Comunicar

Media prosumers
Participatory culture of audiences
and media responsibility

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C O N T E N T S

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FOREWORD

DOSSIER

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Submission guidelines

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

«Comunicar», Media Education Research Journal, is published by Grupo Comunicar Ediciones (VAT: G21116603). This established non-profit professional group, founded in 1988 in Spain, specialises in the field of media education. The journal has been in print continuously since 1994, published every six months in March and October of each year.

Contents are moderated by means of peer review, in accordance with the publication standards established in the APA (American Psychological Association) manual. Compliance with these requirements facilitates indexation in the main databases of international journals in this field, which increases the dissemination of the papers published and therefore raises the profile of the authors and their centres.

«Comunicar» is indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Journal Citation Reports (JCR), Scisearch, Scopus and over 210 databases, catalogues, search engines and international repertoires worldwide.

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2.1. Subject Matter: Fundamentally, research papers related to communication and education, and especially the intersection between the two fields: media education, educational media and resources, educational technology, IT and electronic resources, audiovisual, technologies... Reports, studies and experiments relating to these subjects are also accepted.

2.2. Contributions: «Comunicar» publishes research results, studies, state-of-the-art articles and bibliographic reviews especially in relation to Latin America and Europe and regarding the convergence between education and communication, preferably written in Spanish although submissions are also accepted in English. The contributions to this journal may be: Research papers, Reports, Studies and Proposals (5.000-6,000 words of text, references included), State-of-the-art articles: (6,000-7,000 words of text, including references), and Reviews (620-640 words).

Unsolicited manuscripts sent in by authors are initially placed in the Miscellaneous section of the journal. The Topics section is organized by an editor through a system of Call for Paper and specific commissions to experts in the field. If we receive manuscripts within the deadline for a particular topic, the journal editor can pass on the manuscript to the Topics editor for assessment and possible publication in this monographic section. The deadline for each Topic section is at least nine months before publication.

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«Comunicar» confirms receipt of all articles submitted by authors and keeps the authors informed of the process of acceptance/rejection, as well as the editing process, in the event of acceptance. The webpage www.comunicarjournal.com also provides information about manuscript editing procedures, full guidelines for publication, as well as the Annexes: review protocol prior to submission, manuscript structure protocol, external review protocol…

In general, once the external reports have been seen, the criteria that justify the editors' decision to accept or reject submissions are as follows: a) Topical and new. b) Relevance: applicability of the results to the resolution of specific problems. c) Originality: valuable information, repetition of known results. d) Significance: advancement of scientific knowledge. e) Reliability and scientific validity: verified methodological quality. f) Organisation (logical coherence and material presentation). g) Presentation: good written style.

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Editorial

Research as a Strategy for Training Educommunicators: Master and Doctorate

La investigación como estrategia de formación de los educomunicadores: Máster y Doctorado

Dr. J. Ignacio Aguaded
Editor of «Comunicar»

Training educommunicators, experts in audiovisual education and media literacy, is undoubtedly one of the best strategies for consolidating this new class of professional in this field, and it should be a successful synthesis of communication and education dynamics taken to a higher level. The educommunicator is no mere media or teaching professional, and neither is he or she a mixture of both. This is a new type of professional with origins in both trades but with a separate, specific vocational profile that combines communication and educational competences, its main target being the "audience" of a mediatized society in all its diverse strands and situations. Educating audiences in media competence is based on the simple premise that since we live in a society «mediated by media», what is needed is a generalized form of education and literacy aimed at the public because, as research consistently shows, consumption of media does not guarantee that these are viewed in an intelligent, creative and constructive way. In this sense, research in its essence becomes the best resource for training educommunicators for the development of audiovisual literacy and media competence; and this new task calls on all sectors involved in communication and education to contribute to the training of citizens in a media world. For this to happen, the generation of scientific endeavor in this new knowledge area is essential. The design and implementation of research projects is one of the more urgent needs especially given that there is still so much to discover in this field. It is a new reality that did not exist previously and which could not have been foreseen a decade ago but which has transformed our lives. Let's pause and think for a moment of a typical daily situation, our dependence on the mobile phone that manifests in any work or leisure space in any type of society where smartphones have taken control of the audience.

The call for projects needs to attract competent researchers, making the concerted support of public institutions and audiovisual bodies crucial. The best example of this is the European Commission and the «Media» programme. As well as research projects as a strategy for promoting educommunication, an essential factor should be the training of researchers in this new knowledge space in order to raise the level of communication as an educational space focused more on the media than on the audiences that generate it. Today only universities as a higher education institutions can guarantee the type of quality training needed to produce qualified educommunicators, providing them with a broad range of research methodologies and educational strategies aimed at audiences that will enable them to confront this huge task ahead of them. Although other successful experiences have taken place internationally, we wish to emphasize two well-established researcher training projects in educommunication: the Interuniversity Master in Audiovisual Communication and Education, and the Interuniversity Doctorate in Communication, as official aggregation frameworks developed by universities in the south of Spain, but which are vocationally international in their outlook and whose aim is to create a pool of young qualified educommunicators. The Official Master in Communication and Education (www.master-educomunicacion.es) is now the

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best-established postgraduate training programme of its type in Spain in terms of official courses. Now in its fifth year, and has successfully formed a wide-ranging group of young people and professional educommunicators from around 20 countries, especially from Latin America and Europe. The Master is taught by the International University of Andalusia (UNIA) in conjunction with the University of Huelva (UHU), and this excellence in postgraduate studies has recognized international prestige and is regularly oversubscribed. With a staff of 42 researchers from 21 universities in Spain –many of whom are full professors-, the Master is a solid academic proposal with face-to-face or virtual classes and a study plan based on research, ethics, technological resources, professional work experience and the study of the media from the perspective of audience education. Its almost 200 graduates from across the world is the best advert for the quality of this official qualification that leads directly to the doctorate course. For the first time, several universities in Andalusia now offer a doctorate course, together with the Master, with the first admissions accepted this academic year 2013/14.

The Official Interuniversity Doctorate in Communication (www.doctorado-comunicacion.es), a unique course in educommunication and media literacy, is an acknowledgment on the part of the university establishment of the need to investigate further in this field, with its own seat and resources, given the subject's social relevance and the widespread research possibilities. The doctorate has a clear international vocational direction and is taught in the universities of Sevilla, Málaga, Huelva and Cádiz; the aim is to extend this course to other prestigious universities in Latin America and Europe, and to sign collaboration agreements with similar institutions in the countries of North America, Africa and Asia. More than 80 academics with PhDs from the broad spectrum of Communication, both from the universities that organize the course and other prestigious institutions, form the staff that imparts this doctorate, whose quality has been verified by several agencies. Almost 80 doctoral students have completed their first year, in this initial year of the course, having participated in a wide range of training activities provided by the universities where the doctorate is taught. Almost two dozen chose the educommunicator line of study which ensures good quality future research in this field, which is in urgent need of good, solid investigation and the widespread publication of the results. Research projects of excellence, official Masters in Educommunication, International Doctorates in Communication with lines in media literacy, scientific journals such as «Comunicar» with its clear educommunication vocation, are just some of the actions that, together with international policies like those implemented by UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the European Parliament or the European Commission, can endow the mediated citizens of the 21st century with tools for a better understanding of their reality and, above all, for an intelligent transformation of the media as key pieces in the quest for personal development.
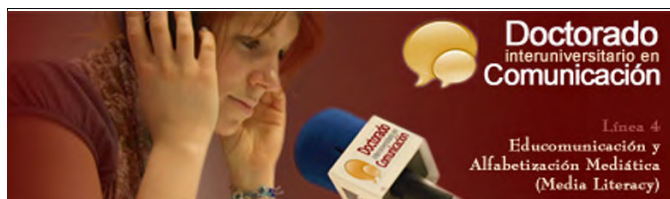
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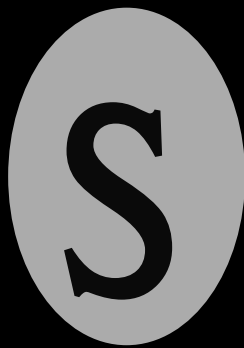
Special Topic Issue

Media Prosumers

Participatory Culture of Audiences
and Media Responsibility

Introduction

Media Prosumers. Participatory Culture of Audiences and Media Responsibility

Prosumidores mediáticos
Cultura participativa de las audiencias y responsabilidad de los medios

GUEST-EDITED SPECIAL ISSUE

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Dr. Angharad Valdivia, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA)

Technology is creating new ways of being, relating, getting around, becoming informed, and interacting. In this context of change that is brought about by ICT, it can be asserted that it is the relationship of people to media and information which has undergone the biggest transformation, specifically with the arrival of media such as the Internet. Digital media allows some recipients to frequently occupy the role of senders, capable of transmitting and sharing content without renouncing the role of media consumer. This process has generated «prosumer» as the concept that occupies the central focus of this issue of this journal.

It is worth noting that this situation –and, indeed, the concept– cannot be generalized to include everyone in developed countries. When speaking of the marriage between the audience and different technologies, one cannot leave out young people as primary users of these technologies and also as the main participants in the content, which is produced and transmitted over the Web for sharing purposes. The so-called «Generation Y», that is to say those who were born in the '80s, has lived through one of the biggest transformations that has taken place in the history of humanity. Thus, Toffler refers to the «Third Wave», with the first being the agricultural revolution, the second the industrial revolution, and this last one the technological revolution. This digital Tsunami has necessarily brought about changes in different aspects of our existence, such as what has happened with the nomenclature of media, itself. Therefore, alongside concepts such as «mass media» the term «social media» has appeared as a permanent addition, even though all mass media is by definition also social media.

Throughout this process of change and adaptation to the new formulas of relating to the new media, three key activities can be seen: composing, sharing/participating, and distributing, which will be closely analyzed in the following. It is worth noting that none of these activities or essential elements in the relationship that is created between users and the particular media has isolated reasons for existing as far as digital natives are concerned.

With respect to the first of these activities, that of content creation, it is abundantly clear that anything from a video-witness to a call for solidarity through pictures or news created by these same young people, the opportunities to create using these new technologies and devices supersede anything that any of the previous generations, whose means/modes of communication were quite limited, could have possibly imagined. Of course, both the creators and consumers of content have a distinct purpose— that of sharing it.

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Introduction

This is the second of the key activities in the process of the prosumer. It doesn't make sense to create without sharing. Social networks play a fundamental role in this since they are created in a medium where little is rejected. As a matter of fact, problems arise precisely because young people do not comprehend where the boundaries [should] lie insofar as putting content in the public arena as, perhaps, adults do. We can list some positive examples of where sharing content is the essence of sharing. For example, you can begin with Wikipedia, itself, which began in January of 2001 as a free and multilingual encyclopedia specifically founded on collaboration. Or, again, in 2004 when the term Web 2.0 appears in which the Web became a social venue, and the term is created to deal with the three «w's» which seek to increase creativity and exchange of information between users. Or in 2005 when YouTube, the website which allows for the sharing of digital videos, appears.

But sharing is participating. As a matter of fact, people start talking about the participatory culture of audiences. From feedback criticizing how a certain subject matter is dealt with to being a first-person witness of something that has been recorded, digital media has allowed people to feel as though they are being heard. They have found a way to make their words reach out.

We want to make a distinction as to the third element, that of dissemination, to emphasize the opportunities that the new media affords the user as consumer and as producer of content reaching millions of people in a very short amount of time, e.g. space-time compression. Limits of time and space have been done away with; content is on the web and 2.4 billion people use it nearly on a daily basis. If the internet produced important sociological changes, social online networks have not been far behind. Even though Facebook was not the first social network, it can be said that it has achieved a feat insofar as communication is concerned, especially for young people, since it is not just a method to alert people to events but rather events are created by the mere sharing of them on the web.

Thus this world of change and adaptation in which we live is creating an unprecendented participatory culture for the younger audiences. In this context it would seem that it is necessary for the media and related social institutions, themselves, to take on a corresponding role of being the socially-responsible party while at the same time insisting on the need to educate the young with a critical eye for confronting future media challenges. Media literacy is absolutely essential.

The majority of articles dealing with this issue have the common theme of online social networks playing a primary role as the main medium representing the prosumer role of citizens and the participatory or reactive culture of audiences.

In this sense the article by Rosa García Ruiz, Antonia Ramírez, and María Mar Rodríguez Rosell, which opens this particular journal issue, is very interesting since it points out that although access to technology and the internet have had a positive effect in all aspects of our lives –personal, familial, professional, and social– media literacy hasn't kept up. Development of media competency among the citizenry, especially youth and children so that they can approach media critically and actively is absolutely necessary in this society of media prosumers.

As a matter of fact, several articles attempt to emphasize the role that the internet and, more specifically, online social networks play in the development of social and civic participation among young people. The first of these, one written by Carmen García Galera, Mercedes del Hoyo, and Cristóbal Fernández, mentions that young people utilize social networks in order to participate in collective social action. Cristian Cabalín's article highlights this with a case study in which he shows how young people in Chile turned to Facebook to mobilize student protests in contrast to what was being covered by official news outlets.

Flavia Gomes Franco e Silva and José Carlos Sendin Gutiérrez reiterate the need for literacy in their article about the negative effect the internet can have on teenagers. Given that this section of the population, or at least a grand percentage of them, feels the need to be constantly connected, these scholars investigate other variables, such as family relationships, that influence their use or abuse of the internet, turning them into prosumers without a critical perspective of their time investment in and their general use of the web.

Francisco Javier Ruíz del Olmo and Ana María Belmonte Jiménez focus on mobile devices as tools, which beyond their obvious usefulness of allowing people to search for new information, products, and services or commercial promotions, also have an important added social value – that of creation of virtual communities, shared social and cultural practices, and a sense of belonging and identifying with the values of a brand, something essential for groups of young people – that being its main contribution with respect to prosumers. The youngest users of intelligent mobile devices are turning out to be pioneers in new social, communication, and cultural uses of this technological tool. Such tools influence the vital experience of the user and the creation of communities around values, lifestyles, and brand idionsyncrasies. For corporations (and this is a subject that deserves further research) virtual communities are very useful as they strive to foment client loyalty.

Carmen Fuente Cobo, Juan María Martínez Otero, and Rogelio del Prado Flores foreground issues of social responsibility of the media, which is part of the title of this journal issue. Their article takes up the main disciplinary positions regarding the dichotomy between citizens and consumers and suggests that the different concepts of audience have a deep connection to the way in which the control of the media and the accountability of its operators is thought of in the public sphere. The additional interesting point of the article is the comparative analysis it makes between the situation in Spain and Mexico. Salomé Berrocal, Eva Campos, and Marta Redondo deal with an area that has barely been touched on in studies, either at a national or international level: they analyze the prosumer of political «infotainment» on the Internet. This research explores «politainment» on Web 2.0 and the role of the prosumer in this new communication sphere. The prosumption of «politainment» on the internet is characterized by massive consumption by users but high passivity in terms of its production. The prosumer establishes his consumption and production on collaborative action, but s/he is not the hegemonic producer of this content. The media prosumer of «politainment» is characterized by exercising a very limited prosumption insofar as the creation of messages and major consumption but also very polarized and limited in thematic variety in that s/he tends to reproduce the same message repeatedly –the same content in various versions– without even having a participatory role as prosumer.

Natalia Quintas and Ana González discuss the relationship between traditional media, such as television, and new formulas of communication, such as social networks. This convergence, which has brought about the so-called social audience, is analyzed in their work with the purpose of establishing the elements which contribute to the success or failure of programs with the same format in relation to

this social audience. As the authors, themselves, mention, the conclusions derived from their analysis of the Spanish experience can serve as a model for other countries where the development of a social media audience is not quite as extensive.

Finally, María Sánchez y María Bella Palomo bring to light another possibility that participation of internet and social network audiences offer: crowdfunding. This formula grants the public the power, through its contributions, to decide what projects will be carried out and has already allowed for start-ups of micromedia and other innovative initiatives in Spain especially with the emergence, particularly in the last five years, of virtual platforms specialized in launching campaigns and the so-called «social media» which facilitate its dissemination. The article written by Rayén Condeza, Ingrid Bachmann, and Constanza Mujica show once again how social networks are also an information medium. This research explores how Chileans between the ages of 13 and 17 consume news in a media context with multiple inputs, convergence, and mobile culture. The results show that the young people surveyed become informed mostly through social networks such as Facebook while their use of conventional media is in decline. What least interests them is traditional politics, which, according to them, is the subject most covered in the news. Their motivation in consuming information is related to the desire to defend their own points of view and to deliver information to others.

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Enrique Martínez-Salanova '2014 by Comunicar

Media Literacy Education for a New Prosumer Citizenship

Educación en alfabetización mediática para una nueva

ciudadanía prosumidora

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ABSTRACT

Access to technology and the Internet is having a positive impact on all levels, personal, family, professional and social. However, the influence of the media has not been accompanied by the promotion of media literacy. The development of the media skill among citizens, especially young people and children, in order to exercise a critical and active role in relation to the media, is a key development in this society of «media prosumers». This paper discusses the results of a research project at state level, surveying a sample of 2.143 students from Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary School, in this study using a questionnaire ad hoc online. The objetive of the research project is to identify levels of media literacy amongst children and adolescents. It can be seen that a significant portion of the sample is proficient in the media, at an acceptable level. However, and despite belonging to the generation of so-called «digital natives», the sample does not possess the skills necessary to practice as «media prosumers». We conclude the work highlighting the necessity of complementing the digital competence established in the school curriculum with media literacy as a key element into developing a «prosumer culture». This would resolve the convergence of an urgent need to improve the training of young audiences as responsible citizens capable of consuming and producing media messages in a free, responsible, critical and creative way.

RESUMEN

El acceso a las tecnologías y a Internet está teniendo consecuencias positivas en todos los niveles, personales, familiares, profesionales y sociales. Sin embargo, la influencia de los medios de comunicación no se ha acompasado con el fomento de la alfabetización mediática. El desarrollo de la competencia mediática en la ciudadanía, y especialmente en los jóvenes y niños para que puedan ejercer de forma crítica y activa su papel ante los medios, se revela como clave en esta sociedad de «prosumidores mediáticos». En este trabajo se presentan los resultados de un proyecto de investigación de ámbito estatal con el objetivo de identificar los niveles de competencia mediática de niños y adolescentes, encuestando a una muestra de 2.143 estudiantes de Educación Infantil, Primaria, Secundaria y Bachillerato, mediante un cuestionario ad hoc on-line. Puede observarse que una importante parte de la muestra es competente ante los medios, en un nivel aceptable, sin embargo, y a pesar de que pertenecen a la generación de los denominados «nativos digitales», no poseen las habilidades necesarias para ejercer como «prosumidores mediáticos». Concluimos el trabajo destacando la necesidad de complementar la competencia digital establecida en el currículum escolar con la competencia mediática, como elemento clave para desarrollar una «cultura prosumidora», convergencia de imperiosa necesidad para mejorar la formación de las jóvenes audiencias como ciudadanos responsables capaces de consumir y producir mensajes mediáticos de manera libre, responsable, crítica y creativa.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Prosumers, media literacy, media, digital skill, media skill, school curriculum, audiences, students.
Prosumidores, alfabetización mediática, competencia digital, competencia mediática, currículum escolar, audiencias, estudiantes.

1. Introduction

Media literacy is conceived of as a right of all citizens (Area, 2012), and as a challenge to contemporary society, where the world's educational systems have to constitute themselves an authority that will write the guidelines needed to obtain media-knowledgeable citizens (Dejaeghere, 2009; Gozálvez, 2013; Gozálvez & Aguaded, 2012), characterized by a new humanistic media (Pérez-Tornero & Varis, 2010). This will connect the educational and communicative domains, as various research studies have been proposing, backed by institutional initiatives, where edu-communication is forged as the necessary resource for obtaining a prosumer society.

The term prosumer is not new. It was already mentioned in the seventies by McLuhan (McLuhan & Nevitt, 1972), and its dimensions have been continuously evolving up until the emergence of social networking spheres, which linked coinciding and reinforced its frame of reference strengthening itself in the convergence of traditional media and the new communications media (Sánchez & Contreras 2012). They have proposed that today, the media prosumer produces and consumes information, To the extent that today's prosumer exercises a leading role in the new paradigm of participative culture, propelled by the technological interactivity which characterizes this new paradigm. (Sandoval & Aguaded, 2012). This leading role also requires at the same time emotional education (Ferrés, 2010). Therefore, a prosumer citizen will possess a set of skills that will allow him or her to perform a series of actions, as a media and audiovisual resource consumer, as a producer and a creator of critical, responsible and creative messages and content. In this way, the autonomous, constructive manner of consumption and production should be constituted as part of the objectives found in current media literacy, using diverse strategies that will favor the creation of critical emitters (Aguaded, 2012; Aguaded & Sánchez, 2013). These emitters will contribute to the creation of critical receptors, just as Kaplún (2010) has argued, re-defining the parameters of audio-visual literacy as regards to the use and habits of children and youth in the current digital landscape (Gabelas, 2010), or as part of the social networks as a democratic exercise of prosumer youths (García-Galera, 2012; García Galera & Del Hoyo, 2012).

Currently, the prosumer that dominated the «first wave» society (Toffler, 1980), becomes again the center of economic action, but this times, s/he achieves this status through the high-end technology owned by the «third wave». Toffler (1980) denominates this phenomenon as the «resurgence of the prosumer», which gives its name to chapter XX of his work, but in this case the prosumer becomes a «technological prosumer». The term can be interpreted from different perspectives, with the most common one being the one that relates it to the world of marketing (Tapscott, Ticoll & Lowy, 2001; Friedman, 2005; Werner & Weiss, 2004), and the power it can eventually exert on the socio-economic structure. The meaning, however, is far from the one adopted in this article, which defends a humanistic vision of a prosumer as producer and not a mere consumer. Nevertheless, the truly important thing is not knowing that she is able to produce or consume, or to reflect about what kind of relationship s/he can establish with the media or the environment, but at what expense, with what values and with what ethical principles.

Contemporary society, more globalized, and paradoxically more private and individualized than ever, is shaped by prosumers of different natures, such as those labeled by a few specialized digital newspapers as–persuasive, middlemen, opinion leaders, apprentices, skeptics, innovators, social and critical- (puromarketing.com, 2012). But, what is the profile of the perfect prosumer? A Producer of new messages, who knows how to arrange the necessary resources for generating creative and innovative content; A Reviewer, of the content he or she receives, as well as that which s/he creates, with a critical, thoughtful and pluralistic eye; he or she has to be an Observer of the message's production and emission processes, as well as its impact, taking into account the possible audiences. The prosumer should be a Selector of the content and resources that are adapted to the technological era and the new styles of learning, and a Unifier of the criteria for quality, equality, inclusion, and the maximal diffusion of the message. Another of the qualities that are inherent in the prosumer would be the capacity to become a Manipulator of the technological tools that are adapted to the new communications media, and to the characteristics of the new messages and media products, as well as an Identifier of stereotypes, bad practices, abuse and lack of veracity of some messages that are distributed through communication media and social networks. A complete prosumer would be a Booster of the communication and interaction between emitters and receptors, the Organizer of the resources that are required for the production of creative, critical and responsible content, favoring democratic participation, and the Producer of new messages, shouldering the responsibility of caring for the technological, artistic, ethical and moral quality of the final product.

Having all, or some of the characteristics that idealize his or her figure, it is true that most of the prosumers see in the media an excellent tool for actively participating in the social fabric, recognizing in them a fundamental role in processes of creation and diffusion of social values (Fernández-Beaumont, 2010); maybe this is why articles that discuss active citizenship are more frequently found (Jenkins, 2006). In general, prosumers are also aware of the value of the information that they are able to generate, and the power that this value gives them. Large businesses have long ago detected this tendency some time ago, resorting to the figure of the prosumer for the analysis of tendencies or for collecting opinions that will help them to correctly transform their products. Just as Fernández-Beaumont (2010: 15) asserts, «the old media consumer is passive, predictable, isolated and silent; while the new one is active, migratory, is socially connected, is loud and public» But, is he or she, then, more ethical?

Immersed in a new educational paradigm that we could denominate techno-holistic (Melgarejo & Rodríguez, 2013), the real work of media literacy should be done in parallel to moral requisites that could help in discerning and weighing the different criteria that accompany these acts. Holistic education (Gardner, 1999; Gallegos, 2000; Wimpier, 2008), the basis for his human development theories, melds itself with technology, that not only allows, but also facilitates (if adequately used), an immersion in the humanistic vision, the vision that this new paradigm boasts of; it's a comprehensive education, complete and integrative, based on the search for individual identity through community liaisons. But for this use to be adequate, we have to equip the users with media competency, doing this at different stages. Of the six basic dimensions proposed by Ferrés (2007: 100-107), the fifth, linked to ideology and values, acquires special protagonism, especially when related to the «ethical attitude when downloading products […] documents or for viewing entertainment», or when advocating for the possibility of «taking advantage of the new communication tools for transmitting values and for contributing for the improvement of the surroundings, coming from an attitude of social and cultural commitment» or to «commit themselves as citizens in a culture and society in a responsible fashion».

Media literacy based on technology is, then, fundamental if we want to shape creative, participative and free individuals, who are also equipped with a high degree of responsibility and critical vision. Adding media literacy to the school curriculum, from the first stages, is a necessary requirement for the achievement of a prosumer society, a society that has been pushed for by different international institutions and organisms (Comisión Europea, 2007; UNESCO, 2007, 2011a). Media literacy when understood from this angle, has to favor teaching and learning processes that are focu-

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sed on educating for the reception of the communicative message, as well as its critical and creative, collective and dialogic, conscious and emotional production and emission.

Although much progress has been made for attaining this objective, much is left to be done. (Federov, 2014). As Sánchez and Contreras state «Children, in their role as prosumers, find serious limitations […] the preparation given to them in the school system and family surroundings for shaping themselves at the same time, both as producers and consumers is null or lacking» (2012: 70). However, there is no doubt that the adding of basic competencies to the curriculum has contributed in some way to the preparation of children and young people, who belong to the «digital native» generation (Prensky, 2011), in the acquisition of abilities, skills and contents, through comprehensive training that allows them to understand in a critical manner, and to adequately act in modern society (Bernabeu, 2011).

The digital competency curriculum, as part of the basic competencies, tries to develop abilities that are more related to the technological and digital sectors, so it is necessary to complement it with media competency, related to communication media and audiovisual language, but in a convergent and complementary way, as Pérez-Rodriguez and Delgado (2012), and Gutiérrez, Palacios and Torrego (2010) propose, towards media literacy as a common framework.

Another of the necessary requisites for attaining media literacy is the improvement in the training for media education teachers. For this, the UNESCO (2011b), through the «MIL Curriculum for Teachers», tries to favor informational and media literacy to improve intercultural dialogue, due to the fact that, as mentioned by the Gabinete de Comunicación y Educación (2013), the teacher's attitude favors the use of ICT for innovation and educational improvement. Also, it is necessary to improve the training of families in media competency, as highlighted by the Ofcom (2013) report «Children and Parents: Media use and Attitudes Report».

There is no doubt that succeeding in making the new generations acquire an adequate degree of media competency is a challenge, making the knowing of the degree of media competency that children and youth have, indispensable. Once this is known, we can determine the actions to follow, going beyond previous studies that were focused on the evaluation of the degree of digital or technological dexterity, in order to attain a comprehensive competency development of the prosumer citizenship. The objective posed in this research study is to try to determine the degree of media competency that the Spanish school-age population possesses, to be able to respond appropriately. Likewise, the running hypothesis is that student competency in relation to communication media is inadequate.

2. Methods

The methodology used in this research study falls within what is known as empirical-analytical methodology, based on experimentation with posterior statistical analysis. To ascertain and explain a concrete rea-

lity and to establish certain generalities that could predict later behaviors in the participants, a survey was used. On this occasion, it was achieved through four on-line questionnaires designed ad hoc1, for each of the school stages analyzed (pre-school, primary school, compulsory secondary education (ESO), and Spanish Baccalaurate (Bachillerato). Also, this research study follows a non-experimental, correlational and descriptive design.

The population is made up of Spanish students who were attending pre-school (ages 5-6), 4th grade in primary school (ages 9-10), third year of ESO (ages 13-14) and the first year of the Baccalaurate (ages17-18). More specifically, the sample, non-probabilistic or intended, is distributed in table 1.

The variables that were used for this research were socio-demographic data such as sex, age, type of educational center, province, and previous training in communication media. As for the dependent variables,

Provinces	Pre-school		Primary School		Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)		Baccalaurate	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
Cantabria	25	9,10	58	10,00	70	10,50	52	8,30
Córdoba	28	10,20	59	10,20	82	12,30	53	8,50
Granada	25	9,10	57	9,80	52	7,80	58	9,30
Huelva	25	9,10	53	9,10	49	7,40	37	5,90
La Rioja	25	9,10	74	12,70	105	15,80	109	17,50
Lugo	25	9,10	52	9,00	102	15,30	110	17,70
Málaga	25	9,10	60	10,30	50	7,50	50	8,00
Murcia	26	9,50	50	8,60	54	8,10	50	8,00
Sevilla	44	16,10	49	8,40	51	7,70	49	7,90
Valencia	26	9,50	69	11,90	50	7,50	55	8,80
Total	274	100	581	100	665	100	623	100

Table 1. Sample distribution according to province and educational stage.

these were configured around the six dimensions of media competitiveness established by Ferrés (2007): languages, technology, interaction processes, production and diffusion processes, ideology and values, and esthetics.

The procedure follows a series of phases that start with the design of the questionnaires, picking up from those already designed by the members of the Project entitled «Media Competency. Research on the degree of competency of the citizens of Spain», with the participation of representatives from 17 Spanish universities. Starting with this, the items were adapted according to the participant's ages. In all of the questionnaires, the validation was performed through the Delphi Technique, where all the members of Project took part, composed of 23 members, whose specialties encompassed all the education and audio-visual com-

munication fields. They also belonged to all 10 participating provinces.

In the second phase, a pilot study was carried out with all the questionnaires. After its design on paper format, and the subsequent pilot study, the digital version was worked on for its implementation on-line. For this, the effort was focused on reducing the phrasing of the questions to their minimal expression, to provide an attractive web interface and easy navigation, and lastly, to use a graphic design that was adequate to the age groups of the test groups.

In the third phase, we proceeded to finalize the design of the questionnaires. Keeping in mind the pilot study and a second application of the Delphi Technique, we modified them accordingly, and proceeded with the application of the final instrument.

In the provisional stage, as well as in the final stage, each questionnaire was accompanied by an evaluation rubric that measured the answers given by the students, in accordance to pre-established criteria that defined the degree of competency shown by the students. Each question from the different questionnaires was evaluated as a function of the different competency levels that could be attributed to the answers offered by the participants. As for the reliability index, the questionnaires have given different figures, from 0.61 to 0.787 for the different questionnaires.

The application of the on-line questionnaires was done in successive phases as a function of the educational stage, but simultaneous to the 10 participating provinces, and always in the presence of researchers in the classrooms. The 40 educational centers were selected based on their availability, their type, and their internet connection. After the application of the questionnaire, the resulting database was transferred, and the data encoding for each of the questionnaires was prepared. Lastly, the answers were re-categorized with the statistical program SPSS (v.18), according to the evaluation rubric that was previously created during the questionnaire design phase.

3. Results

According to the objectives that guided the research study, three levels of media competency were established. These were defined

as: a) Basic level: the lowest value to 33 percentile; b) Intermediate level; 34 percentile to 66 percentile; c) Advanced; 67 percentile to the maximum value. Table 2 shows the designations to each level according to the educational stage of the participants.

In graphical form, figure 1 shows how Primary School children mainly place themselves in the intermediate competency level, while the ESO students show the most polarization in relation to their competency levels, placing themselves primarily in the basic

Levels	Pre-school		Primary School		Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)		Baccalaurate	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
Basic	95	34,70	118	20,30	246	37,00	228	36,60
Intermediate	103	37,60	328	56,50	195	29,30	223	35,80
Advanced	76	27,70	135	23,20	224	33,70	172	27,60
Total	274	100	581	100	665	100	623	100

Table 2. Media competency levels.

level of media competency. Pre-school children, as well as Baccalaurate students, show a similar tendency, where the basic and intermediate levels overcome the advanced level.

Except for the ESO students, the rest of the school-age population show, on average, intermediate levels of media competency.

By analyzing the results as a function of the established dimensions in the questionnaires, which correspond to the dependent variables, we highlight the most relevant results.

The dimension that is related to Languages refers to the knowledge that the students possess with respect to the codes found in the audio-visual language, and the ability to use them to communicate; it also refers to the ability to analyze audio-visual messages, according to their sense and meaning, narrative structure, category and genre; and the ability to construct a
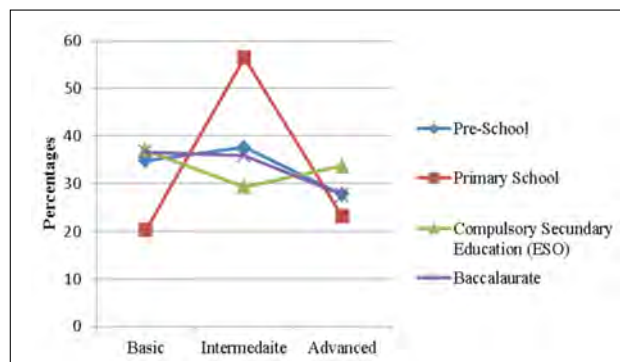
Figure 1. Competency levels.

visual narrative, taking into consideration the rules of visual language. According to the data obtained, we verified that 77% of the Pre-school children correctly answered the questions. 60.90% of Primary School children answered successfully. In the ESO, 61.20% recognize media language, but only 30.50% were able, for example, to note that close-ups are used to show emotional states. Around 65% of the students in Baccalaurate reach adequate levels on this scale, where the most important aspect is recognizing the different languages in a fragment of a film.

The Technology dimension refers to the knowledge of the inner workings of the tools used in audio-visual and digital communication, and the ability to use them for communicating, and understanding how these messages are created. In this sense, the results show that even though pre-school-aged children habitually use technology-based machines, their use for educational purposes is limited to the family sphere, as only 48.90% said they used them in the classroom. In Primary School, we observed that 47.65% of the student body have working notions of technology, and 39.02% possess partial knowledge of them. In the case of Baccalaurate students, 79.10% use an adequate criterion for the selection of a browser, but only 22.30% were able to perform a search with a previous strategy, and only 1.80% employed adequate terms for performing it. 12.50% of the Baccalaurate students possess a broad knowledge of technological aspects related to the creation of a Wiki, uploading of videos to YouTube, writing a blog, publishing photos in Picasa, and accessing RSS services, but only 3.40% were able to successfully relate different terms such as firewall, podcast, or android to their definitions.

The Reception and interaction dimension refers to the ability to identify audiences that are targeted by the communication media, as well as the ability to recognize themselves as an active audience; to the ability to critically evaluate emotional, rational and contextual elements that intervene in the reception and evaluation of audio-visual messages; as well as the knowledge of social joint-responsibility found in the content that reaches the audiences (responsible organisms), and to show favorable attitudes by using these organisms.

The data obtained show that in Pre-school, the number of correct answers surpasses half of the sample. The students in Primary school find themselves correctly answering 50.60% of the questions. Between 50 and 60% of the students in ESO, depending on the aspect analyzed, achieve an adequate competency level, with the lowest levels notably found in aspects such as the analysis of a web page according to valid cri-

teria (16.80%). The Baccalaurate students correctly answered 35% of the questions, but it is noteworthy that only 8.90% would go to the cinema, watch a film or an audio-visual program according to a media criterion.

The Production and diffusion dimension is related to the knowledge of the functions and tasks of those responsible for the production of messages; knowledge of the different phases of the production and programing processes of audio-visual products; the ability to take advantage of technological resources to elaborate audio-visual messages, and to participate in the communications sphere, generating a participative culture and a responsible attitude; and to the ability to identify the different audiences targeted by the media.

The results obtained indicate that in Pre-school, most (74%) of the students are able to identify the different receptive audience. We can interpret this by stating that they correctly master the knowledge and attitudes tied to this dimension, even though the technological manipulation for the production of new messages shows less satisfactory results. As for the results of the Primary School students, 45.18% of them possess complete notions of this dimension's aspects, while 27% possess only partial notions. The ESO students are not able to reach an adequate level of media competency in this dimension, with the aspects related to composing a story that is visually well told (0.60%), active participation in social topics through the web (27.50%) or the different steps needed for the creation of a video (33.50%), being the ones that had the lowest percentages. The Baccalaurate students also place themselves in inadequate levels of media competency. For example, only 14.30% would be able to create a correctly-sequenced video, and only 11.60% use the TICs to improve their surroundings.

The Ideology and values dimension is related to the capacity for comprehensive and critical reading of the audio-visual messages and of the ethical, ideological and esthetic values that they transmit, as representations of reality. We discovered that in Preschool, the number of correct answers to questions related to the recognizing of the sexist content of advertisements came only from about a quarter of those surveyed. The Primary School children, for their part, correctly answered about 53.35% of the questions that were implicated in the identification of values and the distinctions among them. A similar percentage was reached by ESO students (53.50%), and we noted their ability in identifying the message transmitted by an advertisement. However, only 35.60% of the Baccalaurate students were able to differentiate between arguments and emotions.

Lastly, the Aesthetics dimension, which brings together the ability to analyze, evaluate, and enjoy the formal and topical innovations and the education in the aesthetic sense of the messages; the ability to formulate aesthetic judgments, of evaluating an audiovisual product not only for the story it tells and presents, but also for the manner in which it is told or presented, and the ability to establish comparisons with other artistic manifestations: painting, literature, music, etc. The results indicates that in Preschool, the students have not yet reached the intellectual capacity to analyze the aesthetic value of the images, even if they correctly answered some of the questions given to them. This, however, shows their interest and ability to enjoy aesthetics. Primary school students are characterized by their having a «non-aesthetic» focus before the media (79.95%), as opposed to the 20.05% that are able to establish a criterion before the selection of an advertisement and identification of its aesthetic aspects. The percentage increases in ESO students, who succeed in identifying 90% of the esthetic criteria. However, these percentages decrease to 49% in the case of the Baccalaurate students.

media competency of Spanish students are low, this being true of all the educational levels studied. After establishing the competency levels in each schooling stage, we can determine which dimensions are most inadequate, and therefore, the ones that require a greater curricular intervention to reach the media literacy objectives. In this way, the results demonstrate that the dimension related to Audio-visual languages is the one receiving higher scores, in all the school stages, although the number of correct answers decreases when a more profound analysis of the dimension's content is

> When starting with the hypothesis that the students would show a limited level of competency with respect to their relationship with the media, the results show that we find ourselves in a privileged situation, as far as the opportunity given to us by technology is concerned, and the educational possibilities that we find in them, to undertake the pressing task of introducing media education in the school curriculum.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The results obtained in the research study allow us to conclude that the level of media competency of Spanish children and young people has not yet reached an optimum level, making it necessary to continue working so that the school curriculum caters to media literacy as a fundamental element in the shaping of prosumer citizens that could lead to active participation in the media, with a marked critical-constructive character.

Being conscious of the convenience of knowing the starting point of media competency of the student body, the work developed in the research study allows us to evaluate the methodology currently used in the project, as well as making available valid and trustworthy data-gathering tools to the scientific community, that could be used to replicate the study in other educational contexts. The samples used, without trying to be representative, indicate that the levels of

required. With respect to the Technology dimension, we verified that the number of correct answers was greater in ESO and Baccalaurate as compared to the lower stages. However, when the questions delve into topics related to greater proficiency in the use of technology, we see that the percentage of correct answers decreases in all of the school stages. We can interpret the results as showing that the use of machines or technological devices does not guarantee their adequate use, as far as that required to be media proficient. The dimensions related to Reception and Production indicate that the highest correct answer percentages are found in the earlier school stages, as the rest of the students do not show an adequate level of understanding. In the Aesthetic dimension, we find the opposite, as the ESO and Baccalaurate students are the ones that show greater proficiency. Lastly, as for the Ideology and Values dimension, we find that a basic level exists in all the school stages, even if greater training is need as far as the moral behavior characteristics of prosumers is concerned.

The results of the research study allow us to esta-

blish that even though the samples used belong to the generation defined as «digital natives» (Bennet, Maton & Kervin, 2008; Prensky, 2011), it is necessary to plan a process of improvement for media literacy, starting with knowing their media competency. In this sense, this research study becomes very revealing. When starting with the hypothesis that the students would show a limited level of competency with respect to their relationship with the media, the results show that we find ourselves in a privileged situation, as far as the opportunity given to us by technology is concerned, and the educational possibilities that we find in them,

> There is no doubt that succeeding in making the new generations acquire an adequate degree of media competency is a challenge, making the knowing of the degree of media competency that children and youth have indispensable. Once this is known, we can determine the actions to follow, going beyond previous studies that were focused on the evaluation of the degree of digital or techno-logical dexterity, in order to attain a comprehensive competency development of the prosumer citizenship.

to undertake the pressing task of introducing media education in the school curriculum. For this, we find ourselves in an opportune moment to start to work in the classroom for reaching an optimum level of media competency that could provide the students with the necessary tools to become media prosumers, in agree-ment with the conclusions reached by Ferrés, Aguaded and García (2011).

The conclusions extracted in this pioneering re-search study encourage us to continue working on the subject. For this, we hope to establish new lines of work, where we will try to count with the representa-tion of the levels of media competency in the context of Latin American schools. This work will try to com-plement the research performed in other seven coun-tries, where their respective projects have already star-ted, and whose results will give us a global view of media literacy, which could be used to establish lines of action that could allow citizens to acquire an ade-

quate level of media literacy, which is needed in this new prosumer society.

Notes

For Pre-school (http://goo.gl/VhnkqM), for Primary School (http://goo.gl/26dVNl), for Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) (http://goo.gl/mZsgma) and for Spanish Baccalaureate (Bachillerato) (http://goo.gl/cTp9I6).

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Online and Mobilized Students: The Use of Facebook in the Chilean Student Protests

Estudiantes conectados y movilizados: El uso de Facebook en las protestas estudiantiles en Chile

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ABSTRACT
Considering the relationship between new social media and youth political actions, the purpose of this article is to describe the use of Facebook during the 2011 Chilean student movement, through a content and textual analysis of Facebook's page of the Student Federation of the University of Chile (FECH). In 2011, Chile experienced massive mobilizations for seven months. These were perhaps the most important social protests in Chile's recent history, where young people played a leading role in the discussion over education. During these events, Facebook was one of the digital social networks most widely used by the mobilized organizations. In FECH's case, it utilized Facebook mainly to call for protest actions, to highlight the achievements of the movement, and to indicate their opponents. However, most of the content published on this Facebook page was produced by traditional media, showing that conventional communication strategies of social movements are interrelated with new innovative practices. Therefore, this article rejects technological determinism, because it does not recognize the complex characteristics of student and youth movements.

RESUMEN
Considerando la relación entre los nuevos medios digitales y la acción política de los jóvenes, el objetivo de este artículo es describir el uso de Facebook durante el movimiento estudiantil chileno de 2011, a través de un análisis de contenido y textual de la página de Facebook de la Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile (FECH). En 2011, Chile experimentó una serie de movilizaciones, quizás las más importantes de su historia reciente, donde los jóvenes fueron los protagonistas de la discusión sobre la educación. Durante estas manifestaciones, Facebook fue una de las redes sociales en Internet más utilizadas por las organizaciones participantes. En el caso de la FECH, esta agrupación estudiantil usó Facebook principalmente para convocar a las acciones de protestas, para resaltar los logros del movimiento y para señalar quiénes eran sus adversarios. Sin embargo, la mayor parte del contenido publicado fue generado por los medios de comunicación tradicionales, demostrando que en el nivel comunicacional también se entrelazan las estrategias usuales de los movimientos sociales con las nuevas prácticas más innovadoras. Por lo tanto, se rechaza la visión del determinismo tecnológico, porque no da cuenta de los fenómenos complejos que caracterizan el desarrollo de los movimientos estudiantiles y juveniles.

PALABRAS CLAVE / KEYWORDS
Student movement, Facebook, social networks, Internet, protests, students, education.
Movimiento estudiantil, Facebook, redes sociales, Internet, protestas, estudiantes, educación.

1. Introduction

«With rain, with snow, the people still move», sang almost 100,000 students on August 18, 2011 in the streets of Santiago. That day, the temperature was 4 degrees below zero and snow fell on the capital of Chile (Cabalin, 2011). This event was called the «March of Umbrellas» because participants used them to protect themselves from the elements. This was just one of the multiple protests of the «Chilean Winter», as it became internationally known, in reference to the «Arab Spring» that year. Only a few hours after the march, the Student Federation of the University of Chile (FECH) used Facebook to call for a new protest action, stating: «after the beautiful march today, cacerolazo[1] at 21:00!». This post received 443 «likes» and 31 people posted comments in support of the cause. This is an example of the combination of traditional and new resources that are currently used by social movements, where digital networks have played a key role in their communication strategies (Castells, 2012).

During 2011, various protest movements developed in different countries («Los Indignados» (The Indignants) in Spain and the «Arab Spring» in Tunisia and Egypt, among others). In fact, for some authors, this was a historic moment that should be remembered as the «year of revolutions» (Fuchs, 2012: 775). One of the characteristics of these citizen mobilizations was the intensive use of social networks. As such, different media began using expressions such as «Facebook or Twitter» revolutions to refer to these events, depending on the importance assigned to a specific social network. However, a number of academic papers on the subject, published in a special issue of the Journal of Communication, qualified this categorization as simplified and popular, demonstrating that the impact of online social networks is complex and contingent on the context where protests develop (Howard & Parks, 2012; Valenzuela, Arriagada & Scherman, 2012). This view allows for the problematization of the notion that contemporary social movements are a consequence of new media on the internet. This causal relationship is associated with technological determinism, which does not recognize the complexity of social movements and their political, social, cultural and economic components (Fuchs, 2012).

However, it is impossible to deny that the internet has provided effective and innovative tools that allow social movements to mobilize supporters and to counteract hegemonic media trends. In fact, one the leaders of the 2011 Chilean student movement, Giorgio Jackson, states that «new technologies served to put a limit to the mainstream media, to show that they no longer have a monopoly on the represented reality» (Jackson, 2013: 85). Considering this point, this article analyzes the Facebook page of FECH, the most influential federation of students in Chile, to describe how this organization used this digital social network during the student movement.

In order to do this, this paper first presents the relationship between the youth and the internet and then situates this discussion in the Chilean student movement to further describe the use of FECH's Facebook page. It concludes with final remarks.

2. Globally connected youth

The effects of the internet on social capital formation, political participation, cultural diversity and the identity construction of individuals, among other themes, have been studied since the '90s. Young people have received special attention in academic work around new technologies because of the close relationship between youth and the Internet (Tapscott, 2009).

Young people interact with digital social networks more than any other social group. This is a global phenomenon. For example, the youth in Asia share similar experiences via the internet with their peers in the United States or in other parts of the world (Farrer, 2007). However, it would be naive to think that young people are experiencing a full development due to new technologies. In fact, global inequalities are affecting many of them. Unemployment is highest amongst the young, they suffer from vulnerability and many are experiencing «waiting times», a term coined by Jeffrey (2010), which describes the situation of young people in developing countries that bet on education as an instrument of social mobility, but have instead seen those expectations crushed. Furthermore, the representation and social visibility of young people have been dominated by «moral panic» (Valdivia, 2010; Thompson, 1998). The youth are seen as the hope for the future, but at the same time they are the risk in the present (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005). Against this backdrop, new technologies have allowed them other avenues of expression and participation in society.

New information technologies not only have a high economic component, but also cultural and political ones (Xenos & Moy, 2007). Due to their interactive nature, social networking sites on the internet have been viewed as a collaborative space with immense consequences for the development of young people Some authors have spoken of this as a «historic moment» for youth (Tapscott, 2009), but others are more skeptical about the positive impact of these new technologies (Gladwell, 2010). In the case of the 2006

and 2011 student movements in Chile, social networks and new media played a key role in the development of the protests. During the «Penguin Revolution», the 2006 secondary school movement, the students used Fotologs, blogs and YouTube to communicate their demands (Condeza, 2009) and in 2011, mobilized students utilized Twitter, YouTube and Facebook as their communication strategies.

Herrera (2012) has characterized this close relationship between young people and digital social networks as the «wired generation». In the case of the Chilean student movement, we can assume that its protagonists are part of this new generation. Mobilized youths were able to use the internet as a space for the construction of meaning while on the movement. For Castells (2012: 5), this process of production of meanings and concepts is fundamental to the success of social movements, since power is exercised by «the construction of meaning in people's minds, through mechanisms of symbolic manipulation». Online social networks, as such, help to counteract hegemonic power relations. However, Buckingham and Rodriguez (2013) state that new information technologies are far from being an absolute free and democratic space, because traditional patterns of domination and control often play out on the internet.

At any rate, the internet does allow for the observation of the development of political participation by young people. In 2011, the mobilized Chilean students showed that their protest actions offline and online were complementary (Valenzuela, 2013), allowing them to overcome the division between «traditional» and «new» movements. In fact, they were able to incorporate both strategies, making them more diverse and difficult to define linearly. However, the «message» of social movements continues to be determined by how the movement operates, which is more important than which media platform was chosen to communicate the movement's operations (Castells, 2012).

3. The communication of the movement

The students were in the streets for 7 months and

received support from 80% of the public, according to various surveys. One of the elements that helped to explain this massive popular support was the ability of the students to frame their message of transformation and to control the media agenda during movement. Students were aware of the need to convert their political objectives into a massive message, as Jackson (2013: 63) points out: «Our initial language was not ideological; it was technical and pragmatic, in the sense that if we wanted to reach more people, we had to start by deleting certain words». The students conveyed a message that condensed the main problems of

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the Chilean education system: inequality, low quality, segregation, and indebtedness (Bellei & Cabalin, 2013).

In Chile, the neoliberal model in education was imposed in the '80s during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, implementing the privatization of the educational system, increasing competition, the pauperization of teaching jobs, the weakening of public education, among other specific aspects of the neoliberalization of education on a global scale (McCarthy, 2011). Thus, in 2011, the supposed neoliberal progress faced a critical review by the majority of the population for the first time in 30 years, surprising the administrators of the economic and political systems. As noted by one of the 2011 student leaders, Francisco Figueroa: «few imagined that the model's own children, the youth allegedly lulled by individualism, would rebel against the current state of affairs» (Figueroa, 2013: 72). The

student revolts showed precisely how the passivity that the youth were charged with reduced their political participation to only the classical dimension that was established by the routines of the political system. However, young people do participate through other methods.

The 2011 student demonstrations, marches, strikes and takeovers of educational establishments were accompanied by flashmobs, kiss-a-thons, viral campaigns, and other artistic activities, where students used both the physical and digital public space actively. It was a mixture of «Facebook and street», to paraphrase the book Tweets and the Streets: Social Media

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and Contemporary Activism (Gerbaudo, 2012), which questions the overemphasis on digital social networks as catalysts for protest actions. The students displayed their demands through a combination of both strategies, demonstrating that «even a new medium, as powerful and participatory as the internet's social networks, is not the message. The message constructs the medium» (Castells, 2012: 122). This means that for a social movement to be successful it requires, among other things, the construction of a persuasive message (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994), which connects with the experiences of people. Digital social networks allow for that message to go viral, thus leading to mass impact, especially among the youth sectors. This was understood by the Student Federation of the University of Chile through the use of its Facebook page as the means to distribute their message.

4. Methods and material

86% of young Chileans have a Facebook account and 52% of those young people connect to Facebook every day (Scherman, Arriagada & Valenzuela, 2013). Facebook was the digital social network most used by

the students during the 2011 movement. In fact, 68% of those who mobilized used the internet as an information platform to find out about the movement (Arriagada & al., 2011). Consequently, it is important to analyze how this generation of students displayed their actions through online social networks during the student movement. With this objective in mind and without generalizing the results to all mobilized organizations, the Facebook page of the Student Federation of the University of Chile was utilized as a reference, as it represents one of the most influential institutions in the educational debate in Chile and its president in 2011, Camila Vallejo, was one of the leaders with greatest public visibility in the media. This Facebook page had more than 62,000 «friends» during the movement, surpassing the number of students at the university itself, which shows the extent of its influence beyond the University of Chile.

The new information technologies involve diverse epistemological and methodological approaches. Social networks can be useful for studying social interactions, relationships of belonging, identity formation and types of discussion, among other themes (Murthy, 2008). According to Coleman (2010: 488), there are at least three categories to study digital media: a) «the cultural politics of media; b) the vernacular cultures of digital media; and c) the prosaics of digital media». The first relates to the interest in the study of the circulation and construction of cultural identities, representations, meanings and collective commitments in digital media. The second approach deals with the analysis of different groups or social phenomena in digital media (for example, blogs, hackers, and memes). Finally, the third approach focuses on the social practices that occur in digital media, which involve economic, financial, cultural or religious aspects. This study uses the first approach.

As the student movement lasted seven months, this sample is restricted to only one month, considering two milestones: a political one (the first change of the Education Minister during the movement) and the other, a symbolic one (the «March of Umbrellas»). These two events represent in some ways, what the student movement meant in the recent history of Chile. On the one hand, the political system was over-

come by the force of the mobilized students who questioned the legitimacy of the means of political representation in the country; on the other hand, the persistence of the protests and their size transformed the movement into an expression of the collective commitment of students beyond the particular circumstances of each individual student.

All public posts on FECH's Facebook page that were made over these 33 days were intentionally selected, beginning on July 18th -when the president, Sebastián Piñera, made a change in the cabinet, which included the departure of then Education Minister, Joaquín Lavín, and the appointment of his replacement, Felipe Bulnes- and ending on August 19th, one day after the «March of the Umbrellas». This last event was included to observe how the students addressed the success of the march the day after it occurred. These entries were analyzed into a content analysis matrix (Krippendorff, 2013), deductively constructed from previous literature on social movements and new communication (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994; Benford & Snow, 2000; Castells, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013). This methodological design relates to the research question: What were the uses of FECH's Facebook page in terms of content during one of the seven months of student mobilization?

To answer this question and describe the uses of Facebook, eight general categories were used. The first two categories recognized the architecture of the analyzed medium, which regulates and limits its use (Lafi Youmans & York, 2012). These basic categories are:

1) Likes: The number of «likes» on each post was quantified to account for the popularity or acceptance of each entry.

2) Comments: The number of comments for each entry was considered to observe the interaction generated from the initial entry.

The following three categories attempted to describe the communication strategy used by the Student Federation of the University of Chile. In order to do this, the presence (1) or the absence (0) of these functions were considered.

3) Own posts: The posts made by FECH were used to quantify whether FECH generated some kind of commentary on their page as a way to frame the content posted.

4) Photos and videos: The presence of images was measured with the understanding that their addition can make an entry more powerful.

5) Organization's Leadership: Considering that their president was Camila Vallejo, a figure widely

known by the public, the use or lack of Camila Vallejo's name was also measured in FECH's posts.

The remaining two general categories attempt to describe content characteristics present in each of the analyzed entries. These categories were:

6) Source of content: It is important to note where the content originated. Therefore, I measured if the content was generated from FECH's own website, if it was content from the University of Chile, if it was from another organization related to the movement or if it was content from the government. Also, I quantified if the content posted was produced by an organization not associated with the movement or by a traditional medium.

7) Media quote: To measure the interaction with other communication platforms, I quantified if the content posted was referring to a form of national, international, student or other digital social media (for example, YouTube) communication.

The final category attempted to describe the purpose of the entry, since the objectives of social movements are also associated with different communication strategies (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994). Thus, this category corresponds to:

8) Purpose of Entry: I measured whether the content published summoned participation in protest actions (marches, strikes, etc.) or movement activities (lectures, conferences, etc.). Also, I measured if the entry highlighted achievements or support of the movement (balance of participation, emblematic backups, etc.). Finally, other objectives that could reaffirm the definition of movement (mobilization reasons) or replies to or mentioning opponents (government, police, etc.) were also measured.

This descriptive content analysis was complemented with textual analysis of the posts made by FECH to describe and understand how public content on their Facebook page was framed. The textual analysis followed the approach proposed by Norman Fairclough (2003), who understands discourses as a facet of social life in interaction with other social dimensions. Discourse is, ultimately, a social practice (Fairclough, 2003). This textual analysis was done to account for the broader use of Facebook, considering the importance of generating messages and meanings in the development of social movements (Castells, 2012).

5. Results

Considering the eight general categories mentioned, 552 posts were identified during the month of analysis (an average of 16.7 posts per day), which

shows the intensive use of this digital platform by FECH. There were 47,314 approvals (likes) on the content posted and 8,686 comments. In other words, each post generated on average 15.7 reactions from fans of the page.

5.1. Content

The analysis shows that FECH used its Facebook page primarily as a source of information for the student movement. The vast majority of posts were accompanied by a comment made by FECH itself, which tried to explain, elaborate on or summarize the content posted. In 85.7% of the 552 posts, FECH made its own introduction to frame the discussion. However, the presence of visual «hooks» (photos or videos) was lower than expected, considering how frequently the use of Facebook is associated with the publication of images. Only 58.5% of the posts analyzed used photos or videos. References to the leadership of the organization had even lower numbers. Camila Vallejo was practically never mentioned in the entries. Just 43 of the 552 posts included some mention of the president of FECH. This result is striking because of the high public visibility of the leader, but it could be explained by the very nature of FECH, whose leadership is made up of a list of representatives who are voted in each year. Thus, the organization is not serving a particular leader, but rather all student groups that make up its board.

Another result highlighted is the use of content produced by some type of traditional media. The majority of posts incorporated content generated by an organization not related to FECH. In fact, 40% of the posts corresponded to traditional media content and only 22.6 % is content generated by FECH itself. This illustrates that the Facebook page was mostly used to respond to the content published on other media platforms. References to content generated by the University of Chile (4), by another organization of the movement (7), by the government (3), or by an organization not directly linked to the movement (10) were scarce.

In summary, the major source of content for FECH's Facebook page was traditional media (radio, print and online newspapers, television). Specifically, national media are the main sources of content (37% of the 552 posts). International media only appear 14 times, despite the wide coverage of the movement in various countries. In addition, consistent with the low number of images in the analyzed posts, there were only 28 occasions when YouTube was referenced.

With regard to the purposes of each post, the use of Facebook by FECH responded to the usual characteristics of the communication strategies of social movements. Its main uses are: to mobilize supporters through the call for protest actions or movement activities (29.2%), to highlight achievements, outstanding support and mass demonstrations of the movement (27.5%) and to remind readers who were the opponents of movement (24.3%). The remaining 47 posts were intended to explain the main reasons for the student conflict. Through these communication uses, FECH contributed to the construction of interpretive frameworks for collective action, defined as «action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization» (Benford & Snow, 2000: 614). The constant references to the popularity of the protests and the support that the students gained showed the «success» of the movement and the need to keep going, without forgetting who the opponents were. This was the framework for action that was communicated via FECH's Facebook.

5.2. Textual analysis

For textual analysis, 473 posts were examined, which included a header generated by FECH. The vast majority of these texts were direct references to content posted, in an attempt to introduce and contextualize the information. Also, in these posts, additional data were added to those mentioned in the posted content or information spread by traditional media was rejected. Some examples are: «Meet the new Minister of Education. Complete information on Felipe Bulnes» (19-07-2011), «Dear all, at this time have a double eye [be careful] when reading certain media» (19-07-2011), «They have invented many things to discredit us, pay attention to the info [sic] circulating» (19-08-2011). These types of messages were accompanied by explanatory notes. Through these means, the information available to participants of the movement spread and a counter-framing of news events published by traditional media (Squires, 2011) was realized.

The vast majority of FECH's own comments are short, accurate and informative texts. This can be explained because the Facebook page was administered by the young professionals of the organization, who have knowledge about communication. For example, commenting on the change of minister by President Piñera, FECH wrote: «A change in Minister is not enough, we demand a change in state policies!» (19-07-2011). Or to call a protest activity during the Chilean winter: «The rain isn't going to stop us either!» (28-07-2011). As expected, all references to the

movement's actions were positive and the references to the adversaries were negative, confirming the polarization communication strategy employed by social movements (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994).

The positive approach of the texts intended to show the support and achievements of the movement, counteracting the official conservative voices criticizing students (Cabalin, 2014). This discursive strategy was also intended to motivate and add supporters to the demonstrations organized. Thus, when there was an unauthorized march, which was violently repressed by the police on August 4, 2011, FECH posted on its Facebook: «The March Continues!! No repressive media that the government unleashes will achieve [or] undermine the strength of our movement. We respond with more unity and more fight!». During that day, there was a greater degree of violence against the student movement and Facebook was used as a platform to denounce such actions: «Throughout Chile We Are Being Repressed»; «What has happened in our country today Cannot Go Unpunished!». Messages written in capitalized words by the administrators of the Facebook page show that the emphasis of the students' complaints was affirmed by the leaders of the movement in its subsequent statements to traditional media.

Other common uses of the messages were to broadcast the activities of the movement, to gather information for the development of demonstrations across the country or to reaffirm the protest actions. For example: «Let everyone in the world know that today in Chile we could not protest and congregate publically» (04-08-2011); «How is the cacerolazo going at home?» (09-08-2011); «Yesterday we were 100,000 in the rain in Santiago, peacefully beautiful. This Sunday everyone is invited to Family Sunday for Education, with everyone for everyone» (19-08-2011). These types of messages explicitly called for the interaction with fans of the page, asking on the one hand for «help» in denouncing unjust acts and, on the other hand, seeking feedback on the protest actions. It was also a way to promote participation and turn readers into activists in these actions.

In short, the messages published by FECH demonstrated that the following communication functions were used on Facebook: disseminating and framing information, responding to opponents and traditional media, counteracting official information, calling for public demonstrations and events, highlighting the positive results of the protest actions and support obtained, calling for adhesion, and finally, acknowledging and identifying the main detractors of the movement.

> Obviously, new information technologies are fundamental to the development of the current youth movements, but cannot be considered exclusively as the factors that enable the success and scope of these movements. In the case of the Chilean student movement, its prolonged development is explained by structural reasons associated with the reproduction of inequalities in the educational system and the political and cultural reconfigurations of the country. Nonetheless, Facebook and other digital platforms were key to the success of the mobilizations, facilitating the transformation of many of the bystanders into activists of the movement.

6. Conclusion

As noted, one of the most important organizations of the 2011 Chilean student movement used Facebook intensively, but this use replied to classic schemes of social movements. This indicates that current protest actions synthesize traditional actions in new innovative ways, which dismisses any hint of technological determinism in the analysis of protest actions of these movements. According to Valenzuela (2013), in the case of young Chileans, the use of social media networks to express opinions and join social causes, predicts a higher probability of young people participating in public demonstrations, but cannot be considered a trigger for political actions. Social movements use digital social networks as a tool in a wide variety of

actions, ranging from street marches to viral internet campaigns, as a case study of the 15M movement in Spain illustrated (Hernández-Merayo, Robles-Vílchez & Martínez- Rodríguez, 2013).

In the case of FECH, the increased use that this organization gave to its Facebook page was made on the basis of specific mobilization strategies, such as the call for marches, debates and conferences, in addition to permanently highlighting its opponents as responsible the conflict. Aware of the importance of communication for the success of the movement, the students also resorted to traditional media, whose reports were the main content on FECH's Facebook page. This content, which often criticized the students, was recontextualized in the analyzed posts through explicit comments or direct calls to not believe the information published by traditional media sources. Along this line, the wisdom of one of the student leaders frames this idea saying: «We were on the radio, television news, and in the morning newspaper. This happened despite the lines of editors and the interests of some media sources, which responded against our rebellious and transgressive message, focusing its efforts in distorting our opinions and focused on showing the movement with a violent and uncompromising character, almost criminal character» (Jackson, 2013: 21-22).

Social networking sites were not used only for this counter-framing, but also for communicating the message of the mobilized students. Social movements see communication as «the lifeblood» (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994: 159) and Chilean students understood this well.

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Considering the above, it would be interesting to investigate other aspects of the relationship between new digital media and the actions of protesting youths. For example, the processes of appropriation of these new technologies by young people and their impact on citizen mobilizations or generational identity could be examined. This approach was beyond the scope and objective of this article, but in the same way, the study presented allowed for the analysis of the uses of Facebook communication developed by an influential organization in the 2011 Chilean student movement.

Notes

[1] A special type of protest where pots, pans and other kitchen utensils are banged together noisily to call attention to a specific cause.

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Engaged Youth in the Internet. The Role of Social Networks in Social Active Participation

Jóvenes comprometidos en la Red: El papel de las redes sociales en la participación social activa

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ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to the analysis of the role that social networks play in civic, social mobilization and solidarity of Spanish young people, considering whether social networks are responsible for active social commitment offline or if they just intensify an existing or previous tendency towards social participation. This research was undertaken by online questionnaire –Likert scale and multiple choice questions– in collaboration with the Spanish social network Tuenti where more than 1,300 young people took part. The results show significant percentages of participation exclusively online although there were more than 80% of young people, in a way or another, involved in actions to which they were called by social networks. The study analyzes the forms of participation in solidarity actions and the influence of factors such as geographical, social or emotional proximity to causes on the degree of participation online and offline. The article shows that social networks have changed the meaning of participation. They are encouraging young people who were mobilized only in social networks, to take action, so it proposes in its conclusions the need to overcome the dichotomy that opposes online and offline activism and passivity.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza el papel que las redes sociales juegan en la movilización ciudadana, social y solidaria de los jóvenes españoles. El objetivo es observar si son responsables de que los jóvenes activos on-line demuestren también su compromiso en la vida fuera de la Red, y si su predisposición existente o no hacia la participación, se intensifica a través de estas redes sociales y en su respuesta off-line. Para ello se desarrolló una investigación on-line a través de cuestionario –con preguntas en Escala de Likert y de elección múltiple– en colaboración con la red social Tuenti en la que participaron más de 1.300 jóvenes. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto porcentajes significativos de participación solidaria exclusivamente on-line, si bien se observa que más del 80% de los jóvenes, de una u otra forma, participan en las acciones a las que se les convoca a través de redes sociales. El estudio examina también las formas de participación en acciones solidarias y la influencia de factores como la proximidad geográfica, social o emocional sobre la participación on-line y off-line. Las redes sociales han cambiado el significado de la participación, están incentivando el compromiso y consiguiendo que jóvenes que no se movilizaban fuera de ellas, pasen a la acción. Por ello propone entre sus conclusiones, la necesidad de superar la dicotomía que opone on-line y off-line en el ámbito de la participación social.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Social networks, youth, participation, Internet, solidarity, cyberactivism, digital communication, interactivity.
Redes sociales, juventud, participación, Internet, solidaridad, ciberactivismo, comunicación digital, interactividad.

1. Introduction

Social networks should not be considered merely as technological tools for exchanging messages –even if at one point in time they were– but rather as contemporary means for communication, interaction and global participation. It is currently undeniable that their consequences have resulted in a change that goes beyond them.

What occurred with the earthquake and the subsequent tsunami that devastated the Japanese coast in March 2011 marked a before and an after in terms of how social media are used. According to Tweet-o-meter (which measures Twitter activity), the number of Twitter messages originating in Tokyo those days surpassed 1,200 per minute, and they consisted primarily of messages sent by people who needed to know the location of others (Google has launched the Person Finder service, a social tool that allows disaster victims to publish and receive information about others whose condition is not known).

Initiatives based on solidarity and participation, such as the fight against cancer, for example, highlight the importance being achieved by social networks in this area. Top athletes, singers and celebrities in general have used this tool to show their solidarity with various causes. These globally famous individuals are joined by thousands of users who show their support anonymously using online networks.

However, there are those who go beyond simply stating their support in favour or against something, who go beyond exchanging messages in the various social networks, people who feel motivated to convey the values they defend –including solidarity– to the offline world through actions that take place beyond these networks, such as assisting efforts or carrying out actions that directly affect or have direct repercussions beyond these networks, such as economic contributions through networks to certain causes.

1.1. The value of social networks and cyber-activism

What are the aspects of social networks that allow them to influence users that other mass-communication media alternatives, such as television, have not had in the past? The effects on the audience and their mobilisation through this medium has been studied for decades. The response links two obvious aspects: immediacy and interactivity.

The creation of the World Wide Web in 1989 marked the start of a new era due to its impact on all social, economic and even political structures thanks to its extraordinary contributions in terms of communica-

tion. The expansion of this communication phenomenon was even more significant after the new millennium, when new tools that have favoured the exponential connection between audiences were developed, reinventing the classical paradigms for mass and non-mass communication. This has been possible thanks to the appearance and development of what are known as social networks.

Users no longer play only the role of recipients (a role that they had hardly left behind in the traditional mass-media communication process), and instead they alternatively assume the role of recipients and senders. This alternation is a core affordance of interpersonal communication, and it has now transferred to global communication which, applied to the mass media, has coined terms such as «prosumer», a user that consumes and also creates contents.

Digital technologies have made it possible for users throughout the world to interact with each other and share opinions and experiences. Internet users have their own virtual identity that is developed through the set of platforms that comprise social media. These new channels have changed the parameters of communication between individuals and groups, allowing dialogue to be democratised and multiplied exponentially.

With the Web 2.0, any individual can have a global impact with their dialogue, and this is exactly where the phenomenon of cyber-activism takes place (Tascón & Quintana, 2012), thanks to the array of possibilities that have opened popular channels such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter. The term Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) was created to refer to the social phenomenon based on the interaction of various web applications centred on users that facilitate the exchange of information, multimedia collaboration and exchange in real time, which are essential for participation and social activism on the Internet.

Aside from growing in parallel with the number of Internet users (according to Internet World Stats 2012, more than 2.4 billion people, more than a third of the world population), this revolution that is defining the new digital era is also increasing the possibilities of broadcasting content that denounces situations of social injustice, abuse, etc. A good example is the witness.org website, a platform whose slogan is «See it; film it; change it» and its aim is to encourage people to provide witnesses with the mission of opening «the world's eyes to human rights violations» (http://goo.gl/7wg5SM) with their testimony.

This is ultimately a form of social cyber-activism or cyber-social movement that involves active participa-

tion through social networks as well as individual/ social mobilisation in the real life of people (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). Cyber-activists are «active» online and offline. This concept does not include a limited definition of cyber-activism that is referred to as «click-activism».

Establishing the concept of cyber-activism can be as complicated as defining activism before the Internet. Social movements, with the more or less active participation of many individuals, have always existed, but digital technologies and the opportunities they offer for interaction give users greater power with regard to these movements because they become content senders for mobilisation and the active collaborators that are necessary as individuals for attaining the overall objective.

This mobilisation and participation activity is manifested through social networks (Martínez, 2013). They are the link between organisations and users, and the way in which they are able to reach them and offer their content. The work of Valenzuela, Park and Kee (2009) showed the direct relation between the use of Facebook and the commitment to civic and/or political actions. An example of this is the Facebook event that filled Egypt's Tahir Square during the Arab Spring (http://goo.gl/6NY-9kO).

A further example is Barack Obama's campaign for the United States presidency since it paradigmatically made apparent the power of social networks and the value of trust between individuals, beyond the traditional mass-communication structures. This is exactly how the contact networks in platforms such as Facebook, with more than 800 million users just in the United States (Vitak, Lampe, Gray & Ellison, 2012), Twitter, Linkedin or, Spain's Tuenti, should be understood. Within the strategy of communication, they have all become extremely powerful tools that are growing continuously (Harfoush, 2009).

In this context, the studies presented by Hernández, Robles and Martínez (2013) are of interest. They analysed how young people experience democratic citizenship through both digital and traditional media. Here, a more informed digital citizenship

is being created, and it extends its communication relations by connecting to a network, and it also transforms civic participation into one of the predominant aspects of social networks (Kahne, Lee & Timpany, 2011; Bescansa & Jerez, 2012).

This makes it possible to conclude that the foundation for active social participation online and offline can be found in digital literacy and in the increased level of competency. Thanks to social networks, young people have access to a multitude of possibilities to participate actively in creating social changes, and

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this participation in networks increases their knowledge of interaction methods that facilitate this activism (Ito, 2009).

These digital natives (Prensky, 2001), today's youth, who comprise the sector that first discovered the networks and builds in them its relationship dynamics (Monge & Olabarri, 2011), have a long way to go in these new social digital communication methods. Experiences such as those of Leonard (2011) show that the education of young people, combined with the development of a critical ability in using online networks, will intensify the potential of these networks to help social mobilisation, participation, and the comprehensive training of this generation as well as future ones.

1.2. The role of networks in mobilising young people

Therefore, the following research question is worth considering: Are social networks responsible for people who are active online also displaying their social commitment beyond the network, or only when

these individuals were already predisposed to mobilisation do the networks strengthen this active attitude that spreads to the offline response?

In order to understand what is occurring, it is important to take into consideration that the networks create paths towards active social participation, involving users in events for which in the past it would have been complicated to even be informed of, facilitating for organisers the dissemination and for recipients the information (Rubio-Gil, 2012). As a result, users, who become active recipients that alternate this role with

From Guatemala (Harlow, 2012) to South Korea (Choi & Park, 2014), experiences are being gathered in how young people use social networks, national or global, to participate and mobilise for social and/or civic purposes, online and offline. This is additional proof that «users have gained control of the tool and they are transforming it into a lever for changing the world» (Orihuela, 2008: 62). As Lim (2012) states, social networks have supported the change from online activism to offline protests and engagements.

2. Methodology

The initial hypothesis is based on the idea that the familiarity of young people with social networks makes them an ideal instrument for involving them in social participation. As a result, the general objective of research must be none other than to analyse how the participation of young people in social networks leads to an active social mobilisation online and offline (in other words, through a virtual world and also through the real world); to see to what degree it is cyber-activism in which young people have

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the senders or producers of messages and contents, are also the information transmission channel.

Participation within the networks activates a movement that frequently spreads because the aim is for it to be extended (Dalhgren, 2011). For participating users, each initiative requires a different degree of involvement and a different complexity in the response from the moment when the organiser or the creator of a certain movement in the network may ask the recipient to simply press a button (a donation to a campaign against hunger) or to go out to the street and physically surround the Congress building, passing through intermediate initiatives such as collaborating to find a missing person.

What all situations have in common is that the dissemination process has changed from the traditional «mouth to mouth» to «computer to computer» and more recently «mobile phone to mobile phone» and what is now known as «Face to Face», as the shortened version of «Facebook to Facebook» that is an unexpectedly symbolic substitute by recalling the traditional and increasingly less essential «face to face».

new tools that facilitate their involvement in situations of social injustice, solidarity or humanitarian needs.

The research instrument used to perform the study was a survey, so an online questionnaire adapted to the conditions of social networks was created. Internet surveys have intrinsic characteristics —such as the speed in collecting information, the low cost and/or the improved responses— and these characteristics adapted perfectly to the study that was performed in this case (Díaz-de-Rada, 2012). The process of collecting this information relied on the collaboration of Tuenti, the Spanish social network par excellence, which has 10 million active users, that launched an advertising campaign in its platform to disseminate the questionnaire among users and encourage their participation (80% of the activity in Tuenti is by users between the ages of 14 and 25 years). This Tuenti campaign included a link to the research questionnaire –with dichotomous, Likert scale and multiple choice questions– regarding their overall participation in social networks, not just Tuenti. The questionnaire, with 30 questions, followed a logical sequence, starting with

short questions about socio-demographics (age, gender, education) and then continued with introductory or ice-breaker and basic questions regarding privacy and participation in networks. The campaign used what is known as the «standard ad» format, and Tuenti offered an incentive (a prize draw amongst participants) in order to encourage user participation. Afterwards, the SPSS statistics application was used for the data analysis. The sample used for the study was comprised of 1,330 young people, male (59%) and female(41%) with the ages of 16 (44%), 17 (34%) and 18 (22%), selected through a random simple probabilistic sample, with a confidence interval of 95.5% and p=q=50%, and a margin of error of approximately 2.7%. The results obtained were then presented and reviewed.

3. Analysis and results

When analysing the role that social networks play in the lives of young people, it is important to highlight that the networks, beyond allowing them to expand their social relations, represent a medium that allows young people to not only be informed of civic, political and cultural events, etc., but also to participate in them actively (García & del-Hoyo, 2013).

As a result, with the aim of verifying this participation method, the research performed confirmed some of the descriptive data listed below. Regarding the first research question related to the influence of social networks in online/offline participation, the data seem to show that the participation of young people tends to start and end in the virtual world since 38% state that aside from participating in an online event, they tend to also join the offline version, and 44% admit that although they participate in online events, they do not join them in real life. However, interpreting this data in dichotomous terms of mobilisation and indifference would be incorrect.

In order to understand correctly the scope of these percentages, certain clarifications should be made, without veering from the data provided by the study. The mobilisation capabilities of young people through social networks should not be underestimated since they produce content and urge others to participate, as shown by 24% of the young people surveyed who state that they always or almost always use social networks «to encourage others to participate in certain events, demonstrations, meetings, etc. » or the 26% who agree with the following statement: «Social networks lave led me to develop/participate in an action of social protest».

The very similar percentages show the dual role

that young people can play through the networks, or the dual role they play (the percentage of young people who feel encouraged by social networks to participate in social collective actions is very close to those who use social networks to encourage others to participate). Taking into consideration the Spearman rho coefficient (García-Ferrando, 1994: 253), a moderate relationship (0.63) can be established between the variables of «I use social networks to encourage others in the area of social mobilisation» and «social networks have led me to participate in an action of social protest».

Therefore, the figures invite us to deduce that young people are active in the networks, and that they are active in two ways: as producers of content that encourages others in the area of social mobilisation and as active recipients who transfer their empathy to situations of social need towards action.

An especially significant aspect is the percentage of young people surveyed who say they use social networks to support solidarity campaigns (34.3%), those who say they use social networks to denounce unfair situations (27.2%), and those who state that social networks have led them to develop or participate in an action of social protest (27%).

At this point, the data shed light on the participation possibilities that the networks offer young people in order to show, online or offline, their solidarity and involvement with situations of social injustice that are more or less close to them. In summary, the possibilities of promoting and channelling the social mobilisation of young people, especially as drivers of solidarity in this population group, which leads to our aim of knowing to what degree these possibilities are taken advantage of as tools for channelling solidarity in light of certain situations, and if so, how this solidarity is expressed.

Specifically, the study posed various situations to the young people selected that would require them to respond with solidarity...or not. This response could be reflected with a «click», an «economic donation» or «going to a social engagement». In the first case, and depending on the situation or the circumstances, the «click» could represent active online participation on behalf of the young person who would remain in that virtual behaviour.

However, it can be misleading to think that this would not move to the offline social life since there are associations such as Greenpeace whose webpage recognises the importance of cyber-activism. The organisation defines it in this manner: «Being a cyber-activist involves active mobilisation to defend the Earth

from your computer. Your signature is a valuable tool in the fight for the environment, and with thousands of them we have been able to reduce some of the most serious assaults on our planet». Therefore, a «click» should not be considered simply as idle or passive behaviour by young people, nor should it be underestimated. Instead, the corresponding context should be taken into consideration (http://goo.gl/ttQx5i).

According to the study results, the majority of young people continue to participate through clicks from their computers, but as we have just seen, the effects of these actions are far from negligible. This is combined with the significant percentage of young people who seem to be involved in social and civic actions, and who take their solidarity actions beyond a click. In addition, only 17% of the young people surveyed can be considered as passive since only that 17% states that they «would not participate» through the virtual world or the real world in any of the events included in the questionnaire. As a result, it can be deduced that this reflects the other side of the coin: the confirmation that more than 80% of young people participate in some way or another in the actions they are invited to through social networks.

Therefore, social networks cannot be considered simply a passing trend. They are a fundamental change in how we communicate and interact in a global manner. The added value they have contributed to certain social movements cannot be ignored.

3.1. Ways of participating in actions of solidarity

The behavioural differences shown by young people in situations that require their active social participation primarily respond to matters of proximity, including geographic proximity as well as what can be referred to as social proximity.

When expressing an active attitude that goes beyond social networks, young people tend to show more solidarity with situations that are geographically closer. Therefore, in the case of participating in an ecology campaign to protect Spain's coast, 27.5% stated that they would participate in an offline engagement, while only 22% would participate in an ecology campaign to save the Arctic.

Something similar occurred when they were asked how they would participate in a humanitarian campaign against poverty in Spain or in a humanitarian campaign against poverty in Africa. In both cases, 38% responded «with a click», but the difference was made apparent in terms of transferring their solidarity beyond social networks. In that case, only 13% would go to an offline engagement for a campaign to fight poverty in

the African continent, while 23% said they would go to an engagement if the campaign was to fight poverty in Spain.

Paradoxically, when making an economic donation, young people showed more awareness of poverty in Africa (33% of those surveyed would donate money) than of poverty in Spain (27.3% would do so). Of all the situations that appeared in the study, the case of the campaign against hunger in Africa is the one with the most responses for making an economic donation.

The fact that geographic proximity can be a determining factor is also made apparent by the instance of a «Campaign against the death sentence in Iran», although in this case it would be more appropriate to refer to geographic distance, since this is what determines that 31% of the young people surveyed marked that they would not participate in this campaign. None of the other situations proposed for measuring how geographic distance influences participation obtained a higher percentage (the average for non-participation in the situations was 17.4%).

The «social proximity» factor refers to events in which geographic proximity is not involved or does not appear to be decisive. Instead, it is the empathy with the situation itself that leads individuals to participate actively, guided by social networks (similar to what is occurring in the media with the proximity news value, a value with a dual dimension, both geographic as well as emotional and/or intellectual). As a result, in a campaign against cancer, 24.2% would participate in an engagement, 30% would make a donation and 36% would participate with a «click». The percentage of individuals who would go to an engagement nearly doubles in the case of a «campaign against bullying at school or cyber-bullying» (40%) as this is an issue that they seem to be more aware of and feel closer to in their lives (in terms of the geographic proximity or dis-
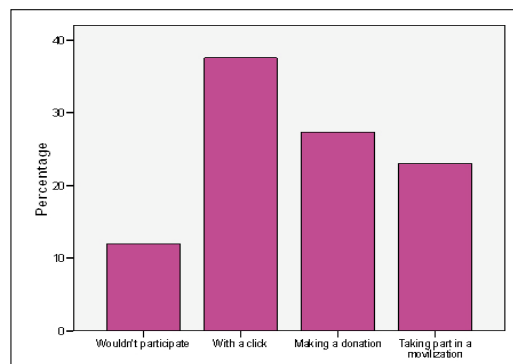
Figure 1. Humanitarian campaign against poverty in Spain.

tance, emotional proximity is the factor in this case) since most of the individuals in the sample were still completing their education (88.2%), and the situation that was described is probably close to them, regardless of whether they have experienced it directly.

Although it may seem difficult to determine what type of proximity plays a stronger role in certain instances, as in the case of the «campaign to support a neighbour with a rare disease» or the «campaign to defend the neighbourhood school», the results confirm that physical proximity is a secondary factor compared to social proximity (which is perfectly in line with the fact that the networks connect people, overcoming physical barriers). In the first instance mentioned, participation in virtual support was 35% while for the second it was 40%.

The difference is exacerbated in favour of situations to which they feel emotionally closer, and when the possibility of participating in engagements outside of the network is proposed, the percentage that would participate to support a neighbour with a rare disease drops to 24%, while remaining at 31% to support situations the individuals identify with more easily in accordance with their age. An example is the new campaign against bullying at school, for which the percentage of commitment outside of the network is nearly 40%.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The study results confirm that motivations in social networks are not only aimed at areas related to personal interests, but also at social relational or inclusion needs, as suggested by Notley (2009) and Colás, González and de-Pablos (2013). In fact, they go one step further and reflect that a significant percentage of young people participate in the networks with solidarity or civic purposes in mind. American studies, like the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project on civic commitment in the Digital Era, affirm this conclusion in a study performed on adults that found 48% of Americans participated in a civic activity that could range from helping to solve a problem in their community to participating in a protest action, always mobilised by social networks (Civic Engagement in the Digital Age) (http://goo.gl/y2q7AM).

In the first part of this article, we stated that social networks go beyond simply being a method or a medium for communicating, and that they are also a method or a medium for social participation and global activism. The study results presented here confirm this since more than 80% of the young people surveyed channel through networks their response to campaigns that support or reject certain events.
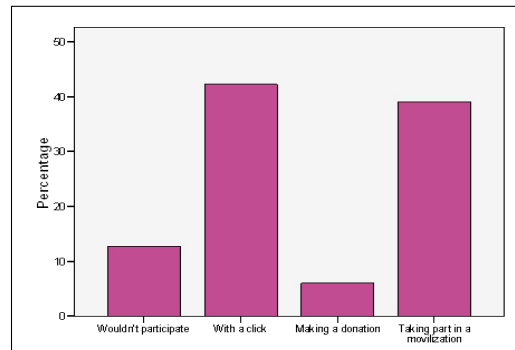
Figure 2. Campaign against ciberbullying.

It was also believed that the networks have an advantage over other media in terms of immediacy and interactivity. In light of the data and taking into consideration that the information for mobilising now reaches young people who in the past did not have access to it, it can be said that social networks are providing incentives for commitment and making it possible for young people who in the past did not mobilise to now take action, precisely because of the consequences resulting from the aspects mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. The networks eliminate the physical distances that sometimes limit mobilisation significantly, and young people become closer to those who are «near» them, regardless of their actual location, and they support them because the support or the mobilisation have also overcome the physical limitations, as proven by the higher mobilisation percentages obtained by causes that feel close, regardless of their geographic proximity or distance (40% of the sample supported these types of causes).

Interactivity entails an alternation in the roles of sender and recipient in the networks, but once again, the data collected goes further by stating that users do not simply receive messages passively but instead they are capable of responding to them. This shows that those users take the initiative in new messages which the spread action. In other words, young people generate responses, but they also generate questions, proposals and calls for action (nearly one quarter of those surveyed confirmed this).

The impossibility of maintaining a limited concept of activism in the networks should be understood within this framework, not just because of the evidence that a virtual action has real consequences, but because within the sample that has been collected, it is still necessary to address degrees of commitment and degrees of mobilisation as opposed to degrees of activism or passivity. In summary, this refers to the need to

overcome the dichotomy that opposes online and offline within social participation.

The study confirms that young people do not use social networks merely to expand their offline social relations. Networks offer an infinite number of possibilities for active social participation. It is necessary to show young people the options provided by networks as a resource for channelling actions of solidarity. The networks have changed the meaning of participation: organisations request the collaboration of citizens

social awareness campaigns has dropped considerably. Therefore, organisations or social movements should rely on this new method of social communication as a resource for achieving digital and real mobilisation for «Causes 2.0», which are situations that require the civic participation of citizens and use social networks to achieve this. The study confirms that circumstances exist that result in greater participation, and the door is open to discovering other variables that, aside from being collected, drive young people to be increasingly committed on a civic level, which will be addressed in future work.

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through the networks as a way to apply pressure in light of situations of injustice or of social needs.

Amnesty International and Greenpeace are already aware of the importance of social networks in encouraging the active social participation of citizens. In fact, Facebook has become a key tool for organising and coordinating civic protests in many cities around the world (Lim, 2012). Experiences like Change.org, «the largest platform for petitions in the world» in which, as they have announced, more than 50 million people «have taken action» are situations that require an updated and detailed analysis of the variables that drive people to participate. In this regard, this study could contribute to the developments in this field by considering certain variables that have an impact on online participation and the corresponding offline channelling. As a result, the geographic, social or emotional proximity will determine the commitment of young people in events that require their solidarity or cooperation.

With social networks, the power of bringing people together has grown and the cost of carrying out

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Internet as a Haven and Social Shield. Problematic Uses of the Network by Young Spaniards

Internet como refugio y escudo social: Usos problemáticos de la Red por jóvenes españoles

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ABSTRACT

Universal access to the Internet among young people has been accompanied by new opportunities associated with online developments and practices, but the problematic use of the digital environment also involves threats. In the current scientific literature, there is no clear consensus on the definition of the behaviors that could arise from inappropriate use of the Web, which, as an attempt, is defined with the term «addiction». This article combines a qualitative-quantitative approach, based on a competitive national research project, aiming to identify the main threats posed by digital immersion of Spanish youth between 12 and 17 years old. On the one hand, results obtained from this research confirm the discomfort experienced by young people when they have to be offline during a certain period of time, especially in those intensive users of social networks. On the other hand, it has been shown how damaged or conflicting family relationships lead individuals from 15 years old to spend more time connected to the Internet in an attempt to supplement or protest against their family interactions. This study confirms several trends already mentioned in the specialized literature, and presents new findings that suggest possible future lines of investigation on early detection of cyberpathologies.

RESUMEN

La universalización del acceso a Internet entre los jóvenes va acompañada de nuevas oportunidades asociadas a las prácticas y desarrollos on-line, pero también de amenazas derivadas de un uso problemático del entorno digital. En la literatura científica actual, no se observa un consenso en la definición de las conductas que podrían derivarse de un uso inadecuado de la Red, al que, de manera aún tentativa, se define como «adicción». Este trabajo combina una aproximación cualitativa y cuantitativa, a partir de un proyecto competitivo nacional, con el objetivo de identificar las principales amenazas que presenta la inmersión digital de los jóvenes entre 12 y 17 años en España. Los resultados obtenidos confirman, en primer lugar, el estrés y/o malestar experimentado por los jóvenes ante la imposibilidad de conectarse a Internet durante un determinado período de tiempo, especialmente en aquellos usuarios intensivos de redes sociales. En segundo lugar, se ha comprobado cómo las relaciones familiares deterioradas o conflictivas influyen en que los adolescentes a partir de 15 años pasen más tiempo conectados a la Red, en un intento de suplir sus interacciones familiares o protestar frente a ellas. El trabajo confirma tendencias apuntadas en la literatura especializada y presenta nuevos hallazgos que sugieren líneas adicionales de interés para futuras investigaciones interdisciplinarias en torno al reconocimiento y la detección precoz de las ciberpatologías.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Internet, social networks, young, addiction, adolescence, cyberpathologies, digital behavior, familiar relationships.
Internet, redes sociales, jóvenes, adicción, adolescencia, ciberpatologías, comportamiento digital, relaciones familiares.

1. Introduction

In a very short period of time Internet has become widespread, especially among the young. Data reveals almost universal access, 91.8%, for those aged between 10 and 15 and up to a 97.4% for those aged between 16 to 24 (INE, 2013). At the same time, there is a remarkable increase in the number of social networking site profiles. As of December 31st, 2012, Facebook in Spain alone amounted to over 17 million (Internet World Stats, 2013), which represents 37.6% of the total population. Besides their extensive use of the Internet, the young are considered to be the age group that is most vulnerable to developing problematic Internet use as they are at a critical stage –adolescence– as regards defining their identities and in a period of insecurity, confusion and instability that can lead them to escape into the world of Internet and social networks with adults hardly noticing it. This outlook has drawn academic interest to detect possible addictions, even if this term does not receive general consensus.

1.1. Problematic use of or addiction to the Internet. Conceptualization and measurement issues

The problem of referring to problematic use of or addiction to the Internet and identifying who is developing those behaviors stems from the different interpretations, sometimes blurred, applied to these terms. Establishing whether Internet is actually used problematically together with the different content, services and apps available online (Bergmark & al., 2011; Kim & Haridakis, 2009; Echeburúa, 1999), especially those activities linked to a reward (Kim & Davis, 2009), constitutes one of the most contentious issues. In this sense, Shapira & al. (2003) found a positive association between Internet addiction and some psychiatric illnesses, such as pathological gambling, sexual deviations or compulsive shopping. Nevertheless, empirical research often avoids this question due to its problematic conceptualization.

Understanding problematic use as lack of control in engaging with the Internet which implies distress and negative consequences on a daily basis (Echeburúa & Corral, 2010; Shapira & al., 2003), some authors have drawn attention to the abusive use of the Internet as a problem in itself (Lee & Stapinski, 2012). With regard to the young, some empirical research shows that spending so much time online may have negative consequences for on habits and daily routines as well as in personal relationships in general (Armstrong & al., 2000; Douglas & al., 2008). At the same time, the variety of content and services provided

through the Internet, together with the multitask character of online activity as shown in several research papers (Kaiser Foundation, 2005; 2010; Gross, 2004), challenges the fact that excessive use may turn into a reliable indicator of problematic Internet use.

Linked to the problematic use is the perception of discomfort if use is not possible. Labrador and Villadongos (2010) suggest this reaction being comparable to addiction symptoms. Nonetheless, Carbonell & al. (2012) note the importance of being careful when using this term, because questionnaires might in fact show «concern» or «perception» instead of addictive use.

In this regard, Espinar and López (2009) report youth being attracted by the Internet and making excessive use of it linked to entertainment, while at the same time they acknowledge discomfort if no access to the Web is available, because this may imply having to look for substitutes for spending time. However, this Internet use should not be taken directly as problematic. Additionally, empirical research has shown the perception of problems associated to Internet use may evolve with age (Carbonell & al., 2012; Labrador & Villadongos, 2010) as well as with own experience (Griffiths, 2000), while some authors only notice temporary addiction to online games (Van-Roij & al., 2010).

There are still many inconsistencies when referring to problematic Internet use (Bergmark & al., 2011) and there is also little knowledge of the interrelation of its different dimensions as well as with the factors which may predict it. Therefore, these limitations make approaching the prevalence and real meaning of problematic use applied to national samples more complex.

1.2. Factor associated with problematic Internet use

Several studies have focused on connecting time as a predictor to pathological Internet use (Armstrong & al., 2000; Leung, 2004; Yang & Tung, 2007; Douglas & al., 2008; Labrador & Villadongos, 2010; Muñoz-Rivas & al., 2010). Additionally, it is suggested that intensive use of the Internet may vary depending on the reasons for connecting and the prevalence of previous socio-pathologies.

Several research results point to the fact that problematic use of the Web is linked to specific communication apps (Carbonell & al., 2012), particularly those used to look for new friends online, chat and social networking sites (Kuss & al., 2013; Viñas & al., 2002; Lee & Stapinski, 2012; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007; Acier & Kern, 2011). García & al. (2013) con-

firm the use of these communication platforms directly associated to the time spent online. Other authors suggest the problematic use of the Internet being associated to communication of identity disorders (Carbonell & al., 2012), for instance through the adoption of avatars (Wan & Chiou, 2006), which allows the user to pretend to be someone else (Carbonell & al., 2012; Douglas & al., 2008).

However, from the Uses and Gratification theory, it is underlined that media effects are driven by reasons of use which, in turn, may vary from one individual to another, and Valkenburg and Peter (2011) conclude that even the same technologies might be used either positively or negatively. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) suggest that introvert and extrovert young people are heavy users of interactive digital networks, to the extent that the former use them as social compensation tools, while the latter seem to use them as a way to enlarge their social relationships. The same authors point to the fact that both personalities are more likely to risk addiction. These results show how problematic use is not particularly linked to a specific tool usage, but on the contrary to the problematic relationship established with it, which may be explained as a way of to escaping other types of day-to-day problems.

Finally, other factors linked to problematic Internet use are connected with the offline world, such as family relationships, although little attention has been paid on this respect so far. Unsatisfactory family relationships (Liu & al., 2012; Viñas & al., 2002; Lam & al., 2009), communication with family (Liu & al., 2012; Park & al., 2008) and a high level of conflict in parent and children relationships (Yen & al., 2007) have been associated with intensive and problematic use of the Internet, through which minors may distance themselves from family conflicts (Douglas & al., 2008).

2. Methods

The combination of methodologies is the option chosen in this work with the aim of, firstly, approaching Internet uses and online social tools of preference by Spanish youngster between 12 and 17 years old; and, secondly to assess their connection behavior through their own testimonies. At the same time, it was proposed to identify main online activities which could entail a problematic use of the Web.

The first hypothesis (H1) establishes that young people experience stress or distrust through lack of use, especially among those with high connectivity habits and uses of online tools and particularly the social ones. The second hypothesis (H2) establishes

> The young are considered to be the age group that is most vulnerable to developing problematic Internet use as they are at a critical stage –adolescence– as regards defining their identities and in a period of insecurity, confusion and instability that can lead them to escape into the world of Internet and social networks with adults hardly noticing it. This outlook has drawn academic interest to detect possible addictions, even if this term does not receive general consensus.

that low interaction with parents increases stress in young people when faced with lack of connectivity.

2.1. Qualitative stage

This phase allowed the researchers to test opinions of young people as well as to elaborate the national survey which follows. Therefore, eight focus groups were conducted between the months of June and July, 2011, at national level, representing students enrolled in public and private secondary education (ESO, aged 12-16) and High School (Bachillerato, aged 16-18).

The study worked with mixed-gender groups separated by age into pre-adolescents and adolescents, considered operatively as individuals aged between 12-14 years old and between 15-17 years old. Six state secondary schools were selected, located in Andalusia (1), Catalonia (2), Madrid (2), Murcia (1), as well as two privately-owned but state-funded establishments found in Galicia (1) and Aragon (1).

Once the centers were selected, researchers got in

contact with school principals to ask them to identify the students, and informed parental consent was also asked. Focus groups lasted one hour and included six students on average. They were directed by a moderator who was in charge of addressing and conducting the discussion around uses and risks of the Internet.

All the focus groups were recorded and transcribed in full and verbatim. After reviewing and editing the texts of the transcriptions, they underwent an initial segmentation process that was in accordance with their semantic importance as per the objectives of our research. ATLAS.ti software was used to help with this task.

They were encoded, taking into account who was talking, their gender and their age. Then, they were automatically processed, generating 14 semantic codes, nine linked to uses, (daily use, amusement, dating, friendship, appropriate content, active appropriate use, passive appropriate use, family education and family relationship) and five linked to risks and control procedures after being tested by the members of the research group. A very large percentage was consistent with the categories extracted from five discussion groups in a previous research project limited to young people in the Madrid region of Spain (García, 2010). At the same time, these categories were compared with two initial focus groups with a view to establishing that they were valid and dovetailed with this project.

These categories were used in the discourse analysis and later discussion. As a result, several analytical inconsistencies were observed, mainly due to the differences found between active and passive uses, even though in the available literature on Internet users there is an established division among those active users who generate content and the passive, who draw on other's creativity (Holmes, 2011; Schaedel & Clement, 2010; Taraszow & al., 2010; Livingstone & Haddon, 2008).

2.2. Quantitative stage

The data presented in this study comes from a representative statistical auto-administered survey of young 12-17- year olds attending school at the level of «Educación Secundaria Obligatoria» (ESO), years 1 to 4, and «Bachillerato» (High School equivalent level) in the Spanish State, with the exception of Ceuta, Melilla and Balearic Islands throughout the 2011/2012 academic year.

The data for preparing the sampling frame and the selection of the sample was extracted from the statistics published by the Spanish Ministry of Education (students) and from those compiled from the web

pages of each of the Autonomous Communities analyzed (educational establishments). In total, the study universe would consist of 2,227,191 students at ESO and Bachillerato level from a total of 6,053 state, private and state-funded private educational establishments for secondary education and Bachillerato.

The second step consisted of applying stratified sampling of students by Autonomous Community, stage of education and whether it was a state-owned or privately-owned educational establishment. Over 5,000 questionnaires were collected. To ensure the representativeness of the sample by gender, age, educational level and type of center, 2,077 surveys were selected following the marked assessments for these variables. As the students needed to have parental permission to be able to complete the questionnaire, in the end there was a marginal deviation in the real sample from the theoretic student sample; therefore, elevation indices were established for the purpose of making adjustments.

The sampling error stood at ±2.2 for the worst possible case of variability in which p and q=50/50 and a 95% level of confidence, assuming simple random sampling.

The information was gathered from a classroom-based self-assessment questionnaire used between the months of September and November in 2011. The questionnaire consisted of fifty-four questions relating to types of Internet use and familial tactics of control and supervision. In order to test the comprehension of the questions posed and their consistency, a pre-test was undertaken.

Questionnaires were filtered based on the consistency of the information reported. In addition, frequency analysis or «hole count», flow analysis of the survey, validation filters, outlier controls and controls for to setting the average obtained against the planned were performed. Having obtained parental informed consent, the questionnaire was administered among interviewees after explaining to them the research purpose and requesting participation and openness as well as assuring confidentiality.

The data was analyzed using the SPSS 18 statistical program. As it is customary, the statistical significance level that indicates if the differences detected are due to chance has been set for $\chi2 < 0.05$. A correlational analysis was applied to the available data in order to test interrelations among distress for not having access to the Internet, the perceived difficulty of being offline or having access to specific content and online apps, time of use and impact on their daily life.

3. Results

The results presented in this paper are organized around the two research hypotheses mentioned above, and combine the findings of the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. In the following paragraphs, we first show the most significant aspects associated with the perception of discomfort because of lack of access for a certain period of time. Then, we proceed to link them in order to specify activities that could cause a perception of dependence on the Internet. Finally, personal relationships are observed, within and outside the family, for the purpose of associating them with the habits of connection.

3.1. Stress and/or discomfort perception through lack of Internet access

Approximately seven out of ten young people who answered the quantitative questionnaire consider having no access to the Internet for several days would not imply any problem for them or represent any serious problem despite the inconvenience caused by this situation (see figure 1). 70.2% of them are connected to the Internet every day or almost every day.

If we consider the number of devices used for going online, which increases the chances of exposure to the Web, it is observed that the more the ways to connect are available, the more difficult it is for youths to remain offline. One in ten young users of three or more devices expresses high discomfort when they do not have access to the Internet.

The results show that this trend is recurrent when there is a higher frequency of Internet use. In table 1, it can be seen that the difficulty to stay offline for seve-

Table 1: Adolescent opinions on the possibility of being offline for several days depending on the frequency of Internet access				
	Every day or nearly every day	Three or four days a week	Two days a week	Once a week
It would bother me a bit, but does not mean a serious problem	38.2%	39.2%	18.5%	10.0%
There would be no problem	23.7%	45.9%	68.9%	67.9%
It would be difficult, but it happens sometimes	24.0%	8.6%	8.2%	2.7%
It happens very rarely, but when it happens, I feel very bad	10.0%	1.5%	1.1%	3.8%
Don't know	3.6%	3.6%	2.6%	12.6%
No answer	0.4%	1.2%	0.6%	2.9%

ral days increases in parallel to the time usually spent online.

Therefore, the stress perceived while for not having access to the Web increases when considering connection time. Two out of ten young people who connect more than five hours a week report feeling very bad if they are forced to stay away from the Internet for several days. In this context, if certain applications or specific services are added as a variable, the number of young who expresses distrust on stopping use of using the Internet increases. Four in ten young people would find it quite difficult not to connect to their social network every day at any time, whereas for three in ten it may be challenging not to have access to YouTube.

3.1.1. Online activities associated with a perception of problematic Internet use

It is observed that social networking sites produce increased attachment to the Web and may lead to a perception of dependency. Facebook and Tuenti are, without any doubt, the most commonly used tools among young people, since nine out of ten young people uses them and 75% check them very often. The most requested online activities are: sharing videos (48.6%), surfing a range of websites (45.7%), and downloading different kinds of files including music (37.1%).

After coding the ideas raised in the focus groups, activities referred to by young were connected to entertainment. Sharing different kinds of files, uploading photos and tagging them or chatting with friends online are some of the examples of daily use of the Internet with the purpose of amusement.

There are also some other online activities that could be included in this context: 68.5% of young people use the Internet very often to listen to music and 35.5% watch TV online. Regarding the media consumption, boys do connect more often than girls
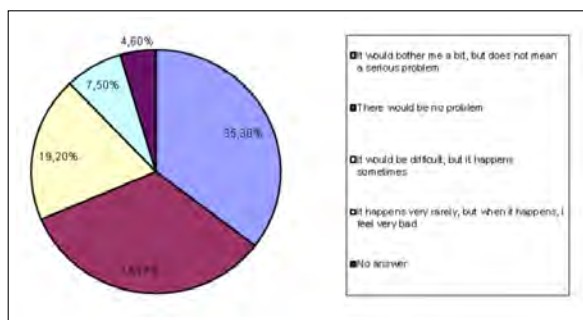
Figure 1: Adolescents' perception through lack of Internet access for several days.

to watch movies or series, to watch TV or search for information related to series and/or artists. Downloading television programs is a general activity among the interviewees. 60.5% of young aged between 12 to 14 and 71.2% of them who are in the 15 to 17 years-old range normally download TV programs they were unable to watch live due to incompatibility of schedules or because they prefer to have privacy to watch the audiovisual content they really like.

During the qualitative phase, participants reported

those who socialize with friends every day or nearly every day. There is a 5.8 percentage point difference compared with those who report not socializing or hardly socializing with friends.

The close family circle was addressed in the quantitative questionnaire through a variety of questions about the relationships of the young people with their parents. In order to qualify them, the interviewees should select one of the following options from a multiple choice question:

• Total confidence. My parents trust me and I tell them everything that happens to me.
• Enough confidence. We often talk about issues that concern us.
• My parents are very authoritarian with me and we have a lack of communication.
• My parents are very authoritarian with me, but they listen to me.
• My parents have no idea about what happens to me and I think they really don't care.
• Others.

When cross-checking the data, it is observed that 21% of the young who report their parents as being very authoritarian and with lack of com-

> It has been noted that young people who do not have good communication with their parents, or when the behavior of the latter is perceived as authoritarian by the interviewees, are the ones who tend to spend more hours online. In this way, youngsters try to compensate for the lack of communication at home. This problem is growing among adolescents in the 15 to 17 years old range, who prefer to have the support of their reference groups instead of talking to their parents in order to solve problems whose origin lie in the use of Internet.

that one of the main uses attributed by them to the Internet is watching TV either through the computer or the console. This finding is associated with the use of social networking sites, because very often these digital and interactive platforms host the debate on the most popular followed series.

The data collected during fieldwork reveals that each household member may have their own computer while the family usually has only one TV set per household. Participants in the focus groups confirm that their parents or other adults set limits on the consumption of inappropriate television content. Nevertheless, when they go online this control decreases.

3.2. Personal relationships

Although there is a trend to link the discomfort caused by the absence of Internet with problematic offline relationships and communication problems, the percentage of young people who reported discomfort when not having Internet access increases among

munication also express a feeling of stress and/or discomfort from an inability to connect to the Internet. The same is true of 19.6% of the young who claim that their parents have no idea about what happens to them, or even do not care about them.

The survey also asked young people about the frequency with which they interact or speak with the people at home. The perception among the ones who would feel discomfort when not having access to the Internet for several days doubles when we include the ones who reported never talking or hardly ever talking or relating to their relatives at home (15.3%).

The young who talk to their parents about Internet use are in the 12-to-14-years-old range. In general, the adults tend to establish clear and concise rules regarding access to the Internet by pre-adolescents, who also say they listen to their parents and respect these rules.

Four in ten young people consider their relationship with their parents to be one of total confidence,

which allows more personal exchanges of ideas and the possibility for the youngsters to ask adults about things which concern them. Interviewees aged between 12 to 14 years old, more often qualify their relationships with parents as of total confidence, while the adolescents between 15 and 17 years old qualify them as of enough confidence.

Nevertheless, when asked about their contacts with strangers over the Internet and whether these contacts turn into a real meeting up, the percentage of youngsters who report these encounters to their parents is much lower (20.9%) than the percentage of young people who prefer their group of friends for such confidences (66.7%). A far smaller percentage of focus group participants report telling their siblings (18.6%), their friends by using a social networking platform or Internet forum (15.4%), and 12.7% prefer not to tell to anyone.

From the qualitative phase of the research it is important to note that no difference has been found between traditional and single-parent families when we focus on the control of Internet use or the digital behavior in the case of 12-to-14-year-olds. According to the interviewees, early access to the Internet (between 10 and 11 years old) is always done under the authorization and consent of their father and/or their mother. Overall, adolescents convey a sense of responsibility when they make a decision about visiting or not an inappropriate website, assuming that a lack of responsibility will, sooner or later, be discovered by their parents or other adults.

The parent-child relationship described by the group of the 15 to 17 year-olds is characterized by the typical defiance attitude of this age. Therefore, they try to solve their problems without any support from their parents.

4. Conclusion and discussion

The association between perception of discomfort because of lack of access and frequency, together with the use of online communication tools has been demonstrated to be pertinent. Young people recognize the inconvenience caused by the inability to access the Internet for several days, but in principle they do not think this could be a problematic experience. However, the perception of discomfort increases whenever additional variables are included in the research. The perception of stress is generally less evident if we consider the number of devices youngsters use to log on the Internet, and, conversely, it increases if there is a higher frequency of connection. The discomfort is even more evident if being offline means not to be able to access

their social networking sites. Thus, the hypothesis H1 seem to be proved, from which elements could be highlighted that could influence the perception of the young people as regards a problematic Internet use.

In terms of the second hypothesis (H2), it has been noted that the young people who do not have good communication with their parents, or when the behavior of the latter is perceived as authoritarian by the interviewees, are the ones who tend to spend more hours online. In this way, youngsters try to compensate for the lack of communication at home. This problem is growing among adolescents in the 15 to 17 years old range, who prefer to have the support of their reference groups instead of talking to their parents in order to solve problems whose origin lie in the use of Internet.

Some of the trends identified in this paper, such as the increasingly early age of connection together with the gradual rise in the number of hours spent online, may become cyber pathological, which suggests new lines of investigation into methods of early detection of disorders aggravated by the daily practices in the digital environment. The first-person accounts, such as those which have been recorded during the focus groups, might help to contextualize the quantitative data. This information may also help to establish a necessary link between the social and cultural dimensions and the Internet uses attributed by adolescents themselves.

An additional finding of this research is that young people show an increasing preference for accessing television content through the Internet. They value the possibility of watching their favorite programs whenever they want, especially the opportunity to comment about them on social media of their choice. This behavior, increasingly prevalent among the young, opens a window of opportunity for audiovisual media in their transmedia expansion to achieve greater audiences.

The methodological triangulation performed in this study has not only helped to reach the objectives set and to prove both hypotheses, but it had also led to the confirmation of some of the trends reported by the research on which this paper is based. Nevertheless, it was found that to go further into the issue and improve the overall understanding of how young people go online and use the Internet, it is necessary to stimulate interdisciplinary synergies, especially regarding the correct use of terms and concepts like addiction or pathological/problematic Internet use.

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News Consumption among Chilean Adolescents: Interests, Motivations and Perceptions on the News Agenda

El consumo de noticias de los adolescentes chilenos: Intereses, motivaciones y percepciones sobre la agenda informativa

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ABSTRACT

In today's context of media proliferation and increasing access to diverse media content, it becomes necessary to address young people's motivation to consume information. Researching this age group is relevant given that adolescence is a key period in people's civic socialization. This study explores how 13 to 17 year old Chileans consume news, in a multiple-platform, convergent and mobile media context. There are few studies that focus on the information habits of this particular age group. Using a quantitative self-administered questionnaire applied to 2,273 high school adolescents from four different regions in the country, this paper analyses participants' news consumption habits, their interest in news, their perception about the importance of different topics, and their motivations to being informed. The results show that surveyed teenagers access information mainly via social media like Facebook, to the detriment of traditional media. These adolescents are least interested in traditional politics, but they think this is the most prominent topic in the news. Their motivations to consume news have to do with their wish to be able to defend their points of view and deliver information to others. Also, they think that their portrayal in the news agenda is both inadequate and negative. These findings suggest that the news industry has a pending debt with young audiences.

RESUMEN

En un contexto de proliferación de medios y creciente acceso a diversos contenidos mediáticos, se vuelve necesario examinar las motivaciones de las audiencias jóvenes para consumir información. El estudio de este grupo etario es relevante, dado que la adolescencia es un período fundamental en la socialización cívica de las personas. Esta investigación explora cómo chilenos de 13 a 17 años consumen noticias, en un contexto mediático de múltiples soportes, convergencia y cultura móvil. Pocos estudios se centran en los hábitos informativos de este grupo específico. A partir de un cuestionario cuantitativo autoaplicado en 2013 a 2.273 adolescentes en establecimientos educativos de cuatro regiones del país, se analizan sus hábitos de consumo, interés en las noticias, percepción sobre la importancia de los temas de la agenda y motivaciones informativas. Los resultados muestran que los jóvenes encuestados se informan principalmente a través de redes sociales como Facebook, en detrimento de los medios convencionales. El tema que menos les interesa es la política tradicional, que, a su juicio, es el que más aparece en las noticias. Sus motivaciones en el consumo informativo se relacionan con el deseo de defender sus puntos de vista y de transmitir información a otros. Además, estiman que su representación en la agenda informativa es inadecuada y negativa. Estos resultados sugieren una deuda pendiente de la industria informativa con los jóvenes.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Adolescence, quantitative analysis, media consumption, digital context, secondary education, social function, information.
Adolescencia, análisis cuantitativo, consumo de medios, contexto digital, educación secundaria, función social, información.

1. Introduction

Adolescents' lives are «mediated», since «digital media are a central part of their out-of-school experiences and of their everyday relationships and identities» (Buckingham & Martínez-Rodríguez, 2013: 10). Different authors have become interested in analyzing new communication practices among adolescents beyond the school domain, in a technological environment that is changing, convergent, online (Carlsson, 2011), and increasingly crossed by the communication of mobile culture (Caron & Caronia, 2005). The fact that adolescents have access to media and information and communication technologies goes beyond their constitution in mere «new audiences» (Jenkins & al., 2006): they are immersed in a participatory and expressive culture of media convergence, in which their members are creative participants, believe in the importance of their contribution, and feel a certain degree of connection with each other. Scholars Orozco (2009), and Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) consider these users as prosumers, that is to say producers and consumers simultaneously, whereas Burns (2010) employs the concept of «produser».

Educational, family, and informative systems participate in the change of media landscape, its cultural industries, and adolescents' communication and media consumption new practices. Casero (2012: 152) underlines the need to know the changes in young audiences' informative habits «to calibrate the scope and effects of digital convergence and their future perspectives». The informative news industry faces the challenge of achieving higher levels of pluralism and freedom of expression. To what degree do journalists –and the information system in general– set their agenda to include pertinent information aimed at adolescents? Regarding that matter, Zaffore (1990) states that every means of communication should contain an accumulation of different opinions and that such diversity is correlative to the increasing complexity of the social framework they must reflect. The task is not easy: the volume of news forces journalism to include, exclude and establish a hierarchy of information (De-Fontcuberta, 2011; Puente & Mujica, 2004). Then it is necessary to know if the multiplication of access to different communication platforms benefits adolescents and therefore allows them a greater access to a variety of news about their surroundings (Buckingham, 2000).

Pluralism is not only expressed in the exercise of «the freedom of expression in the media of different kinds of priority, management, size and editorial direction, so that contents that express social, cultural, gender, geographical, and about original peoples are created» (Fundación Friedrich Ebert, 2013: 1). It is also manifested in the possibility that different kinds of audiences can be informed about the topics that affect and interest them. Adolescents are citizens in the present from multiple perspectives, before the exercise of suffrage (Condeza, 2009), from multiple perspectives, and they are part of a complex media ecology (Ito & al., 2010). Tracing their informative consumption in different media is socially relevant.

In that context, this article analyzes the news consumption habits of 2,273 Chilean adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17, by geographical location, socio-economical status and gender, in different regions of the country. This is the first study of its kind in Chile, funded by the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research. It was conducted from January through September 2013 to know: a) which media and technologies adolescents use to be informed; b) their motivations to consume news; c) their perception about pluralism and the informative agenda and d) to associate motivations, media consumption, adolescents' attitudes and behaviors toward public affairs.

2. Educated to be informed?

Researchers from different disciplines have underlined the importance of informative consumption in teenagers' lives. Developmental psychology has studied how, in search of their identities, adolescents turn to the media in order to understand what is socially acceptable, how to identify with their peers, express degrees of autonomy regarding adults' preferences or for the need of evasion-introspection (Padilla-Walker, 2007). According to Flanagan and Syvertsen (2006), adolescents symbolize the replacement of older generations in the political and social process. For political science and sociology, the informative habits expressed in news consumption in different media are related to citizenship training, the interest in public affairs, higher rates of civic participation, the exercise of the right to vote, and different forms of activism (McLeod, 2000; Valenzuela, 2013). Thus, news and media are considered to be relevant agents in adolescents' socialization that interact with similar agents, such as the family and educational institutions.

Along these lines, the interdisciplinary area of scientific research in communication and education has emphasized the critical formation on consumption of news, advertising, and fictional content (Aguaded, 2009; Buckingham, 2000; De-Fontcuberta, 2009). This is materialized in different levels and actions of

media education related to citizenship training, such as courses of media literacy in Europe, enacted by its Parliament (2009); a state policy, like in Argentina (Morduchowicz, 2009), or a proposal for Chilean teachers training in media literacy (De-Fontcuberta & al., 2006-2008; De Fontcuberta, 2009). Bévort and others (2012) say that the degree of pluralism in the media has an effect on the configuration of debate spaces in the national and international agenda to which citizens have access, and that massive media education is an essential democratic challenge. For Livingstone (2004), it is crucial for the democratic agenda that consumers create content, which turns them into participative citizens.

When it comes to research into adolescents' news consumption in an online, convergent environment, studies are scarce. Casero (2012) analyzed the consumption habits and perceptions of 549 Spanish youths between 16 and 30 years old with journalistic information. Huang (2009) explored consumption preferences of 28 American college students in different media, from the uses and gratifications approach. In these studies and others, the adolescents tend to get lost within the broader age categories (young, young adult or college students). Recent research on Internet and social media usage habits in adolescents (García & al., 2013), does not consider news consumption among the habits and usage practices analyzed.

In Chile and Latin America the relationship between adolescents and news has been studied from the perspective of the representation journalists make of them (Antezana, 2007; Condeza, 2005a, 2005b; Cytrynblum & Fabbro, 2011; Maronna & Sánchez, 2005; Sánchez, 2007, Túñez, 2009; Yez, 2007). Some studies that give adolescents a voice in this subject come from UNICEF and the Network of news in infancy for Latin America (Andi, 2013).

Studying the news consumption of Chilean adolescents matters for two reasons: 1) The Chilean population is young, a third is under 18 years old (INE, 2010). 2) During 2006, 2011 and 2012, they were the protagonists of social movements demanding free, good quality education, while some of them criticized the practices of traditional politics (Condeza,

2009; Meunier & Condeza, 2012; Valenzuela, 2013). Little is still known about how this participation is related to the adolescents' news consumption. 3) The current secondary education curriculum does not pair civic education and citizenship training with media literacy or informative consumption.

3. Methodology

The data obtained comes from a quantitative questionnaire applied in schools to a representative sample of 60% of the population between 13 and 17

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years old, in the main cities of four regions (provinces) of Chile. The sample was stratified by urban center in three stages. Institutions were selected according to their dependence or typology, since there are three types of schools in Chile: municipal, subsidized, and private (municipal schools are managed by each of the local city councils, and are funded by the state. Subsidized schools are owned and managed by private individuals and receive public resources in addition to a copayment from the parents. Finally, private schools are owned and managed privately). Specialists from different disciplines have criticized such conditions, as the schools that are managed in this way would reproduce and even worsen the social stratification in the country (Puga, 2011). The sample was segmented according to the real percentage that each type of school represents of the total student enrollment in those urban centers, through probability sampling proportional to its size (number of students between ninth and eleventh grade, according the yearbook of Chile's Department of Education) (Mineduc, 2013). For the next two stages (grade), simple random sampling was used. This yielded a sample of 163

schools. Between 20 and 30 students per institution were randomly selected to be surveyed. The questionnaire was used with 2.744 youths between 13 and 18 years old, from 105 schools of different types, for a response rate of 64%. This sample was reduced to 2.273 valid cases, as 15% (N=411) was discarded for incorrectly answering a control question to measure attention; and 2.8% (N=77) was 18 years old (adult age). With 2,273 valid cases, under a maximum variance assumption and a confidence level of 95%, the margin of error is ±2,05%.

Most studies in Chile are carried out in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago and its media. To reduce this bias, schools from the main cities in the regions of Antofagasta (mining zone in the north with a strong economical expansion), Valparaíso (the province were the Congress operates), Biobío (industrial area in the south of the country with high rates of poverty and unemployment) and Santiago (the capital) were selected.

A total of 388 cases (17.1% of the sample) were students from the Region of Antofagasta; 541 cases (23.8%) from the Region of Valparaíso; 530 cases (23,.3%) from the Region of Biobío, and 814 cases (35.8%) from the Metropolitan Region of Santiago.

The questionnaire (30 questions, self-administered) was elaborated by the project researchers, from the uses and gratifications perspective (Rubin & al., 2008; Huang, 2009), and based on questions tested in national and international studies, among them, that of professor Edgar Huang from the University of Purdue (Condeza & al., 2013). The questionnaire was piloted in field conditions and adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork, conducted between May and August of 2013, was commissioned to the Institute of Sociology of the Pontificia Univesidad Católica de Chile. The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Communications of the same university authorized the no-objection letters for the participants, and the consent forms for the parents and school directors.

The students' average age is 15 years old. 52% were male and 47.9% were female, divided homogenously across the three course levels examined. When breaking the sample down by educational type of school, 39.9% of the cases were municipal institu-

tions; 48.7% were subsidized schools, and 11.5% were private, paid establishments.

4. Result analysis
4.1. Frequency of media usage and daily information technologies

Traditional media have a minor presence in the informative diet of the surveyed adolescents, whereas the social network Facebook is the medium they use the most to be informed. 64.9% use it more than one hour a day, followed by websites like YouTube (52.9%) and, to a lesser degree, broadcast television (31.4%). The least used media are news websites (7.3%), print magazines and newspapers (4.3% and 2.9% respectively; see graph 1):

Women consume more news on Twitter and print magazines, while men prefer Facebook and video websites. There are significant differences by type of school across all the media analyzed. Students from municipal schools consume more news on Facebook, broadcast TV, cable and radio. Those from private institutions consume significantly fewer news through these media. The students from subsidized schools use more website videos, like YouTube, at similar levels as students from municipal schools. The private school students' informative diet is significantly more varied (Twitter, blogs, other social media, online newspapers and magazines, news websites, and print newspapers and magazines).

The main medium used to access news on the surveyed adolescents' own city, country, and the world is broadcast television, followed by Facebook, although some differences are observed depending on
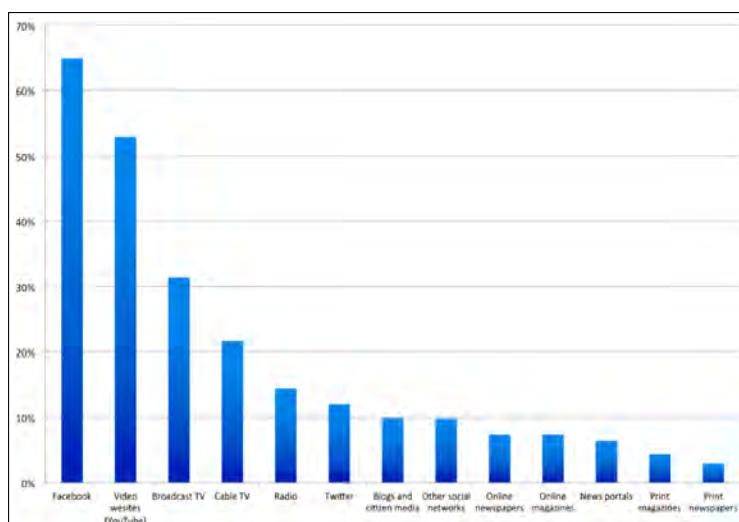
Graph 1: News consumption by type of medium (in %).

the geographical focus (city, country, world). Broadcast television is the most consumed medium in the case of national news, and it decreases in the case of international ones. For international news, the use of cable television increases up to the same level as Facebook.

When analyzing the most consulted medium to look for information about the country, municipal schools' students are the ones who most use broadcast television and Facebook, while students from private schools are the ones who use news websites the most.

When it comes to main activities carried out on the Internet, the list is topped by Wikipedia queries (49.8%) and information searches related to their studies (48%). Next is the use of the instant messaging service Whatsapp (45.9%) and online games (38.8%). The frequency of activities related to the web's expressive power and participants' produser condition in the informative domain –that is to say, creating content, collaborating with a medium or writing on a blog– is quite moderated.

4.2. Adolescents' interests and motivations to consume news

Adolescents were asked about their attention to different types of news: crime; sports; politics and elections; environment; economy; education; health; show business; their own schools; the student movement, and science and technology. Over 70% report paying attention to news about education, health, crime, the student movement, science and technology, and environment. The least popular topics are economy (41%) and politics and elections (32.9%).

Significant differences are observed by genre in nine of the eleven topics. Women pay more attention to education, health, politics, student movement, environment, their schools, and show business; and men to science and technology, and sports. When considering regional variety, only crime showed a statistically significant difference: 80.3% of the surveyed participants from the Region of Antofagasta reported paying attention to this type of news, 78.1% from the Region of Valparaíso, 76.2% from Region of Biobío, and 69.5% from the Metropolitan Region of Santiago.

Significant differences were also found by type of school in four topics: crime (students from municipal and subsidized schools are more attentive than the ones from private institutions), student movement (youths from municipal schools declare to be more attentive), environment (youths from subsidize schools declare to be more interested), and politics and elections (the only topic that students from private schools declare to be more attentive about than the rest of the adolescents). Still, in general politics and elections seem less interesting to them, regardless of other variables.

While 65% of the surveyed individuals show an interest in news, 63% disagree with others telling them what news to pay attention to (see graph 2). This could be an expression of their autonomy and independence perception (Padilla-Walker, 2007) and underlines a distance between normative aspects and news consumption. The adolescents declare they somewhat agree (47,6%) or strongly agree (44,1%) with only consuming news that they are really interested in .85% demonstrate agreement with the idea of learning something new through the news, while most of them do not consider news affects their lives in an important way (44.9% does not agree).

The latter could be related to the news value that they add to informative content, or how significant, close, and pertinent are the news items they have access to. There is a consensus about the role parents play in the news consumption habit, since 71.4% report (41.4% somewhat agrees and 31% strongly agree) having inherited it from them. Regarding news, adolescents do not consider its format to be complica-
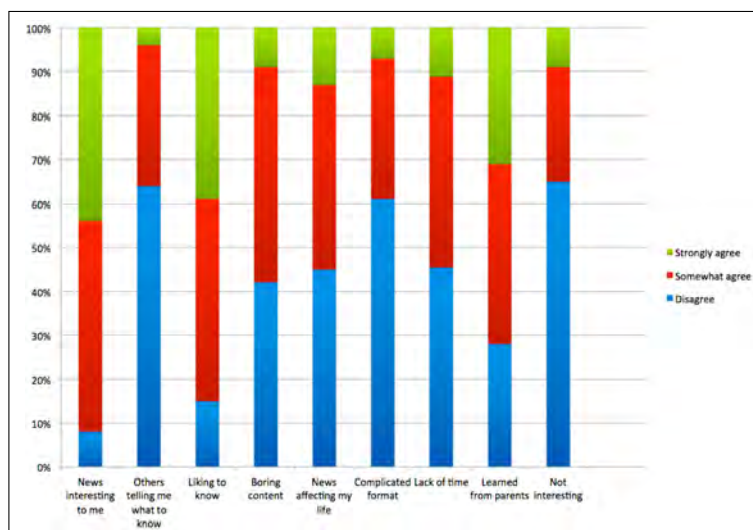
Graph 2. Interest in news (in %).

ted nor do they think news to be entertaining in general.

There are no statistically significant differences by gender (except that women report not having enough time to follow the news), grade or region. But there are differences by type of school: students from private schools accept more that other people tell them what news to follow. Adolescents from public and subsidized schools show less interest in news.

Motivations to consume news were grouped in three categories according to the uses and gratifications approach (Katz & al., 1974; Rubin & al., 2008): 1) Current affairs monitoring (surveillance), 2) Entertainment, and 3) Social utility. Adolescents agree on the importance of being aware of current affairs (54.6% somewhat agree and 29.3% strongly agree). They would consume news mainly to be aware of the problems that affect people like them (49.5% somewhat agree) and 31.7% strongly agree). A lower percentage considers consuming news to decide on the important topics of the day (46.5% somewhat agree and 37.7% do not agree). Knowing what the government does is less prominent (43.7% do not agree, 37.8% somewhat agree, 18.5% strongly agree).

The surveyed individuals do not agree, however, on the fact that news is consumed because it is entertaining, dramatic, or stimulating. Among the social utility factors they consider being informed is important in defending their point of view to other people (49.8% somewhat agree and 29.8% strongly agree). Being

informed allows them to talk about interesting things with others (43.6% somewhat agree and 31.5% strongly agree). Also, giving other people information (49.8% somewhat agree and 31.5% strongly agree). They do not perceive journalists as approachable people (to 79.9% of surveyed participants journalists do not seem like people they know). Commentators are not their referent when it comes to comparing ideas (38.6% do not agree and 43.8% somewhat agree). What is more, 48.1% disagree with the idea that journalists humanize the news.

There are substantial differences by type of school. The adolescents from subsidized and private schools report being significantly more motivated to consume news to be aware of current events and to talk about relevant things than those who attend public schools. For students who attend subsidized schools it is more important to be informed to defend their points of view.

4.3. Talking with others about the news

Talking about current affairs in different spheres and with different actors spurs a dialogue and interest in civic affairs. The parents are the most frequent interlocutors of the surveyed adolescents, followed by their friends. Nearly half of the sample reports talking about news once a month or less often with their teachers. This suggests that current affairs are not a discussion topic in the classroom. Their discussion networks are rather homogenous: low frequency of conversation with other people with a different ideology or social background.

Students who attend private schools talk with their family and their peers (friends and classmates) significantly more frequently than with their teachers. While 52.2% of the surveyed adolescents from public schools talk about current affairs with their teachers once a month, 47.3% of the students attending private institu-
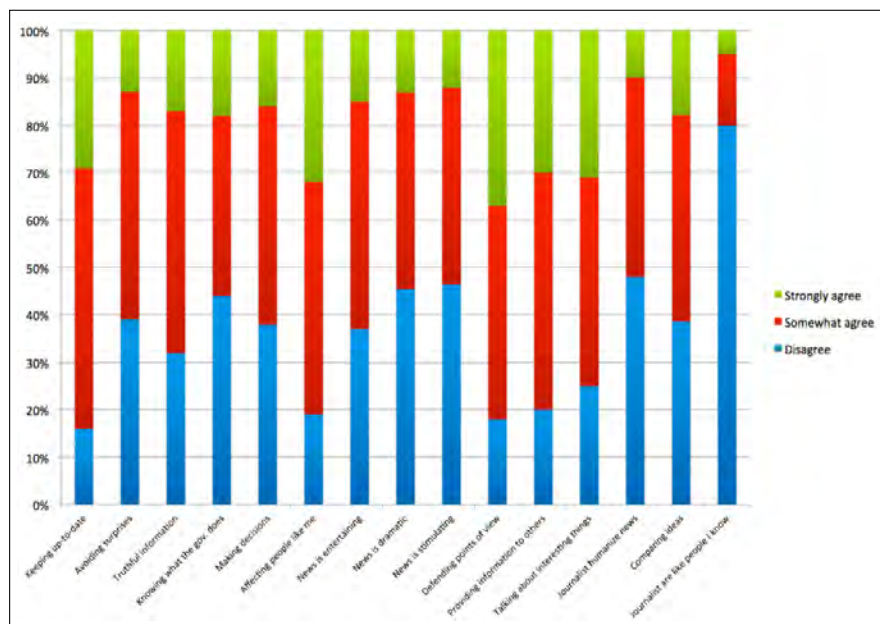
Graph 3: Motivations for news consumption (in %).

tions do so at least once a week. Their home, their school, and social media are the three places where the students talk about the news with the highest frequency.

Table 1: Frequency of conversation about news with other people					
How often do you comment the news with the following people?	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	2-6 times a week	Every day
Parents	19.0%	11.9%	17.8%	24.5%	27.1%
Siblings	43.3%	13.5%	17.8%	14.0%	11.4%
Other relatives	42.1%	20.6%	21.4%	9.9%	6.0%
Friends	27.4%	29.3%	22.7%	19.6%	19.9%
Classmates	30.2%	20.6%	20.9%	17.9%	10.5%
Teachers	47.5%	19.6%	18.3%	11%	3.7%
People with ideas different to mine	46.3%	20.1%	16.6%	9.9%	7.1%
People with a different social level to mine	56.0%	17.0%	12.9%	8.2%	5.7%

4.4. Assessment
of topics and evaluation of their appearance in the agenda

Adolescents were asked about the importance of 17 topics. Education (77.3%), poverty (76.8%), domestic violence (76.6%), health (76.2%) and discrimination (76.1%) are the topics considered very important with the highest frequency. Next as very important are social inequality (68%), crime, muggings and robberies (67%), drugs (65.5%), environment (64.4%), and corruption or influence peddling (62.9%). Rising prices as well as public transportation seem very relevant to adolescents, though in 51.2% and 48.2% respectively. Politics are the topic about which students show least interest.

If students' valuations of important topics are compared to the perception they have of their appearance frequency in the news, an opposite relation can be observed. The five most frequently topics evaluated as appearing often are social inequality (76.4%), crime, muggings and robberies (74.4%), politics (66.5%), sports (62.5%) and drugs (55.4%). On the other hand, the most invisible topics for students are the environment (35.5%), corruption or influence peddling (25.2%) and poverty (22.4%).

This assessment varies again by type of school. In subsidized schools students qualify topics as very important with a higher frequency, followed by municipal and private institutions. Education matters more to students who attend subsidized (80%) and public (76.5%) schools. The same happens with work related topics, which are very impor-

tant for students who attend subsidized and municipal schools (66.6% and 64.4% respectively, while 56% in private schools). Sports, on the other hand, is valued as very important with a higher frequency in the case of students who belong to municipal schools (45.4%), in contrast to 38.7% in the case of adolescents from subsidized schools and 35% private ones. Adolescents from private schools assign politics a high importance with a higher frequency (35.4%) than students from subsidized (30.3%) and municipal (28.2%) schools. A third of the surveyed students from municipal schools (33.38%) qualified politics as not important.

Likewise, students –regardless of their gender or type of school they attend– consider that journalists do not include young people's opinions and say false things about them. When asking them about the social function of journalists some of them consider that the news media show deficiencies when giving truthful information or a diversity of points of view. Something similar happens when evaluating the coverage given to their respective cities and regions, and the rest of the country.
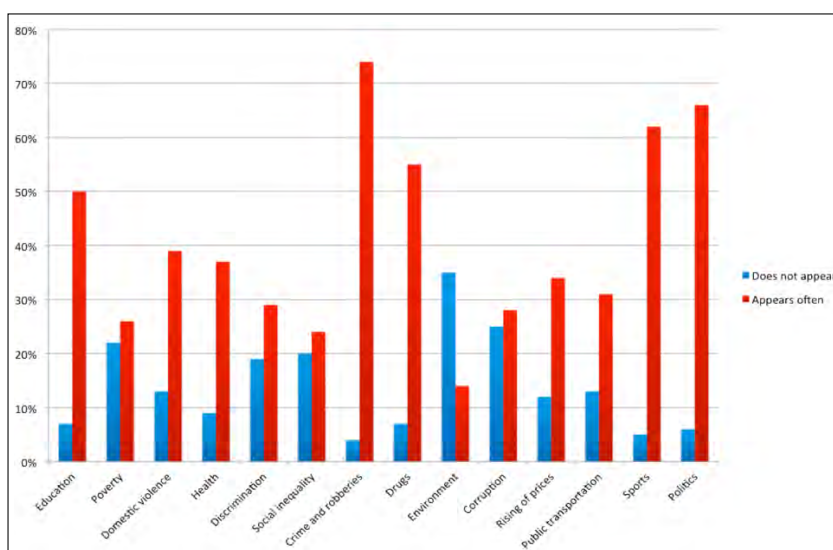
Graph 4: Topic prominence in the media (in %).

5. Conclusions and projections

This work represents an advance in the study of the informative habits of a relevant group of the population, which has not been addressed on a large scale in Chile so far. This is particularly important since it is in this life period that media consumption habits are developed, alongside civic-politic ones. In other studies, adolescents are usually considered indistinctly within the category of «youths», together with college students or professionals.

In terms of frequency of media use to be informed daily, results show the importance Facebook has for teenagers against traditional media, except television. The news diet presents differences according to the type of school. This confirms the presence of economic biases in the news consumption by these adolescents.

Regarding interests in news, the main topics are education, health, crime, and the student movement. The topics that are least interesting for adolescents are politics and economics. This could be interpreted as a lack of interest in traditional politics, but not necessarily as indifference towards civic or political action, precisely because of the interest in topics related to the public sphere.

In addition, the data reveals that topic interest depends on the type of institution. Thus, this study proposes a new angle for debate over economic, educational, and informative segregation in Chile, which will be discussed in later works by the research team.

When comparing these results with the news agenda in Chilean media (Mujica & Bachmann, 2013) it is possible to detect a gap between the interests of adolescents and what news media offer. This study may help the news industry plan editorial strategies that offer a greater range and diversity of topics for these groups. For adolescents, the main motivations to consume news are linked to their social utility over their informative value. This suggests boosting news for this kind of use (addressing topics which interest them, allowing to share and comment news, among others).

It is possible to project new studies to deepen the understanding of adolescents' motivations and explore the content in the news agenda they criticize. Some of the correlations currently under study examine variables such as talking about news with parents, the inheritance of this habit, motivations for news consumption, interest in public and political affairs, and the impact of the type of school in the information gap, as well as topics of interest. Likewise, they observe the role of parents and teachers in promoting an interest in consuming news and talking about it, and citizenship training through this process.

A greater challenge for researchers is the divesting of epistemological and theoretical frameworks as well as the traditional analysis of what is news. What is more, the challenge of divesting of what scholars consider desirable for the students to deem of informative value in order to observe adolescents' interests with more freedom –and less oriented to regulate teenagers' behaviors and habits. If Facebook and YouTube are the media to which adolescents dedicate more time daily, it is necessary to know the habits and content of consumption on those platforms. There are spaces clearly identified as news-related on social media. What is news for adolescents then? What is news for them on a social network, on which they exchange personal and group information as well as information about public affairs? Is it that informative consumption is the product of a comment by one or more peers about a piece of news previously seen in another media or format? Does their perception of news respond to journalistic criteria? What kind of news makes students circulate on social media or «self-broadcasting» platforms?

There is also the risk of replicating ideas about the unilateral power of technologies in the socialization of adolescents. As this study shows, they are interested in what occurs around them. They need the news to assert opinions and talk with others. An important finding –and a ground wire– is the fact that the type of school is an informative inequality factor which generates greater differences in news consumption by type of medium, attention and interest in news, conversation with others and public affairs interest. It is possible to identify consumption patterns and to characterize the surveyed individuals' news diet based on the type of school they attend. Is an unequal social stratification being formed in Chile based on the type of school, which deepens social segregation (Puga, 2011) in relation to the informative domain?

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Media prosumers in political communication: Politainment on YouTube

Prosumidores mediáticos en la comunicación política: El «politainment» en YouTube

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the role of the political «infotainment» prosumer on Internet. In the second half of the XX century, telecracy was the predominant one-way communication model that not only popularized politics but also transformed politics into entertainment or «politainment». The XXI century began with the conviction that the Internet would lead to a bidirectional communication model in which true dialogue between political power and citizens would emerge. This research explores a new field of study: Web 2.0 «politainment» and prosumers' attitudes and actions within this new communication sphere. The objective of the study is to identify the kind of political content Internet users consume and produce. To achieve this, we made a case study of the political information produced and consumed on YouTube, and in particular of a speech given by Ana Botella, the Mayor of Madrid, before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in September 2013. The 40 most-watched videos on YouTube during the week of the Mayor's appearance as well as those viewed in the month that followed have been analyzed, in addition to the 3,000 comments on these videos. The conclusion shows that the prosumption of «politainment» on Internet is characterized by massive consumption of information but passive reaction with regard to production and participation.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la figura del prosumidor del «infoentretenimiento» político en Internet. Si durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX predomina la «telecracia», un modelo de comunicación unidireccional que supone la popularización de la política pero también su conversión en espectáculo o «politainment», el siglo XXI se inicia con el convencimiento de que Internet conducirá a un modelo comunicacional bidireccional en el que se establezca un diálogo real entre el poder político y la ciudadanía. Esta investigación explora un nuevo campo de estudio, como es el «politainment» en la Web 2.0 y la actuación del prosumidor en esta nueva esfera comunicativa. El interés del estudio es detectar qué contenidos políticos consumen y producen los usuarios en red. Para ello, se realiza un estudio de caso sobre la información política producida y consumida en YouTube sobre la comparecencia de la alcaldesa de Madrid, Ana Botella ante el Comité Olímpico Internacional (COI) en septiembre de 2013. Se analizan los 40 vídeos más vistos en YouTube la semana de su comparecencia y un mes después, así como 3.000 comentarios a estos vídeos. Las conclusiones señalan que el prosumo del «politainment» en Internet se caracteriza por un consumo masivo de información pero un comportamiento muy pasivo en su producción y participación.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Political communication, consumer, behavior, humor, quantitative analysis, infotainment, politainment, YouTube.
Comunicación política, comportamiento, consumidor, humor, análisis cuantitativo, infoentretenimiento, politainment, YouTube.

1. Introduction and definition of the issues studied

This research is based on Alvin Toffler's concept of the prosumer (1980) which defines the user as a combination of producer and consumer. The producer in this case is also linked to the «social factory» concept (Hardt & Negri, 2000) and the idea of immaterial production (Lazzarato, 1996) which all communicative activity entails. The proliferation of Internet has updated the notion of «prosumption»: Web 2.0 is a new social factory (Ritzer, Dean & Jurgenson, 2012) where users consume information, produce content and become prosumers via wikis, blogs and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr o YouTube (Chia, 2012; Shaw & Benkler, 2012). Web 2.0 has enabled the mass mobilization of the immaterial work of producers and consumers of information: the prosumer has become a hegemonic element within this communication setting.

Social networks are clearly a «prosumption» medium in which prosumers are the loudspeakers that broadcast conversations with, and for, a consumer public. In this conversation, the listener not only consumes this content but responds to and reproduces these messages, and creates others almost simultaneously. This means that any activity in the offline world can be transformed into something important within the online sphere, thus creating «an independence space» (Castells, 2012) by means of «the self-communication of the masses» (Castells, 2010). When citizens consume data on the traditional media, they can then take the new media –in particular Web 2.0– to mix the «old information» with «new information», a process some authors have called «transmediation» (Cheong & Lundry, 2012).

And while the personalization and individualization of information is reinforced, prosumers contribute as a community to the production of a meaning that envelops the content and the product, thus sharing a meaning, developing a social relationship and participating in a way that was non-existent before. As a result, a communal ethical surplus is generated in the content and message (Arvidsson, 2005). This is to say, an informative model a la carte (Sunstein, 2001), or pro-am (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004), is established, while prosumers join together in a collective drive to develop these messages. An important player within these prosumption environments, according to Bruns (2008), the produser, who produces and consumes information collaboratively. He bases his production of content on the philosophy of collaboration, by working with other users within the Web 2.0 networks.

The idea of the prosumer of political communica-

tion on Web 2.0 also includes the notion of «political prosumption» (Hershkovitz, 2012). One of the main lines of study of the prosumer and political communication is the focus on the type of content produced and consumed by users on Internet, namely, news-based or entertainment. In our research, the setting we investigate is the new phenomenon of «politainment» (Nieland; 2008; Sayre & King, 2010; Schultz, 2012), a term coined relatively recently that unites the two media-related functions of information on politics and entertainment. The «infotainment» trend that emerged in the 90s was linked to the intense competition unleashed in the audiovisual market at that time, which encompassed all types of themes, including politics; yet as far back as 1967, Debord had foreseen the slippage of social life from reality into the show business format; Postman (1985) suggested that public discourse in the USA would transform itself into entertainment, and Bratlinger (1985) referred to the type of spectacle offered by the media as akin to a Roman circus.

In Spain, the study of political «infotainment» on television began to emerge at the end of the 90s (Berrocal, Abad, Cebrián & Pedreira, 2001; Dader, 2003; Carpio, 2009; Arroyo, 2008; Ferré & Gayá, 2009; García Avilés, 2007; Valhondo, 2011; Ortells, 2009) in line with significant international research on the subject: in Europe (Brants, 1998; Brants & Neijen, 1998), Asia (Shirk, 2007), the Middle East (Bahry, 2001; Lynch, 2004a, 2004b) and in the USA (Patterson, 2000; Baum, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Hollander, 2005, Moy, Xenos & Hess, 2006). Although most studies on «politainment» were TV-based, the term refers to a journalistic trend towards representing reality as performance or a show that could be produced in any type of media. The coming of Internet provided a new platform for studying this phenomenon, yet research on «politainment» both nationally and internationally is scarce (Tryon, 2008; Towner & Dulio, 2011; Berrocal, Campos & Redondo, 2012).

Academia has striven to understand the type of content that citizens produce and consume when it is they and not the media who choose the news and information they wish to receive, and opinion is divided on the subject: authors such as Gibson & Mc-Callister (2011) argue that the most politically active Internet users, by their interventions in political life, learn to acquire greater knowledge and competence in terms of their rights and capabilities, while others, like Santori (1997), believe that the subjects are just as drugged and passive on the Net as they are when sat in front of the TV screen.

When talking about the possible effects of «poli-

tainment», most researchers assume that «infotainment» degrades political information and so prevents citizens from measuring reality with the necessary rigour to enable them to take fundamental decisions (Blumler, 1992; Prior, 2005; Moy, Xenos & Hess; 2006), while others, such as Grabe, Zhou, Lang & Bolls (2000) state that a news item offered via «infotainment» formats grabs the audience's attention far more than if it were presented in traditional media forms. Brants (1998), Baum (2002, 2003a, 2003 b, 2005), Stockwell (2004) and Taniguchi (2007) consider that the risks of exposure to political questions on televised info-show programs are not so great, and have the distinct advantage of popularizing items of political information among social groups who would normally show no interest in the subject.

So far, studies on «politainment» on Internet have focused on video content on YouTube (Berrocal, Campos & Redondo, 2012a; Berrocal, Campos & Redondo, 2012b) but a few have examined the prosumer's role in dealing with political «infotainment» on the Net, hence an analysis of prosumer behaviour regarding «political infotainment» on Internet is clearly needed.

«El País» and «El Mundo»[2], pointed to the quality of the presentation as justifying the failed candidacy, although both commented on the level of English spoken by some of the presenters.

But the social networks interpreted the defeat differently, and many users were quick to point the finger at Ana Botella for a specific phrase in her intervention in which she invited IOC members to come to Madrid to enjoy a «relaxing cup of café con leche en Plaza Mayor». In no time at all, users had set up a Twitter account called @Relaxingcup[3] which soon started trending on this particular social network, not to men-

Social networks are clearly a «prosumption» medium in which prosumers are the loudspeakers that broadcast conversations with, and for, a consumer public. In this conversation, the listener not only consumes this content but responds to and reproduces these messages, and creates others almost simultaneously. This means that any activity in the offline world can be transformed into something important within the online sphere, thus creating «an independence space».

2. Material and methods

This work is based on a case study that analyses one particular news item, the presentation of the Madrid candidacy by the Mayor of Madrid, Ana Botella, before the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in September 2013, at a meeting to decide which city would host the 2020 Olympic Games.

On 7 September 2013, Madrid was eliminated in the first round of IOC voting following a tie with Istanbul, and Tokyo ended up the winner. The presentation of the Madrid candidacy before IOC members lasted 45 minutes during which there were nine speakers, including Prince Felipe of Spain, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, President of the Autonomous Community of Madrid Ignacio González and Mayor of Madrid Ana Botella, among others. The speeches were written by North American speech writer, Terrence Burns[1]. Analyzing the defeat and its political fallout, neither of Spain's two leading national dailies,

tion groups that sprung up on Facebook, and the songs composed and all kinds of humorous material posted on Web 2.0 that fuelled interest in the subject. There rapidly appeared videos on YouTube in which users broadcasted Botella's[4] performance accompanied by subtitles and songs, and mixes of music and the speech. Only a few hours after her intervention, the most-viewed Ana Botella[5] video on YouTube had been seen 2.4 million times. We can get an idea of the popularity of this video by analysing the most recent data supplied by EGM which shows that YouTube, Spain's most-visited website, registered 17,958,000 unique visitors from April to May.

To examine Internet users' interest in this news item and the role of prosumers in its propagation, we carried out an initial analysis of YouTube's 20 most-viewed videos on the subject between the day of its initial broadcast, on 7 September, to 14 September 2013. And to see whether interest in the subject lasted

or flagged we made a second study, again of the 20 videos most viewed, on October 7, exactly one month after Botella's speech. We also analysed the content and authorship of the comments on each video, which totalled around 3,000.

It is significant that of the 20 videos most viewed on October 7, only four had not featured in that list a month before. This indicates that those videos uploaded to YouTube immediately after the speech were the ones that got most hits, and that it was hard to shift them from the top spots or for new videos to break into the top 20.

To analyze the video content and commentaries, we designed an ad hoc analysis datasheet structured in three categories that combined open and closed responses. The analysis took into account the four levels of «prosumption» based on Arnstein's (1969) scale of participation:

On the first level, the prosumer is just a consumer of information, selecting the type of video he or she wants to watch but taking no further action with regard to the content. The items in the first category of the analysis datasheet are placed in a particular order to detect which political information videos on Ana Botella the user chose to watch in his or her role as an information consumer to determine if they saw a «politainment» type of video or one which was must straight news.

On the second level, the prosumer is just a fan or message follower. This idea is based on the first level of «fandom» as described by Jenkins (1992), in which the user interacts with other users on the social network by creating meanings, shared as «Like», «Dislike» or «Share» in terms of the content, however, they do not add any comment or content of their own to the message. The items in this second category are chosen in order to explore the extent of prosumer «fandom» involvement in the videos analyzed.

On the third level, the prosumer starts off from the main message –the video– and produces content based on that message along with the rest of the community. We analyze the comments made by users on each video taking into account Sunstein (2010) and his views on information cascades and on how falsehoods are spread: the information and conformity cascade, group polarization. We examined some 3,000 comments and categorized them as information, conformity and group polarization.

On the fourth level, the prosumer is the producer of the message. The prosumer is seen as the sole or partial creator of the video –in the latter case, he or she takes the content generated by another author and modifies it with sound, video or text.

The analysis and codifying was carried out by four codifiers, members of the University of Valladolid's «New Trends in Communication» research group. They applied the content analysis datasheet to the 40 videos and 3,000 comments –75 per video– in a pairs system. Alongside this quantitative analysis we also ran a qualitative examination via open-ended response analysis datasheets which the codifiers –following a review and discussion of international scientific contributions that enabled us to establish the state of the question– used to complement the quantitative analysis. After pair codification, the codifiers unified the results. The data –total number of plays and «Like», «Dislike » or «Share» options– had been extracted from YouTube, hence the quality of this analysis is dependent on the credibility of the data provided by that video platform[6].

3. Analysis and results
3.1. The prosumer as consumer

The prosumer mainly watches political entertainment videos on YouTube: the subject of the majority

Table 1. Proposal for a scale analysis of prosumer participation in «politainment»		
Level of involvement	Definition	Items
Level 1	Consumer	- Number of plays - Subject
Level 2	Fan or Follower	- Number of «Like» options - Number of «Dislike» options - Number of «Share» options
Level 3	Commentator	1. Number of comments per video 2. Discourse of the comments 2.1. Information cascade 2.2. Conformity cascade 2.3. Group polorization

Level 4	Producer	1. Authorship of the main message (video)
		 2. User who posts the message
		 3. Message production
		      a. Sole creator
		      b. Partial creator
		          i. Sound
		          ii. Visuals
		          iii. Text

Author-designed table based on Arnstein (1969), Jenkins (1992) and Sunstein (2010).

of the videos played was parodies of the Mayor of Madrid Ana Botella's speech in English before the COI –this theme accounted for 81% of the videos analyzed–. In barely a few hours, the most widely viewed video had been played 2.4 million times. Put in context by comparing[7] this figure to the TV viewing ratings in Spain in September, the Botella video would have ranked 25th in the list of most-watched TV programmes in the week of its broadcast, ranking it alongside the Champions League football match between Galatasaray and Real Madrid, which attracted 2.5 million viewers, and ahead of «El peliculón de Antena 3», a film that captured 2.38 million viewers, or the comedy chat show «El Hormiguero» with 2,169,000. The difference is even more significant when compared to viewing figures for TV news programmes: the most popular was «Antena 3 Noticias 1» with 1.956.000 viewers followed by «Telediario 1 de La 1» with 1.891.000 and «Informativos Tele 5, 21:00» with 1.812.000. It is also interesting to measure the effect of the Botella video by Internet user data: in September, there were 22.640.000 registered Internet users, of whom 7.920.000 visited news websites while 10.144.000 checked out entertainment websites: the news websites were consulted, on average, 13.9 minutes per day, while TV entertainment content on the Web was viewed an average of 226 minutes[8]. These indicators reveal the importance of entertainment and, in our case in particular, the supremacy of political «infotainment» on YouTube. Just as 81% of Ana Botella videos were political parody and satire in content, it was also interesting to note that the subject matter of the remaining 19% consisted of related, previously posted material but updated as a result of the Mayor's speech –such as her husband José María Aznar talking Texas English to George Bush Jnr, or of Botella-related videos produced before her IOC speech and taken from TV, like a piece on Ana Botella on La Sexta channel's «El Intermedio», or a conversation between Botella and Spanish author Fernando Sánchez Dragó before a TV interview.

In most of the videos analyzed it is the Mayor of Madrid who is the protagonist –in 90.5% of cases–, something which, given that YouTube searches are based on her name as key word, also constitutes a particular feature of «politainment».

The prosumer converts a political anecdote into something politically novel in a matter of hours, and even shifts a past event into the present: the majority of the Ana Botella videos played on YouTube were posted in 2013 (77.3%) and half the videos analysed were sent in on the same day of her intervention before the COI or in the five days that followed. At the same time, comments on Botella's speech in English succeeded in updating earlier videos posted on YouTube in 2013 (from March to September, and before the day of her speech on 7 September) as well as seven videos posted between 2006 and 2012 (T2).

3.2. The prosumer as fan or message follower

Prosumers' activity on the political «fandom» level is virtually non-existent. A paltry 0.4% of plays carried

Table 2 (T2). Values relating to the political «fandom» options and comments on the videos analysed									
			«Like»		«Dislike»		«Share»		Comments	
N	Year	Number of plays	T	%	T	%	T	%	T	%
1	2013	3,242,581	14,553	0.4	912	0.0	6,657	0.0	2,466	0.1
2	2013	2,868,989	8,542	0.3	1,397	0.0		0.1		0.0
3	2013	2,328,925		0.0		0.0	2,738	0.0	8,295	0.4
4	2013	2,275,161	4,055	0.2	4,688	0.2		0.1		0.0
5	2013	2,228,171	14,119	0.6	2,392	0.1	2,335	0.1	3,520	0.2
6	2013	2,221,396		0.0		0.0	1,204	0.1	8,295	0.4
7	2013	918,446	3,114	0.3	525	0.1	1,329	0.0	1,117	0.1
8	2013	810,472	1,160	0.1	373	0.0		0.0	994	0.1
9	2013	705,280	477	0.1	904	0.1		0.1	1,262	0.2
10	2013	604,074		0.0		0.0	615	0.1		0.0
11	2013	549,944	1,383	0.3	690	0.1	720	0.0	2,124	0.4
12	2013	502,867	1,386	0.3	279	0.1		0.4	542	0.1
13	2013	491,702	6,127	1.2	145	0.0	1,878	0.1	1,478	0.3
14	2013	483,510	731	0.2	1,012	0.2	564	0.0	1,452	0.3
15	2013	437,295	542	0.1	91	0.0		0.0	509	0.1
16	2013	314,212	850	0.3	85	0.0		0.0	314	0.1
17	2013	222,445	101	0.0	362	0.2		0.0	357	0.2
18	2012	152,518	219	0.1	38	0.0	42	0.0	195	0.1
19	2010	460,012	995	0.2	157	0.0		0.0	25	0.0
20	2008	233,798	422	0.2	12	0.0		0.0	59	0.0
21	2007	154,525	319	0.2	372	0.2	42	0.0	195	0.1
22	2006	477,663	334	0.1	67	0.0		0.2	771	0.2
	Mean	1,031,090	3,128	0.3	763	0.1	1,648	0	1,788	0.2

Legend: data for the most-played videos featuring Ana Botella dated 14 September 2013. N only corresponds to the unit of analysis (the video) by weighing the first and second wave data in the case of repeated videos. The highest values for each category are shaded. Empty cells correspond to instances where YouTube did provide the necessary information.

user tags of «Like», «Dislike» or «Share». Neither is there a clear relationship between the high number of plays a video receives and a greater number of actions in terms of these three options. In this study, although the most widely seen video is the one that gets the most «Like» or «Share» votes, there is no similar link observed in the rest of the videos analyzed (T2). In general terms, prosumer decision-taking in terms of one or other of the options is volatile in relation to the number of plays.

3.3. The prosumer as commentator

Neither did the prosumers generate a significant number of comments in relation to the number of videos seen (T2): there is no correlation between the most widely viewed videos and the videos with comments attached. Another important variable is the date of the comments: the majority trend was the relation between the number of comments received and the year when the video was posted. All the videos posted in 2013 got the highest percentage of comments, from 7 September 2013 to the same date a month later, and those posted a year earlier got more comments than those from the previous year, and so on. So, although it is true to say that prosumers set about updating a video prior to that date by raising its number of plays, new comments on that particular video were not numerically significantly.

What deserves special mention is the comments' form and content. Most of the opinions aired by the prosumers on these videos relate to what Sunstein (2010) calls the «conformity cascade», in that these messages are very short and merely reinforce the majority message. None of the messages analysed are truly informative –as in, providing information that does not feature in the video or which take a well-argued stance–, only two videos attract significant differences of opinion in which two groups of prosumers argue among themselves –trading insults and opinions not backed by any solid arguments–, and the rest are merely opinions that follow the majority lead.

3.4. The prosumer as producer

And neither is there much prosumer activity in terms of video authorship. We only saw one video produced entirely by a single user and posted by him on YouTube –a music rap–. Production activity comes mainly in the form of the prosumer taking a fragment of a TV program –usually from the La Sexta's «El Intermedio»– which features Ana Botella and then posting it on YouTube, without editing the video content and merely adding a title, description or, in this

case, a subtitle. Most of the videos (71%) were posted without any alteration to the sound, visual or textual content. This corresponds to the same number of videos produced by a media outlet or the institutional images of Botella's speech provided by the IOC, although in only 9.5% of cases were these videos, produced by established media, posted on YouTube by the media company or program themselves.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Internet «politainment» consumption is characterized by its being consumed in large quantities by users who show very few tendencies to create content of their own. Prosumer consumption and production is based on collaborative actions but prosumers are not the hegemonic producers of that content. Although it is true that each video receives a significant number of comments, the number is not proportional to the amount of plays: as we have observed, only a small percentage of plays generate substantial number of comments. Also, the video content does not add anything new and merely toes the majority line of conversation, without any sustained arguments and in the form of brief messages, hence Sunstein's (2010) «conformity cascade». Even more absent is prosumer action in self-produced videos; here there is a clear trend towards «transmediation», taking messages from «old media» like television and transforming the message with a slight alteration –text, visuals, sound– to adapt it to the «new media», YouTube, by adding a new title, a subtitle or a description.

This definition of the media prosumer of «politainment» opens up a new line of study in Spain which could investigate prosumer passivity in the face of political entertainment on Internet in order to verify if users really become less knowledgeable and competent in terms of their rights and democratic capabilities by intervention in politics with the development of a majority (passive) consumption of political «infotainment» (Gibson & McCallister, 2011). If the trend described here is confirmed in Spain, the media prosumer of «politainment» can be described as exercising a prosumption that is highly limited in terms of message creation in the majority of cases, but one that is also highly polarized and restricted in its variety of topics and which tends to replay the same message over and over again –the same content but in different versions and formats–, with scarcely any evidence of participative actions as prosumer.

Notes

[1] Contracted as speech writer for the Madrid candidacy. Burns, pre-

sident of Helios Partners, an international consultancy group that specializes in sporting events, had previously advised other candidate cities for the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008, the Winter Games in Vancouver 2010 and Sochi 2014, and now for Pyeongchang 2018.

[2] From 8 September (the day after the IOC vote) to 14 September, «El País» published 15 news items on this subject as well as two editorials and two opinion pieces; the news made the front page four times. «El Mundo» had 13 items on the speech, five opinion pieces and two editorials, and it featured on the front page three times. The two newspapers agreed that the failed candidacy was due to Spain's diminished standing in the world and the deterioration of its international image, the economic crisis, pressure and interest groups within the IOC and the impression that doping is not treated seriously in Spanish sport.

[3] Information available on: http://goo.gl/U8HiEA (22-11-2013).

[4] Information available on: http://goo.gl/Ipn6Uo (22-11-2013).

[5] Video entitled «Ana Botella y su inglés haciendo el ridículo en Buenos Aires (subtitled in English, Russian)*», or «Ana Botella and her English making a fool of herself in Buenos Aires». (http://goo.gl/SxpZ6T) (20-11-2013).

[6] In the course of this investigation, the authors contacted YouTube via email to obtain complementary data on the segregation of these data by country but according to YouTube spokespersons this platform did not differentiate such data by country.

[7] It must be remembered that the comparative data are merely contextual since the methodology applied to each case is different, and on YouTube only the number of plays are counted and not the number of unique users, data which we could not obtain for his investigation.

[8] Data provided by Barlovento Comunicación in relation to September 2013. The information has been obtained in collaboration with this communication company as observer and promoter of the research program of which this study forms a part.

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Young People as Users of Branded Applications on Mobile Devices

Los jóvenes como usuarios de aplicaciones de marca en dispositivos móviles

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the role of young consumers in the context of new communication processes arising from emerging technologies. It examines the use of mobile device applications that activate new, more complex social and communicative uses of technology. The applications for smartphones which link to commercial advertising and enable online purchases are a recent priority for communicative actors such as trademarks, banking and technology companies. In this context, this paper describes and encodes qualitatively how young users as prosumers understand, perceive and use these corporate branding applications. Research techniques were applied to four focus groups of Spanish undergraduates of Communication Studies, as they are users that show a predisposition towards an early adoption of these practices. The coding and grouping of their responses enabled us to develop a qualitative analysis of usage and interaction with trademark applications. These focus group responses also allowed us to classify such communicative practices. In conclusion, active consumers interact with commercial content, establishing social networks with the backing of the brand culture and image as a form of group cohesion. Other uses are related to entertainment and enquiries for information, but users are still reluctant to pay for products or services through their mobile devices.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo analiza el papel de los jóvenes consumidores en el contexto de los nuevos procesos comunicativos que surgen de tecnologías emergentes: el uso de las aplicaciones de marca en los dispositivos móviles. Estos incorporan funcionalidades sociales y comunicativas cada vez más complejas y, entre ellas, las aplicaciones para teléfonos inteligentes que vinculan publicidad comercial y pagos, formando un campo novedoso pero de interés prioritario para distintos actores comunicativos, como son las marcas comerciales, los servicios bancarios y las propias compañías tecnológicas. En ese contexto la presente investigación describe y codifica cualitativamente cómo los usuarios entienden, perciben y utilizan, como prosumidores, las aplicaciones de marca corporativa y los pagos. Para ello se aplican técnicas de investigación en cuatro grupos focales, de edades comprendidas entre los 18 y 24 años, compuestos por jóvenes universitarios españoles estudiantes en Comunicación, como usuarios que muestran una predisposición y una adopción temprana de estas prácticas. Las respuestas de las reuniones del grupo de discusión permitieron una clasificación de las prácticas comunicativas. En conclusión, se constata una alta predisposición de estos consumidores activos por interactuar con contenidos comerciales, estableciendo redes sociales bajo el amparo de una cultura e imagen de marca, como forma de cohesión grupal. Otros usos se relacionan con el entretenimiento y la información, al tiempo que aún se muestran reticentes al pago de productos o servicios mediante el dispositivo móvil.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE
Youth, students, mobile phones, social group, brand, advertising, qualitative analysis.
Jóvenes, estudiantes, telefonía móvil, grupo social, marca, publicidad, análisis cualitativo.

1. Introduction. Underlying issues

Smartphones, or the latest generation of phones, have become devices that are increasingly functional and capable of managing not only personal communication but also the ever-more complex life of the digital user. The possibility of incorporating a wide range of so-called branded applications for all kinds of purposes generates new potential communicative users who become not only active consumers of, among other things, advertising content and integrated social networking, but also prosumers or generators of content or value. These digital applications installed and used by current smart phone users act as a link for a trademark of products or services to the user's phone. They allow the user to access a catalogue of brand names, purchase products, or get added value usage of promotions or exclusive products through the branded application; so the app becomes a specific, unique and increasingly frequented communication channel.

The technological and communication revolution arising from the social use of mobile devices has led to an increase in research on interactive communication, marketing and commercialisation based on mobile devices. Earlier research identified the different social uses of mobile technology in relation to age (Castells, Fernandez-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2006: 41); young users are especially inclined to use emerging technologies, along with fascination for the brand as an identifier of social and group integration, which has recently been treated by Colás, González and de-Pablos (2013), Boase and Ling (2013) and Mihailidis (2014), among others. The latter author participated in an investigation that researched how university students used their mobile phones on a daily basis. This 2012 study worked with 793 students from eight universities across three continents, and the results showed the massive use of social mobile applications, with the difference between relationships that entail real contact and those that do not becoming increasingly unclear (Mihailidis, 2014: 70-72). Such users are therefore, an ideal target for trademarks and their strategies of social penetration through mobile software applications.

The devices are based on software and can run applications and connect to Internet; they also incorporate and work with different software applications designed for a variety of purposes: purchases, information, audio-visual creation, geolocation, etc. Brand applications would be no different from any other category in that vast catalogue of applications, except that they include within their denomination and purposes links to commercial and social actions, and proposals for a wide range of services related to the acti-

vity and image of their brand. They give increasing priority to commercial advertising, and join the traditional purchase of products or network services to aspects such as providing information or forming a bond between social and active users. In fact, the generation of social networks and contents by users are essential functions in the marketing strategy of brand applications. However, there are still relatively few investigations that follow an essentially qualitative methodology which address the description of motivations, social practices and features that users demand of these communicative forms; this is precisely the purpose of this research, which is based on focus group discussion of these issues. Dalhberg, Mallat and Ondrus (2008) presented an exhaustive review of up-to-date scientific literature on mobile device applications.

The state of the question was also dealt with by Varnali and Toker (2010), who demonstrated an exponential growth in research on mobile devices from 2000 to 2008 by assessing some 255 scientific articles from 83 research journals. Closer and even more related to this research are contributions by Kim, Mirusmonov and Lee (2010), who made an empirical study of the influences (social, technological, etc.) on the intended use of mobile devices; we can also cite Xu, Erman & al. (2011) or Yang, Lu, & al. (2012) who identify and define the ways mobile phones are used. Other contributions to qualitative research on the social use of mobile devices by groups are those by Fernández-Ardèvol (2011), in this case referring to older people, by Charness and Boot (2009) or Mallat (2007). For scientific communication research, focus groups are especially valid for studying the social uses of the new communication forms and the extent of use and interaction; all from a qualitative and humanistic perspective.

This qualitative and humanistic concept has been described by Porter (1998) from a business strategy, and by Pearce and Robinson (2005). A notable piece of research that used focus groups and also followed a qualitative methodology was that carried out by Mallat (2007). The investigation looked at individuals of various ages (from 14 to 60) and concluded that the adoption of these new uses is both dynamic and contextual, depending on situational factors such as urgency or need for speed; it also identifies barriers that hold users back, like the complexity of the system, connection rates, the possible lack of safety guarantees in transactions and the absence of a critical mass of users (Mallat, 2007: 231-232).

New users, particularly young adults, are beginning to change the traditional perception of the mobile

telephone (wireless voice communication), considering it to be a personal device, a gateway to extensive, varied and enriching networking communication services. Although, these brands originally aimed to develop interactive actions with commercial, promotional or even advertising purposes, as indicated by Maqueira-Marin, Bruque-Cámara & Moyano-Fuentes (2009: 141-142), the fact is that they have evolved and now seek proactive interaction with the user with the idea of developing specific content. These social and cultural changes have been described by Dalhberg, Mallat, Ondrus and Zmijewska (2008: 169-170), identifying them as crucial in affecting interaction and consumption habits, with people constantly on the move and increasingly aware of their free-time possibilities; an essential factor for communication and personal use of mobile technology. Brand applications are increasingly intertwined with cultural values and the personal and social idiosyncrasies of their users.

All this is a recent phenomenon, but with huge potential for business communication that runs alongside the emergence of new prosumer practices. Bellman, Potter and others (2011) observed that persuasive communication was having a greater impact, regardless of the category of the brand and application. The concept of usability and its value as a strategic factor in the expansion of mobile interactions has also been analysed by Liu, Wang and Wang (2011): in particular, it defined the characteristics of content, ease of use, emotionality focused on the user and the medium. Kim, Ling and Sung (2013) also defined how users, especially young people, have a greater predisposition towards establishing interactive communication with the brand, institution or service via the application. This goes hand-in-hand with the capability of mobile telephones to spread viral, communitarian and social content, transforming the relationship between brands and digital users, as has recently been unveiled by Bermejo (2013). This is a creative, innovative and low-cost strategy for trademarks (Swanson, 2011). Shin, Jung and Chang (2012: 1418) claim in this regard that each new technology needs to be perceived as being useful for it to

be accepted and assimilated into people's daily routines.

2. Material and method

The research was centred on finding, describing and categorizing the knowledge, attitudes and types of usage among young Spanish university students in relation to their experience and social use of brand applications on their mobile devices. For Boase (2013: 58-59), the way data are collected and the analytical tools defined in any mobile phone study as an experience

> The technological and communication revolution arising from the social use of mobile devices has led to an increase in research on interactive communication, marketing and commercialisation based on mobile devices. Earlier research identified the different social uses of mobile technology in relation to age; young users are especially inclined to use emerging technologies, along with fascination for the brand as an identifier of social and group integration.

can determine the outcome of the results, this being a field that is still new. One of the greatest challenges for a study on mobile phone applications is access to user data and content (Humphreys, 2013: 23); content analysis here is a valid research technique aimed at formulating from certain data reproducible and valid inferences that can be applied to its context (Krippendorff, 1990: 28). According to Cook and Reichardt (1986: 29), qualitative research should contain as relevant criteria, among other reliable characteristics, solid and repeatable data; data that is valid, current, rich and deep, grounded in the process, based on reality and oriented to exploratory, ever-expanding, descriptive and inductive discoveries.

This research method is one of the techniques adapted for the study subject set out here since, according to authors like Dahlberg and others (2008: 175), qualitative studies using interviews or focus groups can yield more details about the factors surrounding the adoption of these new communication tools. The treatment of the focus groups and intervention by the

moderators follow the steps defined by Yin (2011: 141). This author sets out and analyses what a focus group should be in this area. It would be a medium-sized group to enable accurate data gathering following, for example, the techniques proposed by the often-cited Stewart, Shamdanasi and Rook (2007: 45-50). The focus group evolves because the researcher has selected individuals who have previously had common experiences, or who are believed to share the same points of view. The moderator is the researcher who establishes communication and talks with these groups, and encourages all the group members to

whose apex includes interactivity and quality motivations (2012: 1425). Nevertheless, it is not without its methodological challenges as a new medium, as indicated by Kobayashi and Boase (2012). All the references cited so far in this paper have enabled us to focus the research on users and their motivations.

The processes of category construction can cater to different typologies. The first is known as inductive and consists of drawing up categories based on the readings (of the transcripts) and review of the compiled material without taking into consideration the categories deployed at the start. In this way provisional or emerging categories can be proposed which, as the encoding process progresses, will be consolidated, modified or withdrawn from the data comparison included in other categories (Rodríguez, Gil & García, 1996: 210). Some authors call this task open coding (Strauss, 1987), a process in which one aspect of the search for concepts is to try to provide data. The second process is called deductive which, unlike the previous categories, establishes a priori the role of the researcher in order to adapt

> Technology as a positive social value, and the need for the integration and use by individuals of new communicative proposals, were opinions on which almost all students agreed. This is further reinforced by the widespread technological optimism expressed by the young university students, as well as in regard to communicative interaction.

express their opinions, with minimal and no guiding or influencing of their views and experiences.

In terms of qualitative data analysis, the process of how the collected information is organised and used by the researchers is understood as a way to establish relations, interpret them, extract meaning and draw conclusions, in the ethnographic way as described by Spradley (1980: 59-70). In the qualitative analysis, Yin (2011: 6) highlights a series of phases such as: recording social reality, its material conversion into some kind of expression and coding, and its transformation through a conceptual development process.

To analyse the focus groups, this research made a transcription of the recorded audio interviews and then examined these texts to discover more about the study subject and the research categories within, using the bias limiters already mentioned. With regards to these research categories, we considered the active use of brand applications, with reference to Varnali (2011) because it introduces personality variables and subjectivity in user behaviour; we also took into account Shin, Jung and Chang (2012), who built what they call the «Technology Acceptance Model»,

each unit to an already existing category. Finally, we arrive at the mixed process from which the researcher extracts categories, formulating others when they are shown to be ineffective; this means that they cannot be considered within the category system as a register unit. This research carried out in May and June 2013 used a mixed process by means of a specifically designed computer tool, categorisation and data management, all conceived for this type of analysis. These programs are created to manage mechanical and repetitive qualitative analysis processes of responses, and are known as CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software). The latest version of Atlas.ti, Win 7.0, was chosen from among the various solutions available in the market for this research. The overview diagram of working with this tool can be summarised in the following processes, which correspond to the different phases of the research.

• In the first place, it was deemed appropriate to create a Hermeneutic Unit to house the documents (in our case, the transcriptions of the opinions expressed by the participants of the groups).

• This is followed by reinterpretations of these

texts to discover relevant passages and phrases to which codes and research reports are assigned,

• Thirdly, various analysis operations are developed on these codes, which are synthesised in family code groupings. In the present case, it was useful to group the visual networking concepts from which it was possible to retrieve the results of this research.

• Finally the QDA tools (including the one used in this work) allowed us to export the data in different formats and options.

The type of qualitative analysis carried out refers especially to category estimation, and infers relationships rather than verifies hypotheses (Krippendorff, 1990). The reference framework of our analysis is the description of real interaction and activity processes in mobile communication, focusing on the mobile brand applications. Within this context, the qualitative technique was applied to four focus groups of young university students aged between 18 and 24. Group composition consisted of 10 students in the first group, 12 in the second, 16 in the third and 10 students in the fourth. These groups can be classified as early adopters of technologies or services, according to marketing studies. Questions of an open and interpretative nature are related to the knowledge and use of, and communicative interaction within, the branded applications of mobile devices. This research was particularly on the look-out for indications of the depth of knowledge of these types of applications and, above all, the communicative practices established within the mobile phone's brand applications; searching for traits that would identify the users as content generators in the brand's social network.

3. Analysis and results

In the content analysis applied, the questions acted as parameters to guide the participants to contribute freely, which facilitated the work of the study and made it possible to establish codes or categories from the responses, offering indications of the interactive and social use of the applications. Relationships were also established between codes, code families and associations between codes, so the researchers could infer the uses, demands and objections of these young university students in terms of communication technologies. Finally, the results from the selected groups were validated and the sample validity verified.

The empirical encoding process is described below, and is the result of a dual process that takes advantage of the benefits inherent in the aforementioned computer tool. Firstly, after the transcription and reading of the responses from the four focus groups,

an analysis was made of the content of the responses based on the theme underlying each of the questions, selecting significant fragments through a process called In Vivo Coding; that is to say, establishing the significant brands so that they can operate as future analysis codes; an inductive code process. A third review discovered semantic elements common to many of these codes and we proceeded to assign a code or category to encompass different responses. In this way, the researchers defined a total of 20 codes, of which 13 came from the responses to the questions on brand applications, use and interactivity, while the remaining seven related to advertising and payments made by mobile phone.

The process of category construction is also deductive (using a mixed method for the encodings), partly due to the categories having been established a priori. The questions asked by the researchers were related to the extent of knowledge and use of, and interaction with, the brand applications on the mobile devices. They also specifically asked about the possibilities of payment for goods and services with the application. The list of the codes found in the responses and related to the brand applications were: Entertainment, Ease of Use, Information, Purchases, Curiosity, Offline, Unnecessary Items, Technical Limitations, Advertising, Speed, Rejection, Usability and the Value Added. With respect to the use and perception of advertising and payments (NFC or others), the group participants gave opinions that were clustered into codes, such as Comfort and Ease of Use, Knowledge of the Technology Without Use, Expenditure Control, Social Influence, Concerns over Security, Technological Optimism and the Value Added.

It also proved to be convenient to build clusters of codes into supercodes or family codes, based on a search and analysis strategy. For example, the code family named «Users of Brand Applications» included the codes, and hence the quotes, of the participants related to information, purchases, entertainment, curiosity and advertising. It should be noted that certain codes belong to more than one family; for example, the «Information» code belongs equally to the «Users of Applications» family and to «Features in Demand».

The research results shown below include some that are particularly expressive and present information in the form of conceptual diagrams of the codification work and the qualitative analysis using the QDA software tool. The types of relations obtained mainly include «is associated with», «contradicts», «is part of», «is the cause of», among others, from the relationships established in a list of codes.

For a more complete, clear and significant understanding of the conceptual diagram, the more frequently mentioned categories are located above while the codes lower down represent a smaller number of appeals in the transcripts of the various participants in the focus groups. These relationships are included in figure 1.

The users of brand applications are numerous within the focus groups, and these apps are used, as seen in the previous results chart, for buying and obtaining information on products and services. The «Value Added» code is especially relevant: it includes the prosumer's practices, particularly regarding personalised and exclusive promotions, communication with the brand and, above all, the generation of online content. Other minor, although significant uses, have to do with entertainment or downloading and occasional use out of sheer curiosity. A curious result emerges from the «Advertising» code. For example, the inclusion of advertising is principally rejected and contradicts the «Value Added» category, even though some users occasionally permit its use. Furthermore, students who had declared themselves to be non-users of branded applications expressed their opinions more strongly but less clearly than others. The majority said that they had found some applications to be unnecessary or of no significant use. Secondly, there is a categorical refusal to use these applications in abundance; and linked to the previous code, a very small number of users mention the technical limitations of the device, or refer to the network, arguing that they do not have smart phones, or a flat rate data tariff, or they complain about the difficulty of working on small screens, which are just some of the other reasons that have been encoded. This is displayed in figure 2.

Understanding of «Branded Applications» is related to the family the researchers composed from the codes that responded to the questions referring to what the users would like to see as features in those applications regardless of whether they are users or not. The results can be seen in figure 3, in which the determining factor is that the applications contained «Value Added», this is to say, the ability to create content, brand communication, the creation of Usenet,

speed, immediacy and exclusive products or services. The views of both groups on what the mobile applications should contain contradicted some categories; for example, a small number of non-users of branded applications also cited certain off-line services that could be included. These non-users are defined as not permanently connected to the network either for financial reasons or due to the technical limitations of their mobile device. This naturally clashes with «Value Added», or with use in terms of the access to immediate and constant «Information» that users demand. The non-users of these technologies also called for greater usability or ease of use of the applications.

While the mobile phone applications and their features were well-known and used by the majority of members of the four focus groups investigated, NFC mobile phone payment proved less popular.
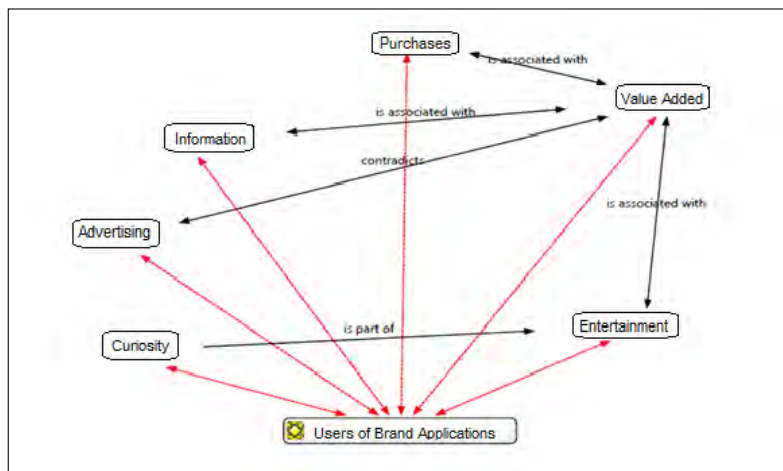
Figure 1: Users of Brand Applications, codes and qualitative analysis.

Nevertheless, in a vaguer and more imprecise way, a significant number of students were aware of the possibility of making payments by the mobile phone and other applications yet to be implemented. The technological optimism associated with a positive social influence was observed transversely in all focus groups. It is necessary to emphasize the scant or non-existent critical capacity of these young users of mobile applications in terms of the advertising and commercial strategies that the brand applications discreetly incorporate into the social networks, and the standing invitations to participate and generate content through the device's software.

4. Conclusions and discussion of results

Young users of smart mobile devices are now pioneers in the use of the new social, communicative and
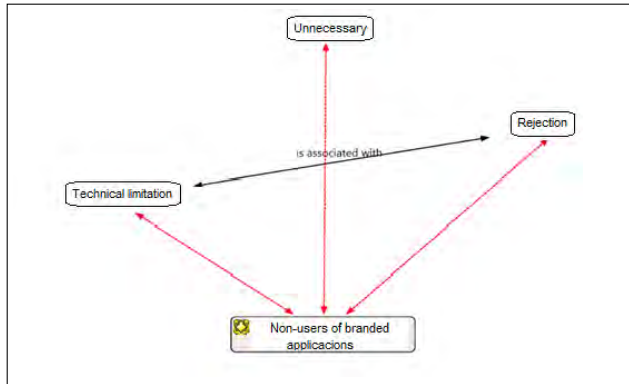
Figure 2: Non-users of branded applications.

cultural services provided by technological and communicative tools such as brand applications. These are related to user life experience and the creation of communities based on the values, lifestyles and idiosyncrasies of the brand. For companies, and this remains a subject to be discussed and researched further, these branded apps are extremely useful in building customer loyalty strategies.

The young university users surveyed show a very positive attitude towards downloading, installing and using brand applications. Their use broadens the communicative experience far beyond a mere commercial relationship. Therefore, in addition to the obvious usefulness of finding information, products and new services or commercial offers, the added social value is significant. The formation of virtual communities, the sharing of social and cultural experiences, and belonging to and identifying with brand values are essential elements for the youth groups. This is the main contribution of the prosumer.

In particular, use among the Spanish university population studied of brand applications was considerable, and this use extended to the applications for purchasing and obtaining product information, services and other added values, especially exclusive offers, discounts and instant communication with the brand as well as with other users. Other minor uses, although still significant, related to entertainment or sheer curiosity. Obviously complementary

ethnographic research is necessary, as knowledge of these social groups' lifestyles would enhance understanding of their communicative mobile uses.

The number of students who declared themselves to be «non-users of brand applications» was very few. They stated that this was mainly due to the presence of unnecessary applications, given that their use did not offer any significant value. To a lesser extent some expressed a categorical refusal to use these applications and a small number mentioned the technical limitations of their device or network, on the grounds that they do not have smart phones or a permanent flat rate data tariff plan. They also complained about the difficulty entailed in using small screens, among other things.

The focus groups expressed opinions on what a brand application should include in order for it to be attractive and interesting. In general, they referred to the inclusion of new features with respect to the corporate website, the possibility of specific utilities (such as the creation of networks, communities or making contact with other users) and payments through the application. The young university students approved of elements such as speed and immediacy in accessing content, exclusive sales offers and the discovery of products not found in stores or other establishments, as well as the community and cultural connection with the values or philosophy of a brand.

Technology as a positive social value, and the need for the integration and use by individuals of new communicative proposals were opinions on which almost all students agreed. This is further reinforced
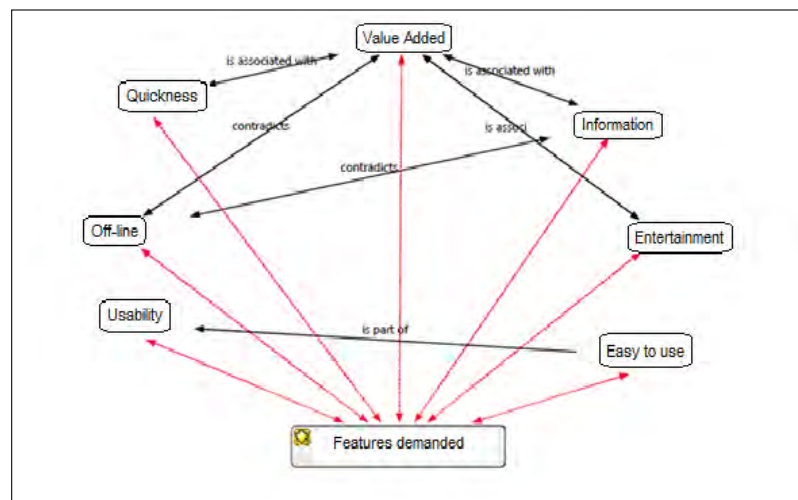
Figure 3: Features demanded of Branded Applications.

by the widespread technological optimism expressed by the young university students, as well as in regard to communicative interaction.

This study also demonstrates the influence of the economic crisis in the methods and channels of traditional commercial communication and advertising. The use of new media such as the telephone or mobile device, both closely linked to personal, intimate or private use, highlights the breakdown of the traditional mass media advertising model (television, radio).

The qualitative research only found one single and significant objection to the use of these technological resources: the feeling of insecurity when making payments via mobile devices. The security issues surrounding these purchasing transactions represent one of the greatest concerns among users and one of the biggest obstacles to increased purchase and payment activity via the mobile telephone. In turn, a small but significant number of users in the focus groups almost exclusively rejected the notion of making payments via their mobile devices.

Finally, and although the analysis developed excludes the quantitative aspect, it is interesting to note that the typology of the codes discovered, as well as the percentage corresponding to each one, ended up being very similar in all four focus groups. This indicates a uniformity in the typology of mobile application use among the Spanish university population, who are at the forefront in the adoption of new communicative, social and cultural uses of mobile technology.

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Active Audiences: Social Audience Participation in Television

Audiencias activas: Participación de la audiencia social en la televisión

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ABSTRACT

The combination of social networks, second screens and TV has given rise to a new relationship between viewers and their televisions, and the traditional roles in the communication paradigm have been altered irrevocably. Social television has spawned the social audience, a fragmentation of the real audience based on how they interact with social networks. This study is an attempt to analyze the factors which contribute to the success or failure of programs with a similar format in relation to their social audience. To do so, the study took as its subject three talent shows launched on the principal mainstream TV channels in Spain in September 2013. The study looked at the impact of these shows on the Twitter network, employing a control form [and developing a categorization and coding system for the analysis with the aim of collating all the data collected]. The results showed that the success of the shows was influenced by the activity in the social network accounts of the presenters and the judges. The conclusions reached in this analysis of the Spanish audience could be used as a development model for social audiences in other countries where social television is not so widespread.

RESUMEN

La combinación de redes sociales, segundas pantallas y televisión ha propiciado la aparición de una nueva relación de los espectadores con la televisión en la que los habituales roles del paradigma de la comunicación se han alterado. La televisión social ha dado pie al nacimiento de la audiencia social entendida como una fragmentación de la audiencia real en función de su interactividad en las redes sociales. Este trabajo pretende estudiar los elementos que contribuyen al éxito o fracaso de programas con un mismo formato en relación a la audiencia social. Para ello se han tomado como objeto de estudio los tres talent show que lanzaron las principales cadenas generalistas españolas en septiembre del año 2013. Se ha procedido a la observación del impacto de dichos programas en la red social Twitter empleando una ficha de elaboración propia y se ha desarrollado un sistema de categorías de análisis y códigos con el fin de recopilar toda la información recogida. Los resultados obtenidos indican que en el éxito de los programas analizados en audiencia social influye la actividad de la cuentas de los presentadores y del jurado. Las conclusiones alcanzadas tras este análisis de la experiencia española pueden servir como modelo de desarrollo de la audiencia social para otros países en los que esta no se encuentre tan extendida.

1. Introduction and state of the question

Social television has forcibly arrived in the media ecosystem as a result of the evolution imposed by the combination of social networks, second screens and television. It is yet another episode in the convergence process (Jenkins, 2008) in which traditional media are forced to adapt to this new scenario (Gillan, 2011). In the words of Scolari «there are old media species that must adapt to survive while others desperately fight for their lives» (2013).

For television, all these transformations have unleashed important changes that have affected its very nature (León, 2012). Scolari talks of hypertension (2008), a term that emphasizes interactivity; other times the word «TVmorfosis» (Orozco, 2012) crops up, after Fidler's work in 1997. Social television is the most widely used of these expressions and is based on the interaction between the audience and the medium; the first experiences go back to the 70s (Wohn, 2013) when the theory of active audiences was developed.

We now have a liquid media ecosystem which has altered the habitual roles of the communication paradigm of emitter and receiver (Rublescki, 2011). The traditionally static audience has evolved into a species of prosumer that interacts with the TV program's guests and presenters (Rincón, 2008). This audience is liquid (Aguado & Martínez, 2012) and characterized by its permanent, universal and dynamic connection to the Net.

The social audience emerges from the fragmentation process the traditional audience undergoes within the new media ecosystem, and it is the result of segmentation based on interactivity through the social networks. Audience participation in audiovisual media has increased in the last decade due to various mechanisms (Tíscar, 2005). The novelty lies in the fact that a horizontal conversation between physically separated users is now accompanied by a vertical exchange that occurs between the traditional emitter (the TV program) and the receiver. So the interactivity process is doubled and this is highly enriching. Besides the modifications that every media species has had to undergo, they have also had to remodel their studios and metrics to accommodate the new social audience (Arrojo, 2013) that has emerged from social television.

Twitter, which is more than just the micro-blogging web it is normally called, is a social network in real time (Deller & Hallam, 2011) where most conversations revolve around television programs. In Spain, 32% of all comments in prime time are on TV programs (Tuitele, 2013), making it the European country with the most highly-developed social audience (The Wit, 2013). The reason behind this extensive diffusion is the high percentage of mobile device ownership in Spain, which has a growth rate in tablets of 43%; and according to the Association of Mobile Marketing, 68% of people who use them are also following their social networks while watching TV.

In this new scenario, TV executives strive to get closer to or even control these new audiences that have emerged from the social networks in order to preserve television's dominant role in the ecosystem. We can say that social television was born in the final phase of the evolution of the media interactivity that Rost (2011: 104) applies to news sites but which can be transferred to other media such as television. In the words of this Argentine professor «these media use the networks in a two-directional way: first they insert them into their own web pages, then they flip their own content over within these same social networks so that it can be distributed to their fans and followers».

This audience provides TV executives with numerous positive elements. Their comments on a program can be seen live and come cost-free. They inform executives about what works and what needs to be tweaked. Studies on social audiences reveal the tastes and interests of each and every social spectator, all of which is vital data for the sale of advertising space. Some studies, such as those by Nielsen (2013), have also shown that there is a correlation between the number of comments on a program and an increase in traditional audience viewing figures for a program.

Another advantage that social audiences offer relates to program duration: the conversation that arises from a television space can begin before a program is broadcasted and continue well after its end, so the program's life lasts far beyond its broadcasting time. This amounts to an audience loyalty strategy via the creation of communities that share the viewing of a particular television space.

Nevertheless, this new social audience will not replace the traditional one since the former consists only of those viewers who use social networks. The profile of this type of user in Spain includes mainly adults (44% between 40 and 55) and young people (34% between 18 and 30) (IAB, 2013). So any analysis of this audience type can provide no more than a complementary source of data, never forgetting that it is not representative of all TV consumers (Bredl, Ketzer, Hünniger & Fleischer, 2014).

Since this reality is relatively new, there is still not

much research on social audiences. In Spain, one of the countries where this new audience is most highly developed, in addition to the studies already mentioned, research has mainly focused on case analyses such as «El Barco» (Claes, Osteso & Deltell, 2013; Fernández, 2013; Sequera, 2013; Grandío & Bonaut, 2012), the Goya Spanish film awards (Congosto, Deltell, Claes & Osteso, 2013), «Isabel» (Barrientos, 2013), hashtag usage (Castelló, 2013), investigations on the new metrics (Gallego 2013a; 2013b), the quality of social audience participation (Rodríguez & Pestano, 2013), the emotional factor (Merino, 2013), the role of the program presenter (Gallardo, 2013) and comparisons between the social and traditional audiences (González & Quintas, 2013). There are contributions from the Anglo-Saxon countries, where similar trends are observed. Wohn and Na (2011) conducted the first studies on the subject. Research undertaken as part of the «Cost. Transforming audiences, transforming societies» (2010-14) initiative has also focused on this topic (Bredl, Ketzer, Hünniger & Fleischer, 2014) while others (Harrington, Highfield and Bruns, 2013) examine the influence of the social audience. Moreover, there are also specific case studies that analyse the journalistic contexts of television (Larsson, 2013) or the Eurovision song festival (Highfield, Harrington & Brun, 2013).

The objective of this work is to study the elements that determine a TV program's success or failure by analysing three talent shows that were launched on mainstream Spanish TV channels in September 2013. The choice of this format was based on the fact that this program type had scored high in social audience ratings the season before (The Wit, 2013). Emotion, which is such an important factor in the social audience phenomenon (Merino, 2013) stands out clearly in this program type because, as (Redden 2008) points out, these spaces allow greater public identification with the competitors, as part of the process of television democratization, a meritocratic representation of society (Oliva, 2012). This is fertile ground for fan groups to set up in support of a particular competitor and or to comment on the judges, and these group members actively participate in these conversations that flourish on the social networks.

2. Material and methods

The aim of this investigation is to analyze the factors involved in the success or failure of TV programs with the same format in relation to the social audience that watches them. The study starts from the premise that the format of this television space might not be a key issue for the social audience whereas other independent variables of greater importance may influence this new audience (González & Quintas, 2013). A second objective is to make a comparative analysis of the social and the traditional audience of these programs.

We took a sample of three talent shows broadcast in prime time by the most widely watched TV channels in Spain, these being Telecinco (17.5% of ratings share), La 1 (15.7%) and Antena 3 (15.3%). These programs debuted in September 2013 at the start of the viewing season when TV channels traditionally present their strongest content.

The sample consisted of the following programs:

a) «Código Emprende» (broadcast on Wednesdays on La 1)[1]: this program takes six potential business people who seek financial backing for their projects. During the competition a business expert guides them and helps them to shape their ideas which are then presented to a panel of judges. The program is also sponsored by the BBVA bank.

b) «La Voz» (screened on Mondays on Telecinco)[2]: this is an adaptation of a Dutch TV format called «The Voice of Holland» first broadcast in 2010 and taken up a year later in the USA by NBC with great success as «The Voice». In Spain, it made its debut in 2012 and became very popular. It scored the highest ratings among social audiences worldwide between September and December 2012. The idea is to find the best singing voice in the country, as singers are put through various tests in front of a panel of judges made up of professional singers.

c) «Top Chef» (shown on Wednesdays on Antena 3)[3]: this is another example of the proliferation of programs framed around cooking that abound on television nowadays; it is adapted from a US format of the same name first screened in 2006, in which 15 professional chefs compete for the prize of top chef by overcoming various tests before expert judges.

The analysis period ranges from 11-09-2013 (the day of the first screening of «Código Emprende») and ends on 13-11-2013[4]. Due to the different debut dates of these programs, we analyzed how they evolved over seven episodes only, taking as a reference point «Código Emprende», which was the shortest-running program of the three and lasted seven weeks.

The lack of any unanimously recognized standard methodology for this new reality led us to draw on past research (Claes, Osteso & Deltell, 2013; Gallego, 2013a; 2013b; Congosto, Deltell, Claes & Osteso, 2013; Bredl, Ketzer, Hünniger & Fleischer, 2014). As a result, we selected a quantitative, non-experimental,

trans-sectional methodology, in other words, an observation of the impact of the three programs as registered on Twitter during a limited time period. To do so, we designed a datasheet that develops a system of categories and codes of analysis in order to compile and codify thematically all the information gathered during the two months of field work.

The datasheet's analysis categories are grouped according to the official Twitter accounts of the three key elements in this format: the program, the presenters and the panel of judges:

a) The presence and activity of the official account: date of the first tweet, number of messages sent, classification of the tweets based on content and number of hashtags.

The messages sent out from the official account have been classified according to the contribution type made (a retweet or modified tweet, a reply, video, text, links and photographs) in order to enrich the message. The use of hashtags[5] is a determining factor when handling the account's messages and tracking program follow-up on the network. It also enables the TV network to control information on the program and to gather together all comments on the network related to the program space. It also helps the social audience to share program-related messages more easily.

b) The presence and activity of the presenters' accounts: number of messages sent, the number of program-related messages sent and the number of followers. In this case the tweets directly related to the program were separated from those that were not related.

c) The presence and activity of the judges' accounts: number of messages sent and the number of followers. As in the previous category, the tweets directly related to the space were separated from those that were not.

These categories allow us to compile data for subsequent interpretation that will reveal relevant information on the dynamics established for the program via Twitter. The accounts analysed

were: @lavoztelecinco, @TopChefA3 y @Codigo-Emprende[6].

Categories are measured according to a timeframe that ranges from 30 minutes before the program starts to 30 minutes after it ends[7]. We have also studied the account activity between episodes to identify a potential weekly cadence.

These categories were included in the analysis datasheet that was tested beforehand on other programs by researchers in order to verify the correct register of the data and to add any modifications before the investigation began. The compiling of information was done directly from Twitter in real time to avoid register-related problems arising from other monitoring tools, which did not enable us to limit the period of analysis to the length of the program as they measure longer periods.

The data pertaining to the real audience were obtained from the Formula TV website and provided by Kantar Media. The data related to the social audience came from Tuitele, the first social audience-measuring tool developed in Spain.

It should also be pointed out that this research focuses on endogenous factors and does not take into account exogenous factors (those not linked directly to the program account on Twitter)[8] that could be directly related to the success or failure of the program in terms of social impact. Such categories include the TV channels' attempts to raise the profile of the program on other social networks, the transmedia strategy, and the level of support in-house in relation to the dissemination of the program (a magazine, a website, blog, etc.) or the synergies set up as a result of program feedback. Another consideration that was discar-
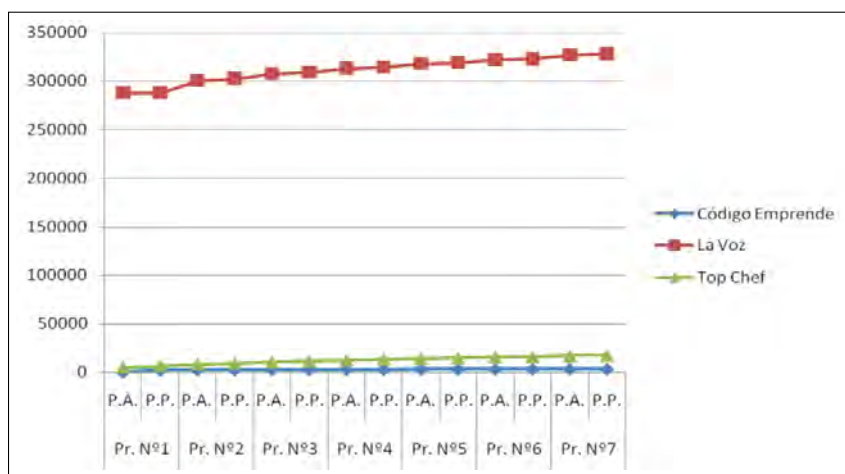
Chart 1. The evolution of the number of followers from the previous period (P.A.) to the posterior period (P.P.) for each program's official account.

ded is the program's scree-
ning time and the analysis
of the competition from
programs on other chan-
nels as determining but
exogenous factors.

3. Analysis and results

The field work yielded
the following results based
on the triple classification
established in the previous
section:

Chart 2. Content of the tweets published by the official accounts of the programs
during the period analyzed.

3.1. Official account

As Chart 1 shows,
there is a considerable dif-
ference between the number of followers of «La Voz»
and those of «Código Emprende» and «Top Chef». In
addition, «La Voz» has the advantage of bringing with
it followers of the program from the previous edition
while the other two start from a far lower base.

In the course of the seven programs under analy-
sis the trend was for the number of followers of «La
Voz» and «Top Chef» to continue to increase over the
seven weeks. With far fewer followers, the evolution
in the number of «Código Emprende» fans is hardly
noticeable, from the beginning to the end of its run it
only picked up an extra 1,179 followers.

Chart 2 reveals differences between the activity
and the content of the tweets of the program accounts.
«Código Emprende» is the talent show that generates
most retweets, modified tweets and replies. By con-
trast, references to links to the program's website are
much more prominent in «Top Chef» and «La Voz»
since these websites act as complementary material
containers, thus the video content does not exist in
these programs unlike on «Código Emprende». Also
«La Voz» stands out for being the show that includes
the most photos of the program as it develops.

Another noteworthy fact is that «Código Em-
prende» published the most number of tweets per pro-
gram (4) over the seven weeks although it has the
fewest followers of the three (See Chart 1). By con-
trast, «La Voz» sends out the fewest number of messa-
ges per program (1) despite having the biggest number
of followers.

In terms of hashtags, «La Voz» promotes an avera-
ge of nine (the most preeminent being the one that
appears on the screen during the program) on each
program while «Código Emprende» and «Top Chef»
use only one. «La Voz» and «Top Chef» both insert
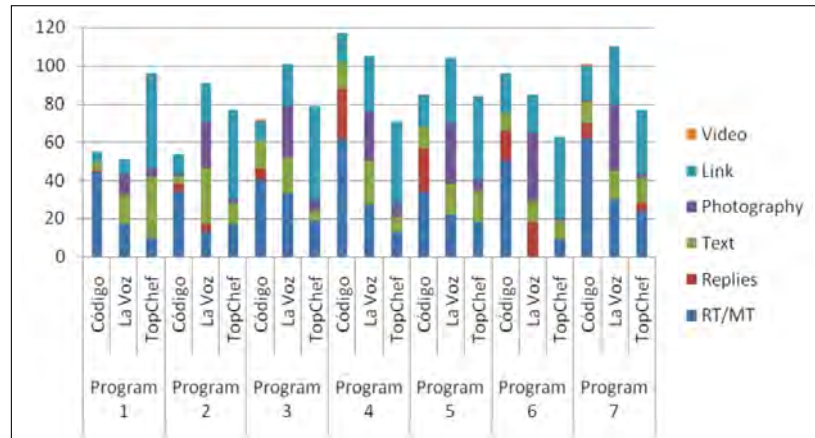
the main hashtag among the trending topics while
«Código Emprende» does so only on one occasion.

In order to detect whether there was a relation
between the social and real audiences, we carried out
a comparative analysis based on the number of real
and social viewers for each program (table 1).

«La Voz», with an audience share of between
20.2% and 25.2%, is one of the most popular pro-
grams in its time slot, and led the rankings for the pro-
gram with the biggest social audience every day during
the period under analysis.

«Top Chef» attracted fewer social watchers than
«La Voz» but consolidated its position in the rankings.
One interesting factor is that both the traditional and
real audience tuned in the day the program was pre-
miered in numbers but diminished on the days that
followed as they tended to lose interest, as observed in
the data in table 1.

«Código Emprende» attracted far fewer viewers
than the other two with an inconsistent audience flow;
when the final program ended, its viewing share had
reached its lowest point during the seven weeks of
broadcasting.

3.2. The presenters' accounts

The study only analyzed two of the three personal
accounts of these program presenters, Jesús Vázquez
of «La Voz» and «Código Emprende's» Juan Ramón
Lucas since «Top Chef» presenter Chicote was on the
panel of judges of that program. The main difference
is that Vázquez is more active during the week than
when the program is broadcasted (except in the first
three programs) while Lucas tweets more actively
during screening as a way to stimulate conversations
on the Net (except in the fifth program).

The results show that Lucas loses followers during broadcasting on four of the days analyzed but recovers them during the week.

Table 1: Number of viewers (in thousands), audience share (percentage) and number of social viewers (in thousands except for C.E.) of the three programs analyzed (C.E.: «Código Emprende»; L.V.: «La Voz» & T.C.: «Top Chef»)														
	Pr.1		Pr.2		Pr.3		Pr.4		Pr.5		Pr.6		Pr.7	
	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh	Vi/Sh
C.E.	613 4.5%	304	286 4%	166	370 5.2%	215	260 3.1%	240	260 3.1%	292	370 5.2%	603	260 3.1%	962
L.V.	3.438 23.3%	163	3.560 24.6%	107	3.816 25.2%	82	3.722 24.6%	70	3.764 24.5%	59	3.591 20.2%	59	3.597 24.8%	94
T.C.	3.030 17.7%	18	2.480 15.7%	11	2.343 13.7%	9	2.273 13.7%	10	2.303 14.5%	7	2.597 15.8%	8	2573/ 14.7%	7

3.3. The judges' accounts

We examined the accounts of the panel of judges of these three programs, nine in total, none of whom had had official account on the program[9].

As Chart 3 shows, the two judges of «La Voz» (David Bisbal and Antonio Orozco) and one on «Top Chef» (Chicote) are the most active tweeters with a level of activity that is continuous and which increases as their respective programs develop. Chicote's tweeting activity increased during program screening and throughout the seven episodes analyzed.

By contrast, the jury on «Código Emprende» registered little network activity. There were two judges who were fairly inactive and this trend hardly changed throughout the seven weeks analyzed.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Starting from the premise that the program format is not the only factor that determines the development of a TV space among the social audience, we have studied those factors that are endogenous to Twitter that can affect a program's success or failure. «La Voz» gets the biggest share of the social audience. The results show that it has the most fans and registers the biggest increase in followers during the period. Likewise its presenter and two of its judges are among the three most active tweeters. However, there is no direct relation between the activity recorded on the program's own Twitter account and its success in the ratings. «Código Emprende» sent out the most tweets during a broadcast but had the least success among the social audience.

Our second objective was to compare these program's real audience to the social audience, and «La Voz» scores highest on both counts. There is also a parallel between the results for each program in both audience types. Yet the results do not allow us to establish a causality relationship between both audiences, nor do they show any possible correlations. Future studies should continue with this line of investigation.

Social networks provide a useful tool for TV channels as a forum to listen to and evaluate viewers' opinions on their programs. However, any strategy designed to make the most of this phenomenon must include enriching this communication by a variety of tweet types. These can be retweets or modified tweets that acknowledge the value of messages that occur beyond the official program accounts, the broadening of the conversation between viewer and the program and encouraging loyalty to the retweeted accounts. This is an example of the prosumer nature of the new social network-related audiences. Yet too many tweets of this type can point to a lack of originality in the program's own account, as in the case of «Código Emprende».

Links to websites, so frequently promoted in tweets from «La Voz» and «Top Chef», enable TV channels to pursue a transmedia strategy by using the web, as a result they scoop up more information on the program and can even monitor the social audience. Likewise, the audiovisual content attached to the tweets cannot be ignored because of the impact that funny or unusual images of the program can have on the social networks. «Código Emprende» was the least active in this field, and the failure of this program and «Top Chef» to promote their hashtags prevented them from structuring the conversations that emerged after the broadcasts.

In order to raise their presence among the social audience, all the program's resources must be directed towards the social networks, and so the presence and activity of the presenters and judges become determining factors in increasing program impact. These efforts must not be limited to the time when the program is being screened. All the programs analyzed were pre-recorded while account activity happened in real time, so a time lapse occurs that could affect the social impact of these programs. The social audience breaks down the time barrier and demands a continuous presence that goes beyond the broadcast time slot. Just as in the official account, the presenters are also active outside the program slot and continue tweeting between programs. In this way, conversations are kept up for several days, thus feeding active

audience expectations.

Also noteworthy is the synergy of forces provided by the presenters and judges through their private accounts. Followers who comment on the program increase the resonance and impact of the program, even among those who do not watch it. These programs also offer a showcase for these celebrities whose own number of followers can increase as a result of appearing on this TV space.

Chart 3. Activity (number of tweets) of the judges of the three programs analyzed (C.E.: «Código Emprende»; L.V.: «La Voz» & T.C.: «Top Chef»).

The analysis of the Spanish experience can serve as a social audience development model for other countries where this audience type is not so prominent. The analysis of the factors linked to the programs' official accounts, and those of the presenters and judges should also be accompanied by a study of other categories such as the accounts of the competitors, of the broadcasting channel and producer, the synergies established between different programs of the same channel as well as the transmedia strategies.

Notes

[1] «Código Emprende» (70 minutes) made its premier appearance on 11-09-2013, on a Wednesday in prime time, but its time slot was changed during the seven weeks of the analysis (11, 18 and 25 September; 2, 9, 16 and 23 October 2013).

[2] The episodes of «La Voz» (180 minutes) analyzed were shown on: 16, 23 and 30 September; 7, 14, 21 and 28 October 2013.

[3] «Top Chef» (120 minutes) was screened on: 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 October; 6 and 13 November 2013.

4 Repeats of these programs were excluded from this study.

[5] According to a Twitter estimate, the insertion of a hashtag on screen generally increases tweeting activity by between 2 and 10 times; screening the name of the Twitter account user raises the number of responses by between 2 and 8 times (Twitter is the second screen, 2013).

[6] The official account of «Código Emprende» was directed to BBVA (@bbvaempresa), so in this case we have analyzed both.

[7] This timeframe is the same one used by «Tuitele» to analyze the social audience.

[8] No analysis was carried out of other accounts that might have influenced social impact, such as those of the producers, the broadcasting channels or the competitors.

[9] One member of the panel of judges of «Código Emprende», María Benjumea, had no Twitter account.

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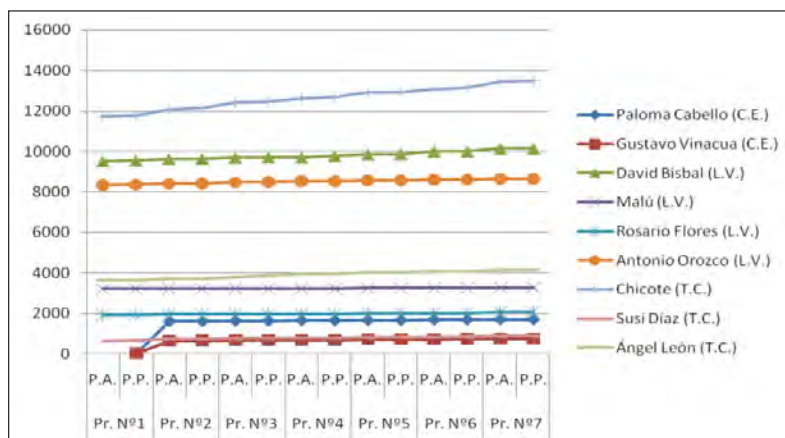
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Active Audiences in the Regulation of the Audiovisual Media. Consumer versus Citizen in Spain and Mexico

Las audiencias activas en la regulación de los medios: La dialéctica consumidor-ciudadano en España y México

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ABSTRACT

Media audience has been conceived, traditionally, as a group of citizens or consumers. In the Media environment, citizens exercise their communication rights and participate in the public sphere; consumers, on the other hand, consume audiovisual products in a specific market. In the citizen perspective, audiovisual communication serves the public interest and democratic values; in the consumer one, it serves private and individual interests. This paper studies the main academic positions referred to the dichotomy citizen – consumer, attending particularly to the investigations of Peter Dahlgren on relations between Media and Democracy; of Richard Collins, on Audiovisual Policy; and of Sonia Livingstone on public sphere, audience participation and Media governance. After this theoretical approach, the paper analyzes the presence of these conceptions of the audience in the audiovisual legal systems of two countries: Spain and Mexico. These two countries are modifying their legal framework. As a conclusion, it appears that the different conceptions of the audience –as consumers or as citizens– are in a close relationship with the different ways of Media control and accountability.

RESUMEN

Dos han sido los prismas bajo los que se ha concebido tradicionalmente a la audiencia: como ciudadanos, que ante los mensajes de los medios ejercen sus derechos comunicativos y participan en la construcción de una opinión pública libre; o como consumidores o usuarios, que actúan dentro de un mercado de productos audiovisuales. Mientras que la primera perspectiva atiende a la comunicación audiovisual valorando su interés público y su influencia en la construcción de un espacio público de debate y discusión, la segunda atiende a la dimensión más privada e individual de la comunicación audiovisual. En el presente trabajo se abordan las principales posiciones doctrinales sobre dicha dicotomía consumidor-ciudadano, analizando para ello la obra de los autores que más atención han dedicado a estas cuestiones en el ámbito europeo, y en especial los trabajos de Peter Dahlgren sobre las relaciones entre medios y democracia, los de Richard Collins sobre política audiovisual, y los vinculados a Sonia Livingstone sobre esfera pública, participación de las audiencias y gobernanza de los medios. Realizada esta aproximación teórica, se analiza la presencia de dichas concepciones de la audiencia en dos ordenamientos jurídicos audiovisuales que están experimentando modificaciones sustanciales: el español y el mexicano. Como conclusión, se constata que las distintas concepciones de la audiencia están en profunda relación con la forma de concebir el control de los medios y la rendición de cuentas de sus operadores frente al público.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Audience, citizen, consumer, accountability, participation, broadcasting, democracy, regulation.
Audiencia, ciudadano, consumidor, control, participación, radiotelevisión, democracia, regulación.

1. Introduction

The terms chosen to designate those who are in front of a television reveal not only a theoretical choice, but also a certain commitment to a socio-political perspective (Perez-Tornero, 2005: 251) which has an impact on the regulation and control of the media (Lunt & Livingstone, 2012: 7). Two of the most widespread concepts of the viewer– in constant dialectical tension –are «consumer» and «citizen». These concepts, referring to the users of the media, have jumped in Europe from the field of academic reflection and communication theory into actual policies and appear jointly for the first time in British audiovisual legislation. The Communications Act of 2003 states that the purpose of the activity of the regulator Ofcom is to serve both the interests of citizens, who are defined as «all members of the public in the United Kingdom» (Section 3.14), and the interests of consumers (Section 3.5).

This article addresses the nature and the scope of the concepts of «citizen» and «consumer» as well as the enduring discussions around them, using as a basis the work of the authors who have devoted more attention to these issues within Europe, particularly Peter Dahlgren's work on the relationship between media and democracy (1995; 2002; 2009; 2010; 2011), Richard Collins on audiovisual policy (2007; 2012) and Sonia Livingstone on the public sphere, audience participation, and media governance (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2006; Lunt & Livingstone, 2012). After completing this theoretical approach, we examine how these concepts are present in the audiovisual policies in Spain and Mexico, two countries with different traditions that are facing profound reforms in their audiovisual legislation.

2. Spectators, audience, and the public: in search of an audiovisual citizenship

The notion that citizenship is linked to the audiovisual field comes directly from Habermas's theory of the public sphere as the ideal space in which the exchange of information on issues of common interest takes place and allows for, when operating properly, the free formation of public opinion. Therefore, the existence of a true public sphere requires the coincidence in both space and time, of people talking with people; hence, the relevance of the media as mediators of social interactions in a mass society (Habermas, 1991). This citizen assembly informs and is informed, discusses and deliberates on issues that are of general interest, particularly of political interest. A condition for the public sphere is not only the existence of a com-

mon space, but also, as a central requirement, the existence of rational discussion, critical speech, and active reasoning by the public (Dahlgren, 1995: 9). Public and citizenship become, in this context, concepts which are linked within the field of public spheres to the extent that citizens are able to share issues of common interest in a mediated «public connection» (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2006: 34-35). Therefore, a public sphere exists when the audience no longer behaves simply as a mere addition of individual receivers, but as co-producers of dialogue and political action (Dahlgren, 1995: 122).

The problem with the theorizations on deliberative democracy and the participation and engagement of publics, is its confrontation with the indifference and apathy of citizens – which is linked in part to structural factors (Dahlgren, 2009: 6). If dialogue is a constitutive element of the notion of publics as «morally and functionally vital for democracy» (Dahlgren, 2002), in order for individuals to become citizens within the scope of the public sphere, and by extension, collectively create a democratic culture that works, there has to be a series of structural prerequisites that Dahlgren groups under the term of «civic culture» (2002; 2009; 2011). These structural prerequisites include democratic skills which can be acquired through education and converted into participatory habits inherent for democracy.

Young people have a special facility for interaction within the Internet (Jenkins & al., 2009; Rheingold, 2008), but the possibilities offered by it for a participatory democracy reach the whole of society. Indeed, the Internet allows for the dynamics of cooperation and social interaction, «smart mobs», in Rheingold's expression (2004), capable of overthrowing unjust governments and building democratic power, though we cannot forget that these smart-mobs technologies can also entail new threats to freedom, quality of life, and human dignity. In this context in which the progressive «audienciation» (Orozco, 2002) of the Internet can lead to the emergence of a mirage of participation when there is only amplified consumption (Orozco, Navarro, Garcia-Matilla, 2012), an education specific for the development of democratic participatory skills is revealed as a crucial issue of our time.

Insofar that the objective of media education is not to guarantee professional efficiency based on the development of certain skills but to enhance «personal excellence» through the development of personal autonomy and the social and cultural commitment of citizens (Ferrés & Piscitelli, 2012), the need for a participatory edu-communication (Rheingold & Weeks,

2012) that serves the dual role of citizens as consumers and producers of contents (prosumers) within the mediated public sphere, connects with the classical theory of the civic virtues. In this sense, the idea of «achieved citizenship» is currently expressed as a mode of social agency (Dahlgren, 2009: 57-79). Citizens are active only if there is a favorable cultural environment beyond the institutions that define democracy, and if these structures and processes are populated by real people with democratic inclinations (Dahlgren, 2009: 104).

Notions of citizenship and public are particularly present in discourses about public media, which find their legitimation in the service of the public interest – a concept that has received surprisingly scarce attention (Lunt & Livingstone, 2010: 36; Feintuck & Varney, 2006: 75). The concept of «public value» as a public media management principle, in particular, is present in the British regulation of the BBC, and assumes the necessary collaboration of both providers and users and their participation in the processes of democratic control of the media (Collins, 2007: 24).

3. The citizen-consumer dialectic

For Dahlgren (1995:148; 2010: 26-29), the concepts of consumer and citizen are incompatible, while for Collins (2012) and Lunt and Livingstone (2012), they can coexist together to the extent that it is possible to achieve a balance between economic regulation, consumer protection, and the promotion of citizens' interests. In fact, these last two dimensions appear united in the concept of «citizen-consumer» as adopted by Tony Blair's New Labour Party in the United Kingdom. The terminology integrates values such as transparency, citizen consultation, accountability, empowerment of individuals, and freedom of choice (Lunt & Livingstone, 2012: 43). This conciliation is consistent with neo-liberal positions which are promoting a new concept of participation, more associated with the capabilities of individual subjects who are responsible in a given market, than with their condition as members of the citizenry in a political community (Ong, 2006; Shah & al., 2012).

Although the term «consumer» is present in the Telecommunications Act 1984, it is enshrined as a guiding principle of British audiovisual policy since the Peacock Report (1986) which introduced the notion of «consumer sovereignty» in the audiovisual field. The term was conceptualized by Potter (1988) as an active user who is able to achieve the accountability of institutions in an efficient market (Collins, 2012: 221), and is in contrast to the previous doctrine based on the idea of viewers and listeners as vulnerable citizens in need of protection, and consequently, less active in demanding accountability. It is precisely on this issue of accountability where the main differences between the concepts of consumer and citizen have been developed in the United Kingdom in recent decades.

Collins and Sujon (2007: 33-52) discuss the evolution of the concept of accountability in the United

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Kingdom using for their purposes the classic distinction of Hirschman (1970) of the three ways through which stakeholders hold institutions accountable: «exit», «loyalty» and «voice». These three pathways act in different ways according to the type of media, their ownership, and the obligations of public service imposed and lead to three different media governance systems. Thus, for audiovisual company service providers who are subject to licence, such as the operators of cable and satellite, accountability is accomplished by leaving (exit): the user acts on his disagreement by terminating the service.

A second group includes private channels for whom «stakeholders», in this case viewers, can choose between approving the programming and staying as loyal viewers (loyalty), or leaving (exit). And, with public channels from which citizens cannot «exit» (that is, the system continues to operate regardless whether users remain or leave), viewers can demand accountability by making their voice heard (voice) either directly or indirectly.

This approach adopts a view of users of the media which is closer to the concept of consumer than to citizen, although the authors warn that, despite the rivalry between the two concepts, there is no incompatibility

between the values systems that they represent. In general terms, it can be said that consumers make broadcasters accountable through their ability to disconnect (exit), while citizens make their voice heard on issues that affect them (voice). The distinction between the concepts of the «audiovisual consumer» and «audiovisual citizen», Collins concludes, is located fundamentally in the mechanisms of accountability: when we speak of the audiovisual citizen, the mechanisms of control (participation bodies, procedures for

For example, the first paragraph of the Preamble to the ERTV maintains that radio and television broadcasting are an «essential vehicle for information and political participation of citizens, for the formation of public opinion, and for cooperation with the education system (...)». While the Preamble for the LTP begins with a similar statement: «The goals of such public broadcasting service must be, above all, to satisfy the interest of the citizens and to contribute to the pluralism of information, the free public opinion-forming and the dissemination of the culture».

With the idea of promoting citizen participation in the contents and programming of the public broadcasting service, ERTV foresaw the creation of advisory councils for RNE, RCE and TVE, with a plural composition of social agents, and functions of information and consultation. Each advisory council had to be convened at least every six months.

During the mid-1990s, Spain incorporated into its legal system the Television without Frontiers Directive

> The advance and consolidation of the concept of consumer and user coincides with a more precise identification of mechanisms by which consumers can make their voices heard, participating in the audiovisual field and demanding, as citizens, proper accountability. The evolution of the Spanish regulation is typically neo-liberal, abandoning the interventionist and collective discourse while stressing the leading role and responsibility of the individual viewer.

complaints, etc.) reside outside the citizen himself, while in the case of the «audiovisual consumer», the control resides within. (Collins 2012: 40). It should be emphasized that consumers' mechanisms of accountability are merely individual (exit), while the citizens' mechanisms have a collective dimension, linked to public debate (voice). In any case, accountability and audience participation are two sides of the same coin: user participation is an obligatory element of media accountability systems (Baldi & Hasebrink, 2007).

4. Spain: more nominal than real participatory rights

How are both concepts of consumer and citizen reflected in the audiovisual policies developed in Spain in recent years? Two stages can be distinguished. The first large regulatory stage was set into Law 4/1980, on 10 January, «Spanish Radio and Television Statute» (ERTV), and Law 10/1988, of 3 May, of «Private Television» (LTP). From the first paragraphs in their preambles, their vision of broadcasting as a form of communication substantially linked with the construction of an active and participatory citizenship is clearly stated.

through Law 25/1994, of 12 July. This transposition was the first step in a process that would gradually turn the vision of radio and television into a more economic and commercial perspective. It is not surprising that these perspectives in European legislation led to a commercialization of the Spanish audiovisual sector, inasmuch as that the European Union has fundamentally served for the harmonization of markets and the free movement of goods, people, and services between member countries (Crusafón, 1998: 83). The Preamble of Law 15/1994 still remains in its commitment to the narrative of rights and citizen discourse, and refrains from characterizing television as a business, or an industry. However, Article 1, upon describing the purpose of the Act, shows evidence that its center of gravity has already shifted toward a more commercialized conception of broadcasting.

Around the turn of the this century, the broadcasting sector underwent profound changes in Spain, marked by the emergence of commercial platforms of satellite TV, pay-per-view TV, and the arrival of digital terrestrial television and Internet television. The legislature, reacting to technological advances, pat-

ched up the audiovisual legal framework, by means of a dispersed, prolix, and occasionally chaotic, set of rules. (García-Castillejo, 2012: 81-82).

Also at the dawn of this century, public broadcasters –both state and regional– reached a point of collapse. After years of drifting towards dubiously fair competition with private operators, they were met with a huge economic deficit, a very limited audience, negligible credibility, and virtually no identity (Azurmendi, 2007: 269). Thus, the debate on the reform of state public television was opened, a debate that ended with the approval of Law 17/2006, of 5 June, of the Corporación Radio Televisión Española (LCRTVE).

A pioneering document for the reforms needed in the Spanish audiovisual sector was the «Report on the Reform of the Public Media», prepared by the so-called «Committee of Wise Men», and published in February, 2005. The entire report is a determined advocacy of public radio and television service conceived as an instrument of democratic participation, and a guarantee of communication rights. In several passages, the report explicitly contrasts the concept of the citizen with the mercantilist conception of radio and television. For example, the preamble solemnly declares that the reform project is oriented to ensure the provision of «public service, (as) a communicative function, addressed to citizens and not to mere consumers of certain products, and whose benefit is social and not just commercial or economic» (p.10).

Turning to the text of Law 17/2006, the terminology used continues in the semantic fields of the cited report, linked to citizenship, pluralism, audience participation, and the rights of viewers. Nevertheless, the Act does not incorporate all the recommendations made by the «Committee of Wise Men» (Bustamante, 2013). Taking into account that the Act regulates public television, and aims to correct the commercial excesses committed in the past, the chosen perspective is natural. However, more than six years after its entry into force, the mechanisms for social participation and control foreseen in the Act are still unapproved.

A large proportion of the advisory councils have been suppressed (Fuente-Cobo, 2013: 72); the right to access has become a purely token reality (Bustamante, 2010); the designation of the governing bodies of public television has been modified, reverting back to the hands of the Government. Ultimately, it can be stated that the drift of the Spanish public broadcasting service brings us back to stages prior to the approval of Law 17/2006 (Bustamante, 2013: 299).

Regarding private television, Law 17/2010, of 31 March, General de la Comunicación Audiovisual (LGCA), derogated a set of laws –up to twelve– applicable to private television, and established a new regulatory landscape. The first lines of its Preamble leave no doubt as to the inspiration and the discourse that underlies its articles. They are dominated by purely commercial concepts: industry, sector, economy, supply, demand, commerce, business, development, etc. Its economistic tone is diametrically opposite to Law 17/2006, which constitutes a curious dichotomy between the two rules both approved under the governments of President Rodríguez Zapatero (Zallo, 2010: 17).

Despite this mercantilist and «consumerist» perspective, LGCA carefully regulates the rights of the public, included in the first part of the Act (Articles 4 to 9). Regarding public participation, Article 9 recognizes the right of the public to request the adjustment of audiovisual content to the law, exercising their «right to participation in the control of audiovisual content». Another mention of citizen participation appears in Article 22.1° LGCA, which defines radio and television communication services as «services of general interest, since these services are connected with fundamental rights, and constitute a vehicle of their participation in political and social life».

Perhaps the most interesting chapter of the LGCA, in which the dialectic of rights and participation of the audience takes a more prominent role, is its Section V, dedicated to the creation of the «National Council for Audiovisual Media» (CEMA). In particular, Article 45 LGCA entrusts to CEMA the mission of ensuring respect for the rights of the public, among which are participation, transparency, pluralism, and the fulfillment of the mission of public service. Also at the service of citizen participation, Article 51 LGCA of the Law envisaged the creation of an advisory committee of the CEMA as an organ for audience participation and for advising the Audiovisual Committee. Thus, we can say that the LGCA opened the door to a more participative and active audience in the field of television.

However, the LGCA has been modified several times since coming into force. The most important of these reforms has been implemented by Law 3/2013, of 4 June, setting up the «Spanish Commission for the Markets and Competition» (CNMC), repealing all of Section V of the LGCA dedicated to CEMA. Based on arguments of budgetary austerity, the Government has promoted the LGCA modification by assigning CEMA's functions to a new macro-regulator, the CNMC.

This legal reform further tilts the balance even more towards the mercantilist conception of the

audiovisual sector and of the audience, as the name of the new Commission itself obviously proves (Linde & al., 2013:246). Article 1.2° of Ley 3/2013 designates the CNMC as intended to «ensure, preserve, and promote the functioning, transparency and the existence of effective competition in all markets and sectors, for the benefit of the consumers and users». All references to the participation of the audience disappear from the Law, with the exception of Article 30, which provides that in the development of some rules, the CNMC will give audience to those interested, and will promote citizen participation. What is not clear is how it will provide for such participation, especially when the Advisory Committee foreseen in the LGCA –the main body of citizen participation in the audiovisual environment– disappears in the new regulation, a movement which has been interpreted as clearly contractive (Fuente-Cobo, 2013).

Perhaps the only positive point of this reform is to be found in Article 37 of the Ley 3/2013, under the title «Publicity of Proceedings». This article requires the publication of CNMC's «provisions, resolutions, agreements, and reports that are handed down in the application of laws, once having notified interested parties». So far, the opacity with which the Administration has handled its own records has been entirely unacceptable. Publishing these records is an inalienable premise for the citizenry to know that the law is applied, and therefore, can participate in content control.

Considering the above, two observations can be made. Firstly, regarding the underlying discourses in the Laws, as television and radio sector expands allowing more and more operators, the vision of broadcasting as an economic sector gathers strength. At the same time, references to its importance to the robustness of democracy, to pluralism, and to citizen participation in public debate, are progressively reduced. Paradoxically, the advance and consolidation of the concept of consumer and user coincides with a more precise identification of mechanisms by which consumers can make their voices heard (voice) participating in the audiovisual field and demanding, as citizens, proper accountability. The evolution of the Spanish regulation is typically neo-liberal, abandoning the interventionist and collective discourse while stressing the leading role and responsibility of the individual viewer (Ong, 2007:4; Zallo, 2010).

The predominant concept in the new regulatory scenario, described in both Law 17/2006 and the LGCA, is closer to the consumer-citizen than to the passive spectator, valid in previous stages characterized by grandiloquent declarations of intentions without the correlative real forms of participation.

Once again Harvey (2005: 70) is correct in his diagnosis of the neoliberal state. In Spain, participatory mechanisms envisaged in both laws are backsliding or, quite simply, have not yet been effectively implemented. At the present time, the only way open for citizen participation is the complaint system, scarcely known about and poorly organized and resourced.

5. Mexico: between the rights of audiences and «realpolitik»

Mexico currently addresses one of the most far-reaching reforms in recent decades in the field of telecommunications, with global effects on communicative rights. The project of reform, which resulted in the Pact for Mexico signed in 2012 by the country's three major political parties and the Federal Government, affects several articles of the Mexican Constitution, and is structured around six central points.

Among the six points that articulate this legal reform, the first stands out. Its objective is strengthening fundamental rights to freedom of expression, access to information, as well as certain rights of the telecommunication and broadcasting service users. It is noteworthy that this is the first time that the principle of general interest in the definition of telecommunications as a public service is incorporated into the Mexican legal system. This in turn, in a provision adding a new paragraph to Article 6 of the Constitution, gives the State the duty to ensure the principles of quality, plurality, universal coverage, networking, convergence, free access and continuity.

The proposed reform directly affects the close relationships that government and television corporations have, so far, maintained with obvious injury to the public. In 2000, the rise to power of a new party –the National Action Party– generated high expectations for change in the television universe, driven so far, in a tacit manner, by Grupo Televisa. Indeed, it was considered that the Ley Federal de Radio y Television (LFRT), existing since 1960, was obsolete and anachronistic.

In 2001 the Government Secretary inaugurated a roundtable for dialogue in relation to the review of the Media Law. Its purpose was apparently democratic, while intending to lay the groundwork for a balanced reform of radio and television that would involve all sectors of society (Esteinou & Alva, 2009: 12). However, in October 2002, the then President Fox announced a new regulation for the LFRT, which, in the opinion of academics and citizens, marginalized all

the citizens' proposals which they had worked on in the reform process started in 2000. Academic groups joined together to counter the presidential proposition and formulated the «Citizen Proposal for the Reform of LFRT», which was later accepted by the Senate and was legally presented in December 2002.

After a long public debate, in March 2003 a Report was finally approved regarding the draft decree of the LFRT reform initiative. It was clearly contrary to the citizen proposal in 2002, reinforcing the position of the government party, and subordinating the Mexican audiovisual system to the interests of private operators even more (Reyes Montes, 2007). The Report was so unpopular that it was given the name «Televisa Law». The LFRT reform was finally enacted by President Fox and published in April 2006, just a few months before the election campaign. There are several studies that analyze all those events and political confrontations, all of which could be summarized with the title of «Televisa Law and the Struggle for Power in Mexico» (Esteinou & Alva, 2009).

The telecommunications reform now being debated in Mexico contains enough elements to fuel optimism. However, this optimism should be moderated: the history of rights and liberties in Mexico reveals the complexity of the relationship between realpolitik and the rights of citizens. In this case, the political realism appears in reform when the user rights are ambiguously and paradoxically counterbalanced against the freedoms of economic agents. This dichotomy, between the freedoms of economic agents and the protection that the State grants the audiences does nothing but reaffirm the power of the media companies despite the proposed text that literally proclaims the following: «The Law shall establish the rights of the telecommunications users, the rights of the audience, as well as their protection mechanisms» (Fraction VI, Part B, Article 6 of the Constitution).

The reform process is still open, and it is too soon to predict how the inchoate reform will finally crystallize. It can privilege the audience and its rights, or the current status quo, by protecting business interests. In any case, the proposed constitutional formulation represents a landmark by recognizing that audiences need to be protected against the powerful influence of media corporations. What is clear is that the path to the establishment of concrete channels for citizen participation, in the control and development of audiovisual content, still has a long way to go.

6. Conclusions

The creation of a public space for citizen participation is of common concern in Europe. The principal approaches focus on the tension between the concepts of audience as citizenship, or as a group of consumers. A key concept in audience participation, tightly linked to the consumer conception, is control and accountability. In the audiovisual field, participation may be exercised in three different ways: by disconnection (exit), through loyalty (loyalty), or by opi-

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nion (voice). The first method is characteristic of the individual consumer; the last, for its contribution to public debate, is characteristic of the citizen.

The Spanish model has advanced from a formal recognition of the democratic dimension of the media (ERTV and LTP) towards a more mercantilist conception of audiovisual communication (Ley 15/1994 and LGCA). Paradoxically, while the audiovisual discourse has been focused on the market and audience conceived as consumers under a markedly liberal view, some forms of citizen participation have been launched following both the «exit» and «voice» models. Indeed, the scenario described by Ley 17/2006 and LGCA would have allowed, if implemented and developed, the construction of a complex and complete system of accountability and social participation. Unfortunately, these options have been ignored or rendered inactive. The current scenario resembles more closely the ERTV and the LTP framework, characterized by nominal and empty recognition of citi-

zens' rights, rather than the active citizen-consumer envisioned in the most recent standards.

As for Mexico, which is in a very early stage of effective communicative rights development, one wonders if the current reform process will conclude with a true recognition of audience protection, or will restore the existing powers where operators and political power have prominence, leaving the audience at their mercy, once again.

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Knowledge and Assessment of Crowdfunding in Communication. The View of Journalists and Future Journalists

Conocimiento y valoración del crowd-funding en Comunicación: La visión de profesionales y futuros periodistas

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the financial and credibility crisis, which currently permeates the communication sector, the future of journalism is going to be decided by the confidence of the audiences and their involvement and participation in journalistic processes and products. Based on online sociological surveys, this article explores the knowledge and experience of crowdfunding of Andalusian journalists and students of journalism. This approach gives citizens the power to decide, through their contributions, which projects will go ahead, and it has facilitated the start-up of micromedia and other innovative initiatives, including in Spain, especially due to the emergence, in the last five years, of virtual platforms specialising in launching campaigns and social media which facilitate their spread. The results show that, although journalists and journalism students are familiar with the phenomenon of crowdfunding, there are training gaps and few of them have direct experience as initiators or funders of projects. However, the perception of the potential of this approach for innovation and entrepreneurship in journalism is positive, except for those issues related to the financial independence and viability in the medium-term of the projects which have been started. The use of students and journalists in the sample, moreover, allows us to outline the first prospective view of crowdfunding.

RESUMEN

Ante el contexto de crisis económica y de credibilidad que atraviesa el sector de la comunicación actualmente, el futuro del periodismo va a estar determinado por la confianza de las audiencias, su implicación y su participación en los procesos y en los productos periodísticos. En este artículo se explora, mediante encuestas sociológicas on-line dirigidas a periodistas y futuros profesionales de la información andaluces, el conocimiento y la experiencia que estos tienen sobre el llamado «crowdfunding» o micromecenazgo. Esta fórmula otorga a los ciudadanos el poder de decidir, mediante sus aportaciones, qué proyectos se materializan, y ha posibilitado ya el arranque de micromedios y otras iniciativas innovadoras, también en España, especialmente ante la eclosión, en el último lustro, de plataformas virtuales especializadas en lanzar campañas y de los llamados «social media» que facilitan su difusión. Los resultados muestran que, aunque periodistas y estudiantes de Periodismo están familiarizados con el fenómeno del crowdfunding, existen lagunas formativas y son pocos quienes cuentan con experiencia directa, como impulsores o financiadores, de proyectos. A pesar de ello, la percepción sobre el potencial de esta fórmula para la innovación y el emprendimiento en el ámbito periodístico es positiva, salvo cuestiones relacionadas con la independencia económica y la viabilidad, a medio plazo, de los proyectos arrancados. Contar con estudiantes y periodistas como parte de la muestra permite trazar, además, una primera visión prospectiva del micromecenazgo.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Audiences, crowdfunding, participation, responsibility, production, micropayment, microjournalism.
Audiencias, micromecenazgo, participación, responsabilidad, producción, micropago, microperiodismo.

1. Introduction and status of the subject
1.1. Crowdfunding as open innovation

Innovation, as a philosophy and strategy that leads to a better service, responsiveness to audiences and, therefore, an increase in sales or users/followers, is key to the survival of newspaper companies (Pavlik, 2013: 190), in a context marked by the financial and credibility crisis of the industry. Since the emergence of the social web, innovative approaches to news production have been developed online. Some were initially developed in micromedia, but today they are also employed by many conventional media. We can observe, therefore, a movement of open innovation ranging from crowdsourcing to co-creation (Aitamurto, 2013: 243) and centred on collaborative journalism (Marchionni, 2013). These have a common goal, of securing the engagement of users, i.e. their involvement, enthusiasm and emotional bonding and ultimately their loyalty, giving them more space for interaction and participation, not only in the products, but also in the production processes.

These innovations include crowdfunding, which is a funding mechanism for a variety of projects through small financial contributions from a large number of people. As Burgess (2011) notes, it combines the participative philosophy of the social web with creative methods of seeking public funding online. Therefore, it gives citizens the power to collaborate in the development of innovative journalistic projects and to decide through their contributions, like «smart mobs» –to use Rheingold's terminology (2002)–, which ones see the light of day.

Previous projects were successfully developed at the end of the 90s, basically in the music and film industry, using alternative online methods of funding such as online microfinance or P2P[1] loans. Unlike crowdfunding, these should be viewed as microloans rather than donations. However, particularly in the last five years, funding initiatives of this type have been launched, due to the expansion of social networks, which are crucial to support and publicise campaigns, and especially through the proliferation of virtual platforms. These are specifically designed to facilitate contact between the initiators of the project and the public, who, as a result of their interest in its development, decide voluntarily to make financial microcontributions[2]. «The Crowdfunding Industry Report» (Massolution, 2013), in an analysis of over 300 platforms, estimated that the funds obtained through this route in 2012 amounted to 2,700 million dollars, representing an increase of 81% over the previous year.

A recent, pioneering example of audiovisual production in Spain is 'The Cosmonaut'. It was launched in 2013 by a group of young entrepreneurs who, four years after its inception, managed to get their project off the ground through crowdfunding in conjunction with other forms of private investment. Cases like this one imply «the discovery of a new commitment to the public» (Altabás, 2013), in the sense that this model «turns them into an investor in the project, transforming the traditional figure of the viewer in a passive role and nurturing new and future financial relationships that map out a positive path for the cultural industry in general, and for cinema projects in particular» (ibid.).

Connecting with audiences from the outset, which is a key factor for the survival of any media business (Chisholm, 2010), is essential for the project initiators. In addition, crowdfunding is characterised by usually offering something in return for the donations, which contributes to the emotional engagement of the donors. These are known as individual rewards, and take the form of explicit acknowledgement either from the platforms or in the credits of the projects. Sometimes, especially in the case of technology products, the donors even become early-adopters, i.e. users who have the privilege of accessing and/or testing prototypes, in advance and exclusively, and, following their experience, of offering feedback for improvement.

1.2. Collaborative online platforms and open crowdfunding in Spain

In Spain there are various models of platform, the vast majority of which accept journalistic projects. Some focusing on journalism are even beginning to emerge, such as Información Sensible, launched in October 2013. Some platforms are restricted to mere altruistic donations –as is the case of Hazloposible (Make it possible)– while in others these donations take the form of micro-investments giving returns. Between these two, the most usual formula is to offer small, non-monetary rewards to those who contribute to the funding of a project.

Two of the pioneer projects are based on this model, Lánzanos and Verkami, which were both started up in 2010. Lánzanos is geared towards entrepreneurship and to supporting charity projects, while Verkami has contributed to the emergence of a new generation of micromedia, reports, journalistic research articles and other innovative initiatives outside the big media corporations. The media include «Diagonal», «La Tuerka», «Café Ambllet» or «MásPúblico». «MasPublico», which started up in May 2012 and was

a precursor of «La Marea» (Magallon, 2013), has become an alternative for many journalists after the closure of «Público». Being crowdfunded they are assumed to be, in principle, free from the possible financial pressures of conventional funding systems and, therefore, to have greater news independence. In this regard, and just as significantly, several publications of the «Anuari Mèdia.cat» under the title «Els Silencis Mediàtics» were also financed through Verkami (Muñoz, 2013). In October 2013, 80 projects within the «journalism» category were included on this platform alone, of which 60 had their minimum funding guaranteed.

Another extremely active Spanish platform is Goteo.org. It enables the creation of local nodes for organisations' proposals[3], and offers them advice. In particular, it supports initiatives whose implementation involves collective returns in the form of «free knowledge and/or open source» (Goteo.org/Fuentes Abiertas, 2013). It is, therefore, a model of open crowdfunding, based on principles of digital culture such as horizontality, reproducibility or commons. Here, micro-sponsors, rather than seeking financial or material returns, generally share a social or personal interest in a project, which supports the formation of networks or virtual communities and continued interaction in the project over the course of time.

1.3. Potential and impact of crowdfunding on journalism

From this perspective, crowdfunding enables the development of open-production journalism. Not only do the public provide content (participative journalism), but the origin of the medium is, in many cases, the result of collaboration between the public and journalists. When journalists explain (and involve) their patrons in the decisions relating to the production process, transparency and even quality are enhanced (Llorca, 2010).

Several recent studies note that crowdfunding requires a redefinition of the role of companies and journalists (Aitamurto, 2011; Roig, Sánchez & Leibovitz, 2012) and that journalism even needs to be reformulated as a service (Carvajal, García-Avilés &

González, 2012) in which the results meet the needs and expectations of the crowds who have, online, decided to contribute to the project. For this reason it can also promote greater specialisation and segmentation and, consequently, a more diverse and plural media ecosystem (Llorca, 2010). At the end of 2013, Jian and Usher (2014) published the findings of their research into the uses and gratifications of citizens who had contributed with their online donations to the implementation of various micromedia through the US platform Spot.us.

However, this phenomenon has barely been

> Particularly in the last five years, funding initiatives of this type have been launched due to the expansion of social networks, which are crucial to support and publicise campaigns, and especially through the proliferation of virtual platforms. These are specifically designed to facilitate contact between the initiators of the project and the public, who, as a result of their interest in its development, decide voluntarily to make financial microcontributions.

addressed from the perspective of the producers. Are journalists familiar with crowdfunding and its features? Do they know the major journalistic online platforms and success stories? To what extent do they perceive this collective online microfunding as a possible channel to launch their own projects and, therefore, for entrepreneurship? What options does it offer to existing media companies?

These questions also need to take into account the views of the next generations of journalists. Given their training, a priori more oriented to the context of digital and participative culture, and the generation to which they belong, they should be regular users of 2.0 technologies (Colás, González & De-Pablos, 2013), and therefore familiar with networking practices such as crowdfunding. Therefore, our intention is to explore not only the present but the future of this online collective funding approach, as a way of giving impetus to innovative and entrepreneurial journalistic initiatives in Spain that are more adapted to and connected with audiences.

2. Methodology

The pioneering studies on crowdfunding and journalism were based on interviews with journalists and those making the donations (Aitamurto, 2011) and on the quantitative analysis of the platforms that house these projects (Carvajal, García-Avilés & González, 2012). This research is new in adopting an approach to crowdfunding based on intergenerational knowledge, through surveys conducted on journalists and journalism students. The two groups are treated separately, following a methodological approach based on sociological surveys, which were self-supplied online using Encuestafacil.com. The design of the survey is virtually identical in terms of variables and categories of analysis and therefore enables comparison between the two groups.

Each questionnaire contains twenty questions, in two blocks. At the beginning there is a common section and then several questions aimed at obtaining sociodemographic data. There is then a filter question to determine, firstly, whether the respondent has heard of the term crowdfunding and secondly, if they can roughly describe its meaning (open question). For those who respond negatively, the survey ends here. The main block, which is then answered, therefore, by users familiar with crowdfunding, consists primarily of dichotomous questions, either multiple-choice or categorical. These are designed to determine the knowledge of platforms and journalistic projects financed in Spain using this approach, individual experience in the development of initiatives or the intention of developing them in the future and the possible routes through which they have received information and training. Some open questions are included. Lastly, there are several rating scales to elicit views on the potential of crowdfunding for journalism (degree of agreement and disagreement on a number of statements). Where applicable, respondents are asked for their perceptions of the Spanish projects with which they are familiar, in terms of quality, financial and news independence or innovative nature (Likert-style numerical scale).

In the absence of any similar previous research, the findings presented here constitute an exploratory analysis, developed primarily on the population linked to Andalusia. Although the objective is not to extrapolate the results to the whole of Spain (and the limited sample makes this impossible), by comparing the responses of the Andalusian sample to others obtained outside the region, we can argue that the geolocation is not a determinant.

The fieldwork was conducted between May and October 2013. The Andalusia Association of Journalists and several Andalusian provincial press associations collaborated in supplying the questionnaire to journalists. For the students, the invitation to participate was sent via teachers from various faculties through virtual teaching-learning platforms or other communication networks. The questionnaire sent to students also included several questions designed to determine whether universities are providing them with the information and training necessary for their active participation in initiatives using crowdfunding, whereas the questionnaire for journalists contained questions to ascertain the role of lifelong learning in the acquisition of skills.

After removing incorrect or duplicate questionnaires, we obtained 185 valid responses, comprising a similar proportion from the two groups, 90 journalists and 95 students. This was a valid sample to obtain an initial impression of their level of knowledge, and to identify different trends in terms of positive perceptions and possible resistance or barriers with regard to crowdfunding. It was, moreover, a young sample, because, apart from the students, most of the journalist respondents (66.6%) were no older than 40. The majority of journalists were working. In terms of the sector of activity, the sample was heterogeneous, enabling us to detect any possible differences.

The results were then analysed on two levels. Firstly, we filtered by socio-demographic profiles or established possible cause-effect correlations in terms of the responses of each individual within the same group to various questions. Secondly, based on the main variables, we compared the results of journalists and future journalists. Due to constraints on space, only the most relevant findings are presented below.

3. Findings
3.1. Knowledge and awareness of crowdfunding and its main features

Almost all the future journalists (77.9% of respondents) and especially the journalists (93.5%) are familiar with crowdfunding (figure 2). On filtering the students' responses according to their year of study, there were no significant differences between those in the first two years and those in the last two years of their degree. Nor were any differences found between journalists based on their age or industry of work.

As for the open question in which they were asked to give their view of crowdfunding, in both groups most respondents gave a definition which was reasonably close to those provided at the start of this article. Many included terms like collective funding, crowd-

funding or, to a lesser extent, micro-donations or citizen donations. Only in isolated cases do they equate it with microcredit funding approaches, as discussed above.

Within the group of students, it is of particular note that the majority associate crowdfunding with specific subject areas (above all, art and culture, the pioneers in crowdfunding), whereas only a minority refer in their definitions to its possible application to journalism. In the group of journalists the applications associated with entrepreneurship and self-financing are given greater importance, in general or in relation to journalistic projects. They are also more accurate and complete, which could indicate knowledge not only of the crowdfunding approach but also of the operation of platforms, campaigns or individual or collective returns associated with crowdfunding. This is exemplified by the following definitions: «Funding of a project through an online platform where users can make financial contributions, in exchange for a consideration on the part of artists». «It is about setting up a project that is funded voluntarily by those who wish to make a financial contribution. Normally the person who is going to contribute can decide on the donation, but sometimes specific sums are required. The projects presented typically require a minimum sum from fundraising to get off the ground».

A majority also highlights the collaborative philosophy of crowdfunding, the active role of the micro-sponsors or their motivations in supporting the initiative, in terms of affinity or solidarity: «Citizen collaboration, individually or collectively, in the form of sponsorship (...)... The philosophy is that union is strength». «A way of funding a project through small contributions from people who are interested in the project, either because they receive tangible or intangible material reward in return (...) or because they want a specific project to go ahead, regardless of their individual reward». «A method of funding where the opportunity is given to anonymous or known people to be co-producers of projects (...). Financial support networks are established based on the trust of these co-producers to obtain the budget needed to undertake a project that otherwise could not get off the ground».

3.2. Knowledge of platforms and projects in Spain

In order to analyse students' and journalists' familiarity with virtual platforms specifically oriented to crowdfunding in Spain, they were asked which of the most active platforms at the time of the survey they had visited. The most popular appear to be «Lánzanos» for students and «Goteo» and «Verkiami for journalists» (figure 1), although, in general, few had visited the platforms, and even fewer had visited more than one. Moreover, in the space provided to specify any others, almost all the platforms cited are Anglo-Saxon (Kick-
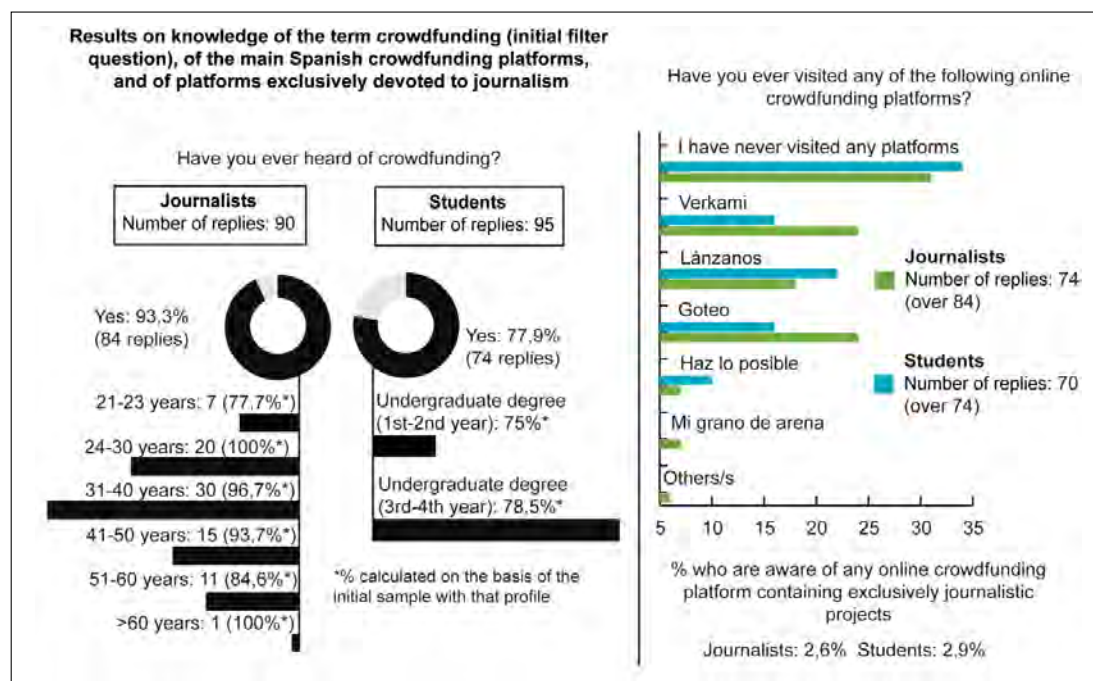
Figure 1. Results on knowledge of the term crowdfunding (initial filter question), of the main Spanish crowdfunding platforms, and of platforms exclusively devoted to journalism.

starter or My Major Company), although they were asked for Spanish platforms, which indicates that the Anglo-Saxon platforms are still more well-known.

Similarly, almost all respondents (over 97% in both groups) said no in response to the question as to whether they knew of any online crowdfunding platforms exclusively for journalistic projects. In Spain, when the survey was conducted, platforms such as Infosensible had not been officially launched. However, the question was raised in a general sense, and the rest of the findings confirm that, in general, there is limited knowledge and experience.

Few journalists (37.1%) and students (25%) are familiar with initiatives launched through crowdfunding in other countries, and about half of both groups were familiar with those in Spain. The responses of those who knew of Spanish projects appear to reflect two trends. Firstly, most of the respondents mention the initiatives that have had the greatest media coverage, many of which we have mentioned above (primarily «Más public», «Diario.es», «Diagonal», «La Marea», «Periodismo Humano» and «Fixmedia.org»). Secondly, some respondents cited projects that had a personal connection to them, either because of its local or regional scope (the Andalusian «Se buscan Periodistas»), or because they themselves or acquaintances have worked on them («15M: Málaga Despierta» is a documentary of which I am a co-director, for which we did journalistic work of interviews, script and the final message. We used crowdfunding through Goteo». «A magazine of a classmate from university).

3.3. Active experience, possible motivations and barriers

As regards the active roles that respondents may take in projects, as citizens or as journalists, the percentages are even lower for all respondents. This is perhaps partly due to the fact, as we have seen, that they are largely unfamiliar with any platforms and projects. Few respondents, and especially students who will have lower purchasing power, have supported a crowdfunded initiative (thirteen people in the two groups). The reasons given by those who have done so are diverse and are linked to the particular projects. They range from their preference as consumers and their alignment/affinity with their aims (I was a reader of «Público» and didn't want it to disappear. I started collaborating with «Más Público» / «La Marea») or the existence of personal links to the project initiators, to other reasons related to the belief that, by doing so, it helps the profession or the development of independent and innovative journalism.

Those who collaborate as journalists in other people's projects or develop their own are the exception (five journalists, and two journalists and one student, respectively). The majority of respondents haven't even considered putting forward a journalistic project of their own – only 21.1% of journalists and 31.4% of students said yes to this question (figure 2).

3.4. Training experiences

To have received training on crowdfunding, including the practical side, is considered to be an essential factor. It does not only affect the level of knowledge about crowdfunding, but also the way it is perceived and the degree of willingness to participate at present and in the future in projects funded in this way, as well as the ability to successfully develop them. For the student group, we examined which degree subjects covered crowdfunding. In the case of the journalists, on the basis that the current context requires continuing education, we identified whether they had received training and, for the journalists who were currently employed, the role played by the newspaper companies.

It is remarkable that almost half of the total of both groups has not received any training on the subject. Almost none of the respondents have been required to design crowdfunding projects, which implies that the training seems to focus on general or theoretical aspects rather than practical ones. Students who have been trained on issues linked to the creation of journalistic companies (7.1%) are a minority compared to those who have been trained in areas relating to participative journalism (37.1%) and others, mainly audiovisual production or digital publishing. Perhaps because the phenomenon is so recent, only 9.2% of journalists have received any training (6.6% in postgraduate programmes). In addition, a minority has learned about crowdfunding in training provided by their journalistic companies (13.2%) as opposed to those who have organised their own training (32.9%). Forms of study related to self-learning and informal learning (active work, news/media, and discussions with colleagues, professional and civic associations to which they belong...) predominate.

3.5. An opportunity for journalism

Overall, the statements on the potential of crowdfunding for journalism, which were based on the review of scientific and hemerographic literature, are positively rated by journalists and students. With the odd exception, almost all have, for both groups, an average score above 3 on a scale of 0 to 5 (figure 3).

Results on training and experience in the design of crowdfunding projects

To date, what experience have you had of journalistic projects financed through crowdfunding?

■ Students. Number of replies: 67 (over 74)   ■ Journalists. Number of replies: 70 (over 84)

I know some projects developed in Spain
I know some projects developed in other countries
I have presented one/several projects of my own through crowdfunding platforms
I have worked as a journalist on other people's projects financed by crowdfunding
I have funded other people's journalistic projects
Other (I don't have any experience, the projects I am aware of are not journalistic projects)

0   5   10   15   20   25   30   35

Figure 2. Results on training and experience in the design of crowdfunding projects.

3.5.1. Scepticism about its impact on audiences

On analysing the data for each item, there seems to be less agreement on certain statements linked to the possible impact of crowdfunding on the relationship between journalists and audiences. Specifically, these are statements affirming that the concept of journalism as a public service may be changed through crowdfunding, or that crowdfunding ensures that only those products for which there is popular demand are produced. The rating of these questions does not reach an average of 3 for either students or journalists.

The statement regarding the perception of crowdfunding as the only financing option is also not very highly rated (There are innovative journalism projects that would not get off the ground without the help of crowdfunding), and many students select the option don't know/ NA (no answer). However, they do seem to be more optimistic than journalists in their views on the statements related to crowdfunding as a possible avenue for future employment for graduates or for opportunities for journalists affected by closures or collective dismissals in newspaper companies.

3.5.2. Financial independence and medium-term sustainability are weaknesses

However, it is significant that for both groups the statement which obtains a higher average rating is the only one expressed negatively, i.e. «Crowdfunding facilitates the initiation of projects but does not guarantee financial sustainability in the medium- or long-term, once they have got off the ground». «The comments on some of the open questions show that students and especially journalists are sceptical about the viability of these initiatives. For example one student stated that «a journalistic project is something that develops over

time, it's not just about the initial impetus (...)», or the journalist who expressed the view that «crowdfunding isn't usually enough to cover all the costs (...)».

As regards the financial independence of projects financed through crowdfunding, although the statement «Crowdfunding facilitates media projects that are more financially independent than conventional methods of funding» obtained an average of over 3 for both groups, there are a considerable number of comments that question this, most of which refer to the audience in their arguments. For instance, one student argued that «if it is the audience who fund the medium, the content will have to be to the audience's taste so that they continue to make donations; therefore there is a financial dependence». For this reason «financial independence is therefore constrained and with it, news independence», according to the remarks of a journalist.

In the same vein, when respondents rate the Spanish crowdfunding projects which they claim to know, in terms of product quality, innovative character, news independence and financial independence, compared to the first three financial independence obtains more individual responses below 3 (figure 4).

3.6. Reasons for and against participating as initiators of crowdfunding projects

Beyond the perception of the phenomenon in general, and of the initiatives driven by crowdfunding in Spain which are known by the respondents, it is worth highlighting some of the arguments given by the journalists and future journalists when asked about the reasons why they have considered, or not considered, launching their own journalistic projects using this approach. Some are personal and reiterate the views
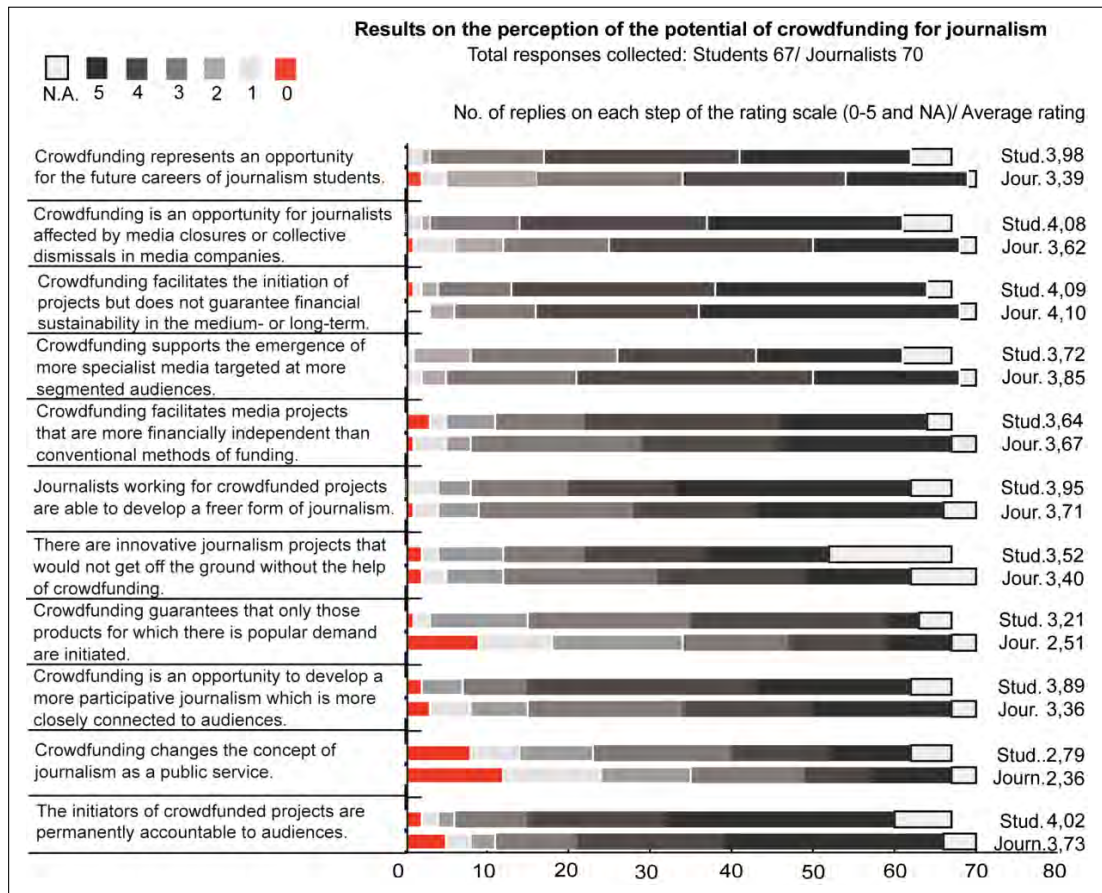
Figure 3. Results on the perception of the potential of crowdfunding for journalism.

given previously. The journalists specify lack of time, or the fact they already have a stable job, or that they are not interested in running their own business, whereas the students state that they know nothing about it, or especially, that they have insufficient knowledge or experience. Others give more pointers regarding their perception of advantages and drawbacks of crowdfunding and, therefore, its possible role in the future.

3.6.1. Motivations for setting up initiatives

Of the journalists (16 responses), many not only allude to crowdfunding as an alternative means of funding for certain projects, as a way forward in the context of the current crisis, or in order to dispense, as least in part, with sources of conventional funding. They also highlight its potential for innovation and/or synergy with audiences. For example:

• «I see it as a method of funding with a great deal of future (and present) potential, which draws on the collaboration between future users and encourages ingenuity and ideas rather than purchasing power to take projects forward».

• «Because I think it is more of a medium- /long-term option, accessible and obviously cheap, given the difficulties involved in getting a loan to set up your own business. And it's not just for the financial aspect, it's creative and generates empathy. That is, the ability to create something and gradually build it up with the support of people who have confidence in your project. There's no better motivation than that».

«Because the advertising model ends up corrupting the independence you need to work as a journalist».

The reasons mentioned by the students (22 responses) are along the same lines. We highlight a few:

• «If I were to carry out a journalistic project, I think the best way to get people involved is if they make their own small contribution (...)».

• Because it's a good idea to launch a project without taking on all the risks yourself».

• «Because I've got a lot of ideas in my head but not a lot of cash in my pocket».

• «Because removing pressures from banks and even from advertising companies can mean a much higher-quality medium, dedicated exclusively to mee-

ting the needs of the audience, who in the end are those who finance it...».

3.6.2. Arguments for caution

Of the journalists (61 responses), some feel that the financial crisis means that it is not the right time for crowdfunding, or that currently it's difficult to «find people who have enough cash in their pockets to act as sponsors». Some suggest that the problem is the lack of knowledge of the crowdfunding phenomenon in Spain, whereas others doubt its capacity to be successful due to the characteristics of the Spanish media system: «In general I think the formula is not very successful because most people are not willing to make a financial contribution to a publication when there are so many free ones available». In this regard, there are even those who lay the blame for their possible distrust of sponsorship on their distrust of the newspaper industry itself: «I think the industry is in decline, and I doubt that, in the present circumstances, there are many people interested in investing in it».

The future journalists (48 responses), in addition to lack of knowledge, point to the need for the initiators of projects driven by crowdfunding to have a certain reputation in the industry, which they themselves don't have: «It is very difficult for people who are not known or those don't have many contacts in the industry to get crowdfunding». However, most look towards the future: «I just haven't thought about it yet, but I'm open to the possibility»).

4. Discussion and conclusions

There are many examples of how citizens can, online, rescue media. In September 2008, the director of the alternative feminist magazine «Bitch» announced from their website and Youtube that they needed $40,000 in order to release the October issue. Within three days, they received $46,000. Years earlier, in 2003,

Christopher Allbitton left his news agency to return to Iraq and provide independent coverage, thanks to donations from readers of his blog «Back-to-Iraq». Today, through the emergence and normalisation of crowdfunding online, the audience has also become a key factor in setting up innovative media companies, even if journalists and students of journalism are not yet aware of it. This study shows that the majority are familiar with the crowdfunding philosophy and attach a positive connotation to these instances of citizen solidarity, but their knowledge of the phenomenon is basically self-taught, theoretical and superficial, and they associate it with other industries. Only a small minority of respondents, 1.7%, have set up their own company through crowdfunding. This shows that online entrepreneurship is a matter that still needs to be addressed and there is a preference for conventional job opportunities, despite the fact that collective patronage encourages transparency, freedom of news production and a greater connection with audiences.

In the current scenario, therefore, the role of universities, professional associations and colleges becomes in any event crucial. Not only must they provide information, but they must also function as laboratories to enable young and not so young journalists to experience the development of creative projects through crowdfunding first-hand. The future of this and other forms of micro-finance of online projects in the field of journalism will partly depend on this. As one of the students in the survey observed, they do not only represent new opportunities for learning and employ-
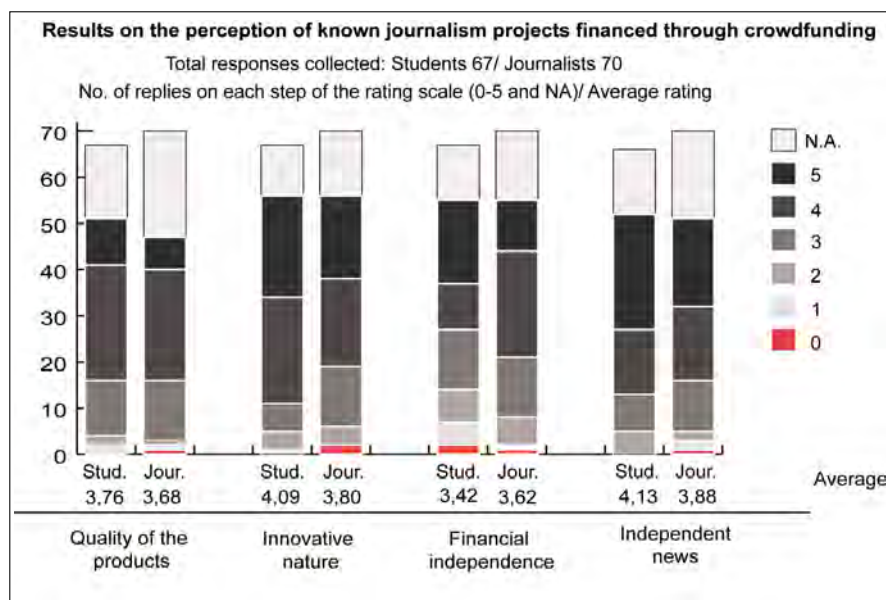
Figure 4. Results on the perception of known journalism projects financed through crowdfunding.

ment, but a great opportunity to promote their digital brand and develop 2.0 journalistic skills.

Footnotes

[1] P2P loans are loans between individuals, which may sometimes be for business purposes and are managed by virtual platforms such as Comunitae.com. With online micro-finance, on which platforms like Kiva are focused, an entrepreneur presents a project and makes a request, and certain users, philanthropists, make a loan that must normally be paid back, although on more advantageous conditions than conventional loans (Goteo.org / Fuentes Abiertas, 2013).

[2] This is the case of the US Kickstarter, one of these that has been most significant for crowdfunding, founded in 2009 and centred, along with others such as Flattr or Vo.do, on the cultural sphere, whereas for the social sphere and support of entrepreneurship, Profounder and Zopa have been important.

[3] As does the UNIA Capital Riego project, a pioneer in Spanish universities. (http://capitalriego.innova.unia.es).

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Media Education and Brazilian Educational Policies for the Enhancement of Learning

La educación en medios y las políticas educativas brasileñas para la mejora del aprendizaje

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ABSTRACT

As media education concepts and practices have been disseminated and strengthened in European countries and Americas, the policies responsible for that expansion remain little known, particularly in countries where the achievements have been recently noted. That is the case for Brazil, where there have been new opportunities for media education, considered as a valuable resource to help accomplish goals of the educational system. This paper looks into the contribution of media education to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the context of innovations brought by recent policies of the Brazilian Ministry of Education. After educational reform programmes which brought the opportunity for emerging fields such as media education, we produced teaching material and conducted a series of workshops with students and teachers from state secondary schools. By reading and producing multimedia information about local public services available to young people, pupils learned about democracy, citizenship, civic engagement, media language, and identity. Lessons from our experiment are discussed against the backdrop of education policies being implemented to ameliorate harsh conditions resulting from the recent economic crisis. We suggest that media education can help by creating a learning environment in which the students become aware of the value of educational attainments.

RESUMEN

Los conceptos y prácticas de educación en medios se han diseminado cada vez más en países europeos y americanos. Las políticas responsables de su expansión son aún poco conocidas, en particular en países donde sus realizaciones solo han sido percibidas recientemente. Así es el caso de Brasil, donde han surgido nuevas oportunidades de educación en medios. Este trabajo examina la contribución de la educación en medios para la mejora de la enseñanza y del aprendizaje en el marco de las innovaciones aportadas por las recientes políticas del Ministerio de Educación de Brasil. Tras los programas de reforma educativa, se tuvo la oportunidad de introducir campos emergentes como la alfabetización mediática, con la producción de materiales para la enseñanza y la realización de una serie de talleres con alumnos y profesores de las escuelas secundarias públicas. Mediante la lectura y producción de información multimedia, sobre los servicios públicos locales disponibles para los jóvenes, los estudiantes reflexionaron de forma sistemática sobre democracia, ciudadanía, participación cívica, comunicación e identidad. Estas innovaciones tienen cabida en el contexto de las políticas educativas que se están implementando para mejorar las duras condiciones establecidas en un pasado reciente por la crisis económica. En esta propuesta, abogamos por que la educación en medios ayude a la creación de ambientes de aprendizaje favorecedores para que los alumnos tomen conciencia del valor de los logros educativos.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Media education, public policies, digital inclusion, teachers training, media literacy, multimodality, education policies.
Educación en medios, políticas públicas, inclusión digital, formación del profesorado, alfabetización mediática, multimodalidad, políticas educativas.

1. Introduction

As media education concepts and practices have been disseminated and strengthened more and more in European countries and Americas, the policies responsible for that expansion remain little known, particularly in countries where the achievements have been recently noted.

That is the case for Brazil, where there have been new opportunities for media education, considered as a valuable resource to help accomplish goals of the educational system. Here, we examine the contribution of media education to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the context of innovations brought about by recent policies of the Capes (Brazilian abbreviation for Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Level Personnel), a department of the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC).

The Capes' Directorate of Elementary Education (DEB), which completed its fifth anniversary in 2012, has been funding creative approaches under the scope of programmes conceived to help change the poor performance detected by evaluations such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which Brazil scored 53rd out of 65 countries assessed by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 2009 (OECD, 2009).

The usual explanations for that position range from low investment in education due to the economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, overemphasis on theory in teachers' degrees, which neglect pedagogical practic, to the persistence of a great number of classes failing to attract and sustain students' interest in a rapidly changing technological environment and labour market. Striving to overcome that crisis, MEC policies designed a variety of approaches, bringing opportunities to the development of emerging fields such as media education in Brazil.

In the Media Lab of the Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro, currently one of the top ten universities in the country, thanks in part to the MEC programmes, we chose radical democracy, cultural studies, mediatization and multimodality as the core concepts of the theoretical framework which shaped a series of workshops conducted with students and teachers from state secondary schools. We produced teaching materials which applied key concepts of media education: language, audiences, media institutions and representation.

By reading and producing multimedia information about local public services available to young people, pupils learned about democracy, citizenship, civic engagement, media language, and identity. The results show that the students think of media education as a way to foster language skills and technology use as tools to become well-informed about citizenship rights, although they remain sceptical about the current curriculum being receptive to such an approach. Inadequate school facilities and unprepared teachers are the main obstacles to media education, according to the students' perspectives. Teachers agree with that view and see themselves as victims of low investment in schools and teachers training programmes.

Lessons from our experiment are discussed against the backdrop of education policies being implemented to ameliorate harsh conditions set off in the past by an economic crisis. We suggest that media education can help by creating a learning environment in which the students become aware of the value of educational attainments.

The existing democratic systems place particular emphasis on the role of education in disseminating an understanding of citizenship as a state of equality of rights in every dimension of social life, comprising access to work, living, health, and education itself. That is why the effectiveness of national education policies has been assessed in part by the schools' ability to promote social inclusion, particularly with respect to the young people, who are expected to develop the skills they need to flourish and prosper in a competitive labour market, regardless of their social or ethnic background (Unesco, 2012; Santos, 1999). While this has been true at least since the beginning of the 20th century, for most of the electoral democracies, changes in the last thirty years brought new demands for educational systems and policies.

Current society seems to be one in which the so-called radical democracy has been more and more feasible. From the lonely citizen signing e-petitions and joining chats and forums discussing politics to largely organized online social movements and consumer social networks, there is enough evidence to support the view that which schools cannot ignore those new expressions of political engagement and the skills needed for the average citizen to exert power responsibly (Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Dahlberg & Siapera, 2007).

Given the enlargement of the political domain, one of the goals embraced by schools turned out to be encouraging students to look into their communities in search for what should be done in terms of remedying poor social and health care, unfair distribution of work, leisure, and opportunities, and how advocacy and social mobilization may help the call for change (Mouffe, 1996; Freire, 2004). One of the prominent

skills then required is acquiring, selecting and organizing pieces of information from many sources, including commercial and public media, and assemble them in order to construct messages which everyone could understand, in the most attractive form, and also on the internet. Abilities of negotiation of meaning become essential in the process of coding and decoding messages.

Media education appears to be a research field capable of bringing about the knowledge many educators are looking for, as they feel that online social activism turned to be one more dimension in which students could be included. Media education techniques are key to assist with the challenges brought by ICT to democracy, as they address negotiation of meaning in complex social interactions.

Media education studies can shed light over the comprehension of mental operations underlying the process of meaning construction, particularly those influenced by the Cultural Studies and its Latin American correlated field named Mediation Theory, which have been useful to elucidate the various aspects which bear on that process (Hall & Whannel, 1964; Hall, 1980; Martín-Barbero, 1993).

In an attempt to overcome the inoculation of media theory, which supposes the existence of a direct causal relation between the message and the behavior it would be intended to generate, Hall and Whannel (1964) argued that schools should be concerned to grasp not what the media did to people, but what people did with the media. Although they were speaking of the old media, many of their insights remain up-to-date.

For Hall and Whannel (1964), the media communicate conflicting ideas about society's rules and beliefs for the youth, and so young people must, with their teachers' guidance, question the accuracy of the interpretations of social life implied in those ideas, by comparing images and stereotypes diffused by mass communication with their own life experiences and values. «We need the critical and evaluative approach precisely because the media themselves, their content and forms, are not neutral: we have to attend to the forms within the new experiences are being presented, to discriminate between values, and to analyse our responses to them carefully» (Hall & Whannel, 1964: 46).

A better understanding of the two-way process of influences and interactions would emerge from that exercise, helping to create a healthy criticism about the media strategies for attracting audiences, which became one of the primary goals of media education.

From the Cultural Studies perspective, the audience does not receive media content passively, but active reception cannot be assumed either. There can be always detected a hegemonic code guiding reception; still, one's own experiences and cultural background provide parameters to a potentially intensive negotiation of meaning, and the outcome of that reception process, even when reject primary ideas, may be limited by their scope.

> The results show that the students think of media education as a way to foster language skills and technology use as tools to become well informed about citizenship rights, although they remain sceptical about the current curriculum being receptive to such an approach.

Martín-Barbero (1993) added to Cultural Studies by clarifying other elements involved in the negotiation of meaning, especially those which would be more usual in Latin American countries, in which broadcasting is massively dominated by the commercial sector, with a residual presence of public channels, and huge social inequalities are accompanied by widespread low educational attainments.

In the region, the stark contrast between the rhetoric of happiness and endless well-being passed on by the media and the poverty of the majority imposed investigations on what had been hidden from the representations of t national daily life. When a nation finds mainly distorted images of itself on the screen, Martín-Barbero (1993) claimed that it is necessary to expose the links (which otherwise would be covert) between aspects such as media ownership and stereotypes often presented as a national character; state authoritarianism and social alienation in national television programming; social class, gender, ethnicity and patterns of message interpretation. «The unquestionable central role that media play in today's world seems disproportionate and paradoxical in countries in Latin America where basic needs in education and health

have not yet been met», which leads to a context in which the reconstruction of value systems, ethical norms and civic virtues «demands our continuous effort to disentangle the increasingly complex fabric of mediations that articulates the relations between communication, culture and politics», argues Martín-Barbero (2006: 280-281).

Cultural Studies and Mediation Theory have an impact on media education research as they pose the need for the development of techniques adequate for decoding media messages often embedded in matters

ned, the outcome of a negotiation of meaning will probably be shaped by how components are assembled.

Power relations should also be exposed as they can determine the logic of a particular assemblage: «signs are motivated conjunctions of form and meaning; that conjunction is based on the interest of the sign-maker using culturally available resources», according to Kress (2010: 10). Power can be noted in the form of a particular cultural perspective guiding the construction of a frame: «what sorts of things are framed, how they are framed, what kinds of frames there are, and so on, and these will vary from culture to culture» (Kress, 2010: 10).

> Current society seems to be one in which the so-called radical democracy has been more and more feasible. From the lonely citizen signing e-petitions and joining chats and forums discussing politics to largely organized online social movements and consumer social networks, there is enough evidence to support the view that which schools cannot ignore those new expressions of political engagement and the skills needed for the average citizen to exert power responsibly.

The theoretical approach summarized above lays the ground for a media education proposal, which must provide answers for a crucial starting interrogation: how do the media teach, after all? The media organize ideas; disseminate values; create and reinforce expectations; and offer behavioral models, according to Cortés (2005: 55), who reminds us about the inevitability of such influence: «the mass media teach whether or not mediamakers intend to or realize it. And users learn from the media whether or not they

of a complex political and cultural nature, imbricated in their production. Media literacy reinforce the case for deepening the students' cultural background, up to a point from where they will more likely be able to become aware of their own process of negotiation of meaning, construct alternative readings and justify these in terms or their political and cultural affiliations. For its turn, the production of various readings opens the research field for multimodality theory (Kress, 2000).

Web pages are obviously multimodal, as they can stimulate human perception through pictures, video and audio clips, and animations. Human speech is also multimodal, as it comes with intonation and facial expressions. As long as it explores many semiotic modes or communication channels, the media should be studied as a combination of signs, which produce a particular meaning only because they are perceived as an assemblage. Although separate signs may have their own isolated meaning, which also should be exami-

try or are even aware of it», so the media should be considered in terms of an «informal yet omnipresent non-school textbooks».

In order to have autonomy from the media, one must learn how to recognise the manufactured nature of the information; identify the ways by which the media make representations; create explanations about how we learn, being constantly exposed to media messages, fictional and non-fictional, during a life time.

We support the claim that such skills can be developed through teaching activities supported by four key concepts of media education (Lusted, 1991; Buckingham, 2003; QCA, 2003; Unesco, 2011), namely: a) language: as media messages result from choices and strategies that frame reality, teachers should approach them by questioning how meaning was constructed through professional practices, which are not neutral and carry the weight of industry standards and corporate values; b) audience: as media effects cannot be

taken for granted, and a text may not have meaning outside of certain cultural assumptions, teachers should explore ambivalences which may or may not be perceived by some fractions of the audience, by striking a balance between the text structure and the predisposition of interpretive communities; c) media institutions: teachers should always have in mind that news values, for example, are typically conveyed within newsrooms by journalists in terms of what the field of interpretive anthropology defines as local knowledge, i.e., they are not objective at all, and are heavily dependent on rites and traditions which serve the essential purpose of increasing the audience; d) representation: as messages can be taken either as a mirror of reality or a lie, teachers must have in mind that representations are attached to identities, which vary according to the public or the producers' intentionality.

As our media education activities proposal was intended to explore opportunities brought by a new set of educational policies in Brazil expected to redress the country's poor performance in recent assessments, we will present a summary of the recent changes affecting teacher education.

The Brazilian education policies currently in place seeking to improve teaching performance have been designed by Capes, the department of the Brazilian Ministry of Education in charge of expanding and assessing postgraduate programmes in the country, through the implementation of law, regulation and research funding policies. Created in 1951, only in 2007 did it begin embracing the responsibility of improving teacher training for basic education, with the creation of the Directorate of Elementary Education and its calls for new funding. The Brazilian higher education system is open to profit-seeking investors, but so far only the 278 public universities (which account for 25.8% of the 6.4 million enrollments in 2010) and non-profit private institutions (about 22% of the approximate 2.000 private schools) have been allowed to apply (Capes, 2012; Inep, 2012; Barreyro, 2008). From 2009 to 2011, the DEB allocated 507 million Brazilian reais (192 million euros) for separate projects carried out by 195 higher education institutions (56 privately owned and 139 public colleges or universities) (Capes, 2012). The UFTM (Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro) won calls from these five programmes:

1) The Parfor Programme provides qualification to remedy a situation initially addressed by a federal law passed in 1996, which stated that, within ten years, every teacher, including those in primary education, should obtain a teaching degree. Notwithstanding, according to data from 2008, 1.3 out of 2.1 million teachers have not achieved that yet, most of them in the north and northeast states (Ipea, 2012).

2) Also a DEB programme, Pibid consists of a number of grants conceded to undergraduates enrolled in teacher education degrees, who become responsible for conducting activities to improve learning outcomes in primary and secondary public schools, which are expected to address «methodological and technological experiences, and teaching practices of an innovative, interdisciplinary nature» (Capes, 2012: 31). From 2009 and 2011, more than 30.000 grants were awarded, involving almost 2.000 schools and 146 higher education institutions.

3) Prodocencia is the DEB's programme created to fund new curricula proposals to be implemented in teacher education degrees, which demand interdisciplinary projects, changes in the management of college departments or specific school conditions, particularly for the use of information and communication technologies. In 2011, there were 75 ongoing projects, conducted by separate higher education institutions, each one investing 130.000 Brazilian reais (50.000 euros).

4) The New Talents Programme intends to increase learning opportunities for students to have a greater grasp of the scientific culture, not only related to the natural sciences, but also connected to understanding of science and technology –including information and communication technologies– as a social and human outcome. In 2011, 61 projects ran 645 workshops, spending 7 million Brazilian reais (2.67 million euros).

5) The Life Programme allocated 7.3 million Brazilian reais (2.78 million euros) to build or maintain proper technological infrastructure for instructional spaces which experiment with interdisciplinary approaches and information and communication technologies. Each project can receive up to 200.000 Brazilian reais (76.200 euros).

2. Material and methods

The research funds deployed in our experiment came from the New Talents Programme, which allowed us to produce teaching materials and offer two separate series of workshops: one for 20 students from 16 to 18 years old (totaling 120 hours) and the other one for 10 English, Portuguese and Mathematics teachers from 25 to 50 years old (60 hours, from which 36 were fulfilled by means of distance education, with the free source e-learning software platform Moodle), all of them from a secondary school located in a deprived urban area. They volunteered after formal invitation.

We chose as a pervasive theme for the workshops the citizenship rights granted to the Brazilian youth, in terms of public services offered in areas such as education, health and culture/leisure. Students were encouraged to exercise their right to free speech and obtain information about policies from which they could build their own perspectives, strengthening cultural identities and developing communication skills in multimodal approaches.

The activities were conceived to foster media literacy skills in four levels:

a) Using web 2.0 tools to produce and publish digital media content, such as Fotoflexer, Strip Generator, Generator Storyboard, Flickr, YouTube etc.

b) Decoding multimodal media messages, in tasks such as identifying production techniques and understanding choices of framing, camera movements, editing, sound effects etc.

c) Making critical analysis in tasks such as identifying representations, perspectives, language features, emphasis and omissions in media messages.

d) Making connections between what was learned in the workshops and the school daily life, assessing what could be changed by forms of social activism and engagement.

Level «a» was designed to explore the potential of media education to bring a multimodal dimension to writing and reading exercises. Within levels «b» and «c», the concern was to investigate the viability of integrating Cultural Studies and Mediation Theory tenets to media education methods in current Brazilian school conditions, namely their vast cultural diversity and pervasive social conflict. Level «d» was meant to create the opportunity to investigate whether media education may enable active participation as conceived by the radical definition of democracy.

Both series of workshops were split in three parts, which took place in the Media Education Lab at the Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro, equipped with five computers, and audio/video recorders, as follows:

Workshop I: Using web 2.0 tools. Programme: Experiments with web 2.0 tools for media production (text, audio, video and pictures), such as Blogger, Fotoflexer, Flickr, Delicious, Strip Generator, Slideshare and YouTube. Audio editing with Audacity free software. Video editing with Microsoft Movie Maker. Activities: Students prepared written reports, pictures and cartoons about the influence of the media on young people. Teachers produced stories and pictures about the lab itself, and what it meant for improving learning outcomes; they did interviews, wrote and edited text and image.

Workshop II: Critical reading of the media. Programme News making. Journalism and framing. Connotation and denotation in photography. Narrative structure and language features in radio and television news stories. Activities: Students developed written and audio reports comprising subjects such as cultural citizenship, political parties and institutions, and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights. The teachers produced a photo essay about an archaeological site and a radio report on the Capes New Talents Programme. They remixed the interview with the director of this programme available at MEC website, interviewed local coordinators and participants, and edited a news story.

Workshop III: Making news about citizenship in Brazil. Programme: Production of multimedia news stories about local public services available to the youth. Activities: Students produced reports about public places such as the Museum of Sacred Art, the Children and Adolescent Support Division and the city library. Teachers produced a report about the library at the Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro.

All these workshops shared a four stage methodology: 1) they started with analysis and discussion of media content related to the theme which was going to be explored later in the media production activities – the goal here was to identify which symbolic representations and meaning were being conveyed by those pieces; 2) exercises were carried out to develop media production skills; 3) media production took place in the media education lab and selected public spaces, such as libraries, museums, prosecutor's office, and universities; 4) the outcomes of the previous stage were subjected to analysis and group discussion, when all participants were invited to justify their choices of scripts and resources deployed, explain the media representations they chose to create and reflect on how other people, such as parents and friends, would probably decode and respond to those messages.

Supporting materials were designed exclusively for the workshops. A set of materials comprising a 68-page exercise book and a CD-Rom with photos, video and audio files, and student worksheets was used as a teaching resource. The exercise book was divided into five sections: preparing news story scripts; writing techniques; language of photography; audio production; and video production.

We analysed the merits and demerits of our media education experiment, in the context of current Brazilian educational policies, based on data gathered through four instruments, used to collect and record the participants' output: media production (individual

and collective); comments posted on weblogs they were expected to have during the whole series of workshops; a field diary, where we made observations about the participants' reactions during the workshops; answers to a questionnaire presented in the end of the series of workshops, asking them about their media consumption habits, their opinions on what they felt to be easier and more difficult to learn about the media and their assessment about the feasibility of performing media education activities within the current curricula in Brazil. There was also space available for them to write whatever they wished about the experiment.

3. Results

The discussion of the main findings is divided into four parts: using ICT; decoding multimodal media messages; critical reading; strengthening citizenship and democracy.

Using ICT. The common sense about the youth's expected readiness for ICT was not corroborated by our findings. We noted that students and teachers were both unprepared to use technology as a tool to produce media content beyond the usual networking (i.e. social diary, party pictures etc). This finding is important because one of the barriers

Decoding multimodal media messages. Teachers showed a better performance. They were able to answer more easily questions such as «what the medium meant by making this news story like that?». The students seemed shy, not confident and had problems to articulate and express their opinions. Yet the group organization was key to make it easy or not. Students were happy about writing down their views, as an individual task. The problem for them was when they were invited to discuss openly their ideas. They may have suffered from public speaking anxiety. Teachers

> The data we collected regarding the students' assessments of our experiment indicates that media education carries the potential of bringing a powerful incentive for them to be focused on study and learning, as they began to consider learning outcomes from a different perspective. They started to value educational attainments as a platform to achieve a deeper understanding about democracy and citizenship, and identified a more proactive role for them in society, which they ought to fulfill in order to demand economic, social and cultural rights.

preventing teachers from exploring media education activities, according to previous studies, is their feeling of awkwardness when dealing with ICT watched by their students (UNESCO, 2011; Nowak, Abel & Ross, 2007). So, if students feel awkward too, there would be room for both to advance together. This may be true only for the limited sample of participants, who come from a low income area, but nevertheless is something which deserves further verification. Data suggested that there is a significant difference in the way each group faces the challenge of mastering technology. The young people were eager to discover new tools and use them intuitively. They felt comfortable with learning by trial and error. Teachers, on the other hand, did not dismiss tutorials. They said that the classroom will turn into a mess if every student wishes to learn by trial and error. This suggests that the fear of technology may not be a problem anymore, but good tutorials and class plans are still indispensable.

went in the opposite direction. They became impatient when asked to write their opinions, possibly because they felt they should master technical terms of media production, and fear that would not be up to the task. Yet they engaged happily in group discussions. This suggests the need for a design suited for distinct profiles, which include the representation that each group makes of itself.

Critical reading. Regarding the development of critical reading skills, data suggests that the experiment was more significant to the students, who wrote in response to the open question that they could «exercise reflective reasoning and creativity in exciting activities». The meaning of this answer, with slight variation of words, was present in 16 of the 20 questionnaires (80%). With respect to the workshops which taught the students how to explore websites of social movements and political institutions such as political parties, the Brazilian House of Representatives and the

Senate, a girl wrote that if there were more classes like that, maybe the students would not feel so much alienation from politics and society. An answer like this probably points to the gap which the students noticed between what they experienced when looking for information on citizenship rights on the internet during the workshops and the random search for entertainment on Google and YouTube they were used to.

The teachers seemed familiar with tasks such as identifying underlying meanings in media messages, discussing conflicting representations and meaning

> All students managed to finish their assignments. The students achievements suggest they recognised that using Web 2.0 tools was, in that case, a new way of learning what the school supposedly wanted them to learn, i.e., how to become skilful and creative when expressing ideas and exercise critical thinking when forming opinions, but then in a new communication landscape, given by the media literacy domain, involving comics stories, photography, videos, etc.

construction. They emphasized that media education activities involving multimodal writing and reading exercises would certainly help to improve the overall learning outcome. However, the teachers objected that the lack of adequate learning spaces, equipment and technical support in the Brazilian schools would probably make it difficult for them to perform such activities. The lack of teacher training regarding media education and the absence of this field in the curricula were also mentioned as obstacles.

Strengthening citizenship and democracy. The most difficult challenge was encouraging the students to access the media and internet as tools to engage in politics. In the beginning, they expressed a bitter despise for any kind of political organization, even related to the participatory management bodies in their own school. We noted the lack of understanding about how Brazilian federation works and the roles of its executive, legislative and judiciary branches on each political level.

This initial diagnosis prompted the design of three activities within the workshops, focused on cultural identity, social activism and Brazilian political institutions. In response, the students appeared to be pleased to learn about the particular Brazilian political arrangement, in which wide political participation has been possible in participatory budgeting and policy councils in areas such as public health, education, and social care (Avritzer, 2012). Students started to consider blogging about neighborhood troubles such as rubbish on the streets, bad lightning and wrecked bus stops. Their teachers reported a change of attitudes. Students participating in the workshops turned to be engaged in schools interdisciplinary projects, such as plans for starting a school radio.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Teachers and students recognised how difficult the path towards the implementation of media education activities in their schools within the current poor school conditions is. However, we found contradictory assessments. The students argued that their teachers are just not capable of performing media education activities, due to the lack of proper knowledge and skills. The teachers, on the other hand, claimed that classes are too overcrowded and schools lack adequate conditions, particularly in terms of ICT and technical support. And yet we noted that the teachers are deeply interested in media education and seem to master the skills needed for it.

The data we collected regarding the students' assessments of our experiment indicates that media education carries the potential of bringing a powerful incentive for them to be focused on study and learning, as they began to consider learning outcomes from a different perspective. They started to value educational attainments as a platform to achieve a deeper understanding about democracy and citizenship, and identified a more proactive role for them in society, which they ought to fulfill in order to demand economic, social and cultural rights. Although the students showed, at the beginning, low interest in knowing more about how Brazilian political institutions work, when they were given the chance to build news stories and blog about local problems and solutions, they discovered an incentive to start becoming civically engaged.

In fact, the motivation the students found in the workshops was strong enough for them to commit to overcoming reading and writing problems. During the experiment, in occasions when students were asked to write a news story or record an audio clip, we had to proactively address underdeveloped skills in order to make the whole activity work. We did it by using the teaching materials produced for the workshops, which provided proper guidance.

Despite the difficulties posed by underdeveloped skills, all students managed to finish their assignments. The students achievements suggest they recognised that using Web 2.0 tools was, in that case, a new way of learning what the school supposedly wanted them to learn, i.e., how to become skilful and creative when expressing ideas and exercise critical thinking when forming opinions, but then in a new communication landscape, given by the media literacy domain, involving comics stories, photography, videos, etc.

In summary, we found a highly positive assessment of the potential of media education to foster skills much valued nowadays, such as critical reading and reasoning judgment, which corroborates previous studies (Burn & Durran, 2007). However, without adequate teacher training and school conditions, the overall goal of improving learning outcomes will not be achieved.

This contradiction is even exacerbated when we realize that media education suits the latest Brazilian educational policies well, at least in respect of their expected contribution to redressing the country's poor performance in recent assessments. One way of solving the paradox is speeding up the pace of the current Capes/DEB programmes and projects. The findings point to a policy recommendation, in the sense that the actual direction seems correct, although the force for change must gain momentum in order to generate the desired outcomes.

Although it has not been discussed yet in Brazil, the formulation of a national policy for media education would help, by setting guides for teacher education curricula, advancing the production of teaching materials and integrating the roles of various social actors such as public and commercial broadcasting, government bodies and non-governmental organizations. It should be the next concern of policy-making, if Capes/ DEB programmes are expected to thrive and improve the country's performance in international student assessments.

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Educating Teens about the Risks on Social Network Sites. An intervention study in Secondary Education

Enseñar a los adolescentes los riesgos de las redes sociales: Una propuesta de intervención en Secundaria

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ABSTRACT

The growing popularity of social network sites (SNS) is causing concerns about privacy and security, especially with teenagers since they show various forms of unsafe behavior on SNS. Media literacy emerges as a priority, and researchers, teachers, parents and teenagers all point towards the responsibility of the school to educate teens about risks on SNS and to teach youngsters how to use SNS safely. However, existing educational materials are not theoretically grounded, do not tackle all the specific risks that teens might encounter on SNS and lack rigorous outcome evaluations. Additionally, general media education research indicates that although changes in knowledge are often obtained, changes in attitudes and behavior are much more difficult to achieve. Therefore, new educational packages were developed – taking into account instructional guidelines- and a quasi-experimental intervention study was set up to find out whether these materials are effective in changing the awareness, attitudes or the behavior of teenagers on SNS. It was found that all three courses obtained their goal in raising the awareness about the risks tackled in this course. However, no impact was found on attitudes towards the risks, and only a limited impact was found on teenagers' behavior concerning these risks.

RESUMEN

La creciente popularidad de las redes sociales (RS) está causando preocupación por la privacidad y la seguridad de los usuarios, particularmente de los adolescentes que muestran diversas formas de conductas de riesgo en las redes sociales. En este contexto, la alfabetización mediática emerge como una prioridad e investigadores, profesores, padres y adolescentes enfatizan la responsabilidad de la escuela de enseñar a los adolescentes acerca de los riesgos en RS y cómo utilizarlas sin peligro. Sin embargo, los materiales educativos existentes no están teóricamente fundamentados, no abordan todos los riesgos específicos que los adolescentes pueden encontrar en las redes y carecen de evaluaciones de resultados. Además, estudios acerca de la educación mediática indican que, mientras los cambios a nivel de conocimientos suelen obtenerse fácilmente cambios en las actitudes y el comportamiento son mucho más difíciles de lograr. Por este motivo, nuevos paquetes educativos han sido desarrollados teniendo en cuenta directrices educativas. Posteriormente se llevó a cabo un estudio de intervención cuasi-experimental a fin de verificar si estos materiales son eficaces para cambiar el conocimiento, las actitudes y el comportamiento de los adolescentes en las redes sociales. El estudio constató que los cursos obtienen su objetivo en la sensibilización de los riesgos tratados. Sin embargo, no se observó ningún impacto en las actitudes hacia el riesgo, y el impacto en el comportamiento de los adolescentes en relación con estos riesgos fue limitado.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Social networks, media education, media literacy, intervention, risk behavior, secondary education, adolescence.
Redes sociales, educación mediática, alfabetización mediática, intervención, conductas de riesgo, actitudes, educación secundaria, adolescencia.

1. Introduction

Almost everywhere around the world, teenagers form one of the main user groups of social network sites (SNS). For instance, in July 2012, about one third of the Facebook users in the US, Australia, Brazil and Belgium were under 24 years old (checkfacebook.com). The new generation of participatory network technologies provides individuals with a platform for sophisticated online interaction. Active participation of media audiences has become a core characteristic of the 21st century and therefore the meaning of media literacy has evolved. While it traditionally referred to the ability to analyze and appreciate literature, the focus has been enlarged, and is now this includes interactive exploration of the internet and the critical use of social media and social network sites is shortened everywhere else. Livingstone (2004a) therefore describes media literacy in terms of four skills, as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts. It has been found that while children are good at accessing and finding things on the internet, they are not as good in avoiding some of the risks posed to them by the internet (Livingstone, 2004b).

1.1. Risks on SNS

The categories of risks teenagers face on a SNS, are broadly the same as those they face on the internet in general, summarized by De Moor and colleagues (2008). There are three different categories of risks. The first one describes the content risks. A typical example of provocative content teenagers might come across on SNS are hate-messages. These messages can be quite direct, like in an aggressive status-update or post on someone's wall, but they can also be indirect, e.g. by joining hate groups. Teenagers also need to develop critical skills, to judge the reliability of information. The wrong information that might appear on SNS can be intentional, such as gossip posted by other users, or unintentional. The latter can happen when someone posts a joke that can be misunderstood as real information. Typical examples are articles out of satirical journals, posted on a social network site wall.

The second category of risks includes contact risks, that is risks that find their source in the fact that SNS can be used to communicate and have contact with others (Lange, 2007). Next to instant messaging, SNS are the most popular media used for cyberbullying (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Olafsson, 2011), by using the chat-function, by posting hurtful messages on ones profile or by starting hateful group pages. Additionally, they can also be used for sexual solicita-

tion, as is seen in the process of grooming, where an adult with sexual intentions manages to establish a relationship with a minor by using the internet (Choo, 2009). Moreover, users face privacy risks, since they post a lot of personal information online (Almansa, Fonseca & Castillo, 2013; Livingstone & al., 2011). Additionally, 29% of the teens sustain a public profile or do not know about their privacy settings and 28% opt for partially private settings so that friends-of-friends can see their page (Livingstone & al., 2011).

The third category of risks contains the commercial risks. These include the commercial misuse of personal data. Information can be shared with third companies via applications, and user behavior can be tracked in order to provide targeted advertisements and social advertisement (Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn & Hughes, 2009).

All these risks form a threat, since research indicates that exposure to online risks causes harm and negative experiences in a significant amount of cases (Livingstone e.a., 2011; Mcgivern & Noret, 2011). Internet harassment is seen as a significant public health issue, with aggressors facing multiple psychosocial challenges including poor parent-child relationships, substance use, and delinquency (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Furthermore, some theories predict that young teenagers are less likely to recognize the risks and future consequences of their decisions (Lewis, 1981). Additionally, it was found that they have a harder time controlling their impulses and have higher thrill seeking and disinhibition scores than adults (Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000). This could increase risk taking by teens (Gruber, 2001), especially since posting pictures and interests helps in building and revealing one's identity (Hum & al., 2011; Lange, 2007; Liu, 2007).

1.2. The role of school education

Many authors emphasized the role of school education in raising awareness about these online risks (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Tejedor & Pulido, 2012). Schools appear to be ideally placed for online safety education, since they reach almost all the teenagers at the same time (Safer Internet Programme, 2009), making positive peer influences possible (Christofides, Muise & Desmarais, 2012). However, while the topic of online safety has been formally included in school curricula, the implementation is inconsistent (Safer Internet Programme, 2009) and although a variety of educational packages about safety on SNS has been developed (e.g., Insafe, 2014), most of the packages focus on Internet safety in general, and therefore lack focus on some of the specific risks that accompany the

use of SNS (e.g., social advertising, impact of hate-messages and selling of personal data to third companies). The packages that focus on risks on SNS, do not tackle all of the above mentioned categories of risks, but often focus on privacy risks, cyberbullying or 'wrong information' (Del Rey, Casas & Ortega, 2012; Vanderhoven, Schellens & Valcke, 2014). Additionally, there often is no theoretical base for the materials, nor any outcome evaluation (Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu & MacFadden, 2010; Vanderhoven & al., 2014). Indeed, very few studies are set up to evaluate the impact of online safety programs, making use of a control group and a quantitative data collection approach (Del Rey, Casas & Ortega, 2012).

It should be noted that quantitative intervention studies in the field of general media literacy education typically only find that interventions increase knowledge about the specific topic of the course (Martens, 2010; Mishna & al., 2010), while media literacy programs often aim to change attitudes and behavior as well. Nevertheless, attitudes and behavior are commonly not measured and if measured, changes are often not found (Cantor & Wilson, 2003; Duran e.a., 2008; Mishna & al., 2010).

Still, when it comes to education about the risks on SNS, one should look beyond mere cognitive learning. Raising awareness about the risks on SNS is a first goal, but it would be most desirable to obtain a decrease of risky behavior as well. The transtheoretical model of behavior change (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992) states in this context that there are five stages in behavioral change. The first stage is the precontemplation stage, where individuals are unaware or underaware of the problem. A second stage is a contemplation stage, in which people recognize that a problem exists. The third stage is a preparation phase, in which action (stage four) is prepared. Finally, when the action is maintained, people arrive in the fifth and last stage. Considering this model, if we want to change the behavior of teenagers whose online behavior is unsafe, we first need to make sure that they are in a contemplation stage (i.e., that they recognize the problem). We might state that this 'recognition' contains a logic-based aspect (awareness of the problem) and an emotional-based aspect (care about the problem).

Therefore, educational materials with regard to teenagers safety on SNS actually are aiming at raising awareness about risks on SNS, raising care about the risks on SNS and finally on making their behavior safer on SNS.

1.3. Purpose of the current study

As mentioned in section 1.2, the existing materials about online safety do not tackle all the categories of risks as described in section 1.1. Moreover, they do not focus on specific risks that are typical for the use of

> With regard to the risks on SNS, more research is needed to find the critical factors to change unsafe behavior and to develop materials that can obtain all the goals that were set out. Ideally, this research will follow a design-based approach, that is starting from the practical problems observed (e.g. unsafe behavior), and using iterative cycles of testing of solutions in practice.

SNS. Therefore, new packages were developed covering all categories of risks and taking into account some instructional guidelines. The goal of these packages was not only that teenagers would be more aware of the risks, but also that they would care about them and that they would behave more carefully on SNS after following the course.

To verify whether these goals were obtained, a quasi-experimental study was set up in which these packages were implemented and evaluated in authentic classroom settings. In contrast to some previous intervention research where researchers were actively involved in the intervention (Del Rey & al., 2012), teachers were responsible for guiding the intervention to assure external validity. The following research question was put forth: does an intervention about content, contact or commercial risks have an impact on the awareness, attitudes and/or behavior of teenagers with regard to these risks?

2. Material and methods
2.1. The design of educational packages

Three packages were developed: one about content risks, one about contact risks and one about com-

mercial risks. The exercises in the courses are a selection of exercises used in existing materials (Insafe, 2014), narrowing the course to one hour to satisfy the need of teachers to limit the duration of the lessons and the work load (Vanderhoven & al., 2014). Some exercises were adjusted through small changes to assure complete coverage of the different risks and to satisfy some instructional guidelines drawn from constructivism, which is currently the leading theory in the field of learning sciences (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). Figure 1 shows how these principles are integrated in the course.

Every package consisted of a syllabus for the pupils and a manual for the teacher. This manual contained background information and described in detail the learning goals and the steps of the course:

1) Introduction. The subject is introduced to the pupils by the teacher, using the summary of risks (De Moor & al., 2008).

2) Two-by-two exercise. Students receive a simulated 'worst-case scenario' SNS-profile on paper and have to fill in questions about the profile together with a peer. The questions were different for the three different packages, scaffolding the pupils towards the different existing risks on the profile. As an example, the course about contact risks contained a question «Do you see any signs of bullying, offensive comments or hurtful information? Where?». Different aspects of the profile could be mentioned as an answer to this question, such as the fact that the person joined a group «I hate my math-teacher and there is a status-update stating 'Haha, Caroline made a fool out of herself today, again. She's such a loser'».

3) Class discussion. Answers of the exercise are discussed, guided by the teacher.

4) Voting cards. Different statements with regard to the specific content of the course are given, such as «Companies cannot gather my personal information using my profile on a SNS» in the course about commercial risks. Students agree or disagree using green and red cards. Answers are discussed guided by the teacher.

5) Theory. Some real-life examples are discussed. All the necessary information is summarized.

2.2. A quasi-experimental evaluation study
2.2.1. Design and Participants

A pretest – posttest design was used, with one control condition and three experimental conditions, as depicted in figure 2. A total of 123 classes participated in the study, involving 2071 pupils between 11 and 19 years old (M=15.06, SD=1.87).

2.2.2. Procedure

To assure external validity, an authentic class situation with the regular teacher giving the lesson -using the detailed instructions in the manual for teachers and the syllabus for students- was necessary. Therefore, only after teachers agreed to cooperate in
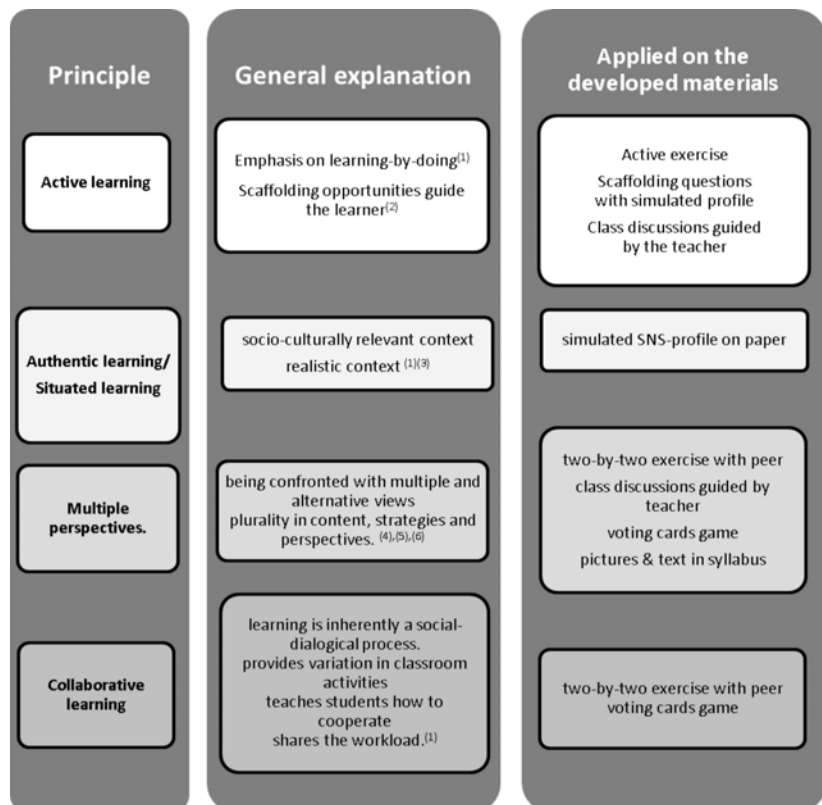
Figure 1. Instructional guidelines derived from constructivism and how they are applied in the developed materials.
(1) Duffy & Cunningham (1996), (2) Wood, Bruner & Ross (1976), (3)(Snowman, McCown & Biehler, 2008), (4) Kafai & Resnick (1996), (5) Mayer & Anderson (1992), (6) Rittle-Johnson & Koedinger (2002).

the research were students given the link to the online pretest. Approximately one week after they filled in the first survey, the course was given in the experimental conditions. Every class participated in one course about one subject. After they followed the course, pupils received the link to the posttest. Pupils in the control condition did not follow any course, but they received the link to the posttest at the same time as the pupils in the experimental conditions.
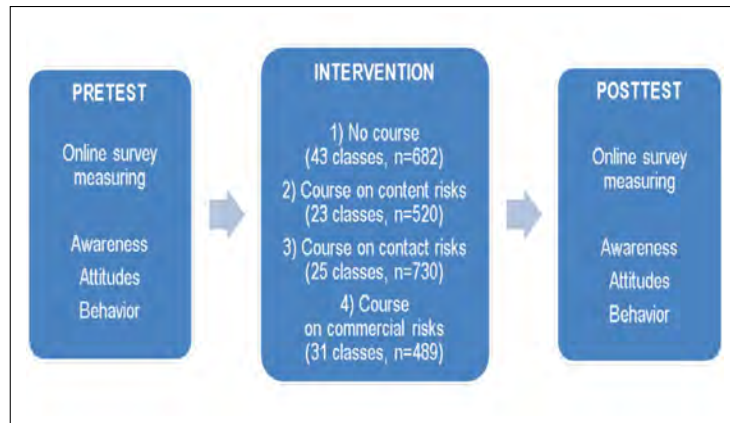
Figure 2. Pretest - posttest design with four conditions.

2.2.3. Measures

The pre- and posttest survey measured nine dependent variables: awareness, attitudes and behavior towards content, contact and commercial risks. These scales were conceptually based on the summary of risks as described by De Moor and colleagues (2008). If available, operationalizations of different risks were based on existing surveys (Hoy & Milne, 2010; Vanderhoven, Schellens & Valcke, 2013). In table 1 all variables are shown with their meaning and Cronbach's alpha indicating the reliability of the scale. Additionally, a direct binary measure of behavioral change was conducted by the question «Did you change anything on your profile since the previous questionnaire?». If answered affirmatively, an open question about what they changed exactly gave us more qualitative insight into the type of behavioral change.

2.2.4. Analysis

Since our data has a hierarchical structure, Multilevel Modeling (MLM) with a two-level structure was used: pupils (level 1) are nested within classes (level 2). MLM also allows us to differentiate between the variance in posttest scores on classroom-level (caused by specific classroom characteristics, such as teaching style) and on individual level (independent of classroom differences). This is important given the implementation in authentic classroom settings, with the regular teacher giving the course.

Because a multiple testing correction was appropriate in this MLM (Bender & Lange, 2001) a Bonferroni-correction was applied to the significance level $\alpha=0.05$, resulting in a conservative significance of effects at the level $\alpha=0.006$.

For every dependent variable, we tested a model with pretest scores as a covariate and the intervention as a predictor (with the control condition as a referen-

ce category). Therefore, estimates of the courses (as represented in table 2) give the difference in posttest-score on the dependent variable for pupils who followed this specific course compared to those who did not follow a course, when controlled for pretest scores. χ^2-tests indicate whether the model is significantly better than a model without predictor.

3. Results
3.1. Awareness

A significant between-class variance could be observed for all three awareness variables on the post-test scores (σ^2_{u0} on average 13% of the total variance), indicating that the multilevel approach is needed.

Second, the results show that the intervention is a significant predictor of all three awareness-variables. Indeed, a positive impact of the given courses on awareness can be observed: a course on content risks or contact risks has positive effects on the awareness of both those risks and a course on commercial risks has a strong positive influence on the awareness of commercial risks. Moreover, no significant between-class variance is left, indicating that the initial between-class variance can be fully explained by the condition that classes were assigned to. This also implies that there are no important other predictors left of the posttest scores on class-level, such as teaching style, or differences in what has been said during class discussions.

The cross-effects between the course on content risks and the course on contact risks on the awareness about contact and content risks respectively, can be explained by the overlap in the courses and the risks. For example, cyberbullying and sexual solicitation can be seen as 'shocking', and therefore be categorized under contact as well as under content risks. However, commercial risks are totally different from the

other two categories, and therefore knowledge about these risks can only be influenced by teaching about these risks in particular, as is reflected in our results.

3.2. Attitudes

Considering the measured attitudes, again a between-class variance was observed on the three different posttest scores (on average 16% of the total variance), indicating the need for a multilevel approach. Yet, there seems to be no impact of the courses on pupils' attitudes whatsoever (non significant model tests). However, the mean scores over conditions, when controlling for pretest-scores, are moderate (ranging from 4.79 to 5.23 on a 7-point Likert scale). This indicates that teenagers do care about the risks at least to some extent, independently of the courses, so that a change in behavior might still be possible.

3.3. Behavior

Once again, significant between-class variance on all three behavioral variables (on average 12% of the total variance) shows that there were important differences between classes, and that a multi-level approach is required. With regard to pupils' behavior, the course on contact risks has a positive impact on teenagers' behavior concerning content risks and the course on content risks has a positive impact on teenagers' behavior concerning contact risks. Although there is a lack of significant direct effects, it should be noted that the direct effect of the course on content risks on behavior with regard to content risks is marginally significant ($p=.007$). Furthermore, as stated in section 3.1, the overlap between the courses on content and contact risks can result in cross-content effects on the different risks.

There seems to be no impact of the courses on pupils' behavior with regard to commercial risks. These results indicate that the given courses do not fully obtain the goal of changing behavior.

Still, if we analyze the answers to the question whether they changed anything on their profile (a more direct but also more specific measure of behavior), we do find some differences. In the control group, 7% of the pupils indicated having changed something on their profile, implying that even a survey encouraged some teenagers to check and change their profile. However, of those who followed a course, significantly more pupils changed something (16%,

Table 1. Different dependent variables with meaning. Constructs are mean scores of different items. Chronbach's α indicates reliability of the construct

Variable	Items	Cronbach's α	Meaning
Awareness content	4	.63	1=low awareness 7= high awareness
Awareness contact	6	.78	
Awareness commercial	4	.75	
Attitude content	4	.81	1= low concern 7= high concern
Attitude contact	6	.77	
Attitude commercial	4	.76	
Behavior content	6	.74	1= unsafe behavior 7= safe behavior
Behavior contact	10	.83	
Behavior commercial	4	.60	

$\chi^2=18.30$, $p<.001$). Answers to the open question of what exactly they changed give us more insight in this information. The results of the content-analysis of these open questions can be found in table 3. As can be expected, when pupils had a course on content risks, they mainly change privacy-settings and the content of their profile (pictures, interests, personal information). When they followed a course on contact risks, they mostly change their privacy-settings and their personal information (including contact information). Participants of the course on commercial risks mostly changed their privacy-settings and their account-settings, protecting themselves against commercial risks. These results indicate that all courses – including the course on commercial risks- had an impact on the behavior of a significant amount of teenagers. Still, it should be noted that a lot of teenagers who did receive a course, reported that they did not change anything.

4. Discussion and conclusion

It was found that all three newly developed courses obtained their goal in raising awareness about the risks tackled in this course. However, no impact was found on attitudes towards the risks, and only a limited impact was found on teenagers' behavior concerning these risks.

The lack of consistent impact on attitudes and behavior is an observation regularly found in general media education (Duran & al., 2008). In this particular case, there are several possible explanations. First of all, the given courses were short-term interventions, in the form of a one-hour class. The courses were organized this way to limit the workload of teachers, who reported not having a lot of time to spend on the topic (Vanderhoven & al., 2014). Although it was found that even short-term interventions can change online behavior with adolescents of 18 to 20 years old (Moreno & al., 2009), a more long term intervention might be needed to observe behavior changes with younger teenagers. Indeed, research in the field of prevention

Table 2. Multilevel parameter estimates for the two-level analyses of students' post-intervention awareness and attitudes about different risks on SNS								
	Awareness			Attitude			Behavior		
	Content	Contact	Commercial	Content	Contact	Commercial	Content	Contact	Commercial
Fixed									
Intercept	4.92(0.05)	4.57(0.06)	4.24(0.08)	4.71(0.05)	4.98(0.05)	5.22(0.06)	4.80(0.05)	5.16(0.05)	4.69(0.07)
Pretest - mean	0.60***(0.03)	0.60***(0.03)	0.51***(0.03)	0.71***(0.02)	0.67***(0.03)	0.65***(0.03)	0.62***(0.03)	0.72***(0.03)	0.59***(0.03)
Course on content risks	0.36***(0.08)	0.33***(0.08)	0.19(0.12)	0.16*(0.07)	0.14(0.08)	0.11(0.10)	0.23*(0.08)	0.24**(0.08)	0.16(0.10)
Course on contact risks	0.26**(0.09)	0.29**(0.09)	0.10(0.13)	0.20*(0.08)	0.17(0.09)	0.04(0.11)	0.27**(0.09)	0.17(0.09)	0.31*(0.11)
Course on commercial risks	0.08(0.07)	0.17*(0.08)	0.63***(0.11)	0.04(0.07)	-0.03(0.08)	-0.10(0.10)	-0.03(0.08)	-0.00(0.08)	0.00(0.10)
Random									
Level 2 - Class									
σ^2_{u0}	0.03*(0.01)	0.03*(0.01)	0.06*(0.03)	0.03*(0.01)	0.04**(0.01)	0.05**(0.02)	0.03**(0.01)	0.03(0.01)	0.04(0.02)
Level 1 – Pupil									
σ^2_{e0}	0.53***(0.02)	0.60***(0.03)	0.94***(0.05)	0.54***(0.02)	0.44***(0.02)	0.72***(0.04)	0.50***(0.02)	0.40***(0.02)	0.66***(0.04)
Model fit									
χ^2 (df)	24.58(3)***	17.00(3)***	29.61(3)***	8.15(3)*	7.75(3)	4.57(3)	17.71(3)***	11.76(3)*	9.51(3)*

Note. * indicates significant difference in total change compared to control group. * $p<.05$, ** $p<.006$, *** $p<.001$.

shows that campaigns need to be appropriately weighted to be effective (Nation & al., 2003). Therefore, additional lessons might be needed to observe a stronger change in behavior.

Second, it might be possible that attitudes and behavior need more time to change, independently of the duration of the course. In this case, it is not that raising awareness is not enough to change behavior, but that this process takes a longer time to be observed. The posttest was conducted approximately one week after the course. Maybe changes in attitudes and behavior could only be revealed later in time. Further research including retention tests should point this out.

Third, it is interesting to look at different theories about behavior, such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Following this theory, behavior is predicted by the attitudes towards this behavior, the social norm and perceived behavior control. One of the predictions of this theory is that the opinion of significant others has an important impact on one's behavior. Because of peer pressure, important instructional strategies to increase knowledge such as collaborative learning might be counterproductive in changing behavior. The same reasoning might be applicable on the other instructional guidelines that were taken into account when developing the materials. These guidelines might only lead to better knowledge-construction, which is often the most important outcome of classroom teaching, and might not be adequate to change behavior. Despite the lack of impact on attitudes, and the limited impact on behavior, our findings show that education about the risks on SNS is not pointless. The materials developed can be used in practice to raise the awareness about the risks among teenagers in secondary schools. Considering the transtheoretical model of behavior change (Prochaska & al., 1992) described in section 1.2, this is a first step to behavioral

change, by helping to get out of the precontemplation phase, into a contemplation phase, in which people recognize that a problem exists.

However, our findings also reveal the importance of evaluation, as it is found that there was no impact of our materials on attitudes and only a limited impact on behavior just yet. Outcome evaluation has been pointed out to be an important factor in effective prevention strategies (Nation & al., 2003), but is also lacking in most educational packages about online safety (Mishna & al., 2010; Vanderhoven & al., 2014). Therefore, it is not clear whether these packages have an impact, and if this impact extents to attitudes and behavior.

With regard to the risks on SNS, more research is needed to find the critical factors to change unsafe behavior and to develop materials that can obtain all the goals that were set out. Ideally, this research will follow a design-based approach, that is starting from the practical problems observed (e.g. unsafe behavior), and using iterative cycles of testing of solutions in practice (Phillips, McNaught & Kennedy, 2012). Through the refinement of problems, solutions and methods, design principles can be developed that can guarantee that on top of a knowledge gain, behavior will be safer as well.

Despite the invaluable contribution of this impact evaluation study, some limitations need to be taken into account. First of all, there was a lack of valid and reliable research instruments to measure media learning outcomes (Martens, 2010), and especially the outcome variables we were interested in. Therefore, a questionnaire was constructed based on the categories of risks described by De Moor & al. (2008) and the obtained goals of our developed materials (change in awareness, attitudes and behavior). Although reliability scales were satisfactory, it is difficult to ensure

Table 3. Percentages of pupils that reported to have changed anything on their profile, enriched with information about what these subgroup changed								
	Total group	Subgroup of pupils who changed something						
Condition	Changed something	Privacy-settings	Account-settings with regard to commercial risks	Personal information	Pictures/ videos/ interests	Password	Cyber-bullying	Report button	Other
Control (no course)	7%	56%	0%	24%	16%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Course on content risks	12%*	57%	2%	11%	20%	2%	0%	0%	7%
Course on contact risks	17%**	75%	0%	14%	3%	0%	6%	3%	3%
Course on commercial risks	19%**	55%	22%	9%	2%	5%	0%	0%	11%
Note. * indicates significant difference in total change compared to control group. * p<.05 ** p<.001.									

internal validity. Moreover, all questionnaires are susceptible to social desirability, especially in a pretest–posttest design (Phillips & Clancy, 1972). However, since we found differences in some variables but not in others, there is no reason to believe that social desirability had an important influence on the reliability of our responses. Still, more specific research about reliable and valid instruments in this field should be conducted.

Finally, this study only focused on an immediate, and thus short-term impact. This is in line with previous media literacy research, but it has important consequences for the interpretation of the results. Given the raising importance of sustainable learning, future research using a longitudinal approach might be interesting not only because, as stated above, it might reveal stronger effects on attitudes and behavior, but also to ensure that the impact on awareness is persistent over time.

As a conclusion we can state that the newly developed educational packages are effective in raising awareness about risks on SNS, but more research is needed to find out the critical factors to change attitudes and behavior. Since this is a desirable goal of teaching children how to act on SNS, our results are a clear indication of the importance of empirical research to evaluate educational materials.

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The Digital Divide in the University: The Appropriation of ICT in Higher Education Students from Bogota, Colombia

La brecha digital universitaria: La apropiación de las TIC en estudiantes de educación superior en Bogotá (Colombia)

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ABSTRACT

The growth and integration of ICTs in the global economy have created conditions that profoundly affect our society, dividing communities between those who effectively appropriate these resources and those who do not, what is called the «digital divide». This exploratory study seeks to propose and validate ways of assessing this phenomenon in higher education, from the construction of a model and a comprehensive methodology that value contextual conditions, in addition to measuring access factors and motivation for use, that have been employed in previous research. To obtain indications about the behavior of this phenomenon, we developed research with students from three universities in Bogota, administering 566 surveys in four phases that would test the variables proposed in the model. The results show that the variables of the model link causally, with the strongest relations between education, attitude towards ICTs and ICT application. Although students have good access to ICTs and high levels of education, no strong relationship was found in regards to «perceived impact on production». This may be explained by a superficial appropriation of ICT, due to a context that is alien to its conditions of origin (industrialism, innovation), poor quality of education and economies not centered around R&D.

RESUMEN

El crecimiento e inserción de las tecnologías de la comunicación (TIC) en la economía mundial, ha generado condiciones que afectan profundamente a nuestra sociedad, dividiéndola entre comunidades que apropian efectivamente estos recursos y aquellos que no lo hacen, situación denominada «brecha digital». Este estudio exploratorio buscó proponer y validar formas de evaluación de tal fenómeno en la educación superior, a partir de la construcción de un modelo y metodología integral que atiendan a las condiciones de contexto, en adición a la medición de elementos de acceso y motivación de uso ya utilizadas en investigaciones anteriores. Se trabajó con estudiantes de tres Universidades de Bogotá para obtener indicios con respecto al comportamiento del fenómeno. 566 encuestas fueron administradas en cuatro fases para probar las variables propuestas por el modelo. Los resultados muestran que las variables del modelo se relacionan de manera encadenada y escalonada; la relación más fuerte se dio entre educación, actitud frente a las TIC y su aplicación. Aun cuando los estudiantes encuestados tienen condiciones óptimas de acceso y formación, no se encontró una relación fuerte con la percepción de impacto productivo; esto puede deberse a una apropiación superficial de las TIC producto de un contexto extraño a sus condiciones de origen (industrialismo, innovación), educación de calidad pobre y economías no centradas en I+D.

1. Introduction

The importance of technology and its relationship with economic development was synthesized by Solow (1987a) when he stated: «technology remains the dominant engine of growth, with human capital investment in second place». During the late twentieth century, radical technological changes were generated in the exchange of information, configuring a networked economy of information and knowledge. A global society with capacity for massive information exchange at low cost and accelerated innovation processes was heralded.

The promise of social change towards fairer societies and increased quality of life seemed reachable, however, a resulting paradox was also noted by Solow (1987b), «You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics». The benefits of the computer age did not materialize as expected, or are not measured correctly; or diffusion was not accompanied by the required organizational changes for its use; or its benefits were associated with intangible assets whose absence diluted their impact (Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000). Measuring empirically the effects of computer technology using methodologies with reasonable reliability has proved to be an elusive task.

This research explores the complexities of measuring the impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) in a group of undergraduate students from three universities in Bogotá (Colombia), and proposes conceptual definitions that would allow measurement in an more efficient, systematic and comprehensive way, while maintaining a critical position in regards to the real effects of these technologies, to differentiate them from fashionable commercial discourse.

2. Inequalities in the network economy and the information society

The impact of ICT is uneven between different communities or organizations (Davenport, 1999). Brynjolfsson proposed that effects can be categorised under two types: 1) those particular to each organization, or distinctive uses; and 2) those common to almost all organizations, or stereotyped uses (Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000). To achieve the first type of effects, we need actions that go beyond the mere application of ICTs (DeLone, 1988). These actions include training, organizational restructuring, process redesign and attitude change. Effects are expressed in long-term intangibles, within multi-faceted and multivariate areas that include context, the system, information, the individual, the collective, intention, emotion and action (Delone, 2003).

Following Brynjolfsson (Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000), organizational behaviors associated with the creation of added value and differentiation when applying ICTs imply autonomy, empowerment, investment in training and incentives for collective performance. Organizations with labor that is skillful in R&D in societies that support and consume products with high levels of added value, tend to have profiles that result in a positive digital disposition (Dutta, Lanvin, & Paua, 2004). However, in organizations within contexts different to these, the beneficial effects of ICT can be reduced, disappear or even become negative (Avgerou, 2001; Brynjolfsson & Hitt, 2000).

Organizations synergic with ICTs tend to invest more in information technologies, permanently making their management more sophisticated and rapidly differentiating themselves from their competitors. In non-industrial contexts, non-computerized societies and organizations maintain more traditional routines, because they simultaneously face the absorption of techniques and instruments, while copying their pre-existing idiosyncrasies, environments and routines (Avgerou, 2003). In these cases change is perceived as expensive, time-consuming and risky, producing sentiments that facilitate phobic, indifferent or stereotyped attitudes towards technology.

The digital divide is part of a global evolving pattern of techno-economic dependence whose dominant centers are the Western industrialized metropolises (Perez, 2001), those that commanded the evolution from Gutenberg's print to the Internet. This center-periphery structure (Prebisch, 1986), maintains technologies that revolutionize the market sheltered in the industrial metropolises, exporting them to the «periphery» when they reach saturation points in their own market, but restricting their source codes. Initially a novelty in the host societies, the process of expansion and saturation is repeated there, while the metropolis evolves to the next innovation, creating a renewed bond of dependence (De-la-Puerta, 1995).

The technological transference involves semiotic elements that act as a DNA that reproduces organizational routines (Hodgson, 2002), market symbolism (Bourdieu, 2000) and social isotopies (Blikstein, 1983), creating an administrative common sense (Perez, 2012). All these sociotechnical dynamics conform what Gille has referred to as the Technological System (Gille, 1999), a structure that transforms social life by connecting technologies and everyday productive routines. If the technological system adopted by the com-

munity is inconsistent or non-competitive, the host is limited by these gaps and builds an inefficient technical rationality.

For these reasons, communities from developing territories end up producing superficial changes in their tortuous transition to the new ICT paradigm, unable to keep up the pace in developing computer skills. The problem is not just access to tools; it includes the construction of a compatible social, cultural and economic logic (Avgerou, 2003), that, due to the resistance to change from some of the local stakeholders, turns into a complex and slow process. It involves sacrificing some of the distinctive particularities of the community, with no clear perspective about the future benefits of such actions.

Under this scenario, the digital divide must be redefined as a multidimensional problem of politics, economics, culture, access, skills and incentives (Cho, De Zuniga, Rojas, & Shah, 2003; Norris, 2001; Warschauer, 2004), complemented with access limitations, economic hardship, fragile infrastructure, weak education and regulation shortage, all of them typical conditions in developing countries (Chinn & Fairlie, 2007). Those with a less effective technology will be unable to extract the benefits from the system. Those with educational, language or context restrictions will not be able to decode the information and integrate it constructively. All social, cultural and context differences between developed and excluded communities are significant, therefore it cannot be assumed that the critical elements for ICT appropriation are the same (Venkatesh & Sykes, 2013).

2.1. Digital divide: A clash of epistemologies and cultures?

For McLuhan (1969) as media are extensions of human perception, new media technology creates radical changes in the sensitive conscience of mankind. Within this logic, we need to review technology features, content and context. It is necessary to exceed the instrumental level to accompany the complex behavior that technological appropriation entails (Be-

rrío-Zapata, 2005). ICTs act as media, content and context. Its techno-informational paradigm is the expression of the Western mind built on the Fordist and post-Fordist model (Day, 2001). Oral tradition lost its leading role and those communities based on it were marginalized by the dominant grafocentrism of the industrial world (Serres, 2003).

Charles Kenny contends that the biggest problem of poor and marginalized populations is the differences in culture and economies from Western traditions and habits (Kenny, 2002). Due to their location, population

> Communities from developing territories end up producing superficial changes in their tortuous transition to the new ICT paradigm, unable to keep up the pace in developing computer skills. The problem is not just the access to tools; it includes the construction of a compatible social, cultural and economic logic (Avgerou, 2003), that, due to the resistance to change from some of the local stakeholders, turns into a complex and slow process. It involves sacrificing some of the distinctive particularities of the community, with no clear perspective about the future benefits of such actions.

density, economy and idiosyncrasies, the Web structure provides certain incompatibilities with them. Globalization marginalizes populations that are not close or compatible with its interests and ICTs follows such inclination. Kenny proposed building information systems and knowledge networks from the tradition of these fringe worlds, with technologies that would be economically viable, structurally possible and socioculturally acceptable.

In management literature we still talk about information systems as a synonym for computer systems. The first pre-exist the latter as an economic structure of organizational knowledge. «Peripheral» communities have non-digital information systems. Merle calls them «knowledge economies of poverty», based on «non-informatic men-ware systems» (Merle, 2005). Information systems, including computing, are better understood from an epistemological perspective of

auto-eco-regulation (Morin, 2001) and self organization (Foerster, 1997), associated with ecological models of information (Davenport, 1999; Nardi & O'Day, 2000) that can be applied to the digital divide. This implies reassessing many of the characteristics attributed to organizational systems. Some of these features are (Berrío-Zapata, 2005):

• System Rationality: meaning and significance dominate over technical rationality. The intuitive, emotional, symbolic, cultural and institutional prevails. Media and content are significance and significant at the same time. The emphasis falls on tacit knowledge. Optimization rules the logic of the system.

• Content Function: Content exceeds and complements the formal and technical structure through informal communication and organization.

• Relationship with the User and Context: Systems integrate with the community and environment in an adaptive dialogue that affects the collective and the individual recursively, producing holographic effects (Morin, 2001). The informational routines behave as organizational DNA that reproduces a rationality of content, media and process (Hodgson, 2002). It is a dialectical spiral of epistemological and ontological impact on the organizational knowledge system.

• System Control: Computers generate butterfly effects, subtle routines that evolve autonomously and create exponential impact over time by force of repetition and multiplication. Self-organization prevails; the formal system conveys informal exchanges whether compatible or not with its productive logic.

This epistemological perspective of information systems is the basis of this work and its methodology for assessing the impact of ICT.

3. Field of study: Colombia and the higher education sector

The education sector is a turning point for social change and that is why it was chosen as the niche for this research. Education is directed at building generic skills that will be the basis for the development of distinctive skills in citizens. As computer literacy is a generic competence in the networked economy, universities are an ideal space for observing the process of technological appropriation and the elements that modulate the process. In Colombia, until 2001, the fastest growing IT infrastructure in the country was in universities (DANE, 2003). The Alvaro Uribe governments (2002-06 and 2006-10) continued a policy started by former president Andres Pastrana (1998-2002) regarding the appropriation of ICTs in higher education, continuing to implement a digital master plan

called «Agenda Conectividad» and articulating it with its educational policy «Revolución Educativa» (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia MEN, 2003). In addition to these two policies, the previous Ten-Year Educative Master-plan also included ICTs for higher education as a strategic priority (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia MEN, 1996). The Uribe government, who reassigned these programs from presidential level to ministerial level, dividing them between the ministries of Telecommunications and Education, reduced the initial impulse of Pastrana's ICT policy. However, Colombia followed the international tendency of building ICT policies and virtual education during the decade of 2000 (Facundo, 2002; Sunkel, 2006).

At the time Colombia was described in international reports as a country with significant advances in digital inclusion and infrastructure investment, although its «ICT shopping basket» prices were not the best (ITU, 2012; Stats, 2012). High expectations were held in regards to the enabling action of the ICT context in Colombian and its appropriation by the university population.

4. Towards a holistic methodology for measuring the appropriation of ICT

Investigating whether Internet improves educational productivity has been sought repeatedly, but research has suffered from varied methodological problems (Benoit, Benoit, Muyo, & Hansen, 2006):

• Small population samples.

• Tenuous relation between measurement and educational objectives.

• Non quantifiable measurements.

• Failures in the control of variables.

• Extensive use of self-reported data.

• Use of single-variable indicators rather than multivariate scales.

• Scales without any reported statistical reliability.

This research has tried to overcome these flaws by formulating a methodology that would encompass endogenous and exogenous variables, while integrating theoretical models that could articulate a comprehensive view of the subjects in their own environment. This structure is described in the following section.

4.1. Areas of measurement: endogenous, exogenous and appropriation constraints

Methodologies that study the effects of ICTs are usually based on the subject's perception about how they impact their lives (Lopez, 2013; Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012): the endogenous. This is just a

part of the equation. This research drew on exogenous indicators in order to triangulate the impact of ICTs, integrating three tools of strategic analysis: (1) PEST analysis (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2006), (2) the Systemic Competitiveness Analysis (Esser, Hillebrand, Messner, & Meyer-Stamer, 1995), and (3) the Core Competencies Model (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Thus it was possible to verify what the subject reports against environmental indicators.

To define the endogenous variables analysis, we used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis & Venkatesh, 2000) complemented with the Expectations Model (Vroom & Deci, 1982) and the Motivation-Hygiene Model (Herzberg, 1966). In the absence of appropriate instrumental conditions for a behavior, in this case technological appropriation, motivation towards the behavior tend to decline despite the perceived usefulness.

Endogenous and exogenous factors were organized in pyramidal style (figure 1), inspired in the Hierarchy of Needs but replacing the structure of «floodgates» with the probabilistic principle proposed by Herzberg. It is expected that the instrumental or exogenous elements act as hygienic factors that reduce the probability of ICT appropriation when they are not satisfied. In addition, conditions such as a facilitating social context (Venkatesh, 2000) would act as facilitators (i.e. positive attitude towards ICT from peers and family).

In this model the existing knowledge structure would mediate the ability to understand, use and articulate a technology and the information that such technology makes available for everyday life, reducing knowledge gaps (Bonfadelli, 2002).

The third pillar includes restrictive factors to technological appropriation, a concept employed by Argyris who contends that the key to knowledge management lays in eliminating the barriers to learning (Argyris, 1999).

Resistance to change was operationalized employing Limiting Mental Models and System Thinking (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, & Dutton, 2012). Due to risk aversion and the anxiety suffered during the process (V. Venkatesh, 2000), communities and organizations can get stuck in traditions that represent successful practices of the past but inadaptive behaviors of the present, (Denrell & March, 2001). They can act as «organized anarchies» characterized by problematic preferences, scarce technological clarity and low participative exchange. In this case ICTs
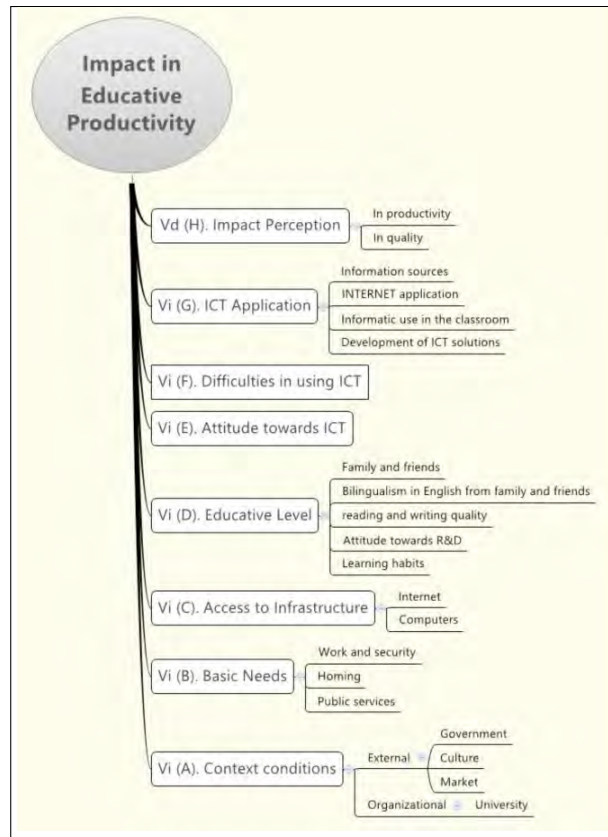
Figure 1: Variables defined for the study.

would become a stereotypical alternative taken from the collection of «fashion solutions».

Educational productivity was defined as an improved relation between quantitative and qualitative production of learning and the effort invested in the process, measured with respect to the goals set by the educative institution, the available resources and the needs from the environment.

4.2 Variables

The variables of the study (figure 1) were divided into Endogenous, Exogenous and Restrictions to Appropriation. It was assumed that the variables in the base of the scale would define probabilistically the possibility of moving up to the variables at the top. As we move up in the structure, access to the following levels of the scale should become more limited. Therefore, the distribution of these variables in the population would have the form of a pyramid: more people at the base and gradually or drastically reducing as you ascend through the variables necessary to reach the top. The steepness of the pyramid would reflect the magnitude of the digital divide. For example (figure

2), applying Colombian statistics from the year 2008, 99.4% of the urban population had access to electricity, 22.8% to a computer, and 12.8% to the Internet; 10.3% of the population in ages between 20 to 34 had five or more years of education (DANE, 2008). Articulating these data a pyramid form naturally where each level is necessary but not sufficient to reach the next level; this incomplete example (it does not include all the seven stages of the model) helps to represent the articulation of IT with everyday life and a context resulting in information impact regarding productivity. Figure 2 shows only four levels but serves to illustrate this new way of visualizing the digital divide. The probability of having an impact on productivity in the population with ICTs would be the product of the combined probabilities of all levels. This research focused on testing this structure of variables and relationships, looking to improve the methodological options required to verify them empirically.

4.3. Instruments and population sample

The instrument used was a survey that included seven dimensions representing the variables in the proposed model. The survey included 25 multiple choice questions adopting a Likert-type format.

The surveys were administered four times between 2006 and 2008, and in each iteration the survey was improved to obtain a final questionnaire. The face validity of the instrument was evaluated using external peers and feedback from the respondents in the initial iterations, the reliability of the scales was assessed via Cronbach's Alpha. We worked in Bogota with a convenience sample of 566 undergraduate students from three private universities. Data collection was made via email including advice on how to answer the questionnaire and control over incomplete answers.

The exogenous characterization was developed on the base of secondary sources, official documents collected from the government, multilateral agencies, NGOs and press news between 2006 and 2009 from two of the highest circulating newspapers in the country: El Tiempo and Portafolio. This information was triangulated with the survey into a section devoted to items asking about how organizational, institutional, economic and sociocultural contexts facilitated or hindered the productive use of ICT. In this way we sought to balance the effect of self-reporting.

5. Results

The endogenous analysis showed the following trends (figure 3):

A statistically significant (0.01) and strong association (β>0.3) between (D) Education Level (E) Attitude towards ICTs and (G) Application of ICT. The explanatory power of these variables reached 'R' values between 24.1% and 53.2%.

All respondents agreed that ICTs are useful, but the (H) Perception of productive impact did not have a strong relationship with the other variables at the base of the pyramid. This can be interpreted in two ways:

a) There are conceptual problems in the definition of «productive impact». Achieving a valid and reliable way of measuring this phenomenon is a long-term challenge.

b) Students have access to the instrumental conditions associated with the use of ICTs, but they do not explore their productive applications, as their social context does not value or reward knowledge management and innovation neither socially nor economically.

c) The different independent variables that affect the perception of productive impact act by stages, and share a correlation based in contiguity. This correlation is reduced as variables become more distant. Each variable is a necessary step but not sufficient to advance forward to the productive impact of ICTs. Inadequate conditions in any level of the pyramid do not prevent moving to the next level, but reduce the chance of reaching the top. These findings were consistent with the results of the analysis of the exogenous context in four levels:

• Meta-economic: During the period studied Colombian society did not yet have a clear perception
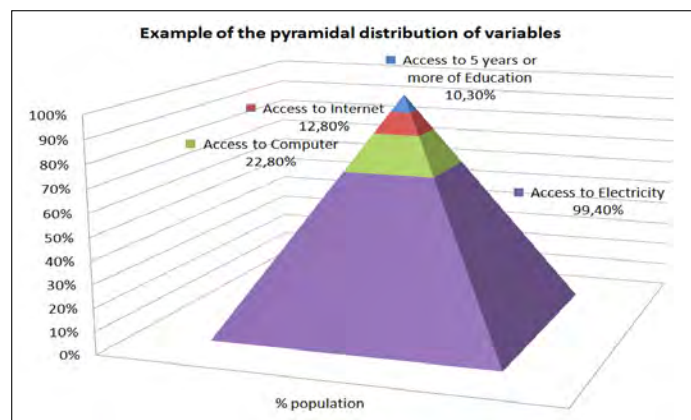
Figure 2 Example of distribution of variables in the proposed model, with data obtained from Colombian urban population, year 2008 (DANE, 2008).
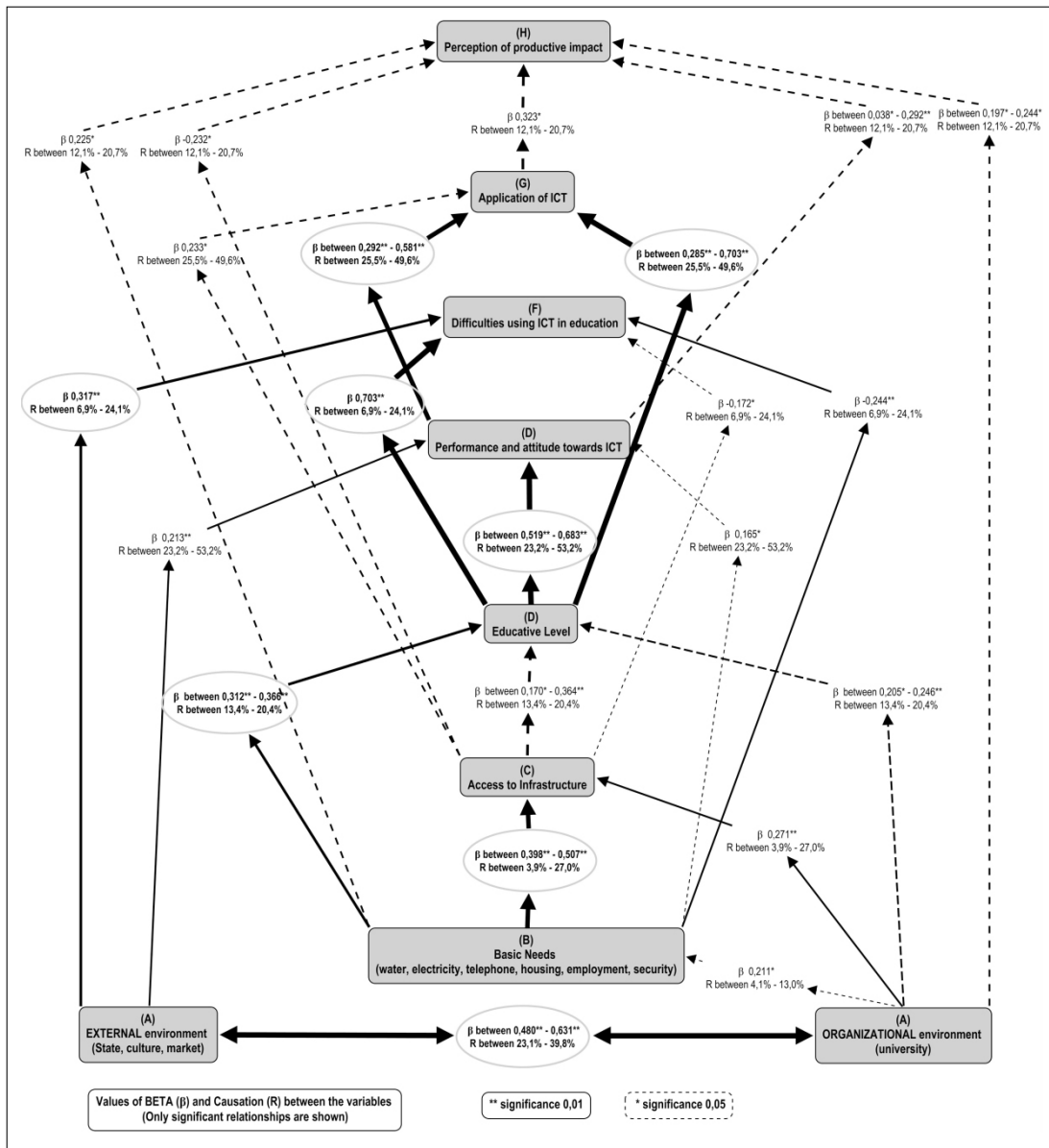
Figure 3: Results in correlation, significance and predictive capacity among the proposed variables.

of the importance of ICTs as a tool for productive development. IT tools still were seen as objects of fashion and status. There was no visible link between education, industry, ICT policies and the development of R&D, and in the community studied and their context that articulation was not considered as something to be encouraged.

• Macro-economic: The situation of Colombian society in terms of consumption capacity was not good. Despite the improvement in some economic indicators and the rapid lowering of IT costs, these technologies were still a luxury for most people and

therefore, alien to their living environment. Such effect was not noted in the community studied except for the rates of broadband access. Due to their socio-economic profile, the samples taken from private universities had the first three levels of the pyramid granted.

• Meso-economic: the country had a rapid advance in the political and regulatory infrastructure concerning the informatic. However, the disarticulation of these policies and norms with the social and economic reality did not allow the creation of a critical mass to shake up the traditional productive array. High rates of growth in access to infrastructure were the result of

the country's lacking state of digitalization before year 2000. A poor educational infrastructure coupled with an economy focused on the exploitation of natural resources where R&D is almost nonexistent, made ICT flawed as a generator of significant productive progress and led higher education towards a scheme of technical training geared towards the production of basic goods rather than the creation of knowledge and the generation of innovation skills. In this context ICTs had a significant loss of power.

• Micro-economic: Universities had the lead in infrastructure but privileged the development of technological instrumental and operational capabilities rather than creative skills. With a focus in tuition revenue and not in R&D, the higher education sector provided the tools but did not encourage a strategic appropriation. ICTs became devices for basic or hedonic uses, not a booster for information management, knowledge and innovation.

6. Conclusions

The lack of a strong correlation between the variables in the base of the model and the Perception of Productive Impact can be explained by the lack of articulation between technological tools, the economic profile of the country and the idiosyncrasy of users. Students use ICTs but given their formation and education, they do not appropriate them beyond basic production possibilities or recreational uses. These results confirm the critique of the instrumental and motivational focus when discussing the digital divide. Technological appropriation is an individual but also collective phenomenon, which includes political, economic and cultural factors that must be analyzed together. It is possible to supplement endogenous models like TAM with exogenous models for competitive and economical analysis to have a contextual view.

The theories of Mental Models can assist in understanding the rationale of technological appropriation. Tradition, culture and power structures associated with conventional information architectures are part of the conflict that is generated in front of any new alternative, irrespective of the benefits that the technology on offer may include. Productive rationality is just a part of these processes. Strong social inequalities and tensions in developing regions stimulate the action of extra technical elements, widening the gaps that limit communities to build computer and information literacy.

The internet is the natural environment of developed communities of the West, those who built the Networked Economy. This environment spilled into a productivist epistemology that does not reflect the dimensions of organic information systems, their ecological complexity and logic. The impact of ICTs has been such that its ontology had been naturalized within discourse about development. But developing countries do not fit into this logic. In these places the actors and dynamics that restrict the ability to access and control Internet are different.

If ICTs are to be the engine of improvement for the world population, we cannot start from the assumption that the world is digital, because two thirds of the planet do not inhabit that paradigm. Although the digital order dominates economically, under its dominion many informational architectures and vernacular technical rationalities remain, representing the diversity of a «peripheral» humanity. Ignoring these risks implies a loss of valuable informational heterogeneity, identity and adaptability, as well as the waste of resources that happens when trying to implement non-negotiated technologies that become forced semiotic conversions.

To tackle poverty and exclusion through ICTs, it is necessary to investigate better the relationship between the local informational architectures, their technology and the economic, socio-cultural, institutional and political systems articulated therein. Developing countries are concentrated on the production of basic goods and services of low added value, so their conditions do not facilitate compatibility with the regime of the Innovation Economy. The social milieu must change if ICTs are to be intelligent technologies.

This research tried to overcome the limitations of preceding studies. That was not achieved in some aspects:

• The size of the samples is still a restraint.

• Although the concept of educational productivity was linked to the educational goals, the results could not be triangulated with other variables such as student performance and class grades.

• Surveys were distributed and controlled via e-mail, a practice that created problems for people with low computer literacy, or limited resources to access a computer or Internet.

• Control of variables within the population samples is still not satisfactory. Given the size of the sample and the limited resources it is difficult to introduce stratified sampling.

However, it was possible to improve other aspects:

• Balancing the structure of self-report with exogenous sources of information.

• Defining countable results with reliable scales tested with Cronbach Alpha.

• The application of statistical correlation and multivariate analyses to test the proposed scales.

• Correlations, reliabilities and predictability of the model worked with a significance of 0.05.

The challenge for future research will be to test these results in populations of wider variability. Working with university students in an educational environment within one country introduces associated variables of socioeconomic nature that limit a better testing of the instrument capabilities.

Finally, it is also necessary to rethink the definition of «productive impact» of ICTs, as there are multiple connotations in the rationality of «the productive», which tend to bias the research towards a technical reductionist discourse that measures the degree of acculturation of the host population. Without the proper care researchers may end up making a justification of what is being criticized: the presumption of universality of a production order that given its technical power and dominant position, this confuses such power with the capacity of producing welfare and human development in every latitude of the globe.

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Managing Creativity in Collaborative Virtual Learning Environments: A DL Corporate Project

Gestión de la creatividad en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje colaborativos: Un proyecto corporativo de EAD

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ABSTRACT

There is a currently ongoing discussion regarding the most effective methodologies for establishing collaborative virtual learning environments (VLEs) and the true contribution to student creativity and innovation in such environments, particularly in the corporate sphere. Educational social networks based on collaborative learning have grown exponentially in recent years, with countless networks now established in nearly all fields. However, stimulation of creativity among VLE users in general, and specifically in the corporate sphere, has become an important issue in educational research. Utilizing experiences of corporate distance learning (DE) in Brazil, the present paper proposes a means of evaluating the presence of creativity indicators among students in collaborative virtual teaching and learning environments. Case studies are used to compare a corporate VLE project that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) under a creative and educommunicative approach with a project that uses ICTs under a traditional approach. The study was conducted in partnership with the consulting and e-learning company Perfectu. The results obtained suggest that the pedagogic model adopted and the manner in which ICTs are employed determine whether ICTs lead to innovative results, not the use of ICTs alone. The average level of creativity in the group that used the creative and educommunicative model was higher than that of the group that used the traditional paradigm.

RESUMEN

Se mantiene abierta en nuestros días la discusión con respecto a las metodologías más efectivas en los entornos virtuales de aprendizaje (EVA) colaborativos y su verdadera contribución al desarrollo de la creatividad y la actitud innovadora en los estudiantes, particularmente en los ámbitos corporativos. Las redes sociales educativas basadas en el aprendizaje colaborativo crecen exponencialmente, y se hacen ya incontables en cualquier área del conocimiento. Sin embargo, la estimulación de la creatividad de los usuarios de los EVA en general y en el ámbito corporativo en específico, se ha convertido en un problema científico de gran importancia para las investigaciones en las Ciencias de la Educación. El presente trabajo se propone valorar la presencia de indicadores de creatividad en los estudiantes al interactuar con los entornos virtuales de enseñanza de aprendizaje colaborativo, basados en la experiencia de educación a distancia (EAD) corporativa acumulada en Brasil. El método de investigación utilizado es el estudio de caso, que permitió comparar la realización de un proyecto EAD corporativo a partir de la utilización de las TIC con un enfoque creativo y educomunicativo, con otro que también utilizó las TIC pero con una visión tradicional. Fue realizado en la empresa de consultoría y e-learning Perfectu. Los resultados obtenidos sugieren que el modelo pedagógico adoptado y la forma de utilizar las TIC son las que llevan a resultados innovadores y no las TIC por sí mismas, dado que se observó que el promedio de creatividad del grupo que trabajó bajo el patrón educomunicativo-creativo fue más elevado que para el grupo que trabajó con el paradigma tradicional.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Creativity, innovation, collaborative learning, virtual environments, creative educational management, project management, DL.
Creatividad, innovación, entornos virtuales, aprendizaje colaborativo, gestión educacional creativa, proyectos, EAD.

1. Introduction

Societal complexity stemming from the confluence of new and diverse social actors and forces, together with the growing pervasiveness of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in all aspects of social life (Morin, 1996), has given rise to new questions about creativity and its development among DE students.

Distance learning (DL) is defined as «planned learning that normally occurs in a location different from the teaching location and demands special techniques of course design and instruction, communication via various technologies, and a special organizational and administrative disposition» (Moore & Kearsley, 2007: 87). Although DL inherently demands a creative approach to pedagogical resources, new technologies are often used within an outdated pedagogical paradigm.

The last several years have seen a proliferation of post-secondary corporate education programs, including complete courses and assignments in virtual learning environments (VLEs) in all fields in institutions of higher learning (Aguaded, Tirado & Hernando, 2011). Additionally, many interesting VLA experiences outside the traditional university and academic world are not described or adequately recognized by the research community (Martin-Barbero, 2002; Soares, 2011; Arnab & al., 2013).

While the first VLEs, based on Web 1.0, represented a giant step toward the integration of ICTs into the teaching and learning processes of higher education, their limitations in certain fundamental respects quickly became apparent (Hennessey & Dionigi, 2013). One such limitation concerns user interactivity, and another is the impossibility of communication with teaching staff who author VLE courses and with fellow students in order to work on assignments, share opinions and ideas, and undertake group assignments.

Web 2.0 (and Web 3.0) opened up many possibilities for collaborative work among staff, students, and other actors in the VLE teaching and learning process (Hennessey & Dionigi, 2013). Despite the great advance represented by the appearance of the educational Web 2.0, viewed by some authors as «a web revolution» (Jenkins, 2009; Aparici, 2010; Okada, 2011), teaching staff (coordinators, teachers, and content creators) began to worry about the extent to which the new VLEs were capable of stimulating creativity among students. A common mistake was to believe that the mere existence of Web 2.0 and 3.0 guaranteed creative teaching.

This is an ongoing concern that has led to new research into the stimulation of creativity among DE

students through interactivity with VLEs and their potential use for collaboration among students and professors to solve problems through individual and group assignments (Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Okada, 2011). Current empirical research indicates the need for adequate training of DL professors and teachers (Donnelly & Boniface, 2013; Calma, 2013).

A new generation of internet users and DL students has arisen, one with a new profile and requiring a distinct kind of motivation (Palloff & Pratt, 2004; Levi, 2004; Baccega, 2009). Members of this generation do not wish to be mere passive consumers of content but rather active collaborators and creators of new knowledge (Bender, 2003) that is reciprocally discovered or constructed through the student-instructor/facilitator and student-student relationship, using all the resources now available in the digital realm (Triantafyllakos, Palaigeorgiou & Tsoukalas, 2010; Kenski, 2011).

This development suggests the need to furnish professionals responsible for producing and managing DL educational materials and technological interfaces (coordinators, writers, web designers, teachers, and facilitators) with a deep understanding of creativity: its epistemological roots, its manifestation in the educational environment, and ways to develop it among students in VLEs (Borroto, 2005; Calma, 2013).

It must also be emphasized that this process should not be viewed as an application to a virtual environment of traditional creativity techniques but rather as an effort to maintain a creative management model that also includes the application of creativity techniques to virtual environments (Chibás, 2012a). Another challenge that remains is the need for creative management of the entire VLE educational process with clear goals for innovative results that permit students to cultivate and develop their creative competencies and abilities.

It is thus appropriate to understand creativity as an energy (Torre, 2008) by which individual intelligence is augmented and multiplied through the use of new technologies in collaborative networks characterized by profound symbiosis and leading to the formation (individually or collectively) of new synergies, products, ideas, and relationships, among others.

A DL model or strategy that includes aspects of the formulation of the programme for UK English, course, or discipline, along with new content that takes advantage of the seemingly infinite possibilities that ICTs and the internet offer (Saad, 2003), must therefore be developed. The formation of such strategies involves decisions such as whether to use synchronous or

asynchronous technologies and online or offline modes, among others. It is also necessary, in developing clear pedagogic goals, to work with a concept of multimedia and integrated communication (Kunsch, 2003) that allows for the integration of all forms of communication (both face-to-face and virtual) used during the process.

Distance learning could be understood as the application of a collection of educational strategies that combine methods and techniques as well as pedagogical, psychological, logistical, and technological resources. These strategies are placed at the students' disposal, in order that they may use interactive, monitored self-learning to develop the necessary critical and creative competencies and abilities (Alterator & Deed, 2013).

The idea is to build new communicative ecosystems or spaces for student-staff coexistence (Martin-Barbero, 2002) that promote a new pedagogical relationship among student, staff, course content, and the technological devices used (computers, software, e-learning platform).

In this sense, in the corporate DL projects that we have implemented, it has been useful to implement the notion of a «pedagogic project». In this case, the Project Management Institute (PMI) approach was used to emphasize the importance of viewing each undertaking as a unique entity with a beginning, middle, and end (PMI, 2004).

Another concept that has helped us in the implementation of corporate DL courses is «creative educational management» (Chibás, 2012b). Creative educational management within networks is a means of administrating organizations with pedagogical functions and of implementing educational projects that emphasize a creative and communicative vision of the organization guided by a transdisciplinary approach. Its main goal is to promote the creativity of all participants in the educational process (students, staff, managers, parents, community, etc.) and to facilitate, through clear operational indicators, the presence and implementation of more up-to-date and flexible education

management processes. Creative educational management means implementing, in an innovative way, flexible strategies that are adapted to the situation and context of the organization or educational project and applying the management of projects and the other administrative instruments noted above to the evaluation of courses and student performance indicators.

The educommunicative approach is an obvious possible avenue for implementation of creative educa-

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tional management, starting with students' critical appropriation of a course's communication methods and the collective construction of the path to knowledge. A critical and dialogue-based vision based on both professor-student and student-student interactions allows for the control of the direction of a course to be truly shared between students and the professor. Figure 1 presents some of these relationships graphically.

Among the question the authors seek to answer are the following: How can VLA courses contribute to the development of creativity among students? What are plausible indicators of creativity that should be stimulated in students through collaborative VLEs? The authors also share their evaluations and experiences of research on creativity, research that has enabled them to identify a group of indicators that can be used to

evaluate the extent to which a VLE stimulates student creativity.

The main objective of this research is to describe the effects on creativity of collaborative educational experiences in a virtual learning environment, where such experiences involved face-to-face methodologies implemented under principles of creative educational management and educommunication. This experience is compared with an experience in a similar environment in which these principles were not employed. The educational principles that contribute to the development of creativity in such an environment or collaborative communicative ecosystem are also reflected upon. It is emphasized that the results obtained do not depend upon the use of new technologies per se but on the manner in which the new technologies are used: the educational models, objectives pursued, and formative values that support the pedagogical-technological resources used.

Perfectu, the company with which the research was carried out, is a consulting firm that specializes in DL and digital marketing. It is part of the multinational French-Spanish group, Global Strategies, which operates in 15 countries spanning four continents. The outreach, training, and courses offered by Perfectu on the internet and in a blended format are geared toward a corporate audience. The same courses that are offered on the internet for anyone to purchase from the Perfectu virtual store are also offered «in company», as courses for businesses. Courses are offered by Perfectu together with Brazilian and Spanish universities, and participants who complete the courses or disciplines obtain a double certification from Perfectu and from the associated university.

Creativity was evaluated using questionnaires and quantitative and qualitative indicators developed by Chibás (2006). The importance of a pedagogic-technological model that serves as the basis for a VLE and is reflected in the characteristics of course materials, learning objects, and an assignment system that includes creative tasks must be stressed. Some definitions of the fundamental concepts addressed in this paper are suggested.

2. Material and methods

The present paper is the first attempt to explore the issue in question. The general method employed is
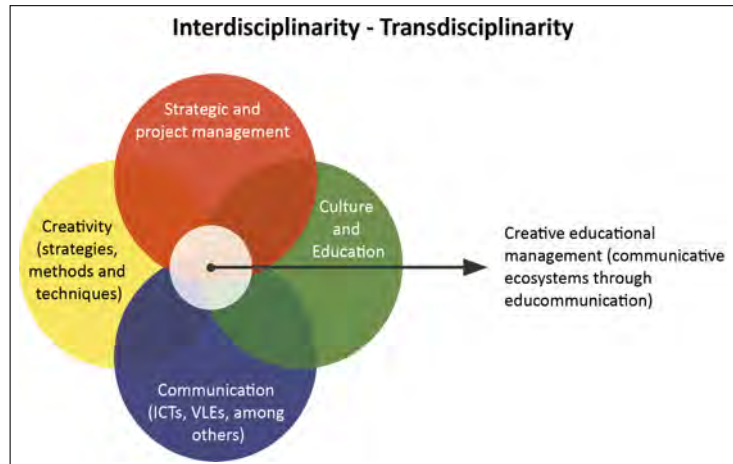
Figure 1. Axes of creative educational management (Chibás, 2012b).

theoretical-empirical, wherein, dialectically, theory leads to practice, which subsequently leads back to theory. A quali-quantitative method is also employed, and quantitative and qualitative analysis is used to triangulate the results obtained through different research techniques (Lakatos, 2006). These methods were combined with a case study (Yin, 1989) in which the management style of a DL project with a pedagogical educommunicative vision was compared to the educational management of a DL project that also used new technologies but followed a traditional approach.

The research techniques used were a bibliographic and document review (physical and internet); Chibás' system of qualitative and quantitative creativity questionnaires (sent by email, using Google and spaces in Perfectu's web portal and its Moodle platform, as this was the e-learning company where we conducted our research); and participatory observation and in-depth interviews (Lakatos, 2006). The latter technique was applied to cases where an individual's responses to the qualitative questionnaires were very detailed or when there was some confusion. MSN and Skype with a webcam were used to conduct interviews in some cases. After transcribing the interviews, a content analysis was conducted, in which information was classified into content categories. To gain a better understanding of their general work strategy, interviews were also conducted with Perfectu's director, the coordinators of the course studied, and the principal managers.

In both the quantitative and qualitative questionnaire, the four basic parameters or indicators of creativity evaluated were originality, acceptance of challenges, creative problem solving, and flexibility.

For the quantitative creativity questionnaire, statistical analysis was conducted using ANOVA and Tukey's test to determine whether significant differences existed between answers of the two groups, those who participated in the educommunicative (creative educational management) course and those who participated in the course that followed a traditional view of the use of new technologies in distance learning. The following table shows how answers were classified for the creativity parameters evaluated.

The research methodology used was validated by the Perfectu research committee composed of consultants, teachers, content creators, and professors from institutions of higher education such as the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Barcelona, the University of Havana, the University of Sao Paulo, the Pontifical Catholic University of Sao Paulo, and the University Center of the Sao Paulo SENAC. A pilot application was conducted before the general application to correct for possible errors and make any necessary changes.

The sample consisted of 42 students who purchased the course on the internet. 21 of the students participated in the traditional course, whereas 21 participated in the course that followed the educommunicative and creative educational methodology.

The two groups received the same marketing materials and were informed that they were participating in a research project. The students from both groups were college graduates who sought to further their professional careers.

Both virtual classrooms had the same gender distribution of 12 women (57.14%) and 9 men (42.85%). There were students from different states in Brazil, but the majority, 25 (59.52%) of 42, were from the southeast. Of the five foreign students (non-Brazilians), two were in the group that adopted the educommunicative-creative methodology, and three were in the traditional group. The predominant age range was between 29 and 37 years, which would classify them as younger adults.

2.1. Procedures

The results obtained for participants in two groups of virtual/in-person classes for a 120-hour blended course (mixing in-person and virtual classes) that used both e-learning and other non-internet activities were compared. The pedagogic activities offered were designed to balance online and offline time as well as synchronous and non-synchronous activities. The course was expanded to 120 hours at the request of the students of a previously successful 44-hour course.

Students invested roughly 4-6 hours per week in the course, which lasted six months. The course was offered on the Moodle platform of the Perfectu website, with one classroom using the traditional approach and the other using creative educational management implemented under the educommunicative approach. In the course selected for this research project, titled «Socially Responsible Marketing Management», participants were taught to manage socially responsible projects, using administrative and communication tools.

Both classrooms had access to the same technological resources on the course website (e-book texts, videos, presentation rooms, a virtual library, a virtual blackboard or whiteboard, chat rooms, debate forums, individual mini-blogs, individual student email, direct contact with the teacher or facilitating instructor, MSN, Skype, Second Life software to work with avatars, etc.).

Course planning included three face-to-face meetings conducted between the teachers and those students who could attend. Students who could not attend participated via Skype, using a webcam. One meeting occurred at the beginning of the course, one in the middle, and one at the end.

Additionally, telephone communication took place when the instructor-facilitator or the Perfectu support team deemed it necessary because participating students had not entered the platform, and an email was sent to remind students about the activity calendar. Instructors specified days and times that they would be available online to clarify individual or collective questions through chat. Both classrooms or groups of students had a teaching team consisting of five people: a coordinator, two instructors, a content creator, and a support team member.

The classroom that offered the course outside the traditional and reactive DE pattern implemented creative educational management through the application of educommunication. Creative ecosystems were established based on the application of the following principles derived from the indicators previously described by Chibás (2012a):

Table 1. Creativity scores and levels (Chibás, 2006)				
Points	Classification	Level	Evaluation	Initial
240-180	Highest score	1	High creativity	AltaC
179-120	Medium score	2	Considerable or elevated creativity	ConCr
119-60	Low score	3	Low creativity	BaiCr
59-01	Very low score	4	Very low creativity	MbaixCr

• The main issues, bibliography, and form of course evaluation were negotiated in the first face-to-face work meeting between the teacher and students.

• From the beginning, the objective of forming a true learning community and creating affective links was established.

• In addition to the communication formats offered exclusively to students by the Moodle platform, the students decided to create two communication formats open to the public outside of the course (a blog and Facebook page). Here, students posted their work and gave each other feedback. This outlet offered students a way to «test» their ideas in the «world». These formats were fully administered by the students but monitored by the instructor-facilitator.

• At different times, the class reflected on how blog maintenance works and how to develop blog content.

• The teacher's role was dialogic and not as the

course sought explicit ways of stimulating creativity, differing analyses and readings of reality, and novel structuring of the form and content of the formats created by the group.

• Assignments integrated collective and individual evaluation as well as auto-evaluation.

• The course promoted analysis of exemplary situations taken from real life that were relevant to the course themes. These analyses were promoted online via chat and offline via the debate forum.

• Participants were encouraged to analyze course content and the work method used.

• The instructor showed explicit interest in and commitment to student achievements.

• The instructor emphasized research and collective knowledge construction, making students responsible for their learning.

The other group followed the common DL course pattern and received technological resources and training under the same schedule but did not apply the principles described above. The students did not create communication formats open to the general public, instead only using those that already existed on the Moodle platform. The teacher maintained a more reactive and distant attitude and focused on course content. Assignments included 50% multiple choice and 50% open-ended or opinion questions. Most work was done individually, stimulating competition for individual grades, although the final project was undertaken by groups.

Annex 1. Website of Perfectu's virtual campus in the Moodle platform.

bearer of knowledge. The teacher was a mediator and facilitator of the process.

• The instructor-facilitator's attitude was that of cautious explicit interest in learning about students' daily worries and the ways in which course content was applied.

• Cooperation and a healthy interdependence were stimulated through collective assignments, which involved joint research and collaborative activities.

• Assignments with closed or multiple choice questions were avoided. Most assignments included open-ended questions.

• Creative techniques were used in various virtual meetings and in the second face-to-face group meetings. These techniques included brainstorming and the Six Thinking Hats method, among others. The

In addition to the factors involved in creativity, as evaluated with respect to students from both groups, the following variables were controlled for: student satisfaction index; course retention rate; index of the achievement of course objectives, according to professors, students, and course managers; and the concrete creativity results based on the quantity and quality of student assignments.

The limitations of this methodology could be derived from its complexity and the need for training the teachers or facilitating instructors.

The main question of the study is: What are the effects on student creativity of a course designed under an educommunicative-creative approach compared with the effects on a control group that had access to the same content and technology but from a traditional approach?

3. Results

Some of the principle quantitative and qualitative results are presented below:

Table 2. Mean creativity scores obtained by each group of students							
Factors of Creativity	**Flexibility**	**Originality**	**Problem-Solving**	**Acceptance of Challenges**	**Creativity Total**	**Level**	**General Evaluation**
Educommunicative-creative group	36.42	28.42	30.14	27.78	123.07	2	Considerable Creativity
Control group	27.68	15.68	14.68	17.26	74.78	3	Low Creativity

• The DL course employing the traditional format was completed by 12 (57.14%) of the participants, whereas the course based on an educommunicative-creative approach had an 81.33% retention rate, with 17 students finishing the course.

• The index of course satisfaction among professors and students was analyzed, using an evaluation questionnaire given at the end of the course. The course that followed the educommunicative-creative methodology had a student satisfaction rating of 85.71% (18 students) and 100% staff satisfaction; the traditional DL course had a student satisfaction of merely 52.38% (11 students) and 60% staff satisfaction (three of five staff from the teaching team corresponding to each classroom).

• The course objective achievement index, according to staff, managers, and students, was also higher in the group that followed educommunicative-creative principles. For this group, 100% of professors (all five members of the instruction team) and 81.33% of the students (17) agreed that course objectives were achieved. In the more traditional classroom, 43.90% of students (11) and 40% of the management-teaching team (2) agreed that course objectives were met.

• Additionally, the concrete creativity results, that is, the quantity and quality of student assignments, was greater in the classroom that adopted the educommunicative-creative perspective, with 16 final assignments found to be highly creative by the course's teacher-manager team (76.19%), based on the four indicators of creativity evaluation described above. The classroom that did not follow this approach produced eight final assignments (38.09%) that the teaching team considered creative.

These results were later corroborated in an interview conducted with course managers and coordinators. Below, we present the average creativity values obtained by both groups:

As can be seen in the table, for each factor of creativity evaluated among students at the end of the course, as well as for total creativity, the average was higher for the group that worked under the educommunicative-creative approach than for the group that used the traditional paradigm. Statistical analysis using ANOVA (2006) and Tukey's Test (2006) showed that the values for creativity obtained for the two groups of students differed significantly (at the 0.01 significance level).

4. Discussion

The case presented allowed for a comparison between results obtained through creative educational management using the educommunication approach in a VLE and results obtained in a VLE in which the same course using the same technologies was administered but under different strategies and approaches. Significant differences favoring the VLE that applied an educommunicative-creative approach were found with respect to student and staff satisfaction indexes, the student course retention index, concrete creative results, and the achievement of course objectives (according to staff, managers, and students). It was also found that average values in the factors used to assess creativity were superior in the group that employed the educommunicative-creative networks approach.

This result corresponds to those obtained in a study conducted by Peppler and Solomou (2011), in which 5 participants in a collaborative 3D virtual learning environment (a social network) showed growth and extension of creativity, as measured by social and cultural characteristics, in online communities, due to the manner in which content was organized.

Our results also coincide with those of Hwang, Wu, and Chen (2012) in a more restricted sense, given that the sample with which they worked consisted of children that specifically used games as a collaborative-creative tool.

Based on the results obtained, it is suggested that successful VLE courses should be designed with a balance between multimedia activities and those that give preference to one kind of media; online and offline assignments; face-to-face and internet activities; and synchronous and asynchronous assignments.

It should be emphasized that the results obtained depend more on how these technologies are used, that is, on the educational models applied to each VLE, than on the mere use of these technologies.

A methodology with clear indicators was proposed and tested and can be used in other VLEs with different content. It can be concluded that current VLE

management should be based on strategic planning complemented by project management.

It would be useful for future research to map both the diverse management models or paradigms that are currently being empirically applied in formal and informal DL educational environments and the creative strategies of managers, professors, and students.

A second phase would be the elaboration of more functional research-action instruments that perform these diagnostics quickly and thus contribute to the formation of professionals who are truly manager-educators, able to create educational projects in VLEs that have at their core the development of the individual through sensitivity, emotion, and creativity.

This would allow for the development of theoretical-practical knowledge of management models that can produce better results in educational networks and formal and informal VLEs. Additionally, the most effective management models, strategies, and tactics can be identified for each sector of corporate education, thus removing the principle barriers to communication and creative educational management.

Annex 2. Perfectu's company website.

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eRubrics in Cooperative Assessment of Learning at University

Las eRúbricas en la evaluación cooperativa del aprendizaje en la Universidad

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ABSTRACT

Teamwork is one of the most widespread teaching methods used to achieve learning skills. Despite the difficulty of finding out the degree of individual learning taking place in each member of the group, these methods are having an increasingly greater importance in university teaching. The present article shows the results of an R+D+i project aimed at «analysing the impact of eRubrics −electronic rubrics− on the assessment of university learning in various forms». Likewise, it aims to show the scope of eRubrics in improving cooperative skills, which are achieved through teamwork and cooperative assessment of tasks in the computer lab. The experiment takes place in three groups selected from a total of six groups of students from the First Year of Primary Education Teaching during the 2011-12 academic year. From the three groups, one acted as the control group and the other two as the experimental groups in which eRubrics were used. Differences were found in students' results in a written test taken by all the groups, as the group using eRubrics achieved better results than the other two. Additionally, a qualitative analysis was conducted, by classifying the students' answers in the control group with regard to the evaluation criteria they used, in order to check for coincidences with the eRubric criteria used by students in the experimental groups.

RESUMEN

El trabajo cooperativo mediante tareas y proyectos en equipo es una de las metodologías más generalizadas en educación para lograr las competencias de aprendizaje. Estas metodologías están teniendo cada vez mayor aceptación en la enseñanza universitaria, a pesar de la dificultad de conocer los aprendizajes individuales producidos en cada uno de sus miembros. Este artículo muestra los resultados de un proyecto de I+D+i cuyo objetivo general consiste en «Analizar el impacto de las eRúbricas –rúbricas electrónicas– en la evaluación de los aprendizajes universitarios en sus diferentes modalidades», y pretende mostrar el alcance de esta herramienta para mejorar el aprendizaje de las competencias o habilidades cooperativas, producto del trabajo en equipo y la evaluación cooperativa de tareas en el laboratorio. La experiencia se desarrolla con tres grupos elegidos (205 estudiantes) de un total de seis grupos de estudiantes de 1° del grado de Primaria en el curso 2011-12. De los tres grupos, uno actúa como grupo de control y los otros dos como grupos experimentales en los que se han utilizado eRúbricas. Se observan diferencias en las notas de una prueba escrita común a todos, con mejores resultados en los grupos con eRúbrica. Además, se realiza un análisis cualitativo categorizando las respuestas dadas por los estudiantes del grupo de control sobre los criterios de evaluación que éstos utilizan, para ver las coincidencias con los criterios de las eRúbricas usadas en los grupos experimentales.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Formative assessment, teamwork, cooperative learning, cooperative assessment, preservice teachers, university education, competences, erubrics.
Evaluación formativa, trabajo en equipo, aprendizaje cooperativo, evaluación cooperativa, formación inicial, enseñanza universitaria, competencias, eRúbricas.

1. Introduction

Among the different teaching methods developed in recent years, cooperative models that use technologies (CSCL)[1] (Voogt & Knezek, 2008) represent a deep renewal in education. In the field of university teaching design and planning, these methods (together with the use of technologies) have become increasingly important when it comes to centring teaching on student learning (Zabalza, 2010), while engaging students in their own learning process, especially when it comes to evaluation (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000; Brown & Glasner, 2003; Falchikov, 2005; Blanco, 2009, López-Pastor, 2009). As a result, different methods and ways of organising the teaching-learning process are planned based on the context of different universities (De-Miguel, 2006: 31). This is where the «teamwork» purpose brings all values and pedagogical principles together: «Students learn and assess collaboratively, by playing a more active and committed role in teaching and learning through technologies».

Human learning is fundamentally social; hence the construction of knowledge and collaborative learning should be a priority at all levels of education (Hargreaves, 2007). Nevertheless, considering that students and educational contexts do not always count on the necessary requirements to implement a collaborative model, a model of cooperative learning is most frequently used as a first step, resolving much of this starting situation, as it provides students with structure and guidance, while providing teachers with control.

When trying to extend collaborative learning to all stages of the teaching process, as in the case of evaluation, the need for guidance becomes more evident and crucial, and methods such as «teamwork» and «cooperative assessment» become important resources and techniques as a prelude to a model of collaborative assessment. This might be the reason why cooperative learning through teamwork is one of the most used methods in the promotion of skills development in all educational stages.

In any case, peer learning is especially beneficial when focused on the assessment process, where it is more often referred to as «collaborative assessment» by academic literature (Blanco, 2009: 115; Brown & Glasner, 2003: 31; López-Pastor, 2009: 94), and also known as «co-assessment», «shared assessment», «peer assessment», etc. A more accurate conceptual definition is needed, as the terms used do not always differ from each other –as it is the case for cooperative vs. collaborative learning–. Cooperative assessment is more structured and guided than collaborative assessment.

While these practices are becoming increasingly widespread, criticisms of certain aspects are raised, including the following:

• The difficulty of carrying out an individualized follow-up and assessment of the skills acquired by the different team members.

• A review of the impact these methods have on student learning, in relation to new contexts and given the use of technology.

• How to approach what students need in order to achieve a collaborative assessment, which requires greater reflection and self-criticism.

One of the principles supporting collaborative assessment consists of involving all team members in defining the criteria by which proof of learning in the team projects will be evaluated. This is a rather communicative and participatory approach to evaluation, starting with the exchange and understanding of goals, objectives and procedures, and ending with the evaluation of processes and outcomes. Quality criteria and indicators are applied on results and on the process. While learning tasks are well-defined and structured, there are often difficulties in communication between teachers and students, especially when online teaching is involved. The final evaluation is often the only aspect that is understood, provided there has been a shared analysis.

This communication issue caused by technology is likely to be solved if teachers and students keep a permanent dialogue on quality indicators, criteria and how criteria can apply to the proof of learning of teamwork. In this type of evaluation, rubrics are one of the techniques or tools that can facilitate communication (Osana & Seymour, 2004; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Reddy & Andrade, 2010; Rodríguez Gómez & Ibarra Sáiz, 2011; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013), and they are called «eRubrics» in their digital version. One of the advantages of eRubrics is that, they allow teachers and students to share quality indicators, criteria and proof of learning when evaluating learning objectives (Andrade, 2005). Federated eRubrics are even more interactive, as they are federated as well as digital. Federation provides the ideal support for cooperation and collaboration among users, thus overcoming the difficulties of interoperability among tools, services, contexts and technological systems, located both inside and outside the educational institution itself.

Federated eRubrics play a double role in teaching. On the one hand, as a technological system, they represent an ideal support for improving communication and understanding of the assessment process, while facilitating teamwork. They are an essential tool

in assessing e-Portfolios, considering the monitoring process required by the teacher-student interaction through which students are enabled to understand the quality indicators, criteria and proof of learning. This is especially true when distance and technology are involved, considering that institutions often have different technological systems. An example is found in the Practicum, when students are distributed across different educational institutions, each with their own tools and technological systems (Meeusa, Petegema & Engelsb, 2009; Cebrián-de-la-Serna, 2011; Del-Pozo, 2012). On the other hand, as a technique and as a methodology, federated eRubrics facilitate formative assessment, because they require a clear definition of the level of learning standards and the implementation of task-related criteria. There is extensive literature on the impact of federated eRubrics, such as research conducted by Hafner & Hafner (2003) and Falchikov (2005), the so-called «deep and authentic learning» explained by Vickerman (2009), research on peer-assessment in technology-mediated collaboration environments (CSCL) (Prins, Sluijsmans, Kirschner & Strijbos, 2005), and a few studies on initial teacher training and acquisition of professional skills (Osana & Seymour, 2004; Bartolomé, Martínez & Tellado, 2012; Gámiz-Sánchez, Gallego & Moya, 2012; Moril, Ballester & Martínez, 2012; Martínez, Tellado & Raposo, 2013; Panadero, Alonso-Tapia & Reche, 2013).

However, despite the results, such research must be cautiously considered. We should aim for a much bigger picture with meta-analysis, such as the one offered by Svingby & Jonsson (2007) or Reddy & Andrade (2010), where a general view of rubrics in university education is offered, emphasizing the positive perception of students towards the use of programmes, taken in conjunction with research showing the resistance of certain groups of teachers to use them. Additionally, there is research on the positive impact of rubrics on academic performance, despite other studies finding no such impact.

Certainly, more studies on the impact of rubrics are needed, despite this broad and extensive literature. Research is especially required in the field of cooperative and collaborative assessment, since, although eRubrics have already been studied from a collaborative assessment approach (Falchikov, 2005: 125), this has not been the case with all the products of the recent boom in new technologies. This is important in studying the impact of «federated eRubrics», as they are more interactive than paper rubrics, facilitating

> Federated eRubrics play a double role in teaching. On the one hand, as a technological system, they represent an ideal support for improving communication and understanding of the assessment process, while facilitating teamwork. They are an essential tool in assessing e-Portfolios, considering the monitoring process required by the teacher-student interaction through which students are enabled to understand the quality indicators, criteria and proof of learning. This is especially true when distance and technology are involved, considering that institutions often have different technological systems. An example is found in the Practicum, when students are distributed across different educational institutions, each with their own tools and technological systems.

communication, cooperation and collaboration between students and teachers of different institutions. Therefore, the scope and impact of federated eRubrics on cooperative and collaborative teaching and learning models is still unknown. Thus, new research is needed to analyse the interactive and communicative functions offered by technologies and social networks (Bartolomé, 2012). In particular there is a requirement for more rigorous methods, for greater reliability and for checking the validity of the procedures from broader geographic and cultural perspectives, as suggested by Reddy & Andrade (2010).

In pursuit of this aim, the results presented below are part of a research project in which federation tech-

nologies in general and federated eRubrics in particular are used for educational purposes and intra- and inter-institutional collaboration. The latter is precisely the topic of the present research: cooperative peer-assessment and teamwork developed in the lab. The interoperability enabled by federation technologies was used for cooperation within the same institution. Students only needed to log in and out to access the tools and federated services available, namely: an institutional platform where task resources were uploaded and shared, a federated eRubrics service for cooperative assessment, a «federated key» tool to upload and share large files, a «federated webquest» service to elaborate teaching materials, and a «federated Limesurvey» service to collect open assessments from the control group in order to contrast their results[2].

2. Methodology

The use of rubrics to assess learning has been introduced in different subjects and university degrees, but their digital version -federated eRubric- is rarely used. Indeed, the innovation in this project lies in the lack of experience with these technologies. Likewise, a broad conceptual framework has been used to examine their impact, following the introduction of a new variable, which can play different roles according to whether the assessment is cooperative and/or collaborative (if it is cooperative, eRubrics are given by the teacher; if it is collaborative, eRubrics are negotiated).

While our research does not address all the possibilities in Chart 1, it does raise the need to answer the following questions: Does student academic learning improve when using cooperative assessment with eRubrics in teamwork? Which evaluation criteria are used by students in peer-assessment without the structure and guidance of eRubrics?

Drawing on these questions, the specific objectives of this project are as follows:

1) To analyse the impact of eRubrics in academic learning by developing collaborative assessment methods and teamwork (cooperative assessment with eRubrics).

2) To analyse the criteria and rating used by students in peer-assessment without guidance (cooperative assessment without eRubrics).

By answering these questions and by developing the two research objectives set, the researchers wish to show the usefulness and effectiveness of eRubrics as a tool and as a method for formative assessment, thus allowing for the improvement of student learning, the internalization of evaluation criteria and the application of these criteria.

The research was planned in two stages: in the first stage, the contents and functionality of the eRubrics were agreed upon and designed, using Limesurvey to experiment with the contents for the first time. In the second stage, after evaluating the contents of the rubrics and creating our own eRubric tool, the planned research design was applied. For this second stage a multi-method approach was used, due to both the characteristics of the objectives and the nature of the data to be collected. The reality could then be seen at a qualitative and quantitative level. To achieve the first specific objective, a quasi-experimental methodology was designed: one class group would not use eRubrics (control group) and their results would be compared with the other two groups that would (experimental groups). To achieve the second objective, a qualitative methodology was applied through content analysis, where assessments were extracted from the control group that did not use eRubrics.

The sample consisted of three randomly selected groups out of six class groups studying the subject «Information and Communication Technologies Applied to Education», from the Primary Education Degree in the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Malaga during the 2011/12 academic year. The three groups had 75 students each, and the context of the research design for both objectives was achieved by dividing each group into two sub-groups of 37 students each (six sub-groups in total), which were given two class hours to perform tasks and carry out peer-assessment in the computer labs. Therefore, research was conducted with 50% of the student population, i.e. 225 students: 75 students for the control group and 150 for the experimental groups. The contents of the eRubrics can be found in the public database of the tool by typing in the aforementioned course description.

The sample was selected by using the cluster sampling technique, where the sample unit was the class group. Differences between the control and experimental groups were minimized, randomly assigning the groups that would receive instruction and the group that would act as the control group, in order to achieve equality between the two, thus avoiding problems of internal and external validity (Colás, Buendía & Hernández, 2009). Groups B and C were the experimental groups and Group A was the control group.

In order to carry out the research, four tasks were conducted during the academic year, each with the same assessment methodology in the three class groups.

The methodology was directed by the same teacher in the three groups, following these steps:

• Two hours. Presentation of the task to the whole group (75 students), task completion and peer-assessment coordinated by the teacher.

• Two hours. Dividing each group into two smaller sub-groups (37 students approx) in the same computer lab, performing the same task but using different materials and examples. In order to perform the task, a file had to be downloaded from an online platform, completed and the team results uploaded so as to be shared. Once all teams had uploaded their tasks, access to the platform was open for all teams to download and assess tasks individually. At the end, the teacher closed the possibility of assessing, uploading and downloading tasks. He assessed all the teams and uploaded their task results to the platform.

The four tasks and their objectives were different. Group A, B and C had the same tasks. Team assessment was conducted by using a random formula provided by the teacher, although assessment between the same teams was avoided, despite the fact that assessment was anonymous in all cases. Tasks were performed in teams of 3-5 students, but assessment was individual, that is, each member of the team assessed the work of another team assigned by the teacher.

To collect quantitative data, four eRubrics were designed, one for each task. Students from the experimental groups carried out cooperative peer-assessment, which, together with the teacher's assessment, was included in an excel spreadsheet. Students were identified with a number in order to be able to compare their individual scores in the final test with peer-assessments made and received during the lab practice. In contrast, the control group did not use any eRubric to assess the work of their peers, only a questionnaire - federated Limesurvey - with a simple open question: «What did you think of the task this team has performed?». This approach to peer-assessment and criteria given by the teacher sought a model of collaborative assessment, but was unsuccessful due to the lack of guidance, counselling and structure. Nevertheless, it has enabled us to get to know the arguments, criteria and thoughts of students in Group A, as a means (with further research) to pinpoint the requirements for collaborative assessment.

3. Analysis and results

Given that all students were identified (experimental and control), the results could be compa-red with other variables such as final scores and specific assessments of lab practice carried out at the end of the year. The practice test consisted of an individual test on a randomly chosen example from the four tasks designed to show the same skills worked in the lab practice, but with different materials from those used during the year. With regard to the first specific objective, the methodology used allowed us to analyse individual and group scores from the test and assessments of the four tasks conducted in the lab, both in Group A (control) as well as Groups B and C (experimental).

As for the second specific objective, the methodology used allowed us to compare the categories found in he content analysis of assessments from Group A (control) with eRubric criteria used by Groups B and C.

3.1. Quantitative analysis

For the quantitative analysis, the use or not of eRubrics by students and teacher was considered as the independent variable. As mentioned above, all groups took a final test at the end of the year. The scores from this test were considered as the dependent variable, thus examining possible differences among students' scores in the different class groups.

To contrast scores from the final test, an analysis of variance has been conducted in the three groups, as the two experimental groups showed different trends. This may be because students do not usually know each other in the first year of their Degree, so the groups they form are more or less successful. Over time groups consolidate and reshape in different work teams. This common phenomenon –which takes place in the first year of any degree– had a higher incidence and caused more problems in Group C, where it happened most frequently. The group sizes were the same, although in the end there is a slight difference of two in the number of students in the control group, as shown in table 1.

3.1.1. Test scores comparison in the three class groups: A, B and C

Table 2 shows the results of the comparison of each group's mean, showing significant differences. Scheffé's multiple comparison test has shown differen-

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Each Group's Scores in the Test						
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Confidence interval of 95% for the mean	
					Lower Limit	Upper Limit
A	67	5.150448	1.8785967	0.2295071	4.692222	5.608674
B	69	7.656667	1.0151292	0.1222072	7.412806	7.900527
C	69	6.977101	1.2659129	0.1523980	6.672996	7.281207
Total	205	6.608829	1.7706570	0.1236680	6.364998	6.852661

ces among all class groups. In other words, there are differences between Group A's scores and Group B's scores, and between Group A's scores and Group C's scores. There are also differences between Group B's mean and Group C's mean. Given the significance and sign of mean differences in Scheffé's test, the means of the groups' scores are in the following order: A < C < B. That is, Group A's mean is significantly lower than Group C's mean and Group B's mean, while Group C's mean is significantly lower than Group B's mean.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of Test Scores				
	Sum of Squares	df	Root Mean Square	F	Sig.
Inter-groups	227.618	2	113.809	55.804	0.000
Intra-groups	411.968	202	2.039		
Total	639.586	204			

Table 3: Scheffé's Multiple Comparison Test				
(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.
A	B	-2.5062189*	0.2449421	0.000
	C	-1.8266537*	0.2449421	0.000
B	C	0.6795652*	0.2431344	0.022

Graph 1 shows the box plot of the scores in each group. As can be seen, Group A's scores show greater dispersion, while Groups B and C's scores are closer together and also higher, especially in Group B. The greater homogeneity of scores in Group B causes extremely high and low values in this group, marked below by the circles.
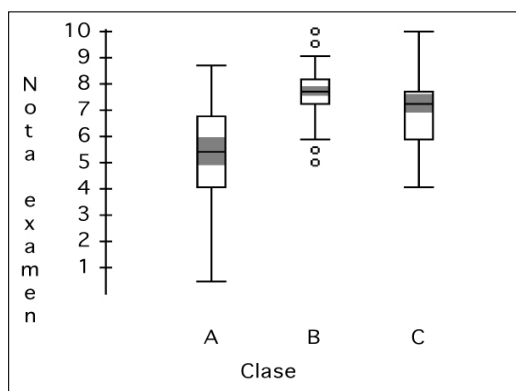
Graph 1. Box Plot of Scores in Each Group.

3.2. Qualitative analysis

When analysing the evaluation criteria described by students in Group A, a greater overlap is found between the categories of 1) control group's students' assessments and 2) eRubric responses, whenever tasks include a high number of responses. Table 4 shows the overlap percentage between categories expressed by students in the control group and eRubric responses. eRubrics of Tasks 2 and 4 (with 16 responses each) show a higher percentage than eRubrics for Task 1 (with 5) and Task 3 (with 6).

When focusing exclusively on the analysis of the categories that match eRubric responses, it can be seen that a greater (or lesser) number of teams evaluated by each other for each task within the group A does not ensure a greater overlap between the categories found and the eRubric responses used in the experimental group. In other words, Table 5 shows a relationship and an equivalent rate of 100% in Activity 1 (with 15 assessed teams) and Activity 2 (with half of the teams assessed). This result also occurs in Activity 3, which has a higher percentage and a fewer number of teams in comparison to Activity 4. That is, the number of teams evaluated in each task does not ensure the spontaneous emergence in Group A of closer or coincidental criteria with eRubric responses.

The above analysis proves that teacher training with no evaluation criteria and no guidance from the teacher (as is the case of eRubrics) does not guarantee the necessary skills for students to evaluate in a more objective and specific manner over time. This fact can also be seen in Table 6, which shows the ratio of students-evaluators identified by their list number, whose assessments or criteria coincide with the eRubric assessments for tasks 1, 2, 3 or 4. There are no coincidences in the assessments of peer evaluators in all 4 tasks of the subject, while the highest percentage is 50.72% in the assessments of the first task.

4. Discussion and conclusion

There is widespread use of the rubrics as a tool for evaluating results and scores, instead of for formative assessment in its various forms. The present paper seeks to present the results from a formative assessment approach, especially with regard to cooperative assessment in teamwork. It also addresses a practice, which is not yet well known: the use of «federated eRubrics», which enables researchers to better study the variables that come together in teamwork, due to the ease of creating and exporting digital data and the federation technologies that support them, hence facilitating interoperability among different tools. Overall, research aims at developing a greater reliability and validity for these practices, in line with some of the reviews (Reddy & Andrade, 2010), while opening up new lines of research to highlight the possibility of studying from a broader conceptual framework in the

Table 4. Categories with eRubric responses			
Number of Tasks	Number of eRubric responses	Number of categories related to responses	% of the relationship between students' categories and eRubric responses
1	5	2	40%
2	16	10	62.5%
3	6	3	50%
4	16	9	56.25%

future, by using eRubrics according to cooperative/collaborative learning/assessment modalities.

Among the most important results of this study, it is worth highlighting that the groups using eRubrics for cooperative assessment of teamwork have scored better and more homogeneous results than the control group in their individual marks when faced with the written test, whereas scores there were more dispersed. There were even scores well below the pass grade in the control group. This means that, in the absence of eRubric specific criteria, students in the control group had fewer elements with which to understand the tasks and more difficulties in facing them. This is reinforced by the results of the qualitative analysis, where the control group scored worse in the test and scores were more dispersed, even though they applied their own criteria, which matched the eRubric responses at over 40%. Regarding the analysis of the criteria used by students in the control group, we may also conclude that the higher the number of responses in the task, the higher approach to eRubric responses. As a consequence, the design of tasks with a high number of responses facilitates good results in learning assessment.

From both –quantitative and qualitative– analysis, eRubrics have proven to have a positive impact on achieving good individual learning results, mainly due to the specification of criteria for carrying out cooperative assessment of teamwork.

The present study highlights the analysis of uncommon practices. eRubrics, together with cooperative assessment, elicit skills that students will have to develop at some point in their career, as they will have to evaluate colleagues' work and apply quality criteria to processes and products. In short, these teaching methods and technologies anticipate the professional realities students will face from an educational perspective. There are many other experiments and much research that together serve to validate the results of this study and provide a greater insight into eRubric methods and their technological use for formative assessment.

Falchikov (2005) studies collaborative assessment and tackles some of the problems, when individual differences are not taken into account in the team. These variables –gender, ethnicity, educational level, age, previous experiences, and so on– somehow influence results. To minimize these confounders, he gathers various formulae used by different authors, such as «weighting the individual factor equal to the rating of the individual effort divided by the average of the efforts in the scores». In this project we were unable to control the individual differences in the design. However we hope to consider them on future occasions, while trying as much as possible to respect the naturalness of groups with quasi-experimental and qualitative designs.

Supports

Notes

[1] CSCL (Computer Supported Collaborative Learning).
[2] Gtea Federated Environment (http://gteavirtual.org).

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Table 5. Ratio of Students-Evaluators in All 4 Tasks			
Tasks	Ratio of Students-Evaluators	Number of Students-Evaluators	%
In 1 Task	3-4-5-8-10-13-19-24-26-28-29-30-34-35-37-41-42-44-46-48-49-50-53-56-61-62-67-68-69-73-74-75-76-79-80	35	50.72%
In 2 Tasks	1-7-12-15-16-18-20-23-32-33-36-38-40-43-45-51-52-58-60-65-66-71-72	23	33.33%
In 3 Tasks	9-11-14-25-27-31-39-57-63-64-70	11	15.95%
In 4 Tasks	-	0	0%
Total		69	100%

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Uses of the Internet in Educative Informal Contexts. Implication for Formal Education

Usos de Internet en contextos educativos informales: Implicaciones para la educación formal

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ABSTRACT

Media use plays an important role in the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young individuals and accounts for a large portion of their time. For this reason it is important to understand the variables that contribute to improve the use of the Internet as a source of information and knowledge in formal and informal contexts. How is it possible to exploit the huge potential of this tool to help people learn? What are the cognitive and social characteristics that help individuals experience the Internet without being overwhelmed by its negative effects? What skills are needed to select and manage information and communication? What type of Internet use creates new relationships and ways of learning? A sample of 191 subjects was examined to determine certain characteristic differences between subjects with high and low levels of Internet use. The results show that individuals with high levels of Internet use have higher extroversion and openness scores. The research analyses the use of the Internet in informal contexts to determine the benefits that may result from Internet use in education which may include the development of the skill set necessary to evaluate information critically and analytically and build independent attitudes.

RESUMEN

El uso de Internet ofrece un importante espacio para el desarrollo social, emocional y cognitivo de los jóvenes y ocupa gran parte de su tiempo libre. Por lo tanto, es muy importante observar algunas variables que contribuyen a mejorar su uso como fuente de información y conocimiento en contextos formales e informales. ¿Cómo, entonces, aprovechar el enorme potencial de esta herramienta para ayudar a las personas en su aprendizaje?, ¿cuáles son las características cognitivas y sociales que ayudan a utilizarla sin que les afecte negativamente?, ¿qué habilidades se necesitan para seleccionar y gestionar la información y la comunicación?, ¿qué tipos de usos de Internet suscitan aprendizaje y nuevas y diferentes relaciones? En una muestra de 191 sujetos se examinan las diferentes características entre los sujetos con alto y bajo nivel de uso. Los resultados muestran que los individuos con alto nivel de uso de Internet tienen una puntuación más alta en lo que se refiere a las características de extroversión y apertura. La investigación se basa en un marco teórico que parte del análisis del uso de Internet en un contexto informal para llegar a una reflexión sobre las posibilidades y ventajas que pueden derivarse de su uso en la educación, y del conjunto de habilidades que es necesario desarrollar para utilizar y evaluar la información de manera crítica y analítica y para construir una mente abierta y una actitud independiente.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Learning systems, formal learning, informal learning, personal learning environment ICT, teaching, individual differences, personality. Sistemas de aprendizaje, aprendizaje formal, aprendizaje informal, auto-aprendizaje, Internet, diferencias individuales, personalidad.

1. Introduction

Media use plays an important role in the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young individuals and accounts for a large portion of their time (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005). For many people, the Internet has become an essential part of daily life, and they have adopted the innovative linguistic practices, cultural forms and costumes that have emerged. An example of such changes is the fact that literacies (Garton, 1997) are evolving from traditional literacy to multiliteracy practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Nuzzaci, 2012) that involve the subject viewing, creating and critiquing multi-mode texts (spoken, written, visual, aural and interactive) (New London Group, 2000). Reading and understanding the Internet (Coiro, 2003a; 2003b) represents a new way to explore reality and to build knowledge through the development of unusual relationships. Multiliteracies are therefore a container in which multiple elements converge; giving rise to educational practices that can take place in formal and informal situations. Refers to education, «formal» proposal defines a teaching/learning that takes place in the context of education in which the relationship between teacher and learner is governed on the basis of a normative institutional and ends with the release of an officially recognized certification. The expression «non-formal education» defines a proposal for a teaching/learning process in which the relationship between teacher and learner is not regulated by the legislation that concerns the institutional context of education and does not end with the issuance of a certification officially recognized.

Many people all over the world learn a series of skills through multi-level activities that are put into action when they use the Internet. The concept of multiliteracies incorporates the development of learning potential through the notion that contamination between the social cultures helps to delineate the multiple and complex contemporary languages. An American survey found that 84% of college students possessed a laptop and that 99% used the Internet (Student Monitor, 2003). Students seem to use the Internet to interact with others and find materials for assistance (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Student Monitor, 2003). The Internet is a useful tool for searching information (Kumar & Karapudi, 2012), and is becoming a key tool for news consumption by young people (Casero, 2012), but it is also a «modality/channel» that expands the notion of text to visual, multimodal and electronic hypertexts (Garton, 1997). People search for information on the Internet because they hope that more information will help them make the right purchase decision (Bei & al., 2004) and also to communicate using different modalities. For instance, Soengas (2013) believes that social networks could represent a counterbalance with respect to official censorship and government supported media, and that they helped overcome the isolation of Arab society. The Internet is a powerful device that, if used appropriately, can enhance the development of children's physical, cognitive, and social skills. Tejedor and Pulido (2012) analyzed current online risks which produce the most emotional distress for children and they focus on how to empower children in their daily Internet use highlighting the importance of the acquisition of skills related to media literacy. The research shows that the Internet is a powerful tool that is revolutionizing thinking mechanisms, learning, communication and play. Peterson and Merino (2003) agree that the Internet makes a large volume and variety of information available with relatively minimal expenditures of time, effort and money.

People can acquire information from web sites that is similar to the information available from traditional mass-media advertising but they can also acquire information directly from physical places (Peterson & Merino, 2003). The media contributes to a re-theorisation of literacy that is incorporated in ideas, practices, interventions and educational practices that teachers can implement in formal contexts (Cuzzocrea, Murdaca & Oliva, 2011). At the same time, the use and implementation of different systems of signification combined with relevant and challenging content enables the students (Gibbons, 2002) to offer sophisticated and critical interpretations and analysis of the world, their own work and the work of others. The Internet allows information to flow freely from one network to another, increasing cultural communication because information passes from one culture to another (i.e. cultural trends include Facebook, instant messaging, blogs, etc.). Cultures can directly communicate with other cultures through elements, signs, systems of signification and cultural symbolism (Nuzzaci, 2011; Nuzzaci, 2012). They use it for activities such as shopping, information and socialization, and in many other ways it is considered to be one of the key factors of innovation towards a «Smart Community» (Nuzzaci & La Vecchia, 2012).

It seems that there is no aspect of life that the Internet does not touch. It is probably the recognition of the predominance of the Internet that has recently led psychologists, pedagogists, sociologists, and semeiologists (Eco, 1975) to focus on this phenomenon (Amichai-Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2003). The Internet

offers an alternative for people to gratify their social and emotional needs, which might be unmet in their traditional offline networks (Leung, 2003). The increasingly multi-modal nature of our global technology is expressed at different levels and evidence shows that the majority of Internet use is for entertainment (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Bearne, 2003; Downes & Zammit, 2001; Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). Cyber-culture does not have a distinctly recognizable form or singular visual style yet; it does seems to mobilize different abilities and resources operating through a combination of perceptions, projections, meanings and interpretations. However, due to the easy accessibility of information, education has been able to advance in many ways. People can now learn about anything using the Internet as a source of information, but much less is known about how people use comprehension strategies during Internet use (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004). Poor empirical evidence has been gathered to support claims that (Salomon, 1994) new types of cognitive processes and strategic knowledge are necessary to effectively locate, comprehend, and use information; the research also analyzes how this is related to the features, characteristics and traits of the individuals and highlights the importance of Internet in education (Keller & Karau, 2013).

With the exploration of context, environment and cultures, there is a decrease in cultural uniqueness because people see there are other possible ways of living life and they gain the abilities (cognitive, social etc.) that help them adapt to a complex society. In the faceless cyberspace, people can create online personas where they alter their identities and «pretend to be» someone other than themselves (Turkle, 1995: 192). They can enjoy aspects of the Internet that allow them to meet, socialize, and exchange ideas through the use of e-mail, ICQ, chat rooms and newsgroups, which in turn «allow the person to fulfil unmet emotional and psychological needs that are more intimate» (Chak & Leung, 2004: 561) and less threatening than real life relationships. Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) examined personality theory in

relation to Internet use and found it to be connected to different levels of Internet use. They analysed levels of extroversion and neuroticism and found that the individuals showed different patterns in their interaction with the Internet. The main result was that extroverts and introverts use different services on the Internet. Furthermore Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2003) demonstrates not only that personality characteristics are related to different types of Internet use, but also that these personality characteristics are an important indicator of well-being during Internet use. Tosun and Lajunen (2010: 162) indicated that psychoticism was the only personality dimension related

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to «establishing new relationships and having «Internet only» friends; and extroversion was the only personality dimension» that is related to maintaining long-distance relationships, and supporting daily face-to-face relationships. The results of Tousun and Lajunen (2010: 162) supported the idea that for some individuals, «Internet can be used as social substitute for face-to-face social interactions while for some others» it can be used as a tool of social extension.

Correa, Hinsley, and De-Zuniga (2010: 247) «revealed that while extraversion and openness to experiences were positively related to social media use, emotional stability was a negative predictor». A description of the five personality traits is as follow: openness to experience trait refers to individuals' receptivity to learning, novelty and change. Individuals who are high in openness to experience tend to be intelligent, curious and like to try new ideas; conscien-

tiousness trait refers to individuals who are rule-following, responsible, dependable, detail-oriented, achievement-oriented, like to plan ahead, thorough and persistent; extraversion trait is related to heightened level of sociability. «Individuals who are high in extraversion are energetic, bold, warm-hearted, outgoing» and enjoy the company of others (Tan & Yang, 2012: 186); agreeableness trait is most concerned with interpersonal relationships. Individuals who are high in this trait tend to be friendly, courteous, considerate, accommodating, tend to avoid conflict, co-operative, helpful, forgiving and show propensity to trust; and neuroticism trait is often known as the anxiety factor. It deals with adjustment and emotional resilience when under stress. Individuals who are high in neuroticism are likely to have higher anxiety level, feel insecure, discontented, sensitive to ridicule, shy and easily embarrassed.

Erjavec (2013: 117) discovered that young children use Facebook for informal learning, but that they believed that there is a connection between use of Facebook and knowledge and skills that their teachers valued in school. «Young students use Facebook primarily for social support and research has shown that there» are gender differences in the expression of emotional support. These results are important because they show that personality is a highly relevant factor in determining behaviour on the Internet. For this reason it is important understand the variables that contribute to improving the Internet use as a source of information and knowledge in formal and informal contexts (Costa & al. 2013).

The Internet has a unique potential to assist people to develop the ability to build and maintain relationships and knowledge. Accessing the information easily, sharing the information and the sources of information are important factors during this process. In a learning context, the Internet can provide effective feedback to the users, enabling pair and group work, enhancing student achievement, providing access to authentic materials, facilitating greater interaction and individualising instruction (Kabilan & Rajab, 2010). In some cases, as McKenna, Green, and Gleason (2002) suggested, there may be a natural transition from an online relationship to an offline association. How is it possible to exploit the huge potential of this tool to help people learn? What are the characteristics and cognitive and social skills needed to help individuals experience the Internet without being overwhelmed by its negative effects? What skills are needed to select and manage information and communication? What uses of the Internet make relationships and

learning different? This exploratory study attempted to examine the potential influences of personality variables (emotional stability, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness) on Internet use. These characteristics seem to play an important role in Internet use in informal contexts (Murdaca, Cuzzocrea, Conti & Larcan, 2011).

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine differences in personality traits, in subjects with a high level of Internet use and subjects with a low level of Internet use after controlling for problematic use of internet. This study used the Big Five Personality Traits taxonomy (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Landers & Lounsbury, 2006). It is a popular personality classification method, and a well-established and unifying framework for measuring personality. The factor of problematic use of internet is considered and controlled because these characteristics are often the subjects of investigation and explain the negative effects that problematic use of internet can have on social and academic development of young adults (Chen & Peng, 2008). Others investigations have been made in order to determine the relation between Internet use and personality. This article brings as a novelty the distinction of personality traits between users with high and users with low levels of Internet use.

Each subject has a cultural profile with their learning outcomes and competencies. This article shall be limited to the first aspect of the problem and postpones to subsequent analysis the exploration of other questions. The significant results motivate to move forward with research. Our hypotheses were examined in a sample of Italian participants. This was deemed important because few studies have examined the role of personality in the internet use in Italy.

2. Material and methods
2.1. Sample

Participants for this study consisted of 89 females and 104 males. Participants were asked to fill a socio-demographic questionnaire asking several questions about age, gender, ethnic background, and educational level.

All the 192 participants ranged from 18 to 47 years with a mean of 31.25 (SD=8.62). All participants had the Italian nationality, were Italian-speaking and voluntarily decided to take part in the research. It was a convenience sample and they were recruited by soliciting volunteers through friends, and appeals to community groups such as churches, clubs, associations and local organizations in Messina (Italy). In terms of education level, the majority of male participants reported that

they had a high school diploma (64%), 21% had a middle school certificate, 13% had a degree, and 2% had a primary school certificate. The majority of female instead reported that they had a high school diploma (67%), 14% had a middle school certificate and 19% had a degree (fig. 1).

2.2. Procedure and measures

Participants signed an informed consent form. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary. They did not receive money or course credit for participation. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were instructed to respond to the questions as honestly as possible, and were told that there were no right or wrong answers. Participants completed the questionnaire in approximately 25 min under the supervision of a researcher.

• Problematic Internet use: To eliminate the potential confounding effects of problematic Internet use, in accordance with the indications of Young (1998) subjects who scored in the at-risk range on Internet addiction scale (i.e., greater than 70; Young,

Figure 1 – Participants' education levels.

1998) were excluded from analysis. The 20-item Internet Addiction Test (IAT; Young, 1998) was used (e.g.: How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?). Respondents are asked to answer the 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale indicating the degree to which Internet use affects their daily routine, social life, productivity, sleeping pattern, and feelings. The higher the score, the greater the problems caused by Internet use. Young found a cut-off score of 70 to indicate a problematic level of Internet use. 7 subjects (3 male and 4 female) who scored in the at-risk range on problematic Internet use were excluded from analysis.

• Internet use and online experience: Internet use was measured by asking respondents (a) the number of days per week they used the Internet and (b) the number of hours and minutes spent on each Internet

session. After having excluded subjects at risk for problematic Internet use, subjects were categorized in two groups according to the frequency of Internet use (bottom percentile up to 49, 50 and above top percentile): low use of Internet (N=94) and high use of Internet (N=8).

• Personality: Personality traits were measured using the Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ; Caprara, Barbaranelli & Borgogni, 1993). The BFQ contains five domain scales: Energy/Extroversion (e.g., I talk to a lot of different people at parties), Agreeableness/ Friendliness (I am interested in people.), Conscientiousness (e.g., I pay attention to details), Emotional stability (vs. Neuroticism) (e.g.: I am relaxed most of the time), and Openness (e.g.: I am full of ideas). For each of the 132 items, respondents indicated the extent to which they assign personal relevance to it on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (very false for me) to 5 (very true for me). Validity of the BFQ scales has been demonstrated by high correlations with analogous scales, such as the NEO-PI, on both Italian and American samples (Barbaranelli & Caprara, 2000). Alpha coefficients for the present study are presented in table 1.

3. Results

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 15.1) was used. Group differences were analyzed using a multivariate of variance (MANOVA) and t-test for simple independent groups comparing and t-test for dependent groups in order to verify differences in trait's personality. All dates were transformed in sin-1 (Freeman & Tukey, 1950) to normalize the distribution.

Descriptive Analyses of personality in the two groups are synthesized in table 1. Participants reported to be on line with a mean of 21.66 hours (SD=20.26) for weak: low users remain on line with a mean of 7.19 (SD=4.33), while high users of internet reported a mean of 35.21 (SD=19.99).

Differences between groups [$F_{(1,190)}$=6.36; p=.012] were found. The tests between groups showed that subjects with higher levels of Internet use had higher Extroversion scores [$t_{(190)}$=2.44; p=.02] and a higher score on the Openness scale [$t_{(190)}$=3.86; p=.001] compared to subjects with lower levels of Internet use. However, the testing within the groups yielded no significant differences when comparing the five traits [$F_{(4,760)}$=.55; p=.696]. There were differences within personality traits connected to the different levels of Internet use [$F_{(4, 760)}$ =5.30;

p=.001]. In fact, a paired sample test showed that subjects that have lower levels of Internet use scored higher in emotional stability than in Openness [t(93)=2.74; p=.007], and subjects that have higher level of Internet use scored lower in emotional

Tab. 1 - Descriptive Analyses of personality's characteristics of low and high internet user						
		Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness
Low use of Internet	M	71.51	71.53	71.63	72.56	70.88
	SD	4.66	3.79	4.93	3.77	4.54
High use of Internet	M	73.24	72.10	72.24	71.36	73.59
	SD	5.10	3.69	5.45	4.80	5.11
Total	A	.73	.75	.72	.78	.76
	M	72.40	71.82	71.94	71.95	72.27
	SD	4.95	3.74	5.20	4.36	5.01

stability than in Openness [t(97)= 3.28; p=.001]. Subjects that have higher levels of Internet use showed higher levels of Extroversion than Emotional Stability [t(97)=2.78; p= .006]. Finally subject that have higher levels of Internet use showed a higher level of Openness than Agreeableness [t(97)=2.50; p=.014].

4. Discussion and conclusion

Results have shown that subjects with high levels of Internet use have higher scores in extroversion and openness. These preliminary results of the research illustrate the potential and the advantages that could come from using the Internet for education. People with high levels of extroversion are assertive, energetic, active, upbeat, and excitable. The excitement and sensory stimulation sought by extroverts' leads them to use Internet to satisfy their emotional and social needs. Instead, openness to experience describes the originality and complexity of an individual's mental and experiential life and is characterized by activity, imagination, aesthetics, and sensitivity. Subjects that scored higher could use Internet to satisfy their need to explore and to improve their knowledge. In fact, in according with Correa & al. (2010) the positive relationship between openness to experiences and social media use found in this study was expected given the novel nature of these technologies.

Therefore, this may explain why extraverted, rather than introverted, people tend to engage in social media use. These results are consistent with other studies that explored the relationship between personality traits and Facebook and social media use (Correa & al., 2010). This result suggests that given the influence of these social media on today's social interactions –more than half of America's teens and young adults use them and more than one-third of all Web users engage in these activities– Internet designers should take into account users' characteristics and needs (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000). The same thing should happen to the school context in situations of instructional design. Social networks can become a resource for teaching and learning when they become part of a deliberate

and rational process that can be located and developed within different contexts and operational knowledge with evident implication for the opportunity to improve educational outcomes, using technologies that students are accustomed to. The results of this research indicate that the use of Internet could provide the opportunity to improve educational outcomes using technology with which the students were already familiar, especially in creating a favorable disposition to learning in the school environment using the resources available in the informal contexts (Costa & al., 2013).

In according with Correa & al. (2010) and using the notions of digital natives and digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001), this study concludes that many digital immigrants confront each change in technology as something new to be mastered. Correa & al. (2010) found that older people who are predisposed to being open to new activities are more likely to engage in social media use while for younger generations using the Internet as a social media tool has more to do with being extraverted. Younger people grew up with these digital options at their disposal to interact and communicate, making them digital natives (Prensky, 2001) and often show more skills in using digital technologies of those of teachers. If the teachers were using in the school context the same tools that the students use to communicate could identify the best solutions to help them teach better and to make their teaching more responsive to the characteristics of the students, by applying force on those variables that constitute the engine of learning (emotionality) and stimulating higher-order skills (awareness and open-mindedness), as well as meeting new forms of multi-literacy. The authors of this paper are working in this direction with a series of research initiatives that link the isolation of significant variables in the informal setting in order to verify the effects in formal context (Costa & al., 2013) and the relationship between digital competence and multiliteracies (Nuzzaci, 2011; 2012).

This research is grounded within the theoretical framework that the use of Internet goes beyond informal learning and includes the use of information in a

critical or analytic manner and building an open mind and independent attitude. Technology is an integrated part of today's schooling and everyday practice and for this reason future research should focus on assessing how students use technology as thinking tools in order to search, produce, manage, analyse, and share knowledge as well as solve complex problems individually and collaboratively (Häkkinen & Hämäläinen, 2012). Numerous researchers have been arguing that using information and computer technologies (ICTs) in traditional paper-based reading activities can maximize students' reading comprehension in a technology-supported learning setting (Chen, Kinshuk, Wei & Yang, 2008; Grasset, Dunser & Billinghurst, 2008). This experience promotes critical thinking and communication, even if such impact needs to be supported by further well-documented evidence since conditional effects are relatively unknown.

Combining digital information with physical objects is the trend in education, which allows students to use technology in the classroom (Huang, Wu & Chen, 2012). Furthermore, Barron (2006) refers to the importance of self-initiated and interest-driven learning that takes place across formal and informal learning settings. For this reason, powerful computer-supported collaborative environments can be seen as essential elements in the re-structuring of social interaction and creation of knowledge (Häkkinen & Hämäläinen, 2012).

There are still some open questions and more evidence is needed for:

• Hp1 - Selective use and awareness promote the integration of all subjects and school groups.

• Hp2 – Raising performance standards in the use of Internet due to high performance standards promotes critical thinking for all subjects and school groups.

• Hp3 - Raising performance standards of Internet use due to high faculty standards promotes social awareness for all subjects and school groups.

• Hp4 - Raising performance standards in the use of Internet predicts awareness for all subjects and groups.

• Hp5 - Raising performance standards of Internet use promotes critical thinking.

• Hp6 - Raising performance standards of Internet use promotes aspirations for all subjects and groups.

The contribution suggests avenues for future research for better understanding whether the nature of the variables of use of Internet differs in certain ways, thus producing dissimilar outcomes for different groups of subjects in relation to their personal characteristics. In order to comprehensively examine the rela-

tionship between personal characteristics and uses/ interaction, educational outcomes and gender race status should also be considered. In this sense, more analysis should be conducted and other instruments used to determine whether the relationships are significantly different for student subgroups. Interestingly, the types of use of Internet relate to smaller gains in cultural appreciation and social awareness. Other research shows an impact on student outcomes. The results bring to light that students, who use the Internet in a more selective and conscious way, possess higher skill levels and tend to aspire to more advanced degrees. This research contributes to clarifying the elements that act as a backdrop in the relationship between learning that takes place in informal and formal contexts, and it helps to understand how to build new forms of literacy. This relates to cultural appreciation and social awareness that represent vital factors in the improvement of the cultural profiles of the population.

Notes

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Perceived Social Support as a Factor of Rural Women's Digital Inclusion in Online Social Networks

El apoyo social percibido como factor de inclusión digital de las mujeres de entorno rural en las redes sociales virtuales

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a study on the digital inclusion of rural women in social networks. Its main objective is to understand the social support perceived by these women within online social networks and its relation to digital inclusion, considering also whether there are differences in the degree of support depending on age, family status and employment status. To do this, we applied two scales measuring perceived social support and digital inclusion to 478 women from rural areas of Andalusia aged 18 to 65. The results showed a medium level of support, with significant differences found in the social support perceived by women depending on their age, family status and employment status. Women, who were young, students, single, with no children and who use Tuenti and Facebook perceived a higher level of social support in social networks. We also observed a strong relation between perceived social support and the digital inclusion of women in social networks, with similarities appearing in studies carried out in different contexts and social groups. The discussion looks at implications for the formation of an active and participatory citizenship of women in social networks.

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta los resultados de un estudio sobre la inclusión digital de las mujeres rurales en las redes sociales. Su objetivo fundamental es conocer el apoyo social percibido por las mujeres dentro de las redes sociales online y su relación con la inclusión digital, considerando también si existen diferencias en el grado de apoyo en función de la edad y la situación familiar y laboral. Para ello, aplicamos sendas escalas de medida del apoyo social percibido y la inclusión digital a 478 mujeres de entornos rurales de Andalucía con edades comprendidas entre 18 y 65 años. Los resultados muestran un grado de apoyo medio, encontrando diferencias significativas en el apoyo social percibido por las mujeres en función de su edad y situación familiar y laboral. Son las mujeres jóvenes, solteras, estudiantes, sin hijos que usan Tuenti y Facebook las que más apoyo social perciben en las redes sociales. Asimismo, se observa una fuerte relación entre el apoyo social percibido y la inclusión digital de las mujeres en las redes sociales, mostrando coincidencias con otras investigaciones realizadas en otros contextos y grupos sociales. La discusión de resultados presenta algunas implicaciones para la formación de una ciudadanía activa y participativa de las mujeres en las redes sociales.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Social networks, rural women, digital inclusion, women's studies, social capital, digital divide, digital literacy, lifelong learning.
Redes sociales, mujer rural, inclusión digital, estudios de las mujeres, capital social, brecha digital, alfabetización digital, aprendizaje permanente.

1. Introduction and current situation

With the incorporation of settings and resources making interaction and online communication much easier, the Web 2.0 has opened up the spectrum of possibilities for education and learning, but it has also had an effect on social exclusion (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste & Shafer, 2004; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007), as it constitutes a setting for the exercise of citizenship which depends on social factors such as age, social class, gender, educational level or geographical location.

Several reports have warned of the obstacles faced by rural women over access and use of technologies (LaRose, Gregg, Strover, Straubhaar & Carpenter, 2007; Lichy, 2012; Rebollo, García-Pérez & Sánchez-Franco, 2013), highlighting several factors which may contribute to their digital exclusion. Previous studies have shown that gender inequalities may be perpetuated beyond actual access to digital technologies, being observed in other dimensions such as autonomy of use, experience, skill and types of use and social support (Hargittai, 2010).

These studies have shown that access is a necessary condition but is not in itself enough for digital inclusion (hereinafter DI) and the exercise of full digital citizenship. This concerns above all the intended and advanced uses of the technologies and their integration in daily activities (Castaño, Martin & Vázquez, 2008; García, López de Ayala & Catalina, 2013).

In a review of the literature on gender and the use of technology Hargittai & Shafer (2006) warned that, due to the greater share of responsibilities taken on by women in their homes and in the upbringing of their children, women had less time to use the computer and navigate on the Internet, suggesting that gender inequalities persist even when the obstacles of access and basic use have been overcome.

This explains why the DI of groups at risk of exclusion in these new settings has become a target of public policies.

In Andalusia (southern Spain), the main objective of the Information Society Plan for Andalusia is to digitally educate the groups at greatest risk of digital exclusion and the aim of the Strategic Plan for Equality between Women and Men is to promote the participation of women in the construction of the Information and Knowledge Society with special emphasis on women in rural settings, elderly women and women with disabilities. In this paper, we study the perceived social support (hereinafter PSS) of Andalusian women in rural settings in online social networks and their relation to the degree of DI.

1.1. Perceived social support in the learning and use of ICTs

The influence of social support in the attitudes, perceptions and performance in Science and Technology has already been studied (Rosson, Carroll & Sinha, 2011; Rice, Barth, Guadagno, Smith & McCallum, 2013), with gender differences being found. Some studies have underlined the importance of social support for predicting and explaining women's attitudes and interest towards technologies in general (Alario & Anguita, 2001; Castaño, 2008), breaking down the myth of female technophobia. Vekiri & Chronaki (2008) showed that access, frequency and the variety of activities are less significant predictors of skills and motivation towards technology than PSS, which indicates that providing quality experiences with technologies may not reduce gender differences if this does not go hand in hand with a social setting of support.

In turn, Bimber (2000) and Carpenter & Buday (2007) discovered that women and elderly people tended to use ICTs for social reasons and for a relational purpose. Prins, Toso & Schafft (2009) showed the influence that the meaning of belonging to the group and strong relations of support had on the will of women to continue learning. In their study, Lin, Tang & Kuo (2012) found that empathetic understanding and the support of other people were the main source of encouragement for adult women in their ICT learning process, finding that social support enabled them to overcome their fear of being made to look ridiculous and their anxiety over the use of ICTs. Pfeil, Zaphiris & Wilson (2009) also found that the older people in their community were able to offer useful advice and support based on their own experience and, as they had similar interests, they were able to empathize and build mutual understanding, which encouraged their learning, perseverance, self-confidence and empowerment in relation to ICTs.

Fuente, Herrero & Gracia (2010) showed the close link between PSS and commitment and continuity in the use of ICTs, pointing out that the fact that virtual communities are heterogeneous in terms of the sociodemographic profile of their participants and homogeneous in terms of their interests and values makes them a potential source of support (Herrero, Meneses, Valente & Rodríguez, 2004; Fuente et al., 2010). This was reiterated by Sloep & Berlanga (2011), who considered that an essential feature of a learning social network is that it should involve people who share fairly similar interests, making trust and support among participants the central part of the interaction.

Several studies have found gender differences in the use and relations of people with technologies (Wasserman & Richmond-Abbott, 2005; Hilbert, 2011). However, the Web 2.0 and, in particular, online social networks have changed the presence and participation of women in online settings. Some studies have revealed that activities related to keeping in touch with friends and relatives are carried out mainly by women (Clipson, Wilson & DuFrene, 2010; Mazman & Usluel, 2011). Sánchez-Franco, Buitrago-Esquinas & Hernández-Mogollón (2012) found that the online social network is a setting which fosters interdependence between people and their social capital, encouraging their active participation and commitment to the community.

Other studies have also underlined the value of online social networks to go beyond the physical-geographical barriers of communities enabling, on the one hand, local communities to strengthen their ties and keep together and, on the other, links to be developed with people with common interests and values who are far away geographically (Castells, 2001; Kollock & Smith, 2003). Godfrey & Johnson (2009) proposed a model for access and use of the Internet for elderly persons based on the enrichment of the digital circles of support; in other words, through sustainable digital communities which strengthen local communities and in which people adopt more active roles. This study demonstrated that digital circles of support produced an increase in confidence and a reduction in anxiety when using social networks and they also facilitated ICTs integration in daily life through support services in activities which were important for them.

Most of these studies have analyzed the relation between PSS and the attitudes and uses of ICTs in general and Internet in particular, rather than focusing specifically on the use of online social networks and, when they have done so, they have studied child and adolescent populations, not adults. In parallel, the scientific literature has documented that gender is not the only factor which can have an influence on the digital divide: age and geographical location also play a part. Focusing specifically on the social support of

adult women in rural areas in social networks and how this relates to their DI therefore constitutes a highly interesting research objective. This is particularly the case when one considers that the strategic plan over the last decade in Spain and Andalusia has been oriented towards digital inclusion and citizenship of women with attention on specific groups (elderly women, rural areas, etc.). For that reason, we aim to answer the following questions:

• What level of social support do they perceive in their personal social networks? What is the profile of

> This indicates that the policies on digital inclusion have produced good results in terms of accessibility, with a large majority of women using this technology at a functional level. However, we have still not seen the effects of these policies at other levels and in different forms of network usage. International studies have pointed out that it is necessary to look at digital inclusion beyond mere access and include aspects about routine and advanced uses of ICTs.

the women who perceive most support in the social networks?

• To what extent is PSS in the social networks related to these women's level of DI?

• What level of DI do these women show? What challenges do women in a rural setting face in terms of DI?

2. Material and Methods
2.1. Participants

This study involved 478 women from rural areas of Andalusia; their ages ranged from 18 to 65 and they were selected using a quota sample based on age and municipality. The following inclusion criteria were used to select these women: a) having a minimum of one year's experience in the use of an online social network; b) having their residence and normal activity in a rural area and, c) representing different profiles in terms of age, educational level, family situation, etc. On the basis of Act 45/2007, December 13, for sustainable development in the rural setting, we considered rural areas to be municipalities or smaller local corpo-

rations with a population under 30,000 and a density below 100 inhabitants per Km2.

Most of the women in the sample lived in a family (98.1%), and of these 54.8% had children while 43.3% did not. A majority had either completed university (39.7%) or secondary education (29.7%). A further 17.9% had completed compulsory primary education while only 12.7% had failed to complete compulsory education. Nearly half of the women had remunerated employment (48.8%) or were unemployed (21.80%). There was also a presence of students (12.6%) and housewives (11.8%). As for their social networks, 43.5% used both Facebook and Tuenti while 41.6% only used Facebook.

2.2. Instruments

The questionnaire we used included the following sections:

• Sociodemographic characteristics and level of studies: participants were asked about their age, educational level, family situation and their current occupational situation.

• PSS scale: prepared ad hoc from previous studies (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988; Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991), its design took on a functional perspective of the PSS, according to which we were interested in the perception of support of the person using the social networks; in other words, the perception that there were people in their network who provided them with emotional, material and relational support. This scale consisted of twelve 5-point Likert type response items (from 0 –never– to 4 – always–). Applying a categorical principal components analysis with an optimal scaling procedure for ordinal data, we obtained a very high reliability coefficient with a Cronbach alpha of 0.955 and optimal construct validity, as all the items presented high saturation rates in the principal component with a mean of 0.816 and a standard deviation of 0.053 which indicates scale unidimensionality.

• DI Scale: designed ad hoc on the basis of previous reports (Becerril & Ramos, 2007; Gimeno, 2011), it consisted of 21, 5-point, Likert type response items (from 0 –never– to 4 –always–), 7 related to access, 7 to use and 7 to production. This scale showed a high reliability coefficient for Cronbach's alpha of 0.905, and optimum construct validity indexes, with a mean saturation of the items in the principal component of 0.567 and a standard deviation of 0.157.

2.3. Procedure

In the selection, localization and questioning of the

women we were assisted by the Equality Monitors from the Women's Information Points (PIM in the Spanish acronym) of the municipalities involved. They were trained in how to administer the questionnaire1 correctly. The questionnaire was conducted by the interviewer as a structured interview to ensure that the women understood the questionnaire and filled it in correctly. All interviews were conducted in municipal offices used for digital technology training and each lasted approximately half an hour. In all cases the women taking part were informed of the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation in the study and why it was being conducted and they decided to participate without receiving any kind of compensation. Data was collected during the months of March, April and May 2012.

Once the data had been introduced into the SPSS statistical package (version 18 for Windows), we conducted an exploratory analysis of the variables to ascertain their structure and distribution. For this paper, we presented the results of the PSS and DI on a three point scale (rarely, sometimes and mostly) after checking that this recoding did not affect either its validity or reliability. A variable was created for each of the PSS and DI scales with the overall score from the sum of all the items, with the overall PSS variable on a 0 to 48 point scale and the overall DI variable on a 0 to 84 scale, consisting of three dimensions measuring access, use and initiative on the networks whose scales ranged from 0 to 28 points respectively.

To check the hypotheses of relation we applied Pearson's r and linear regression and Student's t-test and Anova for the hypotheses of difference, once we had checked the homoscedasticity of the samples with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

3. Analysis and results

In terms of the primary objective of our research, identifying the level of PSS of women in rural settings in social networks, the data obtained indicate a mean of 24.11 and a standard deviation of 11.89, which corresponds to a medium level of support. This indicates that 36% of women perceive a medium level of support and 33.4% perceive a high level of support in the social networks, while 30.6% perceive little or no support.

Out of the group of aspects of the PSS studied, there are five which best define women's perception of social support in the networks: to have people they can have fun with, who express affection towards them, who they can talk to, who they share interests with and in whom they can trust. Table 1 shows the

measurements for the main tendency and dispersion in these items.

As figure 1 shows most of the women perceive a medium-high level of support in these indicators. However, some still find little support in the social networks, with 24% finding few people with whom to share interests and 30.5% finding few people in whom they can trust.

In contrast to these aspects, we found that a high proportion of women did not find support to explore new areas of their online identity (60.4%) or find people who understood their problems (41.5%) or to whom they could express affection over the internet (40.9%).

In turn, in relation to the profile of women who perceive most and those who perceive least support, the contrast tests point to significant differences depending on age (F=9.038; p=0.000), employment situation (F=5.609; p=0.000) and family situation, with differences being found in the marital status (F= 4.141; p=0.16), having children (Levene's test; F=7.522; p=0.006; t=3.051; p=.002) and type of family (F=3.394; p=0.035). The Tukey tests (table 2) indicate that under -25 women who are students are the ones who perceive most support online; in contrast, middle-aged women with remunerated employment are the ones who perceive least social support. Furthermore, the Student's t test indicates that women who do not have children perceive more support than those who do.

As for the objective of studying the relation between PSS of these women online and their level of inclusion, Pearson's r indicates a correlation of 0.546 with a level of significance of 0.000, which shows a consistent relation between both variables. Furthermore, the linear regression indicates that perceived social support shows itself to be a predictor variable of the digital inclusion of this group of adult women in rural areas in online social networks, explaining a percentage of variance of 29.8% (R2=0.298; p=0.000).

Finally, as for the objective of identifying the level of DI of these women, we found that they showed a medium level of inclusion, with a mean of 37.27 and a standard deviation of 13.82. This indicated that 52.5% of the women showed a medium level of DI, 35.7% showed a low level of inclusion and only 11.8% expressed a high level of inclusion in online social networks.

The results indicate that the level of access and functional use of networks has been reached by a high percentage of these women, with the level of access being the one they reached most (M=14.79; SD=4.96) followed by the level of use (M=13.74; SD=6.66). This way, in terms of access we found that 60.4% of the women reported a medium level of access and 20% a high level. As for use, 35.8% reported medium level of use and 30.2% a high level, but 34% reported little or no use. However, the level of advanced uses of social networks, in other words, everything to do with the development of their own digital identity (autonomy, initiative, etc.) was the least present in these women and therefore received the lowest scores (M=8.47; SD=6.13). We found that 65.1% of the women indicated little or no activity on this level, while 26.1% indicated some initiative and only 8.8% showed a high level of advanced uses.

Thus, the more deficient aspects are those referring to: creating groups in the social network and making them more dynamic by inviting others to take part (67.9%), and how to follow a routine when using the internet (53.4%). To summarize, we can say that these women use online networks in a functional way, focusing on consultation, publication and comments about information.

Finally, in terms of access, we would like to point out that a high percentage of women stated that they had not received training courses (62.7%) and a substantial percentage even stated that they did not have access to these courses (29.5%) to learn how to use the networks, suggesting

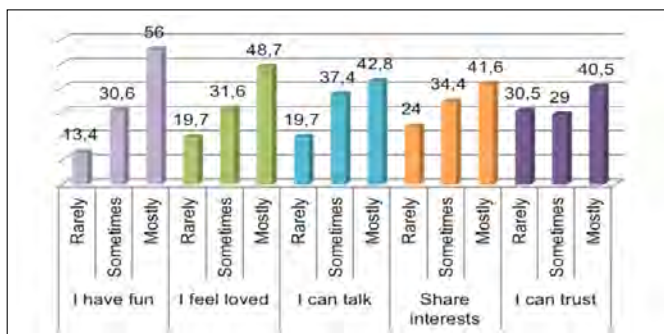| Table 1. Description of some PSS indicators		
Item	Mean	Stand. Dev.
I have people I can have fun with	2.58	1.090
I have people who love me	2.38	1.204
I have people I can talk to	2.34	1.135
I have people I share interests with	2.23	1.213
I have people in whom I can trust	2.14	1.260

Figure 1. Distribution of women in some PSS indicators..

that their network learning had been done in informal settings through their own personal networks.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The results of this study allow us to state that women in rural areas perceive a medium level of support in the social networks, with three clearly differentiated groups emerging: a group of 30.6% of women who find little support, a group of 36% who find sufficient support and 33.4% who perceive a lot of support in the networks. When looking at the profile of these women, we found that the group which perceives most online network support consists of women who are under 25, students, single and without children. In contrast, we found that the group which perceived least online support were married women with children and with remunerated employment. Some studies (Hargittai & Shafer, 2006; Castaño, Martin & Vázquez, 2008) have found that the greater share of responsibilities assumed by women at home and in the upbringing of their children means that they have less free-time to use the computer and browse on the Internet, which lowers their online profile and prevents their digital skills from improving once the obstacle of access has been overcome. Thus, we have found significant differences in the perceived social support of women in a rural setting depending on their age, family situation and occupational situation, in favor of the group of young women who are university students, single and without children, observing the presence of a generational divide manifested in the perceived social support in online social networks. Although we can conclude that the level of social support that these women perceive is not just conditioned by age, but by other aspects of their life. These results coincide with those from other earlier studies which have documented the incidence of multiple factors in relation to the use and handling of technologies and Internet in general (DiMaggio et al., 2004; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Hargittai, 2010).

The most important dimensions of social support for women refer to the fact of finding people who they can have fun with, talk to, feel loved, share interests and trust. Most of the studies on social networks have highlighted shared interests and trust as defining features of online interaction (Herrero et al., 2004; Fuente et al., 2010; Sloep & Berlanga, 2011). Women in

Table 2. Post hoc Tukey tests of PSS depending on Age and Occupational Situation								
Age				**Occupational situation**				
Age Ranges (1-4)	N	Subset for alpha =0.05		Occupational Situation (1-5)	N	Subset for alpha =0.05		
		1	2			1	2	
Between 40 and 54	145	21.56		Remunerated employment	216	21.84		
Over 55	48	22.44		Housewife	52	24.25	24.25	
Between 26 and 39	150	23.66		Unemployed	97	25.98	25.98	
Up to 25	116		28.78	Retired/pensioner	22	26.23	26.23	
Significant		0.604	1.000	Student	58		29.12	
				Significant		0.305	0.205	

rural settings show that the possibility of having fun, communicating –feeling connected- and feeling loved, are also aspects which are highly valued as part of the support they feel in networks. These results reveal the social and relational feeling that the use of online networks has for these women, which ties in with the results of other previous studies performed with adult women (Bimber, 2000; Carpenter & Buday, 2007). In contrast, women perceive little support to discover new areas of their digital identity and establish certain levels of trust and affective intimacy. Putnam (2000) points out that while face-to-face networks are dense and well thought through, virtual networks are watered down and real bonding is difficult. Our results indicate that women use online social networks to complement and extend their physical networks, suggesting that their activity revolves around their face-to-face networks.

The results obtained in this study allow us to conclude that there is a strong link between the social support perceived by these women in the social networks and their digital inclusion, which confirms the general tendency observed in other studies on the relation between social setting and the use of technologies (Vekiri & Chronaki, 2008; Prins, Toso & Schaff, 2009; Lin, Tang & Kuo, 2012). This study shows that social support is also a variable which predicts the use of social networks in adult women in rural areas, not just in the use of technologies in general by girls, adolescents and young women. However, it would be interesting to study the reasons for use to gain a better understanding of the role played by social support in digital inclusion and the improvement of social capital (Straubhaar, Spence, Tufekci & Lentz, 2012).

Our study also offers information to assess the impact of policies for digital inclusion of rural women in Andalusia. The results indicate that the level of digital inclusion reached by these women is medium, which means that the greatest percentage of women is situated at a level of access and functional use of the social networks. Some studies have highlighted the special obstacles faced by women in a rural setting in

terms of a full digital citizenship (LaRose et al., 2007; Lichy, 2012).

With this study we can state that the level of access and basic use is reached by the majority of women, but only 34.9% use it at an advanced level. This indicates that the policies on digital inclusion have produced good results in terms of accessibility, with a large majority of women using this technology at a functional level. However, we have still not seen the effects of these policies at other levels and in different forms of network usage. International studies have pointed out that it is necessary to look at digital inclusion beyond mere access and include aspects about routine and advanced uses of ICTs (Castaño, Martin & Vázquez, 2008; García, López de Ayala & Catalina, 2013). In this paper we have found that this also applies to the use of social networks. The results suggest a positive effect of digital inclusion policies in the access and functional use of social networks by Andalusian women in rural areas, but it would appear important to press on with these policies to stimulate advanced use of technologies, in general, and social networks, in particular, for women in the rural world, as a way of promoting their digital citizenship.

Our study also indicates that many women have not received training in the use of networks, suggesting that their learning is linked to informal contexts and personal networks. This suggests the need to re-think training strategies aimed at adult women in rural areas. Some studies have shown different strategies for encouraging the learning of ICTs (Godfrey & Johnson, 2009; Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012; Greenhow & Gleason, 2013).

Our decision to adopt criteria for inclusion in the sample that women had to have at least one year's experience of use of networks undoubtedly accounted for the scarce presence of women who had completed primary education or had not completed any compulsory education. While this confirms what other international studies have stated about the influence of level of studies in the use of technologies, it indicates that the level of access and basic use of social networks has not been reached, because the percentage of women users in rural areas who did not complete formal education is still low. It would be interesting to investigate this group of women in more depth to identify the factors and mechanisms which encourage their interest, learning and experience in the use of these networks.

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Adolescent Television Consumers: Self-perceptions about their Rights

Adolescentes consumidores de televisión: Autopercepciones sobre sus derechos

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the perceptions of a representative sample of the Spanish population aged between 12 and 18 with respect to the protection of their rights by television channels. To this end, a survey was distributed with 59 questions designed specifically for a much wider research to analyse the opinion of minors on the protection of their rights on television and the Internet. No question in the survey referred to specific channels or programmes identified by the researchers and the information on these arose from the adolescents' own opinions. The results presented refer to data on television and, more specifically, on the respect of the fundamental rights of television viewers in general and those of minors in particular. From these results, we can conclude that adolescents clearly perceive the infringement of the following rights: equality, dignity and privacy; objective, accurate and pluralistic information; free expression and opinion – particularly when this refers to children. Likewise, they demonstrate a critical position which rejects types of programmes that do not respect their rights. Researchers propose that this critical ability of younger viewers can be utilised from a dual perspective: on the one hand to create a school of citizenship and, secondly, to encourage social change to bring about a more just and equitable society.

RESUMEN

El artículo analiza la percepción que tiene una muestra representativa de la población española de entre 12 y 18 años sobre la protección de sus derechos en las cadenas de televisión. Para conseguir este objetivo, se aplicó un cuestionario de 59 preguntas diseñado para una investigación más amplia en la que se analizaba la opinión de los menores sobre la protección de sus derechos en la televisión y en Internet. Ninguna pregunta del cuestionario se refería a cadenas o programas concretos identificados por los investigadores y la información sobre estos partía de la propia opinión de los adolescentes. Los resultados que se presentan se refieren a los datos sobre televisión y, más concretamente, al respeto por los derechos fundamentales de los telespectadores en general, y de los de los menores en particular. De estos resultados se concluye que los adolescentes perciben claramente la vulneración de los derechos de igualdad, dignidad e intimidad, a la información objetiva veraz y plural y a la libre expresión y opinión –especialmente cuando ésta se refiere a los niños–. Igualmente muestran una postura crítica y de rechazo hacia los tipos de programas que no respetan sus derechos. Se propone utilizar esta capacidad crítica de los telespectadores desde una doble perspectiva: por una parte para crear escuela de ciudadanía y, por otra, para generar una sociedad más justa y equitativa.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Childhood, adolescence, television, rights, participation, critic consumer, opinion research, broadcast programming.
Infancia, adolescencia, televisión, derechos, participación, consumo crítico, estudios de opinión, programación televisiva.

1. Introduction and facts

Wide Extensive research has been carried out both in Spain and other countries on the consumption of television by children and adolescents, as well as the respect of their rights by this medium. In this section, a short summary of the most recent research with similar objectives to our own is presented. Various consumer surveys in Spain indicate that children and adolescents watch television every day and that their consumption increases at the weekend (AIMC, 2008, 2012; Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Institute for Recreation and Quality of Life of the University of Gerona (Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya e Institut de Recerca sobre Qualitat de Vida de la Universitat de Girona), 2007; Defender of Minors in the Community of Madrid (Defensor del Menor en la Comunidad de Madrid), 2010; Regional Government of Valencia (Generalitat Valenciana), 2008; INJUVE, 2012; Rodríguez, Mejías & Menéndez, 2012). The results are not entirely conclusive with respect to the type of programmes, as these are determined by age: younger children prefer to watch films, cartoons and sport, whereas adolescents prefer series and films (Ararteko, 2009; AIMC, 2008; Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Institute for Recreation and Quality of Life of the University of Gerona, 2007; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia (Consejo Audiovisual de Andalucía), 2008b; INJUVE-CIS, 2011; Rodríguez, Megías & Menéndez, 2012). The programmes least viewed are gossip programmes and news broadcasts (Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Institute for Recreation and Quality of Life of the University of Gerona, 2007). The channels most viewed –where they exist– are local ones (Barometer of Childhood and Television in Andalusia, 2008a; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, 2008b; 2009). On a national level, although the order varies from one study to another, the channels are: «Antena 3», «Telecinco», «Cuatro» and «Sexta» (AIMC, 2008; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, 2008b; Defender of Minors in the Community of Madrid, 2010).

Most of the studies on the respect of rights on television carried out in Spain have been done from the perspective of the fulfilment or infringement of the requirements set by the Self-regulation Code, with conclusive results. A clear tendency is observed, on all television channels, to broadcast content which violates the Code (ATR-Villanueva, 2009; CEACCU, 2008). When content is analysed, there is sexist content, inappropriate language, discriminatory, sexual and violent content, scorn and ridicule of people (CEACCU, 2008; Catalonian Association of Tele-

vision Viewers, 2009; Núñez, 2012). Likewise, infringements in advertising are also observed: there are many channels which show adverts aimed at children which contain misleading information (ATR-Villanueva, 2009, Regional Government of Valencia, 2008; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, 2008b; Medina & Méndiz, 2012).

These studies, developed on the basis of the opinions of adults on programming aimed at children and adolescents, clearly demonstrate that television violates fundamental rights when broadcasting programmes which discriminate, does not provide accurate information and undermines the dignity of people. The question we should ask ourselves is whether children and adolescents have the same perception of this reality, since only in this case is it possible to adopt an active and critical position regarding programming content.

The general aim of this paper is to provide some information about the opinion of adolescents with regard to the respect of their fundamental rights in the programmes they view regularly on different television channels. Their opinions may produce a more active participation by young people in the design of programming content and may serve both to mobilise society on certain topics and to act as a catalyst for change, fostering more critical and constructive thought which should be encouraged from the initial stages of development.

2. Materials and method

The sample was made up of 3,219 adolescents, between the ages of 12 and 18, who, in the academic year 2009-10, were studying ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education), Bachillerato (Baccalaureate – Upper Secondary) and FP (vocational training) in 150 state and subsidised schools in Spain. The selection was drawn from a stratified sampling in which all the autonomous communities were represented, and to which a proportional allocation of the number of schools was carried out. The size of the sample was estimated on the basis of the data from censuses of schools and students: 3,000 adolescents with a sampling error of ±3%, at the 95.5% confidence level and p=q=0.05.

The material used was a survey of 59 questions specifically designed for a wider investigation called 'Programming and content on television and the Internet: The opinion of minors on the protection of their rights' (Ochaíta, Espinosa, Gutiérrez, De-Dios & Maciá, 2010). The approximate time allowed to answer the survey was 50 minutes. It was translated into the different official Spanish languages.

No question in the survey referred to specific channels or programmes identified by the researchers and the information on these was always based on the adolescents' own opinions. It included identification data which enabled the appropriate statistical analyses to be performed and to analyse the effect of the independent variables selected – educational level, age, gender and sociocultural level.

The content of the survey was divided into six thematic blocks. The objective of the first block was to obtain information about socio-demographic data and the sociocultural level of the families of the participants. In the second block, the questions were oriented towards finding out about the television consumption of adolescents and the equipment available in their homes. A third block asked questions about the use of computers and the Internet. The fourth was aimed at investigating the risks facing adolescents on the Web. The fifth included questions related to the fundamental rights of adolescent television viewers. The sixth and final block included a question formed by 53 statements, with which the participants had to show their agreement or disagreement on a scale with four possible responses: 'completely disagree', 'disagree', 'agree' and 'totally agree'. The statements in the question were related to the rights of minors on television and the Internet.

This paper focuses on one part of the results obtained in the fifth and sixth blocks. Table 1 gives the questions that will be analysed in the results section.

Table 1. Questions on the violation of fundamental rights in programmes on different television channels	
	Questions analysed
Block 5: Fundamental rights of television viewers	P.45: Do you think that any television programme discriminates against girls or women? P.46: Do you think any television programme discriminates people from other countries, ethnic origins and/or cultures? P.47: Do you think any television programme discriminates people with different sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual)? P.48: Do you think any television programme discriminates people with some kind of disability (physical, mental and/or sensorial)? P.49: Do you think any television programme goes against the dignity and appreciation people have of themselves? P.50: Do you think that there are television programmes in which images of minors are shown without parental permission?
Block 6 Rights of minors on television and the Internet	P.59.11: News programmes on television provide objective information. P.59.12: News programmes on television provide accurate information. P.59.14: News programmes and debates on television provide information on peoples' different political and ideological views. P.59.15: News programmes on television make it sufficiently clear what is information and what is the opinion of the people making the programme. P.59.16: What is said in advertisements tends to be true. P.59.17: Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the different opinions held by adults. P.59.18: Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the different opinions held by young people of my age. P.59.19: Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the different opinions held by children (boys and girls).

3. Analysis of results

The results are expressed in terms of relative frequency (percentages). A Chi squared analysis was carried out to contrast the assumptions on the influence of the variables selected: gender, age, educational and sociocultural level. The description of the results only includes the cases in which the differences are statistically significant with a confidence level of $p \leq 0.01$.

Before analysing the results on the respect of fundamental rights, we need to present some results from block 2 of the survey, which included questions on consumption. Specifically, data regarding the amount of time per day devoted to watching television is presented –on week days and at the weekend– and the type of programmes usually watched.

As shown in table 2, the results indicate that adolescents spent many hours per day watching television, both on week days and at the weekend. Although the percentage of participants who do not watch television at the weekend increases considerably with respect to those who do not watch it on a daily basis, those who spend many hours in front of the television also increases significantly.

When asked about the programmes watched with the greatest frequency, the results were grouped in the types shown in table 3.

Adolescents preferred series and films, followed at a considerable distance by programmes of humour and critical analysis, adult cartoons,

Table 2. Percentage of adolescents who dedicated different times to watching television on week days and at the weekend		
	From Monday to Friday	Saturdays and Sundays
Not at all	1.6	4.3
Less than 1 hour	20.2	12.1
Between 1 and 2 hours	34.7	22.2
Between 2 and 3 hours	22.2	23
Between 3 and 4 hours	11.5	18
Between 4 and 5 hours	4.6	10.7
More than 5 hours	5.2	9.6
No answer given	1.3	3.3

Table 3. Percentage of adolescents who watched different types of programmes	
Types of programmes	Quite a lot or a lot
Series (comedies, soap operas, etc.)	73.2
Films	70.2
Programmes of humour or critical analysis	47.3
Adult cartoons	45.6
Sports programmes and sport	43.8
Programmes aimed at children and young people	40.7
Competitions	38.1
News programmes	37.8
Musical programmes	36.3
Reality shows	28.1
Cartoons for children	21.8
Documentaries	18.2
Gossip programmes and revues	14.1
Debates	7.9

sports programmes and sport, programmes for children and young people. Graph 1 summarises the results of which television channels they said they usually watched. As can be seen, Antena 3 is the most watched channel, followed at a great distance by Cuatro, then Disney Channel, La Sexta, Telecinco and, finally, by channel 1.

The main results on the opinion of adolescents on the protection of their fundamental rights on television are summarised below.

3.1. Rights of equality, dignity and privacy

The survey included six questions (table 1) aimed at finding out what adolescents thought about the respect of fundamental rights in the television programmes on different channels.

Question 45 asked whether they considered that, at the time of responding to the survey, there were programmes that discriminated against girls or women. The majority of the participants (66.9%) said 'no', but 33.1% thought that there was gender discrimination. The 33.1% who believed that discrimination existed, were asked if they could name specific programmes where this occurred, to which the majority answered 'gossip programmes'. This perception of discrimination was determined by the school year or age of the participants, since it was the older students who, to a large extent, considered that 'yes', there are programmes that discriminated against women (12.5% in the first cycle of ESO, 13.5% in second cycle and 19.3% in Bachillerato and FP). No differences due to educational level were found regarding specific

programmes which showed sexist content, possibly due to the wide range of programmes named, although differences were found on the channels broadcasting them.

Question 46 dealt with discrimination towards people from other countries, ethnic origin or cultures. The majority of participants considered that no discrimination existed (72.9%), whereas 27.1% thought that there was cultural and racist discrimination on television and 25% said that it was most evident on gossip programmes. Additionally, in this case it was found that the most critical opinions increased with age: only 11.1% of students from the first cycle of ESO detected said discrimination, 15.1% in second cycle, increasing to 17.6% among students of Bachillerato and FP. Nor were any significant differences found between the types of programmes, but differences were seen regarding the channel broadcasting them.

71.1% of the adolescents thought that there was no discrimination with regard to sexual orientation, compared to 28.9% who thought there was (question 47). Again, it was the gossip programmes and those of entertainment and humour which were labelled as the most homophobic. Moreover, it was the students from Bachillerato and FP who considered to a greater extent that 'yes', homophobic discrimination existed in television programming (16.6% compared to 14.5% of first cycle ESO students and 11.8% of second cycle). Again, no differences were found with respect to programmes but there were differences related to the channels.

Question 48 asked about discrimination towards people with disabilities, with the result that almost all the participants (86.6%) thought that there was no dis-
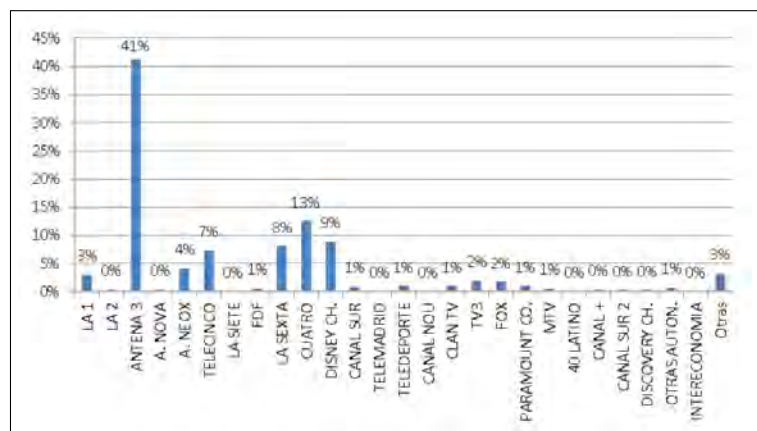
Graph 1. Percentage of adolescents who chose the different television channels.

crimination on television. Only 13.4% thought that 'yes', there was discrimination. In this case, there were no differences between the educational levels. Those who thought there was discrimination attributed it to gossip programmes and those of entertainment and humour. With respect to the types of programmes, revues and carto-

Table 4. Percentage of participants who considered that some television programmes went against some fundamental rights		
	No	Yes ('yes' and 'sometimes')
Discrimination based on gender	69.9	30.1
Discrimination based on country of origin, ethnic origin or culture	72.9	27.1
Discrimination based on sexual orientation	71.1	28.9
Discrimination based on disability	86.6	13.4
Against dignity and self esteem	72.9	27.1
Against the dignity and self-image of minors	79.5	20.5

ons were considered discriminatory by students from first cycle of ESO and reality shows by those from Bachillerato and FP. No differences by school year were found between the different channels.

Question 49 refers to whether any television programme violated the dignity and appreciation people have of themselves, to which 72.9% responded 'no'. Adolescents from higher educational levels were more critical. 24.4% from Bachillerato and FP considered that 'yes', there was discrimination, compared to 13.5% from first cycle ESO and 9.8% from second cycle. When specifying which programmes violated dignity, the adolescents between 16 and 18 chose a programme from the reality show category which was proposed as an example of violation of the right to dignity to a greater proportion than the younger ones (3.8% in the 12-14 age group, 5.9% in the 14-16 group and 14.5% in the 16-18 age group). The differences according to educational level were not significant when considering which channels broadcast said programmes.

Discrimination against women or girls in television programmes and that directed at people from other countries, ethnic origin or cultures was detected to a different degree depending on the sociocultural level. The participants from low to medium-low levels said 'no' in greater proportion. Conversely, those from a high level indicated to a greater extent that said discrimination did exist or occurred 'sometimes'.

A similar tendency was found when asking about discrimination due to sexual orientation, in which adolescents from a low sociocultural level said that it did not exist to a greater proportion than those from a high level. The latter group stated to a greater degree that discrimination did exist or took place 'sometimes'.

Differences between high and low sociocultural levels were also found in the responses to question 49. The adolescents from a low level indicated to a greater porportion that there were no programmes that infringed personal dignity; conversely, those from a high sociocultural level were those who responded 'yes' more frequently.

Question 50 asked the participants whether they thought that television broadcast images of minors without the permission of their parents or tutors. 79.5% said 'no', and that it occurred basically in gossip programmes and news programmes. With respect to the school year, again, the older students had a greater awareness of the violation of this right. Whereas only 8.9% of students from first cycle ESO considered that 'yes', they were infringed, this percentage increased to 11% among second cycle students and to 14.3% among those from Bachillerato and FP. No significant differences were found in the mention of programmes or broadcasting channels. With respect to the sociocultural level, 73.2% of the participants from a higher level considered that this did not happen, compared to 81% from the medium-high level and 82.4% from the low level. Consequently, there were differences between those who responded that 'yes', there were programmes which showed images of minors without parental permission (low level 10.3%, medium-low 10.1%, medium-high 9.7%, high 15.5%).

Table 4 summarises the results obtained from the six questions related to the fundamental rights of equality, dignity and right to privacy and the self-image of minors.

3.2. Right to objective, accurate and pluralistic information

The final questions on the survey included a series of affirmations in which the adolescents questioned had to show their level of agreement or disagreement. Two of them (59.11 and 59.12) analysed what they thought about the information broadcast on television. 64% of those questioned agreed with the statement that 'television news programmes provide objective information' (59.11). The percentage assigned to the idea that they provided 'accurate information' was somewhat lower, at 61.2%. (59.12.). Educational level or age also influenced the agreement or disagreement of the adolescents regarding the objectivity and accuracy of the information in television news programmes. Disagreement with objectivity clearly increased with age with 28.6% in the 12-14 age group,

32.6% in the 14-16 group and 45.5% in the 16-18 age group. Similar results were obtained for the question on the accuracy of the information: Bachillerato and FP students were those who were most in disagreement (45.4% compared to 28.6% in the first cycle of ESO and 33.6% in the second cycle).

They were also asked their opinion on whether news programmes and debates provided information on the different political options of citizens (59.14). In this case, again, there was a significant majority, 67.7%, who were in agreement with the statement, although 32.4% thought that the information on television was not politically representative.

The participants were less in agreement with the assertion that it was sufficiently clear on news programmes which content is information and which is opinion (59.15), since the percentage of disagreement reached 40.9% and that of agreement 59.1%. Disagreement with this statement also increased with age, with 48.5% of adolescents studying Bachillerato and FP in disagreement, and 34.4% of those in first cycle ESO and 39.5% in second cycle.

Question 59.16 asked about the accuracy of advertisements broadcast on television with the following statement: 'What is said in advertisements tends to be true'. In this case, the majority opinion was against this statement, with 72.5% of the responses being in disagreement. Disagreement with the accuracy of advertising also increased clearly with the educational level; the majority of Bachillerato and FP students (82.7%) were clearly against the statement. Significant differences were also found due to the sociocultural level, since disagreement increased according to the adolescents' sociocultural level (68.5% of those from a low level, 70.3% from a medium-low level, 73.5% of those from a medium-high level and 78% of those from a high level).

3.3. Right to free expression and opinion
Most of the participants, 60.8%, agreed that 'Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of people's opinions'.

The tendency changed when they were asked their opinion on the statement 'Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the opinions held by young people of my age'. (59.18). In this case, slightly more than half the participants, 50.2%,

Graph 2. Percentage of agreement and disagreement, by educational cycle, with the statement, 'Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the opinions held by adults'.

were against this statement.

Adolescents were even more critical of the opportunities that television offered for young people to express their opinion (59.19). With respect to the previous statement on 'the opinion of children', the majority, 55.6%, indicated the shortcomings in children's participation. The response to these questions varied significantly according to school year or age, which always became more critical as these increased, whether considering opinions on adult participation or that of young people of their age or of young children. When the statement referred to those surveyed, the 'agreement' responses oscillated between 42.1% for the older group, 49.7% for the middle age group and 58% for the younger ones. Conversely, the disagreement responses increased with age. When the statement referred to children younger than the participants, 45.3% of the youngest, 55.6% of the medium age group and 65.3% of the older ones were in disagreement with the statement (table 5).

Most adolescents, slightly more than 60%, thought that television fostered the freedom of expression of adults. It is noteworthy, however, that half of those surveyed considered that television does not foster the free expression of adolescents and that the percentage increased to 55.6% when they were asked about the freedom of expression of children.

4. Discussion and conclusion
Spanish adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years old dedicate quite a lot of time to watching television, both during the week and at weekends, as indicated in prior research (AIMC, 2008; 2012; Ararteko, 2009; Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Institute for Recreation and Quality of Life of the University of Gerona, 2007; Defender of Minors in the Community of Madrid, 2010; Regional Government

of Valencia 2008; Rodríguez, Megías & Menéndez, 2012). This data, particularly that which indicates that 38% of those surveyed watched between two and five hours or more per day, should be considered as problematic, since the time devoted to television inevitably interferes with carrying out activities such as studying (Ochaíta, Espinosa, Gutiérrez, De-Dios & Maciá, 2010; Ochaíta, Espinosa & Gutiérrez, 2011). Related to the above, it should be stated that the adolescents should receive explicit training which enables them to select the most appropriate programmes according to their age and interests (Aguaded, 2012). Moreover, the media offers many opportunities for adolescents to adopt an active role in the creation and broadcasting of content (Ferres & Piscetelli, 2012). For example, the high impact social mobilisation that can be generated through the Web, in a very limited space of time. Therefore, the time dedicated to media should be used to advantage to attain a media literacy which

The majority of those questioned considered that in the television programmes they usually watched, rights were respected, although there was a significant percentage who detected shortcomings or infringements of the same (ATR-Villanueva, 2009; CEAC-CU, 2008; Medina & Méndiz, 2012; Núñez, 2012). The latter leads us to reflect on the different aspects and behaviour which require improvement, as well as initiatives which should be followed to ensure that due protection is afforded to childhood and adolescents (Ortiz, Ruiz & Díaz, 2013). The violation of rights is seen more clearly with respect to some rights than others, although it is always detected to a greater degree by the older participants and those from a higher sociocultural level but equally by girls and boys. The main infringements of rights of equality, dignity and privacy are detected in the broadcasting of sexist, homophobic, racist and xenophobic content and in those which violate the dignity and self esteem of people. To a lesser extent, violations were detected regarding the right to privacy of minors and, even less, the rights of people with disabilities. These results are similar to those obtained with adults (CEACCU, 2008; Núñez, 2012; Catalonian Association of Television Viewers, 2009).

With respect to the right to objective, accurate and pluralistic information, most infringements were detected in advertising since the majority of the participants said that advertisements did not portray the truth. Conversely, the majority of adolescents considered that news programmes offered information that was objective, accurate and in accordance with different political options (ATR-Villanueva, 2009; Regional Government of Valencia, 2008; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, 2008b; Medina & Méndiz, 2012).

The young people also indicated shortcomings with respect to the right to free expression and opinion, particularly when this referred to the adolescents surveyed and even more with respect to younger children. Unlike what they think happens with adults, they consider that television does not facilitate the expression of young children's opinion. This means of communication and adults in general should give due weight to the views of children, as indicated in article 12 of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is clear that adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 have formed their own opinion regarding television and that said opinion is fairly sensible and critical with the most negative aspects of this media.

Table 5. Percentage of agreement and disagreement with the statement referring to the participants themselves or younger children by educational cycle			
Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of different opinions held by young people of my age (59.18)			
	1st cycle ESO	2nd cycle ESO	Bachillerato/FP
Disagree	42	50.3	57.9
Agree	58	49.7	42.1
Television facilitates democratic debates and the free expression of the different opinions held by children (boys and girls) (P. 59 19.)			
	1st cycle ESO	2nd cycle ESO	Bachillerato/FP
Disagree	45.3	55.6	65.3
Agree	54.7	44.4	34.7

should go beyond learning how to use equipment and should focus on the development of skills and values geared towards creating a more just and equitable society (Del-Moral & Villalustre, 2013; Gutiérrez & Tyner, 2012; Soep, 2012).

As seen in prior research, the most frequently viewed programmes were series (comedies, soap operas, etc.) and films followed by programmes of humour and critical analysis, adult cartoons, sports programmes and sport (Ararteko, 2009; AIMC, 2008; Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Institute for Recreation and Quality of Life of the University of Gerona, 2007; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia, 2008b y 2009; IN-JUVE-CIS, 2011). With respect to the most frequently viewed channels, Antenna 3 is the preferred channel, followed at a great distance by Cuatro, then Disney Channel, La Sexta and Telecinco with TV1 having the lowest adolescent audience (AIMC, 2008; 2012; Audiovisual Council of Andalusia 2008; 2009; Defender of Minors in the Community of Madrid, 2010).

It is worth pointing out that the programmes that are less respectful to the rights we have analysed in this paper coincide with those less viewed by adolescents and that those who detected these problems did so in a very precise manner, depending on which right they were questioned on, with very uniform responses.

Finally, to conclude, the adolescents were able to detect infringements of their rights on television and were critical and selective with those infringements. These results should be considered so that television includes a social dimension, making it a significant catalyst for social change, for the creation of a fairer and more equitable society; in short, to create citizenship (Aguaded, 2005; Ortiz, 2005; Rincón, 2011).

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Common Uses of Facebook among Adolescents from Different Social Sectors in Buenos Aires City

Usos comunes de Facebook en adolescentes de distintos sectores sociales en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we analyze the common uses that adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires display in the Facebook platform. From the review of the state of the art and the empirical evidence gathered by 30 in-depth interviews, 24 months of daily virtual observation and the analysis of 200 profiles in Facebook, it is displayed that for both groups of adolescents the social network is their central entertainment and communication environment. At the same time, the primary uses they give to Facebook within the site refer to self presentation, interchanging personal information between friends, sex-affective relationship searches, and exploring different aspects of their sociability and identity. We examine the most «popular» posts between adolescents (photos, personal texts). Besides, we describe the most usual ludic-communication uses: chat, upgrading status, photographic prosumption and streaming. In this sense, we acknowledge that daily use of the resource by this population is the sharing of intimate performances with the goal of increasing sociability between peers and accomplish a higher visibility both in and out of the site. Thus, by studying the images in the timeline's of adolescents, evidence is exposed showing that gender representations are in conflict with traditional models and new forms of masculinity and femininity.

RESUMEN

En este artículo se abordan los usos comunes que realizan los adolescentes de la ciudad de Buenos Aires en la plataforma Facebook. A partir de la revisión del estado de la cuestión y de la evidencia empírica recogida en 30 entrevistas en profundidad, 24 meses de observaciones virtuales diarias y el análisis de contenido de 200 perfiles de Facebook, se muestra que para ambos grupos de adolescentes la red social es su entorno central de entretenimiento y comunicabilidad. A su vez, que sus principales usos dentro de este sitio son la autopresentación, el intercambio de contenidos personales entre amistades, la búsqueda de relaciones sexo-afectivas y la exploración de distintos aspectos de su sociabilidad e identidad. Se indaga en los tipos de publicaciones más «populares» entre los adolescentes (fotos y textos personales). Además, se describen los usos lúdico-comunicacionales más habituales: chat, actualizar estados, prosumo fotográfico y streaming. En este sentido, se observa que un recurso de uso cotidiano entre esta población es el intercambio de performances de intimidad con el objetivo de aumentar la sociabilidad entre pares y lograr una mayor visibilidad dentro y fuera del sitio. Asimismo, por medio del análisis de imágenes de los muros de los adolescentes, se aporta evidencia acerca de que las representaciones de género se encuentran en conflicto entre los modelos tradicionales y las nuevas formas de masculinidad y feminidad.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Internet, social networking, adolescents, gender, popular sectors, self-presentation, intimacy.
Internet, redes sociales, adolescentes, género, sectores populares, autopresentación, intimidad.

1. Introduction

Several research projects have addressed how information and communication technology (ICT) are reinventing our social relationships and modifying the way in which we relate with the world (for example, Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Castells, 2009; Baym, 2010). Adolescents, born and raised with ICT in constant expansion, usually are the most intensive users of these technologies (Boyd, 2008; Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). With this context in mind, the core of our investigation is the use of the ICT in behalf of adolescents from the City of Buenos Aires, both in low income or middle income sectors. Our focus is regarding the platform displayed in Facebook, where adolescents interact online. Even though there are differences between adolescents from low and middle income sectors in the City of Buenos Aires regarding Internet use and, in fact, the differences are studied in our Master's thesis (Linne, 2013), this article is restricted to the most frequent uses of Facebook. Therefore, the research question is which are the common uses that adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires display through Facebook. Our specific goals are to explore and describe these uses. Meanwhile, the general goal is to present a local perpective on the issue without attempting extrapolations, with the intention to contribute to future comparative investigations.

2. State of the art

Adolescents, who often have a lot of time, find themselves in a central period of their identity configuration in which they wish to experiment with their image and identity (Urresti, 2008; Krauskopf, 2010). Through social networking sites, they produce and share personal information expressing a similar ethos, which is highly aesthetic and, as Sibilia (2008) affirms, differs from traditional representations of intimacy.

According to the state of the art, adolescents share common knowledge and capacities called «prosumption» (produce and consume digital content) and «multitasking» (simultaneous tasks) (Prensky, 2001; Boyd, 2008; Urresti, 2008; Livingstone, 2009, Dezuanni & Monroy-Hernández, 2012, among others). That is why they have been referred to as: digital natives» (Prensky, 2001), «post-alpha generation» (Berardi, 2007) and «multimedia generation» (Morduchowicz, 2010). The most commonly used name is digital natives since they belong to a generation that did not meet, see or live with analog devices but were already born in a world of digital technologies (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

Globally speaking, culture has transformed itself in recent years in an exacerbation of the subject (Urresti,

2008) and a publication of intimacy (Sibilia, 2008). Thus, social networking sites (Boyd & Ellison, 2008), while promoting and pondering personal posts, often encourage the «cyber-exhibitionism» (Urresti, 2008) and the «exacerbation of intimacy» (Sibilia, 2008).

Adolescents spend more time online than adults, and also spend more time in social interaction (Valkenburg & al., 2009; Dillon, 2013, among others). If the interest of children up to ten years old, in terms of technology, is centred on games and movies, from this age on they start becoming interested in relationships within their peers, which include relationships with peers of the opposite sex (Subrahmayan & Greenfeld, 2008). This interest begins to be central in their lives and is transferred to the Internet. As a result, they tend to increase their use of social networking sites (Boyd, 2008). They become part of a virtual community with whom they establish various relationships: entertain themselves, feel included within their group of equals and find company and social belonging (Urresti, 2008). Through networks they provide and seek personal information (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2009); receive empathy manifestations, identify themselves and their environment in another way, accomplish a greater knowledge of themselves and their peers, and offer a personal image that allows them to integrate into other generational peer groups (Valkenburg & al., 2009; Morduchowicz, 2010).

Several studies focus on the different practices used by adolescents regarding ICTs according to social sector, age, gender, use of hours and experience with the media (Prensky, 2001; Urresti, 2008; Van-Dijk, 2013; Benítez Larghi, 2013, among others). The contribution of this investigation is the specific work with adolescents of middle sectors and low income sectors of the City of Buenos Aires, this means a trans-class approach in terms of social cultural theory that, based on the differences between each sector, explores what they have in common. This is relevant for two reasons: first, a categorization of differentiated adolescents is proposed; and secondly, within these differences, we suggest that these social groups have more in common regarding the use of ICTs than those who have been studied.

Concepts such as «capital» and «social capital» (Bourdieu, 1985) are very useful in exploring the network of relationships of adolescents, given that in Facebook it becomes visible (Haythornwhite, 2005). Bourdieu (1985) refers to the concept of «capital» to everything that people consider assets (material or not). Meanwhile, «social capital» defines potential or actual resources associated to possession of a net of

social relationships institutionalized to a greater or lesser degree (Bourdieu, 1985).

As for social networking sites, Boyd (2008) states that these sites allow adolescents to work on their identity and status, besides exposing/negotiating their public life. Meanwhile, Valkenburg & al. (2009) conclude that the use of social networking sites positively cooperates in relationships between adolescent peers. Other authors argue that in these sites there is a leading tendency to interact with preexisting bonds (Haythornwhite, 2005; Boyd & Ellison, 2008) and that co-present relationships are enriching because they are horizontal and non-hierarchical (Urresti, 2008). Besides reinforcing preexisting relationships it allows to continuously generate new social interactions, especially in the case of those who have no friends or sex-affective relationships, or who find themselves in a reluctant relationship (Boyd, 2008). Regarding the impact on private life, both in a friendly or a loving/sexual scale, Van-Dijk (2013) provides empirical evidence about popularity in social networking sites as arenas for self-expression, communication and self-promotion. On the other hand, other research indicate that these sites generate a mixed communication, since elements of oral and written communication are combined (Baym, 2010; López & Ciuffoli, 2012).

Regarding Facebook, and applying Bourdieu's concepts, Valenzuela & al. (2009) points out that the mere membership to Facebook does not contribute per se in the fact of increasing social capital, but collaborates in the consolidation of it, by allowing the major flow of information available about peers, the expansion of opportunities for socializing with people and the possibility of continuing to extend the network contacts. At the same time, Garcia, López de Ayala and Catalina (2013) state that, in the case of Spain, adolescents that have between 15 and 17 years are those who perform the most intensive and active use of these sites. Almansa, Fonseca & Esparcia (2013) observe that Spanish and Colombian adolescents manifest themselves in Facebook in their own language, which does not meet traditional spelling and grammar rules. At the same time, they state that ado-

lescents manage their friend relationships in Facebook having image as their central element and, within seconds, decide to accept friend requests of strangers depending if they find him/her attractive. In the case of adolescents from the City of Buenos Aires, Dillon (2013) argues that the use of Facebook reinforces bonds between peers and that the most important thing for them has to do with friendship and their group of peers, either within or outside the site.

Finally, to investigate gender representations regarding seduction and friendship, we will use the concept of gender as an analysis category both from

> The tendency of adolescents to display intimacy is amplified by sharing them in the network. Therefore, intimacy is shown, exhibited and exchanged daily –selective but done daily– through the mediation of computers. This weighting of personal content is common to all groups, although each group has particular characteristics. In this context, we wish to emphasize that the purpose of this exhibition of intimacy is meeting and sociability with peers.

the classical formulation of Rubin (1975) –which proposes the «sex/gender system», understood gender as a cultural construction–, and the reformulation of Butler (1990) «subjects of sex/gender/desire», which incorporates two modifications: first, «sex» is as cultural as gender; secondly, that generic constructions are crossed by a «hetero-normative matrix». Finally, in the scope of this article, we highlight that gender is produced by daily interaction (West, 1987), since it is an activity that is constituted and reproduced by repetition of body styles, practices and norms that, when «naturalized», generate the illusion of a fixed identity (Butler, 1990; Cháneton, 2007). We state that the intimate gestures adolescents perform in Facebook both from low income or middle sectors, are suitable for studying these issues.

3. Material and methods

The goal of this investigation is exploratory and descriptive. Our study universe is delimited by adolescents who reside in the City of Buenos Aires and who

are between 12 and 18 years old (born between 1995 and 2000). Using some indicators from the National Statistics and Census Institute (INDEC) (2010), we define low income households as those who have the following characteristics: lack of at least one basic public service, head of the household that has not finished high school, have jobs of low qualifed jobs or are unable to work. As to middle sectors, we define them as those households with public services and house-

that emerged in recent years along with the enormous growth of the ICT and used in social studies to explore how people form social networks on the Internet and configure their virtual identity (Keeley-Browne, 2011).

After two years of work, the profile we developed in Facebook features 2700 adolescent contacts. Along with the interviews, the data collection method of cyber-ethnology allowed us to investigate how adolescents of our sample self-presented themselves, entertained and interacted online. We conducted participant observations, in the sense of sending and accepting friend requests, clicking «Like» in some posts and generating others. We also asked permission to adolescents to observe their walls and profiles in Facebook. This allowed us to analyze their behavior in digital environments, both in low income and middle sectors.

In quantitative terms, we conducted content analysis of 200 profiles in Facebook belonging to adolescents in the City of Buenos Aires, selected in a random way. We analyzed pictures and texts posted in profiles, their central themes and environments. Fieldwork was conducted between September 2011 and September 2013.

> Adolescents of both social sectors make their own presentation by personal publications, they chat with friends, find a partner or someone to date, use their capital, tell experiences and sex-affective relationships, manage their address book and diary, entertain themselves with playful and communicative practices as games, photographic «prosumption» and «streaming». This way, their identity configuration and everyday sociability is associated with Facebook, the main site where they explore and redefine relationships with their peers. Regarding gender, they maximize stereotypes as well as question them.

holders with medium or high qualification jobs and whose educational level equals or surpasses secondary school.

We have used a mixed methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative tools. As for a qualitative level, we used traditional and virtual ethnographic tools: 30 co-present in-depth interviews and 24 months of daily virtual observation through the creation of an ad hoc profile on Facebook. This new tool for collection of information was very useful, because we consider that traditional ethnographic methods alone are not enough to grasp the web of meanings in which adolescents find themselves immersed. Therefore, we chose to explore their sociability and virtual identity with the same tool they use on daily basis. To do so, we made an online fieldwork following the concepts of «virtual observation» (Hine, 2000), and «cyber-ethnography» (Farquhar, 2012), which relate to new tools of ethnographic investigation

For ethical reasons, we worked anonymously with the material collected, in the sense that no personal data was saved. Although texts and images mentioned had the express permission of the interviewees, to preserve their identity we only exposed images that do not have any names or photographs, as well as the generic labels in every extract of the aforementioned interview. This is why in the interview fragments and wall captures of Facebook we only pointed out if the user was a boy or girl and to which social sector s/he belongs. Finally, being a non-probabilistic or nonintentional sample, results are not extrapolated to the entire population. However, we believe that this investigation is a significant contribution as it explores and describes certain tendencies in the use of ICT between the adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires. Its value lies in showing common uses in Facebook be-

tween adolescents in an important city of Latin America, with the intention of collaborating in future comparative work both within the region and globally.

4. Analysis and results
4.1. The central environment

For adolescents in our sample, the Facebook social network has become the central communication environment and entertainment, followed by mobile messaging application such as WhatsApp and Twitter for middle sectors of the population. Blogs, emails and instant messaging no longer appear as separate applications, since they have been centralized in the Facebook platform. Therefore this site is the central space of their day to day sociability and their convergent activities during their free time.

• «Through Facebook we communicate with our friends and school mates more easily and without spending money. It's more practical and it's what is used today. We use Whatsapp a lot when we are traveling or at school. And everyday more friends are starting to use Twitter» (Female, middle sectors)

• «Whenever we can we are connected to Face because it's more comfortable and we like to get in touch with our friends and be aware of what happens to each one of us... and sometimes see what the guy we like is up to» (Female, popular sectors).

The phenomenon that made Facebook become the central environment of adolescents who live in the City of Buenos Aires can be explained by two reasons. First, it works as an interactive address book full of events and contacts, as it allows them to coordinate meetings and comment about them before and after they finish, and expand or restrict their contact list based on the actions displayed everyday and mediated by computers. Second, it operates as a center of aesthetic identity publications, where they constantly update their performance regarding their presentation to others.

Adolescents choose to spend much of their time on Facebook because the levels of usability and satisfaction they experience are usually higher than anywhere else. In addition to the interstitial time spent in Facebook while they are in school or traveling on public transport, or even when they are alone (or sometimes accompanied) one of their main activities is to check the updates of their contacts and edit their own posts.

4.2. Personal files

Facebook is central in both the accumulation of contacts called «friends» as the ability to activate the

resources they comment on in the profiles of their contacts: principally by clicking Like, making comments and sharing posts. When adolescents make personal publications, in addition to updating their presentation to others, they are measuring their social capital (Bourdieu, 1985), defined as the level of acceptance and the ability to mobilize resources. Adolescents in our sample tend to appreciate that their peers share their intimacy and agree that those with more contacts, Likes, and opinions shared are more likely to have more couples and friends. This is also associated with their efforts in making public intimate performances to gain popularity, which often leads them to expose their intimacy in a conflictive manner in the opinion of parents, partners or friends.

• «With Face we can express ourselves without having the adults on our backs. Maybe it's what makes all of us like Facebook. Adults do not understand what we do in Face and sometimes they get angry or they control us because they are afraid. They are from another generation» (Male, middle sectors).

• «We make videos or take pictures, for example, and edit and publish them on Facebook. There isn't much more to it. It is unique and everyone can do it. We take pictures at school, the mall, when we get together in a house. And we always go out with the camera» (Female, low income sectors).

Within the personal files, photos are very important and take up a lot of space. Autobiographical texts accompanied by a personal image tend to receive more comments and Likes. Publication of pictures alone or with their group of friends is the preferred practice among adolescents of both low income sectors (Linne & Basile, 2013) and middle sectors. Pictures are also common with couples or friends of the opposite sex. 90% of the profiles analyzed contain photos in the same areas: schools, parks and houses of friends or of themselves. Adolescents choose to take pictures in places that provide greater autonomy from adults. They often accompany these personal images with brief illustrative or explanatory texts. By doing so, adolescents risk their body-aesthetic capital while they update their availability status and mood. In many cases, this also serves as a warning sign –«I'm in a bad mood, do not want to talk to anyone» (Female, popular sectors)– or an invitation to interact.

4.3. Communication and Entertainment

Communication and entertainment are fields of activities that form part of most of the practices deployed at the site. These two activities appear mixed among adolescents within multitasking: they use chat,

games, music, voyeurism and sharing of photos, various 'postings' application usage and viewing videos at the same time.

• «When we are bored and there is no one to speak in Face, we play games. But when there is someone to chat with, we like it more. Or sometimes you just want to play and not talk to anyone, it depends» (Male, middle sectors).

• «We look at girls' pictures, sometimes we take pictures of ourselves, we comment on the photos, we chat and play. There are plenty of games that are very cool in Face» (Male, low income sectors). As for entertainment, 90% of adolescents surveyed select YouTube applications and games. On YouTube, males prefer sports videos –mostly soccer–, dance, comedy, tutorials and musical genres, such as the slum cumbia, reggaeton and hip hop. Meanwhile, women choose similar videos, and other genres like romantic cumbia, ballads and teen pop. In gaming applications, the men prefer action and combat sports, while women tend to prefer ingenuity, design and roles. Both women and men watch in YouTube and other streaming sites, shows like «The Simpsons» or movies like «Titanic».

• «The games that I like the most are 'Counter Strike', 'Criminal Case' and football, as well as the 'Winning Eleven' and the 'FIFA'. And I also play a lot of the games shown on Facebook, which are more convenient, like ones with the mafia, letters or creating civilizations. And your friends send you the invitation to play, so you play with them when they are online. They give you tips, like new tricks or it becomes a topic to talk about» (Male, middle sectors).

• «I like 'Up Cake Special' which is about decorating a cup cake, 'Mini Pets' or 'Pet Society', where you have to take care of your pets, 'Juice and Fruit', where you have to make smoothies in a bar', Good Night Kiss', where you say goodbye to your boyfriend in the front door of your parents house, 'Mall World', where you have a clothing store in a mall, and all those kinds of games. The ones we like the most with my friends are the «Angry Birds» and «Candy Crush», they are so addictive» (Female, low income sectors).
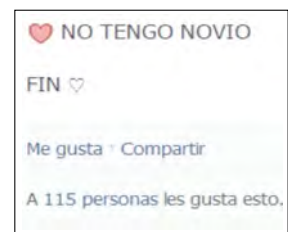
• 70% of respondents and Facebook profiles analyzed, show that their favorite games are. «Criminal Case» and «Candy Crush». While «Criminal Case» is favorite among boys «Candy Crush» is common in men and women. Both games are paradigmatic of the great confluence in communication-entertainment practices between different social sectors. In fact, adolescents of low income and middle sectors agree that their most common communication-entertainment practices are around the Facebook platform : status updates, games, photo prosumption, chat and streaming. While updating states usually refers to mood or emotional states (see images 1 and 2), the prosumption of pictures involves publishing photos and images of personal observation, the chat is used to strengthen ties and explore new ones, while the «streaming» music and audiovisual content is often a major source of entertainment.

4.4. Friendship, seduction and matchmaking

All adolescents interviewed by Facebook mainly communicate with their friends, sometimes with people they know and family, and sporadically with strangers. Communication via instant messaging, chat and content publishing often appear closely linked to the pursuit of sex-affective relationships and creating and sustaining friendships. Such practices are central to these adolescents.

Profiles analyzed have between 132 and 4877 friends/contacts, and the average is 1432. 60% performed at least a weekly publication with a common theme: matchmaking or timeliness affective. When updating the «states» in addition to letting others know what they are up to, they update their relationship status, the degree of harmony or conflict with their partner and their most significant bonds. This is the way they let others know if they got in a fight, if they miss someone, if they feel betrayed, grateful, ignored or loved. As seen in the following images (1 and 3), adolescents express their desire to be in a relationship with publications of images with short texts, «single», «I want a girlfriend»; «in a relationship»; «who wants to be my boyfriend?»; «Everyone with a couple and I'm all by myself». One important aspect asociated with the 'popularity' among adolescents is the amount of Likes. Note the 'popularity' (115 Likes) in the following picture where an adolescent updates their status.

When they choose what pictures they publish, it is usually a thoughtful practice,

♥ NO TENGO NOVIO

FIN ♡

Me gusta · Compartir

A 115 personas les gusta esto.

(I DON'T HAVE A BOYFRIEND END)-

Image 1. Capturing the wall of an adolescent user of Facebook, low income sectors.

since they edit the photos to present the best possible image of themselves. This constant cross-game in which privacy is made public to create an pair intimacy away from the adults, creates repeated adolescent

conflict: for example, when one member of the couple is jealous and feels that the other is disrespectful since they are «flirting» with other contacts. This is why; a common control practice is to publish something from the profile of the couple. This resource shows a greater intimacy which implies some exclusivity. Here we see how a teenage male writes something from the profile of his girlfriend, to express his love and at the same time, discourage contacts «that want a piece of her» and this way he «marks territory».

> Mii Amoor EHM solo vine a marcar territorio porque unos pares se te hacen loslindos we que sepan que vos tenes novio y sos solo mia ah 😊 weno miamor te re amo mi vida y lo sabes mi cielo ah ue, miamor me tenes mas que en todas princesa 💗 en las buenas y en las malas amor

(Myy loveee EHM I just came to mark territory because some dudes are trying you out well they should know you have a boyfriend and you`re only mine ah, well my love I really love you darling and you know it my sweety ah, my love you have me more than all the princess, in bad and good times love).

Image 2. Capturing the wall of an adolescent user of Facebook, middle sectors.

4.5. Representations of gender

Since the daily life of a large proportion of adolescents in our sample takes place in Facebook, we can see the representations of gender when they present themselves and while they search for a partner. This research is limited to gender constructions of men and women who want to maintain, at least publicly, sex-affective heterosexual ties, while recognizing that this dynamic is also present in the bonds of gays, lesbians and queers. Field work has shown that the social network plays a key role in organizing the system IDs and it displays various capitals brought into scene in the process of gender construction and matchmaking. Several of their first sexual and love dialogues, comments and content exchange about their identity, and their experiences are displayed through this site. This is seen in the publications about how to configure your «ideal couple» (images 3 and 4).

As we see in figures 2, 3 and 4, it is common that adolescents feel they have a right to be jealous, seen in captions to photographs, such as the following «yeah, I'm jealous, so what?». By sharing or celebrating these comments on their walls, they demonstrate their agreement regarding these behaviors. On the other hand, more than half of the women adolescents interviewed also take pride in their autonomy and search for couples who are sensitive, «a companion, friend and lover», as declared one of them.

• «For me the ideal boyfriend is a guy I have to like

> La novia perfecta no es la que juega al play, al fútbol, ni ninguna de esas cosas. La novia perfecta es aquella que te ama, que es celosa, enojona, que te pregunta en donde estuviste y con quién, y sólo se enoja para que le des besos y abrazos. Esa con la que peleas y te terminas arreglando. Esa que no despega su mirada de tu rostro solo para que la mires y le des un beso. Aquella que te dice "riete" porque la enamora tu sonrisa. Aquella con la que puedes ser como tu eres y eso a ella le encanta. La que te da los mejores abrazos cuando hace frío, y te dice "te amo" a cada rato. Ella que cuando pasaron 5 minutos desde que se vieron la última vez, te manda un msj diciendo "ya te extraño". Así que no piensen en una novia que solo sea linda y tenga buen cuerpo. Porque existen chicas maravillosas, esas que dan todo por uno. Son las que a pesar de todo, te hacen sentir orgulloso de decir "ELLA ES NOViA". Esas son las novias que te hacen realmente feliz 💗 .

(The perfect girlfriend isn`t the one that plays soccer, playstation, or anything like that. The perfect girlfriend is the one who loves you, that she is jealous, gets annoyed, who asks you where have you been and who with, and only gets mad so you can give her kisses and hugs. That girl that you have a row with and end up getting back together. That one that doesn't stop looking at you so you willl look at her back and give hera kiss. That one that tells you to «laugh» because she is in love with your smile. That one that you can be who you are and that is just what she likes. The one that gives you the best hugs whan it's cold, and says «I love you» all the time. The one who 5 minutes after you left her, sends you a message saying «I already miss you». So don't think of a girlfriend who is just pretty and has a good body. Because wonderful girls exist, ones who give you everything. They are the ones that after all, make you feel proud to say «She is my girlfriend». Those are the girlfriends that really make you happy).

Image 3. Capturing the wall of an adolescent user of Facebook, middle sectors.

physically, but the way he thinks. He does not have to be just cute. And he has to treat me well. If he argues a lot with me or controls me to much, I don't like him. And he must have initiative, drive me to the movies, concerts, things like that» (Female, middle sectors).

> Un novio que te diga , elimina ah quien vos quiera mi amor mi facebook es tuyo , eso es un chico FIEL♥. ((:
> Me gusta · Comentar · Compartir · Hace 7 horas cerca de Buenos Aires ·

(A boyfriend who tells you, eliminate anyone you like, my love, my facebook is yours, that is a faithful boy).

Image 4. Capturing the wall of an adolescent user of Facebook, low income sectors.

• «My ideal boyfriend…I don't know. He should be cute, thoughtful. He should like cooking, listening to me and be good. He should like going for walks, going out and doing things together» (Female, low income sectors).

Digital practices in both low income sectors and middle sectors, show the tension between the paradigmatic ways of being a male and female, as they are questioned at times, as well as in other cases they

reproduce traditional gender representations. A large proportion of men, both of low income sectors and middle sectors, publish photos and personal texts that exhibit, more timidly than women, sensitive and intimate issues. This way, they express love to family, friends, girlfriends and couples, or show their sadness at the absence of a loved one or loneliness. We observed how males are allowed to show emotions and emotional deprivation, in apparent contrast to previous generations. Therefore they show to all their contacts their affective sociability in addition to their social capital. Adolescents post personal texts written in a colloquial, agile and expressive language, elements used orally. In both low income sectors and middle sectors, publications are address mostly regarding the topic of friendship. Most emotional expressiveness of adolescent males, visible both in interviews and profiles and walls, evidence a new masculinity that coexists in tension with the traditional paradigms, such as using violence to impose respect and defend their territory, or be cynical towards emotional demands of women or other men. In return, adolescents tend to express more about their sexuality and their claim regarding freedom to choose who they want to be with, this points out a greater consciousness of gender and a larger empowerment regarding previous generations.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In this research we investigate common practices in Facebook by adolescents of low income sectors and middle sectors of the City of Buenos Aires. Similar to what Garcia & al. (2013) stated for the case of Spanish adolescents, their use of time is mostly concentrated in Facebook games and audiovisual streaming, which outperforms downloading content. Also consistent with García & al. (2013), the desire for popularity is a predominant issue among adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires. We agree that female users between 15 and 17 years are more active regarding this point. Just like Spanish and Colombian adolescents (Almansa & al., 2013), our adolescents of the sample decide to accept or reject applications in seconds. Although unlike Valenzuela & al. (2009) claim that Facebook membership helps to increase social capital. Furthermore, although we agree with Dillon (2013) concerning the central role occupied by the peer group among adolescents of the City of Buenos Aires, our specific contribution is to focus on couples and to investigate gender issues.

The tendency of adolescents to display intimacy is amplified by sharing them in the network. Therefore, intimacy is shown, exhibited and exchanged daily –se-

lective but done daily– through the mediation of computers. This weighting of personal content is common to all groups, although each group has particular characteristics. In this context, we wish to emphasize that the purpose of this exhibition of intimacy is meeting and sociability with peers.

Adolescents of both social sectors make their own presentation by personal publications, they chat with friends, find a partner or someone to date, use their capital, tell experiences and sex-affective relationships, manage their address book and diary, entertain themselves with playful and communicative practices as games, photographic «prosumption» and «streaming». This way, their identity configuration and everyday sociability is associated with Facebook, the main site where they explore and redefine relationships with their peers. Regarding gender, they maximize stereotypes as well as question them.

While there are differences over the use of this platform, here we have focused on common practices that are performed beyond a certain social sector. As we have seen, the publication of personal content and use of video games are paradigmatic examples of the confluence of practices. However, we know that there are differential practices and habits that will be an issue of further investigations.

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The Key Elements of Viral Advertising. From Motivation to Emotion in the Most Shared Videos

Claves de la publicidad viral: De la motivación a la emoción en los vídeos más compartidos

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ABSTRACT

From its origins in the mid '90, the application of the concept of virality to commercial communication has represented an opportunity for brands to cross the traditional barriers of the audience concerning advertising and turn it into active communicator of brand messages. Viral marketing has been based, since then, on two basic principles: offer free and engaging content that masks its commercial purpose to the individual and use of using a peer-to-peer dissemination system. The transformation of the passive spectator into an active user who broadcasts advertising messages promoted by sponsors, and who responds to needs and motivations of individuals and content features which have been described by previous research in this field, mainly through quantitative methods based on user perceptions. This paper focusses on those elements detected in its previous research as promoters of the sharing action in the 25 most-shared viral video ads between 2006 and 2013 using content analysis. The results obtained show the most common features in these videos and the prominent presence of surprise and joy as dominant emotions in the most successful viral videos.

RESUMEN

Desde sus orígenes a mediados de los noventa, la aplicación del concepto de viralidad a la comunicación comercial ha representado para las marcas una oportunidad para franquear las tradicionales barreras de la audiencia ante la publicidad y convertirla en transmisora activa de los mensajes de la marca. El marketing viral se basa, desde entonces, en dos principios básicos: ofrecer al individuo contenidos gratuitos y atractivos que disfrazan su finalidad comercial y usar un sistema de difusión de usuario en usuario. La transformación del espectador pasivo en usuario activo que difunde mensajes de tipo publicitario promovidos por anunciantes, responde a una serie de necesidades y motivaciones de los individuos y a una serie de características de los contenidos que han sido descritos por la investigación previa en este campo, principalmente a través de metodologías de tipo cuantitativo basadas en las percepciones de los usuarios. El presente artículo analiza, a través de la metodología del análisis de contenido, la presencia de los elementos que trabajos de investigación anteriores han señalado como favorecedores de la acción de compartir en los 25 vídeos publicitarios virales con más «shares» entre 2006 y 2013. Los resultados obtenidos muestran las características más comunes en este tipo de vídeos y la presencia destacada de la sorpresa y la alegría como emociones dominantes en los vídeos virales más exitosos.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Advertising, Internet, video, viral, social web, social media, emotion, content analysis.
Publicidad, Internet, vídeo, viral, web social, redes sociales, emoción, análisis de contenido.

1. Introduction and State of the Art. Viral Video Advertising and the Role of an Active Spectator

Viral video advertising may be the most popular manifestation of viral marketing phenomena. The concept of virality, introduced in the field of media theory by Rushkoff (1994)1, has been rapidly adapted to marketing under the basic principles described by Rayport in 1996, in his now acclaimed seminal article for this new approach2: disguising the content's commercial aim and making the users themselves circulate it through their contact networks.

Although «online» videos did exist before this breakthrough, the growth and consolidation of this platform initially targeting the dissemination of clips generated by users («User-Generated Content» or UGC), enlarged audiovisual content distribution channels parallel to traditional media by using the users' networks and small subscriber communities around the channels on this platform. The popularisation of videos was no longer a response to a situation of simultaneous consumption by mass audiences, but to a distribution structure through networks of users who, in an asynchronous way –although generally concentrated in time– share the content amongst their community of contacts. This is the breeding ground for the growth and development of viral videos.

What then is a viral video ad? First, it is a video produced by a brand with a direct or indirect commercial goal. This term is often generically used to refer to videos that have reached a high number of views, but this can be achieved through different means, such as paid content promotion, recommendations of similar videos on YouTube or the amplifying effect of TV broadcasting. If we are to be true to one of the main principles of viral marketing, viral videos must –necessarily– be shared by many individual users. What makes the difference in viral audiovisual content is, beyond the number of views –an important parameter, no doubt– the number of views achieved through mass dissemination by users who share a video across their contact networks of any kind (Porter & Golan, 2006: 29; Eckler & Bolls, 2011: 2). Despite the fact that a successful viral video may reach a large number of views, virals are so designed for their sharing, not for their views. In order to enhance content sharing, viral videos are stored and disseminated through a network. However, at present, viral video ads in particular may be clips that have been broadcast on television, either before or simultaneously. Lastly, another typical feature of this kind of video is that the large number of views implicit in multiple sharing is achieved in a brief period of time – after the initial peak, the growth in hits

dramatically decreases (Broxton, Interian, Vaver & Wattenhofer, 2010).

While the number of views achieved is the result of the passive act of watching –an anonymous act that does not mean any personal implication–, the act of sharing means that there is a symbolic link between the content shared, the personality of the user sharing it, and the perception of the community it is shared with. It is therefore natural to reflect upon the motivations that make a simple spectator become a tool for the dissemination of a message, subjecting their likes, preferences and even convictions to the scrutiny of their community through the action of forwarding the content. In this sense, we have to state the obvious – viral marketing does not create this social habit, but just makes the best of a pre-existing audience behaviour (Aguado & García, 2009).

Word-of-mouth or WOM communication has attracted increasing attention in the academic field of marketing and advertising since the 1950s. According to De Bruyn and Lilien (2008: 152) the research on this topic that has developed since then revolves around three main axes: research on the reasons why a consumer disseminates, in a proactive fashion, their consumption experience of a series of products or brands; research on the situations in which consumers trust WOM more than other sources of information before they purchase something; and research on the reasons why the information supplied by some people can have more influence on recipients.

As years have gone by and new media and communicative phenomena have appeared, research on the users' motivations to share their experience with a brand through word-of-mouth have given way to studies that, without forgetting their origins, focus on the reasons to share content of any kind through email or social networks, and later, on ad content, or more specifically on viral video ads.

Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998), writing about WOM, highlight that we are more inclined to share information on products that we feel are useful for our community, and that we also preferentially share information about those products or brands we are proud to use or about products that we think that define our personality. This thesis is further supported by Chung and Darke (2006), who claim that despite the numerous and varied products that we consume, we only share user experiences about those that we think strengthen the personal image that we want to project.

When we share our experience and interest in products and services that we use, we are taking con-

sumption acts that are, in many cases, private in themselves, into the public sphere, so that the decision to make them public is part of the image that we project towards others.

Ho and Dempsey (2010: 1001) developed a study on the motivations of users when sharing on-line content based on the theories of Schutz (1966) on interpersonal behaviour («Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation»: FIRO) that claim that human beings communicate and relate to satisfy personal needs according to three axes: inclusion, affection and control. The motivations discussed by Schutz are further developed by Ho and Dempsey with the hypothesis that users who consume more online content, and those with higher curiosity levels and a willingness to discover may be more likely to share. The outcomes show that, of the two axes of analysis proposed, only the need for inclusion and affection have a direct influence on the act of sharing content through a network, and it is the need to differentiate oneself from the group –the need to claim that one is distinct and «unique»–, rather than the idea of belonging to the group that triggers the action of sharing content on the web.

However, beyond the motivations related to the construction and projection of the individual's identity, the struggle for acceptance by their surroundings or the contribution to the knowledge of the community, there are reasons that have to do with the content itself and with the perception that the user has of it.

Research such as that by Huang, Chen and Wang (2012: 12) highlights that the quality of content is a determining factor in the decision to share it, while the expected response by the recipient (conceptualised as «empathy» by the authors) has an indirect influence on the hopes for inclusion, control or affection by the user sharing it. From a different perspective on the same aspect, Eckler and Bolls (2011) focus their research on the emotional content of viral messages, and the response they have to generate to become one, although they consider that this is not the only factor explaining the reaction of users, and they argue that generating emotions is a necessary requirement for a video to be

shared. They also argue that, as viral videos are thought to be more provocative than conventional TV ads, an analysis of the emotional tone of viral videos and their effect on the attitude of users towards the ad, the brand and also their intention to share it is much needed. Eckler and Bolls (2011: 8) conclude that the emotional tone of viral video ads is directly related to attitudes and intentions, and they highlight that ads that are perceived as pleasurable are more effective in generating positive attitudes towards the brand and

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interest in sharing than those that are perceived as disagreeable or coercive. This further suggests, according to the authors, that the taste for provocative or controversial content that ad producers attribute to their audiences might not match what the users want.

The idea that viral ads can afford to be –or that they even should be– more dramatic than ads for television is not new, and researchers such as Porter and Golan (2002: 31) already highlighted in 2002 that, although the emotional aspect linked to success of ad content was generally accepted, the success of viral video ads depended more on the excitement they could create through «provocative» and «crude» content, which would be most likely shared by users. The study by Porter and Golan concludes that sex-, violence and nudity-related content –generally enveloped by an air of comedy– gets better results in terms of dissemination by users.

Other authors such as Teixeira (2012) in more recent articles argue that it is essentially content based

on happiness and surprise that keeps the spectator's attention, while the decision to share it or not is more related to the individual's personality, highlighting extroversion and/or egocentrism as the traces of users more prone to share content.

Dobele, Lindgreen, Beverland, Vanhamme and van-Wijk (2007) also consider surprise as the fundamental emotion that a viral video must generate to be shared. These authors' research focuses on identifying the perception by spectators of the six primary emotions previously described by Ekman (1972) (surprise, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and rage) in successful campaigns. Their conclusions emphasize the importance of surprise for the dissemination of viral content, but also that it is usually accompanied by some of the other five emotions, and that the combination of surprise with happiness or disgust (with a humorous outcome) increases the intention of sharing the content by spectators (Dobele et al. 2007: 295-301). However, the authors themselves indicate that the presence of emotions is not enough to force the content to be shared, and that a campaign that «capture[s] the recipients' imagination in a unique or unforgettable way» becomes a must.

Looking at the state of the art, it is obvious that the decision to share a viral video is caused, on the one hand by motivations that have to do with the psychological or emotional needs of the user potentially sharing the clip, and on the other, with the motivations related to the viral video itself. The decision to share a viral video ad stems from the meeting of both these spheres in the individual.

In the face of the conclusions presented by this kind of research –generally of a quantitative nature– based on the perceptions of users about themselves and on the intention of sharing content, one could ask to what extent highly successful viral video ads –that is to say, those that have already been massively shared in an effective way– comply with the features labelled as relevant by previous studies based on the perception or behavioural prediction of users when they face viral content.

The objective of this paper is, first, to analyse highly successful viral video ads and find their common features and, second, to confirm that, indeed, the success of such viral video ads includes the elements highlighted as relevant by previous research on users. If we cross-check the user perspective with the analysis of content we will ascertain the degree of adequacy existing between what the individuals claim that leads them to share a video, and the features of the most successful viral video ads.

2. Methodology

The methodology proposed is based on content analysis of a sample of 25 viral video ads of proven success, looking at the elements identified as triggers for the act of sharing them in previous research.

The selection of viral videos was performed –considering the ideas put forward in the introduction– by looking at the number of times a viral video ad was shared and not at the number of views. As we have already explained, we consider that the act of sharing signifies a viewer of a video deeper involvement with the content in comparison to the mere act of watching it. On the other hand, sharing by users is an essential part of the concept of virality.

In order to obtain data related to the number of times a video ad disseminated through the web was shared, we have taking as reference the public ranking created by Unruly Media (n.d.) –a company specialising in marketing for viral videos– in cooperation with Mashable, which is also followed by publications such as «Adweek», «The Guardian» or «The Washington Post», and institutions such as the «Internet Advertising Bureau» (UK), amongst others.

We have selected the first 25 video ads in Unruly Media's ranking according to the number of times they were globally shared, from the beginning of their operations (2006) until the present. We have selected the sample for the longest period of time that the platform allows, as we think that, in this way, the results obtained are more consistent than if we focused on shorter and more recent periods, such as the latest week or month in the ranking. We also considered that a longer time-frame would lead to fewer less variations in the list, which is subjected to fluctuation depending on user shares. The data for this study were last updated on 23/11/2013.

The list of videos that have been analysed are shown in table 1.

The following data was registered for each item: title, sponsor, agency, year, duration, number of shares, number of views, TV broadcasting, target market, use of celebrities, humour, eroticism, violence, presence (not excluding) of the following emotions: surprise, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and rage and, lastly, final emotional tone conveyed (agreeable/disagreeable).

Once the analysis was started, we perceived that the item «surprise» could be subjected to a more precise delineation depending on the discursive element used to cause it. Thus, four different types of «surprises» were described in the units analysed: «real stunt» (surprise caused by dangerous scenes, generally of a sporty nature, with stunt actors or experts as their main

characters, such as those by DC Shoes, Red Bull or Volvo), «fictional stunt» (surprise caused by activities impossible to perform by the person doing them, usually with the aid of digital effects, for example the clips by Evian or Geico), «surprise event» (surprise caused by a thrilling action of «street marketing» developed in public spaces and recorded with a hidden camera, such as those by TNT Benelux or MGM), and «narrative surprise» (this refers to the narrative turn used in many works of fiction to achieve an unexpected ending, such as those by Volkswagen or Budweiser in 2013).

We thought that we should include the item «using celebrities», even if this was not mentioned in previous research, as this is a widely used resource in the history of advertising. We should clarify in this respect that we consider a «celebrity» any person who is well known in the concrete market or niche reflected or targeted by the video, and not necessarily at international level.

Through the quantification of the data related to the variables presented, and the cross-checks performed we have obtained the results that are presented below.

3. Analysis and outcomes

The first outcomes are of a descriptive nature, and allow us to present a basic profile of the average viral video ad within the group of the most successful ones. The conclusions drawn and relationships present across these elements will be presented in the following section:

a) Duration. Viral videos tend to last longer than most TV clips, with an average of around 03:05 minutes. However, we must highlight that in the sample taken, there are three videos of the same brand –DC Shoes– that increase the average significantly, as their durations are 09:52, 07:42 and 09:16. If we leave these particular clips aside, the average of the remaining sample ranges from 00:31 of the shortest video to 04:57 of the longest, and therefore the average in this second case is of 02:02.

b) Broadcast year. All viral videos in Unruly Media's Top 25 are above 2 Million shares. Despite the fact that we have taken the world ranking after 2006 as a reference, the first positions are taken by more recent videos against the oldest: of the 25 viral videos analysed. In the ranking between 2006 and 2013, 60% of the videos were aired in 2013 (9 videos) and 2012 (6 videos), while the others were aired in 2011 (4 videos), 2010 (4 videos), 2009 (1 video) and 2002-08 (1 video).

c) Target market. The data compiled show that 52% of viral videos analysed initially target an international market, however, 32% initially target (looking at the products or brands they advertise, or at the people in them, for example) the US market. The presence of viral video ads targeting other national

	Title	Sponsor	Year	Shares	Views
01	The Force	Volkswagen	2011	5577,99	66,979,031
02	A Dramatic Surprise on a Quiet Square	TNT Benelux	2012	4,707,252	51,156,565
03	Dove Real Beauty Sketches	Dove	2013	4,273,590	128,006,741
04	Dumb Ways to Die	Melbourne Metro Trains	2012	4,246,095	68,084,885
05	Hump Day Camel Commercial	Geico	2013	4,051,911	18,505,360
06	Baby&me	Evian	2013	3,353,756	66,215,113
07	9/11	Budweiser	2002/08*	3,345,654	14,418,895
08	DC Shoes: Ken Block's Gymkhana Five: Ultimate Urban Playground; San Francisco	DC Shoes	2012	3,294,596	55,002,809
09	DC Shoes: Ken Block's Gymkhana Three, Part 2; Ultimate Playground; l'Autodrome, France	DC Shoes	2010	3,182,060	54,165,642
10	Evian Roller Babies	Evian	2009	3,173,096	118,177,742
11	Ship my Pants	Kmart	2013	3,078,971	29,972,830
12	The Hottest @Abercrombie & Fitch Guys, «Call Me Maybe» by Carly Rae Jepsen	Abercrombie & Fitch	2012	2,918,863	20,806,532
13	Yalın - Keyfi Yolunda, Alkı Sonunda	Cornetto	2013	2,911,402	26,401,796
14	DC Shoes: Ken Block's Gymkhana Four; The Hollywood Megamercial	DC Shoes	2011	2,853,791	25,149,752
15	The Clydesdales Brotherhood	Budweiser	2013	2,719,978	15,417,557
16	Pepsi MAX & Jeff Gordon: «Test Drive»	Pepsi	2013	2,696,314	45,299,800
17	The Epic Split feat. Van Damme	Volvo Trucks	2013	2,518,742	49,343,772
18	2 year old dancing the jive	Studie43	2012	2,425,517	20,414,307
19	Christmas Food Court Flash Mob, Hallelujah Chorus	Alphabet Photography	2010	2,394,191	42,525,502
20	Thank You Mama - Best Job	P&G	2012	2,287,408	12,629,369
21	Telekinetic Coffee Shop Surprise	MGM	2013	2,186,490	49,481,940
22	Danny MacAskill - «Way Back Home»	Red Bull	2010	2,114,377	29,260,802
23	Ma Contrexpérience	Nestlé	2011	2,041,967	19,735,431
24	Write The Future	Nike	2010	2,023,509	41,896,561
25	Ape With AK-47	20th Century Fox	2011	2,022,527	32,289,664

Table 1. Most widely shared viral video ads between 2006 and 2013

*The clip «9/11» by Budweiser was TV broadcast during the «Super Bowl» in 2002, but the video the data refers to appears in the Unruly Media database in 2008.
(Source: Unruly Media)

markets is negligible, albeit present; of the four remaining videos (12%) «A Dramatic Surprise on a Quiet Square» addresses audiences in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, «Dumb Ways to Die» targets an Australian audience, «Keyfi Yolunda, Aşkı Sonunda», is produced for Cornetto Turkey, and «Ma Contrexpérience» targets the French market.

d) Sponsors. The most remarkable sponsors are DC Shoes, who manage to place their viral videos in

happiness is used in a remarkable way as a resource in 92% of videos. We have not found any viral video ads in the sample using disgust or rage, while only 12% used fear to some extent (as a situation in the video) and 20%, sadness.

h) Presence of celebrities. The presence of celebrities is confirmed in 32% of the videos. In 87.5% of cases their presence is associated to the use of surprise as «real stunt».

i) Final emotional tone conveyed. The analysis of the final emotional tone conveyed through the combination of the elements present in the clips produces a result of «agreeable» in the total 25 viral video ads most widely shared in the period 2006-2013.

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4. Discussion and conclusions

The most important contributions of our research have to do with the characterization of the most successful viral video ads –those that could be considered an example, at least from the point of view of the level of dissemination reached amongst users– and with the identification of some emotional and narrative elements in the videos, previously indicated by research on user perceptions of this content through quantitative methodologies.

2012, 2010 and 2011 in the 25 most widely shared ones, Budweiser, who manage to have two of their «Super Bowl» videos (2002-13) in the ranking, and Evian, with two more clips (2009-13).

e) TV broadcasting. Regarding TV broadcasting of viral video ads, confirmation with absolute certainty of the broadcasting of some of the videos in the sample proved difficult. Therefore, we finally left this element out of our analysis. What we could confirm, however, was that three of them were broadcast during the «Super Bowl», amongst them the video ranking first.

f) Presence of humour, erotic or violent elements. While the presence of humorous content in the analysed videos is high (56%), erotic (8%) and violent (16%) content is low.

g) Ekman's basic emotions. According to our analysis, 76% of the most successful viral videos use surprise as a resource, and in all of them another basic emotion also appears; within this group, 37% correspond to the category «real stunt», 21% to «fictional stunt», 16% to «surprise event» and 26% show «narrative surprise». Regarding the remaining emotions, only

Despite the fact that audiovisual content for the web is by definition supposed to have more formal and creative freedom than standard clips, the average duration of the most widely shared viral video ads is, as a whole, not far from the standard TV ad, if we leave the three longer pieces by DC Shoes aside, which could be considered exceptions to the sample, especially as they belong to the same sponsor (without them, the average duration would be of 02:02). However, the fact that the «Gymkhanas» of DC Shoes are so obviously present in the ranking leads us to think that if the content connects with the user, recommendations related to the duration of audiovisual pieces for Internet become secondary.

Research shows that 60% of the most widely shared viral video ads in the ranking from 2006-2013 were launched in the past two years. New entries in the Top 25 displace videos that show slow increases in

the number of views and shares after they were launched. The impression this fact makes is that videos aired at present manage a high number of shares more easily than those produced in previous years, which means higher viral dissemination during launching. One probable cause for this is the unstoppable expansion of social networks, with more users by the day, and who enable the act of sharing with larger contact lists and therefore enable videos to gain greater coverage and impact. Another possibility –related to the first one– is that, once the maturity phase of the phenomenon of viral video ads was reached, companies started investing more actively in their dissemination, in an open or covert manner, optimising segmentation and «guiding virality». Both hypotheses leave the door open to specific research in this sense.

Another interesting result is that this viral phenomenon is not necessarily global in scope, at least in origin. It is true that certain brands launch their viral ads to an international market (52%), but it is also true that in many cases the large market share of a particular market, such as for example the US one, with its global media control, allows clips originally developed for this market (32%) to go international through events such as the «Super Bowl» or, simply, they just reach a high volume of shares without actually leaving their borders. A remarkable aspect is that only the Turkish ad «Keyfi Yolunda, Aşkı Sonunda» uses a language other than English in its voice-over (a song). In fact, despite the fact that we did not take language as a specific feature in our analysis, we think that an interesting element would be to quantify the number of viral ads that remove verbal aspects to maybe favour internationalisation.

Despite the fact that there were several difficulties in compiling information that led us to do away with the item «TV broadcasting», we should highlight that the most widely shared video to date is an ad broadcast during the «Super Bowl»: «The Force», by Volkswagen. This in itself makes us question authors who argue that content of viral video ads is different and more «aggressive» than TV ads (Porter & Golan, 2002), or even the nature of virality because both «The Force», as well as viral videos by Budweiser, were initially broadcast on television during the «Super Bowl», and later posted on the web. This leads us to believe that television and events of mass audiences are a powerful starting point for the later viral dissemination of some of the most successful videos. Even though the initial concept of virality implies the use of networks of users in their dissemination, an interesting pending topic would be to re-examine whether this is still so.

The results obtained on the analysis of feelings are generally consistent with previous research based on user perception or behavioural prediction in the face of viral content.

Regarding the presence of humour, erotic (nudity) or violent elements in the videos analysed, the outcomes are different to some extent to those presented by Porter and Golan (2002). The presence of humorous content in the most widely shared viral adds is remarkable (58%), while erotic (8%) and violent (16%) content is present in reduced percentages, although it is true that whenever violence or eroticism are found, they are mainly presented in a humorous light, and only in one of the cases the use of erotic elements does not imply humour.

Regarding the analysis of Ekmar's basic emotions used by Dobele et al. (2007), the results obtained largely correspond with those presented by these researchers. 76% of the most widely shared viral videos use surprise as a resource, and all of them show at least another basic emotion.

Surprise through potentially dangerous activities related to sports or risky situations is a very common practice of the most successful viral video ads, and has much to do with the use of celebrities, as it is in these roles that such celebrities are usually cast if they are sportspeople or actors specialising in the practice they show in front of the camera. The outcomes of the analysis of surprise as an emotion in the most widely shared viral video ads coincide with the general approaches of previous research, such as those by Teixeira (2012) or Dobele et al. (2007), who find this the most relevant emotion in the success of viral videos.

We also consider that the division into four categories («real stunt», «fictional stunt», «surprise event» and «narrative surprise») proposed to classify surprise in viral video ads may be interesting both from a descriptive perspective and from the point of view of future research.

Regarding the remaining emotions analysed, only happiness appears in 92% of videos, as we have already explained. Regarding the emotions of fear and sadness, we have to highlight that fear is always used as a tool to generate surprise, so that the final feeling is positive. Regarding sadness, we also have to highlight that its use is mainly linked to happiness, generating an unexpected happy ending typical of videos using «narrative surprise» as a resource, and it is only in one case that we find sadness as a single emotion, in the clip «9/11», by Budweiser, of a clearly emotional nature.

Therefore, surprise and happiness are remarkable emotions in the sample of the most widely shared viral

video ads, and this coincides with the contributions of Teixeira (2012), Dobele et al. (2007) or Eckler and Bolls (2011) in this regard.

On the other hand, and related to all of the above, the analysis of the final emotional tone conveyed by these ads shows that all viral videos in the Top 25 ranking can be classified as «agreeable», which coincides fully with the results of Eckler and Bolls (2011).

Our current research confronts the elements –provided by previous studies– seen as relevant by users when sharing content with the elements that are clearly present in the most widely shared viral video ads to date. The outcomes presented show a clear correlation between the findings of previous research from the point of view of users and the results obtained through content analysis of the 25 most successful cases of viral advertising in the past years, but they also open up questions that will allow us to make progress in future research.

Notes

[1] The concept of «media virus» by Rushkoff is related to the «meme», a unit of cultural transmission introduced by Dawkins in 1976, on whose evolution and interpretation Lull and Neiva (2011) have widely reflected.

2 On the origin of the approach of viral marketing and the different contributions to the coining of this term, please see Sivera (2008).

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