are the new trends that have a major influence on the way our world is being shaped, and consequently, on the way our news and fiction are being told?

Each era has its predominant genres and modes of broadcast representation (news, chat shows, soap operas), as well as different ways to express the uniqueness of the individual (popular music culture, blogging, messaging, file sharing). Although they represent the search for different kinds of order and a struggle for power and control over one's immediate material and symbolic space and time (Silverstone, 2006), they work differently over time and space. Both news and entertainment have been changed in their nature by the possibility given through the arrival of the Internet and tools that foster the production and dissemination of contents by individuals (Beyer, 2004; Syvertsen, 2004). But at the same time media companies have also changed their news and entertainment offers. The mixing of the two dimensions of change, one driven by individual producers the other by media companies, has changed the media landscape of news and entertainment (Yetreberg, 2004, 2004a; Syvertsen, 2004). But what common trends can we find in order to understand and typify the change in contents both in news and entertainment?

It is suggested here that major historical discontinuities or events within a given historical continuum can promote change in the way we classify experience, and that the media, given its classification function in society (Silverstone, 2006), are also influenced by those in the way news and fiction are produced and delivered. Social change brings changes, not only to the way we organize society, institutions and family, but also to the culture of a given period in human history (Castells, 2004). The media are not only technology; they are also the contents they print, broadcast or display. It's not only the technology that changes, but also their contents. Both news and fiction are embedded and shaped by the values and representations of a given society in a given time and space. For those reasons we can argue that not only can we trace the current change in contents offered by the media companies (Miege, 1997; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Boczkowski 2004) back to the needs for economic growth (that led into the territorial expansion of their audiences via satellite and cable television), and to the dissemination of the use of the Internet, but also to major social events that have influenced our societies in the last three decades.

The further argument made here is that we have witnessed, during the last decade, a change within the very own mediation processes and that change is closely related to the historical events and the technological transformation that we have witnessed between 1989 and 2001. Those two major historical events are the fall of the Berlin Wall and, consequently, the geopolitical change in Europe and around the world in the two sides of the political blocks (Castells, 2000) and the 9/11 of 2001 attack at the Twin Towers in New York. Between both events, we also witnessed the growing social appropriation by media companies and citizens of the Internet and Satellite Television Broadcasting.

The works of Roger Silverstone (2002, 2006) and Umberto Eco (2007) provide us with a set of concepts that help to understand the change within the news and entertainment we today watch, read and listen, those are: *interruption*; *transcendence*; *otherness* (Silverstone, 2002, 2006); *boundary*; and *reserve* (Eco, 2007).

For Eco (2007), the fall of the "Berlin Wall" combined with the globalization of media, first satellite TV and then the Internet, brought a change to our lives in ways in which both the "limits" of the know, the frontier between something, together with what is considered to be righteously "concealed" or kept in "reserve" are addressed. Such views, in his opinion, have also changed the ways in which mediation occurs and our involvement in such processes. According to Umberto Eco (2007), one of the first concepts that was questioned by the globalization of communication is the notion of boundary. The fall of communicational boundaries brought about by the new information and communication technologies has produced two conflicting phenomena. First, there is no longer a national community that can cut off its citizens from knowing what happens in other countries — even in dictatorships it is increasingly difficult to rule this out (Eco, 2007). Second, the globalization of communications (Lull, 2007) has introduced modifications at the monitoring of communication exchange. For example, the Orwellian *Big Brother* is not the Endemol television version (Roscoe, 2005). Instead of one person watching everyone, we have in the current Big Brother version millions of "voyeurs" who watch a small group of exhibitionists. Today, the *Big Brother* watching us does not have a single face and is not alone: he is the totality of the global economy (Lyon, 1998; Rodotà, 2000). Eco's argument (2007) is built precisely around the questioning if such a change, in the roots of monitoring, is not producing a movement of cultural change in the perception of what we socially value in relation to reserve and up to where those changes influence our mediated experiences in fiction.

For Silverstone (2002, 2006), both mediation and key historical events in our recent history are seen as fundamental processes. The structural dimension to the mediation of events, as the one that took place on September 11, helps us to envisage the broader context of how the media represent the world to us (Silverstone, 2002). The media are the main vehicle for bringing into our lives everything that is not "near" us, that cannot be experienced, seen, touched without mediation, be it from TV, Internet, newspapers or radio. Mediation involves three dimensions of relations between what is mediated and who participates in such mediation process: time; space and ethic (Silverstone, 2002, 2006). Events, such as September 11, bring change in the realm of time (*interruption*), in the realm of space (*transcendence*) and in the realm of ethic (*otherness*). Interruption refers to the way in which the schedule of the media, its continuity, is fundamental to define the conduct of everyday life. In a society where mediation becomes evermore present, everyday routines tend to relate to the routines of the media. Routines bring assurance and continuity. When the routine is broken and we are faced with change and questioning, with the assumption we must readapt to the new, whatever it is. Media routines are only broken when, editorially is perceived something important has happened, and that such event must be communicated. Transcendence refers to the claims of the media as to being able to address, the global village proclaimed by McLuhan (1997), the annihilation of distance to provide new forms of global connectivity by bridging distance (Silverstone, 2002). The media have always provided us with the representation of the event, not the reality, but its image. Nevertheless, they have increasingly suggested that "what you see is what you get — WYSIWYG," that is, representation and reality are expressed as being the very same thing.

The last concept here analysed is the role of otherness in our analysis of innovation in news and entertainment models. Otherness, relates to how the "the other" is represented to us and how we come to perceive it in our daily lives (Silverstone, 2002, 2006). An example, identified by Silverstone (2002, 2006), is that until the appearance of Al-Jazeera on western screens "the other," in this case the inhabitant of the Muslim countries to where the Al-Jazeera broadcasts in Arab language, had been both in fiction and in news, mainly a product of the description of western media. By, simply existing, or broadcasting, Al-Jazeera showed us that we can also be "the other," that otherness can have two ways: the way we see the others and the way the other sees us.

But how do such concepts help us understand the change in media and the way mediation is performed in the network society? Let's look at the eroding of the social value of both boundary and reserve (Eco, 2007). Such erosion has influenced the way in which journalism is practised and the way in which entertainment is built by media companies and individual content producers. This change of the concept of boundary has not only influenced the sources used in journalism and the way journalists work, but also has opened access to sources to be used by people who were not journalists and, ultimately, it also led to the access to new distribution channels for the news produced by them, namely the Internet (Cardoso, 2007; Eco, 2007; Lull, 2007).

Our perceived social value in relation to *reserve* might also bring us some clues to answer why our current games and quiz entertainment has moved from traditional stages surrounded by audiences applauding the contestant into what we have been commonly referring to as "reality shows"? Eco argues (2007), that in order to understand the changes in entertainment we need first to follow a path started in news production. One of the main changes in news content, in the last 30 years, occurred in the written press, a change led by the traditionally referred to as the "celebrities press" (Eco, 2007; Turner, 2006, 2007; Littler, 2007). Such publications, mostly wrote about famous people — actors, singers, monarchs in exile or playboys — who voluntarily exposed themselves to the observation of the photographers and chroniclers (Street, 2006). The readers knew that many times the events featured in the news stories were concocted by the journalists themselves, but the readers were not turning to these publications for news or, if we prefer the truth (McQuail, 2000; Marshall, 2006). What the audiences looked for in such a publication was mainly entertainment and not news in their more traditional definition (Eco, 2007). With the aim of competing with television and also given the need to fill a greater number of pages with stories, the generalist and reference press began to take a growing interest in social events, show business and gossip, thus altering its criteria on what constitutes a news story. Gossip became a reference information matter and even targeted those that were not its traditional targets — reigning monarchs, political and religious leaders, state presidents, scientists, etc. — giving rise to the idea that becoming the object of public gossip was equivalent to acquiring the same *social status* as a famous actor or politician (Eco, 2007; Street, 2006; Marshall, 2006).

This was an important development as it introduced a change in social values and allowed for a further stage of evolution within the media which emerged when television began to idealize shows in which the protagonists were no longer those who gossiped about someone not present, but those who were the object of the gossip themselves and, who were willing to expose their own lives publicly and

those of others (Eco, 2007; Turner, 2006; Langer, 2006). This second stage took place fundamentally in the entertainment dimension, which confers upon it a logic of association between the contestant and his actions as a universal model, for the logic is "if he exposes himself, anyone can do it" (Eco, 2007). However, that dimension cannot only be attributed to television, given that on the Internet, we also find many other examples of Web sites that follow exactly the same values of exhibition of intimacy (Cheung, 2000; Marshall, 2006a). The profusion of web cameras — with or without a profit-making purpose — uncovering the privacy of private or semi-private places, personal home pages revealing all under "who I am," and self-exhibition in photographs, even of such intimate details as the insides of one's own body (Eco, 2007; Marshall, 2006, 2006a), are all examples of this changing relationship with reserve. The focus in the role played by the pair privacy-reserve in the change of entertainment models is also related to the fact that reality shows focused on the loss of reserve have initiated a trend in broadcasting entertainment that has spread across other entertainment genres: the use of *formats*.

Examples of the so-called "formats" are, among other things, the television programs and game shows sold to the diverse television stations around the globe (mainly factual programming, but also shows and serials). If user-generated content is a main drive of innovation for producers outside the environment of major media companies, the change from the original and not duplicable concept of "program" into the concept of "format" has been, during the last decade, a key driver for entertainment innovation of the media industry (Murray, 2005; Roscoe, 2005; Ortoleva, 2004; Ytreberg, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). In a network society where connections between different technologies are sought and experienced, it comes as no surprise that a direct connection between "formats" and our use of software in computers might be argued for, a contamination of model between the computer industry and the broadcast industry. Media contents classifiable into the definition of "formats" are similar to software programs in the sense that the software precedes the final product. As a text is a product of a word processor, so too a "format" is not a finished content program, given that it simply defines and conditions the contents to be produced, but is not yet content because its function is preliminary to the elaboration of the information. So, "formats" allow the final user a large degree of creativity in defining the final outcome.

National consumption of TV programming in Europe shows us that the great majority of fiction has become nationally produced, but at the same time markets are becoming increasingly open to the combined offer of national, European, and North and South American fiction lowering cultural barriers and promoting cultural exchange (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Taplin, 2007). An example of the blurring of borders and focus on reality formats has been the increasing success of mystery and sci-fi series, but this time combining our daily life with supernatural (*Lost*, *Supernatural*, *Medium*, *Invasion*, etc). In what relates to the influence of changes in reserve social perception and fictional writing, we have witnessed the reworking of more traditional concepts as the ones portrayed in *Desperate Housewives*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *House*, or *Prison Break*. Those are examples of very traditional plots but that are being mixed with the open-up of the privacy, or reserve, of human relations within a work environment, household environment, or even between people subjected to extreme stress and so more bound to explore the extremes of human relationships. Formats are no longer just present in Docudramas, Docutainment, or reality shows, but now have reached comedy too, in programs such as *Camera Café*, present in France, Italy, Spain, and Poland. Coaching concepts is another example of the blurring of borders between

previous types of programming and the use of subjects related to the personal life that have gone beyond talk shows and into "formats" built to coach people in health issues in programs such as *You Are What You Eat* or *The Biggest Loser*, aired on Channel 4, NBC, RTL, or M6. Adding to all those new "formats," we continue to witness the presence of reality shows, like *Big Brother*, now built around celebrities and not just "common, ordinary people" (Giles, 2006). If reality shows were a first example of loss of reserve and blurring of borders driving concepts of entertainment, we now keep on watching innovations in this sector, be they through the mix of singing and dancing contests and reality shows, or through the talent shows aimed at Business, Fashion, Education, Boxing, Football or even dating shows (Turner, 2006; Ytreberg 2004).

Can we also find the influence of otherness, transcendence, and interruption (Silverstone, 2002, 2006) on the kernel of today's fictional script writing? The already referred return of Sci-Fi themes, together with supernatural stories, is often accompanied by the clear choice of showing the world through the eyes of "the other," the different one, which has become a common feature in today's fiction. Also, the profusion of series (like *CSI*, *Law and Order*, *Criminal Minds*, *Bones*, etc.) where medical doctors, lawyers, and criminologists are the key characters comes as another example of how the *otherness* is explored as a key feature in today's fiction. In such TV series, storytelling is increasingly built around the way the characters see reality. We are invited to see reality through their eyes, to use their perception of reality as the plot line, and to look at events no longer as the central feature of the script. Other examples of the influence of the focus on otherness, provided mainly through the networking of different technological platforms, are the fictional plots developed to be run simultaneously on broadcast TV, mobile phones viewing, and the Web (Murray, 2005; Lessig, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Those fictional plots are developed in such a way as to allow different experiences that tell the same story from different angles and different characters views, examples of such serials are the ones produced in Germany, by the UFA-based Phoenix Company, like *DTA* (Don't Trust Anybody). *DTA* works in franchise distribution and tells the story of a man who wakes up in a hotel room with an incoming call in his cell phone, the display shows a masked man, who points out that you are responsible for the corpse in the bathroom. As the police knock at your door, he offers a way out, but you can never hang up, as you have only this connection. There follows a search of traces in a big city night. That is the story of *DTA*, a script developed for six different environments and platforms, ranging from a feature DVD and TV series with the whole story, a blog of the main character's thoughts along the search, a WAP feature of snippets from the imprisoned girlfriend, Web episodes with the story of three disciples of the men calling, 2.5G episodes in a Big Brother perspective, and the main story with 30 episodes of 3 minutes each for 3G mobile phones. Otherness is thus explored as a feature in an entertainment business model (Hesmondhalgh, 2007) that tries to bring in different angles of the same story in different technological screens: mobile phone display, computer screen, TV set screen, cinema screen, portable MP3 player, and video player display.

Mediation in fiction also becomes increasingly connected to the search for transcendence. Such a feature can be found in the search for building scripts that will hopefully allow a greater proximity to the viewer and audiences by choosing themes that deal the most with people's fears and expectations. But transcendence is also sought through other ways. Let's take the example of Brazilian soap operas and series like *ER*. For a Portuguese viewer, Brazil becomes identifiable with what television offers us, and the same can be said about *ER* (Espanha, 2007). Viewing *ER*, people in Portugal expect that a hospital works

and resembles what they see there on the screen. Transcendence, the proximity between our life's and a given mediated reality, is built and sustained as long as we don't contact with the reality depicted in mediation and enact a series of new information-reflexive inputs (Giddens, 1991).

The last element of the forces involved in the innovation of entertainment features in our media system is interruption (Silverstone, 2002). Interruption, the search for the peculiar, the singularity, or the story that breaks from the routine is also a feature of today's fiction. The already analysed focus of scripts on the sci-fi and supernatural environment, the peculiarity of the diseases depicted by Dr. House in *House*, and the plot of *Prison Break*, among others, are examples of that search for interruption, for the break from the expected in the everyday life.

What we find in entertainment models today is an innovation promoted by a myriad of factors that combined a specific set of themes, ways to tell stories, and types of fictional characters together with a multiple-media environment networked by the plots, scripts, and technology. That network combination allows producers to build, and us to view, different angles of the same story, that is, the networking concept adapted to fiction and entertainment.

If the communicational paradigm of our societies has been influenced by the innovation in entertainment models by changes in the producers (no longer just media companies, but also individual and networks of common interests), by new ways in which to relate to concepts of boundary, reserve, otherness, transcendence, and interruption, and by innovating the ways in which contents are presented (no longer just programs but also formats) by networking plots and screens, how has news evolved?

News is a central component of the media system, and it would be difficult for us to imagine a world where we would no longer find the news at the newsagents, where we would not hear the news every half hour when we turn on the car radio, where we would not surf the Internet in search of a sports page when we arrive at work, where we would not (occasionally) be tempted to go check the Web site of a newspaper to see if anything new has happened, or where, when we get home, there would not be one of those faces on the televisions screen that we have become so accustomed to watching at dinner time reading the news to us. News is part of our everyday life, so we do pay a certain amount of attention to it, even without such emotionally strong catastrophes such as the 9/11 disaster or the tsunami in Southeast Asia in 2005 (Cardoso, 2007).

Silverstone (2002) and Eco (2007) have suggested how different forces of the social have changed news, and how news is changing the social by mediating it. But how far have those changes gone, and what is the real newness of today's news?

Because news is a mirror of reality (Silverstone, 2006), it informs our value constructions and helps to define how the political, economic, military, social, and cultural power relations are structured (Bourdieu, 1989). Accordingly, when changes are made to its form and content, its editorial organisational models, its business management, its distribution model, the way in which we use it, or the time we give to it, we are also altering the communicational paradigms that build our media system (Lull, 2007; Ortoleva 2004). Traditionally, journalism has been a stable asset in newsrooms (Heinonen, 1999). That is,

during the second half of the 20th century, the major classification of different genres of journalism has been centered on the continental European approach to blending opinion and news and a more segmented approach by Anglo-Saxon journalisms (Burgh, 2005; Eco, 1997; Heinonen, 1999; Bennet, 2003). What we have witnessed in the last decade, coinciding with the arrival of the Internet, has been the coexistence of many different ways to deal with news, sometimes being conducted by professional journalists in newsroom environments, and other times being done by citizens using some of the codes and skills of journalism (Tremayne, 2007; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Burgh, 2005; Franklin et al., 2005; Heinonen, 1999).

Similarly, we are witnessing a segmentation of news contents, no longer just driven by media companies but by the audiences themselves, by choosing to combine different news sources from different media. The news we see, read, or hear today has changed because the communication model of our societies has changed. The news remains *today*, as it was *yesterday*, the most common form of information on public events transmitted by the most diverse media, and its basic characteristics are update, relevance and reliability (Tremayne, 2007; Shoemaker, 2006; Burgh, 2005). The change in the field of news results, primarily, from many of the newspapers, radio and television stations going online. The fact that they have established an Internet presence has also brought about new strategies. In the case of television, this has given rise to a networked television model combining the use of Internet broadcast and streaming, SMS, and teletext (Cardoso, 2007).

For newspapers, it has resulted in a repositioning in relation to television by trying to be present and updated round 24 hours and not just in the morning or afternoon; and in the case of radio, it has led to a consolidation of communicative intimacy by allowing new ways to reach the listener and by giving him a voice and a more intimate relationship with the DJs and the played music. But if the Internet has brought alterations with it, it is also true that the changes in the news field came before the growth of the Internet usage. As we have discussed previously, newspapers had already begun to occupy themselves with an increasing number of social events, customs, varieties and rumours, thus altering the criteria for defining what was and what was not news (Street, 2006; Turner, 2006, 2007). That logic contaminated television, first at the entertainment level, and then in the field of information through the news, turning television programs and journalists themselves into news stories, too (Street, 2006; Langer, 2006). What we have witnessed in the news in Europe and the U.S. (Schoemaker, 2006) is the result of the extension of its personalisation practices, traditionally confined to political party leaders, to promote the anonymous individuals. Celebration in the news became a possibility for many who were not politicians, athletes, or actors, thus producing a condition of ephemeral stardom (Giles, 2006; Turner, 2006), taking the form, in the news, of reports on someone's illness, a village feast and who organized it, or injustices suffered at the hands of the State or an insurance company. A second change in the news dimension can be found in the types of content being delivered online in the Internet, first by portals for delivery of new kinds of information contents that hardly could be classified as news (Kung, 2002; Tremayne, 2007), and then by the users themselves, in a citizen-reporter mode, of which the Korean news site OhMyNews is a paradigmatic example (Bentley, 2007).

The main contemporary trends within news production in our societies are built around the idea of coexistence of different news models under a same timeframe. Evolution in journalism has meant during the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that we had a leading model for news production (Burgh, 2005;

Shoemaker, 2006). What we seem to be witnessing is a news environment where we find as many news production models and strategies as the possible audiences. So we have, as always, different approaches to news based on the medium used (radio, TV, newspaper or Internet), but also the need to differentiate the way news productions are built, sources are chosen, and distribution channels are used in order to build many different audiences. At the same time, audiences network different media, looking for more information on a given subject or simply choosing different media for different news.

News has gone beyond dialectic between "opinion news making" versus "descriptive news making." They have arrived at a stage where the multiplication of producers (journalists vs. non-journalist), together with a multiplication of news models (diversified in terms of perceived quality, quantity of news displayed, scope of the themes chosen, types of sources, etc.), becomes the rule. The change in news is driven in two ways, both by who writes it and by who receives and searches for it, for both are subject to a media-enriched environment, which is a media environment enriched by the quantity of information available, the multiplication of interfaces, and their networking. The fact is that people are still looking for novelty and the truth, but they triangulate it between many different sources by parsing the difference between journalist and citizen journalism, or between journalist and Journalist, or even between citizen journalism and citizen journalism.

If we combine the practises of triangulation of news offerings together with the differences in cultural identity that have always been the trademark of journalism between different areas of the globe, we must acknowledge that the change we are witnessing in news production and availability owes as much to the change in boundaries and reserve as to the perception of otherness, the valorisation of interruption, and the search for transcendence. Both newsmakers and newsreaders are faced, at the same time, with diversity of news models within their professional and national communities and also have been obliged to consider the existence of diversity in news production and news fruition around the world. That is the change: the networking concept that molds the way we produce news and inform ourselves of novelty with accuracy.

#### *The Networking of the new media system*

Based on the analysis of different dimensions of what has been designated here as having a *new communicational paradigm*, can it be said that we are witnessing the rise of a new media system? On the basis of the developments analysed here, it is possible to argue that a new system has slowly been establishing itself over the last decade. In the 1970s, McLuhan argued that the media were the message (McLuhan, 1997) — meaning that any single medium induces behaviours, creates psychological connections, and shapes the mentality of the receiver, regardless of the content that medium transmits. Castells, in turn, characterized the organizational relation of the current media as being based on the "message being the media" (Castells, 2002), i.e., the media are shaped depending on the message one is trying to get across, and seeking that which best serves the message and the audience at which it is aimed. But, not only have we evolved from a moment where "the media were the message" into a society where we find the "message being the media," we also are witnessing a moment when the channel or medium is no longer neutral with respect to what it transmits. Furthermore, "the media precede the message" (Eco, 2002) when the technological acceleration produces multiple new channels that exist

before there is content to be placed there, creating a new challenge of an economic character, thus rendering transmission feasible without having equated what is to be transmitted (as in the case of interactive and digital television or the interactive CD-ROM). In addition to the economic challenge, we also find a cultural change that marks a new paradigm of communicative organization. Such a paradigm is visible in the fact that the majority of the new communicational channels have been presented to the general public in a process of active experimentation which Castells has defined as "learning by doing" (Castells, 2002), or the shaping of its own media environment by the audiences, and no longer only by the media companies. This cannot be seen as merely a conjuncture change in the mass media system. This new media system, whose consolidation phase took place between 1990 and 2001, is characterized by global changes in the communicational trends that have given rise to a new communicational model.

### ***From Mass to Networked Communication***

All societies are characterized by communication models and not only by informational models (Wolton, 1999; Colombo, 1993; Castells, 2006; Himanen, 2006). Our informational societies have been witnessing the rise of a new communicational model. A fourth model can be added to the three preceding models, which can be chronologically ordered in terms of their social affirmation cycles (Ortoleva, 2004). The first being defined as interpersonal communication, characterized by the bidirectional exchange between two persons or several persons within a group. The second model, likewise deeply rooted in our societies, the one-to-many communication in which one single individual sends one single message to a limited group of people. And a third model, with which we have the least experienced in terms of historical time, that of *mass communication*, in which, thanks to the use of specific mediation technologies, one single message is directed to a "mass" of people, i.e., it is sent to an audience whose real dimension is unknown and, as such, not delimited in advance.

It has been argued in this paper that we have gone beyond a communication model based in mass communication and into a fourth model, a communication model based in networked communication.

Our society's communicational model is shaped by the combined leverage of worldwide communicational globalization processes, together with the networking of mass and interpersonal media by the media users, and consequently, the rising of networked mediation. The organization of uses and networking of media within this communicational model seems to be in direct connection with the different degrees of interactivity usage that our current media allow.

If we build communicational models in our societies, it is also true that main *communicational paradigms* formats also what a given media system will be. Our communicational paradigms seem to be built around a rhetoric essentiality built on the importance of moving image, combined with the availability of new dynamics of accessibility to information, with new roles of innovation ascribed to users and with profound changes in news and entertainment models.

Our contents, be they news information or entertainment, seem to have changed due to the increased presence of contents delivered by media users and not just media companies, giving rise to the coexistence of different news models for different audiences. Not only news information has changed, but also entertainment. The innovation in entertainment models is therefore connected to the availability of user generated content, but also to the changes brought by media companies, namely the search for new types of contents like the "formats" and the experimentation with the erasure of boundaries between traditional program genres and new approaches to social values such as privacy, reserve, and changes in the realm of time, in the realm of space, and in the realm of ethic, all of them reflected on the way stories are told and scripts written.

The communicational model generated in the informational societies, where the prevailing social organization model is the network, is that of *networked communication*. This communicational model does not replace the previous models, but articulates them, producing new forms of communication and also enabling new forms of facilitation of individual empowerment and, consequently, communicative autonomy.

In the Informational Societies, where the network is the central organizational feature, a new communicational model has been taking shape. A communicational model characterized by the fusion of interpersonal communication and mass communication, connecting audiences, broadcasters, and publishers under a matrix networking media devices ranging from newspapers to videogames and giving newly mediated roles to their users.

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