

# REVUE COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGIE ET DÉVELOPPEMENT

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**ENTWICKLUNG ANGESICHTS DER INFORMATION UND/ ODER KOMMUNIKATION**

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# DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN CONFLICTS AND CRISES TIMES IN THE WORLD

The Review Communication, Technology and Development wants to publish a special issue on the topic: «Digital technologies and dissemination of information in conflicts and crises times in the world »

The media coverage of international news by the major agencies (AFP, Associated Press, Reuters and Xinhua) and major international media (Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, Fox News, RFI or RT) has often been the subject of debates for decades in both academia and public opinion. The issue of the imbalance of information flows and media manipulation is a debate that can be described as old (cf. Mac Bride Report) although it is still relevant. The last decade, like the previous ones, has seen the media give important space to a number of conflicts and crises. Besides the eternal Israeli-Palestinian crisis, September 11, 2001, the wars in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Sudan, the situation in Colombia and more recently the Arab Spring, the terrorists' attacks in France, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria or Tunisia have featured prominently in international news. The new interventionist policy in some states, under the guise of the UN (Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, Syria), has also been interpreted in various ways.

The case of the recent episodes is worth noting because the most modern information and communication technologies were unable to prevent, or even mitigate, the terror that has taken place. The most emblematic case occurred on the outskirts of the Stade de France, when the terrorist attack was not perceived by the spectators. People who were watching the game only realized the gravity of the events at the end of the match. It turns out that in places with large concentrations of people, such as the Stade de France, the cell phone signal is very bad and hence the information long in coming. In this case, people believed that the noise came from fireworks.

Thus, communication between people was stopped at a crucial point in their lives. Did the same happen in other terrorist attacks in Madrid, London, New York and in other Third World countries? What about the economic crisis of emerging countries, the numerous scandals of corruption in Third World countries, the Syrian immigrants who land in Europe and the social crisis?

Other crises or conflicts can be traced. A Brazilian recent example illustrates this well. About four months in the city of Mariana, State of Minas Gerais, two dams of the mining company Samarco broke. The company reported tremors two hours before the accident, but no one was reported. As a result, sludge, solid waste and water invaded Bento Goncalves community, killing 17 people, creating hundreds of homeless and the biggest environmental disaster in history of Brazil. The waste arrived to pollute the river (Rio Doce), which cuts two Brazilian states. Samarco company was fined by the Public Ministry and environmental protection agencies. Today, the company's image is severely shaken, the media reports endlessly the case, and public opinion snake measures, but so far nothing has happened. Credibility crisis.

In the age of digital technology, large traditional media are facing competition from a new generation of citizen-journalists and social networks. Today, images recorded from cell phones are released at record speed on websites specializing in alternative information and are regularly shared by traditional corporate media. With Internet and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), there is a significant diversity of information sources.

Does this diversification of information sources have an impact on the quality of the treatment of international news? Does it help rebalance the flow of information? What kind of new media manipulation can be observed?

For the Brazilian expert João José Forni (2011) «Another aspect to be considered in the genesis of crises is the speed. In the past, there was a large gap of time before the public take notice and the market to react. It ends. The news broadcasting environment is changing rapidly» (Forni, 2011, p.391). For him crises are no longer local but global, transmitted live from New York, Kabul or anywhere in the interior of Brazil.

And what to speak of the credibility crisis that shakes the modern organizations? The Brazilian Francisco Viana (2001) lists some characteristics of this type of crisis: “The element of surprise, the lack of habit of dealing with media. A lack of information. The way their impacts spread. The unusual media curiosity. The mobilization of public opinion and governments. And what’s worse; the loss of control of the initiatives” (Viana, 2001, p.167).

As students, academics and communications professionals, this tragedy makes us reflect: What is the role of information and communication technologies in times of conflict and crisis? In the XXI century, all development and technological apparatus that we have are not enough for the basics: to communicate with each other.

Focusing on the contribution of digital technologies to the dissemination of information in crisis and conflicts times in the world, this special issue will seek to deepen the following themes:

- The media coverage of conflicts and crisis in the world in the age of emerging technologies;
- New technologies and digital forms of media manipulation;
- Terrorism, Information and Media technologies;
- Global Communication in Times of Crisis and Conflict;
- Hacktivism and social movements;
- Sign of crisis: the future of information technology.

The Editorial Board is hereby inviting interested individuals to submit proposals (research results, line of approach, theory, methodology, analyses, etc.) relating specifically, but not exclusively, to the themes mentioned above.

The articles proposed (summary and bibliography), not exceeding 4 000 characters - spaces included, should be sent to Christian Agbobli ([agbobli.christian@uqam.ca](mailto:agbobli.christian@uqam.ca)) and Katia Maria Belisário ([katia.belisario@gmail.com](mailto:katia.belisario@gmail.com)) before 30th April 2016.

The articles will undergo a double evaluation process by two anonymous experts.

Languages accepted: French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, German, and Swahili

The volume of articles is 35000 characters inclusive of spaces, bibliographies, summaries and key words. Each article should be preceded by an abstract in a language other than that of the said article. This abstract should be limited to twenty lines. It should be typed using italicized Times font size 9 and an 11 point line spacing. Full papers must be submitted by 30 June 2016.