WEATHER FORECASTS IN EUROPEAN **NEWSPAPERS**

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Undoubtedly there is a lot of discussion about how weather broadcasters should get involved in new "social" media, what is the role and the future of weather broadcasting in the digital era where weather information is more and more easily accessible. Looking at the traditional media, our work* focused on newspapers which for 150 years now include weather forecasts. (The world's first public weather forecast was published on 1st of August 1861 in "The Times". It was put together by Robert FitzRoy).

Through a big sample of more than 150 daily European newspapers from 38 countries, we examined among others, how weather information is presented, which kind of data is published and to what extent, who signs the forecasts etc.

Our first finding was that all the newspapers actually have a weather forecast column. Although one can argue that a lot of time elapses between editing the forecasts and publishing the newspaper, and, therefore, forecasts can change during this time, still all the news editors believe that is essential for their readers to publish weather forecasts and definitely they don't do so only to keep the tradition.

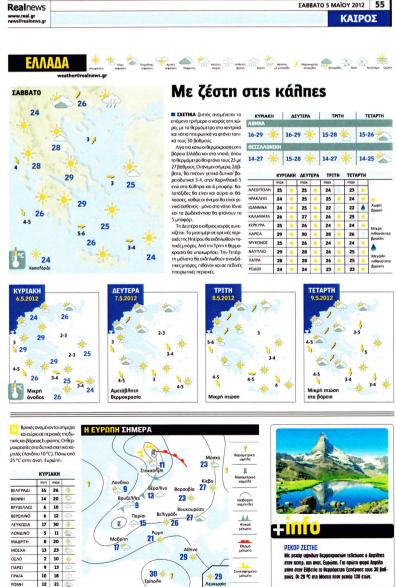
Moreover in many cases (15%) weather forecasts cover an entire page but usually (50%) the size is between and of a page. While almost all the newspapers use weather icons, only 22% of them have no text forecast at all. Usually the text forecast is less than 100 words (60%).

Another important finding is that although news editors now can easily find weather forecasts from many Internet sources - sometimes even free of charge, but of unknown quality - the vast majority of newspapers still choose to have their forecasts signed by a meteorologist and/or by a weather company or by a national Met. Service. This again highlights the added value that a meteorologist gives.

FOR MORE

*"Weather forecast column in European newspapers" 11th ECAM/ 10th ECAM meeting Berlin http://presentations.copernicus. org/EMS2011-843 presentation.pdf)

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