

The boom and the establishment of “blogs” in online regional press in Spain

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative study about the evolution of the use of blogs in Spanish regional press to analyse if the performance of blogs has changed significantly on the basis of the content and the level of updating in recent years. A first analysis was conducted in 2006 when the boom of this phenomenon. Following a new analysis in 2009, this work carries out a comparison of the evolution of the same performance parameters in both years. It can be stated that no clear evolution patterns exist, that the number of blogs has no relation with the updating of these in either of the periods (the beginning period or the establishment period) and that the main difference detected is that in 2006 more attention was paid to the personal contents that provided blogs with the indisputable character of a tool for personal expression, while in 2009 bloggers appeared to be more interested in what is local and current.

Keywords: Weblogs, Online journalism, Local press, Citizen journalism, Collaborative tools.

Introduction

The development of new formulae such as blogs, weblogs and personal notebooks has fostered the development of spaces that provide information about the most immediate environment as well as a more active user approach when creating the contents (Gumbrecht, 2004). This phenomenon changed the panorama of social media, and the traditional definition of media turned out to be questioned (Shifry, 2007). Thus, based on social cognitive theory, Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2007:1) manifest that “blog usage as well as individual motives behind continued usage is an important area of research. This research aims to examine behavioral motivations underlying individual intention to keep using blogs”.

In this line, the aim of this study is to analyse if patterns of creation, use and updating exist in terms of the blog phenomenon, and if the performance of the blogs housed in regional press has varied significantly in recent years.

To achieve this, a first examination (McIntosh, 2005) of the phenomenon was carried out in 2006, when the appearance of blogs experienced a decisive boom, and in 2009 when the phenomenon was expected to have become more established. Data from the most recent analysis (Carrillo & Castillo, 2009) revealed the static nature of the phenomenon, but no evaluation was ever carried out on the comparison of the data

collected in 2009 with the first data observed in 2006, when the blog phenomenon exploded onto the media scene of the Internet (Kahn & Kellner, 2004; Johnson & Kaye, 2004).

The question arising from such a comparison was that, if in view of the most recent results, the phenomenon was not revealing clear performance patterns, it was essential to analyse these results with the first data collected, in order to demonstrate an upward or downward trend in the maturity of the phenomenon, taking into account the moment it began and its position three years later.

It is not objective to assume that the evaluation of the most recent data means a positive evolution of the phenomenon without carrying out this comparative analysis.

Thus, we worked on certain initial questions such as:

Were the essential traits and characteristics of the blogs different in the two periods?

Was the development of the blogs in online regional press more consistent when the phenomenon was beginning and during its boom than after its evolution?

Did the parameters observed evolve positively or negatively?

With these initial intentions we endeavoured to shed some light on the creation and evolution of the active participation of anonymous people when they use spaces provided by the online regional newspapers, as channels of personal expression and as ways to keep in touch with current affairs, as well as the most up-to-date information, as special features of blogs. According to that, a demographical description of bloggers is not possible in this study because the blog's reason of being is the possibility to be a free space of expression without knowing who is whom, as Grumbetch (2004) refers as independent bloggers in "protected spaces"

In this regard, the comparison of both periods was carried out in accordance with the same parameters observed: the content of the blogs presented in each period and the levels of updating present in 2006 and 2009.

Blogs and social media as an interactive digital channel of expression

In the context of media, Shifry (2007) considers the real convergence among traditional media and blogs and he manifests that, according to his study, blogs are the source of information that, more and more, people use and, for that reason, the difference between media and blogs is much more difficult to establish. In this line, Johnson & Kaye (2004) explore the degree to which reliance on Weblogs as well as traditional and online media sources predicts credibility of Weblogs after controlling for demographic and political factors. Weblog users judged blogs as highly credible, more credible than traditional newspapers.

According to Rainie (2005), blogs have become one of the greatest phenomena of the Internet. A vast communication space has emerged, in which millions of people become active communicators.

As well as a register of interesting pages, experiences and opinions are also included, meaning that, like the press, blogs are capable of generating information about current topics.

According to Kanh & Kellner (2004:91) "The new internet subculture that has erupted around 'blogging' is particularly deserving of analysis here, as bloggers have demonstrated themselves as techno activists favoring not only democratic self-expression and networking, but also global media critique and journalistic sociopolitical intervention".

The passing of time has demonstrated that with the "fashion" phase well and truly over, only those blogs with a serious approach and commitment as a basis have remained in cyberspace, since one of the main values of a weblog, like the press, is the need to be constantly up to date. On the contrary, the constant dynamism of a blog through discussing current affairs is also one of the drives behind its survival.

Blogs share with the digital phenomenon and social media the possibility of creating interactive experiences (Carrillo & Castillo, 2007), which first requires an increased knowledge of interactivity, in which the return of communication is the start of what we call "interactive experiences" for the user, which Carrillo (2005) defined using three essential characteristics also present to a greater or lesser degree in blogs what can influence content and updating:

- These experiences help to create an active control on the part of the user who can freely enter and leave the experience that he himself is creating. Thus, Gumbrecht (2004) researched the ability of bloggers to control the content of what is "broadcast" in their blogs and how this affects audience perception.

- They allow greater synchrony or minimum space of time between the reactions of the subjects participating.

- Interactivity must promote multi-directionality, or the possibility of creating a dialogue not between only two, but between various subjects, in different directions and even on different levels of involvement (Prado, 1987). Gumbrecht (2004) discuss the importance of feedback and commenting as it relates to "community-minded" bloggers more than "independent" bloggers. However, according to Hsi-Peng Lu, Judy Chuan-Chuan Lin, Kuo-Lun Hsiao & Li-Ting Cheng (2010) "although blog service providers have developed and promoted various interactive functions of their blog platforms, effects of the interactivities on posting behaviour are still vague"

Blogs in regional on line press

In this vein, participatory journalism, also known as journalism 3.0 (Varela, 2005), enables the creation of interactive experiences which are defined as: "The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information". Grabowicz (2003) adds the importance of weblogs as a way to bring Journalists into a larger Community and Lasica (2003) manifests, in general, several benefits weblogs bring to journalism. Schudson (1999: 122), in his critique of the public journalism movement, describes a "fourth model of journalism;" that is, a model of journalism "in which authority is vested not in the market, not in a party, and not in the journalist but in the public".

New terminology has appeared, in this sense we no longer speak of journalistic genre but rather "the transmedia narrative"; we refer to the old news publishing networks as "corporate hybridization"; and the ever-more antiquated concept of the audience -even the concept of public opinion- has been replaced in Web 2.0 by the concept of "collective intelligence" (Lévy, 1997), "intelligent multitudes" (Rheingold, 2002), in Elias (2010) or "community-mindedness" (Gumbrecht, 2004).

Traditionally, the media have provided spaces on their web pages where well-known journalists and anonymous citizens could house their blogs and participate in a conversation being created in cyberspace, using both computers and other mobile devices (Díaz Noci, 2009).). In this sense the blogosphere can move people, can do new topics arise, can discuss programs or even can change opinions (Cervera, 2006: 16)

Although blogs started out as personal diaries, their content has evolved becoming used for different kinds of communicative purposes. In this regard, Fumero (2005) has made an approximate classification of blogs: "journalistic, political, corporative (organisational) or of companies, professional, personal and educational". In the case of journalistic blogs, the weblogs started to gain importance when they were used by journalists as pages of a more personal nature, where they could reveal their less constrained messages to the determining media (Lowrey, 2006). However less has been written about the anonymous citizens who write contents in the spaces provided by the digital journalistic media for their own personal expression.

In this vein, as Estalella (2005) reveals, referring to blogs, "the existence and dynamic, and by extension the operation of the blogosphere, cannot be understood without referring to its highly personal aspect" what Hsi-Peng Lu, Judy Chuan-Chuan Lin, Kuo-Lun Hsiao & Li-Ting Cheng (2010) refer in terms of the parameter "self-expression".

Although not all blog spaces are used for journalistic purposes, it is evident that blogs exploit the advantages of the Internet for journalistic communication (Murugesan, 2007, Abadal & Guallar, 2010). In

fact, the presence of blogs in digital press spaces has been studied (Rengel, 2005), an analysis of free newspapers' web portals showed that they were competing with subscription media by offering personal communication space and that their best front-page articles were written by readers (Álvarez, 2005).

However, it is possible to say that weblogs incorporate some modifications in the treatment of the present compared to newspapers.

- They include topics that are not broached in traditional media (Lasica, 2003).

- They include the personal reflections of the creator of the weblog (Lasica, 2003, Grabowicz, 2003).

- They include information relating to the Internet itself which is highlighted in these virtual spaces (García & Capón, 2004: 124).

- They provide journalists with more freedom, allowing them to write opinions, select topics and decide on the frequency of publication (Lasica, 2003; Grabowicz, 2003).

Salaverría (2008), using current literature on the study topic as a basic, suggests that the blogs be divided into three different categories.

- Weblogs housed in cyber media and worked on by professionals.

- Blogs specialising in the progress of journalism as a profession.

- Blogs which, without being part of any cyber media, deal with current affairs.

It is evident that this classification omits the possibility that blogs being housed in spaces provided by cyber media can have non-professionals as the active subjects creating and updating the blog; users who are concerned about current affairs (Lasica, 2003; Grabowiz, 2003). This triggered the interest of this work to study the phenomenon of the peak and evolution of the creation of blogs by anonymous people in spaces corresponding to online regional press.

On this occasion it is the readers themselves who start the weblogs in the spaces provided by the media. It is a strategy to make the audience find a place to expose their messages in the newspaper. In this way, the media guarantees visits and as Hindman (2009) says "the blogosphere preserves the patterns of concentrated control that have existed in the media for decades". On the other hand, the blogger can benefit from the visibility provided by the online media, despite of the fact that as Hindman (2009) says too, although the possibility to make sound on the Internet increased, the probability to succeed on the Internet, is not as wide as people think.

In accordance with Salaverría (2008) we can say that blogs have been studied from different points of view with a clear lack of studies about some aspects.

The author collects a wide literature review which we summarise and draw up with the aim of detecting new research areas among which our study can be placed.

Area of study of the blogs	Authors
The social function of blogs compared to newspapers. Their role as a new media and influence on the work of future journalists	Schudson (1999), Blood (2002); Andrews (2003); Grabowicz (2003) Lasica (2003); Blood (2003) Matheson (2004a); Gillmor (2004); Jonhson & Kaye (2004), Domínguez (2006); Orihuela (2005), Cebrián Herreros & Flores Vivar (2007); Carlson (2007).
The formal taxonomy, technological tools and rhetorical features of blogs	Estalella (2005); López (2005); Orihuela (2006); Flores & Aguado (2006); López & Otero (2007); Marcelo & Martín (2007).
Blogs as a new journalistic genre. The characteristics and functions of the so-called "journalistic blogs"	Salaverría (2005 ^a), Morán (2005), Singer (2005); Rengel (2005); Robinson (2006); Frascaroli, Fernández & Millán (2007); García, Martínez & Vizcaíno-Laorga (2007), Abadal & Guallar (2010).
Composition strategies employed by bloggers. Journalism and blogs in the practice of composition and style	Matheson (2004b), Salaverría (2008)
Reasons encouraging Internet surfers to read and write blogs	Rheingold (2002), Kanh & Keller (2004), Gumbrecht (2004), Kaye (2005) Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2007), Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2009)
Impact of weblogs on defining the thematic agenda of public opinion	García Orosa & Capón García (2004), Hindman (2009)
Blogs as a part of the informative offer of digital newspapers	Rengel (2005), Alvarez (2005)

Taking into consideration the main focuses of attention highlighted, we observe an evident lack of studies about the phenomenon in terms of two essential parameters which define the nature of all types of blogs: the study of the blog contents (the presence or absence of personal topics linked or not to highly topical current affairs) and the levels of updating and maintenance that weblogs present, since without this quality, blogs lose their meaning in very little time.

Methodological approach

This work attempts to study the evolution of the blog phenomenon in regional press, comparing the data collected from an analysis carried out in 2006 about blogs in regional press with the data from an analysis carried out on the same body of study in 2009 (Carrillo & Castillo, 2009).

In this line, our study about blogs in the on line regional press in Spain as a place where readers can create their own "protected spaces" (Grumbecht, 2004) was carried out, in the first semester of 2006 and 2009.

This work's contribution is based on analysing the evolution of the phenomenon of creating and maintaining blogs at the beginning of their existence (2006) and three years later (2009). In order to

achieve this, a tracking was carried out of the blogs existing in 2006, in the online Spanish regional press of the group Vocento (<http://www.vocento.com/espanol/portada3.htm>) and those existing in 2009 in the same body of study, analysing the most relevant characteristics in both periods.

There are two essential reasons for researching blogs of regional press on the Internet:

1. Bloggers are drawn to regional media for various reasons:

- Greater proximity to subjects dealt with in the blog and in the newspapers.
- Greater knowledge of reality (due to this proximity).
- Greater commitment in political, social matters, etc.

2. The second reason is that the structure of spaces used for blogs in these regional media is very homogeneous.

Moreover, it is highlight that the two years analyzed were relevant in the social and economic Spanish reality. In 2006, according to the one of the most Spanish important paper: El País (2007), the financial increment was notable as a result of the Spanish long expansive business cycle. On the other hand, it was a period in what problems arise to be manifested as facts in 2009, such as: deficit, low concurrence, work-related problems, the dependency of consumption and construction industry. In this sense according to Ortega & Peñalosa (2012), 2009 was a period when the Spanish economy was submerged in a period of contracting that turned out to be a period of slowing down, 2010, what announced the current financial crisis.

The aims of this study are expressed in the following initial hypotheses:

- Blogs in regional press are a phenomenon that follows clearer performance patterns as time passes, thereby becoming established as information media (Lasica, 2003).
- It is expected that as the phenomenon matures the rate of updating will become homogeneous.

Thus, the level of updating will be uniform, responding to the same performance patterns of bloggers in the two analysed periods.

In this way, if the number of blogs increases in 2009, the increase will be proportionate to a higher rate of updating.

In line with the informative contents present in the regional media, it is still the local context and personal subjects that most interest blogs housed in regional press (Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao, 2007).

Thus, the level of updating of blogs will be directly proportionate to the special treatment of information about current affairs and personal blogs.

Methodology process

First step:

First, it was selected a Spanish group of media (Vocento) and all their regional on line press what you can see in the table 1. Secondly, it was counted every single blog in every regional on line newspapers. It was possible to determine the presence of different categories of blogs established in that newspapers and the number of blogs in each category.

Table 1 presents all the newspapers studied and the number of blogs, grouped according to subject or categories. An initial comparative analysis enables us to obtain an idea about the blog phenomenon and observe that among the regional newspapers of the Vocento group in 2009, two blogs appear which were not present in 2006: *El diario Montañés* and *Las provincias*. On the contrary, in the 2006 analysis the newspaper *El Correo digital*, part of the same group, was not included, since its blog subjects did not have a grouping pattern like those of the rest of the sample. Nevertheless, the newspaper was included in the 2009 analysis since at that time its blogs were better structured.

Table 1. *Blogs* according to subjects

NEWSPAPER	BLOGS ACCORDING TO SUBJECTS 2009	BLOGS ACCORDING TO SUBJECTS 2006
1. EL CORREO DIGITAL http://www.elcorreodigital.com	Authors' blogs	
	Current affairs	
	Art and culture	
	Science and technology	
	Cinema and television	
	Sport	
	Humour	
	Internet	
	Mountains	
	Personal blogs	
	Trends	
	Various	
	Basques abroad	
	Videogames	
2. EL DIARIO VASCO http://www.diariovasco.com	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Sport	Sport

Basque Country	Leisure and past-times	Leisure and past-times
	Other	Other
	Politics	Politics
	Basque Country Football Federation	Basque Country Football Federation
3. LA VERDAD http://www.laverdad.es Murcia	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Albacete	Albacete
	Alicante	Alicante
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Media	Media
	Murcia	Murcia
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
	<i>Readers abroad</i>	
4. IDEAL http://www.idealdigital.es Andalusia/ Granada	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Local	Local
	Media	Media
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
5. DIARIO SUR http://www.diariosur.es Andalusia/Malaga	Local	Local
	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
	<i>Authors' blogs</i>	<i>Other</i>
	<i>People from Malaga abroad</i>	<i>Media</i>
	<i>Associations and NGOs</i>	
<i>Colaboradores en Sur.es</i>		

6. LA RIOJA http://www.larioja.com La Rioja.	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Local	Local
	Media	Media
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs.
	<i>Blog'n'roll 2009</i>	
	<i>Lo mejor de vinorioja.com</i>	
7. EL NORTE DE CASTILLA http://www.nortecastilla.es Castille and Leon	<i>Billete de ida</i>	<i>Art and culture</i>
	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport	Sport and leisure
	<i>Leisure</i>	
	Media	Media
	Castille and Leon	Local
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
	University	University
	Other	Other
8. EL COMERCIO DIGITAL http://www.elcomerciodigital.com Asturias	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Local	Local
	Media	Media
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
9. LA VOZ DE CÁDIZ http://www.lavozdigital.com Andalusia/Cadiz	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Local	Local

	Media	Media
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
10.HOY http://www.hoy.es Extremadura/ Badajoz	Current affairs	Current affairs
	Art and culture	Art and culture
	Science and technology	Science and technology
	Sport and leisure	Sport and leisure
	Local	Local
	Media	Media
	Other	Other
	Personal blogs	Personal blogs
11.LAS PROVINCIAS http://www.lasprovincias.es	Current affairs	
	Art and culture	
	Festival of San José in Valencia	
	Science and technology	
	The world at your fingertips (home, decoration, health, Internet...)	
	Cinema and television	
	Leisure	
	Music	
	Internet	
	Sport	
	Local	
	Environment	
	Psychology	
	Health	
	Politics	
	Economy	
	Astrology	
12.EL DIARIO MONTAÑÉS http://www.eldiariomontanes.es	Current affairs	
	Art and culture	
	Science and technology	
	Sport and leisure	

	Local	
	Media	
	Other	
	Personal blogs	

Source: own creation

In this first approach it can be stated that the grouping and structuring of the blogs has not changed significantly, although a slight trend towards greater specialisation can be observed in the sections of some newspapers in 2009, especially in the *Diario Sur* and in *La Rioja*.

Some sections of blogs have changed their name using more specific names, e.g. replacing the "Local" section with "Castille and Leon". The section "Media" tends to disappear and the section "Other" becomes established as new categories.

Second step:

Apart from this initial comment, in order to be able to respond to the hypotheses suggested, we will study two specific variables: the rate of updating and the content of the blogs.

-Updating: if a blog is commenced and is not updated, it loses a lot of its interest

(Lasica, 2003; Grabowicz, 2003). In this line, Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2009) state a model incorporating three key determinants of the intention to update weblogs: personal outcome expectations, self-expression and subjective norms (environmental factors). Results indicate that subjective norms have a stronger effect on the intention to update blogs than personal outcome expectations or self-expression. As we can observe, subjective norms are in relationship with context and personal outcome expectations, self-expression are in relationship with personal factors, according to the essence of blogs in general and blogs in regional on line press, in particular.

In the second step, it was counted the number of blogs updated in every single category in 2006 and in 2009. It is assumed that a blog without any new post in the period of time between January and June, can be considered as "not updated". Then, taking into consideration that premise, it was counted only the updating number of blogs in every category.

To have a general overview about updating of blogs in 2006 and 2009, it was counted the number of blogs updated and then it was divided by the total amount of blogs in every single newspaper so the result was "the rate of updating" in every newspaper but without identifying by categories or topics (Tabla 2).

-Content: Considering that some newspapers presented particular subjects with few blogs (psychology, astrology and environment) we have grouped the blogs in the following general categories: Current affairs, Art and culture, Science and technology, Sport and leisure, Local, Personal blogs, and Other.

Results and discussion

As regards the general study of updating (table 2), the majority of blogs reveal a different rate of updating for the two periods. Although the number of blogs has quadrupled in 2009, there appears to be no clear relation between the increase in the number of blogs and the increase in the possibilities of finding updated blogs, since the general rate of updating of all the newspapers (although slightly higher in 2009) has not varied significantly between 2006 (29%) and 2009 (32%). This demonstrates that the number of blogs created has increased but the commitment to updating has not increased.

Table 2. Comparison of the updating rates of blogs according to newspapers

Newspapers	TOTAL BLOGS 2006	TOTAL BLOGS 2009	UPDATED 2006	UPDATED 2009	RATE OF UPDATING (%) 2006	RATE OF UPDATING (%) 2009
COMERCIO DIGITAL	54	165	23	79	42.59	48
DIARIO VASCO	216	260	45	98	20.83	38
HOY	159	1077	96	108	60.38	10
IDEAL	129	830	56	149	43.41	18
LA RIOJA	144	259	31	131	21.53	51
LA VERDAD	64	161	16	93	25	58
LA VOZ DE CÁDIZ	8	71	7	29	87.5	41
NORTE DE CASTILLA	93	171	35	94	37.63	55
SUR	136	482	40	217	29.41	45
DIARIO MONTAÑÉS		373		125		34
EL CORREO DIGITAL		450		191		42
LAS PROVINCIAS		67		30		45
	1003	4329	293	1381	29	32

Source: own creation

On the basis of the specific results, there appears to be no clear performance pattern followed by bloggers in both periods. Only the *Norte de Castilla*, the *Sur*, the *Diario Vasco* and the *Comercio digital* appear to maintain upward performance trends as regards the rate of updating demonstrated both years. *La Verdad*

and *La Rioja*, closely followed by the *Norte de Castilla* are most notable in 2009, doubling their rate of updating and revealing a stable performance.

The other newspapers reveal a very disperse performance. The *Hoy*, *El Ideal* and *La Voz de Cádiz* have significantly lost significance in terms of the updating of their blogs in 2006 and afterwards.

In 2006, *La Voz de Cádiz* had an outstanding rate of updating of 87.5%, although it only provided 8 blogs. For this reason, we consider that the medium did not have a sufficient history to positively assess its updating, since this tends to be greater the younger the blog. In fact, this newspaper has experienced one of the most notable drops in the rate of updating in 2009.

In 2006 no relationship appeared to exist between the number of blogs in the newspapers and the rate of updating. Thus, the *Diario Vasco*, with 216 blogs, had a low rate of updating (20.83%). This figure did not correspond to any performance pattern, since in other cases, the relation between quantity and updating of blogs was direct, as in the case of the newspaper *Hoy* (159 blogs, and the highest rate of updating, 60.28%). Nevertheless, in 2009, the newspaper *Hoy* reveals the lowest rate of updating (10%) although the number of blogs in this newspaper has increased vertiginously.

In summary, there appears to be no relation between the age of the blog phenomenon in regional newspapers and the maintenance and updating of the blogs. Although it could be thought that the larger the quantity of blogs the higher the chances of finding more updated information, there are not sufficient reasons to declare this.

As regards the contents, it can be said that, taking the general categories into account, of the definitive numbers from 2009 (total number of published blogs), the interest in "current affair" topics is most notable, followed by "personal blogs" and the category "other", which includes contents of a very diverse nature. In 2006 the blogs of "current affairs", "personal blogs" and "other" were also notable. As a result the trend of interest in these topics related to the immediate environment has not changed (table 3).

In this line, Hsi-Peng Lu & Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2009) revealed that self-expression, personal outcome expectations and subjective norms or context affected directly the intention of sharing information on blogs.

Table 3. Number of blogs, updated blogs and rate of updating according to categories

%	CURRENT AFFAIRS		ART AND CULTURE		SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		SPORT/LEISURE		LOCAL		PERSONAL BLOGS		OTHER	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
TOTAL BLOGS	406	1390	77	412	17	180	105	471	45	188	175	880	147	903
UPDATED BLOGS	142	388	34	141	4	67	30	152	17	74	75	275	39	284
% RATE OF UPDATING	34.98	37	44.16	34	23.53	44	28.57	40	37.78	37	42.86	33	26.53	36

Source: own creation

If we relate both variables, updating and content, thereby considering the frequency of updating of contents, we obtain the rate of updating according to category (table 3).

Analysing the data from both years, we demonstrate that in 2009, despite the fact that the contents presented by the largest number of blogs are "Current affairs", "Personal blogs" and "Other", those that are most updated are "Science and technology", "Sport and leisure", "Current affairs" and "Local". The most numerous categories and the most updated categories do not match up exactly, except in the case of "Current affair" blogs.

Furthermore, in 2006, the blogs which are most frequently updated are "Art and culture", "Personal blogs" and "Local". The most numerous topics do not match up with the most updated topics here either, except in the case of the "Personal blogs".

In any case, the blogs which seem to be most notable are those related to current affairs, despite the increase in sections observed in 2009. On the contrary, in 2006, the blogs dealing with personal topics were those which were most often and best updated as it was said above.

It can be stated that in the most recent period (2009), there is a trend to write keeping feed back and updating information that most interests people, and another opposing trend to write less about what only interests a small number of people (personal subjects) (Gumbrecht, 2004), which was what used to happen in 2006.

If we examine the trend in terms of content and updating of the newspapers studied, we can state (table 4) that nor have the media followed a uniform performance as far as updating and blog contents are concerned.

From observing these data it can be concluded that the rate of updating in all newspapers is quite low. In 2006 only the newspapers *Hoy* and *La Voz de Cádiz* exceeded 50% of the rate of updating, while in 2009, *La Verdad*, *La Rioja* and *Norte de Castilla* just about exceeded this percentage.

Table 4. Rate of updating according to categories for each newspaper

%	CURRENT AFFAIRS		ART AND CULTURE		SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		SPORT AND LEISURE		LOCAL		PERSONAL BLOGS		OTHER	
	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009	2006	2009
COMERCIO DIGITAL	22	46	30	59	0	85	17	27	4	66	0	41	22	34
DIARIO MONTAÑÉS	-	35	0	40	-	55	-	32	-	16	-	36	-	25
DIARIO VASCO	29	34	0	0	0	0	7	46	0	0	51	0	4	34
EL CORREO DIGITAL	-	42	-	41	-	48	-	60	-	50	-	54	-	27
HOY	48	10	4	13	0	14	1	9	5	0	6	3	34	13
IDEAL	30	17	11	27	2	17	14	17	9	26	7	14	21	11
LA RIOJA	71	45	13	25	3	51	0	78	3	61	0	45	1	70
LA VERDAD	44	79	6	88	13	62	6	71	6	68	6	72	13	25
LA VOZ DE CÁDIZ	29	25	14	42	0	25	29	58	0	62	0	55	14	27
LAS PROVINCIAS	-	38	-	57	-	100	-	44	-	46	-	0	-	59
NORTE DE CASTILLA	40	58	17	0	0	50	11	42	6	37	9	46	14	83
SUR	40	40	13	36	0	50	8	25	5	35	5	50	30	51

Source: own creation

In 2009, the newspaper *La Verdad* (the most updated) is most notable in terms of updating the blogs of "Current affairs", "Art and culture", "Sport", "Local" and "Personal blogs". The *Norte de Castilla* is most

notable for "Current Affairs", "Science and Technology" and "Other". *La Rioja*, which is behind the latter in terms of updating, is most notable in "Sport", "Science and technology", "Local" and "Other".

The most updated newspapers prioritise among their main categories the updating of "Current affairs" and "Local", in keeping with the immediate context of these newspapers.

In 2006 the newspaper *Hoy* and *La Voz de Cádiz* were most updated. This was most notable especially in the categories of "Current affairs", which was also one of the most updated categories when all newspapers were considered. In the case of this particular category, it is most updated in the newspaper *La Verdad* in 2009 (79%) and in *La Rioja* in 2006 (71%).

Main conclusions

As regards the initial hypothesis, we can state that contrary to what we expected, the blog phenomenon in Spanish regional press did not present clear performance parameters in 2006, and this situation continued in 2009. This renders it difficult to define the blog as a top-quality informative medium. Three years after its peak as a fashionable phenomenon it still corresponds to the same performance outline, which hinders clarity about its future in view of the comparison of a time in the past and another more recent time.

In this sense, there is to manifest that the financial context in 2006 is different from 2009. In 2006, Spain lived a positive period of time when the priority was not financial problems. On the other hand, in 2009, the financial situation was slowing down and the bankruptcy manifested turmoil related to financial crisis, construction industry and work-related problems. This situation was able to move people toward interests of information related to proximity or context.

Although the situation in 2006 and 2009 was different, in 2006 it was verified that regional blogs were being used as a platform or forum to discuss topics of information which were of interest to an immediate audience which, normally, did not demand continuity (Gumbrecht,2004).This trend remains the same in 2009.

In relation to the second hypothesis suggested, the level of updating was not carried out in a uniform manner in 2006 or 2009, in the media analysed in regional press. A greater and more uniform involvement in the updating was expected from bloggers.

It has not been found, in view of the huge increase in the number of blogs in 2009, that the updating of these is evident and reveals a more stable performance pattern. On the contrary it cannot be stated that in 2006, with the peak of the phenomenon there was greater interest in this parameter. The financial crisis did not seem to influence the "rate of updating" in 2006 or 2009.

In this line, according to Gillmor as one of the experts in the topic of blogs, the main blogs' reason of being is, above all, its sporadic character manifesting that the success of blogs is the possibility to become a journalist writing news as a professional and even competing with them, but sporadically (Gillmor, in Apaolaza, 2006) without pressure to update it.

In line with the third hypothesis provided it is confirmed that, in accordance with the interest in the immediacy of the contents, the "Personal blogs", which were most notable in 2006, begin to be of less interest; and "Current affairs" and in particular "Local" become more notable.

In this line, it seems to be the only relationship between blogs and financial situation in Spain, being 2006 a positive period of time in which bloggers were not worry about current affairs, they focused on themselves, writing personal blogs. In 2009, problems arise and the interest of the local topics and current affairs increased the number of blogs related to these topics.

No direct relation can be established between the rate of updating and the presence of certain contents. Nevertheless, the topics of "Current affairs" and "Local" (which are closest to sharing the *raison d'être* of regional newspapers) present a more or less constant rate of updating in the two periods, compared to the rises and falls in other categories.

In the case of blogs of a "personal" nature, in 2006 there was a direct relation between the higher number and the higher rate of updating these blogs, which confirmed that blogs were used as a tool for personal expression (Grumbecht, 2004).

In 2009 the relation of the number of blogs and updating differs more. The "Current affairs" blogs, most numerous in 2009, although acceptable are not the most updated category. They present the same rate of updating as the category "Local" which has much fewer blogs but blogs which are maintained better over time.

The negative financial situation in 2009 leads bloggers to be interested of current affairs and local context but not interested of updating, they only write blogs about topics related to the situation without pressure to update it.

As regards specific newspapers, none display a constant trend. In summary, in 2006, the newspapers *Hoy* and *El Ideal* were most notable for having demonstrated greater projection and consistency between the number of articles, frequency of updating, and treatment of current affair and immediate topics. However, in 2009, the newspaper *La Verdad* had the highest rate of updating, although its number of blogs is comparatively lower.

It can be stated that at the beginning, the phenomenon had very little structure and organisation, and it continued like that years later. There is no foundation to say that interest in these parameters was greater

at the time of peaking, or years later when greater maturity and establishment were expected, as well as a better treatment of the phenomenon.

It can be concluded that the blog phenomenon did not follow a positive or increasing evolution, apart from in the number of blogs housed in the media and a certain trend to contain less personalised contents and more contents linked to current and local affairs, due in part to the nature of the media in which they are being housed, regional newspapers. In this line, according to Grumbecht (2004) there exists a double tendency, on the one hand, personal blogs without any interest of updating and feed-back and on the other hand, community blogs more interested of feed-back and much more worry about blogs related to current affairs and local situation but not necessary updated neither.

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