Chapter 24

Digital Revolution in Latin America beyond Technologies

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ABSTRACT

The challenge of interactive digital television (iDTV) in Latin America is to give opportunity of technological access and participation to a significant parcel of the population whose main information source is (still analog) television. The increase in connected device possession and system digitalization has been modifying consumption habits of audiovisual content. Television is still the home center, but now it divides the attention with mobile phones, smartphones, tablets and laptops, delineating a consumption that is multitasking, portable, mobile etc., but not always linked (independent devices use), there are multi-platform services and products that allow this interaction, though. Several externalities must be considered, either the different stages of digital signal development and application, or the cultural diversity, laws, technological unfolding, education, and even the economic aspects of each country. The paper aims to provide demands of how to digitally include these millions of citizens who don’t have internet access.

INTRODUCTION

There is a social search for informational democratization in Latin America, but its accomplishment passes through diversified structural, social and political-cultural aspect. Technologies such as mobility, interactivity and connectivity combined with computer science and radio broadcasting are changing information consumption and production means in the continent. However, the distribution, integration, access and assimilation processes of these technologies by the society are conditioned to several factors, such as signal coverage, network capacity, speed, devices price, technical characteristics, and others. A significant part of latin-american knowledge and evolution in communication is a result of the products that circulate through massive media
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Digital Revolution in Latin America beyond Technologies (radio and television), directly attached to urban culture, added to cultural industry development. To understand digitization context in the region is essential to know this society by citizenship perspective, because this results are in a practical interference on what has been done, especially in communication processes, technological access and information dissemination.

Between 1950 and 1970 the researches in Latin America had focus on ideological issues related to popular memory, political management, informational flow, polemics around national identity, political-cultural projects designing, appliance of hegemonic models generated by the necessity of self-identification in social values universe, producing development as a way to satisfy basic necessities, and on epistemological landmark critic and etc. Later, new cultural matrices (especially the ones related to popular culture) bring other configurations in the local and global identity formation. Sender and receiver role is reformulated, the communication is not ‘one for all’ anymore, but it is ‘all for all’, mainly after World Wide Web (www) creation by Berners-Lee, between 1989 and 1991. It is the beginning of digital culture and of new ways to democratize information and knowledge ingestion. Network, connections, interactivity, access, sharing, new communication processes, new media, other forms of audiovisual products etc., are characteristics of a new paradigm, which defines cultural change lines that the region has been experiencing since then.

Many overviews have been discovered in the continent along, mainly, the last decade. The communication inclusion in governmental and non-governmental organizations global agenda, the audiovisual and sound industries expansion and solidification, the universities growth, where the action focus in specific areas of communication such as journalism and publicity was increased, for transmedia spaces usually supported by digital technologies, have been expanding the necessity of putting together the actions, production centers and results achieved in a communication development commun axis in Latin America.

In spite of its encouraging effects, social and digital inclusion still face many challenges. Considering only population and geographical dimension in Latin America it is possible to imagine the extension of the problem that need to be faced. If other variables were included, like economy, culture and laws, for example, the challenge would gain exponential proportions. Since 1970 decade, governments, researchers, research cores and others, have been making efforts, in many places in the region, regarding development policies and the necessity of including a suitable national communication policy for new demands in radio broadcasting and use of digital technologies.

At the same time, a huge effort has been made by several social agents to create a dialogue among latin american countries representatives, universities, governmental agencies, research centers, content producers, media industries and non-governmental organizations aiming the creation of national and international associations of really representative communication researchers together with agencies from several operating areas, in several countries, in order to increase the access to digital technologies and reduce social and digital exclusion by making a joint effort.

Brazilian Digital Television System has characteristics related to transmission and reception, like the screen format (16:9); ‘cinema’ image presentation or widescreen, making reference to television height and width; a high definition television, transmission with image resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels (which demands 16:9 format) and monoprogramming/multiprogramming, that deal with the capacity of transmitting one or more channels simultaneously. Interactivity is discussed as control capacity over the content received and exchange information resources with the user. Mobility/portability focus on reception capacity in mobile devices, while multi service environment is related to supply of additional service, computer
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