



SPECIAL REPORT

Overview of Latin American press The pre-Internet boom

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1. INTRODUCTION

Latin American press is currently thriving —growth in readers, advertising and circulation in most countries—, contrasting with the crisis in other parts of the world, especially Europe and the USA.

There are media more suited to the emerging social sectors —the lower middle classes— in content and price, alongside newspapers focusing on the interests of the higher social strata and the professional middle classes.

These are times of general prosperity throughout the region, although there are already hints of the challenges that will appear in the near future and which have commenced in some countries such as Argentina: falling numbers of readers, sales and advertising as those readers shift from printed press to the digital press on Internet.

This report analyses the following points:

- The current situation of the printed press in Latin America, referring to the number of readers, characteristics, trends and degree of business concentration.
- The short-term challenges facing the printed media as Internet advances.

We shall try to explain first of all what people read in Latin America, why the number of people reading printed press is growing in most of these countries, the business structure in the media of this region and, finally, the future outlook for printed press in Latin America.

“The Popular Press is, together with the free press, behind the current surge of readers”

2. WHAT DO PEOPLE READ IN LATIN AMERICA?

One of the characteristic features of the printed press in Latin America is its variety and widely differing target publics with a broad spectrum of cultural education and social levels, which in turn leads to a diversity of contents and forms of presentation.

Some 5 types of daily newspapers can be distinguished in the region: the traditional press, popular press, regional press, specialist press and free press.

- **The Traditional Press** is what is known as “the serious press”, including large, long-standing benchmark newspapers such as La Nación and Clarín in Argentina, El Mercurio in Chile, El Comercio in Peru, O Estado in Brazil or El Tiempo in Colombia, along with others that have appeared on the scene during the last half a century, such as Reforma in Mexico, Prensa Libre in Guatemala or La Tercera in Chile.
- **The Popular Press** is, together with the free press, behind the current surge of readers and exists throughout the entire region, from Mexico and Guatemala, through Peru and Brazil, to Argentina and Chile.

These newspapers are cheaper and offer everyday, local news on the subjects and areas of most interest for the working class and emerging middle class: public services, the health service, safety

and education. One of their characteristic features is that they present the contents in a clear, direct language, often using jargon, bearing in mind their target public in the middle-middle and low-middle classes. The front page is colourful with large headlines, containing news on crime & accidents, entertainment and show business.

- **The Regional Press** is very important in the largest and most decentralised countries, since the major cities in the interior have enough critical mass and volume of population, especially in the working-class districts, to maintain well-established printed media with large circulation. That is the case of countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina. In Ecuador, Quito and Guayaquil are the two poles where the principal media are developed, which actually operate as national press. In contrast, there is a large dispersion in countries such as Bolivia with small, provincial circulations.
- **The Specialist Press** embraces a large number of media, but two large categories stand out, those dedicated to economic information, addressed at a minority but with a high purchasing power, and sports press, which is much more massive and popular. In fact in some countries, like Mexico, Peru and Venezuela, the sports press is among the most widely read.

“What can be observed throughout the region is a competition between “serious” media and popular press”

In the more socially and economically developed countries the economic media, although minority, are highly influential, as is the case of *Ámbito Financiero* and *El Cronista Comercial* in Argentina —with 74,000 and 58,000 copies a day—, *Valor* in Brazil, and *El Financiero* and *El Economista* in Mexico with 98,000 and 38,000 copies each.

In this regard, certain weekly magazines have a huge impact and are very important, such as *Veja* in Brazil with a circulation of over 1 million copies, *Qué Pasa* and *Capital* in Chile, *Brecha* and *Búsqueda* in Uruguay, *Semana* in Colombia, *Letras Libres* and *Nexos* in Mexico and *Caretas* in Peru.

- In recent years, since the late nineties, **the free press** has also developed with great success.

As pointed out by the specialist in free press, Piet Bakker, from Amsterdam University, this type of newspaper is the most recent phenomenon in the world of printed press. Its circulation grew by 140% from 1.2 million in 2005 to 2.8 million in 2010, reaching a total of 3.5 million newspapers distributed in 2011 —a penetration of 1 newspaper for every 100 inhabitants—. The number of free newspapers in the region rose from just two in 1999 to 40 and currently stands at 37 —8 in Argentina, 8 in Brazil and

7 in Mexico, these countries leading this new form of press—. The most prominent free newspaper is the *Metro International* —“Metro”—, the largest newspaper in Latin America, with almost 3 million daily readers in the metropolitan areas of Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and Colombia.

What can be observed throughout the region is a **competition between “serious” media and popular press**. According to *SkyScraper Life*, a forum of multimedia information resources, which published the report “The 200 daily newspapers most widely read in Latin America: average daily circulation in 2011”, the most read newspaper in the region is the popular Peruvian newspaper *Trome*, followed in second place by *Clarín* in Buenos Aires with 348,239 a day; third was the popular *Super Noticia* in Belo Horizonte with 293,572; fourth *Folha* in Sao Paulo with 286,398; and fifth, another popular newspaper, *Nuestro Diario* in Guatemala City with 270,097.

The first ten places are completed with *El Tiempo* in Bogotá —6th with 269,394—, *Extra* in Río de Janeiro —7th with 265,018—, *O Estado* in Sao Paulo —8th with 263,046—, *O Globo* in Río de Janeiro —9th with 256,259— and *La Prensa* in Mexico City —10th with 244,299—.

As may be observed in this classification, the popular newspapers —*Trome*, *Super Noticia*, *Nuestro Diario*, *Extra* and *La Prensa*— and the traditional ones —*Clarín*, *Folha*, *O Estado*,

O Globo and El Tiempo— predominate on the market.

Analysing the situation country by country, we observe that the printed media predominating on

the markets are traditional and popular press, with a few specific cases where specialist press is more important, especially sports newspapers, and even regional press:

COUNTRY	MEANS	SALES	TYPE	COUNTRY	MEANS	SALES	TYPE
ARGENTINA	Clarín	348,000	traditional press	HONDURAS	La Prensa	60,000	traditional press
	La Nación	162,000	traditional press		MEXICO	La Prensa	244,000
	Diario Popular	96,000	popular press	El Gráfico		235,000	popular press
	La Voz del Interior	55,028	regional daily	El Norte		232,000	regional press
	La Gaceta-Tucumán	53,925	regional daily	El Informador		190,000	regional press
	Dario Deportivo Ole	49,625	sports daily	Record		180,000	specialist press
	La Capital-Rosario	39,175	regional daily	Ovaciones		158,000	specialist press
El Día-La Plata	38,362	regional daily	Reforma	135,000		traditional press	
BOLIVIA	Extra	80,000	popular press	La Jornada		107,000	traditional press
	Gente	78,000	popular press	El Economista		98,000	specialist press
	El Diario	45,000	traditional press	El Universal		81,000	traditional press
	El Deber	28,000	traditional press	Milenio	80,000	traditional press	
BRAZIL	Folha	297,000	traditional press	Excelsior	25,000	traditional press	
	Super Noticia	296,000	popular press	NICARAGUA	La Prensa	42,000	traditional press
	Extra	265,000	popular press		PANAMA	El Siglo	66,000
	O Estado	263,000	traditional press	La Prensa		65,000	traditional press
	O Globo	256,000	traditional press	PARAGUAY	Últimas Noticias	39,000	traditional press
Zero Hora	188,000	popular press	ABC Color		39,000	traditional press	
CHILE	El Mercurio	161,000	traditional press	PERU	Trome	560,000	popular press
	Últimas Noticias	124,000	popular press		El Popular	215,000	popular press
	La Cuarta	107,000	popular press		Correo	161,000	popular press
	La Tercera	98,000	traditional press		Nuevo Ojo	151,000	popular press
La Segunda	133,000	traditional press	Líbero		106,000	sports daily	
COLOMBIA	El Tiempo	269,000	traditional press	El Comercio	100,000	traditional press	
	Q'Hubo Medellín	121,000	popular press	Perú 21	100,000	traditional press	
	El Espectador	58,000	traditional press	La República	50,000	traditional press	
	El Espacio	48,000	popular press	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Listín Digital	66,000	traditional press
COSTA RICA	Diario Extra	169,000	popular press		Hoy	50,000	traditional press
	La Nación	65,000	traditional press		Caribe	28,000	traditional press
ECUADOR	El Universo	135,000	traditional press	El Nacional	28,000	traditional press	
	El Comercio	120,000	traditional press	URUGUAY	El País	65,000	traditional press
	Últimas Noticias	69,000	popular press		La República	38,000	traditional press
	Extra	69,000	popular press	VENEZUELA	Últimas Noticias	170,000	popular press
El Salvador	Diario Hoy	57,000	traditional press		Meridiano	150,000	sports daily
	GUATEMALA	Nuevo Diario	270,000		popular press	Panorama	101,000
Prensa Libre		130,000	traditional press		Líder	100,000	sports daily
El Periódico		30,000	traditional press		El Nacional	90,000	traditional press
Siglo XXI		30,000	traditional press		El Universal	82,000	traditional press

Source: Author's preparation based on figures from SkyScraper Life (average daily circulation in number of copies sold in 2011)

“In contrast to the situation in Europe and USA, in most of the Latin American countries, excluding cases such as Argentina or Chile, the number of people who read printed press is growing”

As can be seen in this table, the competition between benchmark traditional press and popular press is clearer in Brazil than anywhere else. The daily newspaper *Folha* in Sao Paulo and the popular newspaper *Super Noticia* vie with each other every year for the largest number of sales. Moreover, the six newspapers with the highest sales are the popular daily newspapers *Super Noticia*, *Extra* and *Zero Hora*, and the traditional daily newspapers *Folha*, *O Globo* and *O Estado*.

In Peru, however, the predominance corresponds to popular press: *Trome* is undisputed regional leader with 560,000 copies, followed at a considerable distance by another daily newspaper of the same type, *El Popular*.

The Mexican market is dominated by the popular press —*La Prensa*—, the sports papers —*Récord* and *Ovaciones*— and the regional newspapers —*El Norte de Monterrey* and *El Informador de Guadalajara*—. The major traditional newspapers follow in fourth place —*Reforma*, *La Jornada*, *El Universal*, *Milenio* and *Excelsior*—.

Along the same lines, in Venezuela the popular press —*Últimas Noticias*—, regional press —*Panorama*— and sports press —*Meridiano* and *Líder*— top the list of most-sold daily newspapers, outstripping the traditional serious press —*El Nacional* and *El Universal*—. In

Bolivia the most-read media are the popular press such as *Extra* and *Gente*, which double the circulation of *El Diario* in La Paz and *El Deber* in Santa Cruz.

The situation is similar in Guatemala, albeit on a smaller scale owing to the size of the country: the undisputed leader is the popular *Nuestro Diario* —270,000 copies—, way ahead of the traditional newspapers such as *Prensa Libre* —130,000—, *El Periódico* —30,000— or *Siglo XXI*. Similarly, in Costa Rica *Diario Extra*, a popular newspaper, sells 100,000 copies more than *La Nación*, the benchmark daily newspaper in the country.

In Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador the traditional press is most widely read, although the popular press also have a strong presence on the market. The principal newspapers in Argentina are *Clarín* and *La Nación*; in Ecuador, *El Universo* and *El Comercio*; in Chile, *El Mercurio*; and in Colombia, *El Tiempo*. But these newspapers are followed very closely by the popular newspapers —*Las Últimas Noticias* and *La Cuarta* in Chile, *Últimas Noticias* in Ecuador, *Q´Hubo*, with its corresponding local editions, in Colombia and the weakest of all, *Diario Popular* in Argentina—.

3. GROWTH IN READERS

In contrast to the situation in Europe and USA, in most of the Latin American countries,

“The improvement in the economic situation in the region has brought a higher level of resources and increased purchasing power of the population, especially the emerging middle classes”

excluding cases such as Argentina or Chile, the number of people who read printed press is growing. From a ratio of 6.2 newspapers per 100 people in 2002, it rose to 6.7 per 100 people in 2010 while the circulation increased by 15%, according to figures published by the consultancy PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

PwC forecasts a growth of the daily newspaper business in Latin America by around 5.5% per annum over the next five years, which contrasts with the 1.4% p.a. drop forecast in North America over the same period, or the growth of just 0.3% in Europe and the Middle East.

There are several reasons for this growth, which is underpinned by the rise of popular and free press and goes against the global trend:

- Firstly, **the improvement in the economic situation in the region has brought a higher level of resources and increased purchasing power of the population, especially the emerging middle classes, the main niche of readers of the popular press.**
- Secondly, **the consumption of free press has also grown.** The “Metro” phenomenon began in Stockholm in 1995 and reached Latin America in 2009 when this type of dailies appeared in Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala and Peru, subsequently

extending throughout the entire continent.

As pointed out by Piet Bakker, journalist and academician at the University of Utrecht and expert in the worldwide phenomenon of free press, free newspapers will not replace paid papers, but reach a supplementary type of reader: *“The main reason for the low level of substitution seems to be that free dailies target not only new readers but also a different sort of reader. Free papers are usually also quite successful in finding that particular reader. As they aim for a –preferably urban younger– non reading audience, existing titles don’t have so much to fear from free dailies. At the same time there are many people who read both paid and free dailies, which also suggests a low level of substitution”.*

As shown in the following graph, circulation has doubled between 2005 and 2011:

This is a global phenomenon which has extended throughout the region. Some of the most popular titles are La Razón in Buenos Aires; El Día in Bolivia; Sao Paolo Metro, Greater São Paulo, Santos, Campinas, Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte and Destak in Sao Paolo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia; and in Chile, Publimetro and La Hora in Santiago, Viña del Mar, Valparaíso and Rancagua.

“There are large communication groups behind the major printed press in the region”

In Colombia, ADN in Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, Cali; Al Día and Diario Libre in the Dominican Republic; Metrohoy, Metroquil and MetroCuenca in Ecuador; Publinews in Guatemala; Publimetro in Peru; Primera Hora and Ciudad in Venezuela.

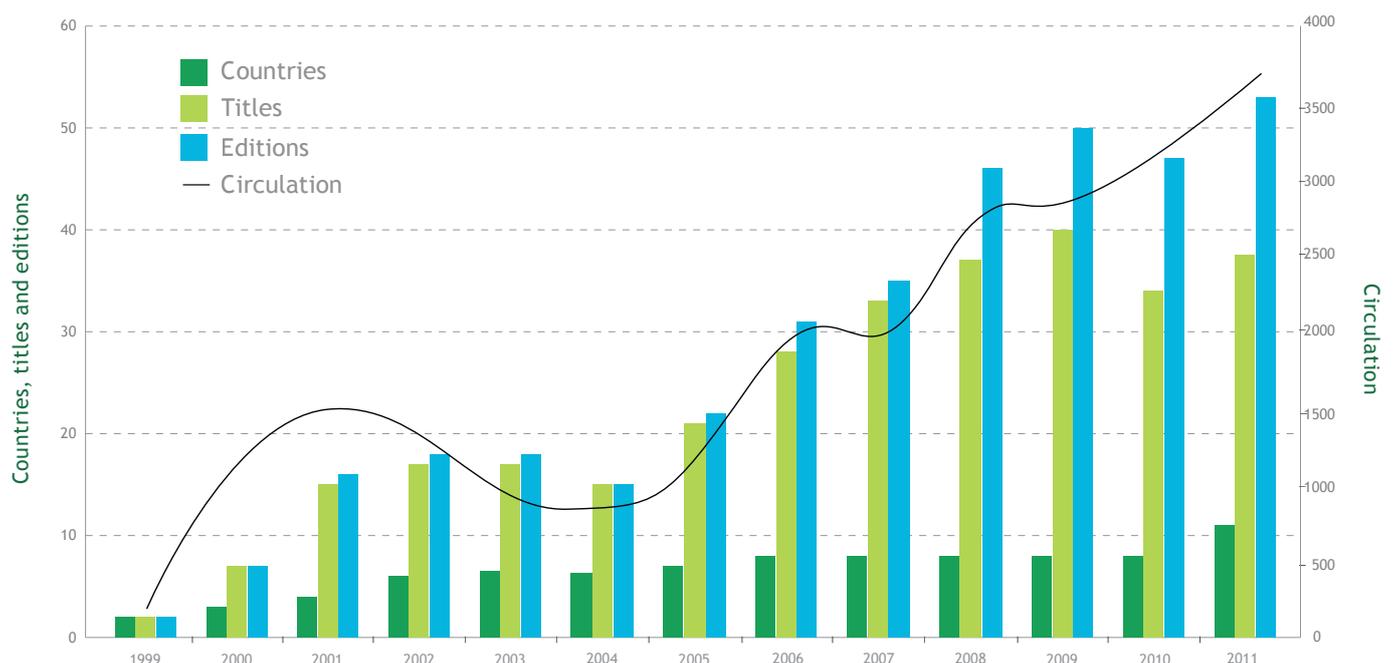
In Mexico we can find El M in Mexico City, in circulation from 2000 to 2007; El Tren in Guadalajara, created in 2000; El Nuevo Siglo, 2004-2010; El Tren in Monterrey (2005); Crónica Síntesis (2006-2010); Publimetro, with editions in Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara (2006); Más por Más in Mexico City (2009); PuntoMedio in Mérida (2009); El Nuevo Mexicano in Federal District (2010) and 24horas with a national circulation (2011).

4. CONSOLIDATION OF THE PUBLISHING GROUPS

There are large communication groups behind the major printed press in the region. These major corporations have the largest circulation, largest numbers of readers and largest advertising portfolios.

In Brazil, the most important paper, **O Globo**, is owned by InfoGlobo of the Marinho Group, a media conglomerate with holdings in radio, press and television. The other major group has been developed around **Folha**, related to the Frías family, which publishes the Folha de Sao Paulo, Agora and Valor Económico. Other prominent groups are the **RBS Group in Rio Grande do Sul** with 4 newspapers,

COUNTRIES, TITLES, EDITIONS AND CIRCULATION OF FREE NEWSPAPERS IN LATIN AMERICA, 1999-2011



Source: Piet Bakker: “The rise of free daily newspapers in Latin America”, at <http://udep.edu.pe/comunicacion/rcom/pdf/2012/Art129-149.pdf>

“In Argentina, the Clarín Group owns the daily newspaper Clarín, which was for many years the most widely read Spanish-language newspaper in the world”

including its flagship Zona Zero, and the **Estado Group** with O Estado de Sao Paulo.

In Mexico, the following groups are prominent: *El Universal* Group, Image Group –owned by Olegario Vázquez Raña, which controls Excelsior newspaper–, and *Organización Editorial Mexicana* – which is controlled by Mario Vázquez Raña, bringing together some 70 printed media–. Then there are important local groups, such as La Jornada in Mexico Federal District, and Reforma and Milenio in Monterrey, Federal District and Guadalajara.

In Colombia, the Santo Domingo Group controls radio and TV Caracol, the daily El Espectador in Bogota and prominent magazines such as Semana and Cromos. Furthermore, in 2012 the **Organisation of the Colombian entrepreneur Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo (OLCSAL)** purchased 55% of the shares in Casa Editorial El Tiempo from the Spanish Planeta Group. This firm also publishes the economic specialist daily Portafolio and ten magazines.

Juan Carlos Gómez, researcher from the media observatory at La Sabana University, points out that the interest observed in the past relationship between entrepreneurs and that sector of the press is linked with the “possibility of increasing their sphere of influence and power”: “Large economic investors need backing to increase the influence they can bear on the societies in which they are

established, so they invest in the media because this gives them symbolic power, which in turn underpins their economic power and they thus increase their influence in the sphere of politics and also their profitability”.

In Argentina, the Clarín Group owns the daily newspaper Clarín, which was for many years the most widely read Spanish-language newspaper in the world. La Nación, apart from the newspaper of the same name, also owns the local licences of publications such as Rolling Stone, ¡Hola! and OHLALÁ.

In Chile there are three major groups: El Mercurio, Copesa and the Claro Group.

El Mercurio is the largest journalistic company with more than 20 national and regional newspapers, including El Mercurio de Valparaíso, El Mercurio de Santiago, Las Últimas Noticias, El Mercurio de Antofagasta, La Estrella de Valparaíso, El Líder de San Antonio and La Prensa de Tocopilla.

The Copesa Group controls several names in radio, television and Internet, as well as press, including Pulso, La Tercera, La Hora, La Cuarta, El Diario de Concepción, the magazine Qué Pasa, Paula, BizHoy, Biut, Agrupémonos, Zoom Inmobiliario, Zoom Automotriz, Promo Service and the radio stations Zero 97.2 and Duna 89.7, among others.

Finally, the Claro Group, named after the entrepreneur Ricardo

“All these processes are occurring in a context of modernisation of what were formerly companies that had been owned for generations by families dedicated to journalism”

Claro, is behind Ediciones Financieras S.A., which owns Diario Financiero. The group also owns Ediciones e Impresos S.A., which publishes Revista Capital.

In Bolivia, the Rivero family owns the benchmark daily El Deber and controls Periodistas Asociados Televisivos, nine dailies in La Paz, Cochabamba and Potosí, two radio stations and two television channels.

In Peru, the El Comercio Group owned by the Miró Quesada family is the principal media group in the country, with daily newspapers such as El Comercio, Gestión, Peru.21 and Trome, along with its interest in television, through Grupo Plural TV, owner of Canal N and América TV, in which the La República Group is a minority shareholder.

In Venezuela, the largest two newspapers, El Nacional and El Universal, are owned by the **Otero Silva and Mata families**, respectively.

All these processes are occurring in a context of modernisation of what were formerly companies that had been owned for generations by families dedicated to journalism. Those families have now formed business units which are run using modern administrative and managerial methods.

For the time being, these groups have opted for a triple strategy:

- **Diversification:** while continuing to publish their

long-standing titles, they have also put popular and free newspapers on the market. This is the case of Clarín with the popular daily Muy, El Tiempo with Hoy and Copesa in Chile with La Hora (created in 2000).

The media conglomerate that publishes O Globo, the largest paper in Río de Janeiro, launched its own tabloid, Extra, sold at 65 cents, while O Globo was sold at US\$ 1.15. Following the launching of Extra by Infoglobo, the RBS Group, a media conglomerate from Porto Alegre, launched Diário Gaúcho in 1998.

The traditional media have also entered the free press business: Clarín took over La Razón in 2000; Diario Hoy in Ecuador launched Metrohoy, Metroquil and MetroCuenca, the Copesa Group in Chile brought out La Hora; El Comercio in Peru is behind Publimetro; the Planeta Group, which owns the daily El Tiempo, promotes ADN in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla; El Nacional in the Dominican Republic launched Última Hora; El Día in Bolivia launched El Sol; and El M was published in Mexico by El Universal.

- **Segmentation of the journalistic market** —through specialist, sports, popular and free press— as an option to focus on readers’ needs, make the press more attractive and start publishing brief, more local news.

“The circulation of printed newspapers grew by 0.1% in 2012 in Latin America”

- **Positioning in Internet,** since, as highlighted by digital press researchers Summer Harlow and Ingrid Bachmann: “A solution is sought in Internet to the problems encountered as a result of the falling circulation and smaller advertising income of the press –Paterson and Domingo, 2008–. However, a recent report showed that 20% of the digital journalism initiatives in Latin America do not make a profit – Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano, 2011–”. Although the number of readers is rising in some Latin American countries –the most representative being Peru, where sales have grown by 55% in the last 5 years from 1.2 million copies sold to 1.8 million, according to figures published by KPMG–, the socially more mature countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Chile, with historically consolidated middle classes, are already in a very different situation as reading on Internet is rising steadily. That is the way Latin American press will go in the coming years.

5. FUTURE OUTLOOK: LOSS OF READERS AND DIGITAL CHALLENGE

The medium-term future of the Latin American printed press, in around five years’ time, will be hit by (a) a loss of printed press readers through migration to Internet and, as a direct consequence of this, (b) the boom in electronic media.

Loss of printed press readers

Broadly speaking and according to the annual survey of World Press Trends published by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, the circulation of printed newspapers grew by 0.1% in 2012 in Latin America –1.2% in Asia and 3.5% in Australia and New Zealand–, contrasting with a fall by 6.6% in North America, 5.3% in West Europe, 8.2% in East Europe and 1.4% in the Middle East and North Africa.

By all accounts, as the middle classes in Peru and other countries in the region become consolidated, gain more purchasing power and start entering the world of Internet, the number of people who read newspapers online will rise.

However, at least for the next few years, it looks more as if the different formats will be complementary, rather than some immediately substituting others, as highlighted by Juliana Sawaia, Manager of Learning & Insights at Ibope Brazil. According to this researcher, we are in the “tradigital” era in Latin America, in which the penetration of electronic devices on the market leads to a diversification of multiple formats for the distribution of contents and information, but where digital media now form part of the strategy of traditional media and, as such, complement them, promoting the consumption of media in general.

“Whether complementary or substituting the reading of printed press, there is a clear trend towards increasing readership of digital press”

In fact, it must be borne in mind that the numbers of Latin American online readers have grown more than anywhere else in the world: 12% between March 2012 and March 2013 – according to the annual analysis made by the firm Pingdom and a report by ComScore–. In total there are almost 160 million net surfers in the region, which puts Latin America in the forefront in the growth of Internet users. It is followed by the Asia-Pacific region with a 7% growth; Europe, with 5%; Middle East-Africa with 3% then the United States and Canada with 1%. Yet in spite of the growth of the Latin American audience, it still only represents 9% of the global Internet audience.

the penetration of Internet has grown in the region and is now over 50% in 4 countries –Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Colombia–, as shown in the graph, and over or around 40% in 8 countries –Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Brazil and Peru–.

- Moreover, the infrastructures are improving with a rise in broadband connections. There is still considerable room for growth in this aspect because, as can be seen in the following graph, despite having increased by 20% in 3 years it is still at 27%.

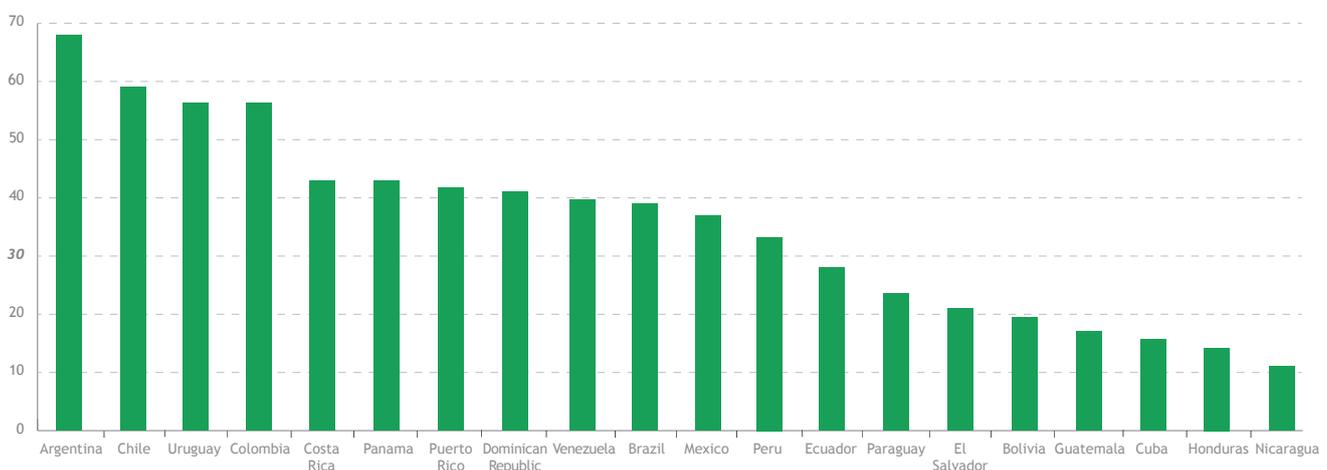
The digital challenge

Whether complementary or substituting the reading of printed press, there is a clear trend towards increasing readership of digital press:

- Because the number of consumers is rising. In fact,

“The arrival of Internet”, as pointed out by the editor-in-chief of El País, Juan Luis Cebrián, “is not a mere change in social attitudes. It is a revolution of society and civilization on a par, in the history of mankind, with the invention of the alphabet or

PENETRATION OF THE BROADBAND IN LATIN AMERICA (%)



Source: Latinoaméricalatinahoy

“We can conclude that access to Internet changes reading habits”

printing. And journalism is right in the thick of things”.

Along the same lines, Francisco Miró Quesada, editor-in-chief of the Peruvian daily *El Comercio*, said during a meeting of the Latin American Society of Journalism (Sociedad Iberoamericana de Periodismo) that “Latin American press is still enjoying a good springtime, but it must not rest on its laurels”.

Over the past 20 years, the digital press has been through three stages. A first stage in which its contents were put on line just like any other distribution channel. A second stage when Google appeared on the scene in 1998 and completely changed the behaviour of the audience. And a third stage, the current stage, marked by “the appearance of social networking (Facebook, Twitter), cell phones –mobility breakthrough– and YouTube; suddenly word gave way to image. All this made up a

new package, which changed the audience’s behaviour again. Some websites now discover that 30% of their entries come from Facebook, i.e. through the recommendation of a friend”, as pointed out by Jean-François Fogel, a French journalist expert in digital media, who ran *Le Monde.com* and was adviser to Grupo Prisa.

Therefore, after two decades of development and due to the latest technological progress, we can conclude that access to Internet changes reading habits. As Fogel also mentioned: “I might be wrong, but I have a feeling that the appearance of smart phones is going to have a tremendous impact in Latin America. In recent decades, families living in the poor, outlying areas of the large cities in Latin America who did not have a house of their own often had a television. That was a way of feeling that they belonged to society. Well the same families now have a cell phone. They will use that cell phone as a small computer and enter the digital world through that channel, rather than buying a tablet or a computer, which are priced out of their reach”.

In this situation and apart from certain exceptions, such as the daily newspaper *Clarín*, *El Tiempo*, *La Tercera* or *Folha* in Sao Paulo, the digital daily of the *El Comercio* Group and *La Prensa* in Peru, the printed press has not yet managed to adapt to the new digital media. Bernardo Díaz Nosty, professor at Malaga University specialising in press, stressed that within

PENETRATION OF THE BROADBAND IN LATIN AMERICA (%)



Source: Wireless Intelligence

“The potential for a greater inclusion of audience in the information process and more collaborative journalism is curtailed by interactivity localised in the hierarchy of the media”

the vast presence on Internet of all kinds of daily newspapers from Latin America, the editions were essentially symbolic, with very little value added in relation to the possibilities offered by the digital support and falling far short of the codes of construction, legibility and design characterising the more highly developed digital press.

Ingrid Bachmann and Summer Harlow –the authors of a study on Latin American press on Internet–maintain that “the publication of contents on Internet follows the logic of duplication and migration rather than adopting new formats and when multimedia resources are used, it is for topics that lend themselves to this type of treatment.

Accordingly, the sections on culture, entertainment and sports include considerably more photographs, image galleries and videos than the rest, while the inclusion of audio clips is significantly more frequent in articles on politics, police & crime and education, especially for witness declarations. Once again, the results suggest that the media opt to use the web elements that are easiest to incorporate and do not especially alter the process of producing news...

According to our analysis of 19 websites of the most emblematic Latin American newspapers, they offer a limited opening to dialogue with users. These results are similar to those

obtained in studies on the media of other western countries –e.g. Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Jönsson and Örnebring, 2011–, which suggest that the editorial staff still control what news is published and how. The potential for a greater inclusion of audience in the information process and more collaborative journalism is curtailed by interactivity localised in the hierarchy of the media. As mentioned by Kim and Sawhney (2002), users have little room for reaction and the producers of contents make sure they hang on to the decision-making powers”.

All these processes–improvement of the economic situation of the population with access to other, more sophisticated and expensive communication instruments and the “technological revolution”– will eventually encourage readers to migrate from printed press to digital press. Moreover, the anticipated reduction of readers will go hand-in-hand with a reduction of advertising, since Internet has already begun to attract income from advertising. Its share of all media advertising rose from 1.6% in 2004 to 4.2% in the first half of 2010, according to the Projeto Inter-Meios, which monitors expenditure in advertising. This increase contrasts with the income from general advertising, which dropped from 16.6% to 13.4% over the same period.

There is now even a rich, new experience in Latin America regarding digital informative media. Some

“Payment for contents is proposed as a very long-term alternative, since that culture of paying for reading the press on Internet is non-existent in Latin America”

twenty news websites have been developed which operate as digital journalistic media. These include Plaza Pública in Guatemala –two-third financed by the University Rafael Landívar–, Animal Político and Reporte Índigo in Mexico, El Faro in El Salvador, Confidencial –a portal in Nicaragua directed by Carlos Fernando Chamorro–, Verdad Abierta and La Silla Vacía in Colombia, Ciperchile in Chile, Puercoespín and Chequeando in Argentina, Apublica in Brazil and IDL-Reporteros and Infos in Peru.

However, the growth in digital platforms is not being followed by a parallel growth in advertising income, so the printed dailies will foreseeably not be able to offset with Internet the loss of advertising income in their printed editions or the drop in sales.

PwC says that advertising in the online editions of the Latin American dailies will grow by 23.5% until 2016, three times more than in the printed versions, but with a much smaller cost of advertising on Internet.

The Achilles heel of online media is their inability to finance themselves, since the vast majority have financial problems. According to a study published by the FNPI –Foundation of New Latin American Journalism– made by Angel Alayón, 57% generate losses. Only 18.5% declared that they had generated more income than costs. Payment for contents is proposed as a very long-term alternative, since that culture of paying for reading the press on

Internet is non-existent in Latin America. To quote the assistant editor-in-chief of the Argentinian daily La Nación, Fernán Sagüer: “Online websites represent a very small percentage of the business: between 5 and 7 per cent”.

There are several alternatives for the future development of the different formats –traditional press and the press arising in the digital world–:

- The segmentation and even hyper-segmentation of content, adapting to each user and endeavouring not to broadcast to an undetermined mass of readers, but to each Internet user in particular. “Therefore, it is not a collective message to be consumed on equal terms by a mass of receivers. On the contrary, it is a specific offer which each user will choose individually to adopt his decision-making or enrich his particular data bank”, assures Tatiana Hernández Soto in her doctoral thesis: “Evolution of the principal general information digital newspapers in Latin America from the beginning of the third millennium (2000-2007). The cases of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela.”
- PCommitment to and further development of the use of the tools available in the digital world, such as hypertext, the multimedia option, bonding together text, fixed image – infographics–, sound –voice, music, special effects–,

“The ground already covered by the websites of some traditional Latin American newspapers is a good starting point, but there’s still a long way to go”

moving image –animation, videos– and interactivity between the transmitter and the receiver.

As Tatiana Soto points out: “The digital design is still faced with a number of technical limitations. The ground already covered by the websites of some traditional Latin American newspapers is a good starting point, but there’s still a long way to go. New expertise needs to be introduced. It is unarguably necessary to make further progress in the interdisciplinary work of journalists, editors, designers, photographers, infographic designers, etc., as well as in the executive vision of this new challenge for journalism. In short, newspapers need to assess and understand the real repercussions of the new platform”.

- One possible solution that is being tried and tested to cope with the falling numbers of printed press readers is the idea of focusing on the development of content as a “formula for survival” and to attract more readers. There are already experiments along these lines, such as the newspaper Zero Hora, which has 19 sections, daily theme-based supplements and content especially targeting young people –53% of its readers are less than 40 years old–.

Its secret lies in offering an enormous amount of localism, with editions adapted to each segment. That formula is repeated in Colombia through the newspaper alliance Grupo Nacional de Medios (GNM), which founded the popular daily Q’Hubo.

- Another development vector must be to take advantage of the synergies among media in the region that share the same language.

According to Díaz Nosty: “the supranational potential of the benchmark press in a cultural space where there are barely any linguistic barriers is extraordinary, but for the time being communication permeability is very low, so the media frontiers coincide with the national geographic boundaries. There is no conspicuous experience of collaboration among publishing companies or supranational projects. The first supplement distributed simultaneously by daily newspapers of different nations stemmed from a North American experience, of the New York Times. Perhaps the most advanced initiative may arise from Grupo de Diarios América, which has 11 newspapers in 11 Latin American nations with a circulation of 1.5 million copies a day, which share and offer joint resources”.

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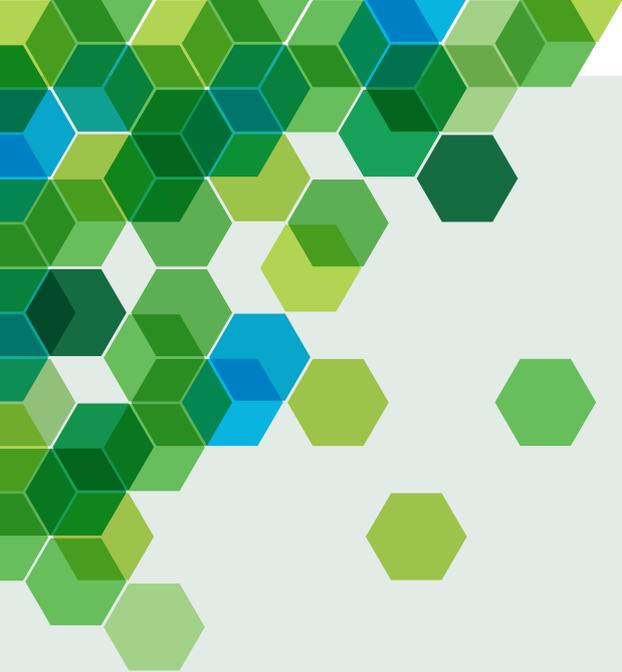
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