YouTube and the new direction of the Spanish press

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RESUMEN

Introducción: La presencia del vídeo en la prensa española ha ido adquiriendo en estos últimos años una importancia creciente. La audiencia más joven empatiza mejor con el vídeo que, además, aporta nuevos ingresos, fundamentales para sostener un negocio en claro declive. Las inversiones en creación de contenido para ser distribuido en las redes sociales han crecido de forma considerable en todas las rotativas. Por otro lado, la plataforma de distribución dominante, tanto por su potencial como por su flexibilidad, sigue siendo YouTube, puesto que permite abrir canales específicos. Mediante la cuantificación de los vídeos distribuidos en YouTube por los diarios El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, El Español, elDiario.es y El HuffPost, y del volumen de sus visualizaciones, así como a través de entrevistas a algunos de los responsables de negocio de los mismos, y un análisis comparado con otros doce diarios internacionales de gran relevancia (Le Monde, Le Parisien, Figaro Live, Bild, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, The Guardian, The Guardian News, The Times y Sunday Times, The Washington Post y The New York Times), se deducen las estrategias de las cabeceras, las tendencias del mercado de la información y la importancia que está adquiriendo el vídeo para la supervivencia de las empresas periodísticas. Concluimos que el desarrollo de las redes sociales se ha vuelto un impulsor de la innovación en los modelos de negocio del sector.

PALABRAS CLAVE: YouTube; Modelos de Negocio; Prensa digital; Diarios; Empresas periodísticas; Vídeo *online*; Vídeo de noticias.

ABSTRACT

The presence of vídeo in the Spanish press has been acquiring a growing importance in recent years. Younger audiences empathise better with vídeo, which also brings in new income, essential to sustain a business in clear decline. Investments in creating *content* to be *distributed* on social networks have grown considerably in all newspapers. On the other hand, the dominant distribution platform, both due to its potential and its flexibility, is still YouTube, since it allows specific channels to be opened. By quantifying the vídeos *distributed* on YouTube by the newspapers *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, *El Español*, *elDiario.es* and *El HuffPost*, and the volume of their views, as well as through personal

interviews with their business managers, and an analysis compared with twelve other highly relevant international newspapers (*Le Monde, Le Parisien, Figaro Live, Bild, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, The Guardian, The Guardian News, The Times y Sunday Times, The Washington Post & The New York Times)*, deduces the strategies of the headlines, the information market trends and the importance that video is acquiring for the survival of journalism companies. We conclude that the development of social networks has become a driver of innovation in the business models of the sector.

KEYWORDS: YouTube; Business models; Digital media; Newspapers; Journalism companies; *Online* vídeo; VídeoNews.

CONTENIDO: 1. Introducción. 2. Estado de la cuestión. 3. Objetivos e hipótesis. 4. Metodología. 5. Resultados del análisis. 6. Discusión y conclusiones. 7. Referencias.

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

1. Introduction

The informative video, as Díaz Arias (2009) has defined, is one of the key pieces in the global audiovisual language since it "goes beyond linguistic borders. The videos that make up the television newscasts combine the visual discourse with the verbal one, the latter having a decisive role as an anchor for the images". In this way, it could be said that news presented on video facilitates the consumption of information. However, in the online environment, the video format also plays other roles for the media: it has become a sign of identity and distinction, paving the way on social networks and generating revenue from advertising.

It has been shown that the use of the two languages (visual and linguistic) applied to information in video format on the Internet achieves a higher ratio of views and audience participation and, consequently, attracts greater investment from advertisers on these platforms (Hallgren and Nylund 2018). Thus, although the cost of producing the video is higher, the revenue obtained through views is also higher (Hallgren and Nylund 2018).

For more than fifteen years now, informative online videos have shared space with the news in the digital editions of newspapers. Their inclusion took root strongly from 2007 (Guallar, 2008) and, since then, their presence has been growing year after year, becoming a common format on the Internet to tell the news (Reevell, 2007; Micó and Masip, 2008; Mayoral and Edo, 2014; Lawrence, 2020). To this successful context of news video, we must add the relocation of self-produced audiovisual pieces that the media carried out in their digital editions, hosting them directly on social networks, which, together with the creation of original content specialized for social networks, has set the guidelines to establish a strategy, which began to be visible from 2014, and which would be called platform publishing or distributed content. The results derived from its application have been beneficial for many media outlets, which have been achieving more views of their content through social networks than on their own portals (Kalogeropoulos, 2017). In this way, we agree with Santín and Álvarez Monzoncillo (2020) in that we are beginning to find ourselves in a scenario where the media generate news "beyond their website [...] looking for new commercial margins in the convergent and global market". The increase in video production and the creation of communities around topics of interest has been truly spectacular in recent years (Raun and Petersen, 2021).

Video has gained prominence on social networks, as Mark Zuckerberg predicted in 2014 (Miners, 2014), and repeated in 2015 at the annual developer conference (Jarvey, 2015). This is a format that has benefited news traffic on all social networks, among which Facebook and YouTube are the most prominent (Shearer and Mitchell, 2020). Its success lies mainly in the simplicity of its consumption, without neglecting the great possibilities of expression and creation that it offers (García-Avilés, 2015). These, in fact, translate into a constant increase in the demand for the visual format on social networks, which is confirmed in the increase in views as reflected in the 2021 IAB Report "Study of Social Networks", on the analysis of these types of communication tools in Spain. Newspaper companies want to become content distribution platforms but this entails expenses that are difficult to amortize because their business models are not sufficiently consolidated. Perhaps such uncertainty stems from the fact

that the new models are trying to be defined from the original patterns designed for other less dynamic environments and with passive audiences. If the job were left in the hands of global platforms, they would be exposing themselves to the risks of having their algorithms imposed. The consumption patterns of media audiences are changing, which requires a strategic transformation of companies in their relationship with their customers (Kueng, 2017; Westlund et al., 2021).

2. Literature review

The digital reconversion in the media industries began a long time ago, when they began to be able to distribute their content through the internet and, thus, modify their value chain. This was the case of the press. But, there also was an integration between text and video that created greater dynamism and attractiveness for newspaper websites. The all-important development we need to understand lies in the coming together of the involved sectors: "These technologies and corporations have become firmly entrenched among media users and producers, making each of them co-dependent on their products and platforms to design, distribute, access, and share media content" (Deuze and Prenger, 2019, p. 14). Thus, this reality can be seen more than ever in the channels that newspapers have opened on YouTube, in which they not only distribute their videos but also aspire to be co-creation platforms in which the reader is expected to contribute comments and recommendations, and also content production. This is the new wave of integration and convergence in the media ecosystem.

The current situation of the media has been described as collapse, hybridization, and precariousness (Curtin and Sanson, 2016), in the same way, innovation and entrepreneurship (Krumsvik et al., 2018), as well as intermediation (Lobato, 2016), virtual reality, and platformization (Duffy et al., 2019), establish the characteristics of a profession marked by the algorithms of the platforms that control the process (Gillespie, 2014; Bishop, 2020) or big data (Arsenault, 2017), etc. And let us not forget that all this is taking place in an uncertain phase of globalization (Curran and Hesmondhalgh, 2019). The transformation in the media system has been spectacular (Holt and Perren, 2019).

The rise of the platforms has been remarkable so the alliance between newspapers and YouTube has become an important catalyst in the fight to consolidate a sector in constant renewal. These new containers for information and online viewing are characterized by their storage possibilities and the sophistication of their algorithms to relate the archived information. In this way, the platforms contribute to the fact that the hosted audiovisual content, its managers, and users stop operating independently to form a true social network.

2.1. The importance of YouTube today

Since 2006, YouTube's growth in the number of users and visits has been spectacular. Its rapid success manifested the need in the market for a free platform that could contain an unlimited amount of audiovisual material, that would cover the whole world, and that would be agile and easy to use. Jawed Karim, one of its founders, revealed that the key to its success is mainly due to the integration of five elements: "1) recommendations of related videos, 2) sending the videos through a link, 3) tools to interact with users, 4) an integrated video player, and 5) the synergies created and the knowledge of Google when they bought it. Although YouTube managed to add a large part of the population in its early years, it also accumulated millionaire losses in this period since the greater the penetration it obtained, the greater the expense it also required.

YouTube's assault on the media market unbalanced the hierarchy of power that monopolized television in the consumption of audiovisual content (Gallardo, 2010, Burgess, 2017). However, the heyday of television as we knew it ended in the late 1990s (Lotz, 2018). Consequently, the new emerging television proposals at the beginning of the century, such as personal television (IPTV) and Egocasting (Rosen, 2005), began with the same model adopted by YouTube and the Internet in general, since they offered a television based on the "anyone, anywhere, anytime" (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2011). Premises on which the internet model is based, especially if we observe the rapid increase in users year after year around the world, as reflected in the 2021 Reuters Digital News Report, which points out how 62% of the world population with internet access uses YouTube. Since 2014, it has grown by 9%, and this year it has managed to beat Facebook for the first time and has become the most used social network worldwide. In Spain, the figure has increased by 2% since 2018 and is in the second position after

WhatsApp (Newman et al., 2021, p. 103). One of the reasons that explain its continuous ascension, despite the years it has been operating and the number of competitive platforms in the market, lies in its transformation and renewal "introducing more and more agreements and structured commercial practices aimed at professionalizing, ordering, and regulating the content that is published on the platform" (Burgess, 2017).

Other entities, such as Facebook and Google, have established the foundations from which YouTube has learned and that has allowed it to gradually enter the media business (Burgess, 2017, p. 10). Thus, Facebook launched its FB Newswire in April 2014 to provide journalists with verified content (News-Corp/Storyful) in real-time, to facilitate the production of breaking news. Its objective was to make Facebook a platform with greater power to attract informants and communicators and for them to generate new news publications (Etherington, 2014). In 2015, Google launched its Google News Lab project. Although the initiative emerged to contribute to fact-checking, it ended up becoming a much more ambitious project that was renamed the Google News Initiative, and that is focused on journalistic information through two structural axes: financing innovative digital journalistic projects (DNI Fund) and training in Google monetization products and other areas.

Of the two great improvements that Google has implemented in YouTube in recent years, the following have been observed:

- 1)The creation of YouTube Newswire in 2015, following in the footsteps of the Facebook channel, also audited by Storyful, and which follows the same goal of providing verified and breaking audiovisual content to both journalists and non-specialized users (Pérez, 2015)
- 2) The launch in 2016 of Player for Publishers with the similar intention of promoting news video traffic and attracting media outlets to its space (McOwen, 2016). This new tool was built thanks to the feedback provided by some newsrooms; Its development had also been previously tested by some European media outlets that collaborated with the Google Digital News Initiative (DNI), such as: Editorial Unidad Editorial, Prisa, *The Guardian*, or France24. Player for Publishers was mainly oriented to better connect with the audience, increase control over the tool to maximize revenue, and reduce technical complexity and costs.

Since its release on the market, more media outlets have joined YouTube seeking greater stability in the positioning and monetization of their videos (Patel, 2018). Many of the new affiliates who have been attracted by this improvement come from Facebook for the sake of a firmer and more constant economic gain not as dependent on an algorithm that swaps as frequently as is the case with Facebook (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2016; Patel, 2018; Bernal and Carvajal., 2019).

2.2. Monetization on YouTube

However, the challenge for the YouTube platform for newspapers is to effectively increase their revenue. YouTube supports a specific program called the "YouTube partner program" (YPP), which includes the characteristics that a content creator must have for this purpose, such as: living in a country where the program is available, having more than 1,000 subscribers, having more than 4,000 hours of valid public viewing, and have a linked Google AdSense account. Besides complying with a series of rules on the type of content (audio and video) that is appropriate, devoid of violence, and non-offensive for any type of public. Terms whose non-compliance may lead to the disqualification of the account. When a creator decides to monetize their channel, they must undergo a first review where YouTube makes sure that the content complies with its standards and policies. A follow-up that remains active until the end. In fact, the user will be able to request their entry into the program only when they have managed to reach the threshold of followers and cited views. Hence, the profits obtained monthly are subject to infinite variables, of which we highlight the most representative next: 1) the number of visits obtained, that is, the index that determines the bulk of the profit: the more successful the content is, the more views it gets, the higher the income; 2) space: geography matters and the visualizations produced in the countries that invest the most in advertising and where many of the multinationals are located do not have the same value. In this sense, the visits generated from the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries give more benefits than those from Spain or Latin America; 3) time: the ratio also fluctuates seasonally, such as major global marketing campaigns or holidays (Black Friday, Christmas, etc.); 4) advertising: the brand and type of commercials that are included in the content also make a difference. Starting at three minutes long, YouTube allows the content owner to decide where the advertising is inserted in the content. In a shorter video, it is YouTube that "does it for you"; 5) technical elements of the content such as length, and 6) the Player for Publishers. We have already talked about this tool and its efficiency to streamline processes and achieve greater penetration on YouTube. Corporations or communication companies that make use of it monetize more than those that do not use it.

Increasingly, the content that is hosted on YouTube is designed to catch and retain the audience for as long as possible, which is why the creation of audiovisual content has specialized depending on the platform. For example, in the case of news videos, Miguel Sanz, head of YouTube for the newspaper 20 Minutos, has revealed to us some strategies that his company tries to take care of in its YouTube content to achieve a greater number of views: 1) a personalized cover for the channel and 2) a strong start that avoids introductions because they can slow down the engagement with the target. Likewise, audience retention strategies such as hyperlinks embedded in the image at the end of the video, to link to another on the same channel, are common in the press.

And, finally, it should be noted that Google periodically publishes the changes made to its algorithms on its blogs and networks to inform its customers of the new improvements implemented and how they can benefit to monetize more. Similarly, they provide the creator with assistance and courses to optimize YouTube resources. Social networks and news consumption via mobile terminals are experiencing powerful growth year after year, as revealed by the data revealed in the 2020 Pew Research published earlier this year. In the United States, more than 8 in 10 adults consume news on digital devices (Shearer, 2021). The Reuters Digital News Report, 2021, determines the fall of news consumption on computers for another year, compared to the respective rise of news reading on mobile phones.

2.3. The lowering of the cost of technology, its simplicity, accessibility, and quality

Another notable milestone that favors the consumption of news videos on social networks lies in the increase in the use of mobile devices. These connections maintain an upline year after year. The average time that an individual spends connected to the network through a mobile phone was higher in 2019 than in 2018 (Ditrendia Report, 2020). This inclination predicts a systematic growth that will be favored by the use given to the terminal and the improvements in data transfers. This fact has been reflected in the average increase in the speed of mobile connections already in 2018, which was 13.2 Mbps, and it is estimated that in 2023 it will triple, reaching 43.9 Mbps. Furthermore, the power of 5G will increase, which will reach 575 Mbps (Cisco Annual Internet Report, 2020). These data outline a scenario in which technology will no longer be a difficulty but rather the solution for enjoying mobile Internet connections. Moreover, with its development, the increase in data traffic, the connection time from these terminals, and, therefore, the consumption of news on social networks will be promoted. Almost half of the world's population actively uses some type of social network, which means a great penetration of these platforms.

The press has detected a great opportunity "to redefine its strategies in the creation, distribution, marketing, and promotion of its content" (Santín et al., 2020), especially aimed at generations of digital natives (Mitchell et al., 2016). The increase in their audiovisual productions has been analyzed by previous studies (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2016; Ortells-Badenes, 2016; Kalogeropoulos and Nielsen, 2017; Hallgren and Nylund, 2018; Pérez-Serrano et al., 2020; Sixto-García and Rodríguez-Vázquez, 2021; Suárez-Álvarez and García-Jiménez, 2021), in which it is shown that technology has facilitated this progress thanks to the size reduction of the files, the speed of new-generation devices and the internet, but also to the new strategies that social networks have carried out to attract more informative audiovisual content.

The motto "the more we are, the more options we have" could well define one of the basic ideas of the internet. Technology has made it possible for 4.7 billion people to have a connection to the Internet in less than thirty years, mainly due to: 1) improvements in infrastructure, which have increased speed and reduced the cost of installation; 2) less, smaller, and cheaper hardware; and 3) more efficient and faster software. Similarly, the content hosted on the Internet could not have been generated or shared if it had not been for equipment, terminals, platforms, or apps that have contributed to its production,

transmission, and consumption. The Internet has been and continues to be possible thanks to constant technological progress but also to the desire of Internet users to generate content and want to share it. Hence, the motto "the more we are, the more options we have" not only derives a question of volume but of different possibilities that can inspire others, thus forging an ad infinitum spiral.

Content creation has become more sophisticated with the constant emergence of new technologies. The clear line that existed decades ago between the amateur and the professional user has been blurred, giving rise to the creation of high-quality audiovisual or visual pieces made with affordable technologies.

The inspiration that the internet has provided with this type of sophisticated and attractive content available to everyone has not only penetrated the public but also companies and the media. The inspiring and stimulating *make it yourself* that derives from the internet has also made it possible to bring events —news— closer to the Internet user in a more vivid and faster way through the practice of Mobile Journalism (MOJO). An increasingly visible trend in the media that has taken root thanks to the simplification and accessibility of technology (Burum and Quinn, 2016). Consequently, new technologies have not only changed the way news is consumed but also its production and broadcast. For all these reasons, multimedia tools have introduced new techniques and narrative styles in stories, such as greater realism and empathy (Hedley, 2012), as well as speeding up the broadcast process in such a way that creation and retransmission times have been shortened (Bradshaw, 2017).

Newspapers, which were not familiar with the audiovisual language, have learned to film, edit, and broadcast this type of content in their digital editions and on internet portals. Many newsrooms now have dozens of employees in their audiovisual content generation departments and, increasingly, their internal organizations are resembling television channels. The problem with distributing content through platforms like YouTube is that control is lost in some way and campaigns with discounts cannot be carried out with their advertisers, besides the handicap of being in the hands of algorithms that favor large platforms, as we already mentioned. But the growth of informative video consumption is expected to be spectacular in the coming years due to the changing habits of the younger audience: nomadic, multi-platform, and frugal, dedicated to creating and sharing information on social networks from various content creators. In this battle for attention, newspapers have a long way to go in the search for engagement and co-creation as a key way to innovate in an environment of great fragmentation, strong competition, significant uncertainties, and the empowerment of the audience. As in so many other companies, also in this sector, the development of social networks has promoted innovations in business models (Zhang and Zhu, 2021).

3. Objectives and hypothesis

The central goal of this work lies in the analysis of the use that the Spanish press makes of YouTube. Other specific ones emanate from this main objective: 1) analyze the work that the national and international press has done in this social network; 2) find out if the Spanish media outlets, aware of the work of their international counterparts, are taking advantage of the potential of the platform; 3) find out the ballpark figure of their earnings on YouTube; 4) understand the weight that the creation and distribution of audiovisual content have on their business models, and 5) assess whether the commitment to increasing broadcasts of audiovisual content in the short and medium-term could be viable to develop their businesses.

From the specific objectives, some research questions are derived that will guide us towards the working hypotheses: is the Spanish press increasing the publication of audiovisual content on this platform? And if so, are they investing more effort than their international counterparts? Also, why do they choose YouTube to host their audiovisual content over other platforms or their own websites? What benefits does it offer or what differentiating elements are observed? Do all media outlets use YouTube Player for Publishers? What is the average income per views obtained that could indicate the viability of this new business model? What will be the scenario in the short and medium-term if investment in audiovisual content continues to increase?

Therefore, we start from these questions to expose the four working hypotheses that will lead this research:

- H.1. The Spanish press has increased the number of news videos in the last year on You-Tube compared to other international media. Through the quantification of the audiovisual content published on YouTube for twelve months in the selected national and international media outlets, it will be analyzed whether the trend regarding the total number of publications in their accounts is ascending or descending on this platform. Confirming or refuting this hypothesis will give us information on the audiovisual consumption of pieces broadcast by the national press compared to the foreign press.
- H.2. If so, and if the increase in audiovisual publications by national newspapers on this platform is confirmed, a second hypothesis derived from the first is established, leading to the demonstration that the main causes of this movement lie in: a) the facilities offered by the Player for Publishers from YouTube to the media; b) the clarity and simplicity of the algorithm proposed by YouTube to monetize published content. If these reasons are ratified, the optimization of the most important resources that this platform offers will become clear.
- H.3. This research will try to find out or approach an approximate of the income that media outlets receive for the views of their audiovisual content published on YouTube to verify or reject in this third hypothesis, that: a) these benefits are not enough to refound the business model of the Spanish press; b) the production of audiovisual content in newspapers grows annually and impacts the dimensions of the content creation departments that increase in size. This effect is configured in the rotating internal organizations of a television nature.
- H.4. And, finally, it is estimated that the strategy of these newspapers on YouTube in the short and medium-term will be similar: to continue increasing their audiovisual productions to continue monetizing, but also to sell their brand on social networks and, therefore, hook new followers and retain those they already have.

4. Methodology

This research is approached from a mixed approach that combines quantitative and qualitative procedures. This mixed approach combines numerical measurements and statistical analysis of the data through sequential and evidentiary processes, which are common in the quantitative approach, such as those applied in research with the same object of study (Mayoral-Sánchez et al., 2016; Newman et al. ál., 2021; Díaz-Lucena et al., 2022) and that are complemented with inductive methods typical of the qualitative approach, such as semi-structured interviews with the media and professionals.

In the first phase of the investigation, a quantitative data analysis methodology has been used that has been structured as follows:

- 1) Previous observation of the selected media accounts on YouTube.
- 2) Extraction of the data necessary for this analysis. Most of this information has been obtained directly from the newspapers' YouTube accounts: a) account opening date; b) the number of published videos; c) the number of views, and d) the number of followers. However, due to the number of newspapers selected and the ambitious time frame of this study, which includes twelve months, —as will be explained below—the software of the statistical marketing company Keyhole has been used to obtain two new data: e) monthly number of published videos and f) the monthly number of views. Keyhole's software routinely dispenses reports in Excel format with a maximum history of twelve months.
- 3) Statistical analysis with the compiled figures to find: a) growth or decrease in the number of broadcasts and visits obtained by the account in the established period compared to the total; b) comparison of the results between national and international press media.

In the second phase of the study, various interviews were conducted with those responsible for the analyzed media but also with specialists and YouTubers to qualify the results obtained, but also find out the economic benefit that the visualizations on this platform bring to these newspapers. Data that has not been easy to approach mainly due to two reasons: the confidentiality of the media prevents them from revealing their economic benefits or the details of the contract signed with YouTube. Thus, directly with the press, it has not been possible to obtain any data. And the second issue lies in the scarcity

of research or current national or international studies where this issue is addressed in the press sector. However, although those responsible for the media have set the limits of the information provided, some YouTubers and journalists specialized in this platform —who have asked us not to quote them—have provided us with useful information that little by little we have been able to contrast with each other to shape and get closer to some realistic figures that will be exposed in this work.

The interviews with those responsible for the chosen media have been configured mainly with three basic questions: 1) Does your newspaper use YouTube Player for Publishers? If they use another player, what advantages does it bring them? 2) How many people does your audiovisual content creation department consist of?; and 3) the third question asks about the possible movements or changes that these rotaries could carry out in the short or medium term, considering the success that the creation of audiovisual content is reporting. Of the six Spanish media analyzed, five of them have agreed to answer these questions. Their names and positions are as follows:

- 1. Carlos de Vega (deputy director of *El País*) and
- 2. Pau Rodríguez (CMO of *La Vanguardia*)
- 3. Vicente Ruíz (deputy director of *El Mundo*) and Guacimara Castrillo (responsible for social networks of *El Mundo*)
- 4. Mario Díaz (deputy director of *El Español*)
- 5. Daniel Ventura (director of *El HuffPost*)

The selection of national newspapers has been carried out based on three variables:

- A. General newspapers.
- B. With the largest number of followers on YouTube
- C. With a great deal of activity and movement on the YouTube platform: the total number of posts since the account was opened has been assessed but also its current activity during the study period (minimum of one daily publication).

Therefore, to enrich this study with greater diversity, within the general newspapers it has been decided to choose three traditional newspapers with print circulation and digital version and another three digital-native ones. In this way, fulfilling these requirements, the newspapers selected for this study are: *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, and *El Mundo*, together with *El Español*, *elDiario.es*, and *El HuffPost*.

On the other hand, in the selection of international newspapers, the activity present on YouTube has not been taken into account as many of them started before and their strategy has varied since then. Thus, the number of followers and the number of visits they reach despite publishing less content have been more relevant in their choice. These journals have met the following conditions:

- A. Western general newspapers
- B. A large number of followers on YouTube
- C. A large number of total posts
- D. A large number of monthly visits

The twelve international newspapers chosen represent six Western countries and are: Le Monde, Le Parisien, Figaro Live, Bild, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, The Guardian, The Guardian News, The Times and Sunday Times, The Washington Post, The New York Times.

And, finally, the time frame of this study comprises twelve months (July 2020 to June 2021). The reason that has led to choosing a broad period lies in the need to observe the possible evolution and variation in the work carried out by these media outlets on YouTube. In this way, the possibility of obtaining more data to carry out a more precise and in-depth analysis is opened. Likewise, the socio-health situation derived from Covid-19 must be taken into account. One of its consequences has been the increase in user connections to the Internet and especially the choice of streaming video platforms such as Netflix and YouTube (Nokia, 2020). Although this fact should be underlined, since it directly affects our object of study, it must also be taken into account that YouTube's growth progression year after year has been upward, as revealed in the 2021 Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2021). It is considered

significant to note this circumstance that affects our research, but the specific impact of Covid-19 on the growth of the selected newspapers on YouTube will not be studied.

5. Analysis results

This analysis begins with a brief explanation of the situation of the international press on YouTube followed by the quantitative results for the national newspapers since we will know from the beginning which is the real photo on this social network of the Spanish press when comparing it with the work made by their international counterparts.

5.1. international newspapers

Taking into account the main Western media outlets (Table 1), an early opening of their channels on YouTube is observed in the first instance, specifically between 2005 and 2007. A range of dates, which, as we have stated at the beginning, would be the ordinary one for a newspaper that is not a new creation and taking into account that this platform began to roll in 2005.

Table 1. Data from international newspapers. This information has mostly been extracted from the official accounts of these media on the YouTube platform, available in the account information tab, except for the number of videos and monthly visits provided by the Keyhole marketing company software and which have been added to find the total of twelve months.

YouTube	Followers	Date	Total views	Total videos	365 days videos	365 days views
Le Monde	1.080.000	17-mar06	262.422.861	1.973	101	26.183.585
Le Parisien	594.000	6-oct14	532.589.219	7.030	2.135	222.716.774
Figaro Live	353.000	21-may06	215.509.809	10.213	626	20.281.990
Bild	765.000	7-nov14	1.120.285.007	19.253	5.178	334.142.724
FAZ	177.000	27-oct05	182.944.358	22.521	4.892	44.600.855
Corriere della Sera	180.000	1-sep07	154.455.898	10.744	5.884	79.148.681
La Repub- blica	618.000	24-may16	604.029.085	26.445	2.631	67.348.208
The Guar- dian	1.700.000	15-feb06	545.561.445	6.943	182	11.015.531
The Guar- dian News	1.910.000	22-oct14	1.560.702.354	10.479	2.412	283.784.348
The Times	55.800	29-jun07	41.622.547	553	83	2.412.498
The Washin- gton Post	1.750.000	30-jun06	902.663.831	17.605	1.711	177.526.998
The New York Times	3.610.000	13-oct06	1.182.120.302	9.912	113	41.425.923

Other data is very striking in Table 1, such as: a) five newspapers have exceeded one million followers (Le Monde, The Guardian and The Guardian News, The Washington Post, and The New York Times) and three reached one billion views (The Guardian News, The New York Times, and Bild). It should be noted that among the first newspapers to create a specialized video department (in 2007) are The Washington Post and The New York Times (Layton 2008; García-Avilés, 2015); b) the French newspaper Le Figaro called its YouTube channel Figaro Live. If we pay attention to its nomenclature, but also its contents, this project transcends the concept of a traditional news newspaper to be closer to a television channel. This same phenomenon is also perceived in The Guardian News in 2014 and The Washington Post Live in 2017 (although with less success than the British or French); c) The launch of The Guardian News in 2014 by The Guardian follows the same line as Le Figaro Live, as it focuses on live broadcasts and breaking news and provides a very specific video format that does not reach 90

seconds duration in most of its audiovisual content not broadcast live. This is a channel that, despite its short history, if we compare it with the rest, has more followers and triple the number of visits than its main channel; d) The German newspaper *Bild* is one of the latest to break into YouTube, but like *The Guardian News*, it has achieved a large number of followers and views in a short time. It is remarkable the number of views reached in twelve months, 334 million, followed at some distance by *The Guardian News*, with 284 million. Its investments in new technologies are constant and proof of this is demonstrated by the launch in August 2021 of its own cable, satellite, and online television channel. Since 2019, Axel Springer's newspaper has invested more than one hundred million euros in this new challenge and its audiovisual content creation team now has seventy people (Scally, 2021).

Chart 2 shows the percentage represented by the number of video broadcasts and annual visits in the study period of each of the media outlets cited in Table 1 compared to the total number of videos hosted and visits obtained on their YouTube channel.

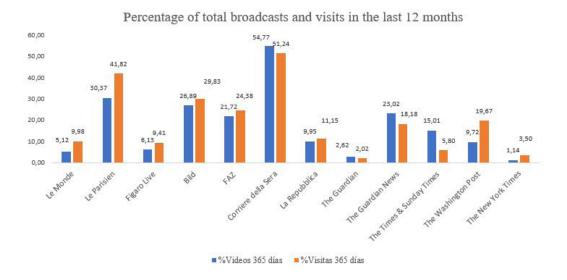


Chart 1. Analysis of the data presented in Table 1 that presents the growth percentage of international newspapers in twelve months on YouTube. The raw data has been extracted from the official account of the media outlets and the Keyhole marketing company, as explained at the bottom of Table 1.

Corriere della Sera is the most prominent media outlet, with 54.77% of videos broadcast and 51.24% of visits obtained in the study period. This means that it has doubled its broadcasts on this channel in a single year, with averages of 490 videos per month and 6.5 million visits obtained monthly. It is followed by Le Parisien, Bild, FAZ, and The Guardian News above 20% and with average broadcasts between 431 and 178 videos per month. In decrease, we can see The Times, Le Monde, The New York Times, and The Guardian. Its percentage of the total is actually low, with video uploads on YouTube of one every several days. The work of The New York Times stands out, a newspaper that began to create audiovisual content regularly as of 2007, which has a base of more than 3.5 million followers who show great activity on YouTube, —a fact that warns of the intense work that has been done in previous years—, and they allow it to obtain more views of its content with fewer videos. This paradigm, also observed, although differently in The Washington Post or Le Parisien, is not the general trend. The average is found in percentage figures for the creation of videos that are very even or for lower views compared to broadcasts.

5.2. National newspapers

The creation of YouTube accounts by the Spanish press happened somewhat later than for their international counterparts, in general (Table 2). Although some of the selected media outlets were launched in video format in the second decade of the 21st century, as is the case of *elDiario.es*, *El Español*, or *El HuffPost*, and therefore their appearance on YouTube began later, this was not the case of *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, or *El Mundo*.

Table 2. Data from international newspapers. This information has mostly been extracted from the official accounts of these media outlets on the YouTube platform, available in the account information tab, except for the number of videos and monthly visits provided by the Keyhole marketing company software and which have been added to find the total of twelve months.

YouTube	Followers	Date	Total views	Total videos	365 days videos	365 days views
El País	1.540.000	11-jan08	913.592.733	23.385	2.790	49.637.457
El Mundo	493.000	20-may13	329.046.721	12.253	6.399	116.296.914
La Vanguar- dia	923.000	9-jan07	556.627.819	20.905	5.710	66.454.752
El Español	26.900	6-jan15	11.541.912	4.234	2.052	3.539.561
elDiario.es	131.000	30-may12	72.801.980	7.081	1.289	9.430.085
El HuffPost	113.000	9-may12	53.180.779	2.192	453	3.511.127

Similarly, in the case of national newspapers, more differences are detected in the use they make of YouTube compared to the international press. In the first instance, despite the youth of some of the aforementioned newspapers, their investment and presence on YouTube compared to other social networks such as Twitter are really low (Díaz-Lucena et al., 2022). A fact that, as we will see below in chart 2, seems to be changing. Other elements that can be extracted from a reading of table 2 are the following: 1) the great difference in followers and visits obtained by the newspaper *El País* in comparison with the rest of the newspapers confirms the conscious dedication of this media outlet (Bernal et al, 2019); and 2) the number of views that *El Mundo* has obtained in the months of this study is truly striking, as are the broadcast averages of its audiovisual content, as we will see below.

Percentage of the last 12 months over the total broadcasts and visits



Chart 2. Analysis of the data presented in Table 1 that presents the growth percentage of international newspapers in twelve months on YouTube. The raw data has been extracted from the official account of the media outlets on YouTube and the marketing company Keyhole, as explained at the bottom of Table 2.

Chart 3 details the percentage of videos and visits to each media outlet in the study period. As we can see, the newspaper *El Mundo* leads with 52.22% of new audiovisual material and 35.34% of visits regarding the total, which, translated into monthly averages, implies 533 videos and 9.6 million views. A higher ratio than that of *Corriere della Sera*, although both reflect with their figures a parallel strategy to achieve greater presence and increase their penetration and monetization. Similarly, it can be seen that *El Español* has undertaken a similar tactic, although with much lower averages for audiovisual content and views obtained. *El Español* hosts a figure of 171 videos and 25,000 monthly visits. The contributions of *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, *El HuffPost*, and *ElDiario.es* in this period have also been remarkable since the trend, although with great differences between them, is upward. All newspapers publish videos on YouTube daily.

In table 3 we compare the figures of the twelve international newspapers with the seven Spanish ones. It has been divided into three large blocks: monthly videos, monthly views, and views per video.

Table 3. Analysis of the data in Tables 1 and 2 presenting the average monthly posts and visits along with the average number of visits per video. The raw data has been extracted from the official account of the media outlets on YouTube and the marketing company Keyhole, as explained in the footer of Tables 1 and 2.

	Monthly videos		Monthly views		Views per video	
N	Newspapers	Videos	Newspapers	Views	Newspapers	Views
1	El Mundo	533,3	Bild	27.845.227,0	The New York Times	366.601
2	Corriere della Sera	490,3	The Guardian News	23.648.695,7	Le Monde	259.243
3	La Vanguardia	475,8	Le Parisien	18.559.731,2	The Guardian News	117.655
4	Bild	431,5	The Washington Post	14.793.916,5	Le Parisien	104.317
5	FAZ	407,7	El Mundo	9.691.409,5	The Washington Post	103.756
6	El País	232,5	Corriere della Sera	6.595.723,4	Bild	64.531
7	La Repubblica	219,3	La Repubblica	5.612.350,7	The Guardian	60.525
8	The Guardian News	201,0	La Vanguardia	5.537.896,0	Figaro Live	32.399
9	Le Parisien	177,9	El País	4.136.454,8	The Times	29.066
10	El Español	171,0	FAZ	3.716.737,9	La Repubblica	25.598
11	The Washington Post	142,6	The New York Times	3.452.160,3	El Mundo	18.174
12	elDiario.es	107,6	Le Monde	2.181.965,4	El País	17.791
13	Figaro Live	52,2	Figaro Live	1.690.165,8	Corriere della Sera	13.452
14	El HuffPost	37,8	The Guardian	917.960,9	La Vanguardia	11.638
15	The Guardian	15,2	elDiario.es	802.286,0	FAZ	9.117
16	The New York Times	9,4	El Español	294.963,4	El HuffPost	7.751
17	Le Monde	8,4	El HuffPost	292.593,9	elDiario.es	7.316
18	The Times	6,9	The Times	201.041,5	El Español	1.725

In the first block, regarding the hosting of news videos on YouTube, four Spanish newspapers stand out among the top ten in the last twelve months. Moreover, two of them occupy the first (*El Mundo*) and the third (*La Vanguardia*) position. In the segment of monthly visits, for their part, three Spanish newspapers are among the top ten (*El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, and *El País*). However, if we look at the number of views obtained for each video published in this period, Spanish newspapers drop to the bottom positions. This ratio of visits per video warns us of some specific circumstances: 1) the previous work that has been invested in this social network, and 2) the activity of the audience that they treasure. It is not so much about the accumulated number of followers but their activity, their fidelity, and habit. For example, *The New York Times* has more than 3.6 million subscribers to its YouTube channel. *El País* has more than 1.5 million and *Le Parisien* has half a million. For each video posted by *The New York Times* on YouTube, it received an average of 366,000 views. *Le Parisien* an average of 104,000 and *El País* 17,000 views. *Le Parisien*, with only 500,000 subscribers, a seventh of the audience of *The New York Times*, and a third of *El País*, obtains great penetration and confirms the importance of the loyalty and habits of the audience it draws.

5.3 An approach to the monetization of the national press on YouTube

In the methodology section, progress has been made on the difficulty of approaching the figures for the income that the press obtains from YouTube due to the confidentiality implicit in the contracts of the American company and the lack of studies that offer more details in this regard. However, through interviews with Youtubers and journalists specialized in this platform —who have requested to remain

anonymous— it has been possible to approximate some figures that are considered sensible, although we do not have the exact data.

Monetization fluctuates depending on many variables involved, such as: space (geography), time (seasons, specific dates, holidays, etc.), the number of views obtained, the corporations behind the advertising that is inserted in the video, the technical characteristics of the audiovisual content (length), whether or not the media outlet has Player for Publishers on YouTube, etc. Despite the implicit variability, we can approximate amounts of CPM (Cost Per Thousand Impressions) that range between 2 and 7 euros; that is, for each visit to its content, the Spanish press on YouTube monetizes between 0.002 and 0.007 euros. Although this scale is broad, perhaps we could get closer to a more exact figure if we added that the newspapers that have Player for Publishers are monetizing more than the rest on YouTube, being in a range between 0.005 and 0.007 euros per visit. If we take these values as a reference, we would be granting the press that does not have Player for Publishers (*El HuffPost*, *elDiario.es*, *La Vanguardia*) a figure of, for example, 0.003 euros per visit. For their part, for those who use the YouTube player (*El País*, *El Mundo*, and *El Español*), if they were given 0.006 euros per visit, in twelve months, we would obtain the results of table 4.

Table 4. An approach to monetization by visits obtained from national newspapers on YouTube. The data of visits in twelve months has been extracted from the software of the marketing company Keyhole. On the other hand, the approximation to the economic benefit has been found through the interviews carried out.

YouTube	365 days views	Monetization
El País	49.637.457	297.825 €
El Mundo	116.296.914	697.781 €
La Vanguardia	66.454.752	199.364 €
El Español	3.539.561	21.237 €
elDiario.es	9.430.085	28.290 €
El HuffPost	3.511.127	10.533 €

Furthermore, it should be explained that *La Vanguardia* does not use YouTube's Player for Publishers because today they find greater economic benefit in the JW Player. This app has a VPAID (Video Player-Ad Interface Definition) technology very useful for advertising agencies and publishers, in general, because it makes it easier for them to incorporate interactive in-stream video ads and monitor campaigns. In this way, they open themselves to more advertising options than YouTube offers. Pau Rodríguez, CMO of *La Vanguardia*, has informed us that, in the future, the YouTube player may end up incorporating VPAID technology, thus opening the door to more advertising options and, therefore, of economic benefit for the creators of audiovisual content. They do something very similar in *El HuffPost* with their refusal to YouTube's Player for Publishers, as confirmed by its director Daniel Ventura, although we think that with fewer benefits than *La Vanguardia*.

5.4 ¿What will happen in the short and long term?

After having observed the figures that some of the newspapers are receiving for creating audiovisual content and hosting it on YouTube, —numbers that indicate that they will continue to grow due to the increase in publications but also due to the improvements that the platform will continue to undertake to attract more advertisers— these media have been asked about some issues that could shed a little more light on their future on this platform and, therefore, the evolution of their businesses in the short and long term.

The first question asked of these media was related to the type of player chosen to publish content on YouTube and has been dealt with in the previous section. The second question asked about the number of members of the audiovisual departments of each newspaper. Table 5 shows the employees who organize each section in these newspapers. In Spain, especially since 2015, the investment of the press in audiovisual content has been growing. In this process, they have been acquiring greater responsibilities

and sophisticating their techniques to generate higher quality content. As Miguel Sanz (YouTube responsible for 20 Minutos) argues, the current aspirations are to grow on YouTube by publishing higher quality content that can be seen in the present but whose viewing may also be of interest in the long term and that, therefore, keeps monetizing. Additionally, the investment in quality works as a differentiating object of the brand that therefore facilitates the acquisition of new followers or makes the ones they already have even more loyal.

Table 5. The number of employees in the audiovisual content creation department of each newspaper. Data found extracted from interviews with the media.

Newspapers	Vídeo
El País	14
La Vanguardia	6
El Mundo	12
El Español	7
El HuffPost	3
El HuffPost	3.511.127

In the analyzed international newspapers, the examples of the American newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, began to invest in video as of 2007, coming to form audiovisual creation departments with dozens of workers (Layton, 2008). A case study that has been taken as a starting point in the interviews carried out is that of the German newspaper *Bild*, which last year had more than one hundred and fifty professionals, including photographers and videographers (Senft, 2021). On August 22nd, this German media outlet notified its jump to television by free-satellite and online broadcasting. The main reason for this movement lies in its commitment to audiovisual content since, in 2020, eight of its ten most successful pieces were based on canned videos or live broadcasts (Granger, 2021). Concerning this case, we wanted to question the analyzed media about their business model in the short and medium-term, being aware of the annual increase in these publications and the growth of their audiovisual content creation departments. In this way, the third question urges them to reflect on the possible movements or changes that their companies could carry out in the short or medium term, thinking about the success that the creation of these types of pieces is reporting.

Taking these premises into account, the deputy director of *El Mundo*, Vicente Ruiz, affirms that "this was a thought that became widespread more than ten years ago when we believed that video was the future, however, the reality is different: the audience comes to newspapers to read and the use of video must always be justified". In this sense, this newspaper is one of those that are growing the most in the publication of audiovisual content and the incorporation of new employees in this section, however, its short and medium-term thoughts are to stay in the same line.

Carlos de Vega, deputy director of *El País*, comments that we are witnessing an evolution of video and that quality is more important than quantity. In this sense, he adds that he does not believe the *Bild* case will happen here because the press "looks towards subscription models and video content is also an element to get loyal followers. For this reason, the trend now is to differentiate them, offer high-quality content that cannot be found in other media. In this change, video platforms also arise, which can become the next ally of the press to distribute and produce audiovisual content".

Pau Rodríguez, CMO of *La Vanguardia*, confirms that, in the short and medium-term, the situation is going to be very similar. We will continue betting on audiovisual content and, therefore, this will grow as well as the economic benefits from monetization, especially if YouTube continues to implement improvements to attract more advertising and make it easier to host and play videos.

Mario Díaz, deputy director of *El Español*, states that they will continue to invest in YouTube in the short term because of the facilities it offers them and the quality of their videos, mainly because, for them, YouTube is a little-used channel. Being a relatively young media outlet, compared to much of its competition, they argue that they still have many fronts to cover and many things to improve but they

consider that there are long-term solutions in audiovisual content.

Daniel Ventura, director of *El HuffPost*, thinks that "their growth on YouTube has to do with everyone's first mission as editors: to reach as many people as possible. With the muscle we have, we try to create good content and for it to be seen and shared more and more". Similarly, he confirms that their earnings from views are negligible.

6. Discussion and conclusions

From the analysis carried out, it can be deduced that the use made by the Spanish press of YouTube represents a notable growth in investment. Furthermore, the newspapers *El Mundo*, *El País*, and *La Vanguardia* show significant figures in the number of publications and average monthly visits if we compare them with their international counterparts. This confirms the great commitment of the Spanish press to YouTube but also the publication of its audiovisual content on other social networks, such as Twitter; This platform has seen an increase in this type of content from 2018 to 2020 (Díaz-Lucena et al., 2022).

Thus, the preference of YouTube over another social network to host their audiovisual content is mainly due to two factors: 1) the features of the Player for Publishers (playback quality and content loading speed). Although this player is a tool that sets itself apart from its competitors, it is expected to improve even more in the coming years if VPAID technology is incorporated. An update that would attract more advertisers and that would translate into greater profitability for journalistic companies; 2) the relative simplicity and stability of the YouTube algorithm that simplifies the content monetization process, providing it with greater transparency compared to Facebook. This fact has prompted dozens of companies to turn to this social network to host their creations (Patel, 2018), as confirmed by interviews. All this has been accelerated by the Covid-19 socio-health crisis, which has caused a series of social changes that have had an impact on the increase in the consumption of information and entertainment in general on social networks, as stated in the 2020 Pew Research report, of which TikTok and YouTube have been its protagonists.

The third of the hypotheses has been answered by calculating the turnover obtained from YouTube, —ascertained through quantitative and qualitative techniques— and which confirms that 10% of the total income of many of the analyzed newspapers has not yet been reached, but the truth is that they begin to approach it. Although these data do not represent a considerable item in the income structure for the strengthening of the current journalistic model, it does ensure a commitment to its transformation. In this sense, the creation, specialization, and sophistication of units dedicated specifically to the production of audiovisual content (or the hiring of third parties for this task), has increased in this period as a result of the upward trend in profits. Apart from this, the impact of the reduction in the price of technology today should be highlighted, as it paves the way for access to the different recording, production, and broadcasting processes. For all these reasons, it becomes clear that the audiovisual content creation units of the press will continue to grow in Spain and their structure and organization will be more similar to television models, as is being observed in the international model if we look at some of its YouTube channels (*Figaro Live* or Washington Post Live) or the aforementioned case of the *Bild* newspaper, which last year launched a television news channel via satellite, cable, and online.

And, finally, the Spanish press does not contemplate in its future strategy that the movement carried out by the German newspaper *Bild* is a possible solution to the systemic crisis to which this sector is subjected. It follows from the analysis that their short and medium-term strategy will continue to be the creation of audiovisual content based on these requirements: optimization of monetization, the loyalty of the bases, the engagement of new subscribers, and branding.

In short, and while awaiting new contributions that illuminate the subject from other approaches, it can be stated that audiovisual content will gain prominence in newspapers in such a way that it will be key to the future business model, especially if three new scenarios are explored: increased investment in artificial intelligence, massive acquisition of advertisers on YouTube, and presence on video-on-demand platforms. All this implies improving management tools, changing the corporate culture of companies, and a strong push in their digital transformation.

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