

Typography and colour: A comparative analysis of the free and paid-for newspapers in Spain

Jesús del Olmo-Barbero [[CV](#)] [[iD](#)] [[G](#)] Associate Profesor at the Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC), Madrid / jesus.delolmo@urjc.es

Sonia Parratt-Fernández [[CV](#)] [[iD](#)] [[G](#)] Full Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM) / sfparratt@ccinf.ucm.es

Abstract: This article examines the design of free newspapers in Spain, with special emphasis on their format, typography and colour. In order to establish the main features of the design of the free press, we compare it with the paid-for newspapers. The method of analysis is a comparative quantitative analysis based on case studies. The sample of analysis comprises eight Spanish newspapers: the four most-circulated free newspapers (*Qué!*, *20 Minutos*, *Metro Directo*, and *Adn*), and the four highest-selling newspapers (*El Mundo*, *El País*, *Abc*, and *La Vanguardia*). This work is part of a larger research project that examines the model of the free press by taking into account the publishers, the papers, and the audience. This article presents the results related to the design of the papers. The analysis shows that there are obvious similarities between the free and paid-for newspapers, but also very subtle differences in the treatment of typography and colour.

Keywords: Free newspapers; journalism; design; typography; colour; print media.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Method. 2.1. Methodological strategies. 2.2. Population and sample. 2.3. Data collection instruments. 2.4 Procedure. 3. Results. 3.1. The format. 3.2. Masthead type. 3.3. Front page heading. 3.4. Inside headings. 3.5. Body text. 3.6. Sub-headings. 3.7. Headings for support information. 3.8. Body text of support information. 3.9. Photo caption. 3.10. Typography graphics and tables. 3.11. Colour. 4. Discussion and conclusions. 5. Bibliographic References. 6. Notes.

Translation by **Cruz Alberto Martínez-Arcos, M.A.** (University of London)

1. Introduction

The research project of which this article is part studies the phenomenon of free newspapers in Spain (concept, history, typology, characteristics and social function) from a triple perspective: the publishers (impact on the traditional media companies and attraction of advertisers), the

papers (design and content, information treatment, quality strategies), and the audience (uses, gratifications, needs, potential capacity to interact with this medium, and socio-political effects).

Despite its situation has changed dramatically in the past two years because of the lack of publicity caused by the current economic crisis, the rapid evolution of the free daily press in Spain and the recognition, from different sectors, of its economic, informational and social implications are the main reasons study the design of the free daily press in Spain.

Why have the free papers succeeded so quickly? From the point of view of their design, one of the differential features observed in the free press is an optimization of the visual resources, with the objective of attracting the reader, and the use of a design that is fresher and less rigid than in the paid-for newspapers. These observations drove us to examine this area from the academic field. In this regard, we are interested in outlining how the visual resources are used to establish the differences between the two models. This is aimed to fulfil one of the main objectives of the research: to define the free press model from the point of view of the product.

In 2008, Professor Sabés already qualified the free newspapers as a new press model that was different from the paid-for papers in their low number of pages, the use of more colour, and certain dynamism in the treatment of the image.

“Based on the information presented so far it can be inferred that the free newspapers [...] have given birth to a new model of Spanish press, which is characterised, at the formal level, by a reduced number of pages in comparison with the paid-for press, a standard tabloid format, the introduction of colour in typographies and backgrounds and a greater dynamism in the treatment of the image, with abundant cuts and montages. [...] Infographics and drawings, in general, are scarce. Their front pages usually present a lot of headlines in comparison with the traditional press, which often contradict its objective of clarity and speed of reading” (Sabés, 2008a: 107).

The study of the new phenomenon of free newspapers is of considerable interest for the academia due to the impact they are having on the media industry, in the exercise of journalism, and in the relation of the press with readers.

Regarding the impact of free newspapers on the print media, the sales of general information paid-for newspapers are progressively decreasing to the benefit of a new type of press that is catching the interest of strategic social groups such as young people, women and immigrants. The free newspapers are, increasingly, characterised by a type of press that is of quick consumption, simple, with very local information, very useful, free of charge, and which provides readers the opportunity to participate in the creation of contents.

Second, the model of the free press involves new journalistic formats and designs, different content, new journalistic formulas (including the recovery of the so-called journalism of service) and the use of new technologies, which together have produced unforeseeable consequences such as the alleged devaluation of an information product that lacks in-depth analysis and is built with news from agencies.

Third, in regards to the audiences, this model raises new possibilities for users: the coverage of information and entertainment needs that are different from the ones covered by the traditional press and new interaction with the medium. In this sense, the free papers give a remarkable protagonist role to readers, who become reporters, and also offer new ways of expression thanks to technological advances.

The hypothesis of the aforementioned research project is as follows: the success of the free daily press model will be one of the toughest contemporary competitions for the paid-for daily press up to the point of questioning the existence of the traditional model; not in vain, in some cities, the free press is already a worthy competitor for the great paid-for-for newspapers as supplier of general information, especially among social sectors such as young people, immigrants and women.

This article tries to fulfil one of the various objectives of this wider research project: “to systematise the [formal] features of the information model of the free newspaper”, in order to respond two questions: (1) what are the specific formal elements used in this type of press for its presentation? And (2) what differences can be observed with regards to their paid-for-for counterparts?

Analyses focused on the design of the Spanish free press are scarce -González and Pérez (2007), Sabés (2008a), Pérez (2008) and Bakker (2004-2010)- in comparison to the many studies addressing this type of press from a general perspective, focused primarily on the product -initiated with Nieto (1984), and followed by Casero (2002), Blanco (2004), Lopez (2004), Arias (2005), Arroyo (2006), Vinyals (2007), Santos (2005 and 2008), and Tuñez (2009), among others. The latter group of research studies, as a whole, have contributed to the knowledge of the new medium, its characteristics and the various adaptation formulas of the news content to that format.

From the studies referring to the formal aspects, the work of González and Pérez is remarkable as it was one of the first to address the design of free newspapers in Spain from a broad perspective that analysed the design of what they call a “new information model” (González and Pérez 2007: 144). For its part, Sabés also analysed a number of formal elements -including typography and colour- of the free press of Barcelona, based on the examination of the “big four” dailies (*20 minutes*, *Metro*, *Qué* and *Adn*). The quantitative analysis presented by Sabés is

an obligatory reference in this research (2008: 94-97). These same formal aspects have also been analysed by Canga in the digital press (Canga, 2005: 71-78) and the Basque press (Canga, 2010: 61-70).

From a perspective that goes beyond the free press, an outstanding contribution is the work of Pérez Cuadrado on the use of colour on the *Abc* newspapers during the Spanish Civil War and the description of the technologies that made it possible. His hemerographic review covers from 1936 to 1939 (Pérez, 2008: 176).

At the international level, there is a large volume and space dedicated to the Spanish free press, which includes the website of the Dutch Professor Piet Bakker (www.newspaperinnovation.com), which continuously publishes information about new design and/or content innovations in the European free press.

2. Method

The method used in this part of the research consists of a comparative quantitative analysis of the format, typography and colour, which are the three basic formal elements that define the design in the free and paid-for newspapers. Statistical data obtained with this type of analysis are used to support the results of this research with rigour.

2.1. Methodological strategies

From the possible methodological strategies, we decided to conduct a descriptive investigation in order to outline the characteristics of the format, typography and colour in free newspapers in comparison to paid-for papers, through a case study methodology.

The research addresses three issues. First, it tries to establish the format differences between the two types of press. At first sight, these differences seem insignificant in the case of Spain, where all free and paid-for papers use similar formats –something that differentiates Spain from other European countries where the free papers are edited in a small format. Secondly, it tries to outline the typographic elements involved in the design, their size and position. And finally, the research tries to establish how and where colour is used, to what extent, and in what tones.

Because this subject is new and insufficiently studied, and there are no tested models for this type of research, we created two models of analysis specifically to collect information about, firstly, the papers' format and typography and, secondly, about their use of colour. For the first analysis we designed a model of specific typographic code that was processed with a programme for quantitative analysis -SPSS, which is standard in this type of analysis. For the second analysis, the process was similar but used a more extensive code that collects

information about the textual elements, graphs (photography, infographics and drawings), and advertising. The creation of both models of analysis is based on previous literature review carried out to develop the project, as well as on the professional experience of the members of the research group. The results are intended to serve as a reference to the aforementioned wider research project and future studies.

2.2. Population and sample

For this research we selected the four main free Spanish newspapers according to their level of national circulation and relevance (level of penetration and influence on public opinion), and the four major paid-for newspapers with the highest level of dissemination and relevance. The free newspapers analysed were *Qué!*, *20 Minutos*, *Metro Directo* (now defunct) and *Adn*. The paid-for papers were *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, and *Abc*. We considered the sample to be representative of the totality of the press in Spain in each of its sectors.

The sample used for the exploratory study of colour includes the copies published from 3 to 7 March and 7 to 11 April, 2008. These are copies published on weekdays because the free dailies are not published during the weekend. In total, the analysis included a sample of 40 copies: 20 of free papers and 20 of paid-for papers.

For the analysis of the format and typography we only examined one copy of each of the selected newspapers because the data we wanted to get does not vary from one day to another in any case. We selected the eight copies, one from each newspaper, published on Thursday, 10 April, 2008.

All the copies of the free papers correspond to the Madrid edition. Three of the selected paid-for papers are also published in Madrid (*El País*, *El Mundo* and *Abc*). The edition of the fourth paid-for newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, is from Barcelona and its inclusion in this sample has been motivated by its position as the third highest selling newspaper in Spain.

2.3. Data collection instruments

A form was specifically developed to collect data from the papers. It is composed of 36 items (149 if we include those repeatedly applied to the different sections) that collect from identification data (number, date, place of printing, editor, etc.) to the most specific data about the space dedicated to photography, infographics, colour, drawings, text, advertising, web references, and each of the sections. From this form we extracted the data about format and colour, which are the elements of analysis in this research.

The form chosen for the typographical analysis was already used by del Olmo (one of the authors of this article) and presented in 2008 in the framework of the 3rd International Congress of Typography held in Valencia [2]. This analysis tool included some of the items proposed by Cabrera (1999: 290) in his doctoral thesis on the design of online media. The form was revised with the latest research work on typographical elements: the analysis model used by Núñez-Romero (2009, 2010), which in turn arose from the morphological analysis of Kayser (1974), and the model used by Canga for the study of the online press (Canga Larequi et al., 2010).

The review of such items and the eventual choice of some of them, in order to adapt them to the printed press, was complemented with some new items of qualitative (font used) and quantitative (size, classification, alignment) character. The resulting analysis card summarises the data from the following typographical elements: (1) typography of the masthead, and (2) typography used in the front page headlines, the headings on the inside pages, kickers and sub-headings, summaries, summary leads, the body text, the heading and text of the supporting information sections, captions and, finally, the fonts used in tables, graphics and infographics.

2.4. Procedure

In the data collection, the design of the data collection form and the typographic card went through several tests before their application to the object of study of this research. In the first case, the first version of the data collection form was reviewed to detect errors of interpretation from the various encoders and the members of the research team specialised in this area. It was necessary to make some adjustments in relation to the thematic areas of the journalistic units because the variety of sections did not coincide in most of the newspapers.

The typographical card had already been tested in a previous work and no significant adjustments were needed. It was first applied to the daily *Qué!* and since the results were as expected, the typographical card as applied to the rest of the sampled newspapers.

The analysis of the data was performed with computer applications. For the coding of the newspapers we used SPSS, a standard in quantitative research. The data collected in the typographical card, because of their simplicity in terms of treatment, were processed with SPSS but subsequently exported to Excel.

3. Results

The results are presented in sections and include three categories: (1) a comparative analysis of the free newspapers, (2) a comparative analysis of the paid-for newspapers, and (3) a comparative analysis of both groups. This organization of results allows us to position each paper within its group and each group against its competition.

This kind of comparative analysis will help us discover the common and differential elements, and to fulfil one of the objectives of this research: to define the model of the daily free press from the formal point of view.

3.1. The format

Table 1. Format and grid

Free	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
Size (in mm)	288 x 392. Tabloid	288 x 403. Tabloid	290 x 390. Tabloid	290 x 370. Tabloid
Nº columns in grid	6	6	6	6
Paid-for	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
Size (in mm)	260 x 350. Pocket	289 x 410 Tabloid	289 x 400 Tabloid	289 x 410 Tabloid
Nº columns in grid	5	5	5	5

1. Among the free papers, the chosen format is tabloid of six columns in all cases (*Qué!* has reduced its size recently [3]). In this aspect, the Spanish case differs markedly from the trend followed in the rest of Europe, where the free dailies mostly maintain a format similar to the A4 with four or five columns (in its various European editions, *Metro Directo* and *20 Minutos* are published in A4 format). The reason is that the free papers, as a whole, are printed on rented web presses and, in Spain, the tabloid is a generalised format in all the press types. Choosing a different format would increase the production costs.

2. The paid-for newspapers, after the emergence of *El País* in 1976 in five-column tabloid format, have adopted this size to the point that now the tabloid is considered a serious press format. *La Vanguardia* used the Berliner format until 2007, but switched to tabloid in its last redesign [4]. *Abc* maintains its characteristic pocket format (known in Spain as *mini*) and its staple, two elements that keep loyal a large number of readers.

3. Between the two models, we do not perceive significant differences and thus we could talk of certain mimicry among the free papers in order to reach the quality level of the paid-for dailies, which has led many free papers' readers to claim that "they are the same" and to ignore the huge differences in content between these two groups. The number of columns in their grids, five in the paid-for papers and six in the free papers, marks the difference between the two groups. Locked up in a similar format, a larger number of columns makes possible to provide more information when the number of pages is reduced.

3.2. Masthead types

Table 2. Typography in masthead

FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i> [5]	Giza Bold <i>Slab-serif</i>	Unidentified <i>Sans Serif</i>	LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) bold <i>Decorative epoch</i>	Unidentified <i>Sans Serif</i>
Graphic resources	Red font	Negative font over green panel	Negative font over blue panel	
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Unidentified <i>Modern Serif</i>	Clarendon bold <i>Slab-serif</i>	Valencia extra bold <i>Modern Serif</i>	Mercury bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>
Graphic resources	Exposed shadow	Blue accent	Green Icon	Negative over blue panel

1. In the free papers the mastheads are designed in lower case letters, with varied typographic elections: Sans Serif in *Metro* and *Adn*, Slab-serif in *Qué!* and a Display typeface in *20 Minutos*; and a significant presence of colour (blue, green and red), which are characteristics that define them as modern. The use of the lower case letters deliberately seeks a rapprochement between sender and receiver; and the use of colour, either as background or support for the typeface, aims to transmit an image of modernity. When it comes to locate the masthead within the front page, the free newspapers choose to position it at the entrance of the page, in the majority of cases in the upper left corner, a trend that can be also observed in the Spanish sports newspapers and a large number of magazines.

2. On the other hand, paid-for papers use classic mastheads in capital letters, with heavy Serif typefaces, black over white backgrounds (the exception is *La Vanguardia*, which designed the masthead in white over a blue background), and some elegant detail in colour, which are characteristics that give them an image of quality. Regarding location and size, the mastheads gain space and occupy the whole width of the front page, becoming an authentic brand, a sample of the importance of the masthead with respect to the other elements on the front page of the publication.

3. In the masthead design, the differences between the two groups are significant: mastheads are modern in the free papers and classic in the paid-for papers. The use of colour in the masthead also differs markedly: it is abundant in the first case and scarce in the second, which reinforces an image of more sensationalism and more seriousness, respectively.

3.3. Front page headlines

Table 3. Typographic features of the front page headlines				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Interstate cond. black/bold. UC* <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Metro Corpid heavy/light <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Poynter bold condensed <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Benton Modern bold <i>Modern Serif</i>
Headline size**	89 36 18***	58 40 19	47 40 10	73 22 13
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Blue
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources	Negative text over red panel		Blue Headlines	Negative headline over red panel
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	LeMondeJournal bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Majerit bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>	(1) Helvetica condensed (2) Century condensed (1) <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i> (2) <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Mercury bold/italic <i>Transitional Serif</i>
Headline size**	40 28 18	40 28 18	38 27 12	64 42 22
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources				

*UC = Uppercase. ** In Didot points. *** Small, medium and large sizes.

1. The free newspapers mostly use Sans Serif fonts, with the exception of *Adn*, which opts for a Modern Serif font with certain elegance. The size of the front page headlines is considerable and, in some cases, exaggerated, more characteristic of tabloid newspapers than the serious press. In these papers it is common to find the headlines are aligned to the left, in all cases, and are composed with a tight tracking [6] –which allows including a greater number of words in

the small column space. However, to draw more attention to their headlines, they use profusely all kinds of graphic and typographic resources: negatives, coloured typography and coloured lines among others.

2. In the case of paid-for papers, their front page headlines are governed by strict rules that mark the tradition, the style book, and their design departments. The size is moderate and hierarchies are very rigid; the differences between the large, medium and small sizes are very balanced, in order to mark hierarchies between news items without exaggerating their value. The font choice, a transitional Serif, is similar. In the case of *El mundo* this choice is alternated with a headline in Sans Serif typeface. Headlines are aligned to the left in all cases, with tight tracking, and apart from composing the headline in black over a white background no other type of resource is used.

3. In the typography of the front pages we find significant differences in the font size, style, and colour. Most free papers present their main headline in Sans Serif typography -only *Adn* opts for the Serif font- and in much larger size (from 47 to 89 points) than paid-for newspapers (from 38 to 64 points), which use classic Serif typefaces in all cases. The use of the largest font size in the main headline and the use of Sans Serif typefaces transmit certain sensationalism to the free papers, in comparison to the sobriety of the Serif typeface and the moderate size used by the paid-for newspapers.

3.4. Headings on inside pages

Table 4. Typographic features of headings on inside pages				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Interstate condensed black/bold/light. UC* <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Metro Corpid heavy/light. <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Poynter bold condensed <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Benton Modern regular and bold <i>Modern Serif</i>
Headline size**	60 50 10***	70 30 14	42 22 10	80 42 22
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track	Tight	Tight		Tight
Typographical resources	Coloured words			Code Colour
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	LeMondeJournal demi <i>Transitional Serif</i>	(1) Majerit bold/reg. (2) Freight sans bold (1) <i>Transitional Serif</i> (2) <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	(1) Helvetica condensed (2) Century condensed (1) <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i> (2) <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Mercury roman/bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>
Headline size**	40 28 14	44 28 18	33 28 18	62 42 16
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources				

*UC = Uppercase. ** In Didot points. *** Small, medium and large sizes.

1. In the free newspapers the headlines on the inside pages maintain the hierarchical pattern of the front page, but with greater moderation in sizes. Here the differences between the largest and smallest headlines are shorter and the sizes of the headlines are reduced up to one column

of 10-points body text. The reduced number of pages, which is usually offered by the free papers, demands a greater use of space. The font choice is similar to the one in the front page: Sans Serif fonts in the majority of cases, with the exception of *Adn*, which continues to use the same font of its front page: Modern Serif. The colour, as a typographic resource in the headlines, is used as a navigation code with an excellent result in *Adn*, and a good result in *Qué!*

2. Paid-for newspapers also follow the trend marked on their front pages in terms of typographic choice and hierarchy. Moderate sizes, tiered hierarchies and lack of colour in the headings. Differences between the largest and smallest headings continue to be moderate. For headings of general information, most papers go for transitional Serif typefaces of certain weight, usually in black; sometimes alternated with series such as italics, in the case of *La Vanguardia*, or regular, as in the life & arts section of *El País*. Headlines in Sans Serif typefaces are not common and are used only to highlight the most relevant information in a page, as in the case of *El Mundo*, or in certain sections, like sports in *El País*.

3. The use of larger headings in Sans Serif typefaces and much more pronounced hierarchies confirm that the free newspapers prefer a much more sensationalist design than the paid-for papers do. In free newspapers, the news headings on inside pages are composed mostly with Sans Serif fonts, in both grotesque and neo-grotesque styles, which is very similar to the typography used to design the headlines in the front pages. The size of the headlines is also larger in the free papers (between 42 and 80 points) than in the paid-for papers (between 33 and 62 points). In the latter group, the design of the inside pages follows a very orderly hierarchical model where a larger headline prevails above all others. These differences in size among the headlines are much more pronounced in the free papers than in the paid-for papers. Among the largest and smallest headlines there is a difference of 47 points in the former group and of only 28 in the latter.

3.5. Body text

FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Nimrod regular <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Metro Swift regular <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Utopia regular <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Benton Modern reg. <i>Modern Serif</i>
Text size (in Didot points)	8,5/10,5*	9/10	9/9,5	9,6/10,5
Alignment	Justified	Justified / Left	Justified	Justified
Track		Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources		Colour background in leisure section		Colour according to code
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Charter roman reg. <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Majerit Roman light <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Imperial light <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Mercury Roman <i>Transitional Serif</i>
Text size (in Didot points)	9,5/9,8	8,8/10,5	8,5/10	10/10,5
Alignment	Justified	Justified	Justified	Justified / Left
Track			Tight	
Typographical resources				

* Text size and line-spacing.

1. Free newspapers use Serif typography for the body text. They are recently designed fonts (Nimrod, Swift, Utopia and Benton) with classical inspiration. Their size is very similar (from 8.5 to 9.6) but somewhat bulky if we take into account that the width of the six columns in their grid is rather limited. The justified alignment and tight tracking of the body text are common in most papers. Both resources result in an optimal use of space by increasing the number of words per line. The use of coloured backgrounds following a colour code is a resource that gives modernity to the *Adn* newspaper. The texts are composed with a line-spacing of between 0.5 and 2 points.

2. The font used in the body text of the paid-for papers is also of classic design, like Charter, Imperial, Mercuri and Majerit. The size of the body text is small, between 8.5 and 10 points. The alignment is always justified and respects the original tracking in the majority of cases; only *El Mundo* dares to use tight tracking sometimes. As a whole, the typographical treatment in this type of press is aimed to achieve visual comfort and legibility. The body text is composed with a line-spacing of between 0.3 and 1.7 points.

3. The typographic treatment of the body text is very similar in both groups, and only slight differences were observed. If we take into account that the width of the column is smaller in the free papers which are designed on a grid of six columns, against the five columns of the paid-for papers, we can say that, proportionally to their width, the text size is relatively larger in the free papers, which regularly use a tight tracking to include more text in a generally small space and, finally, that the free papers' uses colour in ways that, for now, appear to be banned by the paid-for papers. The line-spacing of text is greater in the free papers, which have narrower columns and need to take advantage of the horizontal space by tightening the track, but also need to increase the line-spacing to balance the composition.

3.6. Side-heads

Table 6. Typographic features of side-heads				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Does not have them	Does not have them	Poynter bold condensed <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Dinot black <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>
Text size (in Didot points)			9	8
Alignment			Left	Left
Track			Tight	Tight
Typographical resources				Capital letters
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Poynter gothic <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Majerit bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>	Madison bold <i>Transitional Serif</i>	TazBarcelona extrabold <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>
Text size (in Didot points)	10,5	10,5	11	10
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left, indented
Track				Loose
Typographical resources				Quotation marks

1. Half of the free newspapers have opted to remove side-heads. With general texts as short as the ones often included, it makes no sense to ease their reading even further. However, *20 Minutos* and *Adn* include side-heads in long news stories, in a size similar to the body text but with certain typographical distinction of high contrast: Sans Serif typography, in bold, capital letters, and colour in some cases.

2. In spite of the general tendency of suppressing side-heads in the recent redesigns, the paid-for newspapers offer longer texts, which are usually divided into several blocks in order to reduce their heaviness and make them more attractive. In these cases, side-heads are larger than the body of text, of heavier typography, generally bold or extra bold, and (in cases such as *La Vanguardia*) are integrated in the body text. While some papers like *Abc* and *La Vanguardia* opt for a typographic differentiation with Sans Serif types, other papers like *El País* and *El Mundo* simply resort to using bold fonts in the body text.

3. In the case of the free papers, side-heads have a great typographic contrast that puts them to the same level of heading elements. In these cases, side-heads are used to fragment the information by offering several entries. In the case of the paid-for papers, side-heads show a discreet contrast with the text, behave as elements of navigation through the news story that contributes to a comfortable reading, and at the same time, serve as a reference to the content of the information. In the latter case, the typographical treatment is far more austere in free newspapers, in which the colour or the typography in negative coloured spaces is common.

3.7. Headings in supporting information sections

Table 7. Typographic features of headings in supporting information sections				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Interstate black Neo-grotesque Sans Serif	Metro Corpid heavy Grotesque Sans Serif	Poynter condensed Grotesque Sans Serif	Dinot black Neo-grotesque Sans Serif
Heading size (in Didot points)	10	13	16	16
Alignment	Left	Left	Centred	Left
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources	Negative text over coloured (code) panel	Negative heading on blue panel		Code Colour background
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Poynter Gothic black condensed Neo-grotesque Sans Serif	Freight sans bold Neo-grotesque Sans Serif	Century condensed bold Transitional Serif	Mercury semibold Transitional Serif
Heading size (in Didot points)	15	14	24	15
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track			Negative	Negative
Typographical resources				

1. In the free newspapers, news items, despite his usual reduced size, are presented in many parts, with one, two and even three supporting information sections. In these cases, the headings of these supporting information sections are composed with Sans Serif fonts (just like in their main headlines) in a small size of between 10 and 16 points, aligned to the left in 75% of cases

and centred on the remaining 25%. In an attempt to include longer headings in the reduced space, the headings in these sections are composed using tight tracking, like in the headlines. Typographic resources associated with colour are common, and range from negatives or backgrounds associated to the colour code, to the use of the same coloured background in all the supporting information sections or blue typography as in the case of *Metro Directo*.

2. On the paid-for papers, the headings of the supporting information sections are composed with both Sans Serif and Serif typefaces (each is used 50% of the times). Their size ranges from 14 in the case of *El País*, to 24 as in the case of *El Mundo*. In relation to the size of their body texts -from 8.8 to 10-, the size of these headings is enough to clearly mark the typographical distinction between heading and body text without having to resort to other types of design resources.

3. The treatment of the headings of the supporting information sections varies between the two types of press. In the free papers, the small size of the headings demands the use of other design resources to achieve the necessary typographic differentiation between heading and body text. In this case, colour is the most commonly used resource for the background, the typography and both. In the paid-for papers, the treatment of these elements is much more sober (black text on white), and continues the trend of moderation that we already mentioned.

3.8. Body text of the supporting information sections

Table 8. Typographic features of body text in supporting information sections				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
DIN 16518 Classification	Interstate light Neo-grotesque Sans Serif	Metro Corpid heavy Grotesque Sans Serif	Poynter bold condensed Grotesque Sans Serif	Dinot medium Neo-grotesque Sans Serif
Text size (in Didot points)	9/10,5*	8/10	8/9,5	9,2/10
Alignment	Left	Left	Justified	Left
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
Typographical resources		Sometimes, colour (code) background		Bullets
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
DIN 16518 Classification	Charter roman reg. Transitional Serif	Freight sans bold Neo-grotesque Sans Serif	Imperial light Transitional Serif	Mercury roman Transitional Serif
Text size (in Didot points)	9,5/9,8	8,8/10,5	8,5/10	10/10,5
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track	Tight		Tight	
Typographical resources		Fixed colour background		

* Text size and line-spacing

1. In order to break the monotony and give life to the design, 75% of the free papers use a second font to compose the text of the supporting information sections. The remaining 25%, which corresponds to *Metro*, breaks that monotony by using an extra bold typography in the body text. In all cases, the typographic contrast is achieved, and this is added to a more informal composition style with left alignment, which notably makes more enjoyable the page layout.

The composition size is similar to the general text: small sizes with an increase of line-spacing between 0.8 and 2 points.

2. The typographical austerity of the paid-for papers also extends to the fonts used in the body text of the supporting information sections. Most of them use the same typography for all the body text of the newspaper and the variation is the style of composition from justified to left alignment. This achieves a minimum, although enough, typographical distinction. The left alignment of the text, and the resulting right *drapeau*, injects a few additional elements that lighten up the composition. *El País*, apart from composing the supporting information sections with left alignment, opts for using a second typography, the Freight, which manages to typographically unify the heading and body text in these sections. The increase in the line-spacing varies from 0.3 points on *Abc* to the additional 1.7 points in *El País*.

3. The greater typographic differentiation and the greater line-spacing mark the difference between the way the free and paid-for newspapers compose the supporting information sections. However, although this is a minimal formal difference, it confirms the widespread trend of the free papers towards a more enjoyable, and therefore less sober and less credible, presentations of information.

3.9. Captions

Table 9. Typographic features of captions				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Interstate light	<i>Metro Corpid</i> bold	Poynter bold/regular comp. <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Dinot medium
Size (in Didot points)	8	8	8	9,2
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track	Tight	Tight	Tight	Tight
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	PoynterGothic regular condensed <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Freight sans bold <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Interstate condensed bold <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Mercury roman <i>Transitional Serif</i>
Size (in Didot points)	9,5	8,5	9	10 y 11,5
Alignment	Left	Left	Left	Left
Track				Tight

1. Together with the heading and photography elements, the caption is an element that helps readers interpret what they are watching, is part of the first reading of the paper. Therefore, as element of attraction towards the information and reading entrance, it is necessary to take special care of its content and design. The free papers tend to use their second typography for this purpose, with an average weight, bold in the majority of cases. Interestingly, *Qué!* uses the *light* series of its second typography, the Interstate, for this purpose, which is an unusual weight, and for captions in the front page it sometimes uses the bold series. In the free papers, the typography is always Sans Serif and the composition size is smaller than the body text of the publication, a difference that ranges from -0.4 to -1 point.

2. In the paid-for papers, the second typography is also used mainly for captions. Only *La Vanguardia* prefers using the bold series of its main font for this purpose. In all cases, due to the typographic contrast achieved by changing the font or its weight, captions are clearly differentiated from the general text. Their composition size is equal to or greater than the general text, with a positive difference of up to 1.5 points in the case of *La Vanguardia*, a newspaper that also uses two sizes in the captions, the smallest for short captions and the largest for the long captions.

3. Following the aforementioned trend of maximum use of space, the free papers design their captions in a smaller size than their general text and with tight tracking, which is a trend that is inverted in the paid-for papers. In this case, should we consider captions as design elements that are shared by both types of press? The answer must be yes, when we are dealing with the typographic variety detected in both groups, and not when taking into account that the size is reduced in the free papers and increased in the paid-for papers. The value conferred to captions in the two press types is different: lesser in the free papers and greater in the paid-for papers.

3.10 Typography of graphs and tables

Table 10. Typographic features of text included in graphs and tables				
GRATUITOS	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	Interstate heavy <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	<i>Metro Corpid</i> heavy <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Poynter reg. comp. <i>Grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Dinotmedium <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>
Size (in Didot points)	8/9	6,5	6	8
DE PAGO	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
<i>DIN 16518 Classification</i>	PoynterGothic light condensed <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Freight sans medium <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	Swiss light <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>	TazBarcelona extrabold <i>Neo-grotesque Sans Serif</i>
Size (in Didot points)	9.5	8	8	8

1. We grouped the data about graphs and tables because these two elements tend to use the same fonts and size. All free and paid-for papers use Sans Serif fonts. In order to take advantage of the reduced space the free papers use a small font sizes, between 6 and 8, and when the font family allows it, as in the case of *20 Minutos*, a condensed type is chosen. In comparison to the size of the general text in the free papers, the text included in graphs and tables is reduced from -0.5 points (in the case of *Qué!*) to -3 points (in the case of *20 Minutos*).

2. In paid-for papers, the font size of the tables and graphs, although small, is larger than in the free papers. When compared with the general text, the typography varies from Serif to San Serif and its size is reduced between -0.5 points (in *El mundo*) and -2 (in *La Vanguardia*).

3. Regarding these two elements, we observed more similarities than differences. Both models use bold Sans Serif fonts, choose condensed types when available, and reduce the size by 1 or 1.5 points to balance the design. In this type of elements, the size of the text is reduced as much

as the readability allows it because the credibility of its content is inversely proportional to its size.

3.11. Colour

Table 11. Use of colour				
FREE	Qué!	Metro directo	20 Minutos	ADN
% of pages printed in colour	100%	100%	100%	100%
Colour as signalling element	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in photographs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in infographics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in drawings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in typography	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in background information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominant colour (masthead)	Red	Green	Blue	
C. dominant (interior)	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
PAID-FOR	Abc	El País	El Mundo	La Vanguardia
% of pages printed in colour	Between 75% and 99%	Between 75% and 99 %	Between 75% and 99 %	Between 75% and 99 %
Colour as signalling element	Not	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in photographs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in infographics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in drawings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in typography	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in background information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colour in advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominant colour (masthead)	Red	Blue	Green	Blue
C. dominant (interior)		Blue		Blue

1. Free newspapers have used colour since their birth. 100% of their pages are printed in four colours. Because their number of page does not usually exceed 32, even the smallest newspapers are able to print each edition in a single run. With this reduced number of pages, the cost of colour printing versus black and white hardly varies because either the whole signature is printed in colour or not. In their design, colour is used extensively in several elements. In some cases it serves to increase the informative quality of photographs, infographics and drawings; in other cases, like with typography, the use of colour can compromise the elegance and credibility of the medium. The use of colour as navigation code had an excellent result in *Adn*. The use of a dominant colour in their mastheads serves to reinforce the identification of each medium: the elegant black and white of *DNA*, the blue of *20 Minutos*, the red of *Qué!*, and the green of *Metro*. In their interior, although blue predominates in typography and backgrounds, we can find a variety of colours such as orange, green, red, or bordeaux.

2. Paid-for newspapers have a large number of pages and do not have colour in all them. This is because it is believed that applying colour devalues the information in many cases or due to technical reasons because each edition must be printed in several web presses. The number of colour pages ranges between 75% and 99%. In the analysed models, the differences are minimal: *Abc* does not use colour in signalling elements of the sections and subsections; like in the free papers, the dominant colour of each newspaper is also an element of identification. And in the inside pages, the dominant colour is blue, a serious, credible and elegant colour.

3. The widespread belief that one of the unique characteristics of the free press, in comparison to the paid-for press, is the greater use of colour does not appear to be confirmed because the levels and colours used are very similar in both groups, which only exhibit minor differences. The free press prints almost 100% of their pages in colour (in 90% of the analysed papers all pages were printed in colour and in the remaining 10%, between 75% and 99% were). On the other hand, the paid-for papers never print all of their pages in colour, only between 75% and 99%. In absolute values, over the total number of pages printed in colour, we can affirm that paid-for newspapers print more pages in colour, since they have three times more pages than the free papers. The pallets are reduced in both types of press. They do not contain more than four or five tones, and there are not significant differences in terms of the application of colour to infographics, graphs, photographs, navigation elements or advertising.

The biggest differences were found in the application of colour in headlines and text, which was an almost exclusive use by the free newspapers (table 4). Colouring one or several words of the headline or using negatives over colour panels is usual in the free papers, which also used it as a colour code in order to clearly reinforce the navigation through their sections. The biggest difference we observed between the two models is the way colour is used. Applying small spots of colour throughout the entire page, as the free papers do, and extending the use of colour to the typography to make it more attractive for the casual readers, not only saturates the design, but becomes an element that undermines the papers' credibility.

4. Discussion and conclusions

At first glance, if we take as reference only quantitative data, the differences between the two press models seem insufficient to categorically sustain the claim that from the formal point of view the free and the paid-for press models are very different. However, if the small quantitative differences are supplemented by qualitative observations, one could argue that their formal differences are remarkable in the area of typography and colour, and that as a consequence, they are two different formal models, despite having similarities.

The chosen format is tabloid in all cases, both in the free and paid-for papers -with the exception of the smaller size of *Abc*. The election of a similar format in both groups confirms the lack of formal differences in this aspect, as if the only difference between the free and paid-for newspapers is the price. This strategy optimises the printing process which is performed in rented web presses by the local and regional paid-for newspapers and translates into reduced printing costs and a prompt distribution. In the model of the free papers, the choice of this format is unique and is only found in Spain and, to a lesser extent, in Portugal. In other European countries, the free press is published in small format (similar to A4 size); while the paid-for papers are printed in tabloid or Berliner format. The fact that Spain and Portugal edit

free papers in tabloid format is an exception because there is an increasing number of free newspapers that are distinguished from the paid-for counterparts by their mini-format.

By choosing a tabloid format, the free papers repeated conversely a strategy that worked with success in 1976 when *El País* elected an eminently popular format, reserved for sports and sensationalist newspapers, which broke the hitherto necessary relationship between content and form. However, the experiment worked, the format served to reach the popular classes and the success of the Spanish tabloid was such that it encouraged the conversion of some major European newspapers to the format -*The Times* in 2004 and *The guardian* in 2005. The Spanish case was discussed in communication faculties as a *rara avis* in the panorama of the serious press (Canga, 1994: 58). Now, the strategy of the free papers has been similar as they opted for the formats of the serious press, which provides two advantages that we have already mentioned throughout this article: (1) a greater appreciation of their contents because they mimic the serious press, and (2) cost savings in printing because they use the same web presses.

However, the selection of this format has not prevented some problems. The free press was forced to adapt the necessarily short news to a format designed for larger news stories. Although the two press models share a similar container, the free model needed a profound adaptation: a grid of six columns, a continuous typographic contrast and a generous use of colour as essential ingredients to “cook” their information.

If we ignore the fonts used to compose the general text, which is very similar in both models, the treatment of typography tends towards the tight tracking of words in the free papers. The tight tracking is so much sometimes that it compromises readability. With the exception of *Adn*, which uses Serif typefaces in its headlines, the rest of the free papers mostly use bold Sans Serif fonts in all headline elements, side-heads, captions, graphics and tables. This ensures a good level of visibility and a marked contrast between the various elements, even if this reduces the visual comfort. Although short, the text composed with Sans Serif fonts is much heavier than text composed with Serif fonts or a correct tracking.

The size of the font is very similar in both models, but the differences between the various elements are much more pronounced in the case of the free papers. The headlines are larger and deeper in the free papers [7]. On the formal aspect, in the majority of the newspapers the “headlines” weigh more than the “body” of information, which produces certain aesthetic imbalance.

In both models, the use of colour is very similar from the quantitative point of view of the number of pages, but it presents significant qualitative differences in their application. The free newspapers continuously apply small amounts of colour throughout the entire page and extend its use to elements such as headlines, side-heads, supporting information headings, and any

other element that can be coloured. On the contrary, the paid-for papers are much more moderate in the use of colour, since its application beyond the graphic and navigation elements is considered to be negative.

Despite the main research hypothesis -the free press will be one of the toughest competitions for the paid-for newspapers, [...] up to the point of questioning their existence- could be questioned, because the panorama of the print media has changed drastically in recent years in parallel with the development of research, the objective of this analysis remains valid. Thus, by systematising the formal features of the information model of the free newspapers and comparing it with the paid-for print press model, one can see that the model of the free papers has indeed tried to compete with the paid-for model by copying its format. However, the analysis of the graphic and typographic elements of the free papers shows many differences that put them in different markets, and therefore indicates that the “competition” is not so “though”.

Finally, in addition to the research, we also got the impression that the free Spanish press, with short texts, high typographic contrast and rich colour, is halfway between the free European model and the Spanish general information paid-for newspaper. If the free press opted to reduce the size of its format, it would not only enhance the relationship between its content and form but could also increase the number of pages without increasing the costs and, thereby, would gain consistency, would increase the sense of value, and would increase the reading conform in public transport. A reduction of format would entail major changes in the design and particularly would make the free model more homogeneous. Reducing the number of news per page could moderate the typographic contrast and reduce the number of elements competing for attention, and would not decrease the entertainment value that characterises the free press. A pending task for the free Spanish newspapers is to become consolidated as a unique press model, and departs in format and design from the paid-for papers’ model.

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6. Notes

1. This article is sponsored by the research and development project entitled "El modelo actual de diarios gratuitos en España. Usos y gratificaciones percibidos por la audiencia" (The current model of free newspapers in Spain. Uses and gratifications perceived by the audience). This project is finance by Spain's National Research Programme, conducted by the Anima+d group (www.animasd.com), which is directed by María Rosa Berganza Conde.

2. The 3rd International Congress of Typography was held in Valencia in 2008 and its main term was “glocal” (the merging of global and local). The paper presented by the author was entitled “Globalización tipográfica en la prensa gratuita diaria de la Europa suroccidental” (Typographic globalization in the daily free press of south-west Europe), and included a data collection form that is similar to the one used in this research.

3. In order to print in *Abc*'s web presses, *Que!* newspaper change its size to match the format of the veteran paper for his edition of Madrid on 1 March, 2010.

4. In the redesign of 2 October, 2007, *La Vanguardia* reduced its berliner format from 310 x 455 mm to a tabloid format of 289 x 410 mm, which is a surface reduction of 8% per page (Sabés, 2008-2, 126).

5. Despite some authors like Martínez de Sousa (1999) prefer to speak of typological classifications rather than typographic classifications, the DIN 16518 classification, approved by International Typographical Association (www.atypi.org), establishes the following features for each of the font groups:

1. Serif: Are fonts with serifs and are divided into other five fundamental groups: old-style or garrald, transitional, modern or didones, Egyptian and glyptic.
2. Sans serif: Fonts without serifs, also called *Gothic (in the USA)*, and *grotesque (in Europe)*. They are divided into two groups: Grotesque and neo-grotesque.
3. Script: Reflect the hand or instrument that created them. There are three groups: calligraphic, gothic, and italics.
4. Decorative: They do not belong to any exact classification. We can distinguish two main groups: fantasy and epoch.

6. Tracking refers to the distance between letters in a composition. When the track is tight (negative), more words can be fitted in a line of text; when the track is loose (positive), the words get wider and take up more space without increasing their size. Tight tracking in headlines is common in all types of press.

7. The depth of the headlines refers to the number of lines. The greater number of lines, the greater the depth is. However, the established rule is that the number of lines that a headline must occupy is inversely proportional to the number of columns it occupies. A one-column headline can have a depth of six lines, but the depth of a five-column headline should not exceed one or two lines.

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