

# UGC Status and Levels of Control in Argentine, Colombian, Mexican, Peruvian, Portuguese, Spanish, US and Venezuelan Online Newspapers

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*In this paper we present a comparative analysis of UGC status and levels of control in 24 quality online mainstream newspapers from Argentine, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, US and Venezuela. The study addresses the conditions in which users provide content, in terms of constraint, and the recognition given by mainstream media to the users' activity. "Participatory journalism" is defined as the evolving materialization of an increase in message interchange activity between producers and consumers in two dimensions: content and relationship.*

KEY WORDS online newspaper; UGC; participatory journalism

### **Introduction**

The contributions of "citizen journalists" in mainstream news media illustrate better than any other 2.0 tool the challenges journalism faces as they grapple with user-generated content (UGC). In terms of scope and rapidity, new technologies have made feedback by citizens to news stories as strong as the messages created in the traditional newsroom. The explosion of UGC relates to the essential trait of Internet - its distributed architecture (Newhagen and Levy, 1996).

Bowman and Willis (2004) refer to UGC as one of the forms of participatory journalism, along with discussion groups, weblogs, collaborative publishing, and peer to peer and XML Syndication. A different perspective seems to have been adopted lately by researchers Hermida and Thurman (2008:2) who define it as "... a process whereby ordinary people have an opportunity to participate with or contribute to professionally edited publications", a point of view implicitly shared in recent studies (Singer and Ashman, 2008; Paulussen and Ugille, 2008). De Keyser and Raeymaeckers (2008) consider UGC the sum of participatory journalism and citizen journalism

A report on UGC by Wunsh-Vincent and Vickery (2007) serves to clarify the question. They propose three characteristics that might help identify the possible spectrum of user-generated content: publication (in some context), creative effort (creating or adapting existing works to construct a new one), and creation outside of professional routines and practices (not in an institutional or commercial market context).

UGC might be considered as present in weblogs and forums, sustaining the broader definition of Hermida and Thurman (2008), Singer and Ashman (2008), and Paulussen and Ugille (2008). It derives also in the recognition of UGC as an old practice developed off-line. As early as the 1950s non-professional outlets and broadcasting stations such as pirate radio stations opened the air to new voices. In mainstream media the "letters to the editor" section has long relied on citizen contribution.

Image 1 shows the relationship between UGC, citizen journalism and participatory journalism. UGC does not relate intrinsically to reporting but represents a wider set of content; participatory journalism is presented as the practice of citizen journalism in mainstream media (Paulussen and Ugille, 2008: 25<sup>4</sup>), that is, UGC related to reporting news in legacy media.

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<sup>4</sup> "This brings us to the notion of "participatory journalism". In the sociology of news literature, the term has become commonly accepted to refer to the wide variety of initiatives undertaken by mainstream media to enhance the integration of all kinds of user contributions in the making of news (Paulussen et al. 2007)".

**Image 1. UGC in mainstream media**



The characterization by Wunsh-Vincent and Vickery (2007) serves to explain the difficulty in exploring the question using old models and theories: creativity, amateur practices and free publication were not considered in the old models, some principles collide as the elements of the digital culture expand (Singer, 2007; Deuze, 2006; Kovack and Rosenstiel, 1999).

The research challenge is determining which framework is adequate for analyzing UGC given that the audience is not just the “audience” anymore as “some of the institutionalised communication functions of agencies and journalistic media can be performed by individual society members and organisations” (Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008: 331).

More than ten years ago, Morris and Ogan (1996: 137) suggested “When the Internet is conceptualized as a mass medium, what becomes clear is that neither *mass* nor *medium* can be precisely defined for all situations.” According to them, viewing the Internet as a mass medium relates to reconceptualising the audience, credibility, and the interchangeability of producers and receivers.

Wunsh Vincent and Vickery (2007) related similar challenges regarding UGC and Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger (2007) concluded that a hybrid model solves, in different ways, potential problems for participatory news such as tensions related to control, legitimate commercial goals, and the creative freedom of journalists.

The normative democratic theory and the civic journalism movement as well as the theory of journalism provide theoretical grounds for sustaining and interpreting the development of user-generated content in news publications to some extent, but UGC is expanding as rapidly as it emerges and shares with the Internet some challenging characteristics for researchers: it is metamorphic, it consists of a continuum of communication formats, means and messages, and it results in multiple types of communication (García de Torres and Pou Amerigo, 2004).

At the same time, research into UGC cannot disregard some more traditional views about news. If Bowman and Willis (2004) maintain that comments are the most “...pervasive, and perhaps fundamental, level of participation” in participatory journalism, a classic theory of journalism (Gomis, 1999) supports that “news” is defined by the extent to which a story is commented by the audience. In the context of participatory technologies some UGC represents the voice of the audience. Groth’s characterization of “events” as the impact of news on the audience (Valbuena, 1997) is epitomized in the “most popular / most read” ranking on news sites, a modern technique for enhancing one of the elements of the theory of journalism.

### **Framing User Generated Content**

Boundaries have blurred between journalists and the audience and some steps to convergence in terms of production have been taken, though the gate-keeper model is still an asset for mainstream media (Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008), Paulusen and Ugille, 2008). Findings by the Bivings Group shows, nevertheless, that American newspapers "...are experimenting with user generated content": 58% of the top 100 newspapers by circulation offered some form of UGC in 2008, compared to 24% in 2007, and 75% allowed article comments compared to 33% in 2007. In Spain similar trends are observed in the use of 2.0 tools in mainstream newspapers (see table 1).

**Table 1.** The use of 2.0 tools in Spanish and American Newspapers<sup>5</sup>

Tools	Spanish Newspapers (%)			American Newspapers (%)		
	2006	2008	Dif.	2006	2008	Dif.
RSS	23,5	66,7	43,2	76	100	24
Most Popular	22,4	55,6	33,2	33	76	43
Vídeo	23,5	58,9	35,4	61	100	39
Podcast	3,5	3,3	-0,2	31	40	9
Reporter Blog	31,8	58,9	27,1	80	94	14
Comments on Blogs	29,4	58,9	29,5	67	92	25
Comments on news	10,6	50	39,4	19	75	56
Bookmark	2,4	54,4	52	7	92	85

The emphasis by mainstream media on UGC contrasts with citizen-run blogs that, according to a study by the Pew Research Foundation (2009), offer primarily commentary and links and have e-mail links as the only option for contacting the managers of the site.

The theoretical model devised by Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008), inspired by previous work by Bruns (2005), provides an interesting tool to evaluate UGC in five stages of news production. According to them, for the first time institutional journalism has encountered a serious challenge to its social function; results obtained in their 2007 analysis of 18 European dailies show that journalists retain the traditional gate-keeping role.

The relationship between users and producers is expressed in the aforementioned study in terms of openness (citizens can participate as contributors and / or managers) and closeness (citizens cannot contribute) but closeness and openness can also be interpreted as set messages or frames meaning trust, suspicion, technical limitations, uncertainty, authority etc. Framing the relationship between producers and "producers" might lead to a better understanding of participatory journalism.

For this preliminary approach we follow Bateson (1991) and the Interactional View theory by the Palo Alto Group, given that Valbuena (1997) considers the principles of Palo Alto applicable to interpersonal and collective communication. The pragmatic theory principles can be useful in addressing questions related to culture and professionalism in a way that de-emphasises the roles of producers and consumers and, instead, focuses on the relationship.

As Singer and Ashman (2008:27) point out, "... the nature of the medium invites consideration of optimal ways for journalists to combine freedom with responsibility in fostering and nurturing new relationships".

In the field of Communications<sup>6</sup>, the interactional view is characterized as a theory

<sup>5</sup> A sample of 100 newspapers in the Bivings Group Study both for 2006 and 2008; Spanish sample: 85 newspapers in 2006 and 90 in 2008.

<sup>6</sup> The Group has been considered critical towards the Communication Science founded by Schramm, their

for interpersonal communications; in psychology, as a systemic paradigm (Casmir, 1994). As analysts of communications researchers have an interest in communication as a social phenomenon: the path from intra-psychic explanation to interaction as the unit of analysis necessarily ends in communication, and the Palo Alto Group opts for the observation in their patients of inputs and outputs, being considered inputs or outputs their verbal and non verbal messages (Birdwhistell, 1979).

The concept of feedback is central for this theory of communication; also redundancy because, in sharp contrast with the theory of communication by Shannon, Palo Alto researchers consider that a repeated message or action defines the rules of the relationship.

In this theoretical context, the development of formats that open or close participation and its adoption by media and users are not only the expression of a culture clash (Hermida and Thurman, 2008). They also convey the story of an evolving relationship, as participatory journalism could be defined as the evolving materialization of an increase in message interchange activity between producers and consumers in two dimensions: content (referential messages) and relationship (about the status of the relationship). It can be established, then, the existence of a secular communicative relationship between audiences and producers based in content messages issued by producers (news and articles) and an interchange of relationship messages between producers (i.e. news selection and ethics) and users (data on consumption).

The axioms of the Palo Alto Group are indebted to a great extent to Bateson (Winkin, 1987; Wazlawick et al., 1997), who proposed that words and actions have no meaning without context.

One of the principles concerns the punctuation of the sequence, relevant when discussions focus on who provoked whom, such as in old debates regarding the blogosphere and legacy media. To an observer, messages seem to be a never ending interchange, but according to the Group, participants establish patterns and determine who has the initiative, the predominance and dependence.

Another interesting principle is the distinction between symmetric and complementary relationships, an idea first developed in "Naven", Bateson's PhD research. Complementary relationships are based on differences (weakness versus assistance, authority versus submission). Symmetric relationships are based on similarity (Wittezaele and García, 1994). Research by Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008) *et al* (2008) suggests a pattern of authority - submission in the producers-users relationship.

Traditional symmetric relationship patterns (I produce / You read) would be challenged by new technologies. A study of the interactivity in *The Guardian*, by Light and Rogers (1999:2) led authors to reflect that "... the web is providing the potential for producers to become "hosts" – developing participation among users of the site, where the producers role is to provide communication software and display the outcome of visitors' exchanges". Can producers shift to hosts without consequences for the context users attribute to their relationship with news media?

Qualitative research and other methods, such as surveys, have provided information about the state and changes in the relationship between users / *producers* and producers in a very significant way. In the past ten years, the interest in the relationship between journalists and readers has moved to the broader realm of citizen journalism and the more general interaction between an active audience and legacy or mainstream media.

Attitudes and perceptions (mostly by journalists) have been laid on the table; the flow

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criticisms being directed not to the model by Shannon, but to the use made by specialists from other fields (Birdwhistell, 1979, Chafee and Rogers, 1997). Its contribution to the theory of communication has been recognized in the eighties (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1997)

of public conversations has been systematised to some degree (Light and Rogers, 1999; Shultz, 1999; García, 2007; Thurman, 2008; Singer and Ashman, 2008, Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger, 2007; Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008) et al, 2008), according to the questions posed by researchers that in earlier stages attempted to examine interactivity.

Shultz (1999:5) explored ten years ago the interactive options in 100 online newspapers in the United States including email, live chats, online polls and surveys as well as online forums. To Shultz, though, the mere availability of tools told little about how journalists and their audiences use them. It is "a necessary condition for the initiation of interactive discourse". A year later, Kenney, Gorelik and Mwangi (2002) pointed out two "obvious" lines for future research: to interview executives of online newspapers sites (to learn the reasons why the interactive features were not used more extensively) and to explore the experience of users.

### **User Generated Content meta-communication**

Messages on the relationship either implicit or explicit are, according to Birdwhistell (1979), more important than the transmission of information. In fact, trust is a salient issue in a relationship primarily oriented to the interchange of news<sup>7</sup> and value attached to every report is closely connected to it. If repeatedly a paper fails to comply with veracity, trust might lessen and be replaced – as a frame - by uncertainty regarding the news report's validity. A total correspondence cannot be established, but digital communication is essential to share information about objects and analogical communications are especially apt to share information about the state of the relationship.

In the Internet, users express their points of view on any subject (content) and also on the coverage (relationship) in almost every format. The citizen reporter channel might be an exception as sometimes there are guidelines on the type of message that is expected (content messages in terms of news conceptualization, technical tips and ethical standards). Otherwise, there are no rules regarding what to say or not, except for abusive comments. Users can express themselves explicitly about content and about the relationship by messages sent to journalists, editors and other users such as:

- Letters to the editor / ombudsman
- Private emails for journalists
- Conversations in forums
- Comments on blogs
- Comments on news stories
- Posts in their own blogs
- Questions in live discussions - especially with journalists

Other (tacit) messages are number of comments, number of pictures sent, number of pictures shared, number of blogs created, number of private messages sent to journalists, number of messages interchanged between them, etc. The activity of the users, or lack of activity) can be interpreted as a message on the relationship (I like/do not like this website) or the content (I like/do not like this article, post, etc.).

Journalists operating in the classic formats were more limited because conventions associated to journalistic genres excluded them from reporting comments on how the story was produced or the expectations regarding the readers, but modern formats, such as weblogs, allow more flexibility. Tacit messages by journalists / editors are present in the selection of stories, the inclusion of elements of service and mobilization on news, themes selection, frequency of posting, etc.

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<sup>7</sup> Restrepo and Herrán (1991), in a research on ethic codes around the World, find that veracity – fidelity in the description of facts - is the most frequent (present in 56 out of 68 codes analyzed by them).

The company expresses itself “digitally” in the normative rules regarding participation (terms of use, privacy policy, frequently asked questions, etc.). A study by Wunsh-Vicent and Vickery (2007:49) lists frequent intellectual property provisions in terms of service of UGC sites (content created by users):

- “Most sites specify that users who post content retain ultimate ownership, but that they have given the site a licence to use content without payment. In other words, by posting the content the site receives a limited irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid-up, worldwide license (with the right to sublicense) to use, modify, publicly perform, publicly display, reproduce and distribute such content.
- Most sites specify that this licence does not grant the site the right to sell the content, nor to distribute it outside the respective service.
- Most sites pledge to mention the identity of the user, the author of the work, and also the title of the work, in so far as technical conditions make this possible.
- Most sites specify that the licence terminates at the time the user removes his/her content
- Yet some sites reserve the right to prepare derivative works (modify, edit content posted by users) or the right to adapt. At times, it is specified that the site may commercially exploit the works posted by users.
- Some sites, however, specify that users lose their intellectual property rights and forfeit payment in perpetuity (even when the content is removed). Sometimes the sites also ask the user to admit “moral rights” (meaning that the site does not have to give the author credit).
- Some sites require the user to agree that the content will be subject to the Creative Commons licence.
- Some sites reserve the right to reproduction, i.e. the right to reproduce, without limitation, on any known or unknown medium, current or future, especially optical, digital, paper, disc, network, diskette, electronic, DVD, etc.
- Some sites reserve the right to distribute the work or to sublicense rights to third parties. Mostly, it is proposed that revenue from these activities be shared between the user and the site.
- Some sites reserve the right to use the name and content of users for advertising and promotional purposes (promotional licence).”

The authors found, after the examination of 15 widely-used English-speaking UGC sites, that usually they grant users the right to retain the copyright in their work; users, on the other hand, agree that they give the site a licence to use the content, but “in some cases, unclear terms and conditions or a failure of users to read the latter may lead the user to agree to granting additional rights” (Wunsh-Vicent and Vickery, 2007:48). Recently, a study by the Pew Foundation examined the site information on legacy and citizen sites. Findings (see table 2) show great differences in the provision of legal information about the site and behaviour in legacy and Citizen sites

**Table 2.** Site information by Legacy and Citizen sites

<i>Site information</i>	Legacy (n=187)	Citizen (n=145)
Provides purpose/mission of site	80	75
Provides legal information about site	69	39
Provides information about behaviour	68	41
Statement of privacy policy	75	37

Source: PEJ Report On Online Community Journalism Sites –Phase II (2009)

Besides regulations, there is implicit information in the decision on which participatory elements are to be incorporated to a website, and how, such as: UGC is displayed on the

Front Page - in the upper half of the page (or the bottom), UGC is open to comment and users' messages are extra-visible, users can make suggestions to improve news articles, there is a wide variety of 2.0 tool, users can promote discussions, blogs and polls, there are regulations for participation in the web and / or use of each tool, there is a channel for citizen reporters, user-driven content hierarchy is visible, UGC can be shared, UGC is displayed in sections other than those specifically designated for the users, an invitation to send content is issued on the Front page and other parts of the web, users are offered means to improve content - and themselves - with aids such as guides, technical tips and editing tools, e-mail response, participation in forums, blogs, etc.

Following Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1997), in analogical messages there is something similar to what is being represented as, in interpersonal communications, non-verbal elements (gestures, rhythm, posture, facial expression, etc). In newspapers, those elements would be the header, the use of pictures and typographic elements which say something about the article (Schramm, 1986). The interactive options in a website do not say a word about what is going on in the sense of news, but their presence is revealing regarding the status of the user in a website. In the participatory age, users are more free to create and share content messages and mix content and relational issues than before.

Interests of the companies might collide with the journalists' approach to UGC: "The complexity and sheer size of most online news operations means that almost all are run using content-management systems. (...). Whether developed in house (as with the *Independent* and *Belfast Telegraph*) or bought in (*The Times* and *Guardian* use Vignette), content-management systems standardise the production process creating efficiencies but distancing the journalist from the medium they are working with. Depending on their implementation, they can "lock out" certain approaches journalists may wish to take to optimise their content for the web." (Thurman, 2005:226).

A significant change in the relationship between users and producers is expected as a consequence of the new technologies revolution. There might be: an agreement in content and in relationship, an agreement in the content but not in the relationship, or agreement in the relationship but not in the content (terrible for media as news distributors but not so bad as hosts for communications).

Agreement on the relationship has been generally communicated by consumption (I like what you offer, I buy it), by private messages or in the restricted area of "Letters to the Editor" and the ombudsman. It has been difficult for users to send messages such as: "I like this paper, but I do not agree with the coverage of this subject". Now, conversation on the relationship enters the public sphere.

The interest for the relationship dimension rates low in the history of journalism as far as research findings show (McGregor, 2007). Some negative attitudes towards the audience derive from the consequence of its decisions on the evaluation of contents and/or the professionals. Some comments by journalists are illustrative (García, 2007:21): "... we sometimes laughed, there are key words in headlines that you know they generate a lot of visits to the story. Key words are sex, drugs, those always, or words, for example a very violent crime, carving up (body), rape, and those things are well sold and sport stories..." (sic).

Examining patterns is not an easy task; it requires quantitative and qualitative data on users and producers. It is further complicated because the frames are dynamic; each message acquires meaning in a certain context and might, at the same time, contribute to reframing it.

## **Method**

This is a preliminary approach that seeks to explore relational messages in the user-producer relationship regarding control and recognition of UGC through a survey on the

websites of mainstream newspapers in Argentine, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, the United States and Venezuela. Research questions are:

Q1. Are there any patterns - redundancy – regarding UGC? If so, are they followed by a majority of newspapers?

Q2. Do media give visibility to the users contributions? Are they shown in the front page?

Q3. Is there a correlation between control for comments on journalistic and amateur content?

Q4. How far do media get involved in producing a citizen reporter toolkit? Are users given guidelines on news concepts, production values, and ethics?

To make the analysis feasible, we decided to focus on 3 newspapers per country, though the group aims to produce results for a wider sample. The papers selected are national, generalist, paid-for newspapers with the largest circulation in each market, except for the sample for the United States in which the geographic condition does not apply.

Other comparative studies have based selection on similar criteria. Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008) selected two leading online newspapers in six EU countries (not considered for the sample were sensationalist or specialised newspapers, or papers with a free printed version). Another major analysis of European news websites carried out in 2004 based the sample selection on circulation: "These newspapers represent in quantitative and qualitative terms the serious national generalist press in each country" (Van der Wurff, 2005: 4).

De Keyser and Raeymaeckers (2008) have posed objections to the sample selection by Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008) because of the different market sizes and levels of societal acceptance of modern technologies. The same objections might arise in the present research, as in any attempt to compare trends for journals with 100,000 copies or more in a worldwide scale - precisely the ones that in several markets have been identified as pioneers and frontline online papers.

The sample was set in some countries taking into consideration circulation audits data - the United States (ABC), Spain (OJD), Argentine (IPSOS and IVC), Peru (CPI) and Portugal (APCT). In other cases several sources were examined in order to make a selection that met the requirements. Results are conditioned by the sample construct as far as it is a selection of leading papers, meaning that though the selected papers' significance are obvious they should not be presented as representative in terms of global trends or by country.

**Table 3.** Sample

ARGNN1	Clarín	<a href="http://www.clarin.com.ar">http://www.clarin.com.ar</a>
ARGNN2	Diario Popular	<a href="http://www.popularonline.com.ar">http://www.popularonline.com.ar</a>
ARGNN3	La Nación	<a href="http://www.lanacion.com">http://www.lanacion.com</a>
COLNN1	El Tiempo	<a href="http://www.eltiempo.com/">http://www.eltiempo.com/</a>
COLNN2	El Espectador	<a href="http://www.elespectador.com/">http://www.elespectador.com/</a>
COLNN3	El Nuevo Siglo	<a href="http://www.diario-nacional.com/">http://www.diario-nacional.com/</a>
MEXNN1	El Universal	<a href="http://www.eluniversal.com.mx">http://www.eluniversal.com.mx</a>
MEXNN2	La Jornada	<a href="http://www.jornada.unam.mx">http://www.jornada.unam.mx</a>
MEXNN3	Milenio Diario	<a href="http://www.milenio.com">http://www.milenio.com</a>
PERNN1	Trome	<a href="http://www.trome.com">http://www.trome.com</a>
PERNN2	El Comercio	<a href="http://www.elcomercio.com.pe">http://www.elcomercio.com.pe</a>
PERNN3	Ojo	<a href="http://www.ojo.com.pe">http://www.ojo.com.pe</a>
PRTNN1	Jornal de Notícias	<a href="http://www.jnoticias.pt/">http://www.jnoticias.pt/</a>
PRTNN2	Correio da Manhã	<a href="http://www.correiomanha.pt/">http://www.correiomanha.pt/</a>
PRTNN3	Público	<a href="http://www.publico.clix.pt/">http://www.publico.clix.pt/</a>

ESPNN1	El País	<a href="http://www.elpais.com">http://www.elpais.com</a>
ESPNN2	El Mundo	<a href="http://www.elmundo.es">http://www.elmundo.es</a>
ESPNN3	ABC	<a href="http://www.abc.es">http://www.abc.es</a>
VENNN1	El Universal	<a href="http://www.eluniversal.com/index.shtml">http://www.eluniversal.com/index.shtml</a>
VENNN2	El Nacional	<a href="http://el-nacional.com/www/site/p_contenido.php">http://el-nacional.com/www/site/p_contenido.php</a>
VENNN3	Tal Cual	<a href="http://www.talcualdigital.com/index.html">http://www.talcualdigital.com/index.html</a>
USANN1	USA Today	<a href="http://www.usatoday.com/">http://www.usatoday.com/</a>
USANN2	The New York Times	<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/">http://www.nytimes.com/</a>
USANN3	Los Angeles Times	<a href="http://www.latimes.com/">http://www.latimes.com/</a>

Previous research suggests that a sample thus constructed best serve the aims of this study. We have found in earlier studies that for 2.0 tools the variability is high in Venezuelan, Peruvian, Spanish and Mexican online newspapers, showing a very low use of participative tools newspapers from Peru and Venezuela when ample sets of papers are examined.

**Table 4.** Use of 2.0 tools by newspapers

Ítems	Spain N=85	Mexico N=60	Peru N=35	Venezuela N=65
RSS	28,2	30	8,6	4,6
Most popular	22,4	28,3	8,6	4,5
Video	23,5	15	11,4	3
Chat	20	8,3	8,6	1,5
Reporter blog	31,8	5	2,9	3
Comments on articles	10,6	26,7	0	6
Bookmark	2,4	3,3	2,9	1,5
Forums	43,5	25	22,9	21,5

Source: García de Torres, E., Rodríguez Martínez, J., Martínez Martínez, S., Ruiz Grau, S. y Albarca Serrano, H.(2008)

Values get significantly nearer when newspapers with the highest circulation are the ones taken into consideration<sup>8</sup> (García de Torres, Saiz Olmo, Halbarca, Rodríguez Martínez y Martínez Martínez, 2008a).

**Table 5.** 2.0 tools in 46 leading newspapers in Spain and Latin America 2008

RSS	37*
Most popular	26
Vídeo	38

<sup>8</sup> Sample was based on Franco and Guzmán (2007): La Nación (Argentina), Clarín (Argentina), Jornada (Bolivia), El Deber (Bolivia), Razón (Bolivia), RBS (Cero Hora) (Brasil), Globo (Brasil), La Tercera (Chile), El Mercurio (Chile), El Colombiano (Colombia), El Espectador (Colombia), El Tiempo (Colombia), El País (Colombia), La Nación (Costa Rica), Diario Extra (Costa Rica), Hoy (Ecuador), El Comercio (Ecuador), Diario de Hoy (El Salvador), La Prensa Gráfica (El Salvador), El Periódico (Guatemala), Siglo XXI (Guatemala), Prensa Libre (Guatemala), El Herald (Honduras), La Tribuna (Honduras), La Prensa (Honduras), Tiempo (Honduras), El Universal (Mexico), La Prensa (Nicaragua), El Nuevo Diario (Nicaragua), La Prensa (Panama), Panamá América (Panama), Estrella de Panamá (Panama), El Comercio (Peru), El Comercio (Ecuador), El Nuevo Día (Puerto Rico), Primera Hora (Puerto Rico), El Caribe (Rep. Dominicana), El Nacional (Rep. Dominicana), Hoy (Rep. Dominicana), Listín Diario (Rep. Dominicana), El País (Uruguay), El Observador (Uruguay), El Nacional (Venezuela), El Universal (Venezuela), El País (Spain), El Mundo (Spain) and La Vanguardia (Spain).

Podcast	11
Podcast	11
Reporter blogs	30
Comments on reporter blogs	30
Rules for reporter blogs	21
Blogroll	21
Comments on articles	25
Rules for comments on articles	20
Bookmarks	18
Forum	25
Rules for forums	20

Source: García de Torres et al. (2008a)

\*Numbers of papers in which the tool is present

Research by Franco and Guzmán (2007) on 43 leading papers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic Uruguay and Venezuela in 2007 provides some explanation to the data showed in table 5: fifty-nine percent of the editors told researchers they had systems to supervise forums and comments on blogs, 12% had cancelled the sections because of the impossibility of filtering content, and 64% declared they had incorporated a feature to comment on articles. Reasons given by those who were not allowing comments on articles were the absence of adequate technology or human resources to eliminate inappropriate comments, as well as little interest shown by the owners of the company.

Using a qualitative approach as well as surveys Yezerska (2008) examined 10 leading Peruvian newspapers and found that economic problems, scarce access to new technologies and scarce revenues were mentioned as reasons for the low exploitation of Internet potential. Previous studies by Del Pozo (2002) Cely (Rojano, 2006), Caballero (2000), and Navarro (2004) are consistent with latter studies on interactivity.

In Portugal, Zamith (2008a) has explored interactivity in 27 cyberjournals. Results indicate that use of interactive features is low (17,5%), which, to Zamith, means that mainstream cyberjournals are still keeping their visitors and users at a distance.

Hypotheses, based on previous studies, can be stated as follows:

(h1) Low variability in the offering of tools, due to the sample construct, but higher in users' production recognition and control mechanisms

(h2) Privacy policies and legal terms regarding participation highly present

(h3) Clear rules and guidelines provided for the citizen channels

(h4) Closeness higher in the selection / filtering phase of news production

The coding scheme is based on the research by Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008), with important additions in order to find the answers to the research questions. In each country we used the same approach to identify formats that limit participation or which confer status to the users' contributions.

**Table 6.** Variables examined by Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer and Vujnovic (2008)

News production-related spaces

Invitation to submit photos, video, audio

Invitation to submit story ideas

Collective open interviews with newsmakers

Space to publish citizen blogs

Space to publish citizen stories

Audience-driven citizen content selection/hierarchy

Audience-driven journalistic content hierarchy

- Commentary and debate spaces
  - Comments embedded in journalists stories/blogs
  - Comments embedded in citizen stories/blogs
  - Trackback of comments by external weblogs
  - Audience-driven forums, open to any topic
  - Journalist-driven forums, referred to in stories
  - Polls
- Social networking features
  - Public user profile page
  - Karma system (user points based on activity)
  - User tagging of content, serendipity tools
  - Links to promote content on social sites

In our study, when reporting the presence of the "invitation to submit photos, video or audio", we examine each one individually as well as the conditions in which the invitation is issued, i.e., there are terms of acceptance (compulsory or optional); users or media mark inappropriate content; guidelines are given to users and, if so, in what context: ethical, technical or conceptual.

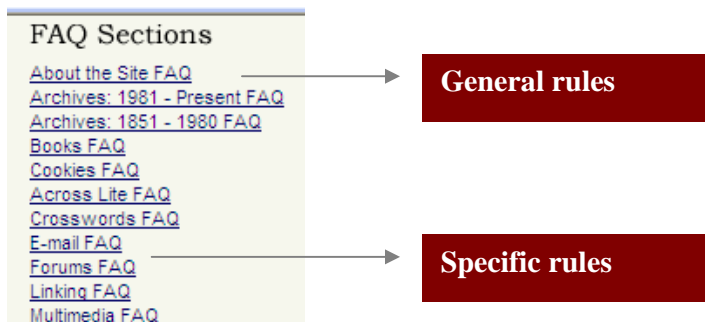
Also, comments on articles are examined on the basis of findings by Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger (2007:335): "As the case studies above suggest to us, their areas of engagement are sometimes clearly demarcated - citizen participation may be sought mainly in soft news areas, while hard news and especially politics, is still regarded as too controversial to be opened to the involvement of news user as "producers"". Sections on Politics (National and International), Entertainment and Crime are selected to test if "hard" news areas are more open to comment by users.

In this study the "rules" refer to any text that provides guidelines for the use of the interactive tools being examined in this research, regardless their reach, nature and location. There might be rules in the general "frequently asked questions" section or specifically attached to a particular tool, as well as terms of use, conditions, privacy terms, guidelines, etc.

We identify as "specific rules" those related specifically to one type of interaction: for example, rules to post a comment on news, or rules to participate in a forum. "General rules" are those that refer to more than one tool or to all the interactive features in the website. To code the items regarding rules coders examined:

- General rules that apply to the whole website and also to the particular feature examined (forums, comments on news or in blogs, citizen reporter channel...). These rules are usually referred to as Terms of Use, Policy, Conditions or even "Rules for interaction."
- Specific rules for a feature or tool.
- "Frequently asked questions" (related to the feature or tool, published in the section), guidelines or short recommendations or instructions published by the feature.

**Image 2.** *The New York Times* FAQ sections: example of specific and general rules



The coding program explores layers of Citizen Journalism as described by Outing (2005) such as opening up to public comment, “the citizen bloghouse”, newsroom-citizen transparency (live discussions), and the stand-alone citizen-journalism site: edited and unedited version. Explanation is limited to a few items because it is impossible to develop the codebook or even to attempt to explain every item, due to space limitations.

“Moderator” is coded as present (1) if there is a mention of a moderator who decides which comments are to be published and which will be eliminated; also if the person in charge of the blog states that he / she will remove inappropriate comments or it is said that contents are supervised. Rules were checked and the analyst posted a message to check the feedback on moderation. If no indication of such an option is given or seen, then it was coded as (0). We are aware that this procedure does not guarantee the correct coding of the item for all the sites as there might be cases in which moderation is not recognized by producers openly at any step.

“Read the (specific/general) rules” is coded as present (1) if the user is asked to read the rules before posting a comment or using any feature.

Items related to blogs took into account the first active ten and "one blog for all users" was coded as 1 only if it was the only blog in which users could post messages. Users blogs were coded as present only if there was an option to create blogs.

Image 3. Example for “Read the rules” (*El Mundo*, (Spain))



Image 4. Example for “Accept the rules” (*Clarín*, Argentine)



“Accept the (specific/general) rules” is coded as (1) only if the user has to explicitly accept the rules before being allowed to comment or upload material, i.e. using a check box (“Accept the terms”). If the terms state that the user accepts the rules implicitly by using the community features this is coded as (0).

**Table 7.** Grid for the analysis of UGC in the website

1.Audience-driven journalistic content hierarchy	4.2Registration required
1.1.News Stories	4.3 Recommendations
1.2. Blogs by reporters	4.4 Specific reasons for not publishing
2.Collective open interviews with newsmakers	4.5. Specific rules
3. Reporter blogs	4.5.1. “Read the rules”
3.1Comments embedded in journalist blogs	4.5.2. “Accept the rules”
3.1.1. All blogs are open to comments	4.5.3. General rules apply
3.1.2. Comments are visible	4.5.4. “Read the general rules”
3.1.3. Comments on comments	4.5.5. “Accept the general rules”
3.1.4. Report Abuse	4.6. Comments rating
3.2.Moderator	4.7. Editor’s selection
3.2.1. Users’ monitoring by author	4.8 News in the homepage are open to comments
3.2.2. Moderator on occasion	4.8.1. All News in the homepage are open to comments
3.3. Registration	4.9. News “Nacional /Politics” open to comments
3.4.Recommendations	4.9.1. All News “Nacional /Politics” open to comments
3.5 Specific reasons for not publication	4.10. News in “Crime/Offbeat” open to comments
3.6. Trackback of comments by external blogs	4.10.1. All news in “Crime/Offbeat” open to comments
3.7. Specific Rules	4.11 News in “Style” are open to comments
3.7.1. “Read the rules”	4.11.1. All news in “Style” are open to comments
3.7.2. “Accept the rules”	4.12. News in “World /International” are open to comments
3.7.3. General rules apply	4.12.1. All news in “World ” are open to comments
3.7.4. “Read the general rules”	5. Users can vote on news
3.7.5. “Accept the general rules”	6. Users correct news
3.8. Staff Blog on comments	6.1 Corrections are shown in the story
4.Comments embedded in journalist stories	7.Audience-driven forums
4.1 Moderator	7.1.Audience-driven forums, open to any Topic
4.1.1. Moderator on occasion	7.2. Moderator
4.1.2. Report abuse	7.3. Registration required

7.4.Recomendations
7.5 Specific reasons for not publishing
7.6. Specific Rules
7.6.1. "Read the rules"
7.6.2. "Accept the rules"
7.6.3. General rules apply
7.6.4. "Read the general rules"
7.6.5. "Accept the general rules"
8.Journalist-driven forums, referred to in stories
9.Polls
9.1. Users design polls
10. Social networking in the stories
10.1. Social networking: other features
11. General Rules
11.1. "Read the general rules"
11.2. "Accept the general rules"
11.3. General rules in the homepage
11.4. Privacy policy
11.5. UGC managed by an external company
12.Karma system (user points based on activity)
12.1. Some users are not supervised
13. UGC in the front page
13.1. "Community" Sections
13.2. Blog section
13.3. Users' Blogs are shown
13.3.1. In the upper half
13.4. Section of Most read/commented/sent or rated... .
13.5. Stories/Blogs list audience-driven hierarchization
13.5.1. In the upper half
13.6. Users' pictures
13.6.1. In the upper half
13.7. Number of comments
13.8.Post a comment on the stories
13.9. Send a story
13.9.1. In the upper half
13.10. Send your pictures/videos
13.10.1. In the upper half
13.11. Polls, Live discussion, forum...
13.11.1. In the upper half
13.12. Other
14. Space to publish citizen blogs
14.1Comments embedded in the users' blogs
14.1.1. All blogs are open to comments
14.1.2. Comments are extra-visible
14.1.3. Comments on comments
14.1.4. Report Abuse
14.1.5.Only one collective blog for all users
14.2.Moderator

14.2.1. Moderator on occasion
14.3. Registration
14.4. Recommendations
14.5 Specific reasons for not publication
14.6. Trackback of comments by external blogs
14.7. Specific Rules
14.7.1. "Read the rules"
14.7.2. "Accept the rules"
14.7.3. General rules apply
14.7.4. "Read the general rules"
14.7.5. "Accept the general rules"
15. Invitation to submit story ideas or content
16. Audience-driven stories /hierarchy
16.1. List of blogs
17. Users' community
18. Invitation to submit photos
18.1. Moderator
18.1.1. Moderator on occasion
18.2. Registration
18.3. Categories
18.4. What a good news-photo is: conceptualization
18.5. How to take a Picture- tips
18.6. Undesirable material
18.7. Report Abuse
18.8. Photos are displayed in other sections also
18.9. Monetary compensation is guaranteed
18.9.1. On occasion, monetary compensation is guaranteed
18.9.2. Users have to pay to public pictures
18.10. Photos can be shared with others
18.11. Post a comment
18.12. Editing tools
18.13. Specific Rules
18.13.1. "Read the (specific) rules"
18.13.2. "Accept the (specific) rules"
18.13.3. General rules apply
18.13.4. "Read the (general) rules"
18.13.5. "Accept the (general) rules"
18.13.6. Grant license on rights
18.13.7. Licence for adaptations
18.13.8. Minimum Age to participate
18.13.8.1. Minimum 18 years old
18.13.8.2. Minimum 13 years old
18.13.8.3. Minors are supposed to have permission
18.13.9. It has to be original work / by author
18.13.10. Consent by people shown is given
18.13.11 Parents/Guardians in case they are children

18.13.12. The paper reserves the right to reject pictures
19 .Invitation to submit videos
19.1. Moderador
19.1.1.Moderator on occasion
19.2. Registration
19.3. Categories
19.4. What a good news-video is: conceptualization
19.5. How to take a Picture- tips
19.6. Undesirable material
19.7. Report Abuse
19.8. Videos are displayed in other sections also
19.9. A monetary compensation is given
19.9.1. On occasion a monetary compensation is given
19.9.2. Users have to pay to publish pictures
19.10. Videos can be shared with others
19.11. Uses´ can post a comment
19.12. Editing tools
19.13. Specific Rules
19.13.1. "Read the (specific) rules "

19.13.2. "Accept the (specific) rules"
19.13.3. General rules apply
19.13.4. "Read the (general) rules"
19.13.5. "Accept the (general) rules"
19.13.6. Grant license on rights
19.13.7. Licence for adaptations
19.13.8. Minimum Age to participate
19.13.8.1. Minimum 18 years old
19.13.8.2. Minimum 13 years old
19.13.8.3. Minors supposed to have permission
19.13.9. It has to be original work, by author
19.13.10. Consent by people shown is given
19.13.11 Parents/Guardians in case they are children
19.13.12. The paper reserves the right to reject videos
20. Invitation to submit audio
21. Space to publish citizen stories/Citizen Reporter Channel

The citizen channels examined here are those that constitute a section in the newspapers, not just blogs. So, even though newspapers such as "Clarín" (Argentina) or "El Mundo" (Spain) do offer citizen reporter blogs, item 22 is coded as 0.

The citizen reporter toolkit (items 26 to 28) provides an method to measure the application of traditional media standards in amateur reporting. Three aspects were examined: conceptualization of news, technical assistance, and ethic principles. As a previous step to defining items related to the citizen reporter toolkit some channels such as I Report (CNN), You Witness News (Reuters), Wikinews and Yo Periodista (El País) were consulted. Ethical principles were based on ASNE's Statement of Principles, originally adopted in 1922 as the "Canons of Journalism" and revised and renamed "Statement of Principles" in 1975.

**Table 8.** Grid for the analysis of the Citizen Reporter Channel assets

22. Name of the Channel
23. Rules for the Channel
23.1. Specific rules
23.1.1. Read the (specific) rules
23.1.2 Accept the (specific) rules
23.2. Frequent asked questions
23.3. Specific points in general rules
23.4. General rules apply
23.4.1. Read the general rules
23.4.2. Accept the general rules
23.5. Inconsistency
23.6. Confusion related to general rules
23.7. Impossible to proceed
23.8.Grant license on rights

23.8.1. Licence for adaptations
23.9. Minimum Age to participate
23.9.1. Minors are supposed to have permission
23.10. Minimum 18 years old
23.11. Minimum 13 years old
23.12. It has to be original work by author
23.13. Consent by people shown is given
23.14. Parents/Guardians in case they are children
23.15. The paper reserves the right to reject contents
24. Formats
24.1. Text upload or form
24.1.1. Text by email
24.2. Video upload
24.2.1. Video by email

24.3. Audio upload
24.3.1. Audio by email
24.4. Pictures upload
24.4.1. Pictures by email
24.5. Mobile platforms
24.6. Tagging
24.7. Propose sections
25. Moderator
25.1. Moderation on occasion
25.2. Registration
25.3. Report abuse
26. What "news" is
26.1 Timeliness
26.2. Interest to a wide audience
26.3. Novelty
26.4. Out of the ordinary moment in time
26.5. "Everyday" matters accounts
26.6. Local news
26.7. Denounce
26.7.1. Photo-denounce
26.8. Others
27. How to write a good story- technical arrangements
27.1. Editing tools
28. Ethics
28.1. Responsibility – Serve the general welfare
28.2. Freedom of the Press – Alert to see public business are conducted in public
28.3. Independence. Not compromise their integrity
28.4. Truth
28.5. Accuracy
28.6. Free from bias
28.7. Impartiality
28.8. Fair Play (respect the rights of people, accountability)
28.8.1. Sources should be identified
28.8.2. Maintain pledges of confidentiality (not given)

lightly)
28.9. Other
29. Comment on contents
29.1. Registration
29.2. Moderator
29.2.1. Moderator on occasion
29.3. Comments in the homepage
29.4. Number of comments
30. Rate contents
31 Share contents
32. UGC audience-driven hierarchization
33. Users' profile
34. A monetary compensation is guaranteed
34.1. On occasion monetary compensation is guaranteed
35. User can add a warning signal for sensitive audiences
36. Unwelcome content
36.1. Pornography/ Sexually explicit content
36.2. Obscene/lewd content
36.3. Advocates violent behaviour
36.4. Contains violent images
36.5. Contains violent images of killing or physical abuse that seem captured for exploitive or gratuitous purpose
36.6. Advocates dangerous, illegal or predatory acts or poses a reasonable threat to people or public safety
36.7. Hate speech, racially or ethnically offensive comment
36.8. Infringes copyright
36.9. Repeated uploads that flood the site
36.10. Information that puts the user in trouble with the law
36.11 Videos taken weeks ago
36.12 Content that puts you or others in danger
36.13 Other
37. There is a possibility that stories/video/photo might go other pages or media

Each item is coded as: 1 (present), 0 (not present) or 2 (it has been impossible to establish the presence or the absence). Coding an item as (2) is exceptional, reserved for cases as follow: (a) due to technical reasons, the analyst does not have access to the contents, i.e. when the registration process fails; (b) in the Citizen Reporter Channel grid, if item 24.7 is coded as present (1) by the analyst the rest of items (24.8 to 37) are coded as 2; (c) in other exceptional situations, when the analyst cannot find information in the rules nor by observation to establish the presence or absence of an item.

The analysis pertains only to the traditional sections of the newspapers; thematic channels are excluded. The reasons to exclude thematic channels are that some papers do not have channels and, on the other hand, if the interactivity tools are only in the channels, results would be distorted as there was no mean to code for the specific location of those tools in the website.

Given that the papers taken into account are published in Spanish (18), English (3) and Portuguese (3) and that the coders were from seven countries, developing the codebook

was a challenge. The codebook that provided definitions, descriptions and illustrations for each item to be examined was written both in Spanish and English. The researcher named for the task was the Principal Researcher of two projects, one of them current, with funds by the Spanish National I+D program on Online Newspapers in Latin America and Spain. The trial version of the codebook improved its efficiency as a guide for coding by incorporating the comments from all the researchers after trial use.

**Image 5. Codebook, English version, page 35 (items 14.2. to 14.3)**

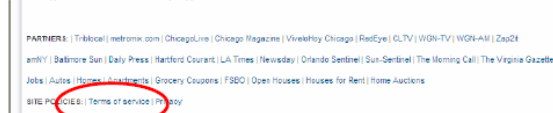
**14.2. Moderator.** Code as present (1) if there is a mention of a moderator who decides which comments are to be published and which will be eliminated in the users' blogs. Code as present also if the person in charge of the blog states that he/her will remove inappropriate comments or if it is said that contents are supervised.

Code as present (1) even if only one of the blogs examined has moderation. It is recommended, though, to write down in the grid the number of blogs examined with a moderator.

Check for the information:

- A) In the users' blogs section (look for rules and Frequent asked questions(Faq) and the 10 top blogs displayed.
- b) Write a comment in a blog chosen at random to check if the presence or notification of a moderator's activity is visible then.
- c) Check it in rules and frequent asked questions. Look for them in the blogs area, "Community or Interact" or "Interact" or UGC pages, FAQ, Site Map and Homepage. Code as present (1) whether it is said in the rules that blogs or all the UGC spaces are moderated.

Chicago Tribune Homepage: bottom



If it isn't found any indication at all regarding moderation, code as not present (0).

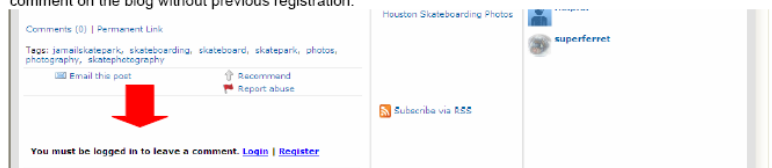
**14.2.1. Moderation on occasion.** If the rules indicate that there is a possibility that moderation occurs or it is stated explicitly that the paper has no means to supervise all the contents produced by the users but some are under moderation, there will be coded as present (1) both items "Moderator" and "Occasional moderation".

**14.3. Registration.** Code as present (1) if the user has to register to post comments on the blog.

Check:

- A) Look around the blogs section for rules and frequent asked questions and check the 10 top blogs displayed
- b) Write a comment in a blog chosen at random to check if the registration is compulsory.
- c) Check it in rules and frequent asked questions. Look for them in the blogs area, "Community or Interact" or UGC pages, FAQ, "About us (or information about the company), Site Map and the homepage. Code as present whether it is said that blogs require registration as well as if all the spaces of participation require prior registration.

Do not code it as present (1) if the registration is voluntary; only in case users cannot by any means post a comment on the blog without previous registration.



The codebook was checked to establish its pertinence according to the different scenarios to which it was to be applied. All members of the team coded two papers randomly chosen from his / her country to readjust, if necessary, the coding scheme. Changes were listed and e-mailed to all the participants, as well as highlighted in the final version of the codebook to facilitate the identification of the new guidelines.

As a main tool for communications, a wiki (Wetpaint-based) was created; traditional e-mail served as an auxiliary means to the platform. It was surprising that a majority of participants chose e-mail as the preferred channel to communicate doubts and suggestions in

the first stages; it took some work to make the wiki really effective in terms of collaborative research.

Following procedures established for comparative analysis with several coders (Shoemaker, 2003; Lombard et al, 2004) training sessions took place before entering the coding process. Newspapers selected for this phase were *Clarín* (Argentine), *El Universal* (Mexico), *Diario de Navarra* (Spain), *The New York Times* and *USA Today* (US). Intercoder reliability of 94.7 percent was considered sufficient to proceed to the next step. All the sites were checked by 2 coders (Graduates, PhD in Communication or Arts or experts with substantial research in the field in their respective country). The survey took place in March 2009. A control sample of 3 newspapers (12.5%) was set to establish the margin of error (3%). Two post-graduate students recorded data using SPSS software and records were also checked before producing results.

## Findings

The survey of the 24 news sites from Argentine, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, US and Venezuela produced 5,168 data points on 276 items; in 42 instances it could not be determined if a variable was present or not (1.9%). Items 22 to 37 produced results for eight papers for which variable 21 (Citizen reporter channel) was coded as present.

A set of variables was examined to identify recognition of UGC contributions to the site (see table 9). The items were selected because of their clear indication of a desire to count on the users' voices and their recognition in terms of visibility (for example, the option to comment all the articles in a section, lists of users' preferences, designing polls, creating forums and blogs, invitation to submit contents of any kind, etc.). "Users report abuse" was not taken into account because it might be a recognition of the users' ability to detect undesirable content but on the other hand it might be a mere substitution of active moderation by the newspaper staff.

There were eleven items coded as 0 (non-present) in all the papers, therefore these are not listed in the table. These items are: *Corrections are shown in the story*, *Some users are not supervised*, *Users' blogs are shown in the upper half of the home page*, *Users' pictures are shown in the upper half in the home page*, *conceptualization information about what constitutes a good news-photo*, *Polls*, *Live discussion, forum... on the home page (upper half)*, *Monetary compensation is guaranteed*, *On occasion a monetary compensation is given*, *Editing tools are available*, and *On occasion a monetary compensation is guaranteed*.

Table 9 shows the number of newspapers that were found to offer each feature by country and global results for the 24 newspapers examined.

**Table 9.** Results for UGC recognition

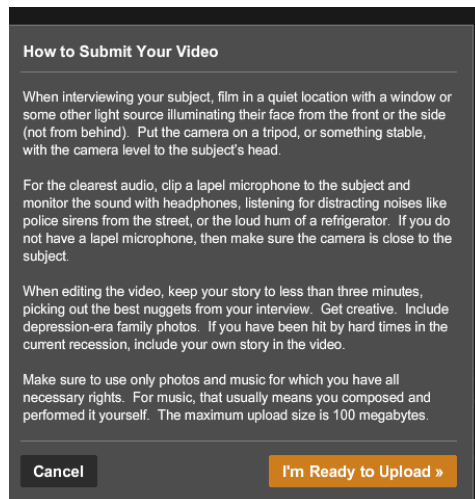
UGC STATUS	ARG	COL	MEX	PER	PTR	ESP	VEN	US	TOT
News Stories audience-driven hierarchy	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	20
Stories/Blogs list audience-driven hierarchy on the homepage	2	2	3	0	3	3	3	3	19
Reporter blogs	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	18
Polls, Live discussion, forum... on the home page	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	18
Comments embedded in journalist blogs	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	3	17
Comments embedded in journalist stories	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	17
UGC on the frontpage	2	2	3	0	3	3	2	2	17
All blogs are open to comments	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	16
Social networking in the stories	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	3	15

Privacy policy	2	2	2	0	1	3	2	3	15
Blog section	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	15
Invitation to submit story ideas or content	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	15
"Community" Sections	1	1	3	0	3	2	2	2	14
Stories/Blogs list audience-driven hierarchy on the homepage (upper half)	1	2	2	0	3	3	1	2	14
Other UGC on the home page	2	1	0	3	0	3	3	2	14
General rules on the homepage	0	2	2	0	2	3	1	3	13
Send your pictures/videos on the homepage (upper half)	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	13
Invitation to submit photos	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	12
All news in "World " are open to comments	1	2	3	0	2	1	1	1	11
Number of comments on the home page	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	11
All news on the homepage are open to comments	1	2	3	0	2	0	1	1	10
All news in "National /Politics" open to comments	1	2	3	0	2	0	1	1	10
Users can vote on news	1	1	0	0	1	3	3	1	10
Audience-driven journalistic content hierarchy section	1	0	1	1	0	3	1	2	9
Comments are visible in reporter blogs	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	3	9
Space to publish citizen stories/Citizen Reporter Channel	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	8
Section of Most read/commented/sent or rated n the home page	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	7
Post a comment on the stories on the home page	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	1	7
Collective open interviews with newsmakers	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	6
Comments on comments in the reporter blogs	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	6
Trackback of comments by external blogs in reporter blogs	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	6
Invitation to submit videos	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1	6
Blogs by reporters audience-driven list	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	5
Users correct news	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	5
Send your pictures/videos on the home page	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	5
Users' monitoring by author in reporter blogs	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
Comments rating in articles	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Space to publish citizen blogs	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
Comments embedded on the users' blogs	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
All users' blogs are open to comments	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
Photos can be shared with others	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4
Audience-driven forums, open to any Topic	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Send a store on the home page	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Comments are extra-visible in users' blogs	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
Post a comment to pictures	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Videos are also displayed in other sections	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Users' can post a comment on videos	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Editor's selection of comments on articles	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Journalist-driven forums referred to in	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2

stories									
Users design polls	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Users' pictures on the home page	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Send a story on the upper half of the home page	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Send your photos on the upper half of the home page	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Trackback of comments by external blogs	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Photos are also displayed in other sections	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Videos can be shared with others	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Invitation to submit audio	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Staff Blog on comments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Karma system (user points based on activity)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Users' blogs are shown on the home page	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Comments on comments in users' blogs	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
How to take a Picture- tips	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
How to take a video- tips	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

The most common indication of recognition is the list of “news stories most read, emailed or blogged” by the users. This was present in almost every paper (83.3%), followed by “lists of contents” provided by users and also listed according to their preferences (79.1%), and “reporter blogs” and the presence of “polls, forums or live discussions on the homepage” (75%). A toolkit for the users that submit photos or audios has been found only in two papers: *Los Angeles Times* –Frequent asked questions- Submit photos (“Please pay attention to composition. Photos should be crisp, not too dark or blown out. We encourage good photography and a good viewing experience for the Your Scene community”) and *The New York Times* (“Submit your video”, see image 4).

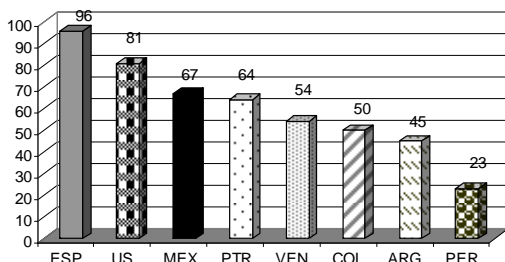
**Image 6.** New York Times tips to submit videos



None of the papers offered the possibility, in general or on occasion, of pay for contributions. Rules even mentioned in some cases that users would not currently be paid, implying that maybe in the future participatory features would be compensated.

By country, the newspapers from Spain, US, Mexico, and Portugal were above the median in terms of levels of presence of the items surveyed. The newspapers from Venezuela, Colombia, Argentine and Peru were below.

**Image 7.** UGC recognition by country



The paper that gives the most recognition to users' contributions on the home page is the Mexican *El Universal* (12 out of 17 features) followed by *La Nación* (Argentine), *El Tiempo* (Colombia), *El País* (Spain), *El Nacional* (Venezuela), *USA Today* and *The New York Times* (US) (10 out of 17 features). Each of the following had 9 of the 17 features: *Público* (Portugal) and *ABC* (Spain). *Journal do noticias* (Portugal) and *Los Angeles Times* had 8 of the 17 features, and *Clarín* (Argentina), *Correio da Manhã* (Portugal), *El Mundo* (Spain) and *El Universal* (Venezuela) each had 7. Fewer than six items were found in *El Comercio* (Peru), *El Espectador* (Colombia), *Milenio* (Mexico), *La Jornada* (Mexico), *Trome* (Peru), *Ojo* (Peru), *Tal Cual* (Venezuela), *El Nuevo Siglo* (Colombia) and *Diario Popular* (Argentine).

**Table 10.** UGC in the front page

Articles/Blogs list audience-driven hierarchy	19
Polls, Live discussion, forum...	18
Blog section	15
"Community" Sections	14
Articles/Blogs Audience-driven list In the upper half	14
Polls in the upper side	13
Number of comments	11
Section of Most read/commented/sent or rated...	7
Post a comment on the stories (invitation)	7
Send your pictures/videos	5
Send a store	3
Users' pictures	2
Send a story in the upper half	2
Send your pictures In the upper half	2
Users' Blogs are shown	1
Users' Blogs In the upper half	0
Users' pictures in the upper half	0

The absence of users' rights over content, especially if no monetary compensation is given is considered as a sign of low recognition. It is a common practice for newspapers in the US, Spain, Colombia and Venezuela. Results do not match expectations raised by the study by Wunsh-Vincent and Vickery (2007), as data shows the situation here as harder on the users' rights.

**Table 11.** Rights on content

UGC RIGHTS ON CONTENT	ARG	COL	MEX	PER	PTR	ESP	VEN	US	TOT
Invitation to submit photos	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2	12
Grant license on rights	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	6 (50%)
License for adaptations	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	5 (41.6%)
Invitation to submit videos	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	7
Grant license on rights	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	5 (71.4%)
License for adaptations	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3 (42.8%)
Citizen Reporter Channel	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	0	8
Grant license on rights	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	4 (50%)
License for adaptations	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	6 (75%)

For 2.0 tools, the results shows notable levels of availability of features such as News stories audience driven list (83.3%), Reporter blogs (75%), Comments embedded in Reporter blogs (70.8%), Comments in news articles (70.8%), All staff blogs opened to comments (66.6%), and Social networking in the stories (62.5%), thus showing a pattern of general inclusion of participatory tools that are dependent on the journalists' activity.

Activities based on contents produced by the users came in lower, such as invitation to submit videos (25%), space to publish citizen blogs (16.6%), rating comments on articles (16.6%), sharing the users' photos (16.6%) and videos (8.3%), and invitation to submit audio (8.3%).

**Table 12.** Use of 2.0 tools

News Stories audience-driven list	20	83.3
Reporter blogs	18	75
Comments embedded in Reporter blogs	17	70.8
Comments embedded in news stories	17	70.8
All Staff Blogs are open to comments	16	66.6
Social networking in the stories	15	62.5
Invitation to submit photos	12	50
Users can vote on news	10	41.6
Audience-driven forums	11	45.8
Space to publish citizen stories/Citizen Reporter Channel	8	33.3
Invitation to submit videos	6	25
Rating comments on articles	4	16.6
Space to publish citizen blogs	4	16.6
Comments embedded in the users' blogs	4	16.6
Photos can be shared with others	4	16.6
Videos can be shared with others	2	8.3
Invitation to submit audio	2	8.3

By country, agreement on the use of tools differs, and only in Mexico (5,8%), Portugal (11,7%), Spain (35,2%), Venezuela (17,6%) and the US (29,4%) can the same features in all three papers examined be found. Results for Argentina and Colombia offer quite a similar pattern.

**Table 13.** Use of 2.0 by newspapers by country

Tools	ARG	COL	MEX	PER	PTR	ESP	VEN	US
News Stories audience driven lists	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	3

Reporter blogs	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	3
Comments embedded in journalist blogs	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	3
All blogs are open to comments	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3
Comments embedded in journalist stories	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2
Comments rating	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Users can vote on news	1	1	0	0	1	3	3	1
Audience-driven forums	1	2	2	1	1	3	0	1
Social networking in the stories	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	3
Space to publish citizen blogs	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Comments embedded in the users' blogs	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Invitation to submit photos	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2
Photos can be shared with others	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Invitation to submit videos	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1
Invitation to submit audio	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Videos can be shared with others	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Citizen Reporter Channel	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	0
Total	17	19	24	8	22	32	21	27

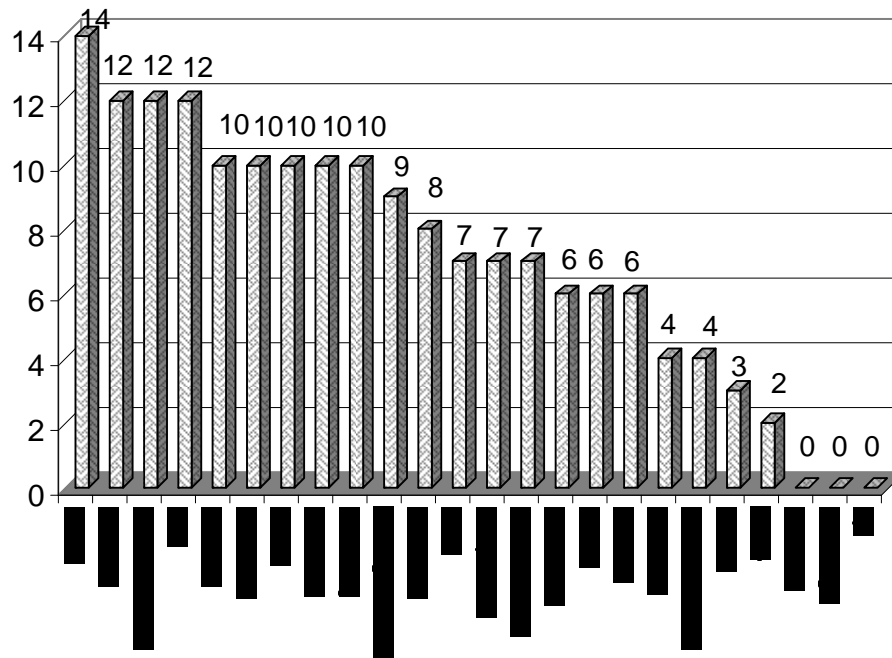
Citizen reporter channels were recorded for one newspaper from Argentina, Colombia, Spain and Venezuela and two from Mexico and Portugal. None were present in the US and Peruvian newspapers examined. The absence/presence of a Citizen reporter channel does not relate to presence of 2.0 tools as can be seen in table 15. In Peru, due to socio-cultural reasons, the use of Internet is low; news media companies do not invest in human and technological resources and cyber media do not generate revenues (Yerzers'ka, 2008). In Portugal, interactivity does not rate high and results obtained in the present research are consistent with previous studies (Zamith, 2008), but two papers offer citizen channels. These results as well as the fact that some papers such as *Clarín* or *El Mundo* offer blogs for citizen reporters -with a different degree of visibility- but not sections, should be further explored.

**Table 14.** Tools 2.0 use and presence of Citizen Reporter Channel

Items	ARG	COL	MEX	PER	PTR	ESP	VEN	US
Citizen Reporter Channel	1	1	2	0	2	1	1	0
Media of 2.0 tools by paper	5.6	6.3	8	2.6	7.3	10.6	7	8.6

Results by paper show big differences, as three newspapers from Argentina (Diario Popular) and Peru and Colombia (*El Nuevo Siglo*) did not have any item. *El Nuevo Diario* has had a remarkable increase in circulation, but there is no sign in the website of interest towards UGC. *El País* (Spain), *El Tiempo* (Colombia), *Jornal de Noticias* (Portugal) and *ABC* (Spain) showed the higher values.

**Image 8.** 2.0 tools by paper



In the Citizen reporter channels agreement was high regarding the requirement of a minimum age to participate, present in six of the eight channels examined; in each of them it was explicitly stated that minors were supposed to have permission to participate. Requirements about the originality of the content sent by users were mentioned by five channels, the necessity of having consent by people shown in pictures mentioned by 2, and permission of parents/guardians in case the person in the photo was a children by 1.

All the channels allowed content in at least two formats. In six of them the users were able to send text, videos or pictures, in four text and pictures by email, and in three upload audio or use the mobile to send content.

**Table 15.** Citizen reporter channels

Name	Newspaper	Country
Soy Corresponsal	<i>La Nación</i>	Argentine
Yo Público	<i>El Tiempo</i>	Colombia
Reportero Ciudadano	<i>El Universal</i>	México
Yo lo vi	<i>Milenio</i>	Mexico
Cidadao Repòrtero	<i>Jornal de Noticias</i>	Portugal
Correio do Lector	<i>Correio da Manha</i>	Portugal
Yo, Periodista (El País)	<i>El País</i>	Spain
Yo reportero	<i>El Nacional</i>	Venezuela

Results for the citizen reporter toolkit contrast with findings on some news sites examined prior to the analysis such as Reuters (You Witness News) or CNN (I Report) or even Wikinews. Only 1 out of 8 (12.5%) explained what news is and how to write a good story (*La Nación*, Argentine). Ethics were mentioned by 3 (37.5%): Soy Corresponsal (*La Nación*, Argentine), Yo Público (*El Universal*, Mexico) and Yo Periodista (*El País*, Spain). In every case, references were scarce and no list of links or other resources were offered. News values mentioned were: Interest to a wide audience, Novelty (2), Out of the ordinary moment in time (1), Everyday matters accounts (1), Local News (4), Denunciations (regarding illegal activities, irregularities in public services, etc.) (4) and Photo-denounce (5).

Image 9. Citizen reporter channel in La Nación (Argentine)



Regarding Ethics, principles mentioned in the channels were Truth (3), Accuracy (1), Freedom from bias (2), Fair Play (1) and Sources should be identified (2).

Results are surprisingly low. It seems that the users are oriented to local news and denunciations; regarding ethics, truth is the most cited principle, as in professional ethics codes.

Only in two papers, Yo Publico (*El Tiempo*, ) and Yo Periodista (*El País*), was there a mention of the possibility of user contents being published in other sections or media owned by the company. This would explain low results for the citizen reporter toolkit (they are, in terms of news production, useless) but it raises another question such as whether the newspaper's ethical responsibility regarding contents extends, or not, to the citizen reporter channel.

Unwelcome content was listed in six channel with the most cited undesirable content (mentioned in five channels) as content that advocates dangerous or illegal or predatory acts. In four channels there were references to pornography and sexually explicit content, hate speech, racially or ethnically offensive content, infringement of copyright. Three sites mentioned information that causes "flood" (posting large amounts of posts that bring a network or service down) and content that puts the user or others in danger. Two made references to obscene content, material that advocates violent behaviour, contains violent images, and puts the user in trouble with the law .

In the newspapers examined there is an ample set of mechanisms, of different nature and efficiency, to supervise and direct participation, such as: moderator (not always effective on every item or prior to publication) registration, peer report (report abuse), recommendations, prohibitions, and legal terms or conditions.

Control through moderation, registration, report abuse and rules ranges from 9% to 100% in the websites, depending on the features (comments in reporter blogs, comments on articles comments on users' blogs, participation in forums and citizen reporter channels). The estimated average of control through moderation is 60.1, followed by report abuse (56.2) and registration (54.6).

The citizen reporter channels are found to be above the average regarding moderation, registration and acceptance of the general rules. Moderation is higher in reporter blogs (64.7%) and registration in forums (72.7%). Comments on the users' blogs were found to have specific rules (100%) and a high level of control through moderation (75%) and "report abuse" (75%).

**Table 16** Control by features (%)

Items	Moderator	Registration	Report abuse	Specific rules	Read Specific rules	Accept Specific rules	General rules	Read General rules	Accept General rules
Reporter blogs	64.7	35.3	35.3	47.1	11.8	5.9	70.6	5.9	17.6
Comments embedded in journalist stories	52.9	52.9	41.1	64.7	11.7	5.8	64.7	5.8	29.4
Audience-dirven forums	45.4	72.7	-	54.5	9	18.1	54.5	9	36.3
Comments embedded in the user's blogs	75	50	75	100	0	0	100	0	25
Space to publish citizen stories	62.5	62.5	37.5	50	25	25	62.5	0	37.5
Average	60.1	54.6	56.2	75	12.5	12.5	81.2	0	31.2

Four papers published both reporter and citizen blogs: *Clarín*, *El Tiempo*, *Jornal de Noticias* and *El País*. When results are compared for both types, citizen blogs showed more openness to participation as all blogs are open to comments, visibility is higher and the trackback feature has more presence, moderation is lower, contrary to report abuse (peer moderation); recommendations and prohibitions are softer ways to control content production.

**Table 17. Blogs: newspaper reporters versus citizen reporters**

Items	RB N=18	CB N=4
Comments embedded in journalist blogs	3	4
All blogs are open to comments	3	4
Comments are visible	1	3
Comments on comments	1	1
Report Abuse	2	3
Moderator	3	2
Registration	2	2
Recommendations	2	3
Specific reasons for not publication	3	4
Trackback of comments by external blogs	1	2
Specific Rules	3	4

In seven of the 17 newspapers (41.1%) that have an option to post comments on articles, it was possible to post comments in all the sections and on each one of the stories published in them. Since a "crime section" was not present in all the newspapers, this feature was not taken into consideration. The seven papers which have comments on news stories

in all sections are: La Nación, El Tiempo, El Espectador, La Jornada, Milenio, El Nacional and The New York Times. General results indicate that differences between contents – hard/soft- are non-existent regarding this feature.

**Table 18.** Comments on news articles by section

News in the homepage are open to comments	17
All News in the homepage are open to comments	10
News “National /Politics” open to comments	17
All News “National /Politics” open to comments	10
News in “Crime/Offbeat” open to comments	4
All news in “Crime/Offbeat” open to comments	2
News in “Style” are open to comments	14
All news in “Style” are open to comments	10
News in “World /International” are open to comments	16
All news in “World ” are open to comments	11

In order to comment on news, registration was found to be active in nine newspapers (52.9) and a combination of registration and moderator in three (*Jornal de Noticias*, *El Nacional* and *The New York Times*). An outstanding paper regarding moderation in comments on articles is *El Nacional* (Venezuela) which had present moderator, registration, report abuse, recommendations, and prohibitions.

Results by newspaper show a great variety of combinations regarding tools to control and direct UGC. In general, data indicates that each feature has its own consideration in terms of control. In the *Los Angeles Times* a clearer pattern can be seen, but in *El Universal*, for example, comments embedded in journalists’ stories require registration, a tool to report abuse is offered, and there are also specific rules. For the rest of the features other control formulas or directions could not be established; in fact, just the acceptance of the privacy policy (not the rules for the feature) is needed to send a comment to a post in the staff blogs.

The feature less submitted to control seems to be the photos send by the users, though there are exceptions. By countries, newspapers from Mexico show a greater openness regarding the control of UGC. On the other hand, *El Nacional* (Venezuela) and *Jornal de Noticias* (Portugal) are more restrictive.

**Table 19.** Control features by paper<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> In the newspapers *Ojo* (Peru), *Diario Popular* (Argentine) and *El Nuevo Siglo* (Colombia) none of the features have been found.

		Moderator	Registration	Report abuse	Specific rules	Read Specific rules	Accept Specific rules	General rules	Read General rules	Accept. General rules
ARGNN1 Clarín	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums	2	2	-	2	2	2	0	2	2
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
ARGNN3 La Nación	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Audience-driven forums	0	1	-	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
COLNN1 El Tiempo	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Audience-driven forums	1	1	-	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
COLNN2 El espectador	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Audience-driven forums	0	1	-	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
MEXNN1 El Universal	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Space to publish citizen stories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MEXNN2	Comments embedded in									

La Jornada	journalist blogs									
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
MEXNN3 Milenio	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Space to publish citizen stories	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
PERNN1 Trome	Comments embedded in journalist blogs									
	Comments embedded in journalist stories									
	Audience-driven forums	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
PERNN2 El Comercio	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
PORTNN1 Jornal de Noticias	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Audience-driven forums	1	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit photos	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PORTNN2 Correio da Manha	Comments embedded in journalist blogs									
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
PORTNN3 Público	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
ESPNN1 El País	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Audience-driven forums	1	1	-	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit photos	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
	Space to publish citizen stories	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
ESPNN2 El Mundo	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories									
	Audience-driven forums	1	1	-	1	0	1	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
ESPNN3 Abc	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Audience-driven forums	1	1	-	1	0	1	1	1	1
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Space to publish citizen stories									
VENNN1 El Universal	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
VENNN2 El Nacional	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Space to publish citizen stories	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
USANN1 Usa Today	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0

	journalist stories									
	Audience-driven forums	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Invitation to submit videos									
	Space to publish citizen stories									
USANN2 New York Times	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos									
	Invitation to submit videos				1			1		1
	Space to publish citizen stories									
USANN3 Los Angeles Times	Comments embedded in journalist blogs	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Comments embedded in journalist stories									
	Audience-driven forums									
	Comments embedded in the user's blogs									
	Invitation to submit photos	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Invitation to submit videos	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	Space to publish citizen stories									

Significant differences have been found when comparing results with those obtained by Domingo et al. (2008) for 16 leading European newspapers, especially in “Commentary and debate spaces” where presence is lower for all items except for comments embedded in journalists stories/blogs (see table 20). Differences are notable for journalist-driven forums, referred to in stories.

In “news production related spaces” results for the actual sample indicate more openness; in fact, space to publish citizen stories is two points higher. Lower presence is found for space to publish citizen blogs and invitation to submit photos, video and audio.

**Table 20.** News production, commentary spaces and social network features

Participatory features /variables	Domingo et al. (2008)			García de Torres et al. (2009)		
	% Yes	% No	% NA	% Yes	% No	% NA
News production-related spaces						
Invitation to submit photos, video, audio (v.18, 19 and 20)	62,5	37,5	0	50	50	0
Invitation to submit story ideas (v.15)	37,5	62,5	0	62,5	37,5	0
Collective open interviews with newspapers (v.2)	18,7	81,2	0	25	75	0
Space to publish citizen blogs (v. 14)	37,5	62,5	0	16,6	83,3	0
Space to publish citizen stories (v.21)	31,2	68,7	0	33,3	66,6	0
Audience-driven citizen content /hierarchy (v.16)	6,25	37,5	56,2	29,1	70,8	0
Audience-driven journalistic content hierarchy (v.1, 1.1 and 1.2)	68,7	31,2	0	83,3	16,6	0
Commentary and debate spaces						
Comments embedded in journalist stories/ blogs (v.3.1 and 4)	68,7	31,2	0	79,1	20,8	0
Comments embedded in citizen stories/blogs (v.14.1 and 29)	37,5	6,25	56,2	33,3	66,6	0

Trackback of comments by external blogs (v. 3.6 and 14.6)	37,5	62,5	0	25	75	0
Audience-driven forums, open to any topic (v.7.1)	31,2	68,7	0	12,5	83,3	4,1
Journalist-driven forums, referred to in stories (v.8)	56,2	43,7	0	8,33	91,6	0
Polls (v.9)	81,2	18,7	0	70,8	29,1	0
Social Networking features						
Public user profile page (v.33)	25	75	0	8,33	91,6	0
Karma system (v.12)	6,25	93,7	0	4,16	95,8	0
User tagging of content, serendipity tools (v.24.6)	12,5	87,5	0	16,6	83,3	0
Links to promote content on social sites (v.10 and 10.1)	43,7	56,2	0	66,6	33,3	0

Finally, for social networking features related items results are less divergent except for “public user profile page”.

## Conclusions

Results reflect a duality regarding UGC status: there is a wide implementation of 2.0 tools, but the most accepted are those that allow users to work on the content provided by the newspapers, but not so much the tools to produce content. At the same time, recognition of content provided by users is high regarding both the number of options given to them to be contributors to the newspaper and the publication of their contributions in the front page.

The most significant pieces in the puzzle of status is who retains the rights over content and if monetary compensation for contributions is given. This is where the real recognition or the status is established in terms of authorship and both were found to provide little in the way of protection or rights for the users’ contributions. This is significant given that users were generally not asked to explicitly accept the legal terms, that is, the contract, as a step prior to uploading or sending contributions..

Control of UGC is exerted through a variety of tools. Some of them require a very active stance by the newspapers, such as moderation, especially when it does not depend on the reporting of abuse by the users. Other means of control are based on more or less strong directions and guidelines (rules, recommendations or prohibitions). Newspapers present a high variance with a majority of papers adopting different strategies depending on the tool offered.

Problems arising from participation and attempts to solve them by mechanisms of control based on human resources and/or technology are well known, but the coordination of the actions regarding UGC in the websites requires further examination.

The “citizen reporter channel,” the most significant feature regarding UGC as participation described here as doing the job, was adopted by eight out of 24 papers of the sample. The study shows that the citizen reporter toolkit is almost empty of principles or concepts; again, methodological research is needed to look for an explanation and also to explore the differences found by countries.

Research on the users’ attitudes, perceptions and activity regarding the options given by the papers, their knowledge of the legal terms affecting participation and its consequences, as well as privacy policies and rules will contribute to greater understanding of the structures in the user-producer relationship.

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