International Digital Wine Writing started around 1995-1996 when journalists and wine lovers launched discussion forums open to anybody who wanted to share their tastes, opinions or knowledge. Those forums were the first platforms where consumers and professionals from all over the world could meet virtually before - sometimes- meeting “offline”. Technology evolving and helping, at the turn of the new century, blogs became part of the digital landscape. At a time when top-down messaging had already become obsolete for wine brands, peer-to-peer conversations and consumer-to-blogger conversations took precedence over the traditional monolog of the wine experts and “gurus”. Nowadays, even Facebook and Twitter are part of the digital wine writing.

Forums, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and other social networks and digital tools are now part of the digital landscape and are challenging the wine industry worldwide. What is really at stakes in 2011 and for the next 5 years for the wine industry?

To answer this question, the mastère de Vins de Dijon and its counterpart Wine Master program launched a study of digital wine writing in the US and in Asia (China, Korea and India). Why those countries? An overview of the context of the digital world in the US and in Asia showed the importance of researching the characteristics and main features of a mature market (the US) vs. a few emerging markets in Asia, mostly China, Korea and India.

Our research focuses on wine blogs and digital writing through a corpus of about 450 blogs selected and evaluated by our 45 students from various European countries, the US, Australia, Korea, mainland China and India. We worked very closely with our students who are important contributors to the project.

Our methodology is based on two steps:

- Evaluating several critical points: design, topics, links to social media, monetization, audience, influence, among others;
- Collecting information on a corpus of American and Asian blogs.

The evaluation chart will be presented in detail since it will lead to a classification of the blogs to determine which ones are the most affluent and strategic to the wine industry.

Our research is still a work in progress as we will continue the work on several years. Its objectives are to give a good image of digital writing through blogs as of now in 2011 in the wine industry, to see over the next five years how it is evolving in mature and emerging markets and to give recognition to a new form of communications helping the wine industry to reach new markets through new influencers and trendsetters.

As far as today, we have a corpus of about 300 American blogs and 100 Asian blogs. This study will allow us to evaluate which digital wine writers are the most affluent and important as well as how they can affect the international wine industry.