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Video in the Spanish digital ‘press’: 2010-2015

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Abstract

Introduction: The use of video in online news media has become very important in recent years. These audiovisual pieces are fundamental for the new digital news media to attract the attention of readers. **Methods:** This article uses classic content analysis to examine the video production of five Spanish digital newspapers from 2010 to 2015. The analysis of the video production focuses on genres, formats, structures, origins and contents. **Results and conclusions:** The video production of the Spanish online news media, after a period of sustained growth, has become stagnated in recent years. The videos published by digital news media are moving away from the classical audiovisual narrative, firstly, because of the influence of the great presence of outsourced productions, which includes pieces that are very distant from the classic journalistic standards, and secondly, as a result of the trends in in-house video productions that seek originality and new narrative formulas.

Keywords

Video; digital journalism; online news media; audiovisual journalism.

Contents

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Translation by **CA Martínez-Arcos**
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1. Introduction

This article presents the results of the study of the video production of five Spanish digital news media: *abc.es*, *elconfidencial.com*, *elmundo.es*, *elpais.com* and *lavanguardia.com*. The objective is to examine a series of aspects (genres, formats, origin, narrative modes, structures, editing complexity, etc.) that are part of classical academic works about the journalistic message. In this case, the message is audiovisual, but is inserted in digital media, which can certainly lead, in addition to some methodological problems, to interesting findings in each one of the designated aspects.

The main objective of this study, therefore, is to characterise as journalistic products the videos published by the aforementioned digital news media in their home page. The focus here is on the video as a stand-alone piece, without taking into account aspects related to their integration with textual materials. This perspective will help us compare the videos published by the digital media with the videos presented by traditional television.

This research covers a large period to prevent the study from becoming a sort of photograph of a particular point in time. The first field work was carried out in November 2010 and the last in March 2015. The purpose is to provide analyses of different times (as videos do) to try to detect changes throughout these successive snapshots. Ultimately, we aim to observe the evolution of each of the issues under consideration over a five-year period.

The period of analysis is particularly important for the digital news media because it represents a phase of maturity in the management of the new possibilities offered by the digital media. The audiovisual language quickly found accommodation in the digital news media (Neuberger *et al.*, 1998; Schultz, 1999), but its development was slower than other basic features of online journalism (hypertextuality and interactivity). Some authors (Masip *et al.*, 2010; Fondevila Gascón, 2014) have pointed out that this delay has also resulted in a delayed and perhaps less deep analysis.

1.1. Theoretical framework

Most studies on online journalism (including Murray, 1999; Nielsen, 2000; Díaz Noci, 2001; Deuze, 2001 and 2004; Manovich, 2005; Salaverría, 2005; Canavilhas, 2007; Masip, 2010) highlight three basic issues: hypertextuality, interactivity and multimedia. During the last years some authors have added, as contribution of the possibilities of ICT to the linear printed narrative (Boczkowski, 2004: 21), the permanent updating and the personalisation of journalistic contents. Moreover, it has even been argued that the confluence of the codes enabled by multimediality is also a narrative possibility, although not a defining feature, of the new media digital (Deuze, 2003).

Multimediality has been analysed by researchers interested in describing the organisation of the different news-making and business models of journalistic companies, the tasks assigned to journalists and the consequences of technological changes in those functions. These authors tend to resort to the “ethnographic method”. Their contributions on the technological advances appeared at the end of the XX century (Cottle and Ashton, 1999) and have been developed over the last decade (Boczkowski, 2004; Williams and Franklin, 2007; Thurman and Lupton, 2009; Bock, 2012;

Lancaster, 2012). Works on the technical aspects related to multiplatform contents (Erdal, 2009) and the specific narrative features of each platform have proliferated in recent years. Within this same strand of research, others authors have studied multimediality as part of the research on journalistic convergence (Aquino *et al.*, 2002; Deuze, 2004; Micó, Masip and Barbosa, 2009; Masip, 2010).

As Masip *et al.* (2010) explain, a second group of researchers has focused on the analysis of the messages, leaving aside issues related to their production. These works (including Berry, 1999; Sundar, 2000) propose how to efficiently coordinate the different codes available. Some authors (Zamarra López, 2010) have pointed out that sounds and images allow viewers to feel as if they were witnessing the scene of the narrated events, although this does not necessarily translate into a better understanding of the events (Canavilhas, 2007, p. 62). In any case, it seems clear that the audiovisual grammar is not limited to the juxtaposition of textual and audiovisual elements (Deuze, 2001; Canavilhas, 2007; Micó and Masip, 2008).

This work is underpinned, at least in part, by a third line of research (including Neuberger *et al.*, 1998; Schultz, 1999; Greer and Mensing, 2006; Russial, 2009) that aims to measure the degree of development of the multimedia resources used in digital news media. To this end, the study uses classic content analysis. This means that, whenever possible, the study aims to quantify the development of audiovisual resources in the sample of digital news media under analysis. So far, some scholars have found that there has been a substantial and sustained growth of the video contents in online media (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Guallar, 2008; Micó and Masip, 2008; Guallar, Rovira, and Ruiz, 2010), but that this growth is still far from the possibilities offered by the new digital platforms (Russial, 2009). This approach has also been applied in the analysis of Spanish digital media (Marrero, 2008; Masip *et al.*, 2010; Masip, Micó and Meso, 2012; Cassany *et al.*, 2013), even to take quantifications as point of departure to perform analyses of the quality of these media (Fondevila Gascón, 2014).

1.2. Hypotheses

As mentioned, the videos disseminated by digital news media have been usually analysed in the framework of research on *multimediality*. However, this general approach, which is undoubtedly necessary, does not imply that we should not address the strictly audiovisual elements from a classical journalistic perspective. It is obvious that the new online media are not, nor can be, a mere “television on the web” (Bradshaw and Rohumaa, 2011:106), since the digital platform requires radical changes regarding the model of classic television journalism. Some authors even argue that there is already a new *video-journalism* (Bock, 2012; Lancaster, 2012; Marshall, 2012).

From this dual audiovisual and journalistic perspective, the study has formulated the following hypotheses: the videos disseminated by digital news media constitute an ideal setting for the analysis of the always complex coexistence between traditional journalistic approaches and new -less orthodox and perhaps more attractive- products that appeal to another logic. Given the enormous supply of videos (think platforms like YouTube), we can argue that digital media will use these new pieces, but at the same time will try to continue with the classic production, which is more attached to the audiovisual narrative typical of television.

As derived hypothesis is that this coexistence will have consequences on fundamental aspects for the analysis of the journalistic message: genres, formats, structures, type of narrative, coordination of codes, and even the contents themselves.

This work focuses on analysing the strictly audiovisual aspects, without dealing with other aspects of multimediality (e.g. it does not explore in details the relationship between the audiovisual pieces and the texts they accompany). However, this does not mean that the study dismisses the specificity of the new audiovisual narrative of the digital news media. The digital platform has created a new type of interaction, a new kind of communication and, ultimately, a new way of telling stories through words, images and sounds. This study is based on this hypothesis, which has already been formulated in other research works (for example, Cassany *et al.*, 2013).

The fourth hypothesis, in line with the results of previous research (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Guallar, 2008; Marrero, 2008; Micó and Masip, 2008; Guallar, Rovira and Ruiz, 2010; Masip *et al.*, 2010; Masip, Micó and Meso, 2012; Cassany *et al.*, 2013), proposes that the digital news media try to increase their offer of audiovisual content, especially in the most visible and accessible parts of their websites. This work aims to observe the evolution of the audiovisual production and to characterise the location of videos within the space provided by each news website.

2. Methods

The initial goal of this study was to analyse the audiovisual production of a representative group of Spanish digital news media. The sample selection is based on data provided by Comscore, an audience measurement company recommended by the Spanish Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), which represents the advertising industry in digital media in Spain, and the Spanish Association of Media Research (AIMC). We set a midpoint in the period of analysis and selected the five newspapers that at that time, in December 2012, had the largest number of pageviews. This metric provides more precision in comparison to the “unique users” metric, which is vaguer and often equivocal. However, the study does not deny the methodological validity of other possibilities (like, for example, using the “daily unique visitors” metric to consider the degree of loyalty of readers).

Data from Comscore led to the selection of the following five media: *abc.es*, *elconfidencial.com*, *elmundo.es*, *elpais.com* and *lavanguardia.com*. The next step consisted in determining the dates of the field work sessions. The study aimed to cover the period between 2010 and 2015. To facilitate the analysis and collection of information, the number of field work sessions was reduced from six to four. The most effective option was to establish two field work sessions at the beginning of that period and two other at the end (in the last months of 2010 and 2011, and in the first months of 2014 and 2015). This allowed us to observe changes in the mid-term, but also between very close intervals.

By means of a non-probabilistic random sampling, November was selected as the month to carry out the field works of 2010 and 2011, and March as the month to carry out the field works of 2014 and 2015. The specific dates were as follows: 2 to 15 November, 2010; 23 November to 5 December, 2011; 18 to 31 March, 2014; and 2 to 15 March, 2015. Changes of dates within the selected months

were made to ensure that in all cases there was a normal journalistic activity, without extraordinary events that could alter the results.

This study opted for a quantitative methodology and in particular for content analysis to carry out the systematic examination of the number of videos published on the home page and the issues or basic contents of those audiovisual works; the location and the type of production (or authorship) of these videos; the formats and genres employed; the type of narratives and structures employed; the coordination of the different codes; and the degree of involvement of each media in the development of the audiovisual pieces they disseminate.

Table 1 shows all the variables examined during the research. The following table includes categories (labels, types of shots, and presentation of the author, for example) that not will be discussed in this text because they were not examined in the four field work sessions. In order to make the results comparable, we avoided introducing methodological changes to the aspects addressed in this study.

Table 1. Research variables

DATE:	
MEDIUM:	
GENRE	News report, interpretive news article/report (known as <i>crónica</i> in Spanish journalism), interview, feature story, fragment of programme, others
FORMAT	Short News Clip (known as VTR in Spain), News-related footage (known as COLAS in Spain), On-camera commentary (known as TOTALES in Spain), News-related images + on-camera commentary, Video clip, Other.
LOCATION	LOC 1, LOC 2, LOC 3.
DURATION	
ORIGIN	In-house production, news agencies, others
GENERAL THEME	International, national, economy, society, music, culture, cinema, football, other
SPECIFIC TOPIC	
TYPE OF STRUCTURE	Inverted pyramid, scattered pyramid, expository, argumentative, chronological narrative, other.
Start of text	[For qualitative analysis]
End of text	[For qualitative analysis]

Internal elements	[For qualitative analysis: structural function]
EDITING COMPLEXITY	In-out, basic, grade 1, grade 2
PRESENTATION OF AUTHOR	On screen, in banner, other
NARRATION TYPE	With off-camera commentary, with on-camera commentary, without off-camera nor on-camera commentary, Other
SHOTS	
BANNERS	
Types of banners	Thematic, identification, temporary, subtitles, informative, others
CODE COORDINATION	- Partial or total hierarchy - Partial or total complementarity
Observations	
On-camera commentary	
Resources of interest	
Other	

Source: Authors' own creation.

Only one registration was performed during the eight weeks of analysis. In the fieldwork sessions of 2010 and 2011 two registrations were performed per day: at 11:00 and 21:00 hours. In 2014 and 2015 the double registration was cancelled because we verified that the presence of videos in the analysed home pages exceeded twelve hours and that the double analysis only provided duplicated data about the videos already registered. That is why the second registrations performed in 2010 and 2011 were not taken into account in the study. In all cases, only one person was responsible for registering the data.

The following sections explain specific methodological decisions. However, it is important to provide an initial explanation on at least four issues here: the location of videos, the structure models, the coordination of codes and the types of editing. For other variables such as formats and genres we used the categories commonly used in the specialised literature (including García Jiménez, 1993; Oliva and Sitjà, 1992; Vale, 1996; Prósper and López, 1998; Cebrián Herreros, 1998; Gordillo, 1999; Pérez, 2003; Selinger, 2008; Canet and Prósper, 2009; Mas Manchón, 2011).

With respect to the location of the videos, we sought to establish three categories that enabled the comparison of web pages with very different internal extension and organisation. For this purpose, the home pages were divided in three bands: "Location 1" ("L1" in graphics), which refers to the all

columns available, from left to right, in the uppermost third of the home page; “Location 2” (“L2”), which refers to the central section of the vertical scroll bar; and “Location 3”, which represents the lowest third part of the screen. This categorisation does not distinguish between input and output columns, nor establishes a very accurate division as it would have resulted with a division of each website, for example, into five or six sections. However, it brings clarity and simplicity to the fundamental objective: to determine whether the videos are placed in the most visible and valued areas (“location 1”) or, on the contrary, they are placed in the final section of the home pages (“location 3”).

The analysis of the structures was performed with some of the classic categories: “inverted pyramid”, “scattered pyramid”, “chronological”, “argumentative” and “narrative”. The “expository” category was added after it was observed that the digital news media often used videos which presented images in a sequential order but did not formulate a conclusion (as it usually occurs in the “argumentative” structure) or an ending (as usually happens in the “narrative” structure).

It is not easy to study the different types of combinations of codes that converge in the audiovisual message. It is even more difficult to carry out this study without abandoning the quantitative approach that underpins this study. This work has resorted to a classification already used for videos of television news programmes (Mayoral, 2008: 184; Benaissa, 2012: 202-227). Simplifying as far as possible the original theoretical approach, we set out four types of relations between the linguistic code (usually converted into sound) and the iconic code. “Type 1” relation refers to total hierarchical relations (one read out news story or one image without any text). The “type 2” corresponds to the partial hierarchical relationships in which the protagonism is given to the text (and the image assumes an illustrative function) or to the image (in which case the text has an explanatory function). The “Type 3” refers to the relationship of perfect complementarity (absolute balance between codes). Finally, the “type 4” represents an imperfect complementarity (subsidiarity between text and image).

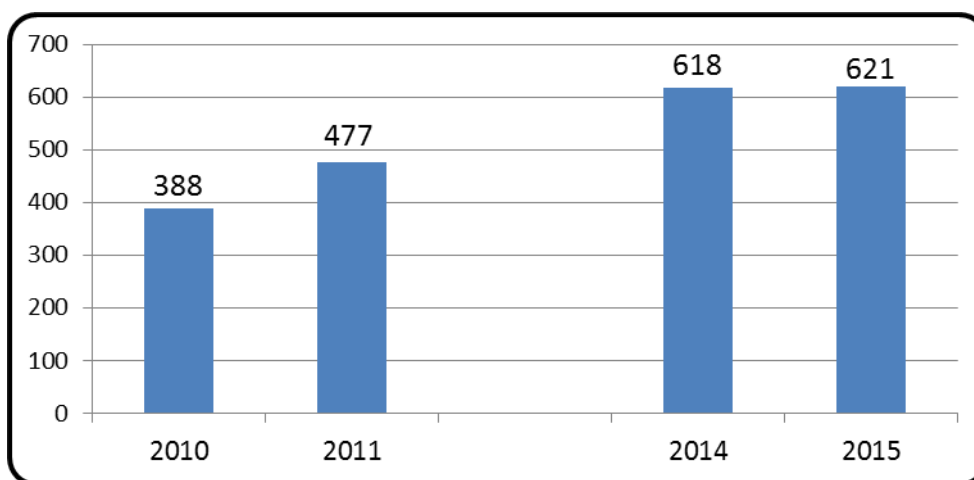
With regards the type of editing, which is intended to reflect the complexity of the editing process, we used the following categories: “in-out” (mere reproduction or copy, with no editing at all); “Basic” (up to seven editing actions); “grade 1” (between 7 and 15 editing actions); and “grade 2” (more than 15 editing actions). The “Basic” editing category reflects a degree of editing complexity equivalent to a 25 to 30 second-long piece of news-related footage. “Grade 1” editing refers to a complexity level equivalent to a 50-60 second-long video. “Grade 2” editing refers to a level of complexity greater than the previous types. “Editing actions” should be understood as any in or out order during the editing process, or any shot changes in the audiovisual pieces.

3. Results

As mentioned, this study aims to analyse the videos posted on the home page of five Spanish digital news media for eight weeks. The ultimate aim was to document the evolution of their audiovisual production from 2010 to 2015. The four field work sessions involved the analysis of more than 5,250 minutes (or 87 hours and a half) of audiovisual material. A total of 2,104 videos were analysed. This means an average of 5.5 videos per newspaper per day. The average length of the videos was two minutes and twenty seconds.

Figure 1 shows that the audiovisual production increased in a steady manner from 2010 to 2014, but became stagnated in 2015. In 2011, the number of videos published on the home page of the digital news media increased 22.94% in comparison to the previous year. The following field work sessions revealed an even greater increase (29.56%), but it covered a much larger period (28 months, instead of the 12 months that passed between the first and second field work sessions). The novelty, therefore, occurred at the end of the five years: the number of videos detected in March 2014 (618) remained almost the same in March 2015 (621), which breaks the trend of growth in the audiovisual production observed during the previous years (59.28% if we compare data from 2010 and 2014).

Figure 1. Video production of the five digital news media



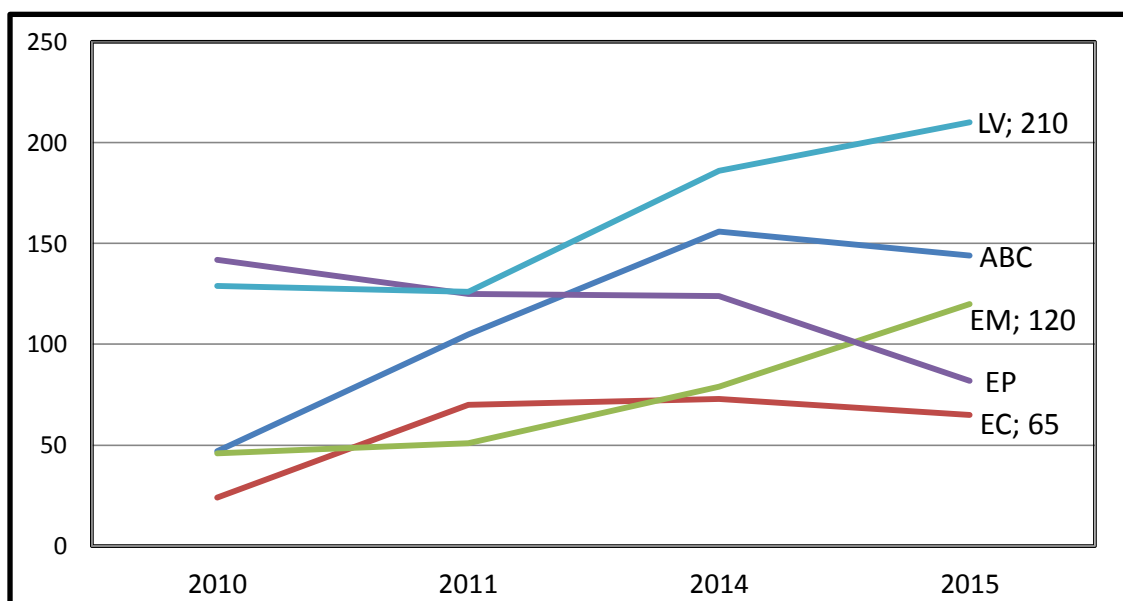
Source: Authors' own creation.

It is worth reviewing the particular behaviour of each of selected media, because not all of them followed the same route. A similar pattern, although with very different starting points, is shown by *lavanguardia.com* (“LV” on figures and tables) and *elmundo.es* (“EM”). In both cases, as shown in figure 2, growth intensified between 2011 and 2015, but in 2015 growth slowed down in *lavanguardia.com* and intensified in *elmundo.es*. Both *elconfidencial.com* (“EC” in figures and tables) and *abc.es* (“Abc”) registered substantial increases in production between 2010 and 2011 (191% and 123%, respectively). However, *elconfidencial.com* changed its strategy afterwards, which helped it to maintain production in the following two years and to descend slightly (from 73 to 65 videos) in the last year of analysis. In *abc.es* the change occurs between 2014 and 2015, with a drop of almost 7%.

The case of *elpais.com* (“EP”) is very unique. In 2010 it published 142 videos on its home page. In 2011 there is a considerable setback (125 videos). The field work in 2014 revealed a stagnation (124 videos), but the field work of 2015 showed a significant decline (82 pieces), which largely explains the stagnation of the video production of the five media in that last year of analysis. It is important to remark that in 2015 the audiovisual section of *elpais.com* was going through a phase of restructuring and redefinition of objectives. However, and at the margin of other possible explanations, it is important to pay attention to what happened in the sports section: in 2010 it published in the home page 43 videos related with football (as a result of the alliances achieved by PRISA group to obtain the rights to broadcast these images), while in 2015 it only dedicated three videos to the same topic.

Table 2 provides more detailed information on the topics of the 2,104 registered videos. Some of the categories listed there (“Football”, “Music” and “Cinema”) have been used just to show to what extent the medium chose to post certain content or simply used the audiovisual material that was easy to access. Similar to the case of *elpais.com* and its videos about football could be said in relation to music or cinema, except that in these cases the producers or distributors continue to provide those materials (in the form of video clip or trailer) to the media. However, the loss of protagonism of these two categories is undeniable: cinema went from 15.21% of the whole sample of 2010 to 4.83% in 2015, while music went from 7.46% to 1.93% in the same period.

Figure 2. Evolution of the video production of the digital news media



Source: Authors’ own creation.

The use of the categories “cinema” and “music”, therefore, allowed us to see the evolution of a type of video that can be integrated naturally into the “culture” category, but that presents unique characteristics regarding its (external) production and (free) distribution. It is important to note the weight of these two sections (7.46% and 15.21% in 2010) and compare it with the rest of the cultural activities (6.19% in 2010 and just 1.45% in 2015). However, in both cases, “Cinema” and “Music”, there is a gradual loss of protagonism as the five-year period of analysis progressed.

The “Society” section captures between 25% and nearly 30% of the videos in all the field work sessions. No of the classic journalistic section comes close, unless “Cinema”, “Music” and “Culture” are grouped together in a single category in 2010 (29.86%). In 2015 the only category that comes close, and with a distance of more than ten percentage points, is the “national” section (15.46%), whose increase is due in good measure to the increase in the production from news agencies.

In any case, the most striking data is found in the last category included in table 2. The “other” section contains 17.53% of the 388 videos registered in 2010. In view of such results, we considered it was a methodological error to have included in the category of “others” the videos related with sports other than football. It would have been better to act in the same way we did with the “music”,

“cinema” and “culture” categories: it would had been convenient to add the “sports” category (or others sports, actually) to register the videos of motoring, motorcycling and tennis. This nuance would have allowed us to be more precise.

Table 2. Themes of the analysed videos

	2010	2011	2014	2015
International	23 (5.93%)	15 (3.15%)	48 (7.77%)	48 (7.73%)
National	21 (5.41%)	43 (9.01%)	81 (13.11%)	96 (15.46%)
Society	98 (25.26%)	123 (25.79%)	182 (29.45%)	164 (26.41%)
Economy	7 (1.80%)	10 (2.10%)	23 (3.72%)	21 (3.38%)
Music	29 (7.46%)	24 (5.03%)	31 (5.02%)	12 (1.93%)
Cinema	59 (15.21%)	66 (13.84%)	43 (6.96%)	30 (4.83%)
Culture	24 (6.19%)	28 (5.87%)	19 (3.07%)	9 (1.45%)
Football	59 (15.21%)	68 (14.25%)	73 (11.81%)	42 (6.76%)
Other	68 (17.53%)	100 (20.96%)	118 (19.09%)	199 (32.05%)

Source: Authors' own creation.

Anyways, the videos about other sports -aside from football- were very scarce and do not justify the weight achieved by this latter category. The protagonism of the “Other” category should be explained according to very different arguments. This category encompasses audiovisual materials

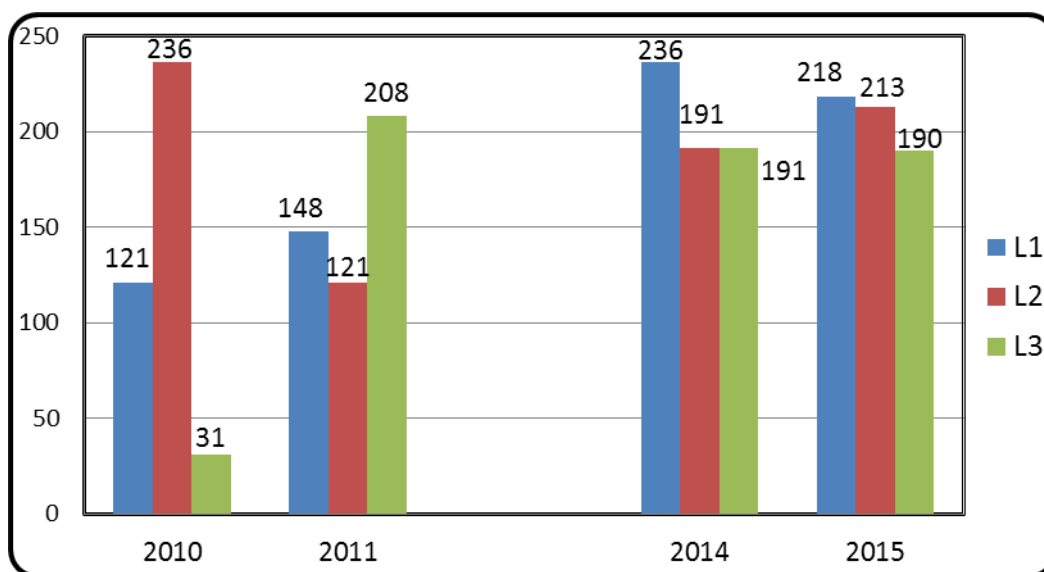
whose common feature is precisely their distancing from journalistic canons, both in terms of form and content. They are videos basically meant to catch readers’ attention, arouse their curiosity and generate visits through social networks. That is why they are unclassifiable under classic journalistic criteria such as those used in table 2 (or the ones that will be used later in relation to genres and formats): a family video posted on YouTube, an advertisement, a fragment of a television programme, or shocking, bizarre or cute video recordings. Which section is right for the video of a cat escaping from its cage or a video about a fight between mascots in a baseball game (*elconfidencial.com*, 20 March 2014 and 26 November 2011)?

3.1. Location and origin of videos

Figure 3 shows that the digital news media changed their strategy during the five-year period of analysis. The two first field work sessions (2010 and 2011) showed very noticeable imbalances in the location of the videos. For starters, the disproportion of videos found in the three defined locations was surprising, just like the changes experienced within just twelve months. The “Location 3”, for example, is almost residual in 2010 (not even reaching 8% of the total sample of videos), but a year later it captured 40.60% of all the videos published in the home page.

At least three reasons may explain such mismatches. First, as mentioned, we are in a phase in which the digital news media are increasing very significantly their video production. This is a phase of experimentation, of ongoing trials. Secondly, the final data obtained depend largely on the place in which video libraries are usually located. In the case of *elpais.com* and *lavanguardia.com*, which published the largest number of videos in 2010 and 2011, those libraries were gradually moved to “location” 3, towards the lowest section of the home page. Finally, we have to bear in mind that the video production of news agencies was even lower (18.81% in 2010, as it will be discussed later), which meant that purely journalistic news, located almost always in “location 1”, not always could be complemented with videos.

Figure 3. Location of videos in home page



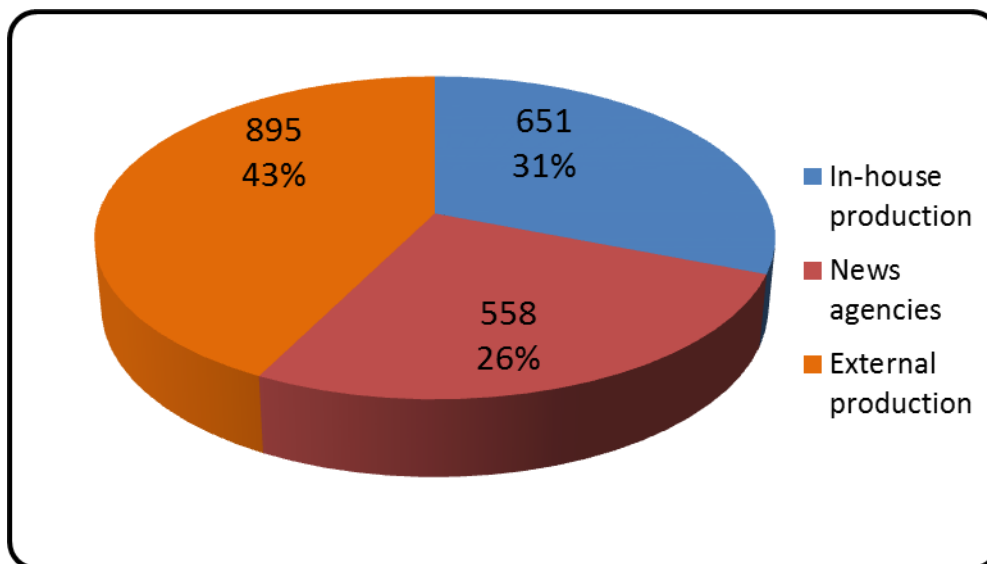
Source: Authors' own creation.

The data corresponding to 2014 and to 2015 have a very different distribution, as shown in Figure 3. The digital news media have understood that video is not a trick to attract people's attention towards contents that have lost freshness or transcendence. These media have also understood that videos should not be stored in repositories, since they are useful and attractive resources in any corner of the web page. Even now that the video production of news agencies has grown to almost 30% in "location 1", in which the main news stories are located.

Of the five media under analysis, perhaps the most striking case is *elconfidencial.com*: in 2010, it placed 87.5% of its videos on "location 3" (almost always anecdotal or sensationalist materials extracted from YouTube), but in 2015 60% of its audiovisual offer was placed in "location 1" to accompany the most relevant and innovative news pieces. This meant that in this period the eye-catching video, understood more as a hook or lure, loses protagonism and gradually gave way to the video with full informative capacity. However, other newspapers have followed different trends: for example, in 2014 and 2015, anecdotal and eye-catching videos became the protagonist of the home pages of *lavanguardia.com*, which in previous years were reserved for classic journalistic videos.

In terms of the type of production, the selected digital news media showed a clear preference for external productions. News media's own video production does not even represent one of three published videos. Figure 4 distinguishes between "external production" and "news agency videos". Actually, these two subgroups are part of what is usually called "outsourced production", and together represent 69% of the 2,104 detected videos. The largest part of the videos published were external productions (43%), which had many noticeable consequences on the issues that will be discussed later.

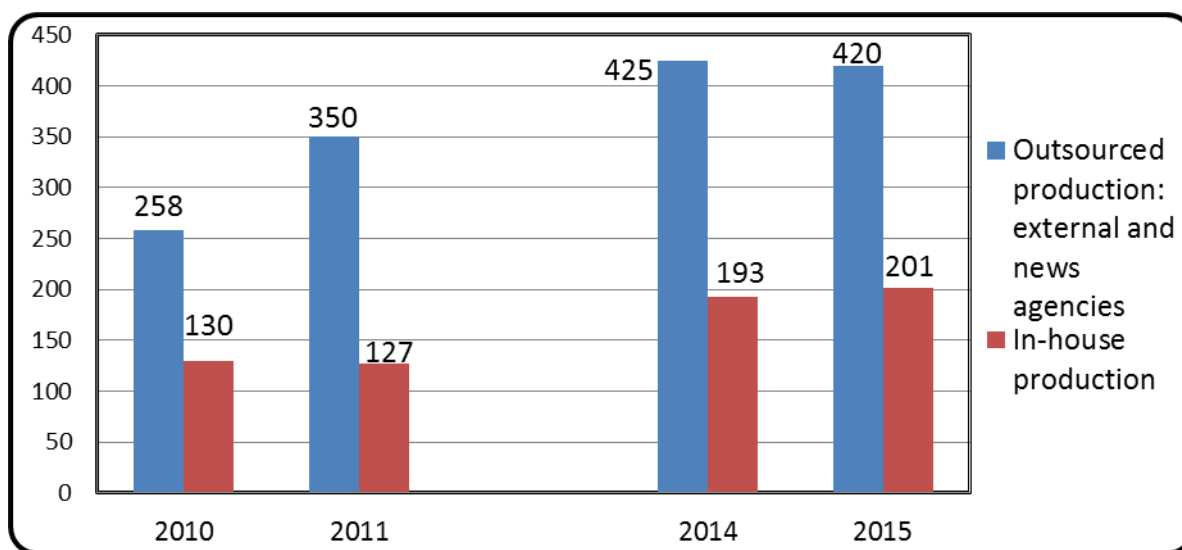
Figure 4. Origin of the videos published by the five digital news media



Source: Authors' own creation.

Figure 5, unlike the previous one, brings together in a single category the videos of news agencies and the rest of the outsourced productions to better show the weight of each type of production and examine the evolution of the data throughout the period of analysis. The correlation of forces is unbalanced in favour of foreign productions, in 2011. The last two field work sessions revealed a timid recovery of in-house productions, although in 2015 the ground lost during these five years had not been recovered yet.

Figure 5. Evolution of the video production of the analysed media



Source: Authors' own creation.

In-house productions represented 33.51% of the video production of the five analysed media in 2010 (see table 3). A year after, in-house productions had fallen to 26.62%, particularly due to the increase of almost 7% of videos from news agencies. In the final year of the five-year period of analysis there was a considerable drop (close to 8%) of external production, while videos from news agencies reached 30.58% and finally descended slightly. This perspective shows that in-house production decreased more than one point (33.51% to 32.37%) and that news agencies' video production has stolen almost eight percentage points from the rest of the external production.

Table 3. Evolution of the different types of production

	2010	2011	2014	2015
External production	185 (47.68%)	227 (47.59%)	236 (38.19%)	247 (39.77%)
News agencies	73 (18.81%)	123 (25.79%)	189 (30.58%)	173 (27.86%)
In-house	130	127	193	201

production	(33.51%)	(26.62%)	(31.23%)	(32.37%)
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Source: Authors' own creation.

Each one of the media under study follows its own particular route in this regard. In *elconfidencial.com*, for example, the increase of in-house productions is spectacular: in 2010 it did not publish a single in-house video, but in 2015 it published 33 (50% of its total production). Also remarkable is the case of *elmundo.es*, whose own production grew from 13 videos in 2010 (28.26% of the 46 counted that year) to 58 in 2015 (48.26%). In contrast, *lavanguardia.com* decreased its in-house productions by almost 40% (going from 64.34% in 2010 to 24.76% in 2015).

3.2. Genres and formats

The journalistic genre that predominates in the videos of digital news media is the news report genre. The predominance of the news report genre is confirmed throughout the five-year period of analysis. In the final section of this period the news report genre even reinforced its protagonist role: in 2014 one of every two registered videos was news reports. In 2015 the percentage of news-videos dropped slightly (about 3%), but its distance from the rest of journalistic genres continued to be huge. The feature story is 35.75 percentage points behind the news report, followed by the interpretive news article, the interview and the opinion genres.

Table 4. Journalistic genres used in the videos

	2010	2011	2014	2015
News report	143 (36.86%)	206 (43.19%)	311 (50.32%)	292 (47.02%)
Interpretive news article	45 (11.6%)	39 (8.18%)	20 (3.24%)	32 (5.15%)
Interview	19 (4.9%)	14 (2.93%)	27 (4.37%)	28 (4.51%)
Feature story	43 (11.08%)	54 (11.32%)	82 (13.27%)	70 (11.27%)
Opinion	28 (7.22%)	23 (4.82%)	19 (3.07%)	8 (1.29%)
Fragment of TV programme	40	36	18	36

	(10.30%)	(7.55%)	(2.91%)	(5.80%)
Other	70	105	141	155
	(18.04%)	(22.01%)	(22.82%)	(24.96%)

Source: Authors' own creation.

Table 4 reveals that the interpretive news article and the interview ended having a similar weight (close to 5% of the published videos), although the first with a noticeable wear and the second with a remarkable stability. The interpretive news article, in fact, started constituting 11.96% of the sample in 2010 and finished with less than half (5.15%). The interview, however, fluctuated between 3% and 5%, with minimal variations in various field work sessions. Stability is the main characteristic of the feature story, whose presence was very similar, about 11%, from 2010 to 2013 and in 2015, and only changed (very slightly) in 2014.

Based on the data provided in Table 4, it seems that the feature story genre plays a secondary role, but it does not if we compare it with the results of the rest of genres as if they were typical television videos. Let's consider in this regard the number of feature stories broadcast by an orthodox television news programme and evaluate, therefore, the proportion of news reports and feature stories. In the case of digital news media about one feature story is published for every five news. It would be very complicated to find a similar proportion in any conventional television news programmes, where news stories are predominant and feature stories are hardly present.

The opinion genres have been losing strength every year. They started representing 7.22% of the sample in 2010, but in 2015 -after a sustained and very regular decline- these genres were relegated to an almost residual role (1.28%). The main victim of this fall is the *videoblog*, which first lost visibility in the pages of some digital news media (in *elmundo.es* and *elpais.com*, for example) and then took refuge in the pages of the "opinion" section or completely disappeared.

The last two categories included in Table 4 refer to videos that cannot be included in the classic journalistic genres. First, a significant percentage of videos (10.30% in 2010 and 5.80% in 2015) are mere fragments of TV programmes. Second, there is an outstanding protagonism of the "other" category: 471 or 22,39% of the 2,104 videos. To understand this result it is necessary to relate the behaviour of this category with the data shown in Table 2 and Table 5. In all the cases the "other" section represents between 25% and 35% of the sample. As shown in Table 2, this category encompasses heterogeneous audiovisual materials whose common denominator is the remoteness from the journalistic narrative: they are picturesque, eye-catching and flashy videos that are unclassifiable because they do not follow the structure of the classic journalistic narrative.

Table 5. Journalistic formats of the video production

	2010	2011	2014	2015
Short news clip	200	174	254	257
	(51.55%)	(36.48%)	(41.10%)	(41.38%)

News-related footage	20 (5.15%)	42 (8.80%)	46 (7.44%)	43 (6.92%)
On-camera commentary	27 (6.96%)	41 (8.59%)	62 (10.04%)	55 (8.86%)
News-related footage + On-camera commentary	16 (4.12%)	13 (2.72%)	13 (2.10%)	6 (0.97%)
Video clip	38 (9.79%)	90 (18.87%)	79 (12.78%)	47 (7.57%)
Other	87 (22.42%)	117 (24.53%)	164 (26.54%)	213 (34.30%)

Source: Authors' own creation.

The “other” section also stands out in Table 5 and in this case encompasses videos whose format is different to the one usually employed in journalism: short news clips, news-related footage and on-camera commentary, mainly. Before the first field work session, we thought that this category would serve to classify the live and near live broadcasts. However, the truth is that the “other” category (581 pieces) thrives on very heterogeneous videos that are beyond any kind of classification made according to journalistic criteria, from semi-edited videos from news agencies (which aim to facilitate the work to the media) to unedited home videos taken from video-sharing platforms like YouTube.

As for the classic formats, the short news clip represents 42.06% of the total video production. News-related footage, which is widely used in television news programmes, faces the difficulty of almost never having the support of live presenters, which significantly limits their informational use. Hence, in the five year-period of analysis this format did not even reach 8% of the video production. The combination of “News-related footage + on-camera commentary”, which is so common in television news programmes, barely appears in the digital news media (2.28% of the whole video production, but with a decline that ends in 0.97% in 2015). The video clip, usually associated with music or cinema contents, reached 18.87% in 2011, but its use became moderated in the following years, decreasing to 7.57% in 2015. This is, however, a significant percentage: 12.07% of the 2,104 analysed videos, behind the short news clip, but ahead on-camera commentary (8.79%).

3.3. Types of narratives, structures and codes

As happens in television news programmes, in the digital news media on-camera commentary may appear autonomously (or accompanying other formats, such as news-related footage). In this case on-camera commentary is used as another format, and that is how it has been treated in the previous

section. In the four fieldwork sessions we collected 233 videos in the form of on-camera commentary and “News-related footage + on-camera commentary”. However, on-camera commentary may be also located inside of a short news clip. In this case, on-camera commentary is not considered to be a format in itself, but an element which is integrated in the structure of the short news clip. Understood in this way (not as autonomous formats, but as statements of actors included in short news clips), there were 3,403 on-camera commentaries/participations in the registered videos.

To confirm the growing importance of the use of on-camera commentary in short news clips we only have to see at the evolution of this resource in the four data collection sessions: 453 (in 2010), 768 (in 2011), 1046 (in 2014) and 1136 (in 2015). This format is important also in qualitative terms because it has allowed digital news media to materialise an uncommon type of narration in other audiovisual media: the short news clip without off-camera commentary or voice-over. This narrative formula represents 21.70% of the group of structured videos (918). The classic short news clip with off-camera commentary represent 56.97%, while the video without off-camera commentary and without on-camera commentary occupies the third position with 17.32%.

The qualitative importance of the short news clip with on-camera commentary and without voice-over was highlighted because this narrative modality has become ingrained in the feature stories produced by the digital news media. Somehow this formula identifies the new digital narrative, in contrast to a classic audiovisual narrative much more tied to voice-over. The short news clip produced by news agencies often uses traditional narration, but the short news clip produced by the digital news media (particularly *elpais.com*, *elmundo.es* and *lavanguardia.com*) privilege the combination of on-camera commentary, images (with ambient sound) and banners with essential additional information.

As explained in the methods section, this work distinguishes four types of relationships between codes. The audiovisual narrative of classic television knows well those four possibilities (Barroso, 1992: 242; Prósper and López, 1998: 23-24; Benaissa, 2012: 224). However, some variants are acceptable as long as they allow us to inform the when it is not possible to do it otherwise. This is what happens, for example, with a news that is read out. It is preferable to offer an important news without a single image than to silence that news while the first images arrive. Other combinations of codes, on the other hand, are sought after with passion. This is the case of the perfect complementarity that almost any type of feature story aims to achieve. Thus, the relationships of “Type 3” and “Type 4” codes (in that order) are preferred by the classic audiovisual narrative.

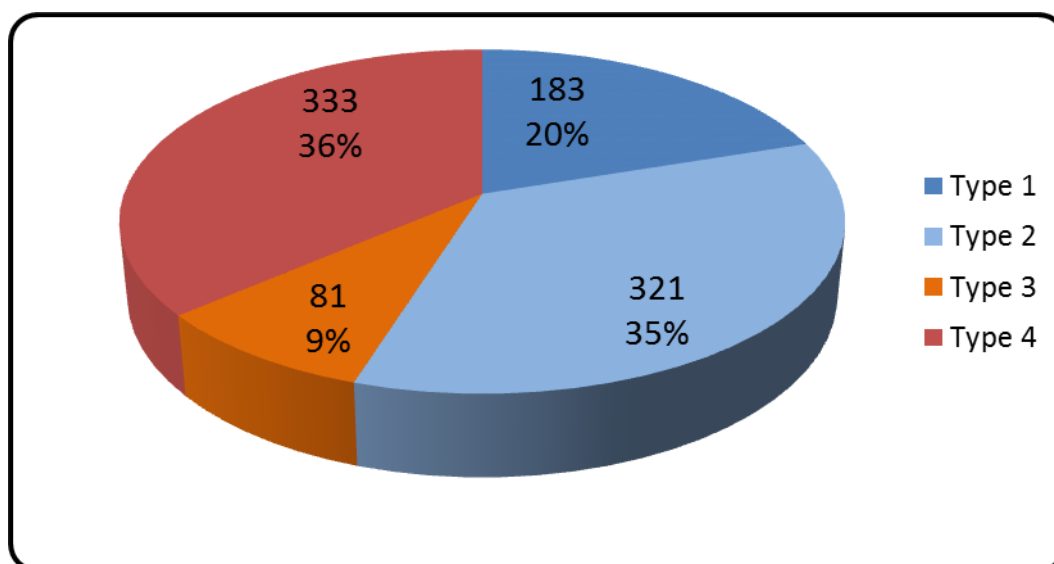
Figure 6 shows that hierarchical relationships dominate clearly on the analysed videos disseminated by the digital news media, which can be interpreted as a symptom of poor preparation or certain precipitation in the editing process. The “type 1”, whose rarity in television news programmes was already underlined, represented 20% of the sample. The “Type 2” (partial hierarchical relationships) is located at the level than the “type 4” (imperfect complementary relations), with 35% of all the videos with a recognisable structure.

The most sought after type of relationship of codes, the “type 3” (perfect complementarity), not even represents 10% of the videos considered in Figure 6. In the vast majority of cases these pure complementary relationships are documented in the in-house feature stories. It is not surprising that the medium that provides the largest number of “type 3” videos (60 of the 81 videos in Figure 6) is *lavanguardia.com*, and neither that it happened especially in 2010 (29 “type 3” videos), precisely at

the moment it produced its greatest share of in-house video productions (almost 64%). In 2015, the in-house production of *lavanguardia.com* had declined to 24.76% and at that time its production of “type 3” videos fell to 13.

The in-house video production model, especially in relation to feature stories, opts for a type of structure that has grown significantly between 2010 and 2015 and that we have called “Expository”. It essentially consists of a classification of content that establishes a sequence or series of elements: *first this, then that, later that, then the third point*, and so on. As shown in Table 6, videos with a “Expository” structure did not reach 10% of the videos collected in the field work of 2010 but by 2015 they represented more than 21% of the video production. And what is more important: this type of structure became clearly dominant over other structural options.

Figure 6. Types of coordination of codes



Source: Authors’ own creation.

The usual journalistic formulas (“inverted pyramid” and “scattered pyramid”) have also gained ground. In 2010, these formulas were present in around 12% of the video production while in 2015 they surpassed 18%. This increase is explained largely by the increase in the production of news agencies (about 9% during that period, as was under 3.1), which often use these structural formulas based on a descending ordering of the information of interest. It is important to remember that, unlike what happens in traditional television, in digital media viewers can stop watching the video when they consider they have had enough information, which undermines the usefulness of this type of pyramidal structures.

Table 6. Types of structures used in videos

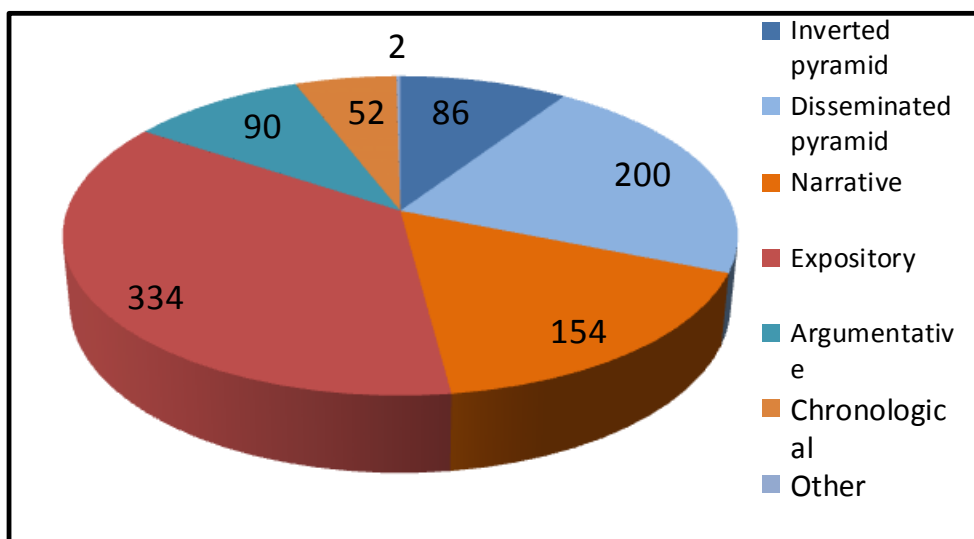
	2010	2011	2014	2015
Inverted pyramid	15	9	34	28

	(3.87%)	(1.89%)	(5.50%)	(4.51%)
Scattered pyramid	32 (8.25%)	31 (6.50%)	53 (8.58%)	84 (13.53%)
Narrative	28 (7.22%)	40 (8.38%)	48 (7.77%)	38 (6.12%)
Expository	38 (9.79%)	47 (9.85%)	114 (18.45%)	135 (21.73%)
Argumentative	37 (9.54%)	27 (5.66%)	17 (2.75%)	9 (1.45%)
Chronological	5 (1.28%)	3 (0.63%)	38 (12.5%)	6 (0.97%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.32%)

Source: Authors' own creation.

Table 6 shows that the “Narrative” structure, which aims to tell a story according to a more literary model, has remained very stable, always present in around 7% of the video productions. The “Argumentative” structure, on the other hand, started being present in almost 10% of the video productions in 2010, but its presence dropped to 1.45% in 2015. The “Chronological” structure, which is so prevalent, for example, in the interpretive news reports (*crónicas* in Spanish) presented in television news programmes, only stood out in the field work carried out in 2014. As we can see in Figure 7, which presents data about the whole sample, the chronological sorting of the narrative is present in 6% of the structured videos, behind the “Argumentative” structure (9.8%) and the “inverted pyramid” (9.37%), and even further behind the “scattered pyramid” (21.78%), the “Narrative” (16.77%) and the “Expository” (36.38%).

Figure 7. Types of structures used in videos



Source: Authors' own creation.

In any case, it should be pointed out that both table 6 and figure 7 accounted for the videos in which any kind of structure was identified. The problem is that most of the examined videos do not have any kind of structure, neither journalistic or extra-journalistic. Here it is worth adding that the data corresponding to these videos (unedited, semi-edited, sequence shots that can last up to five minutes, amateur unedited videos, etc.) in which the audiovisual materials are presented in a hasty manner: 233 in 2010 (60.05%); 320 in 2011 (67.09%); 314 in 2014 (50.80%); and 319 in 2015 (51.37%). Therefore, unstructured videos represent 56.37% of the sample of videos.

Table 7. Types of editing

	2010	2011	2014	2015
In-out	196 (50.52%)	288 (60.38%)	219 (35.43%)	243 (39.13%)
Basic	60 (15.46%)	54 (11.32%)	127 (20.55%)	76 (12.24%)
Grade 1	52 (13.40%)	50 (10.48%)	86 (13.92%)	13 (2.09%)
Grade 2	80 (20.62%)	85 (17.82%)	186 (30.10%)	289 (46.54%)

Source: Authors' own creation.

Table 7 provides another view of the low level of complexity of the sample of videos. In 44.96% of the 2,104 collected videos the digital news media only copy a video (or offers a link to the video) without adding a single editing action. Together, the categories “in-out” and “Basic” (up to seven editing actions) are present in 60% of the sample of videos. It is clear that these two categories have lost force during the five-year period of study and that the “Grade 2” category has grown remarkably (more than 25%). However, even in 2015 “Basic” level editing, which is very common in the shortest videos of television news programmes, was only present in less than half of the videos.

4. Discussion and conclusions

This study has found a significant increase in the video production of the digital news media under analysis, in line with the fourth research hypothesis and the findings of previous studies (Greer and Mensing, 2006; Guallar, 2008; Marrero, 2008; Micó and Masip, 2008; Guallar, Rovira and Ruiz, 2010; Masip *et al.*, 2010; Masip, Micó and Meso, 2012; Cassany *et al.*, 2013). Some scholars have noted that this growth could be even higher (Russial, 2009). However, this study has found a significant change in trend in the last section of the study period (2010-2015): there was an increase of about 25% in video production between 2010 and 2014, but there was a clear stagnation in video production in 2015 (when the growth was less than 0.5%).

With regards to the contents, there is a predominance of the themes usually covered in the “society” section (26.95% of the sample), which are way more common than contents from the “national” section (11.45%). There is an outstanding protagonism of copyrighted contents (“Football”, for example, is the protagonist of 11.45% of the sample of videos) and promotional contents (together “Music” and “Cinema” represent 13.97% of the sample). The most striking finding, even though it has been already pointed out in other studies (Díaz Arias, 2009: 68; Masip, 2010: 183; Peer and Ksiazek, 2011: 45-63) and was expected by the second research hypothesis, is the relevance of contents that are unclassifiable from a journalistic viewpoint: the “Other” category represents 23.05% of the sample. This category encompasses all kinds of strange or sensationalist videos that are aimed to go viral across social networks.

The first and third research hypotheses insisted on the specificities of the videos disseminated by digital news media that are derived from the singular nature of the new digital platform. In this regard, it is interesting to see how the digital news media have changed their strategy with respect to the location of their videos on their home pages. The first fieldwork sessions detected rapid changes in the preferred locations for videos (as if the media were experimenting) and great imbalance in the number of videos found in each location. However, in the last part of the study period there is a much more balanced distribution of videos and the digital media seem to have decided to offer videos throughout the entire web page, avoiding the video libraries that were used to collect those materials.

Outsourced production is clearly more dominant than the in-house production. Of every ten videos, only three are produced by the news media themselves. The presence of videos produced by news agencies has grown during the period of study, but the videos produced by external agents (which are usually extracted from platforms like YouTube and are not elaborated with journalistic criteria still constitute the majority (43% of the total sample). As mentioned, this affects the content, but also the

genres, formats and degree of editing of the audiovisual pieces that are published. The second research hypothesis was also confirmed.

First, videos without any kind of recognisable structure represent 56.37% of the sample. They are unedited videos that present a simple accumulation of different materials. 60% of the videos do not even contain seven editing actions. The degree of complexity of those videos is, as expected, minimal. However, there has been a remarkable improvement in this aspect, although not as much as the extreme primitivism of the videos registered in the first field works would require. Regarding genres and formats, the great weight of this external non-journalistic production translates into a striking number of unclassifiable videos. That is why the category “Others” reaches surprising levels on these two issues (22.39% in genres and 27.61% in formats).

The strength of news agencies has reinforced the primacy of the pure informational genre. The news report (45.25% of the sample) clearly dominates over the feature story (11.83%), the interpretive news article (6.46%) and the interview (4.18%). The preferred audiovisual format among the digital news media is the short news clip (42.06%), way above on-camera commentary (8.79%) and news-related footage (7.18%). A striking finding is the presence of the music video (12.07%), which often tends to be associated with freely distributed music or cinematographic content.

Many other studies (Cassany *et al.*, 2013; Fondevila Gascón, 2014; Ortells-Badenes, 2016) have highlighted the importance of in-house production in the creation of the audiovisual narrative of the digital news media. This research has attempted to point out some of its features. First, this type of production tends to avoid the classic voice-over of the journalist. The short news clip without voice-over (21.70% of the structured videos) is way less common than the traditional short news clip with voice-over (56,97%). However, from the qualitative point of view it is very important because it identifies fully with this the in-house production that takes much more care of the audiovisual grammar of the videos. This format, for example, provides the rare cases of perfect complementarity (only 81 of the 2,104 registered videos) between the different codes that coexist in the audiovisual message.

The in-house feature stories disseminated by the digital news media prefer sequential or expository structure, over the narrative or pyramidal structures, which are more common in other platforms. In this specific aspect this in-house production of quality seems to have imposed its criteria, since the “Expository” structure, which in 2010 did not reach 10% of the sample, managed to exceed 21% in 2015. Taking into account only structured videos, the “expository” formula is present in 36.38% of the videos, which is way higher than the presence of the “scattered pyramid” (21.78%) and the “narrative” structure (16.77%).

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