**Introduction**

Since the first Iphone smartphones are a common technology. We are used to carry them around but most of the people know little about how powerful smartphones really are. An actual smartphone has enough raw power to be used as a personal computer. The app culture is growing fast and every year developers surprise us with more complex and innovative products. Smartphones are a fundamental tool for professionals. They have brought connectivity and mobility to task that were limited by old technology. Journalism is one of these. Text processing, image and video production and edition are only 2 seconds away now. News are faster than ever, they spread through social networks reaching every corner on the world. This is the ideal situation for my product. It will unify professional tools that are being used and it will make them more accessible. It will also connect users and their content with social platforms and agencies. The actual technology to make this a reality is yet to develop but as I will show in this research, the need is real and there are already products close to this concept.

**Market Research**

Smartphones have conquered the market over desktops and laptops. Mobile overtook PC in 2014. What does it mean? From this year people, has been accessing internet and online services from their phones rather than their computer. Mary Meeker, wall street former security analysis predicted it and she later stated it in her annual report about internet trends (Meeker, 2016). We are also connected to the internet longer than before. It is more present in our lives than ever. Statistics show that spent a daily amount of 5.6 h on the internet. We have changed our patterns. We get news from social networks and websites. Video streaming and on- demand video services are rising and they are more popular than the traditional TV systems. It has change the whole media ecosystem.

It has been a great gamechanger at a professional level. This trend has pushed and developed new kind of jobs. Smartphones are now essential tools and in many situations, they’ve replaced traditional equipment. This has been deeply affected journalism. Newspaper and its paid subscriptions are now outdated. Most of the media networks and agencies have switched over online services. Images and video are more predominant than plain text and new forms of storytelling and formatting have been developed because of that. Most of the professional equipment and the old technology have changed due to the digital era. Mobile computing and faster internet networks have provided major improvements for journalists. Offices are not needed anymore and content can be produced on the go. Smartphones are now used instead of professional equipment; expensive cameras are not the only equipment able to create high quality pictures and video. Even video streaming is now possible without complex set ups and technical knowledge.

News agencies have experienced this change in two different ways. Social networks (citizen journalism) have supposed an actual loss of revenue to the traditional market. Griessner journalist at the APA stated it on his research about the relationship between news companies and the social media “The online market has also led to less revenue through advertising across the media landscape. With social media, the audience becomes even more fragmented which also implies new challenges for media production, distribution and selling”. However, Griess also states in his paper how this new journalism is providing more sources for them. News agencies see this new journalism more as a collaboration than a threat. (Griessner, 2012 )

My project is born from this trend, it understands the needs of news companies and journalists. It combines high quality content produced by professionals and it connects it to news agencies. It provides accessible content to news agencies and it gives free professional tools to journalists. It is also scalable at any level and it can be used by freelance or organizations.

There is only one question remaining. Is it enough to make people use the platform? Where do I have to focus if I want to achieve success. We’ve talked about technological improvements, connectivity, and mobility but we are not strangers to them anymore. If we analyse the latest great successful platforms we come to see that most of them are social networks. Facebook and YouTube are probably the oldest one and they’ve changed dramatically since the smartphones are an extension of ourselves. Twitter, Instagram and lately Snapchat couldn’t have grown if we weren’t constantly using our smartphones.

If my platform can offer this sense of community and at the same time ground breaking improvements to the workflow of journalists it will probably be a successful product. At the end of the day, I’m using an idea that works already (social networks and citizen journalism) and putting it at the service of conventional journalism and news agencies. I also consider this project as an attempt of democratizing news. There is always this concern about how information is produced, controlled, and distributed.

**Competition**

Researching the competition is a fundamental step on the elaboration process of the product. I have mainly focused on the app because is the most complex part. There are many apps with similar functions and I will go talk about the most popular and important of all them.

**App**

**Image and Video production**

As web platforms and applications works with different sizes than print publications the resolutions and quality of the content don’t need to be that high as it used to be. It is then very common to see professionals using their smartphones to produce content. It is possible to find a balance though. Native camera apps and social networks camera functions aren’t for professionals. However researching trough the App Stores we can find apps that aim for this sector.

[Pro camera](https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/procamera./id694647259?mt=8) offers professional controls (exposure, white balance or aperture) for Iphone users.[FV-5](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.flavionet.android.camera.pro&hl=en) is the android equivalent. When it comes to editing we have VSCO, Snapseed and Adobe Photoshop mobile. All of them provided strong editing utilities.

**Video Streaming**

This technology is relatively new and it has become popular within the last two years. Periscope and Meerkat were the first ones. It has been so popular that Twitter decided to connect Periscope to its services. Facebook has developed its “Facebook live”. It lets you stream directly to your friends feed. Lately Youtube has also made available its streaming system for smartphones. With the development of 4G networks this technology is stable enough to work without a WIFI connection. It makes streaming on the go an easy tool to use.

**Sound recording**

Most of the phones used to include a native app for voice recording but it seems like it has been deprecated. Instant messages apps like Whatsapp, Telegram or Facebook Menssenger include a voice message option. However, its quality is limited and there is not an intuitive way of saving these audios later. There are standalone applications for voice recording though. [Smart voice recorder](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.andrwq.recorder&hl=en_GB) allows you to use your android phone at a professional level. [Smart recorder classic](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/smart-recorder-classic-transcriber/id312941044?mt=8) offers many settings and configurations for iOs systems.

**Text Processing**

It might seem the easiest function but it is very important to get it right**.** Many apps fail at this introducing too much lag on the writing or not properly implementing the editing on smalls screens There are many text processing apps for any mobile OS. From the simplest to the most complex the range is very wide. However, cloud technology has been added and now it is possible to edit your documents from any device. Microsoft office, Google documents or the Icloud suite offer the possibility of editing text, save it in the cloud and keep editing it from another different device.

**Cloud Storage**

We’ve already talked about cloud technology and there is no many things to sat as we are used to it by now. Google Drive and Dropbox are probably one of our daily tools. 4G Networks and faster Wi-Fi provides the ability of quickly saving any file in the cloud. Providing instant access and more security than any physical way of storage.

All these Apps are excellent applications however there is not a single app with all this functions included. There is no app that unifies all this tools and I think that’s a good hole in the market. If there is an actual need of an app like this the product might be a success.

**Online Platform**

This platform is such a new concept that so it is difficult to find competitors, there are similar products though. If we think of the platform as a way of editing your documents online, we can go back to Dropbox or google Drive as they offer the same. We could think of Evernote or Slack even though they are more focused on the team work. Social Networks could work in the same way so Twitter and Facebook might be the closest concepts.

**New Zulu**

New Zulu is with no doubts the main competitor as it is the most similar concept and they are already on the actual market. They are positioned in the middle where they serve revised and curated content to news companies. They also have an online platform and an application for iOs and Android. There are however weak points that I think my project could cover much better.

* Their presence in UK is inexistent. They have closed the co.uk domain and now they redirect you to their international site. Their site works as a news platform. You can see all the news uploaded by the users there even if you aren’t registered.
* Member access is open to anyone making this platform focused on the citizen journalism. However, I feel that without any kind of first level filter many resources are wasted in later verification of content and identity.
* Android application hasn’t been updated since march. Its design is outdated too which I think it is an important part as the public your pointing to are professionals from the creative sector. There are also many complains on the play store of the app now working at all, it has only a rate of 3 stars.

New Zulu’s point of view is important when it comes to democratise Journalism using citizens content. However, I feel they are not offering a real alternative to professional and they have just created a new based social network. Their business plan doesn’t make much sense as there are selling content but there is accessible to anyone visiting their website. I don’t see the project taking off as any ground-breaking ideas they might have had, I think they haven’t been well implemented. It is difficult to find the balance and they might have gone too much to one side or another.

If I have access to professionals of the sector and I understand its needs I will be able to build an actual useful tool.