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El Vocero Celebrates Four Years and Great Hurricane Coverage

By [Kirsten Ballard](#) February 6, 2018

During Hurricane Maria, everyone in the *El Vocero* office was a reporter, photographer and editor. Even the newspaper's president, Salvador Hasbún, chipped in, taking a photo with his cell phone that ran on the front page.

"How many newspaper presidents can say that?" he laughs. But he admits that was the key to success in the aftermath. "Everybody was important. You have to do everything."



Salvador Hasbún

In the months since hurricane María made landfall in Puerto Rico, the newspaper's editorial team has worked tirelessly to cover every single angle of the disaster. Like the rest of the island, the newspaper was without power and telecommunications.

But these conditions did not stop them.

"In a time like that, you realize how vulnerable you are. It was like going back to the old days, it was really complicated at first," Hasbún says. "I think we are stronger now than we were before, because of that experience."

During the hurricane, editorial editor Juan Miguel Muniz was one of two tasked with live streaming the hurricane. He recounts being up high in a building, for the 180-degree view. "I don't know if it was a good idea," he says. "At that moment, it looked like a great idea. You could feel the whole building shaking but we didn't stop."

Maria made landfall on a Wednesday. On Friday, *El Vocero* published. They ran a special edition on Saturday to help people gather the news in a time of no TV and no radio. The team worked from five different locations after the hurricane to deal with the constraints imposed by power outages and transportation.

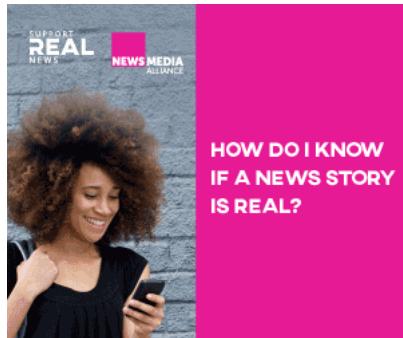
"We wanted people to have the information that they needed," Hasbún says. "Our newspaper is a free newspaper. Every time we saw a line in gas stations or super market, we went there with newspapers. You cannot imagine the faces of people when they received a copy of the newspaper."

All this effort did not go unnoticed by the public, who chose *El Vocero* as their main source of news. As TV networks saw their audiences dwindle as electrical systems collapsed, *El Vocero* reached an unprecedented 63 percent of newspaper readers in October and November.

El Vocero de Puerto Rico is celebrating four years of uncompromising reporting. Looking forward, Hasbún wants to increase the readership and continue to develop an even stronger relationship with the community. “We want to be their voice,” he says.



Kirsten Ballard



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