

2nd Mobile Journalism Conference (MoJo BCN) 2018

Movistar Centre Barcelona

Good morning. Welcome to Barcelona.

I'd like to start by thanking the Movistar Centre for hosting this second Mobile Journalism event and, obviously, everyone attending as speakers, in the audience, or working behind the scenes, all of whom have helped to ensure the continued success of the event – an event which last year showed its immense potential.

My opening words referred to the success of MoJo 2017. Clearly, there are many ways to judge its success, but, given its digital focus, maybe the most logical way would be to look at its impact on social media.

If we take Twitter as an example, 300 users posted over 2,300 tweets, with an estimated reach of 11 million people.

Clearly, these figures could be dismissed and considered merely a reflection of the popularity and reputation of the speakers. However, a closer look shows that it was the analysis, experience and vision of the future for digital journalism that generated the most traffic. In other words, it was the content that appealed to professionals and scholars, justifying the need for the first event and leading to its being held again this year.

Although, if you'll allow me to joke about it, looking at the programme it seems the organizers have once again sought well-known names. We're covering all the bases...

Because, although the disappearance and death of journalism is predicted on a regular basis, the reasons that justified its origins, society's demands and the commitment of its professionals are still present... They're experiencing difficulties, but they're still there.

It is this uncertainty that means journalism has to reinvent itself, both in its practices and in its forms and links to society.

In other words, it has to change and evolve what is peripheral to guarantee what is essential: its relevance and utility.

Journalist and now successful script writer David Simon often expresses outspoken nostalgia about his former profession. In his opinion, “the best journalism would manage to outrage people. And people are less and less inclined to outrage.”

However, at the risk of contradicting such an authority, I believe there still exists both this “best journalism” and those outraged voices, but they just express themselves through other channels, which are mainly digital.

We will be discussing a magnificent example of this thanks to the round table organized for the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which will focus on their defence through mobile coverage.

In this context, digital journalism can better contribute to public debate, as a conduit for new ideas (and even new outrage), to coordinate responsible and well-informed citizens – in short, to serve and inform.

I'm absolutely convinced of the importance of the digital world. And more so as someone living in Barcelona, because our city is today one of the world mobile capitals and host of the Mobile World Congress (whose centre is in this very building).

And I am also convinced as president of the UOC: the first online university which, over 20 years ago, pioneered the development of e-learning, and is now doing the same for mobile journalism.

From the local level –Barcelona– to the global level, without losing sight of our commitment to Latin America. From the particular –Catalonia– to the general.

Today, more than ever, we know that strength resides in the web, that knowledge is only useful when shared, and that wealth is created through collaboration and understanding.



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Only by bringing together the academic and professional worlds can we guarantee a real impact on society, preparing future generations and improving technological and civic capabilities.



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And, above all, nothing seems to me so democratically necessary as rethinking journalism in light of the impact of new technologies.

Journalism that, turning to a more optimistic version of the previously mentioned David Simon, must also consider the why. As the creator of The Wire said: The why is what makes journalism an adult game. The why is what makes policy coherent and useful. [...]

The why is everything and without it, the very suggestion of human progress becomes a cosmic joke.

I am convinced that MoJo 2018 will, more than ever, pursue this why to the benefit of knowledge, journalism and society in general.

Thank you very much.