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Inside the Changes in Infoglobo's Newsroom Routine Eight Years after Integration

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I. The Promises of Integration

In 2017, the newsrooms of *O Globo*, *Extra* and *Expresso* were unified in what became known as the Integrated Newsroom. O Globo Organizations are the largest media conglomerate in Brazil, and the newspapers *O Globo and Extra* are the two main journalistic products of the company with print and online products. The change in structure and workflows aimed to further expand the focus on digital environments. The content produced by reporters began to be shared across all products. Meetings of Infoglobo editors gained more technical resources, with the presence of specialists in social media and audience engagement. According to the brands, the goal was to analyze internet user behavior in real time and thus direct the content offered.

A report published by *O Globo* on January 29, 2017[1], stated that throughout the day, the main news stories would be expanded and enriched with real-time analysis, videos, and infographics. It was also emphasized that the characteristics of *O Globo*, *Extra*, and *Expresso* would be preserved — "continuing to explore different topics and approaches" — despite the unified production.

Eight years after the change, it is necessary to understand and analyze whether the proposals have been consolidated (or not) and what impacts they have had so far. To begin this analysis, we conducted an initial survey, presented here in this article: we invited ten journalists who had already been working at the company before the integration and remain employed today to share their impressions. To ensure job security and freedom of speech, they requested anonymity.

The journalists were contacted by the author via WhatsApp in January and February of 2024. As the author is also an employee of the company, she had access to the participants' phone numbers, who already knew her. The selection criteria were twofold: to have worked at the company both before and after the integration; and to have been directly affected by the change in the organization of production in their daily work. The WhatsApp message asked the journalist to respond only to the following question:

> "What are the Main Advantages and Disadvantages of Infoglobo's Integrated Newsroom?"

All ten contacted journalists responded via WhatsApp within less than a week, either in writing or via audio message. Of the ten selected, five are women and five are men. Four were originally from *Extra*, one from *Expresso*, and five from *O Globo*, ensuring a balance between staff from the so-called Popular Units and *O Globo*. Eight currently hold editorial positions, and two are reporters. Most work in editing because, in leadership positions, they can analyze the process more comprehensively, having more information about results. No questions other than the one mentioned above were asked.

The idea of contacting interviewees via WhatsApp with only one question served two initial purposes of this research. The first was to ensure a response, given that journalists have busy routines in which lack of time prevails — as will be analyzed in this article. In addition, the methodology includes a second stage of research, to be carried out by the first half of 2026: based on the impressions collected from employees, we will conduct in-depth interviews with brand managers to gather their views on the expressed opinions.

In this first stage, presented here, the main objective was to investigate whether journalists believe that the integration's goals, as announced by management when it was implemented, were achieved, and to identify the main impacts of the new organization on their professional routines, in their opinion. It is essential to hear the journalists themselves — witnesses to their own practices and how they change or persist — because their self-testimony is often overlooked.

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[1] Avaiable at: https://oglobo.globo.com/politica/o-globo-extra-expresso-se-integram-em-uma-redacao-multimidia-20840004

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Analyzing the integration process of Infoglobo's newsrooms is also important because it is replicated in many newsrooms worldwide, where the focus is on cost reduction and process agility in a digital environment. Therefore, the results of this and other analyses may serve as a basis for studies of similar proposals in different contexts and companies.

Increasingly, journalists must understand technology, not just text[2]. When writing, they are expected to design ways to convey information through various channels with innovative and attractive models. They must stay tuned to events in both the real and virtual worlds, to what is being commented on and shared, to new tools that emerge, in order to incorporate innovations into their work. Professionals from tech companies are increasingly partnering with journalists in the search for solutions and answers. This demand, in turn, becomes yet another task for journalists.

In discussions about who the journalist is today, technology plays a central role in shaping new requirements — such as those presented to Infoglobo journalists at the time of the integration announcement.

In the name of increased productivity, journalists are subjected to new and complex work routines, overloading them with tasks, which, according to some authors (Kischinhevsky, 2009), can compromise the informational quality of journalism. Journalism's success has always been influenced by technological advances: from the typewriter to the computer, from analog to digital cameras and recorders, from single-media to multimedia formats. But technology has often been seen as a harbinger of threats, as it comes with higher stress levels in newsrooms, perceived as more work without clear benefits. It takes time for changes to be ingrained in newsroom culture.

The main question this research seeks to answer is: were the changes well-received and consolidated over these first eight years of integration, in the view of journalists directly affected by them?

II. Advantages and Disadvantages

To understand the impacts of the changes brought by the integration on professional routines, let us first look at the interviewees' responses to the question they received via the messaging app.

The first to answer was a journalist from the Economics team of *Extra*'s website, who had previously worked in the print edition of the same newspaper. According to her, the main advantage of integration is the possibility of conceiving story ideas, producing, and writing for different audience profiles. However, she describes as disadvantages the fact that the change resulted in more work for a reduced number of employees and also led to "less market" for journalists, since through the "optimization" of staff (the same reporters producing for different outlets), there would be less need for hiring.

An editor from the print edition of *Extra*, who had previously worked at *O Globo*, agreed with the view that the change reduced the number of job positions. He added that the integrated newsroom is an idea that, in practice, has not produced good results for *Extra*:

> "What would be its (the integration's) purpose, besides saving human resources? Pragmatically, there is no real effort to preserve the identity of the popular newspaper, at least for now."

He cites as an example the planning for the Sunday print edition in January 2024. According to him, it was noteworthy that there was no regional political coverage planned (even though *Extra* has historically had a more "Carioca" profile). He was also troubled that in the Economics section — which *Extra* calls "Earn More" (reflecting its profile) — the only story produced specifically for the paper was a service piece on insurance coverage during heavy rains, which had nothing to do with making more money.

He stresses that the challenge of publishing content suited to different newspapers is significant, especially as the team of reporters has been reduced, "which significantly limits production capacity":

> "I see the unified newsroom as an initiative that forces *Extra* to adapt to content primarily produced for *O Globo*. I believe we are facing a strategy that accelerates the end of a product."

Another assistant editor at *Extra*, focused on its print edition, commented that the main advantages are related to making better use of professional work:

> "We stopped having double work, with two teams from two outlets of the same company investigating the same story and 'bumping heads' in the field," she summarized.

Another advantage, she said, is understanding both outlets as products, when before, those working at *Extra* or *O Globo* focused only on their own paper. She also believes that the ability to move between outlets is another benefit, opening up diverse work opportunities.

However, regarding disadvantages, her opinion matches the editor mentioned earlier:

> "The products are less differentiated from each other, with less identity, because we have to optimize the team's work. In this regard, the biggest disadvantage is for the less strategic outlet for the company — in this case, *Extra* — because many times priority, when choosing stories for a reduced team, is given to *O Globo*."

She added that another disadvantage falls on print editors, especially at *Extra*, who are tasked with "transforming" the same content produced for *O Globo* into a popular version aimed at *Extra*'s audience.

[2] Cf ANDERSON; BELL; SHIRKY, 2012 e *Perfil do jornalista brasileiro - Características demográficas, políticas e do trabalho jornalístico* (2012), de Alexandre Bergamo, Jacques Mick (Coord.) e Samuel Lima.

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The editor further emphasized that, since the integrated newsroom brought a separation between production and editing, this also brought both disadvantages and advantages for editors:

> "On the one hand, if you don't want to work 24 hours to follow production throughout the day, the editor is left out of the process and only receives the content to edit at the end of the day. The advantage, however, is that now they *can* choose not to work 24 hours."

Another assistant editor at *Extra*, working on the website, highlighted as the main advantage the possibility of greater exchange with different colleagues, with diverse viewpoints:

> "Naturally, the team becomes more diverse, with more heterogeneous perspectives on various topics, allowing for positive exchange."

Among the downsides, she too pointed out the draining of *Extra* and the reduction of positions:

> "More energy and dedication are invested in certain products, strangling others. Professionals are often reassigned to specific activities, while others are gradually diminished."

This concern over unequal attention given to *Extra* is not limited to those in leadership roles. An Economics reporter interviewed also cited as a disadvantage the lack of attention from leaders toward the paper:

> "They see *O Globo* as the priority and, in a way, end up sabotaging Rio's newspaper. I think having people responsible for each paper helps ensure greater dedication to making it work."

As an advantage, she mentioned the ability to reuse stories that would not have been produced due to lack of resources, and the opportunity for reporters to have bylines in more than one brand.

Another interesting conclusion is that concern over brand identity loss is not limited to those on the "disadvantaged" side — namely *Extra*. An assistant editor at *O Globo*, who had already been working there, agreed that as a disadvantage, the newspapers risk losing their unique characteristics:

> "*O Globo* and *Extra* were distinct products. Integration makes them similar. This can lead to one disappearing or both losing relevance, or even to the reader no longer feeling represented and seeking another news source."

She added that integration could also reduce jobs:

> "With the newspapers having similar editorial lines, one story is published in both."

As advantages, she cited that reporters have the chance to publish in both papers and interact with colleagues who were previously isolated in another newsroom.

For those from *Expresso*, the brand's tabloid that was discontinued in 2023, the disadvantages do not seem as impactful. An assistant editor, formerly at *Expresso* and now at *Extra*, believes the integrated newsroom promotes closeness among people. He did not cite disadvantages:

> "The exchange of knowledge and understanding of each outlet's interests is good. And within the editorial profiles, it's good to narrow the differences that existed according to the market prestige of each product."

Among those working more in the digital environment, the analysis goes beyond brand profile issues to differences between processes for online and print versions. For an *Extra* website editor, the print-online integration streamlined processes that had been duplicated in both newsrooms.

However, there are specific products that work well online but are not attractive to print readers:

> "It makes no sense for online production to replicate print, losing its creative identity that should target an audience far removed from reading the print product and its formulas."

For him, one of the biggest consequences of integration was the drop in investment in audiovisual resources because readers are often not seen as multifaceted and demanding different strategies and media coverage. This, in his view, harms online journalism — contrary to what the company announced as the main goal of the change.

For an *O Globo* politics editor, the main advantages of integration are logistical:

> "And that includes the financial side of production — when you merge two different structures that often produce very similar things, you avoid rework and redundancy."

He mentioned that it was common to arrive at a certain story and find an *Extra* team with a reporter, photographer, and driver, and another *O Globo* team with a reporter, photographer, and driver:

> "Not only is that a waste of resources, it also created a certain noise — a tacit competition between two parts that, theoretically, already belonged to the same company."

However, he noted that the merger never truly became "integrated":

> "It was never a newsroom producing equally and with equal effort, with a more logical division between the two brands. It's no coincidence you see a clear decline of *Extra* in many ways."

He sees *O Globo*'s predominance as evident — a centenary brand, more valuable to advertisers, with subscribers, a flagship, a national reference. But there was no merger plan "to ensure it could be good and productive for both sides":

> "So the balance became very uneven. It's been an uphill battle for those still trying to protect *Extra*, and that even generates internal embarrassment. I think it's very bad that there's no concrete support."

According to him, those at higher levels should guarantee a minimum of fairness:

> "It didn't have to be such a beating, because I think this will inevitably lead to the end of one of these brands — and the

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obvious consequence is job losses and a series of setbacks for the company as a whole."

A staff member from *O Globo*'s video department has a similar view of the main advantage: the union of efforts in the essence of a story — the reporting. For him, although integration reduced the number of professionals, it boosted production and saved other positions:

"Preparing the story in the format best suited to each outlet happens in editing. This allowed the group's newspapers to have lower costs and a better chance of facing competition, which also had to cut costs."

However, he stressed that the issue should not be seen only as the integration of different outlets' newsrooms within the same company, but as a much longer and broader process that later also encompassed the integration of print, digital, and online newsrooms.

The editor disagrees with the *Extra* site staffer: he believes priority has increasingly been given to the website:

"Online has become more important than the paper version. A scoop? It's almost forbidden to save it for the print edition. The big stories started to come out online first."

For him, this model of total priority to online is already established:

"What I foresee is that in a few years we will only have one model for the former print newspapers: the online version, fully adapted to modern times, more audiovisual than ever."

III. Time Crisis and Sensation-Driven Journalism

The interpretations of the journalists interviewed bring to light, first and foremost, a very striking consideration: that the integration of the brands has, as a side effect, the detriment of one in favor of another — in this case, *Extra* being disadvantaged compared to *O Globo*. Little is said about *Expresso*, which was discontinued at some point between integration and today. In this article, we include both products within a category of sensation-driven journalism to which we believe they belong.

By eliminating positions exclusively dedicated to producing stories with the identity of *Extra* or *Expresso*, the integration, according to the interviewees, naturally resulted in greater content selection and greater dedication of efforts toward meeting *O Globo*'s demands.

The most practical effect of this phenomenon is related to the supply of stories to the Globo.com portal, which is where most of Infoglobo's products get their audience. Most stories are created and offered for Globo.com's homepage[3] from *O Globo*, guaranteeing a much larger audience for the centenary brand. And because *Extra* has little "own" production, it ends up reusing much of its sibling's content, reducing the distinction between the two brands' identities.

Another harmful practical effect is that, by publishing stories with very similar content, both brands can be "penalized" by Google's search system, and *O Globo* may be harmed in its subscription offerings. The reader may choose to access content for free on *Extra* rather than pay for very similar content on *O Globo*.

Interestingly, the advantages cited are mostly not strategic or business-related. They are more associated with routine facilitation (no "rework" or two people doing the same task) and a pleasant experience for journalists — writing for different products and interacting with more people.

The interviewees' responses allow for multiple interpretations. In this article, we focus on two central issues found in their answers: journalism's relationship with the accelerated pace of contemporary life and the impact of the internet on so-called sensation-driven journalism.

The change in the production model is linked to the time regimes of today, adapted to the journalist's professional routine. High competition in the digital environment, full of information sources, demands active participation in the virtual world, particularly because of the need to continuously receive and process a massive and growing amount of data. This generates in journalists a constant attention stress. Reading is generally intuitive scanning, with little time for deep concentration or text interpretation.

In the new virtual format, a story is no longer a unit but a flow of activities. Deadlines and formats can change according to feedback. The very concept of a "deadline" — as a fixed reference for closing a story — is reconfigured because the reporter is always online. Permanent network presence creates a condensation of temporality in the present and a blurring of boundaries between work time, leisure, and learning (Sodré, 2002).

This directly relates to the phenomenon analyzed here. Little time seems to be devoted to effectively and deeply correcting flaws in new models due to the rush to handle multiple demands. There is also little time to think about and produce distinct content for multiple outlets and platforms given the speed required to meet the internet's demands and the multiple tasks each journalist faces in an increasingly competitive environment with fewer jobs. Producing for multiple outlets at once serves the need to save time and keep up with the internet's pace — but that same acceleration and demand overload harm differentiation in production or editing according to the outlet or channel.

Franciscato (2017) notes a tension between the speed of world events and the speed of journalistic discourse about them, since journalism faces the

[3] Globo Organizations' news products compete with each other for spots on the Globo.com portal, which is the largest source of audience for the sites.

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constant risk that its temporal sense will drift away from that of the real world. This seems to be greatly exacerbated now due to digital media. This idea is embedded in newsroom routines: avoiding obsolescence justifies accelerating production and valuing a story's timeliness. The journalistic discourse publicly presents itself as current because it builds a temporal sense of no real mismatch between the world's time and journalistic production time.

The digitalization of society proposes changes in how time is experienced. Castells (1999) conceptualizes this new temporality as "timeless time." This configuration is related to the fact that network communication enables instant data transmission with no temporal gap between sending and receiving ("instantaneity") and that such transmission does not depend on a slow, linear sequence of reading and sending. This aims to break with the chronological time model — whose paradigmatic examples include assembly lines and production pace controls typical of industrial societies.

In this sense, one of the main side effects we see from the interviewees' comments is content uniformity. With little time for deeper or more creative elaboration, the most common outcome is seeing "repetition" or "more of the same" across different news sites. The most important value is to publish first and secure the largest audience share by being faster. Thus, remaining faithful to a brand's identity or profile is less important than being the most read — often equated with being read first.

Harvey (1992) uses the expression "time-space compression" to describe "processes that revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time to the point of forcing us to alter, sometimes radically, the way we represent the world to ourselves." The consequences include institutionalizing ephemerality, volatility, disposability, and instantaneity as modes of capital realization in society, with impacts on how journalism is practiced today. Products, services, production techniques, work processes, ideas and ideologies, values, and established practices all become enveloped by this logic in an experience of time as an ever-renewing present (Harvey, 1992, p. 258–263).

It is interesting to note that this relationship with time — simultaneously encompassing multiplicity, instantaneity, and a shared time — profoundly affects journalistic practice, increasingly imposing a sense of urgency and disposability. While journalists have a desire for the future, they are not so concerned with the lasting marks that their rushed content might leave because, at the time it is produced, it seems ephemeral. Yet they still value their role as historians of the present, wanting to produce content that endures. In this research, the concern for *Extra*'s continuity is clear, even while a lack of collective effort to achieve it is noted.

Another relevant point is that the pursuit of audience and resulting content "uniformity" may have a curious side effect: as the main goal is to engage online audiences and their emotions, all products start to take on characteristics of so-called sensation-driven journalism, which is no longer the "privilege" of outlets once considered popular, like *Extra* or *Expresso*. In short: *O Globo* increasingly resembles *Extra*, and vice versa — an almost unanimous observation among the journalists interviewed.

When presented with the journalists' concerns, one of *Extra*'s executive editors, who coordinates the integration process, responded directly:

> "On the internet, there's no longer space to differentiate between popular journalism and non-popular journalism. Everything is popular. It all comes down to audience. It all comes down to appeal, to emotion. All news fits this profile — there's no need to choose to publish in one paper or another."

In the next stage of this research, this editor and others will be interviewed in depth to better understand this perception.

Analyzing the sensational aspect of coverage — that is, deeply examining the characteristics of sensation-driven journalism (also referred to by various authors and by the journalists interviewed as "popular journalism" [Amaral, 2018; among others]) — requires a prior understanding of what "popular" means. According to Barbosa and Enne (2004), sensation-driven journalism relates to a cultural universe of meanings formed over the long term, in a "flow of the sensational" perceptible through narrative-memorial traces of various cultural matrices.

In this conception, the "popular," here meaning sensation-driven journalism, is characterized by several elements, the most notable being:

1. Mixing everyday dramas and melodramas.
2. Adopting a narrative structure appealing to the imagination, navigating between dream and reality.
3. Appealing to the grotesque and the scatological, while incorporating values present across all social strata.
4. Covering Crimes; the extraordinary (miracles); the sexual ("orgy"); timeless content with recurring situations but different characters (daily tragedies transporting familiar settings and characters into the text); fantasy — narrating by mixing fiction and presumed reality.
5. Placing the body in focus.
6. Incorporating sensory markers in the text, bringing scenes to life: body expressions; synesthesia; personification.
7. Valuing orality: slang, informal language, figures of speech, everyday expressions, giving a sense of intimacy between reader and newspaper.

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8. Exaggerating certain editorial strategies: appealing to sensations; huge headlines; humorous titles; illustration; close-up photos; comics and photo sequences reconstructing events.
9. Simplifying narrative construction in a binary way: good vs. evil (Manichaeism), love vs. hate, compassion vs. others' pain, coldness vs. innocence.
10. Using reducing, synthesizing elements that also decomplexify the narrative.

In short, the main sensational aspects are those that deal with intimacy — reducing the distance between text and reader, removing it from a kind of sacred pedestal, and making it even more accessible to whoever wants to read it. The closer, more familiar, more impactful, more detailed the story, the greater the chances of provoking sensations and thus making a connection with the reader that goes far beyond simply informing.

In the online context, these characteristics have become so common to all journalistic outlets that the question arises as to whether it still makes sense to produce a brand "separately" with only this focus — a concern shared by journalists. On the internet, aren't all brands now, in some way, representatives of popular or "sensation" journalism?

In sum, journalists observe a decline in investment in the so-called popular units following the newsroom integration analyzed here, but this research may be yet another to provide evidence that this phenomenon is deeper: it is actually the "spread" of sensation-driven journalism on the internet, making it no longer "necessary" for it to be "personified" in a specific product. Especially since websites can encompass an unlimited amount of content, allowing greater freedom to include various "profiles" on a single page.

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