Xosé Soengas
Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

The Role of the Internet and Social Networks in the Arab Uprisings - An Alternative to Official Press Censorship

Abstract

This research analyzes the power of the Internet and social networks in the Arab uprisings. We are interested in learning about the contribution of communication technology in low advanced societies in conflict situations and the value of the network as a link between young people who supported the changes from abroad and those who were directly involved in protests. On the importance of technology as a virtual communication tool we have conducted a series of online interviews with 30 young people from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya living in Barcelona, Madrid and Santiago de Compostela during the development of the conflicts and who were involved in the Arab Spring though the network. The research findings in this study prove that virtual support for uprisings were not based on coordinated actions, and that it was simply a confluence of similar acts coinciding in time and on the same platforms. The Internet and social networks served as elements for supporting the process and as a counter-balance to official censorship and to government-supportive media, and were useful for overcoming the isolation of Arab society, in order to make the conflicts visible and to attract relevant support from abroad. But it also showed that the network had constraints in the face of the consolidated propaganda infrastructure which existed in each country.

Dr. Xosé Soengas Pérez is Full Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences in the School of Communication Sciences at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) (jose.soengas@usc.es).

1. Introduction and overview

In the spring of 2011 a series of uprisings broke out in a number of Arab countries, causing regimes that had been in power for decades to collapse, in some cases with incredible speed. The first protests began in Tunisia, but quickly spread to other key points in the area, wasting no time in reaching Egypt and Libya (Fernández 2011). But these political and social changes, having no contemporary precedents in the Arab World, were not purely coincidental, but rather had been discreetly cultivated and strengthened over the years (Majdoubi, 2011). The only missing ingredient was a detonator; a trigger event to force the people to take to the streets, since all the necessary conditions for unleashing these protests were already dormant in the general population: significant social differences, political corruption and abuse of power, lack of freedom, continuous repression and restriction of basic civil rights, and ostentatious government employee privileges, etc. (Izquierdo, 2009).

The isolation that Arab countries had traditionally been subjected to ended when globalization and technology made official geographic boundaries obsolete (Lago & Marotias, 2006). Then, virtual relations became normalized, making it possible to contact any corner of the globe without needing to travel (Esteinou, 2003). The unstoppable advance of the Internet and social networks revolutionized old modes of communication and produced a massive information exchange with the outside world (Roces, 2011). In this new scenario, Arab society, especially its youth, now has the means to avoid censorship and regime control within its reach for the first time in history (George-Cosh, 2010), along with the ability to organize and share opinions with foreign communities. They also have at their disposal the necessary tools to denounce their government on a world stage, and are able to receive all kinds of international support, from advice on topics of strategic interest and general logistics to guarantee the success of their protests to solidarity movements that lend visibility and prominence to the cause.

Officially, media in the Arab world was controlled either by the State or the military (Warda, 2012), and social networking through the Internet has not only facilitated more open access to information, but also freedom of expression and the right to express opinions and to associate freely, albeit in a virtual sense.

International communication allows one to understand other realities and to compare and contrast different social models, and it was in this context that the Arab youth saw the chance to demonstrate their long-latent non-conformity and to fight for comprehensive political reform (Majdoubi, 2011). The constant virtual calls to revolution were able to draw thousands of citizens onto the streets. The massive crowds gathered in Tahrir Square now serve as a point of reference, an example of the power of this proclamation (Schechter, 2011). The Internet and social networks were useful during the initial stages of the uprisings and also later, as the conflicts developed, because they encouraged a close monitoring of how the events were unfolding (Roces, 2011). In spite of the imposed censorship and the constant information blockades, these media platforms made it possible for anyone to find out what was happening in the Arab world, which served to sensitize the international community.

The media has always been considered a strategic weapon in any conflict, and proof of this is found in the fact that state-sponsored television and radio stations were among the first places to be protected by the regimes when uprisings broke out in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya (Castillo, 2012). Because no free and independent press existed, the information was disseminated to the citizens through media channels contaminated by government propaganda. During the protests, access to foreign media was limited, complicated or obstructed leaving journalists to work in repressive conditions, with no real way to corroborate their stories. The governments hid sensitive and strategic locations from journalists, keeping them from reporting information or images about the strength of the rebel troops or the weaknesses of the regime (Raoof, 2010). Other times they tried to discredit international media outlets, accusing them of bias. Journalists have been a target in the majority of the conflicts, and in these specific uprisings, many suffered physical attacks while attempting to get information, especially during the actual protests. They tried to prevent access to qualified witnesses of the events (Rodríguez, 1999). But the Internet had completely changed the traditional map of how information is spread. And in this new scenario, efforts to maintain control over the media and the dissemination of information were increasingly difficult and complex to carry out (Etling, Kelly, Faris & Palfrey, 2009). The most substantial difference between the Arab Spring of 2011 and prior conflicts is that, when protests broke out in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, the Internet and other social networks were already established and consolidated in society, composing an important alternative to traditional media and communication infrastructures. Even though it has different characteristics and objectives, the Internet is able to perform tasks similar to those of print media, radio or television, sometimes even outperforming them, an occurrence that had up until that point not been thought possible (De-Rivera, 2011).

Since journalists were not permitted access to all the protests, in many cases the only images and proof that came out of the uprisings were those found on the Internet and social networks, obtained and distributed by anonymous citizens who, lacking the appropriate knowledge of professional journalism standards, were unable to verify their data and offer objective and verified information (Gómez-Diago, 2005), a process which is called unfiltered journalism. Because of this, a number of authors, including Canga (2001), agree that the information that circulates on the Internet does not have the same value or adhere to the same quality standards as traditional media, from a journalistic perspective. It was precisely this argument that the Arab governments favored time and again to discredit any unfavorable reports found on the Internet. They claimed that these reports had been taken out of context or worse, that they were completely untrue. But there is another important factor to consider: many citizens attribute similar levels of credibility to all media formats because they do not differentiate between the specific roles that each one should have. For these people, the images that circulate on the Internet are documents whose very existence supports the veracity of the events they are supposedly documenting, and they do not question other details that a professional would in a similar situation (González, 1989). In this context, the Internet and social network sites had a distinct advantage over the technical

limitations and informational control that other Arab media networks were forced to endure, which facilitated both the reach and the impact of the content as it spread around the Internet.

From a theoretical standpoint, much has been written about the role, the importance and the possibilities of technology in the field of information gathering and communication, but the phenomenon of how the Internet and social networks were used during the Arab uprisings also underscores the importance of reflecting on the risks involved if these technological tools are not used or regulated correctly. One of the most controversial aspects is the uncontrolled dissemination of sensitive or inappropriate information on the Internet, which can be especially dangerous for those who do not have the necessary education to decipher and process it. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that technology makes it possible to control communication and the flow of information. The same elements that keep information from being censored can be converted into tools of repression, just as Arab governments did during the uprisings, blocking Internet access to impede the free flow of information. Another potential risk factor is that technology could be used to create propaganda (Belaali, 2011). It has been proven that these same governments infiltrated the Internet to plant false information with the end goal of sabotaging the rebels. The universe of information technologies and communication is large enough to allow for the coexistence of various phenomena, from a direct and high-speed connection with the source of information to the immediate reception of news from any corner of the world. But this universal access to the Internet can also lead to chaotic and disorganized information. This is considered one of the primary risk factors associated with the so-called journalism without filters. Additionally, the sheer volume and variety of information that circulates on the Internet must be taken into account (Canga, 2001), a determining factor that can complicate or even prevent an effective management of content and affect the utility of the messages.

2. Materials and methods

In order to understand the role of the Internet and social networks in the Arab uprisings and to confirm the effects and the efficacy of technology as a communication tool in underdeveloped societies that have been subjected to repressive regimes for decades, a series of on-line surveys were distributed to 30 young people from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, countries that best represent the general characteristics and overall scope of the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions. Ten people from each of these three countries were interviewed, each between the ages of 19 and 25 years old, and who were either living, studying or working in Barcelona, Madrid or Santiago de Compostela from the time when the uprisings broke out to when the regimes were overthrown. These young people are representative of the user profile that dominated virtual media formats during the uprisings, a feature which clarifies how technology was used to participate in the conflicts and to support the cause from abroad, along with highlighting how the Internet and social networks influenced how events developed, which is the primary objective of this study. The 30 interviewees were supporters of a regime change in their re-

spective countries, and were all asked about the following topics: motives for why they became involved in the protests, strategies and types of communication used, characteristics and changes in the content of both sent and received messages, profiles of the people with whom they virtually interacted and how they perceive support for the uprisings from an international perspective.

The results of these interviews have been compared with information about the political and social situations in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya found in three Spanish media outlets («TVE», «El País» and «El Mundo») during the same time period. The goal of this comparison is to verify if general-interest media provides a reference point and a source of information for users of the Internet and other social networks.

While the protests were taking place in each of the above-mentioned countries, the activities of the 30 interviewees were monitored by means of a monthly online survey, in order to obtain precise data that would permit a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the different phases of the conflicts, and also to know if the same level of support was maintained throughout the entire period or if there were fluctuations in attitudes during the process. Additionally, in the final interview, the subjects were asked to assess, from their point of view, the role that the Internet and social network sites played in the entire process, along with an appraisal of the changes produced in their countries, specifying the factors that they believe had contributed decisively to the fall of the regimes.

The concepts and ideas used as primary reference points for this study are as follows: usefulness of information, design of communications strategies and plans, joint actions, coordinated actions, and informational and communicative opportunities originating from Internet usage during times of conflict, all while remembering the organizational capacity that technology possesses to promote social cohesion, along with its communicative properties.

3. Analysis and results

Of the Arab youth interviewed, 92% believe that the Internet and social networks made the protests and conflicts in their home countries more visible to an international audience, and support the belief that these technologies partially made up for the informational embargoes and censorship that local media in the region experienced. But when it came time to provide a more precise assessment of the role of technology in the protests, 45% stated that the Internet affected the development of events and the successful outcome of each conflict, with only 32% categorizing virtual media as crucial. These 32% of respondents feel that the old regimes fell faster because the Internet gave those living abroad a better understanding of the significance of the abuses that were being committed by the government, which gave rise to an international solidarity movement with the rebel forces, contributing to the further isolation of the regimes. For 81% of the subjects, the sudden and generalized outbreak of the revolts was surprising; even though they had been aware of social unrest and were hoping that a citizen uprising would occur, they did not expect it to be so drastic or immediate. They assumed that any conflict would carry on silently for years, with 56% estimating

that change would eventually arrive, but only with the natural dissolution of the old regime.

Amongst participants, 89% recognize the lack of a unifying strategy that would have permitted the development of a joint and effective effort, and admitted that the majority of their Internet activities were spontaneous, individual actions that were in response to a general feeling of solidarity with those that were working to improve social conditions in their country. Within this group, 75% are of the opinion that the lack of coordination and advising was one of the most significant problems of the entire process, and that the overall success of the Internet and social networks would have been much greater if there had been a well-designed plan in place from the beginning, instead of losing out on all that the Internet has to offer by focusing on useless information. For these young people, a more coordinated effort would have optimized resources, establishing filters that could have avoided the dissemination of fraudulent information and allowing for a centralized management of all communications. Directly related to this, one of the problems that Arab activists endured on a daily basis was the reception and categorization of the extraordinary volumes of data that flooded communication channels and thereby became less effective simply by being unmanageable. They also admit that there were certain messages that were constantly being repeated, above all summaries of articles announcing foreign government support for the rebels, information about solidarity movements with the Arab Spring being celebrated in countries around the world, and a large amount of irrelevant data.

But at the same time, 62% affirm that a strategy designed with professional criteria and standards is unrealistic because it would require adequate infrastructures and would involve a great deal of prior organization and preparation, all of which were not feasible at the time, due to a scarcity of resources and free time. Moreover, 47% sustain that the lack of homogeneous criteria and common guidelines in the events carried out during the Arab Spring is actually what defines the philosophy of using the Internet and social networks to support a cause, however chaotic and dysfunctional it may seem. The interviewees agree that these actions are based on solidarity, spontaneity and individual freedom, all of which must prevail in active and passive use of the Internet.

After analyzing the interviews, it can be deduced that these young Arab residents of Barcelona, Madrid and Santiago de Compostela rarely communicated with each other or with other friends or acquaintances, except on rare occasions such as selected weekends when they would meet and discuss issues that they considered to be sensitive or important. Only 11% admit to having consulted an expert at any given moment. Of these, the advice being sought was almost always in relation to possible strategies to make the protests more effective and impactful, to find international funding and support or to ask legal questions about protecting friends and family members. But 38% bemoan the fact that the recommendations that were passed on were not always accurate because circumstances were constantly changing due to unforeseeable developments in the conflicts. Furthermore, they admit that imprudent advice has been shared on the Internet, advice that carries the risk of resulting in reckless actions. In retrospect, it has been proven that a good deal of the information shared on the Internet was not appro-

priately researched, having been based on desires, emotions, commentary and rumors rather than on real events.

For 82%, the primary objective was the greatest possible diffusion of images of protests happening daily in the streets of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, along with the publication of data and testimonies of the atrocities being committed against citizens. In this way, they were able to destroy the regime's credibility and internationally publicize each country's reality, especially related to acts of repression. And for 63%, the next priority was to make sure that their fellow citizens were kept informed about international support, impact and opinion about the conflicts, since they were distrustful of the local press, which had been conditioned to accept governmental censorship and propaganda. This group of interviewees felt that the information provided on the Internet, in spite of inaccurate reporting on certain events, as detailed earlier, helped them to configure a more realistic opinion about the conflicts, and above all to lift the spirits of the those who were directly involved in the protests to ensure that they felt morally supported.

Some 78% confirm that the intrinsic possibilities of new technologies were influential in increasing the visibility of the Arab uprisings. In fact, 59% claim that they had very little prior knowledge of information management in virtual scenarios, and just by having used the Internet to participate in the conflicts of their home country they have a better understanding of information and communication technologies. For 23%, the experience of the uprisings has made them reflect on the potential and risks of the Internet and social networks.

Despite recognizing the benefits of some of the actions undertaken, 89% acknowledged the lack of a unifying strategy, just as they did earlier in the report, and felt that a large part of the potential of the Internet had been squandered due to the fact that many of the transmitted messages were simply testimonies of solidarity with and support for the young Arab combatants, and rarely contained any useful information. The self-criticisms of the participants regarding their virtual participation in the process increased greatly from the beginning stages of the conflict to the end. In the first wave of interviews, 79% believed that they were acting correctly, but the level of satisfaction fell to 34% in the last interview, when a complete regime change had already occurred in each of the three countries. The most critical subjects found the actions at the beginning of the conflict to be appropriate, but when analyzed later, the efficiency of these achievements was put into perspective.

The information collected during the interviews reflects both qualitative and quantitative changes in the use of the Internet and social networks while the uprisings were taking place, and 90% of the interview subjects recognize that the intensity, frequency and content-sharing capabilities of communications during the conflict evolved a great deal from beginning to end. Initially, communication occurred within a small group of friends and acquaintances, but this group continued to expand as the conflict progressed. Moreover, the exceptional circumstances conditioned the kinds of messages that were received. In early communications, people were more interested in anecdotes, but later, the level of involvement deepened. As the conflicts evolved and worsened, so too did the concern felt for family members and friends.

On being asked about the motives behind their decision to actively participate in the uprisings in their countries of origin from abroad via the Internet, 86% of the interviewed youths say that they have seen themselves caught up in a new and unexpected phenomenon and that they initially participated, as previously mentioned, out of solidarity, then found themselves collaborating for a variety of causes. Most coincide in highlighting two: 61% felt a moral obligation to do something for their country, and 74% joined the virtual process not only to show solidarity but also because of ideological convictions, as this presented a unique opportunity to influence a political change which would improve conditions in their country and assure freedom and democracy in the future. Only 10% were convinced by friends, and the rest participated for other reasons.

Apart from the exchanges of information with friends and acquaintances, 83% maintained constant contact with a family member through social networks, almost always with young people as older members rarely use such technology, but the frequency and the content of the messages were very different in each case. During the period analyzed, 87% of the communication between friends was centred on political questions or matters related to the development of the protests, whilst 95% of messages sent to the family worried about their well-being.

Although the basis of the communication between Arab residents in Barcelona, Madrid and Santiago de Compostela and their countrymen from Tunisia, Egypt and Libya was the Internet and social networks, 71% also used digital versions of the popular press- both from Spain and abroad- as a source of information (30% on a daily basis, 19% once or twice a week, and 22% very occasionally) above all to gauge the international reaction to the conflicts. 65% trusted the reliability of this popular press because they considered it to be a guarantee of objectivity and neutrality, since it came from countries not directly involved in the conflicts (Gómez-Diago, 2005).

This information helped them to verify and corroborate the magnitude of the confrontations, and provided them with details to allow them to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and strategies of the regime with criteria which was, in their opinion, fairly objective, thus enabling them to calculate the rebels' capacity for resistance. Then they would transmit their impressions via social networks. Consequently, news stories from Spanish and foreign press would often become a trigger which influenced the volume and intensity of the messages, both when levels of concern became heightened and when people sensed the expectation of triumph.

Comparing the results of the interviews with information about the Arab uprisings which appeared on «TVE», «El País» and «El Mundo»in the same period, one observes that news reports about the most intense incidents that took place during the protests coincide with the dates the interviewees associate with peaks in the traffic of online information, a parallel which is also visible in the content of the messages. The interviewees admit that the popular press was for them a source of information and a habitual reference point, and that often they would rely on such reports to keep their countrymen updated and informed about the international reaction to the development of the conflict, and the external support they could count on at each moment. For 73% of the youths, the information

about the Arab uprisings published by the Spanish press gave them a certain confidence because, according to them, it boasts adequate infrastructure and human resources to be able to obtain reliable information, a privilege not available to all countries. Despite this, for 55%, not all media outlets show the same sensitivity with regard to problems facing Arab countries, something which could affect their focus, their attitude about the conflicts and the processing of information.

Of the youths interviewed, 64% are extremely critical of the development of the revolutionary process in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as they believe that it has not been well organized, and for 52% the achievements of the revolutions are neither solid nor sufficient enough to guarantee a stable democracy and full freedom in the future. In spite of the apparent triumphs, 43% do not expect great progress, because for them a regime change does not necessarily imply profound social change. Only 26% declared themselves satisfied with the current situation.

4. Conclusions

The political and social changes which have occurred in the Arab world in the last two years cannot be attributed to one singular event. They are the result of various factors: an inevitable social evolution, sped up thanks to regular contact with the outside world, a generalized discontent due to their precarious economic condition, in large part brought about by government corruption, and the desire to improve their living conditions and obtain a larger share of freedoms. In such a context, technology has come to play a determining role. Thus it is essential that one takes into account the communicative possibilities which the Internet and social networks offer in order to analyze and understand the planning and development of the process which led to the uprisings and the subsequent fall of the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

There remains the impression that the virtual support for the Arab uprisings was based on coordinated actions, but an analysis of the reality, as has been demonstrated in the data from this investigation, shows that this was not the case; there was simply a confluence of similar activity which, by chance, coincided in time and platform. However, there was also an important mimetic effect, emerging from the first international declarations of solidarity, which transformed into a massive phenomenon as a consequence of the summoning power of the Internet and its word-of-mouth effect. This caused the support base to grow progressively from the very beginning.

In the development of the conflicts the factors of commitment and solidarity have played an extremely important role, and these values have had a decisive influence in the participation of the youth in activities supporting the uprisings which have been carried out online.

Arab citizens, both those residing in their country and those living abroad, for the first time were able to take advantage of a possibility which, until then, had been rarely used in such a direct, popular way: individual actions focused towards group communication, personal suggestions and ideas working for a common goal. This communicative flow derived from combined but uncoordinated action

which could be defined as communication of the masses based on the virtual relationships which are possible thanks to the Internet. This demonstrates that technology can act as a tool of action associated with the phenomenon of a localized protest, allowing it to acquire a global dimension.

The popular press is a source of information for users of the Internet. However, as well as having all the functions which correspond with classic methods of communication, the Internet and social networks offer alternative services which are out of the reach of the printed press, the radio and the television, and which, in under-developed societies, as in the case of the Arab world, where the uprisings took place, play a key role: keeping the citizens informed and well-communicated at all times, both domestically and abroad, at extremely low cost and with almost instant feedback. Thanks to these possibilities an unprecedented communicative phenomenon was developed which facilitated the communication and the virtual relationship between people with very different profiles, a plural communicative exchange, but with a common objective: the concern for the development of the social and political conflicts taking place in various Arab countries.

These services are responsible for part of the success (or the importance) of the Internet in the Arab uprisings because, although there was no professional coordination between the activists, the fact that it makes contact between citizens possible means it improves conditions to organize combined actions, something essential in the planning and development of protests. These opportunities are one of the new features of the uprisings because both the Internet and social networks are, from a historical point of view, and compared with the trajectory of classic methods of communication, extremely recent. Until the time in question there had never been the opportunity to demonstrate their potential in such a peculiar and complex situation, thus understanding their communicative possibilities and capacity to influence.

The role of the Internet, its efficiency and the intensity of the communications, has differed at various points in the conflicts. The Internet and social networks were useful to overcome the isolation of Arab society, making the revolutions visible and forging relevant support abroad. However, the interviewed youth recognize that the advantages were greater at the beginning because, over time, difficulties began to appear which could not be solved through technology, and they soon realised the illusion that they were under. Furthermore, they discovered the limitations of the Internet when faced with the infrastructure of propaganda that the regime had set up throughout the country. Fighting against such powerful resources was a complicated matter.

The Internet also serves a testimonial and legalizing function. The messages sent remain registered, and are a detailed accounting of the development of the events and the emotional states of those involved, since outpourings of euphoria varied depending on the triumphs and failures in the different phases of the uprisings.

The interviewed youth recognize that the conflicts have brought about significant change and relevant and necessary progress, yet the majority are skeptical about the permanence of the victories and believe that, in the short term, there will not be an all-encompassing evolution involving all facets of society which allows the development of a modern, free society. They consider that many of the achieve-

ments are not sufficiently consolidated and deep-rooted to be considered irreversible and definitive, and think that in some aspects there is the risk of regression. Furthermore, they distinguish between those changes which are important and those that are influential. Thus, when asking them to specify in which aspects or sectors they notice most important advances and in which there has been least evolution, or less democratization, they maintain that, apparently, there is more individual freedom but, on the other hand, neither state structures nor the most repressive laws affecting the essence of democracy have been modified, meaning many of the achievements have had little or no effect. They also maintain that the political reforms must be accompanied by economic reform to ensure that they are viable and sustainable.

References

Belaali, M. (2011). Revolución y contrarrevolución en el mundo árabe. (www.rebelion.org (www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=132961) (08-09-2012).

Canga, J. (2001). Periodismo en Internet: nuevo medio, vieja profesión, in Estudios del Mensaje Periodístico, 7 (www.ucm.es/info/perioI/Period_I/EMP/Numer_07/7-3-Pone/7-3-02.htm) (01-09-2012).

Castillo, A. (2012). Los medios de comunicación como actores sociales y políticos. Poder, medios de comunicación y sociedad. Razón y Palabra, 75 (www.razonypalabra.org.mx-/N/N75/monotematico_75/12_Castillo_M75.pdf) (05-06-2012).

De-Rivera, J. (2011). El papel de las redes sociales (de Internet) en la revolución árabe: el caso de Egipto, in Sociología y redes Sociales (http://sociologiayredessociales.com/-2011/02/el-papel-de-las-redes-sociales-de-Internet-en-la-revolucion-arabe-el-caso-de-egipto/) (08-10-2012)

Esteinou, J. (2003). La Revolución del ciberespacio y la transformación de la sociedad de principios del siglo XX. Razón y Palabra (www.razonypalabra.org.mx/rypant/anteriores/-n36/jesteinou.html) (09-07-2012).

Etling, B., Kelly, J., Faris, R. & Palfrey, J. (2009). Mapping the Arab Blogosphere: Politics, Culture, and Dissent, in The Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University (http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/idblog). (http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/-cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Mapping_the_Arab_Blogosphere_0.pdf) (20-02-2012).

Fernández, H. (2011). La caída de Ben Ali: ¿hecho aislado o cambio de paradigma en el mundo árabe? (ARI), in Real Instituto Elcano. (www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/-rielcano/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/ari14-2011) (11-10-2012).

George-Cosh, D. (2010). Twitter Plans Arab website, in The National (www.thenational.ae/business/technology/twitter-plans-Arab-website) (10-01-2012).

Gómez-Diago, G. (2005). Tres criterios para evaluar la calidad informativa en Internet: credibilidad, cobertura, novedad. Global Media Journal. (http://gmje.mty.itesm.mx/articulos4/gomez_g.html) (17-03-2012).

González, N. (1989). Hechos y valores en la narración periodística informativa. Comunicación y Sociedad (www.unav.es/fcom/comunicacionysociedad/es/articulo.php?art_-id=295) (10-07-2012).

Izquierdo, F. (Ed.) (2009). Poder y regímenes en el mundo árabe contemporáneo. (www.academia.edu/495709/Poder_y_regimenes_en_el_mundo_arabe_contemporaneo) (05-06-2012).

Lago, S. & Marotias, A. (2006). Los Movimientos Sociales en la Era de Internet. Razón y Palabra, 54 (www.razonypalabra.org.mx/rypant/anteriores/n54/lagomarotias.html) (08-09-2012).

Majdoubi, E.H. (2011). Las revoluciones democráticas en el mundo árabe, in Infoamérica, 5 Communication Review (www.infoamerica.org/icr/n05/majdoubi.pdf) (07-10-2012).

Raoof, R. (2010). Egypt: Security Department to Monitor Facebook and Support the Government, in Global Voices (http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/2010/08/29/egypt-security-department-to-monito-facebook-and-support-the-government) (05-03-2012).

Roces, F. (2011). El nuevo mundo árabe: El papel de las redes sociales y de las televisiones por satélite árabes en la ola de cambios políticos en la región, in wordpress.com (http://elnuevomundoarabe.wordpress.com/2011/06/10/el-nuevo-mundo-arabe-el-papel-de-las-redes-sociales-y-de-las-televisiones-por-satelite-arabes-en-la-ola-de-cambios-politicos-en-la-region/) (08-10-2012).

Rodríguez, R. (1999). Periodistas ante conflictos. El papel de los medios de comunicación en situaciones de crisis. Pamplona: Eunsa.

Schechter, D. (2011). The hidden roots of Egypt's despair, in Aljazeera (www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/01/201113113211680738.html) (15-03-2012).

Warda, N. (2012). Los medios de comunicación árabes, estructura y características, in Zer (www.ehu.es/zer/hemeroteca/pdfs/zer08-06-warda.pdf) (11-08-2012).