EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Changes in routine style of production and processing of information in the press offices of local institutions: the case of Castellón"

2014
Degree in Journalism. Universitat Jaume I

Alberto E. López Carrión
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With advances in new technologies it has appeared numerous tools in communicative scene: social networks, latest phones with internet connection, instant messaging applications between mobile facilities, virtual media... They all facilitate communication not only between cabinets and journalists but also with citizens. Communication offices of public institutions have seen the potential of these tools and they have incorporated into their communicative activity. This work aims to analyze how the communication offices of major public institutions of Castellón (Spain) have incorporated these new tools, and what dynamics are both producing information and its dissemination. To achieve this goal, it has released a survey of communication offices of municipalities with over 10,000 inhabitants, in addition to the Diputación de Castellón, in which they are asked for their production routines and the dissemination of its contents. Moreover, they also wanted to know the point of view of information professionals, so that the opinion of the media concerning Castellon about these new tools is also reflected in this study. In the results we see that many cabinets update their web and social networks steadily and looking as possible facilitate the work of the journalist, supplying a large amount of high quality information in the shortest time possible.

If we proceed to explain one by one the different parts of the article, first of all we can see the introduction. In this part the reader can see the originality of this investigation, and the objectives of the work too: investigate the effects of changes in the production of information, due to the rise of new technologies; study how journalists from media access to information provided by local public institutions; demonstrate the pursuit of immediacy when posting news, by the press offices of local institutions; and make clear the rise of social networks in the local media over other more traditional channels such as email, fax or phone call.

The second part is one of the most important paragraphs of the investigation: the literature review. Here you can find the most important theoretical views of other authors in relation to this investigation. Starting from source journalism, the literature review begins by offering an overview of the communication
offices as information sources. Then, the press offices of public institutions as a possible alternative to the journalistic profession are addressed or content generation will be explained in public administrations. For the last, the corporate portal as the epicentre of the communication of local institutions, new communication tools in local government and this part closes with the debate whether the communication offices of local public institutions working to serve the public or journalist.

In preparing this study, which investigates the different changes in news production routines and processing of information in the press offices of local institutions of Castellón, it has choose qualitative and quantitative techniques for the methodological design. In the part of qualitative techniques, it has sent to the most important media of the province of Castellón an email interview, which they answer voluntarily. On the other hand, for the quantitative techniques we have send a survey via email to the most important communications departments of Castellón city hall’s cabinets (and to the Diputación de Castellón). On the content of the questionnaire is organized into four sets of questions, with a total of 21 questions. The first battery is about the structure of the communication department (number of employees, sub-departments...); the second battery, about communication tools (on whether or not to have a profile on the various social networks, use of newsletter or virtual newsroom...); the third battery, about updating content (degree of frequency of update and sending information to the media) and the fourth set of questions on the changes introduced by the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). As for the chosen sample, and considering that the population of Castellón is 601,600 inhabitants in 2013 (according to the National Institute of Statistics), you can see that it is sufficiently representative, and if we add the population of the eleven municipalities (448,748 inhabitants), the resulting figure is more than 50% of the total population of Castellón.

But the most important part of this work is the results area, through which the main conclusions of this research are drawn. The results show how the communication offices of local institutions have taken a step forward by incorporating various technologies to your daily with traditional media tools chore. While it is true that meet the standards established in terms of the update
of its corporate website and profiles on the major social networks, data portal on the use of newsletters and meeting virtual press are not as positive as either are not incorporated in the work of these cabinets, or do not believe in their communication utility. Moreover, it has been seen that the use of social networks in these departments has improved dissemination of the contents themselves between citizens of different municipalities. This fact suggests that the activity of the press offices of local government bodies has shifted more towards leaving the citizen journalist in the background. However, the fact that the first step for most of those responsible for these cabinets when communicating or disseminating news is sending the classic mail communication corporate to media addresses these possible questions and demonstrates that media are still very strong despite the crisis suffered by the newspaper industry.

Another important part of this work is the conclusions. It has been separated in ‘principal conclusions’ and ‘secondary conclusions’. In the first case, for example, we can say that: most of the communication offices of local institutions update their corporate website and their different profiles on the major social networks frequently; advances in information technology and the emergence of new tools has improved access to information from both the general public and journalists. In case, all the journalists surveyed for this study extolling the benefits of these new tools, saving cost and time, so that improved access to information; most of the communication offices of Castellón public institutions not offer live content, so if journalists or citizens want to follow in real time any official ceremony or press conference, in most cases be required in person; and despite the rise of social networks, which is the tool that updates more often most cabinets, these departments know that good hand through the media your message reaches more people. For this reason, notifying the corporate media is the first step taken from the cabinet, in most cases.

On the secondary endpoints, we can say that most communication offices of Castellón public institutions has a sole structure, Twitter and Facebook are social networks used in the communication offices of public institutions of Castellón and most of Castellón communication offices seldom used tools like virtual press rooms restricted access to journalists or newsletter.
The last part is the references area. To make that, it has been use Zotero tool. It is the only research tool that automatically senses content in the web browser, allowing you to add it to your personal library with a single click. It’s very useful to save all the references of this investigation and convert to APA-6.