

The incidence of age and gender on social media usage habits in the journalism profession. The case of centennials and millennials

La incidencia de la edad y el género en los hábitos de uso de las redes sociales en la profesión periodística. El caso de Centennials y Millennials

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ABSTRACT

Social networks have influenced the way information is consumed, but also how journalism adapts to new audiences and new ways of accessing information. To find out how these social applications are used by the media, a questionnaire was prepared from a gender perspective, taking into account the structural inequality between men and women journalists. This survey was applied to media professionals in the Basque Country, differentiating between age groups, with special emphasis on the centennial and millennial generations. The four most used social networks in Spain in 2020 were analyzed, as well as other applications and multimedia resources. The results of the more than 500 surveys show that the use of social networks is fully established in newsrooms. We found no special generational biases in the use of the main social tools. Women journalists are the ones who mostly use social networks and the most used are Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to the detriment of

others such as Telegram, LinkedIn, or different audiovisual resources. Knowledge and trust are the main reasons for the primacy of some over others. We recommend the media to specify the strategy in social networks, train professionals, and get initiatives of multimedia and transmedia journalistic interest towards new social networks such as Tik Tok or Twitch.

KEYWORDS: journalists, gender, social networks, millennials, centennials.

RESUMEN

Las redes sociales han influido en la forma de consumir la información, pero también en la forma en la que el periodismo se adapta a nuevos públicos y a nuevas maneras de acceder a esa información. Para conocer cómo se utilizan estas aplicaciones sociales en los medios, se confeccionó un cuestionario, desde la perspectiva de género, teniendo en cuenta la desigualdad estructural entre hombres y mujeres periodistas. Este sondeo se aplicó a los profesionales de los medios de comunicación del País Vasco diferenciando entre grupos de edades, haciendo especial hincapié en las generaciones Centennials y Millennials. Se analizaron las cuatro redes sociales más utilizadas en España en 2020 además de otras aplicaciones y recursos multimedia. Los resultados de las más de 500 encuestas nos muestran un panorama donde el uso de las redes sociales está plenamente asentado en las redacciones. No encontramos especiales sesgos generacionales en el uso de las principales herramientas sociales. Las mujeres periodistas son las que emplean mayoritariamente las redes sociales y las más utilizadas son Twitter, Facebook e Instagram en detrimento de otras como Telegram, LinkedIn o diferentes recursos audiovisuales. El conocimiento y la confianza son las principales causas de la primacía de unas sobre otras. Recomendamos a los medios de comunicación especificar la estrategia en redes sociales, formar a los profesionales y conseguir iniciativas de interés periodístico multimedia y transmedia hacia nuevas redes sociales como Tik Tok o Twitch.

PALABRAS CLAVE: periodistas, género, redes sociales, Millennials, Centennials.

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Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

1. Introduction

More than twenty years have passed since, in 1998, the last study that analyzed the journalistic profession in Euskadi from the media was carried out. The results of that research yielded data where just over half of the surveyed professionals had an email at their job (54.2%) and 22.7% had it at home (Cantalapiedra et al., 2000)

In these years, there have been changes not only in the profession of journalism (Verón and Sabés, 2008; Domingo & Paterson, 2011; Hermida, 2013; López et al, 2017) but also in how the audience consumes information, which has developed new customs and has more means and different ways to receive it (Ortega et al, 2015; Jiménez et al., 2018; Crusafon et al., 2020).

All these modifications have meant that different generations of journalists have to coexist and share the uses of new apps and social tools (Crucianelli, 2013; Castañeda, 2019). Furthermore, a multitude

of research works reveals the impact of social networks as media where citizen participation is essential to disseminate journalistic content about important events (Campos Freire, 2008; Mendiguren et al, 2011; Sintés, 2012; Pérez Soler, 2017; Benaissa, 2018; Landeta et al., 2020) and where new participants have appeared, such as bots and audiovisual and streaming projects that are increasingly sophisticated. The leap from the media themselves to social networks has modified some aspects of the journalistic profession and has led to the need to continually adapt content to the different formats required by new media and, likewise, has favored the creation of new professional figures in the field of communication (Fuentes, 2012; Rodríguez Fernández, 2012; Meso et al, 2015; Ortega, 2017).

In the study that was cited at the beginning of this research, there was talk of a "male, young, with a degree in Information Sciences..." journalist (Cantalapiedra et al, 2000: 337). However, besides the digitization of the profession, the incorporation of women into this career is another of the most relevant events that have occurred in recent years (Rivero et al., 2015). The proportion of women journalists in the media has significantly increased in recent times (Ufarte, 2007). Since 2002 in Spain, "the percentage of female managers in general information newspapers and public and private television has increased exponentially" (Rivas de Roca, 2020: 88). Despite these encouraging data, the structural difference that exists between men and women in society (Menéndez, 2017; Gallego, 2019), is also manifested in the newsrooms of the media outlets. The systematic discrimination of women journalists operates at various levels (De Miguel et al., 2017) and the existence of differences and a glass ceiling for women as they advance up the professional ladder continues to be one of the consolidated barriers in the profession that should be extinguished (De Miguel et al., 2019).

As a consequence of this new situation, the need arises to carry out a more current study that covers a much broader vision and with a necessary gender perspective (Menéndez, 2007), of journalistic work. It is about exploring how this new facet of communication, dominated by the use of social networks, the recommendations of information companies on their use, and the benefits or risks Basque journalists perceive using them, affect the professionals of the Basque Country and, more specifically, men and women, centennials and millennials, journalists.

2. State of the art

The latest edition of the "Study on the use of social networks in Spain" prepared by The Social Media, highlights that, in 2020, 98% of the Spanish population between 16 and 65 years old uses social networks. This means that 29 million people use some of the most popular social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or the WhatsApp messaging network. This study places special emphasis on the use of various social networks according to gender. In this way, it is the female population that, by 51%, exceeds their general use. Instagram and Facebook are used mostly by women, 54%, while other networks such as Twitter or LinkedIn are mostly male, 64% and 53% respectively. Furthermore, it is highlighted that women participate and interact more in all the networks of which they are part and better tolerate advertising both on Facebook and on Instagram and Snapchat.

This widespread use of social apps leads to a change in media consumption (Cortés, 2016). Most of the direct visits to the website of the media in Spain come through these social networks and buying through these apps is increasingly a reality, after the launch of new stores on Facebook and Instagram, and other functions that are already developed for social networks such as TikTok, Twitch, and Pinterest.

These social tools have also revolutionized the way of practicing the profession and have led to changes in journalistic routines and in the creation and adaptation of new content to different formats with different characteristics (Rauchfleisch et al., 2017) and new content verification systems (Brandtzaeg et al., 2015). Another characteristic of these social spaces is speed, which has also brought dangers when preparing and sharing information (Bruno, 2011), and difficulties in delimiting the border between personal and professional identity (Caro, 2016; García Borrego et al., 2018).

Today, professional practice implies, above all, a reassessment of the essential principles of journalism, but also constant updating, training, and bringing up-to-date. Increasingly complex technical competencies are required (Tejedor and Cervi, 2017), which are essential for the development of this profession (Peñañiel, 2015). Furthermore, the ability to connect with the audience of the media outlet is also fundamental (Marta et al., 2020), and with an increasingly young public with whom it is necessary to know how to create communities of dialogue and understanding (Herrera and Requejo, 2015). All these new circumstances cannot be seen except as an opportunity for the deeper development of the aforementioned values (Sánchez de la Nieta, 2013, Fuente et al., 2017).

Herrero (2014) highlights as a turning point in the adaptation of the profession to this panorama, two key events such as the 11M and 15M social movements where social apps are consolidated and lead a new way of making and distributing information. The author points out the unclear communication strategies and the incipient state of the media orientations on their use by professionals.

Varona and Sánchez, for their part, also denounce journalists' underuse of many social networks such as Tuenti or LinkedIn in favor of other more used ones such as Twitter or Facebook. They highlight the ignorance of professionals and point out the need for training so that all the potentialities of social apps can be used in newsrooms (Varona, Sánchez, 2016).

On the other hand, Wu (2019) segregates American journalists by age and analyzes the professional uses of the networks. However, the age difference as a determinant of the distinction does not stand out so much, but rather the types of social networks that some groups and others prefer to use. While young journalists use Twitter, older professionals use Facebook and middle-aged journalists use Twitter and Facebook interchangeably. Wu highlights the new generational frontier of the 50s instead of the 30s, confirming that there is not much difference between the use of networks by young and middle-aged journalists. Significantly, the true inequality is between the use of these apps by journalists over 50 and young ones.

This distinction of generational groups is interesting considering that the promotional change that occurred in this decade has notably contributed to the increase in this generational gap. A gap that is already beginning to emerge as digital inequality within connected audiences in the digital world itself (Yamamoto et al., 2017). This is the transition from the millennial generation to the centennial. Moreover, the feminization of university studies in Journalism (De Miguel et al., 2019) and the need to join the work world, make female centennial and digital natives journalists fresh out of the faculties, join the media and share management and uses of the information. These journalists will have to deal with some of the major problems of the profession such as structural inequality, online harassment, and discrimination, as revealed in the latest reports presented by both the Madrid Press Association and the Platform in Defense of Freedom of Information in 2020. Hence, the inclusion of the gender variable in this research is essential.

On the other hand, the different conceptions of the term lead to define the centennial generation, also called generation Z (Dimock, 2019), iGen and Digital Natives (Prensky, 2001), Post Millennials or Centennial (Fundeu, 2018), as people that have been born from 1991 (Jain et al., 2014), from 1994 (Ortega and Vilanova, 2016), from 1995 (McCrindle, 2014 and Bencsik et al, 2016), from 1996 or 1997 (Duffet, 2017).

For the present study, the meaning of centennials will be taken as the one offered by McCrindle (2014) and Bencsik et al. (2016), and centennial journalists will be considered to be those born from 1995 to 2009. These are recently graduated young people who join the newsrooms of media outlets and who will have to share tasks and knowledge with journalists already established in their jobs, as are millennials.

This generation Z groups together people who were born with the development of the World Wide Web, with smartphones and tablets in their hands, and with massive use of social networks as a hallmark. In this way, they have more and more opportunities to participate in a multitude of cultural and social projects and to express their creativity. These great prospects also pose a challenge for this generation, who must know how to balance their real and "cybernetic" lives, as well as deal with the risk of technological addiction and other dangers related to privacy, harassment, and cybercrime (Ortega and Villanova, 2016).

The consideration of millennials also fluctuates from people born after 1977 (Kim et al., 2009), since 1980 (Bencsik et al., 2016), and even after 1981 and 1982 (Pendergast, 2010). For this study, millennials will be considered professionals born between 1977 and 1994.

This generation, for its part, has grown in parallel with the emergence of the internet and social networks. They browse fluently and use digital audio and video players daily; they use the digital images that they manipulate and send; and they also use their computers to create videos, multimedia presentations, music, and blogs (García, Portillo, and Benito, 2008). These people need to share their experiences and actively interact on social networks. However, this generation is very heterogeneous and there are more current millennials who even get to be confused with those of the centennial generations (Marín and Simancas, 2019).

3. Objective and hypotheses

This research is composed of 7 general variables that give us a global vision of journalistic activity in the Basque Country: perception of the practice of journalism, journalistic practices, changes in the profession and work organization, the relationship of the media and their audiences, use of social networks, the impact of social networks at work, and gender in the journalism profession.

We present the results of the surveys on the variables specifically related to the use of social networks and their impact on journalistic work. The main objective of this research is to analyze the use made by different generations of Basque journalists, generation Z and millennials, of the main communication tools and social networks in the exercise of their profession.

It will be analyzed whether there are differences in the criteria and use of these social platforms in consecutive generations of journalists working in different media. Likewise, it will be studied whether there are gender differences in the use of these media by information professionals.

It is based on the following descriptive hypotheses:

- H1. The difference between the centennial and the millennial generation is reflected in the use of social networks in the Basque media newsrooms. The use of tools such as Facebook or Twitter is associated with professionals of the millennial generation, while younger profiles of journalists are associated with platforms such as Instagram or YouTube.
- H2. Although the use of social networks by both men and women journalists is widespread, there are still gender differences in their use and in their conception of the benefits and risks they entail.
- H3. There is underuse of social networks as sources of information, which means that there is still mistrust and/or ignorance on the part of professionals about their use.

4. Methodology

To carry out this study, the survey was used as a research technique (De Rada, 2012). A questionnaire is a tool that allows asking a set of questions to collect structured information about a given sample, using the quantitative and aggregate treatment of the responses to be able to describe the population to which they belong and to statistically contrast relationships between measures of interest (Meneses, 2016). A CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) questionnaire was prepared, consisting of 26 closed and anonymous questions that analyzed topics such as the use of social networks in the profession or changes in work organization, among others. The questions were mostly single-response multiple-choice, while 12 items were multiple-choice (Likert scale from 0 to 5 points). Likewise, for the preparation of the sample, we had the collaboration of the Euskal Kazetarien Elkarte/Basque Association of Journalists and the Kazetarien Euskal Elkargoa/Basque College of Journalists. The aim was to achieve a sufficiently representative pattern of 500 journalists who worked in the media, with a balance in terms of gender (50% men and women), historical territories (Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa), and media outlets, trying that there were workers from the largest possible number of media outlets (press, radio, and television).

According to the Basque Institute of Statistics, Eustat, in 2020, the people employed in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country in the Information and Communication sector were 22,564. However, it must be taken into account that this sector also includes professionals that are not strictly media workers. The survey carried out for our study, consisting of 500 interviews, would give a margin of error of 4% with a trust level of the analysis of 95%, so we consider it sufficiently representative for the analysis.

To obtain the tracking list, we began with the Basque Government's Open Communication Guide, which includes the list of the persons responsible for the main areas of communication in the Basque media. Subsequently, and using the "snowball" technique, the list was completed. To conclude the study, the profiles of the professionals who appeared on the social networks of each media outlet were taken into account.

The fieldwork was carried out between April 12th and May 24th, 2020, and, in total, 522 journalists working in the Basque Country participated. The anonymous questionnaire questions were given by the research team, but they were delegated to the *CPS Estudios de Mercado y Opinión* company, which carried out the surveys with various methodologies, such as the self-administered through an online link, although they were also carried out by phone if the person to be surveyed preferred it. A Pretest was carried out to be able to analyze the reception of all the participants in the study. In all cases, it was notified that the information obtained was going to be used exclusively for research and not for commercial purposes. In this case, there was no ethics committee to validate the procedure.

The work that was carried out was from the creation of a database with journalist contacts, a questionnaire scheduling in CPS' own online respondent platform, contact and information collection, creation of results database, recording, validation, and writing of field reports.

Four age parameters were established for analysis. Centennial journalists have been considered to be people born between 1995 and 2009; millennials those born between 1977 and 1994; Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980); and baby boomers (journalists over 60 years old). In this research, only the comparative results of centennials and millennials are shown. To check the validity of the convergent-type construct of this study, the correlations between several variables were analyzed.

The results that we present below collect the five specific variables of the analysis on the use of social networks, such as: the use of the main messaging tools and apps to practice journalism, the social networks used in daily work, audiovisual resources and blogs used, benefits in the use of social networks in journalism, and risks and threats derived from the use of these social platforms.

5. Results

5.1. Messaging tools and applications for journalism

Practically all Basque journalists, both centennials and millennials, almost always or quite a few times use the telephone (98.44% and 97.4%) and email (96.16% and 98%), becoming the most widely used tools in the newsrooms of the media outlets and, in the case of the latter, it is a channel that is gaining importance in daily life (Newman, 2020).

Another app that makes it possible to dynamize information quickly and with quality, and that constitutes a work tool and an unavoidable mechanism for interaction with users, is WhatsApp (Giraldo and Cardona, 2018), which also makes it possible to establish direct contacts with audiences (Palomino-González, 2019). As can be seen in chart 1, there are no major differences between the use of messaging tools such as WhatsApp by these age targets, since in both cases it is also possible to speak of a generalized use in 94.61% in the case of centennials and 91%, in the case of millennials.

Despite having technical advantages (Martín Granados, 2016) and innumerable options (Thorsen and Jackson, 2018), and ensuring privacy in their messages, through secret chats, encrypted messages, and personalized channels for the user, the use of Telegram by professionals is a minority. It aspires to be one of the preferred apps of the media due to its usefulness and to establish new journalistic production and dissemination practices (Sánchez and Martos, 2020). However, the centennial generation uses it in 11% of the cases (almost always or quite a few times), increasing its use to 23% in the age group between 27 and 44 years old.

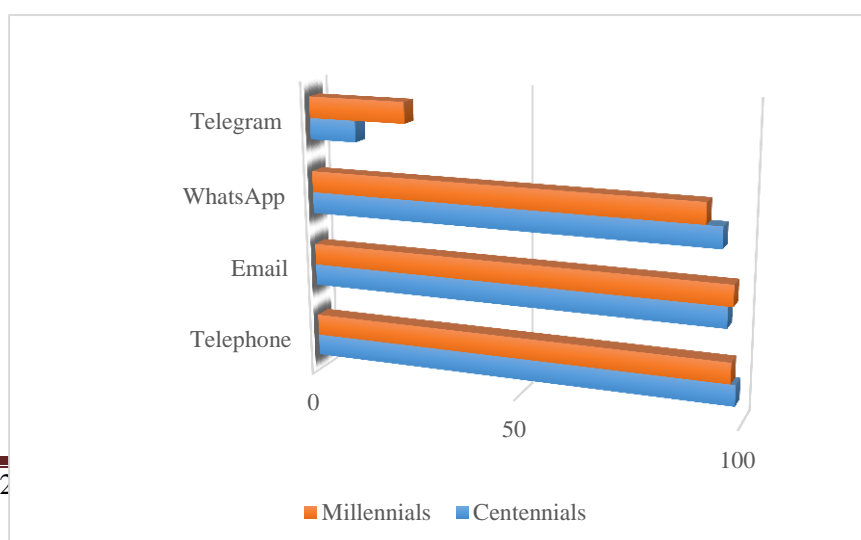


Chart 1- Messaging tools and apps for journalism
 Source: Self-made

While there are no significant differences disaggregated by gender in the use of the telephone, email, or WhatsApp (table 1), Telegram is predominantly female among centennials and male among the millennial generation, being used both occasionally and frequently in 44% of the cases.

Table 1. Use of the telephone, email, and messaging apps disaggregated by gender

	Centennials						Millennials					
	Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often		Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Telephone	-	-	-	3,13%	100%	96,88%	1,03%	-	3,09%	-	94,85%	100%
Email	-	-	4,55%	3,13%	95,45%	96,88%	-	-	2,06%	-	95,87%	100%
Whatsapp			4,55%	6,25%	95,46%	93,76%	4,12%	1,28%	5,15%	6,41%	89,69%	92,3%
Telegram	72,73%	68,75%	20,45%	15,63%	6,82%	15,63%	55,67%	64,47%	17,53%	15,79%	26,8%	19,74%

5.2 Social media used in daily work

This section contains the main opinions on the use of the four most used social networks for the exercise of the journalistic profession: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, although some authors include YouTube among them (Benaissa, 2018).

We included in the study Facebook as a social network, Twitter as a microblogging network and service, and Instagram as a visual app par excellence with a predominance of images and videos. We also analyze LinkedIn as a social network based on networking strategies to work the network of contacts and generate notoriety (Alastruey, 2011).

LinkedIn is the first social network, of those analyzed, to appear on the digital scene in 2002, followed by Facebook in 2004, Twitter in 2005, and Instagram in 2010. All of them are fully installed in the media of the Basque Country (García and Marta-Lazo, 2017).

The questionnaire included questions about the main reasons for using these platforms and the difference between their personal and professional use. They also asked whether there is any kind of recommendation from the media about their use.

Even though there may be pressure from journalistic companies for their staff to extend their influence to the internet (Bossio and Sacco, 2017), 48% of journalists acknowledge that there is no type of demand from the news company about the use of social networks. Thus, 77% of professionals acknowledge that they make both personal and professional use of their profiles. Only 19% use them professionally and 10% of them personally. Although the use of social networks enables communication professionals to achieve recognition, reputation, and remuneration (Marauri et al., 2018), collisions between the interest in having and growing a personal profile and the possible

damages that may be caused to the information company have not been appreciated among the surveyed journalists (Hanusch, 2018).

98% of the participants recognize that they do not make daily use of their social networks and the priority uses professionally speaking range from: getting ideas for new topics (64%), pressing opinions (44%), answering questions to users (31 %), correct errors (26%), and share additional information or background information (25%).

Several studies highlight the use of Twitter as a fundamental tool for journalism (Rodríguez and García, 2013; López Meri, 2015; Hernández-Fuentes and Monnier, 2020; Peña et al., 2021). As can be seen in chart 2, in this research the microblogging network also stands out as the most used social network, almost always or quite often, by the centennial generation (92.76%) to a greater extent than by millennials (82.65%). Its use also differs from a gender perspective (table 2) since it is used mostly by young women (96.88%) compared to 88.65% by men. Among millennials, there is not much gender difference in its use.

Facebook, with its greatest potential as a source of consultation and as a channel to reach an audience located in an orbit far removed from the paper edition or even the web (García de Torres et al., 2015), is a network used in 31.25% of the cases, being women journalists the ones who make more extensive use of it, especially in the millennial generation. Female journalists under 30 years of age use Facebook almost always or quite often in 37.51%, while male journalists use it in 25% of cases. However, the occasional use of it increases among men and decreases among female journalists.

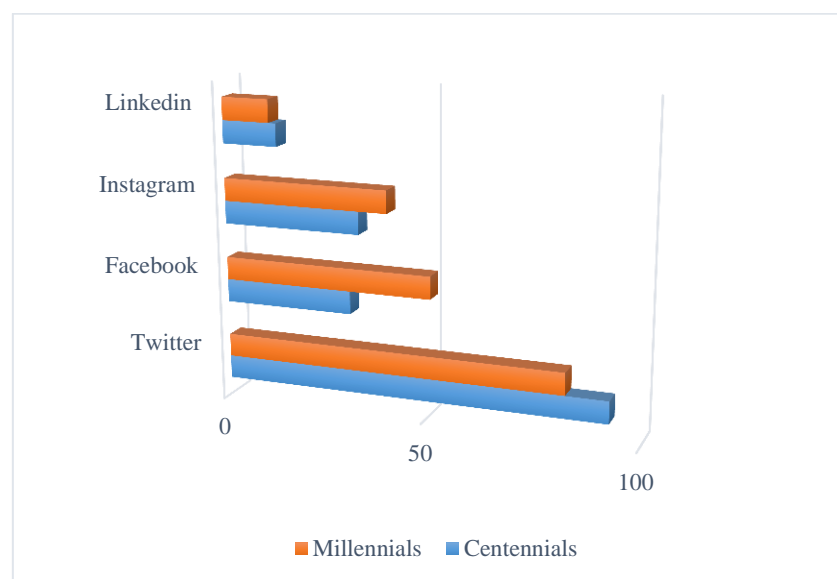


Chart 2. *Most used social networks in journalism*
Source: Self-made

Instagram, a network that grows in its journalistic use (Rojas and Panal, 2017), also raises differences in its generational use, being centennial professionals those who use it to a lesser extent (31.25%) while millennials increase its use reaching 40%. Although the widespread use of this network by women, both centennials and millennials, is greater than the use made by men (41% and 33%), the fact that 40% of women, both centennials and millennials, never use Instagram in their journalistic assignment also stands out.

Lastly, LinkedIn becomes a relegated network for the exercise of journalism, where its use is restricted to 13.5% in the case of centennials who use it almost always or quite often, and to 11.6% in the case of millennials, with no major gender biases in its analysis. As a justification for this underuse is the belief that it is a tool exclusively for job search. There is also a great lack of knowledge of this support and of all its particularities that can be used for the profession (creation of discussion groups, applications, contacts...)

In general, the surveyed people use social media, but without knowing in-depth its specificities related to the profession. Its use is very superficial, more related to its personal use, and there is no clear awareness of the need to delve into these tools.

According to the annual Digital News Report dossier presented by the *Universidad de Navarra* and the report "Top Digital Trends 2021" presented by the Advertising, Marketing, and Digital Communication Association in Spain, (IAB Spain, 2021) there are other "niche" platforms, such as Tik Tok and Twitch, which have become the absolute protagonists of youth consumption and will continue to grow to become key for journalism and advertising professionals.

In fact, the influence of a network like Tik Tok is increasingly important and it seems clear that journalism professionals will have to adapt to the logic of this platform (with its speed and virality) if they want to target a young target of the population that consumes media in different ways (Vazquez-Herrero et al., 2020).

For its part, the adaptation of the content and new formats to streaming platforms such as Twitch leads to reformulate how the profession is practiced. The feeling of enjoyment on the part of media users when using Twitch (Wulf et al., 2020) is viewed with envy by journalists who are forced to adapt content and formats to this new consumer audience.

The survey of this research also asked about the use of these new platforms and, although 65% of centennials and 28% of millennials have acknowledged having profiles on social networks such as Tik Tok or Twitch, none of the surveyed people makes use of them in the exercise of journalism.

Table 2. Use of social networks in journalism disaggregated by gender

	Centennials						Millennials					
	Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often		Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Twitter	2,27%	-	9,09%	3,38%	88,64%	96,88%	3,09%	5,13%	11,34%	14,10%	84,54%	80,76%
Facebook	31,82%	34,38%	43,18%	28,13%	25%	37,51%	17,53%	17,95%	29,90%	30,77%	50,52%	51,29%
Instagram	25%	40,63%	45,45%	21,88%	29,54%	37,5%	38,14%	41,03%	23,71%	14,10%	36,08%	44,87%
LinkedIn	61,36%	53,13%	27,27%	31,25%	11,37%	15,63%	58,76%	57,14%	29,90%	29,87%	10,31%	12,98%

5.3. Audiovisual resources and blogs

Taking into account that many of the surveyed media professionals work in audiovisual or digital media, the use of resources such as images, videos, or blogs as reference elements is widespread. The

media have abandoned their direct relationship with the audience (Noguera Vivo, 2016) to, among other issues, start designing content for other channels such as YouTube (Peer and Ksiazek, 2010) and promote the expansion of the journalist with a channel on that platform (Lorenz, 2018), in a desire to seek to connect and retain a young audience, the most present in this network (Bernal and Carvajal, 2020). In fact, for Spanish media publishers, YouTube is the second social network that has had the most impact on their activities and that can add more value to their businesses in the future (Campos Freire et al., 2016).

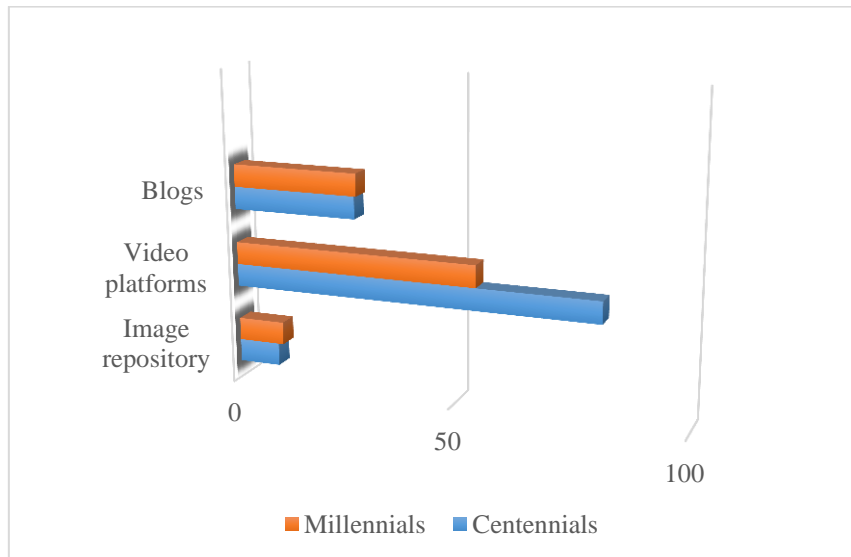


Chart 3. Use of audiovisual resources and blogs
Source: Self-made

Despite this, the use of image repositories such as Flickr or Google Images for journalistic work by both Centennials and Millennials is very residual, not reaching 10% in any case. Something similar happens with YouTube. Although videos have become a priority for the media and social platforms such as Facebook, in Spain, few journalists take the initiative to take an active role in the main audiovisual broadcasting platform (Blanco and Palomo, 2019).

In the use of video hosting platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo, there are also no major differences between the use by Centennials (53.95%) or Millennials (55.36%). Male professionals under 30 years of age use these audiovisual platforms more than their female peers, who in 34% of cases never use these resources.

Although blogs are one of the most used resources for the creation of a personal brand and an online reputation (Singer, 2015; Marauri et al., 2018), the consultation of blogs by Basque professionals is not widespread either. Its use is restricted to 27.84% of the cases in Centennials and 28.26% in the case of Millennials. The greater use by women journalists stands out, who, almost always or quite often, use these resources more, both in the case of Centennials (37.5 compared to 18% of men) and Millennials, (44.8% compared to 11.65% of men).

Table 3. *Use of audiovisual resources and blogs disaggregated by gender*

	Centennials						Millennials					
	Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often		Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Image repositories	84,09%	84,38%	6,82%	6,25%	9,1%	9,38%	67,01%	66,30%	26,80%	24,10%	5,15%	10,39%
Video platforms	13,64%	34,38%	31,82%	28,13%	44,54%	37,51%	16,49%	15,38%	27,84%	30,77%	55,67%	53,84%
Blogs	31,82%	40,63%	50%	21,88%	18,18%	37,5%	43,93%	18,64%	43,36%	38,72%	11,65%	44,87%

5.4. Benefits of using social media in journalism

The questionnaire has raised the benefits that the use of social media can have in the journalistic task. Five premises are considered, such as: finding new stories; promote the information; report faster; improve the relationship with the audience; and increase credibility.

Both Centennials and Millennials are 80% strongly or fairly in agreement that social platforms help find new stories, promote the information that is published, and distribute it more quickly. Both age targets also share the opinion that the relationship with the audience is improved with the use of these tools, in 70% the Centennials (strongly/fairly in agreement), and in 73% the millennial generation (strongly/fairly in agreement).

However, it is a low percentage (30% strongly/fairly in agreement) of both Centennials and Millennials who agree that the use of social media helps increase journalists' credibility. In any case, the Centennials are the ones who have most emphatically supported these claims. In the case of Millennial female journalists, they are the ones who most support all these claims.

Table 4. *Benefits of the use of social networks according to journalists disaggregated by gender*

	Centennials						Millennials					
	Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often		Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Promote information	2,27%	6,45%	11,36%	9,68%	79,55%	74,19%	2,1%	6,76%	42,11%	12,16%	29,47%	79,73%
Improve the relationship with the audience	2,27%	9,68%	18,18%	12,90%	77,27%	61,29%	4,21%	4,05%	20%	18,92%	55,67%	74,33%
Increase journalists credibility	15,91%	35,48%	38,64%	12,90%	31,82%	29,03%	21,05%	28,38%	32,11%	29,73%	29,47%	29,73%
Find new stories	-	-	13,64%	22,58%	86,36%	77,42%	2,11%	2,70%	29,47%	10,81%	67,37%	86,48%
Report faster	2,27%	3,23%	9,09%	9,68%	88,64%	83,87%	4,21%	6,76%	11,58%	9,46%	82,1%	81,08%

5.5. Risks and threats of the use of social networks in journalism

When surveying the possible risks or threats posed by the use of social networks in the journalistic task (Fajardo, 2018), the four most widespread premises in the social imaginary about the journalistic profession have been considered: they represent the end of the traditional values of journalism (Enguix, 2019), threaten its quality (Yepes, 2021; Monpart et al., 2015), expose the journalist more to the public (Suárez and Álvarez, 2016), and sacrifice precision for speed (Martín Algarra et al., 2010).

Regarding the risk of loss of journalism values with the arrival of social apps, Centennials and Millennials agree with this statement by 39% (strongly or fairly agree), and Millennials by 40.89% (strongly or fairly agree). Both Centennial and Millennial female journalists are the ones who almost always or quite often agree with this premise (42% and 46% respectively). This contradicts research such as that of De Miguel (2019), where it is emphasized that women journalists do not perceive as much as men the qualitative and deontological decline of current journalism.

The premise that social networks are a threat to journalism is shared in similar percentages by both Centennials (58% strongly or fairly agree) and Millennials (59.65% strongly or fairly agree). However, it is women who are almost always or quite often in agreement with this threat.

The fact of seeing the professional more exposed to the public with the use of social networks is corroborated by both Centennials (64.73%, strongly or fairly agree) and Millennials (60.62%, strongly or fairly agree)

80% of both Centennials and Millennials strongly or fairly agree with the idea that with the use of social platforms, journalistic precision has been sacrificed for speed when publishing content.

Table 5. *Risks and threats of the use of social networks disaggregated by gender*

	Centennials						Millennials					
	Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often		Never		Occasionally		Almost always/Quite often	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Ending traditional values of journalism	36,36%	37,48%	27,27%	20,35%	36,54%	41,94%	29,47%	22,97%	31,58%	28,38%	35,78%	45,94%
Threats quality of journalism	13,64%	12,90%	29,55%	25,82%	54,55%	61,29%	17,89%	9,46%	25,26%	21,62%	53,68%	67,57%
The journalist is more exposed to the public	9,09%	16,13%	20,45%	22,58%	68,18%	61,29%	11,58%	8,11%	20%	22,97%	65,26%	67,57%
Sacrifice precision for speed	2,27%	6,45%	13,64%	19,35%	81,82%	74,2%	4,21%	4%	17,89%	14,86%	75,79%	82,43%

The opinion that these social apps will never end the traditional values of journalism is shared by 55% of Centennials, while, to a lesser extent, 41% of Millennials think the same.

In general, it is female journalists, both Centennials and Millennials, who consider social networks as a threat to the quality of journalism (67.43%) and as destroyers of its traditional values (44%) to a greater extent (almost always or quite often).

According to the study "Women Journalists in Spain 2020" by the Platform in Defense of Freedom of Expression, women journalists suffer more aggressively from online harassment and are humiliated both professionally and personally. They have to take protection measures by silencing or blocking users, which can justify the rejection of these platforms to carry out their work with quality and freedom.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The main objective of this research was to analyze the use made by different generations of Basque journalists, generation Z and Millennials, of the main communication tools and social networks in the exercise of their profession.

We conclude by noting that no major differences have been found in the use of these social apps by journalists of two generations such as Centennials and Millennials. Wu (2019) also reaches similar findings among American journalists. In general, the results indicate that the use of digital profiles is very widespread among the newsrooms of the media in the Basque Country. The use of more current networks cannot be associated with Centennial generations or pioneering social apps, such as Facebook, with Millennial generations because both make use of these tools. There seems to be no generational bias in the use of social networks associated with them. Facebook and Instagram are used mostly by Millennial journalists, while Twitter is used by Centennial journalists. Both in some cases and others, their tastes or journalistic interests are prioritized, and not generational interests. For all this, we cannot confirm our initial hypothesis.

Another objective was to research whether there are differences in the criteria and use of these social platforms in consecutive generations of journalists working in different media. We have seen that

men and women continue to use the classic tools to practice the profession such as the telephone, email, and, lately, the WhatsApp messaging app, recognized by many authors as a tool for journalistic use (Reid, 2016). The use of email is the majority among both the centennial generation, 96%, and millennials, 98%. In the handling of WhatsApp, there is some difference, its use prevailing among Centennials, 95%, more than among Millennials, 90%. However, Telegram or LinkedIn are two of the least used resources by professionals, their ignorance being the justification for their underuse. It would be necessary, on the part of the media, a clear networks strategy where the journalist contributes a true value to the information with a clear command of narrative languages and professional verification routines (Sánchez de la Nieta and Fuente, 2020).

The intention of this study was also to analyze whether there are gender differences in the use of these media by information professionals. These lines lead us to confirm our second hypothesis because there are clear gender differences in the use of social networks. Twitter, followed by Facebook or Instagram are the ones that predominate in newsrooms and are used mostly by women, both Centennials and Millennials. Twitter predominates among Centennial female journalists, Facebook among female Millennials, and Instagram among both Centennial and Millennial female journalists. Also, in the use of audiovisual and image banks, there are differences in use according to gender, with the use of these resources by male media professionals predominant. However, the consultation of blogs as a source of information is mainly carried out by female journalists.

The fact that women lead the use of these social systems does not by itself justify the end of invisibility, the use of non-sexist language, the incorporation of women as a source of information and protagonism, the inclusion of traditionally invisible topics, the detection of sexist images or content, attention to social problems that exist based on gender, and the exclusion of topics that perpetuate gender stereotypes. It will depend on the degree of commitment of these women journalists, men journalists, and the media to end inequalities.

Female journalists are also the ones who see their profession most threatened by the presence of these social networks. Both female professionals of one generation and the other, see the traditional values of journalism challenged and believe that social networks do not favor the credibility and reputation of the journalistic profession. The gender gap is important in that aspect where female journalists are more exposed in networks and their content is more trivialized and questioned, as evidenced by the study carried out by the Closingap association in 2019 on the disparity of uses in these social media. Multiple research works also warn of harassment and misogyny suffered by women journalists on social networks (Mantilla, 2013; Rego, 2018; Albenga and Biscarrat, 2021).

The third hypothesis was formulated around the underuse of these elements due to mistrust or ignorance and both scenarios are confirmed. It has been proven that the networks help them, mainly, to be aware of the breaking news and keep track of what the rest of the media are telling. Most also use social networks to find ideas and approaches that are different and related to the issues they are working on. These results indicate that journalists use these tools especially to collect information and not so much as a journalistic source (Varona, Sánchez, 2016), to interview sources, or verify the information.

There are social tools that are underused due to ignorance such as LinkedIn, Telegram, or specific audiovisual platforms. Also, we have noticed little training in certain specific particularities within the social networks related to journalism (lists on Twitter, advanced searches, statistics in networks...) that would allow greater dominance and less suspicion in the exercise of the profession. It would be advisable to give highly specialized seminars aimed specifically at the journalistic use of these tools.

Social networks have changed the practice of journalism, and most of the people who work in the Basque Country believe that they have had a positive impact on their information work. Most highlight aspects such as that they have allowed them to better connect with their audiences, better promote their work, and be faster in telling stories. Despite this, the study also detects that there are informants who still consider social networks as a threat and clearly distrust them. In fact, one of the most common concerns is related to speed and that is that social networks lead them to sacrifice precision for speed. The fact that journalists make both personal and professional use of social networks may be related to this aspect. The loss of credibility is another concern that leads to distrust of these tools even though they have been established in the newsrooms of media outlets for a long time and are one more instrument of their daily work.

It is important to work on these deficiencies since youth strive to find news from reliable sources and based on objective facts (Alberto, 2018), and according to the 2017 World Economic Forum report, they are careful with the information they share on the Internet and try to spread reliable information and stop the increasing spread of so-called fake news.

It remains to be seen if the journalistic interests and of the professionals themselves are adapted and how to the new narratives of social networks such as Tik Tok (Alonso-López et. Al, 2021) or Twitch (Gutierrez Lozano and Cuartero, 2020), where there is a younger audience with other types of concerns. We have already pointed out in this study that 65% of the centennial generation and 28% of the millennial generation surveyed have acknowledged having profiles on these two new platforms. However, none of them make professional use of them and the content of the Basque media will have to be channeled and managed to these new apps. It also remains to be seen how the media fights against the high level of misinformation that exists in these types of new social resources.

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