

Update of the Map of Independent Journalism in Brazil: business models in operation

Atualização do Mapa do Jornalismo Independente no Brasil: modelos de negócio em funcionamento

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Abstract: *This work proposes an update of the Map of Independent Journalism of Brazil, launched by Agência Pública in 2016. Considering that the survey became a starting point for many academic researches, it is necessary to update it in order to broaden the understanding about the models of business that are proving to be sustainable for journalism. The investigation starts from the 217 initiatives present on the Map, filtering the journalistic ones and categorizing them into active, inactive and hybrid. In the end, 77 were closed and, among them, the majority were deactivated due to financial difficulties.*

Keywords: *independent journalism map; journalistic arrangements; sustainability.*

Resumo: *Este trabalho propõe uma atualização do Mapa do Jornalismo Independente do Brasil, lançado pela Agência Pública em 2016. Considerando que o levantamento virou ponto de partida para muitas pesquisas acadêmicas, faz-se necessário atualizá-lo a fim de ampliar a compreensão acerca dos modelos de negócio que estão se demonstrando sustentáveis para o jornalismo. A investigação parte das 217 iniciativas presentes no Mapa, filtrando as jornalísticas e categorizando-as em ativas, inativas e híbridas. Ao final, 77 estavam encerradas e, dentre elas, a maioria foi desativada por dificuldades financeiras.*

Palavras-chave: *mapa do jornalismo independente; arranjos jornalísticos; sustentabilidade.*

Introduction

The economic ramifications resulting from changes in the communication paradigm directly impact the journalism sector and play a crucial role in forming “new economic arrangements related to the work of journalists” (FIGARO, 2018). According to the author, “the crisis shaking the business model of journalistic companies, the elimination of jobs, and the reconfiguration of production processes challenge the profession’s future” (2018, p. 17). Therefore, whether to face the crisis or to present an alternative to traditional media, journalists and other communication professionals have invested in innovating (SILVEIRA, 2022) in products, methods, and business structures for the design of media projects. These initiatives play an essential role in understanding the current media ecosystem (JARVIS, 2014), where new logic opened possibilities for new actors and practices in the journalistic field (ZAMITH; BRAUN, 2019), probably like never before.

The proliferation of digital native models that differ from the conventional/hegemonic journalism practiced by legacy companies is a reality in Brazil and Latin America. According to the Ponto de Inflexão report by Sembramedia (2017, p. 6), since the first enterprise in the study was founded in 1998, “hundreds of digital native media outlets have emerged in the region and grown to reach millions of readers”. Often organized horizontally in cooperatives or the form of non-profit associations, these new actors emerging in digital journalism – or, as Christofolletti and Silva (2018, p. 159) prefer to call them, these “new journalism experiences” – are generally “recent enterprises that oppose, to some extent, the conventional journalism model”. As explained by Saad and Silveira (2021), the creation of independent initiatives in Brazil and Latin America ends up being a “way out for journalism itself since these new companies can deal with niche topics and audiences forgotten by traditional media. Furthermore, these initiatives are also far from the legacy of the dictatorship and state supervision of traditional media” (p. 2).

Due to their diversity, it is challenging to find a definition capable of encompassing all these new experiences mentioned by Christofolletti and Silva (2018, p. 159), which “seek to differentiate themselves from the hegemonic model in the field”. In an attempt to locate these initiatives, Agência Pública, itself part of this ecosystem, published the *Mapa do Jornalismo Independente* [Map of Independent Journalism].¹ The survey, “an unprecedented initiative that aims to contribute to the visibility of the independent scene in Brazilian media” (SILVA, 2017, p. 78), has become a reference in academic studies that deal with alternative economic arrangements to media conglomerates in Brazil. However, the native digital media gathered in the sample date back to February 2016.

Therefore, this work proposes to update the Map since it has become a starting point for many studies investigating the topic. An example of this is the study conducted by the Communication and Work Research Center at the University of São Paulo (CPCT at USP), for which the Map was essential in the initial stages of surveying the sample: “We used the map (list) of Independent Media indicated by Agência Pública [...] to organize the research informants” (FIGARO, 2018, p. 34-35). By proposing to update the Map, this research seeks to broaden the understanding of which business models are sustainable and viable for Brazilian journalism today. To this end, this research uses quantitative and qualitative methods designed specifically for the work.

In the first stage, we surveyed the 217 initiatives in the Map to distinguish those that remain active from those that are closed or inactive. We used the systematic observation of websites and collection of information from them as methods and applied a questionnaire with open and closed questions to verify information we could not find with previous collection techniques.

The methodological approach of this research was, initially, to survey and categorize the mapped initiatives that are a) active (in operation)

1 Available at: <https://apublica.org/mapa-do-jornalismo/metodologia/>. Accessed on: 26 February 2023.

and b) closed or inactive (out of date for over six months). Then, within the active ones, we sought to verify which are journalistic projects by following the methodology of the Communication and Work Research Center (CPCT) at the University of São Paulo (USP) (FIGARO, 2018). After this survey and screening, we obtained an updated sample with active journalistic media and deactivated or inactive arrangements. We sent a research questionnaire to the latter group to investigate the reasons for their interruption or inactivity.

About the Map of Independent Journalism

Founded in 2011, Agência Pública is a Brazilian investigative and independent journalism agency. Between November 2015 and February 2016, the agency gathered a sample of independent journalism initiatives in Brazil, published in March 2016 under the title *Mapa do Jornalismo Independente* [Map of Independent Journalism] (SILVA, 2017). With projects created between 1995 and 2015, Pública's survey identified "native internet initiatives that are considered independent of large media groups, politicians, organizations, or companies" (SILVA, 2017, p. 78). Its selection criteria were: 1) organizations that primarily produce journalistic content; 2) organizations that were born on the internet; 3) collective projects not limited to blogs; and 4) websites not linked to large media groups, politicians, organizations, or companies (PÚBLICA, 2016b).

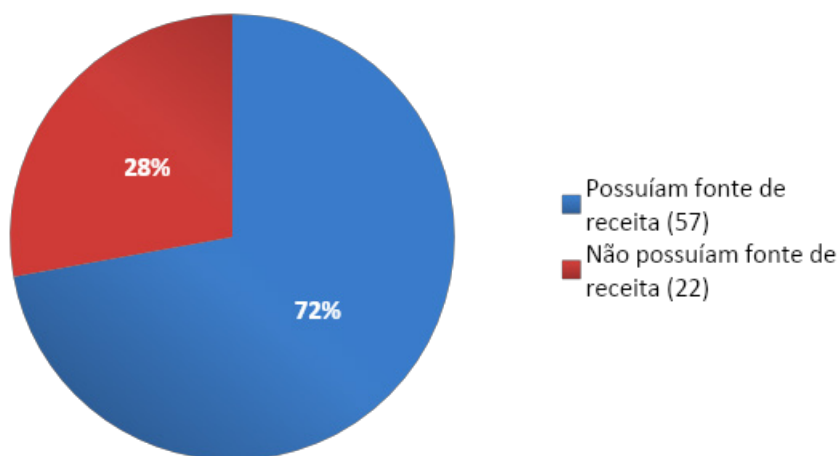
According to Pública's website (2016b), the agency found just over 100 initiatives after an initial survey. From there, they sent a questionnaire to these outlets to confirm their alignment with the criteria established for the study. To this end, Pública created a form and asked the selected outlets to respond and indicate other organizations that fit the scope of the sample using the Snowball technique.

After filtering, Pública mapped 79 arrangements in 12 states and the Federal District. According to Pública, "Since 2006, it is possible to

2 Available at: <https://apublica.org/mapa-do-jornalismo/metodologia/>. Accessed on: 26 February 2023.

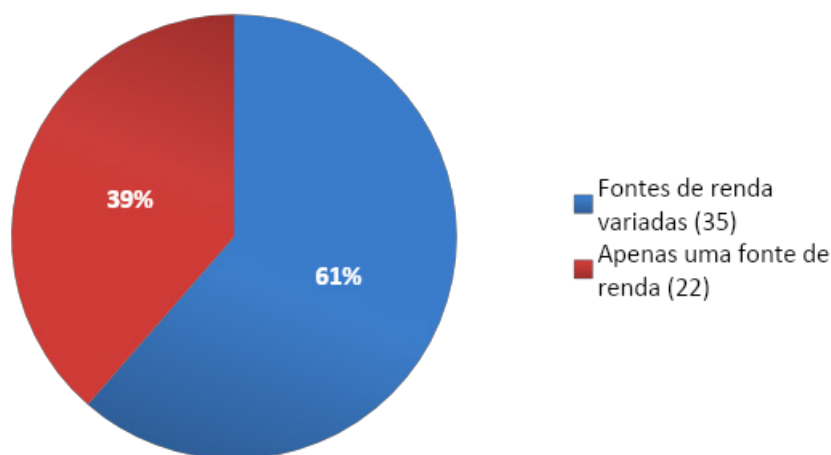
observe the emergence of at least one outlet per year. From 2013 to 2014, the creation of new organizations jumped from five to 18” (PÚBLICA, 2016a, online). Based on its survey, the agency found that, unlike most of the country’s hegemonic news organizations, most of the media outlets observed did not have commercial purposes: “Of the 79, 32 [41%] are commercial in nature and 47 [59%] are non-profit.” Moreover, the agency also investigated how these media outlets sustained themselves. Thus, of the 79 projects, 57 (72%) had some form of financing, while 22 (28%) had none (Graph 1).

Graph 1 – Number of arrangements in the Map in 2016 with income sources



Source: elaborated by the authors based on PÚBLICA, 2016a, online.

Graph 2 – Classification of Map arrangements with at least one source of income in 2016



Source: elaborated by the authors based on PÚBLICA, 2016a, online.

The most used source of revenue among the 32 organizations with commercial purposes was advertising (13 - 40.62%). Of the 47 non-profit initiatives, only seven vehicles (14.89%) mentioned its use. The predominant financing model in this segment was donations from legal entities (15 - 31.91%). Eighteen (38.30%) of these vehicles had no income sources. Among the 32 arrangements with commercial purposes, this number drops to seven (21.88%).

As an interactive tool, Pública's Map also relies on continuous suggestions from readers, who include a significant number of initiatives that do not necessarily meet the previously established selection criteria. Another 138 arrangements selected by the public were included in the Map, so the survey currently has 217 initiatives.

Categorizing initiatives and updating the *Mapa do Jornalismo Independente*

Using the entire corpus of the Mapa do Jornalismo Independente, this investigation collected information on 217 initiatives. Initially, we

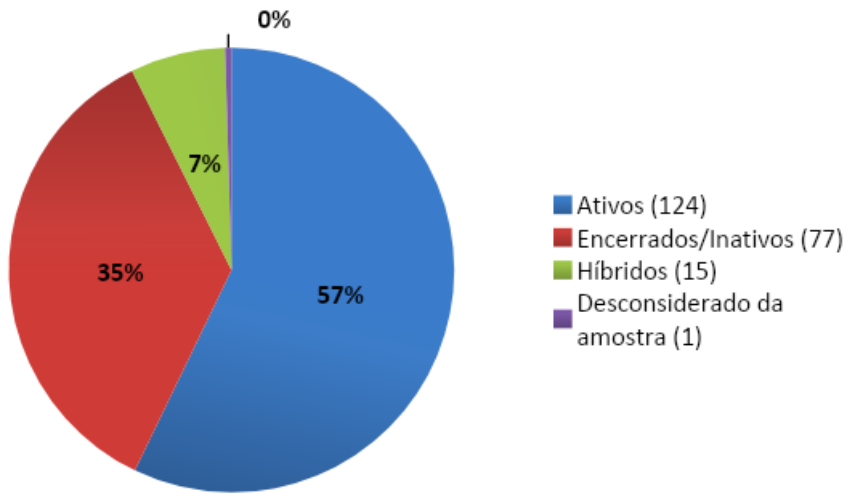
conducted a survey on the status of the arrangements on the Map and, subsequently, categorized them as a) active and b) terminated or inactive. We considered arrangements **terminated** if they had deactivated their websites and their Facebook page had no updates for more than six months or if they had announced their ending. We considered projects **inactive** if their websites and Facebook pages had no updates for over six months. We took as **active** all arrangements that had functioning and updated websites.³

The minimum period of six months to consider an initiative inactive takes into account the fluctuations in the frequency of publications typical of independent journalistic initiatives. The journalistic approach adopted by these arrangements does not align with the logic of constant periodicity of the mainstream media, characterized by brief and frequent intervals between publications. In the case of the arrangements, it is common to observe long and varying intervals in updates, which does not necessarily indicate the end of the initiative but highlights that the periodicity in independent media differs from that in the traditional hegemonic media. Thus, we found that of the 217 arrangements in the Mapa do Jornalismo Independente at the time, 124 (57.14%) remained active, while 77 (35.48%) were terminated or inactive. We decided to disregard (0.46%) the arrangement Libertar.org because its website had no publishing date, and we found no indication on its website or the Map of its social media to verify whether the arrangement was active.

During the data collection process, we identified a third group not initially foreseen: initiatives that closed their websites or had not updated them for more than six months but kept their Facebook pages updated. We categorized fifteen (6.91%) arrangements as a hybrid group.

3 This investigation derives from a broader survey conducted for a dissertation, which also applied a questionnaire aimed at active journalistic initiatives of the Map of Independent Journalism to investigate aspects of their business models.

Graph 3 – Updated *status* of arrangements on the Mapa do Jornalismo Independente



Source: elaborated by the authors.

Table 1 – Updated Mapa do Jornalismo Independente: terminated/inactive arrangements⁴

	Name	URL ⁵
1	Vozerio	http://www.vozerio.org.br/
2	Repórter de Rua	http://reporterderua.org/
3	BRIO	http://briohunter.org/
4	Oppina	http://www.oppina.com/
5	Fluxo	http://www.fluxo.net/
6	Estopim	http://www.estopimcoletivo.com
7	Acurácia	http://www.acuracia.com.br/
8	Desneuralizador	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMF-QDHdHS5lh5RzQnfjWkNg

⁴ Situation on October 21, 2021.

⁵ Although we can no longer access many of the websites of terminated/inactive initiatives because they are deactivated, we were careful to include this information in this table as a record of these addresses and as another element of identification of the arrangement besides the name. We also sought to include the last addresses used by the arrangements if the information was available on their Facebook pages.

	Name	URL ⁵
9	Outra Cidade	http://outracidade.com.br/
10	Ecodesenvolvimento	http://www.ecod.org.br/
11	Projeto Andarilha	http://projetoandarilha.com/
12	Outros400	http://www.outros400.com.br/
13	Jornal Comunitário Vozes da Vila Prudente	http://www.vozesdavidaprudente.com/
14	Overrated	http://overrated.com.br/
15	Bichos Geeks	http://www.bichosgeeks.com
16	Revista Vírus	https://www.facebook.com/virusplanetario
17	VERTICES Inconfidentes	http://verticesinconfidentes.com.br/
18	Raízes do Mangue	https://raizesdomangue.wixsite.com/
19	VIVAA DANÇA	youtube.com/vivaadanca
20	Canal Plá	http://www.canalpla.com/
21	Revista DR	http://www.revistadr.com.br/
22	Formiga.me	http://formiga.me
23	Freak Market	https://freakmarket.com.br/
24	Bang Bang	https://medium.com/bang-bang
25	revista o Viés	http://revistaovies.com/
26	Cogito Coletivo	https://www.instagram.com/cogitocoletivo/ ⁶
27	QuatroV - 4V	http://4v.quatrov.com.br
28	Revista Cajá	http://revistacaja.com/
29	Revista Cardamomo	http://www.revistacardamomo.com/
30	Reinventar Jornalista	http://reinventajornalista.com.br/
31	Las Abuelitas	http://www.lasabuelitas.com
32	Game Prime	http://www.gameprime.com.br/
33	Frida Diria	http://www.fridadiria.com/
34	Rio de Graça	http://www.riodegraca.com/
35	Serviço de Utilidade Pública (SUP)	http://www.supmidialivre.com.br/
36	Ano Zero	http://ano-zero.com/
37	Ovelha Mag	http://ovelhamag.com/
38	Rádio RBC	http://www.radiorbg.com
39	Na Cuia	http://nacuia.com.br/
40	Portal em Pauta	www.portalempauta.com.br

6 The website of Cogito Coletivo did not appear on the Map or its Instagram profile (its Facebook page indicated on the Map was deactivated). Therefore, we included the URL of its Instagram profile. Status on October 25, 2021.

	Name	URL ⁵
41	Arte Tv Rádio Tv Web	http://artetv10.wix.com/artetv
42	O Novelo	http://www.onovelo.com.br/
43	Risca Faca	http://riscafaca.com.br/
44	Rio na Rua	http://www.rionarua.org/
45	Nós2	http://www.nos2.co/
46	Canal Ibase	http://www.canalibase.org.br/
47	O Barato de Floripa	http://obaratodefloripa.com.br/
48	Revista Vaidapé	http://vaidape.com.br/
49	RockinPress	http://www.rockinpress.com.br
50	Revista Megafonia	http://megafonia.info/
51	Revista Geni	http://revistageni.org/
52	Clichetes	https://clichetes.com.br/
53	Calle2	http://www.calle2.com/
54	Move that Jukebox	http://movethatjukebox.com/
55	Revista Poleiro	https://revistapoleiro.com.br/
56	Trombone	https://medium.com/trombone-media
57	Pés descalços produções	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgFi-3xfwvprnOCR2Yj1TZxg
58	Afreaka	http://www.afreaka.com.br/
59	Revista Paralela	http://issuu.com/paralela7/docs/paralelax_issuu_c15c875171ffd1
60	Candeia	http://www.candeia.jor.br/
61	Diário Liberdade	http://www.diarioliberalidade.org/
62	New Yeah	http://www.newyeahmusica.com/
63	Farol Reportagem	http://www.farolreportagem.com.br/
64	plus55.com	http://plus55.com
65	Murdoque.com	http://murdoque.com.br/
66	Maria Pouteira	http://www.mariapauteira.com.br/
67	Azoofa	http://www.azoofa.com.br/
68	Esquiva	http://www.esquiva.org/
69	Jornalismo B	http://www.jornalismob.com/
70	Degenerando Neurônios	https://degenerandoblog.wordpress.com/
71	Projeto Gente Extraordinária	https://www.facebook.com/ProjetoGenteExtraordinaria
72	Agência PLANO	http://www.agenciaplano.com/

	Name	URL ⁵
73	Brasis	http://brasis.vc/
74	Canal Paralelo	http://www.youtube.com/canalparalelobr
75	Multimundi	http://multimundi.org/
76	Vozes do Sul	http://www.vozesdosul.com.br/
77	Maruim	http://maruim.org/

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Table 2 – Updated Mapa do Jornalismo Independente: hybrid arrangements⁷

	Name	URL
1	TV Restinga na Web	http://www.tvrestinganaweb.com.br/
2	Pimentaria	http://napimentaria.com.br/
3	Futebol de Campo	https://www.futeboldecampo.net/
4	Jornal do Nativismo	http://www.nativismo.com.br/
5	Rede de Informações Anarquista (RIA)	https://redeinfoa.noblogs.org/
6	ScienceBlogs	http://scienceblogs.com.br/
7	Rede Colaborativa iTEIA de Cultura, Arte e Informação	http://www.iteia.org.br
8	Ecos da Periferia	http://ecos-periferia.blogspot.com.br/
9	Portal da Várzea	http://portalavarzea.com/
10	Cidades para Pessoas	http://www.cidadesparapessoas.com/
11	Agência Anota	https://www.facebook.com/AgenciaAnota/
12	Revista Rever	https://reveronline.com/
13	Favela News	http://www.favelanews.org/
14	Papo Reto	https://coletivopaporeto.org/
15	Democratize	https://www.portaldemocratize.com.br/

Source: elaborated by the authors.

7 Status on October 21, 2021.

We sought to confirm whether the 124 active arrangements were genuinely journalistic initiatives or websites that produced newsworthy content since readers suggested many of the arrangements listed in the Map, which did not necessarily fit the methodology established by Agência Pública.

The verification carried out in this study follows the approach proposed by CPCT's research, which uses the following criteria: a) those that call themselves journalistic initiatives, b) have journalists on their management team, or c) present indicators of journalistic practice, such as “enunciative elements that characterize journalistic activities”, for example, reports, news, investigations, interviews, magazines, agendas, and articles (FIGARO, 2018, 69).

To apply this filter, we initially sought to identify at least one of these three elements in the texts presenting the arrangements, whether on their websites or on their respective Facebook pages. Thus, we classified 17 active arrangements on the Map as non-journalistic. We conducted a second checking stage by sending the following questions via email or WhatsApp: “Do you identify yourself as a journalistic initiative? Are there journalists on the team?”. Of the 17 arrangements identified as non-journalistic, six responded,⁸ and we re-included three (Papo de Homem, Blogueiras Negras, and Ciranda Internacional da Comunicação Independente) in the group of active journalistic outlets. By eliminating the non-journalistic arrangements from the active group, we have the journalistic projects that remain in operation on the new Mapa do Jornalismo Independente:

8 We received answers by October 23, 2021.

Table 3 – Updated Mapa do Jornalismo Independente: active arrangements ⁹

	Name	URL
1	Envolverde	http://www.envolverde.org.br
2	Revista Capitolina	http://revistacapitolina.com.br/
3	Azmina	http://azmina.com.br/
4	Volt Data Lab	http://www.voltdata.info/
5	Revista Berro	http://revistaberro.com/
6	Lado M	http://www.lado-m.com/
7	#Colabora	http://www.projetocolabora.com.br/
8	Jornalistas Livres	https://jornalistaslivres.org/
9	Passapalavra	http://www.passapalavra.info/
10	Ponte	http://www.ponte.org/
11	Marco Zero Conteúdo	http://marcozero.org/
12	Livre.Jor	http://livre.jor.br/
13	Justificando	http://www.justificando.com/
14	Aos Fatos	http://aosfatos.org
15	Porvir	http://porvir.org/
16	Papo de Homem	http://www.papodehomem.com.br/
17	Agência Mural	http://agenciamural.com.br/
18	Congresso em Foco	http://congressoemfoco.uol.com.br/
19	Nexo	https://www.nexojornal.com.br/
20	Amazônia Real	http://amazoniareal.com.br/
21	Nós, Mulheres de Periferia	http://nosmulheresdaperiferia.com.br/
22	Mídia Ninja	https://midianinja.org/
23	Jota	http://www.jota.info/
24	Repórter Brasil	http://reporterbrasil.org.br/
25	Viomundo	http://www.viomundo.com.br/
26	Puntero Izquierdo	https://medium.com/puntero-izquierdo
27	Opera Mundi	http://operamundi.uol.com.br/
28	Gênero e Número	http://www.generonumero.media/
29	Rio on Watch	http://www.rioonwatch.org/
30	Agência de reportagem Saiba Mais	http://www.saibamais.jor.br/
31	Farofafá	http://www.farofafa.com.br

⁹ Status on October 23, 2021.

	Name	URL
32	#MinhaBrasilia	http://www.youtube.com/minhabsb
33	Apartamento702	http://www.apartamento702.com.br
34	Mulher no Cinema	http://www.mulhernocinema.com
35	Global Voices Online Lusofonia	https://pt.globalvoices.org/
36	Peneira Musical	http://www.peneiramusical.com.br
37	Jornalismo Júnior	http://jornalismojunior.com.br/
38	Assiste Brasil	http://assistebrasil.com.br
39	Nova Imprensa	http://www.novaimprensa.com/
40	Papo Reto	https://paporeto.net.br/
41	Revista Gambiarra	http://revistagambiarra.com.br/
42	Portal Giro	http://www.portalgiro.com
43	Revista Afirmativa	http://revistaafirmativa.com.br/
44	Inclusive - Inclusão e Cidadania	http://www.inclusive.org.br
45	Jornal O Duque	http://www.oduque.com.br
46	Conexão Israel	http://www.conexaoisrael.org/
47	O Antagonista	http://www.oantagonista.com
48	Agência de Comunicação Comunitária de Manguinhos	https://falamanguinhos.com/
49	Tramp	http://www.tramp.com.br/
50	GoAd Media	http://www.goadmedia.com.br
51	Independente	http://independente.jor.br/
52	Blasting News Brasil	http://br.blastingnews.com
53	Parágrafo 2	https://paragrafo2.com.br/
54	Outros Críticos	http://www.outroscriticos.com
55	Jornal O Cidadão	http://jornalocidadao.net/
56	Revista Beira	https://medium.com/revista-beira
57	Esquina Democrática	http://www.esquinademocratica.com/
58	Verminhos por Futebol	http://www.verminososporfutebol.com.br/
59	MigraMundo	http://migramundo.com/
60	Projeto Draft	http://www.projetodraft.com
61	InfoAmazônia	http://infoamazonia.org/
62	Farol Jornalismo	http://faroljornalismo.cc/
63	Desenrola E Não Me Enrola	http://desenrolaenaomenrola.com.br/
64	Jornal Fala Roça	http://www.falaroca.com

	Name	URL
65	Coletivo Catarse	http://coletivocatarse.com.br/
66	Overloadr	http://overloadr.com.br/
67	Outras Palavras	http://outraspalavras.net/
68	Periferia em Movimento	http://periferiaemmovimento.com.br/
69	Conexão Planeta	http://conexaoplaneta.com.br/
70	Scream & Yell	http://screamyell.com.br/site/
71	Drops de Jogos	http://www.dropsdejogos.com.br
72	Desacato	http://www.desacato.info/
73	Eder Content Agência de Conteúdo Ltda.	http://www.edercontent.com.br
74	Revista Série Z	https://revistaseriez.org
75	Associação Portal Catarinas	http://catarinas.info/
76	Boatos.org	http://www.boatos.org
77	Valinor Conteúdo	http://valinorconteudo.com.br/
78	Lupa	http://www.lupa.news.com/
79	Semana On	http://www.semanaon.com.br/
80	A Escotilha	http://www.aescotilha.com.br/
81	Mamilos Podcast	http://mamilos.b9.com.br
82	Rádio Yandê	http://www.radioyande.com
83	Jornal Sul 21	http://www.sul21.com.br/
84	Mães de Peito	http://www.maesdepeito.com.br
85	O Eco - ((o))eco	http://www.oeco.org.br/
86	Do Rico ao Pobre	http://www.doricoaopobre.com.br
87	Nonada Jornalismo	http://www.nonada.com.br/
88	Correio da Cidadania	http://www.correiocidadania.com.br
89	Énois	http://www.enoisconteudo.com.br/
90	Centro de Estudos da Mídia Alternativa Barão de Itararé	http://www.baraodeitarare.org.br/
91	Jornal Já	http://www.jornalja.com.br
92	Amazonas Atual	http://amazonasatual.com.br/
93	Plurale	http://www.plurale.com.br/site/index.php
94	Pressenza	http://www.pressenza.com/pt-pt/
95	Invasões Bárbaras	https://invasoesbarbaras.com.br/
96	Por dentro da África	http://www.pordentrodaafrica.com/
97	Revista O Grito!	http://revistaogrito.com

	Name	URL
98	Manual do Usuário	http://www.manualdousuario.net
99	360meridianos	https://www.360meridianos.com/
100	Alma Preta Jornalismo	http://almapreta.com/
101	Terra sem Males	http://www.terrasemmalas.com.br/
102	Colecionador de Sacis	https://www.colecionadordesacis.com.br/
103	ANF - Agência de Notícias das Favelas	http://www.anf.org.br/
104	O Cafezinho	http://ocafezinho.com
105	Mobilize Brasil	http://mobilize.org.br
106	Jornalismo Colaborativo	http://www.jornalismocolaborativo.com
107	Agência Informativa Pulsar Brasil	https://agenciapulsarbrasil.org/
108	Centro de Mídia Independente	https://midia independente.org/
109	Ciranda Internacional da Comunicação Independente	http://www.ciranda.net
110	Blogueiras Negras	http://blogueirasnegras.org

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Investigation on terminated/inactive initiatives

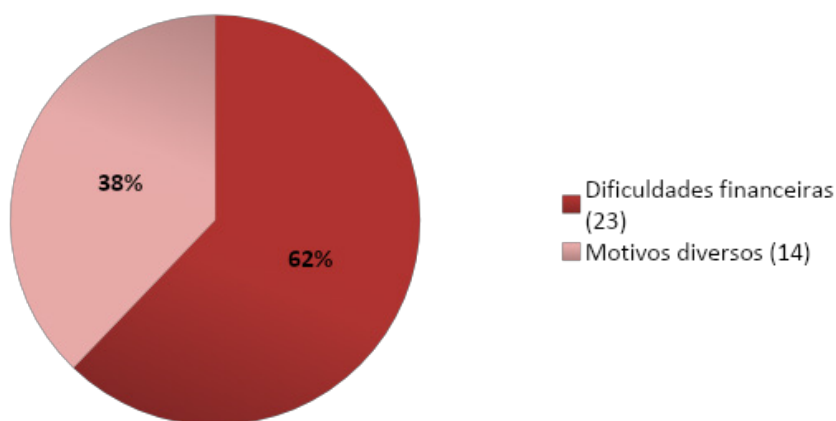
We prepared and sent a questionnaire for those responsible for the arrangements classified as terminated/inactive using the Google Forms platform. We formulated the questions directed at the group of terminated or inactive initiatives to explore the reasons that led to the termination/inactivity of the projects, as well as aspects related to the proposal of the arrangement.

Thus, we sent a questionnaire to the 77 schemes in the group of terminated/inactive initiatives. Given the status of the organizations, contacting their teams was complicated, whether by email, social media, or telephone. Even after an exhaustive search, we could not contact three terminated/inactive projects: Acurácia Fotojornalismo, Desnaturalizador Brasil, and Rádio RBG.

Of the 74 arrangements, 37 (48.05%) answered the questionnaire and indicated economic sustainability as their primary difficulty in

maintaining the project. More than 60% of the arrangements in this study, 23 of the 37, replied that the main reason for termination/inactivity was due to financial difficulties. The other 14 arrangements, approximately 38%, stated various reasons for their termination/inactivity, as demonstrated in Graph 4.

Graph 4 – Reasons for the projects' termination/inactivity



Source: elaborated by the authors.

Of the 23 responses confirming financial difficulties, seven (30.43%) marked option “a. Financial difficulties: We had difficulty coming up with and effectively implementing income sources to sustain the project”; eight (34.78%) ticked option “b. Financial difficulties: We came up with sources of income but effectively had difficulty implementing them”; and another eight (34.78%) selected “c. Financial difficulties: We were able to think and implement income sources, but the resources obtained were insufficient to sustain the project”.

For the 23 arrangements in which financial difficulties played a crucial role in the termination or inactivity, we also asked whether other reasons could have contributed to the current status of the initiative. There were reports of secondary reasons that added to the financial difficulties or were exacerbated by them, as was the case of initiatives that mentioned the disengagement of their members:

Disarticulation of the group (Candeia).

Geographic distancing between the individuals involved (Revista o Viés).

Lack of engagement and perseverance among project members (Agência PLANO).

Dispersion of most volunteer collaborators due to financial needs or other career priorities (Estopim Coletivo).

Because work on the arrangements is often voluntary, members seek remuneration through other activities, which affects their availability of time to dedicate themselves to these projects. We could observe that situation in the following secondary reasons reported by six of the 23 initiatives:

Need to maintain a formal job to generate income (Maria Pauteira).

Because we started as an academic project to finish a course, we had difficulty reconciling it with other demands required by paid employment (Esquiva).

Due to the lack of revenue, I could not continue investing time without any return. I have a family and a job. I need time for my family and to study (Game Prime).

Difficulty in organizing, as it was our first large project, and lack of time to dedicate ourselves to it since it was a collaborative project without revenue (Clichetes).

Lack of availability due to other occupations, such as reporters and press officers (Revista Paralela).

Difficulty reconciling the project with professional activities that guarantee my income (Journalism B).

Representatives of two of the initiatives reported that, due to financial difficulties, they ended their proposals as described by Pública's Map. However, one became a new business - Na Cuia, which kept its name but stopped being a magazine and became a cultural production

company. The other, Murdoque, joined a project, Fusne.com, that was more promising in terms of profitability. Other representatives of the group of 23 arrangements mentioned additional reasons, whether or not complementary to the financial difficulties:

The partners were anxious to obtain revenue soon (in under six months of the project) (Trombone).

There was little demand for the published content (Diário Liberdade).

Few public resources were available and obstacles during the investigation (Multimundi).

I believe that Risca Faca came about at a less-than-ideal time; there were not many initiatives ready to ask for money from the public, the branded content business model was already dwindling, and the company that founded Risca Faca (F451 Mídia) was experiencing financial difficulties and was unable to maintain the investment (Risca Faca).

I ran the project alone or with collaborators who did not write as much as I did. So, we were always a little behind. Moreover, I started working as a press officer. Continuing to write critically about my area of work would be a breach of ethics (Move that Jukebox).

I did not create another source of income other than subscriptions/donations (Farol Reportagem).

I lacked organization, product vision, sponsorship, and incentives (Canal Paralelo).

We researched thoroughly and tested some alternatives. However, we could not find a business model to sustain the project (Oppina).

Among the 14 organizations that reported various reasons as the main causes that led to the closure or inactivity of the project (Table 6), it is interesting to note that, although the members of these initiatives did not consider it a determining reason, the economic element also permeates some of the cases or even forms part of a set of justifications presented.

For example, Azoofa mentioned that “financial difficulties already existed”. Vaidapé Magazine indicated “lack of money” as another

reason. Geni Magazine blamed the “wear and tear of the collective self-management model without funding” among the main difficulties. Megafonia Magazine stated the main reason was “financial difficulties and, at the same time, editorial issues”. RockinPress reported “lack of payment for the team” as a secondary reason”. VERTICES Inconfidentes indicated “lack of resources” as the primary cause and “lack of a solid plan” and “income possibilities” as adjacent difficulties. Finally, Revista Poleiro attested to “difficulty in economic return” in its response to the questionnaire.

Final considerations

Alternative economic arrangements for media corporations influence and reconfigure journalistic practices in contemporary times. These initiatives have significantly gained strength and number in recent years, whether due to the confluence of technology and contextual issues or due to the desire of their representatives to offer a new way of reporting, adapted and reconfigured for digital journalism and the current format of content consumption, even allowing these initiatives to be considered as consumer innovations, according to Bleyen et al. (2014), to the extent that their products are made available to consumers in a different way and are also perceived and experienced by consumers differently from traditional media.

The purpose of this work was to update the important survey on Mapa do Jornalismo Independente [Map of Independent Journalism], published by Agência Pública in 2016, as there is significant relevance in verifying which initiatives listed in the first survey are still active and in understanding the reasons that led to the closure of those that are no longer in operation. Based on the proposed research, we can see that many of the actors in this ecosystem are still searching for solutions that will ensure the longevity of their projects (PAVLIK, 2013). In other words, financial sustainability is one of the main challenges to be overcome by initiatives that wish to remain in operation in the country.

Many arrangements ended up suspending their operations due to the challenges encountered in sustaining their activities, as evidenced in our effort to update the Mapa do Jornalismo Independente. We found that 77 of the arrangements (equivalent to 35%) mapped by Agência Pública are no longer in operation.

The informality in the work relations of many of these arrangements without sufficient sources of revenue weakens internal ties, which makes the proposed operations unfeasible in the long term. Arrangements that do not have prospects of being sustainable even in the medium or long term become inactive or shut down. Among those who remain, many do so based on resistance, belief in an engendered cause, or a certain conformism that the arrangement is a secondary activity compared to other priorities in the lives of its members, such as paid work.

As explained previously, during the data collection, we had to create a group of hybrid initiatives that no longer had a website or stopped updating it but maintained an active social media account. These arrangements had fragile organizational and financial structures since they no longer had websites or platforms.

The main reason for these initiatives to find themselves in this state was financial difficulties, showing the path to longevity involves finding sustainable economic configurations. That is not exactly “new” since the financial maintenance of journalism has always been difficult for most outlets. However, by revisiting one of the first surveys on independent digital journalism that became a reference in the area and investigating which initiatives remained active, we sought to understand the types of journalistic business models that can sustain themselves in Brazil. The necessary economic stability involves new sources of revenue and the creation of sustainable business models across their operations that appeal to the public. Journalism today needs to find ways to deliver the product the public expects to receive, the way they want to receive it, and with the necessary appeal so that subjects perceive the fundamental role of journalistic work in the formation of a democratic and critically capable society.

Studies show a decline in the consumption of journalistic information today (NEWMANN et al., 2023). As explained in previous works (SILVEIRA, 2021), this challenge makes it increasingly essential to translate the value propositions of media outlets to the public to guarantee the consumption of journalism that can convert into sustainability. In a deeply platformed society, information consumption habits have been radically transformed by third-party online social media platforms (BELL et al., 2017). Hence, ensuring the public understands and adopts the vehicle's value proposition strengthens audience engagement and participation.

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