

NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND EDITORIAL EXEMPTION: A STUDY ON SERVICE JOURNALISM BASED ON ECOMMERCE OPERATIONS

NOVOS MODELOS DE NEGÓCIOS E ISENÇÃO EDITORIAL: UM ESTUDO SOBRE O JORNALISMO DE SERVIÇO COM BASE EM OPERAÇÕES DE COMÉRCIO ELETRÔNICO

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ABSTRACT:

The paper presents and discusses business strategies based on the association from journalistic content to new commercial practices in digital media. We describe selected examples from Folha de S. Paulo and El País involving service guides, links and ecommerce advertisements. The employed method provides content analysis to illustrate how the search for new business models in journalism may conduct its commercial activities beyond the conventional sale of advertising and subscriptions, including a discussion on the challenges and implications of this practice. The hypothesis is demonstrated by describing operations for the sale of tickets, books, music, and films related to news features and service journalism contents. The text finally wonders and discusses how such commercial actions may affect editorial autonomy and publishing exemption.

KEYWORDS:

Journalism; Ecommerce; Publishing exemption.

RESUMO:

O trabalho apresenta e discute estratégias de negócios baseadas na vinculação de conteúdos jornalísticos a novas modalidades comerciais nos cibermeios. São descritos exemplos selecionados de Folha de S. Paulo e El País envolvendo guias de serviço, links patrocinados e anúncios de comércio eletrônico. O método emprega análise de conteúdos para considerar como a busca por novos modelos de negócio no jornalismo conduz suas atividades comerciais para além da venda de publicidade e assinaturas, discutindo desafios e implicações dessa prática. A hipótese é demonstrada com a descrição de operações de vendas de ingressos, livros, discos e filmes de modo vinculado à publicação

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de notícias e conteúdos jornalísticos de serviço. Questiona-se, por fim, de que forma essas ações comerciais podem afetar a autonomia e a isenção editorial no jornalismo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Jornalismo; E-commerce; Isenção editorial.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents reflections derived from a research project that attempts to describe the ways in which journalistic content has been organized and transmitted in digital media environments, in order to understand how they are configured to meet emerging business models in the communication market. It demonstrates and questions some specific ways in which information content provided under the public interest, or for the interest of the public, are tied to new commercial arrangements adopted by newspapers, including service guides, advertising links and ecommerce ads.

As a common thread of reasoning, the following hypothesis is woven, summarized in three statements: a) in their quest for business opportunities in digital media, newspapers are testing forms of commercial exploitation of their content beyond the sale of advertising and subscriptions; b) submitted to new business models, journalistic content is occasionally used as an access inductor element for ecommerce offerings; c) linked to informational news genres, these commercial arrangements lead to the emergence of publications with characteristics extrinsic to journalism, possibly with less editorial autonomy and publishing exemption.

To justify this approach, we consider that, in the so-called “capitalist information society”, as Cohn points out (2000, p.24), communication systems are subordinated and actually reduced to the status of subsystems of the information systems, which act decisively in the economic “modeling” system and, thus, play a role of overdetermination in relation to those. According to the author, “before speaking of content, settings, meanings, one must seek a fundamental operation, that without which there is nowhere to turn our gaze. [...] Communication operates within the established cut-outs for the information”¹.

According to this view, the selection of the repertoire of significant elements that constitute the communication process is arranged in accordance with information schemes economically predetermined. Therefore, understanding this economic modeling and its

aspects regarding to the commodity character of the journalistic content appears to be a key task in the search for understanding of the underlying new forms of organization that emerge in newspaper's digital media structures.

Some questions that can be posed on this subject are the following: How are configured the new commercial arrangements operated by journalistic vehicles? What links are there between these commercial operations and the content of the news? What are the opportunities, risks and implications derived from these models?

To illustrate and develop these points, this text portrays the problem of the business strategies for journalism and gathers examples relating to the operations carried by the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo*, from Brazil, and *El País*, from Spain, involving the publication of informative guides, advertising links and advertisements of ecommerce offerings on the Internet.

BUSINESS STRATEGIES IN JOURNALISM

It has been difficult to state in a propositional way about strategic business models concerning the actual face of the journalistic market, as revealed, for instance, in documents published by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers² and by specialized consulting³. The circumstances of these operations have changed so quickly and so dramatically in less than two decades, that instead of a strategy, it seems to have been an almost chaotic movement driving media professionals, businesses and products to territories insufficiently predicted, understood and exploited in the cyberspace. Even considering the importance of some solutions adopted by large vehicles, with its monumental specifics (such as billing model adopted by The New York Times from the conception of a porous paywall⁴), and also the expectations surrounding what will be done by The Washington Post, under the control of Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon⁵, nothing in this market points out to the emergence of a generic reference model.

As assumed by Anderson et al. (2012), the current deadlock reflects the exhaustion of business strategies designed for an industrial era of the newspaper publishing operations, and not replaced yet by a suitable model for the “post-industrial journalism”, having the Internet as a cornerstone of this disruption. For these authors, the advent of the great global network practically ended the subsidy model based on advertising, forcing newspaper companies to restructure their operations and seek new opportunities. The

clearest result thus far has been the transfer of advertising revenue from conventional media outlets to internet-based vehicles adept of a results-driven advertising, including Google and Facebook, which are the largest and best-known examples.

At the same time, there seems to be in these new markets a volatile plenty of offers and requests for information that could be redirected to pursue symbolic goods as those that still characterize the journalistic activity in its task to select information and mediate it critically. In order to seize these opportunities, however, a redefinition of the value proposition of journalism is needed, so that its offers could be connected to new demands, exploring new channels and means of relationship, adapting its activities to new resources and process flows, with new partnerships and alliances, so that newspapers, in short, could have a new strategy to thrive, and not just survive.

SEARCHING NEW VALUE PROPOSITIONS

The possibilities of commercial exploitation of resources in digital and online journalism beyond the conventional advertisement's display and subscription sales are diverse and not necessarily new. These include the operation of ecommerce sites, the use of enhanced data for targeting advertising campaigns (target); the remission of readers as customers to registration, sale and promotion modules (lead); the traffic generation to specific advertising sites, including the insertion of editorially contextualized sponsored links; the displaying of image based ads (banners, displays) with animation and enhanced interactivity; the placement of sponsored posts or profiles on social networks; the insertion of ads into interactive journalistic applications (news widgets); the location of commercial establishments in collaborative information maps linked to service journalism contents; the exhibition of overlapping content in augmented reality on printed news pages; the synchronization of messages involving a second or third screen, among several other resources.

Faced with these new trading arrangements, the parameters for advertising pricing acquire new variables, considering not only serving attributes (such as the number of page views obtained), but also specific potential metrics related to the effectiveness of communicative actions, such as number of clicks (or double clicks) received from the ad, the finalized status of a purchase whose access has been originated by the newspaper's website, the completion of a task by the reader as required by the advertiser (such as

filling out a registration form), or the act to install or download a service or product offered in virtual ad⁶, for example.

In Latin American literature, business models designed to digital media journalism received the attention of Flores-Vivar and Guadalupe (2005), whose work features a range of scenarios, practices, processes, and possibilities of commercial exploitation of news media, including a chapter on the emergence of ecommerce as an artifice of business diversification maintained by newspapers companies on the Internet, with the characterization of their strategic and legal frameworks. The authors also provide a set of key elements that define the success of a value proposition built around information products, considering its potential to meet the needs or desires of their audience, as well as how to establish meaningful relationships with them, how to properly handle the technologies involved in the processes of content production and distribution, and how to optimize the information flows maintained throughout the value chain in which they are disseminated or marketed.

Reviewing the evolution of commercial arrangements in six journalistic media published in the Spanish language, Albornoz (2006, p.115) also identifies a movement on diversification of the revenue sources, such as advertising, content selling, subscription and syndication, including information services directed delivered to subscribers, in addition to the operation of virtual ecommerce stores, in a scenario that has already reflected the “variety of commercial enterprises [operated by newspapers] on their own or in association with others.”⁷

His research identified three phases in the succession of the business models for online journalism: the first phase was characterized by the offering of free access to news content and the selling of advertising in simple formats or enhanced with measurement instruments (click-through), animation (shoshkeles) or visual overlay (flyers or floaters); the second phase, with new ways of charging for access to content and variations between full package (bundle) and specific micropayment (de-bundle); the third phase, with experimentation around several models, including the easing of subscription charging through the use of quantitative filters (porosity) and search for specific models associated with specialized content and services.

More recently, the sophistication of these arrangements began to involve technologies that combine the use of databases and semantic web tools (BARBOSA et al., 2008) to

capture, process, store, monitor, categorize and analyze a vast and complex set of data concerning the direction of attention and the consumption habits of the public, driving, as well, the systematization of other data sources for the composition of journalistic byproducts that enable new forms of exploitation of their content and the provision of commercial services in specialized niche markets (GRAY et al., 2012).

Far from being passive, the realization of these promises of valuing reinvigoration for journalism also designs a range of technical issues and, above all, some other ethic and transparency issues in relation to the regulation of such practices, considering, for example, the conditions of consent and permission that should rule the expropriation of personal records from the Internet readers for the purpose of direct marketing by the newspaper vehicles, and more especially for its commercialization with external agents from the advertising market (DAVIS & PATTERSON, 2012).

BRIEF REVISION ON ADVERTORIAL PRACTICES IN JOURNALISM

In specialized literature, it is possible to identify studies that define and draw an overview of the use of “advertorials” in printed newspapers (GOODLAD et.al., 1997), questioning, for example, how effective are the results obtained through editorial procedures dedicated to the “camouflage” of commercial ads (KIM et.al., 2001); or characterizing the conflicts between advertising and journalism teams in newspaper companies due to the sustaining of opposite symbolic values associated with the use of “advertorial” content (ECKMAN & LINDLOF, 2003); or reporting the information pollution and other negative effects associated with the abuse of this practice in the journalistic scenario (ELLERBACH, 2006).

Regarding the Brazilian press, the emergence and the evolution of hybrid products and languages at the border between journalism and advertising have been analyzed by Marshall (2003), who describes the collapse of the mythical wall that separates the news and ads. He points to the transformation of journalistic language itself through this process, with the adoption of subtle and mimetic types of advertising which are capable of dissolving the persuasive nature of its messages into the context of the news. The author identifies 25 variations of this genre, called as “pink journalism” models, such as paid advertising disguised as news without a proper identification (mimesis), news presented with an advertising character (composition), news production under

request from the commercial sector (“quinientismo”), creation of journalistic products customized for publishing advertisements (demand), among many others.

From another point of view, the issue is also handled by Alegría (2010), who uses examples from the Spanish media to weave a philological and lexical analysis on the evolution of the term “advertorial” (publi-reportage) in contexts in which the radical sometimes refers to the idea of “public” and sometimes to the idea of “advertising”. Among the cases studied, the author recovers examples from texts published by the newspapers La Vanguardia and ABC over the past nine decades, from the 1920s to the 2000s. The conclusion is that during decades of 1950, 1960 and 1970, the term “advertorial” was not so much associated with advertising, but with the idea of “public”, which could, in the author’s interpretation, have given a motivation for advertisers to appropriate the term aiming to bring some extra credibility to the institutional advertising texts, which would constitute the primary meaning of the term in the following decades.

Lara González (2011) also contributes to this debate by performing a comparative study on the publication of advertorial content in Spanish newspapers of national and provincial circulation, concluding that these commercial journalistic texts are only occasionally inserted in those cases, while, on the other hand, they constitute a standard practice among regional titles.

In general, these studies help us to remember that despite the latest digital technologies have expanded and even exacerbated these confluences between editorial and commercial content, the porosity of the border that separates the material produced in newsrooms from that originated from advertising agencies or marketing departments is not exactly a novelty, and neither emerged along with the tools of hypertext. This observation therefore requires, in this text, a brief retrospective view on the exploitation of editorial and commercial spaces in journalism. Although it is not the object of this paper to discuss the conceptual distinctions among these ancient practices referred by terms such as “sponsored content”, “advertorial” and “native advertising”, it is worth noting some precedent for this practice of binding the messages from the news with those which have advertising function.

There are numerous examples that can reveal the roots of this hybrid genre of journalism and advertising in printed pages, as well as on radio and television. It is interesting to note, for example, that the term “advertorial”, a blend of “advertisement” and

“editorial”, first appeared in the Merriam-Webster dictionary in 1946⁸, but the practice of confusing advertising content and journalism content with the intention of favoring the penetration of ads by usurping the credibility of news seems to be almost as old as the business of press.

In an article published in January 2014⁹, the reporter Adrienne LaFrance compiles some examples of this type of content published in newspapers since the end of the 19th century, including an example extracted from an edition of May 5, 1888 of the New York Daily Tribune, which fall under the concepts of “sponsored content”, “advertorial” or “native advertising”, also featuring sample microfilmed pages of newspapers such as The Tulsa World (1915), the Arizona Republican (1915), Honolulu Advertiser (1927), and provides examples of more recent similar practices recorded in the New Yorker (1959) and the New York Times (1960).

The journalist Ryan Chittum, editor of The Audit, a specialized business press section on the Columbia Journalism Review, summarizes the problem by discussing, in an article published in April 2014, the contemporary trends in the use of “native ads” by American online publications:

Native ads are just advertorials by another name, and advertorials have long been published by news organizations of the highest standards, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The New Yorker. (...) In a perfect world, journalism would be paid for entirely by readers and publications’ interests would align with them and them alone. But (...) 99.9 percent of journalists and their organizations cannot. And so in this fallen world, we have advertising, which is potentially corrupting in all its forms, not just in advertorial ones.”¹⁰

GUIDES, LINKS AND ECOMMERCE IN SELECTED NEWSPAPERS

To illustrate how newspapers are exploring some of these emerging possibilities for connecting news and advertising in digital media environments, this paper presents some collected examples of pages maintained on the Internet by two selected journalistic vehicles: Folha de S. Paulo, from Brazil, and El País, from Spain. This survey was conducted in the second semester of 2013 with the aim of checking how is presented, in such cases, the association between editorial content and commercial services related to publishing informative guides, advertising links and ads ecommerce.

As a preliminary result, it was discovered different modes in which proper journalistic content is directly bounded to the offering of products and services advertised for sale

in their own ecommerce storefronts or in advertisers websites and partners' vehicles, including direct and indirect forms of resource use hypertext to achieve the purpose of inducing the consumer to buy. Some of these examples are described in the following sections.

ANALYSIS OF *EL PAÍS*

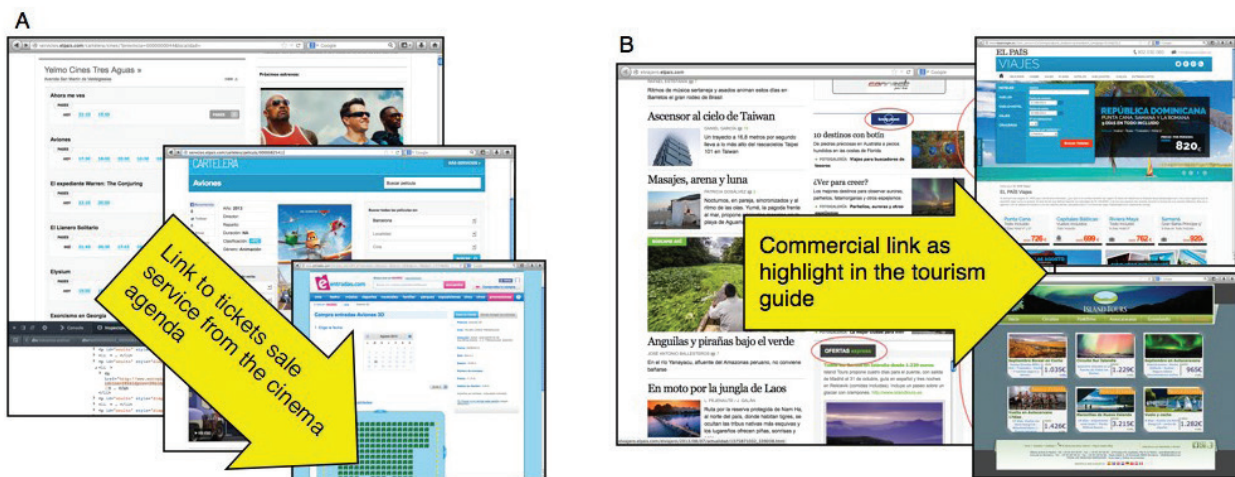
The journalistic website of the Spanish newspaper *El País*¹¹ gets average traffic of 1,2 million unique users per day, generating an average of 3,5 million page views in the period, according to data released by the newspaper itself on the advertising market¹². Its content structure is divided into five thematic news categories (for international, politics, economy, culture and sports). At a secondary level, are listed three categories of promotional offers (for jobs, courses and residences), followed by a general index page, access links to versions of the newspaper for mobile devices, the digital facsimile of the printed edition, some featured travel and products offers, a collection of ebooks, a list of widgets, stock exchange data and information, various other services (including gas stations map, games, raffles, general maps and yellow pages), classified ads, promotions and a wine club. In lower areas of the homepage there are boxes referring to informational guides about fashion and tourism and to a set of publications available in the company's virtual kiosk, offered for subscribers.

Most of its material identified under the labels of services, promotions, offers and classified ads are operated by the newspaper with support or through partners vehicles and, generally, does not maintain connections with specific news content, despite having its highlights and search filters exhibited in valued spaces allocated in the news pages and keeping, often, a direct and thematic relationship with the categories in which the news contents are divided. Nevertheless, some other service contents and informational guides with special commercial appeal sustain direct ties between their editorial pages and specific marketing tools. This happens in the case of film and show schedules accompanying culture news which are bound, through a link, to tickets sale services, or, in the case of travel reports, to promotional pages that sell tour packages that may or may not be related to the destinations attractions informed on the bounded stories.

In the first case, for example, newspaper content leads to a service named Cartelera, which leads to Entradas.com, a partner website (Figure 1a). In the second case,

the newspaper highlight lead to the guide El Viajero, which leads to a proper commercial service, El País Viaje, or to other services offered by partner websites (Figure 1b), such as Lonely Planet, Monocle and Ofertas Express, which is connected to EskUp and others, such as Island Tours and Weekendes. It is formed, thus, a sequential chain of links with business motivation having as destination a financial transaction whose thread started, probably, in the reading of a tourism story published online by the newspaper. Another kind of content association occurs through El País Club de Vinos, which is defined as a selection and wine sales service to the reader, that “helps you to make a good purchase from each wine selection, because we offer you previous information, quality assurance, and the market’s best price”¹³.

Figure 1. Examples of links between informational and commercial services (I)



Source: Adapted from elpais.com reproduction

In these observations, it was also identified the insertion of links to commercial pages directly related to the stories' subject in news and report's text bodies¹⁴ (Figure 2a, 2b, 2c); the insertion of links in the title and the end of the body text of reviews about commercial establishments portrayed in editorial sections¹⁵; the insertion of links among the technical information of products that are reviewed or indicated by a service journalistic text (Figure 2d)¹⁶; the insertion of links in photo subtitles of houses which are announced for sale¹⁷ (Figure 2e); the insertion of commercial highlights exhibited in an editorial style (using the same typeface of the news texts), among common editorial highlights, and having for destination an ad with a product offer for sale online (Figure 2f)¹⁸.

Whereas most of these direct ties maintained between journalistic content and commercial instruments is through the insertion of links, it's worth noting that the table of formats and advertising prices published by the newspaper indicates a price of two Euros for the service "textlink". The content analysis of these pages, however, do not identified explicit forms of indication so the reader could distinguish between links with an informative function, elected by editorial criteria, and links which insertion is due to the accession of advertisers. On the other hand, although this newspaper maintains its own sales service of ebooks, through the showcase of El País Selección on Amazon, it have not been found, within the limits of this analysis, any direct links between news content related to books in the El País editorship of culture and this commercial service.

Figure 2. Examples of links between informational and commercial services (II)



Source: Adapted from elpais.com reproduction

ANALYSIS OF *FOLHA DE S. PAULO*

The website of the Brazilian newspaper Folha de S. Paulo had 23,9 million unique visitors in the month of June 2013, with 305,5 million page views during this period¹⁹. Their slogan, “Folha_the newspaper of the future”²⁰, both the message and the form (with the use of the underline graph signal), refers to the sense of innovation and anticipation of trends.

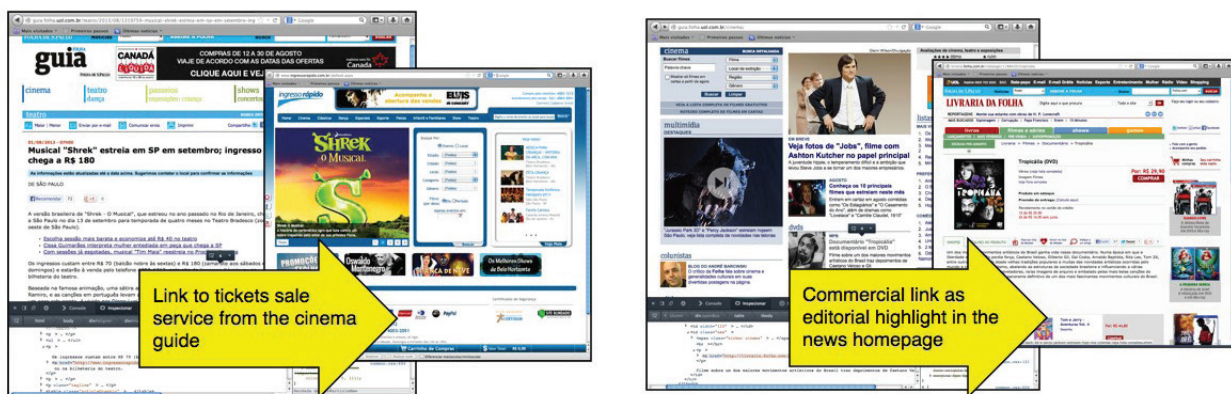
In its home page²¹, the content is divided by a main menu with twelve sections, corresponding to nine thematic editorial content, a classified ads section, a blogs section, and an extension of the menu to access other topics. It was noticed that the second-level buttons derived from this menu could either refer to editorial news content and to other kinds of information services with commercial appeal. Thus, the editorial section for business themes also holds classified ads on this subject, and the editorial section for culture also gives access to a cultural guide that schedules shows and events. Among these contents, there are the informative section Guia Folha, the Folha Shop ecommerce webpage, the newspaper’s bookstore Livraria da Folha, and its classified ads website. It was also recorded the explicit use of sponsored links in the pages of this newspaper on the Internet.

Guia Folha publishes content on cinema, theater, dance, tours, exhibitions, children’s attractions, shows and concerts, restaurant and other eating establishments, as well as bars and nightclubs. Users can register and create a custom profile declaring their cultural and leisure preferences. Some of the informative texts about shows, and especially about plays, include the use of links throughout the texts to an external sale service site called Ingresso Rápido²² (Figure 3a). Other texts are dedicated to orient the reader to the most convenient option among several alternatives for the purchase of tickets.²³

These texts generally include names of portrayed companies, prices of their products and services and often bring direct ties to specific pages of certain commercial establishments²⁴, through links inserted in the text body, or highlighted in lists or in photo subtitles. Reports on commercial establishments are signed by journalists or with an indicative term of the newspaper’s office location (“São Paulo”), without distinguishing the authorship credit between the contents of this specific section, as a service guide, and others, from the editorial sections of the newspaper.

The survey recorded the use of highlights in editorial style, with the same layout and typeface used in news highlights, to lead the reader directly to a page that sells products on an ecommerce website owns by the newspaper company, carrying its brand²⁵ (Figure 3b). There is also a direct link between the editorial section Comida (Food), on the internet, which corresponds to a weekly supplement on the newspaper's printed version, and the Guia Folha's search engines, that leads to specific restaurants and bars information. It is worth noting that this same type of association between editorial content of the newspaper and the guide's search filter is not true in relation to the editorial section of culture, called Ilustrada, even in its sub-sections of cinema, theater and concerts, which could possess, in theory, direct correspondence to the respective categories of the guide's services.

Figure 3. Examples of links between informational and commercial services (III)



Source: adapted from folha.com reproduction

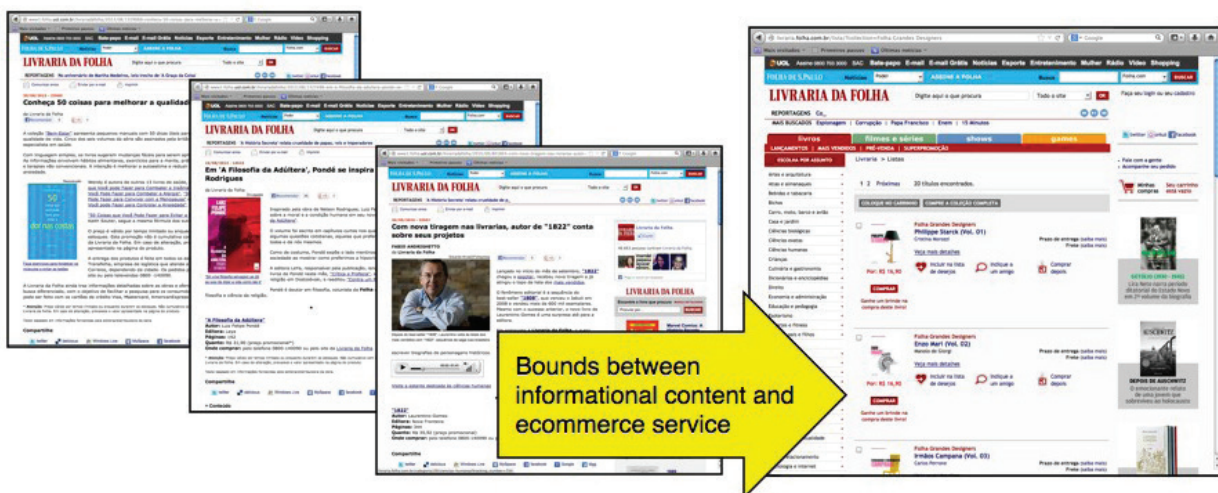
The newspaper maintains two ecommerce sites directly or indirectly associated with its portal. Folha Shop, despite having featured ads and offerings displays integrated to the news pages, may be considered as a separate vehicle from the newspaper, by having its content tied to the commercial service Shopping UOL, constituting an extension of this broader offers search engine and prices comparator. Apparently, this service only takes advantage of the newspaper brand to add value to its operation, since all the offers shown in Folha Shop refer to third party websites specialized in ecommerce, as Submarino, Americanas.com, FastShop, among others.

In contrast, Livraria da Folha is an ecommerce service operated by the newspaper itself and integrated into Folha's online content structure, although its operations are

managed as a separate company and presented as a partner vehicle in the company's advertising website²⁶. These information contents and ads offerings are divided among books, movies and series, shows, games, and CDs, but it was noticed that this last category appears only in the search filter, without an exclusive or prominent button on the page. It is a virtual store that sells its own products, which are edited and published by the newspaper itself (such as books and collections from Publifolha), and a great amount of other third parties products as well (such as books, films, records, series, concerts and games in general, from several other editorial companies).

There is specific news content published in this section witch seams to be specially designed to bring information depicting the products sold in the commercial service, including links to supplementary texts and materials about other products offered for sale²⁷ (Figure 4). These texts are signed by “Livraria da Folha” and, similarly to what occurs in the Guia, they do not maintain direct links with the editorial content published in Ilustrada, the culture editorial section of the newspaper. Some of these informative content appear in multimedia format (such as an audio interview with the author of a book for sale²⁸), offering subsidies and guidance that, in general, fulfill the purpose of inducing the reader to the purchase decision.

Figure 4. Example of link between editorial content and ecommerce (I)

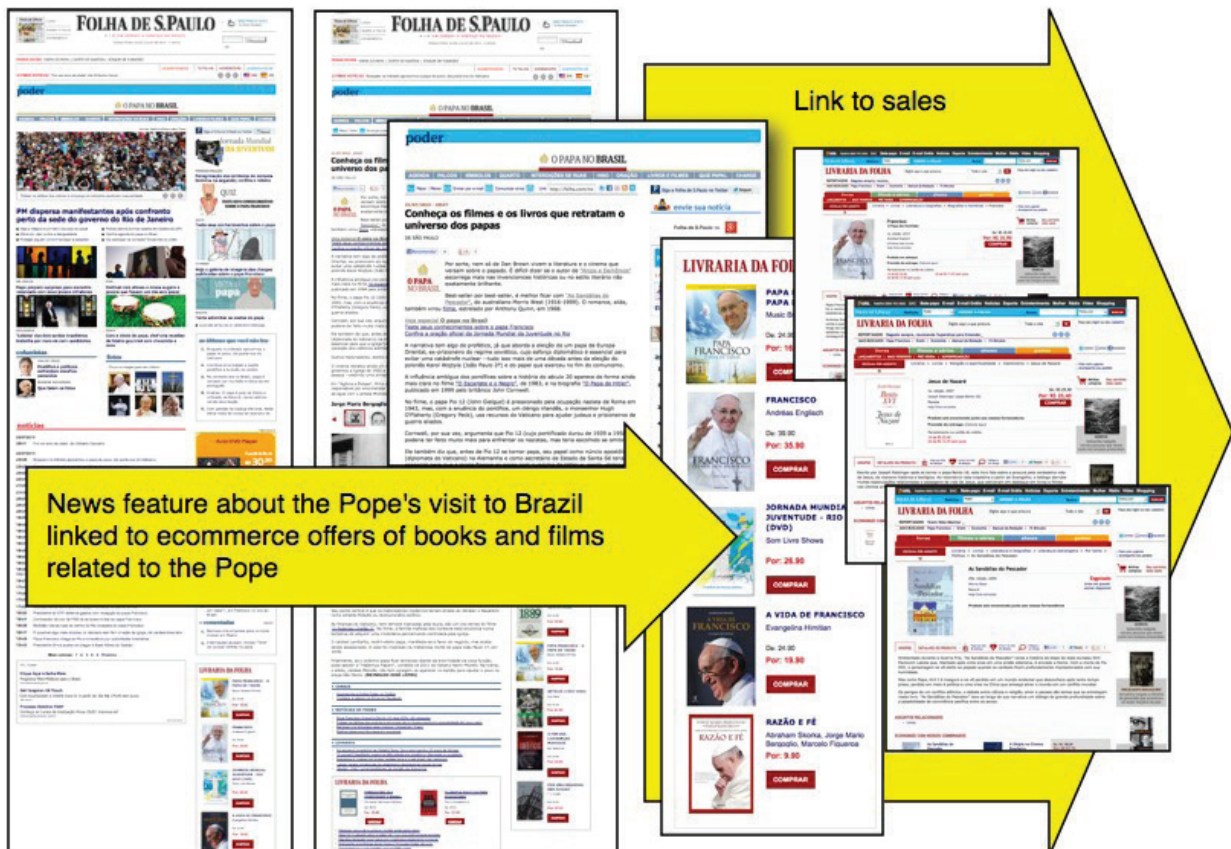


Source: adapted from folha.com reproduction

It was also observed that the link between the news content and the offerings of Livraria da Folha can occur with greater emphasis on more specific situations, as noted on the

occasion of the Pope Francis' visit to Brazil, in 2013, when ecommerce offerings of books and movies about the Pope's biography, with and editorial contextualization, have divided the highlight spaces of the journalistic website with articles and other materials specially alluding to this agenda²⁹ (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Example of link between editorial content and ecommerce (II)



Source: adapted from folha.com reproduction

The newspaper also has its own classified ads publishing in the categories of real state, vehicles, jobs and business services, with access from the news menu, also displayed as a sub-section within the editorial section for business, money and economy issues. All the pages of *Folha's* website potentially exhibit enclosed boxes of sponsored links, separated from the news texts bodies, as an advertising service that is provided through a partnership with *UOL Clicks* and, therefore, differs from the method of inserting links that could be verified about the relationship between *Guia Folha* and *Ingresso Rápido* webpages, for instance. Differently from what has been seen about *El País*,

the advertising media kit offered by *Folha* does not mention the commercial or marketing exploitation of the insertion of sponsored links in journalistic texts.

CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL

As seen, these new business models and its editorial operations depend on a direct relationship linking journalistic content to ecommerce deals, with the objective of enhancing access to sales storefronts and, consequently, the generation of income obtained from these operations. It is possible, however, to question the appropriateness of a classification of newspaper's commercial byproducts in digital media as journalistic products themselves, since they fail to satisfy at least two (a and c) of three necessary conditions for the characterization of this publishing activity, as states López García (2005, cited by MESO and LÓPEZ ALONSO, 2008, p.81): “a) the primacy of strictly journalistic content (vs. other offer, for example the sale of products) b) the subjection to the present time agenda, and c) the use of journalistic standards and professional teams in content generation”³⁰.

Considering some of the examples taken from the operation of service guides, advertising links and ecommerce offers in the analyzed newspapers, as well as the pressures which are currently known due to the commercial instrumentalization of journalistic content, our perception is that the binding of these commercial arrangements to journalistic genres of content gives rise to new digital media publishing products, with an advertising-editorial trend, with less autonomy and exemption for producing the editorial content that they convey, since their news selection and promotion are subjected to parameters extrinsic to journalism.

This condition is characterized, for example, through the introduction of commercial criteria in the composition of news values that determine the decisions about the guidelines and the hierarchical position of informative highlights and, probably, by restricting the freedom of criticism in relation to informational and opinionative content alluding to related topics or, more specifically, to the products and services displayed for sale, also interfering in the semantic composition of messages, with the deliberate introduction of adjectives and other verbal compositions with an advertising appeal, in order to obtain inducing effects of consumption in the readers' attention and behavior while facing the news pages.

Thereby, it is possible to sustain the hypothesis that the business model that supports these journalism byproducts introduces in the preparation of newspapers some tension elements that could be able to negatively affect the autonomy and the exemption of such activities, subjecting them to the very logic of promotional ecommerce operations.

It is suggested, therefore, that the identified opportunities around these new models shall be evaluated not only for its economic potential, but also in relation to the risks they introduce, in the medium and long term, considering its possible impact on reducing the autonomy of the editors in the production of informative and opinionative materials, the generation, on ethical conflicts in content management, on the position of advertisers as close partners of newspapers' commercial operations, and on the commitment of public perception regarding the credibility that, conventionally, legitimizes the quality and the editorial independence of the vehicles.

It is still possible to foresee situations in which this type of commercial exploitation could be maintained under the control of a professional management, committed to the ethical principles of journalism and able to meet new demands for information and services identified with different audience segments, at the same time that it watches over the observance of the larger public interest justifies its activities. This condition could be partially guaranteed with the definition of journalistic criteria for the selection of products and services to be involved in commercial operations, which would be designed in order to get the maximum possible overlap between the quality of the products traded, considering the interests of the public, and the guiding principles of the broader public interest.

To move forward in this proposal, it would also be necessary to ensure instruments that make clearer to the readers and consumers the relationship between journalistic contents and its promotional links, distinguishing featured articles that are free of advertising from others that lead to the induction of trade. Within these and other guarantees, it is worth pointing, finally, the possibility of adapting this business model to its operation also by public media companies, so that they can exploit, perhaps uniquely, the marketing of certain cultural products and services and, thus, generate an extra income capable of complementing (but not to replace) the proceeds from governmental funding sources. Thus, it is possible to identify opportunities related, for example, to the sale of books, movies and albums partially financed by government agencies or directly produced by public publishers, such as university stamps or the

official press, apart from brokering, through these media channels, the sale of tickets to shows and events also held with the support of these public segments.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on these information and propositions, it should be emphasized that the goal of the content analysis presented in this paper is not limited to systematize commercial modalities that could contribute for the reinvention of business around digital media journalism, and nor is it intended, thereby, stimulating its adoption. Our main intention is to contribute to the indication of parameters under which professionals and researchers might come and assess themselves on how and to what extent such commercial practices which arise as an opportunity for newspapers also exert editorial impacts and implications, in that the contents are to be molded to induce consumption by the lecturing, aiming to encourage people not only to read the informative and opinionative content offered, but also buy the products and services they refer.

This concern considers that there is a fundamental distinction between the approaches to ecommerce stores generated from delimited advertisements displayed in news pages and those accesses generated from contextualized elements allocated within editorial content. The first case corresponds to the conventional exhibition of advertising, as the page layout is divided between a newspaper and an advertising area, only with the advantage of having direct links between the ads and the destination page. In the second case, these two areas are merged, hybridized, leading the news and the opinion texts to assume the role of conductors of the interest and the attention of the readers towards pure commercial offers, inaugurating, by means of the hypertext, new shocks in the mythical separation which is attributed, in journalism, between the domains of the Church (editorial) and the State (commercial), under the terms of the American publisher Henry Luce (1898-1967).

Attention should be drawn to this, or journalism in digital media will take the risk of getting profitability exactly at the expense of its identity. In other words, such a business model could even prove to be profitable for newspapers companies, but they will have left, then, to make real journalism.

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ENDNOTES

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