

CRITICAL ZONE: Cultural journalism and social networking

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Social networks can be platforms for journalism... but their usefulness depends on the knowledge of their logic...

A digital media outlet is one thing and social networks are another. That must be clear, because many people (Internet users and even operators) sometimes mix up the logic of these spaces. A digital press outlet (let's use terms that I know are going to upset some theorists) is a newspaper, a magazine or an audiovisual news program on the internet. May it be understood: digital journalism has its distinctive features, it is not about reproducing a newspaper on the web, but social authority and responsibility are and should be the same as those of the most conventional media (although digital media are, in fact, conventional).

Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, etc, etc...) are confluence spaces of dissimilar content and intentions. They are not a space conceived for journalism, although they can be (in fact, they are) perfectly functional platforms for the promotion of journalistic products. And even to do, propose journalism. The quality of that journalism, obviously, is not defined by the characteristics of their format. It has to do with the quality of the staff, clarity in the approaches, command of the logic of every space, and, once again on this topic, clear classification of the contents. Because you can find anything on the networks, without seemingly honoring a thematic and conceptual coherence..., what we propose should ideally be convincing.

Let's go over our context: the cultural journalism we do in our digital media. There is a lot of

cultural journalism in Cuba (we must recognize it, quality is unequal) but the presence on the social networking is not always the most adequate. And the fact that the said presence on the main networks be effective is not a minor issue, because internet users in Cuba access cultural information not mainly on the sites of those media, but on their Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube profiles... We won't talk about connection difficulties, but precisely because of those difficulties it is necessary to make better use of the potential of those networks, which are very popular and offer possibilities that haven't fully been explored yet.

There's a lack of trained staff (networks must be managed by network professionals), it's necessary to create collaborative networks among the different media, it's necessary to boost contents better and stimulate interaction. Because the number of followers and "I like" is important, but not the principal thing: the main thing is that the message be conveyed, capitalized and enables a rich debate that coexists and hopefully sets the pace for other discussions that abound on the networks. Platform, showcase, display... but also spearhead, public service.

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