# Informative reels on *Instagram* in the face of new ways of reporting to attract new audiences

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## Abstract

In recent years, the current media ecosystem has been transformed owing to the adaptation to digital media, affecting all genres and audiovisual formats. As a result, from the point of view of participation, the viewer-user has acquired an unprecedented protagonism owing to the possibility now offered by social networks. The informative genre, far from turning its back on this reality, has allied itself with it and is exploring new ways of reaching audiences, and one of the latest trends has to do with informative television channels and the use of *Instagram* reels. This research focuses on the case of *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias), with the purpose of analyzing the use and communication strategy that they make of *Instagram* reels on this platform, precisely because it is the feature that has achieved more popularity of late. The findings show that *RTVE Noticias* does not currently have a clear strategy when it comes to informing through this medium, which translates into content being reused from other media without really taking advantage of the narrative potential of the network, resulting in low interaction with followers. The main results obtained allow us to continue a rich academic debate related to the media's use of social networks from the perspective of information and consumption, mainly among the youngest users.

## Keywords

Reels; *Instagram*; Social media; Social networks; *RTVE*; News; Digital media; Information; Engagement; Participation; Interaction.

## 1. Introduction

For more than two decades, the Internet has become a cohesive force of the media, and is probably one of the best channels for promotional spaces (**Larrañaga**, 2008, pp. 2-3; **Piñeiro**, 2015), which has in turn transformed it into a meta-medium, understood as

> "a computer-generated online digital medium with properties of traditional media and other new potentialities based on computation, which has autonomy for the creation, editing, reproduction, dissemination, access, and downloading (browsing, searching, reading, listening, viewing, and interaction) of different multimedia content" (**Campos-Freire**, *et al*., 2016, p. 451),

a definition arrived at by those authors on the basis of concepts previously used by **Jensen** (2013) and **Campos-Freire** (2015a; 2015b).

Social networks, as part of the Internet phenomenon, have been a real alternative to other promotional, advertising, or marketing spaces since their conception. These virtual social networks, which in many ways replace analog ones, are virtual communication spaces that, among other things, can put brands/companies in contact with their users without the need for physical presence.

This purpose or variable of "promotion" has not always been so: for example, when the *Six Degrees* social network was created in the 1990s, its aim was for users to able to contact each other (person to person), focusing, to a large extent, on the circle of friends or people who they had previously met in person. Later, other social networks. such as *Facebook*, *MySpace*, *Twitter*, *Hi5*, or *Tuenti*, began to emerge with similar objectives, also underpinning the focus of success on the "person."

Once social networks began to reach the thresholds of maximum success (from 2008 onward), more research began to be carried out on this new reality owing to its diversification and according to variables such as target group, objectives, horizontality/verticality, immediacy, and the short or long term. Thus, people ceased to be the sole "center of attention" of social networks and other possibilities entered the scene: horizontal/vertical, human/content-related, and nomadic/sedentary social networks.

Although most, if not all, social networks have not lost sight of their social character, from a business point of view the emphasis has been on taking advantage of them for promotion, marketing, advertising, direct and indirect sales, and brand image. In general, social networks have been used to increase the popularity of the users themselves, as well as to improve their positioning in virtual markets, since the Internet is still a medium

> "governed by commercial purposes and market logic" (**Díaz-Soloaga**, 2002, p. 2).

In this sense, journalistic companies are governed by the same criteria as any other:

> "Companies are aware that social media are becoming prescriptive spaces where users go to stay informed about brands or companies and express their adherence to them or raise their criticisms" (**López-de-Ayala-López**; **Catalina-García**; **Fernández-Fernández**, 2018, p. 72).

We are immersed in a virtual world that is framed

> "in an increasingly complex communicative ecosystem" (**Campos-Freire** et al., 2016, p. 452),

and

> "the communication industry has no doubt: the present and the future is in the networked society. As new digital media enter their third decade of evolution, now clad in meta-media, no one wants to live apart from social networks" (**Campos-Freire** et al., 2016, p. 452).

This is why social networks are a communicative space that journalists have been taking advantage of (**Porto**, 2011) to get the most out of their information and expand it within a more globalized framework, in addition to generating traffic. There are authors who even claim that traditional media have ceased to be the main focus of news production (**Rodero**, 2019) in favor of these social networks, something, however, that some journalistic sectors question. In any case, these more conventional media have also taken advantage of social networks to achieve greater impact and more reach (**Marcos-García**; **Alonso-Muñoz**; **López-Meri**, 2021), and have used them for several years already as platforms for distributing information (**Pérez-Soler**, 2017). The digital context, therefore, currently configures a media landscape that imposes new challenges to information professionals (**Canavilhas**, 2015) in terms of the use of social networks, no longer only under exclusively business parameters, but as previously indicated, as a journalistic support and source, with the latter being the main context where this research is framed.

### 1.1. Instagram, social networks, and information

*Instagram* is a social network that was first available for *IOS* on October 6, 2010 and for Android on April 3, 2012 (**Caerols**; **Tapia**; **Carretero**, 2013). It was subsequently purchased by Facebook on April 9, 2012 for approximately 1 billion USD (**Caerols**; **Tapia**; **Carretero**, 2013). It can be considered

> In Spain, according to data from *IAB Spain* in its 2023 social network study, *Instagram* is the second most known social network, only behind *Facebook*; and with *YouTube*, it is the third social network in terms of number of users, only behind *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*

"an application whose main value has been attributed to the capacity of interaction between brand and user through photography. In addition, it allows for the sharing of these snapshots on different social networks [...]" (**Caerols**; **Tapia**; **Carretero**, 2013, p. 70).

In just two months it reached 1 million users (**Bilton**, 2010), then 5 million by June 2011 (**Caerols**; **Tapia**; **Carretero**, 2013) and 10 million by September 2011 (**Protalinski**, 2012). In its early years it grew at a rate of 5 million new users per week (**Griggs**, 2012). Currently, according to 2021 data collected by **Mohsin** (2022), *Instagram* has 100 million monthly active users and is the second social network after *Facebook*, with more than 70% of users under 35 years old and who spend an average of 53 minutes per day on the app. In addition, it is the social network that has grown the most globally (**Carrasco**; **Sánchez**; **Trelles**, 2020).

> *Instagram*'s principal influence is through images, in either photographic or video format, and not in text, as on other social networks. Among the different functionalities, there is the *reel*, a short video that can be edited to add audio and effects. Reels are shared on the profile of the user who creates them, reaching their followers as well as the public, if the account on which it is shared is public

In Spain, according to data from *IAB Spain* in its 2023 social network study, Instagram is the second most known social network, only behind *Facebook*; and with *YouTube*, it is the third social network in terms of number of users, only behind *WhatsApp* and *Facebook*. The average rating given by users is 7.4 points on a scale of 1-10. *Instagram* is the second network in terms of frequency of use, while in terms of interaction, so far this year, it comes in first. It was also the social network in which the most was invested in terms of advertising in the last 3 years, according to the aforementioned study.

Today, it is difficult to refute that a large part of the information that is consumed is done so through the Internet, and within this considerable framework, through social networks, to the point of reconfiguring the information ecosystem (**Pedrero-Esteban**; **Pérez-Escoda**; **Establés**, 2021), given that social networks monopolize a communicative flow parallel to the formal discourse but reach many more users (**Newman** *et al*., 2020). Social networks play a significant role on many levels (**Bastos**; **Mercea**, 2018) every day of the year (**Brems** *et al*., 2017), in both the personal as well as the business spheres, as previously noted.

If we focus on the journalistic world, social networks are important links between media companies and digital users. Taking into account the main market studies carried out in Spain, there are three social networks with the highest media consumption by number of users: *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *Instagram*. The media themselves have put the most focus on social networks to reach this type of audience. In fact, if you look at the websites of the six most watched television channels in Spain, they are the ones that most reference and most use social media. To date, no results have been found as to the traffic generated by these media or rankings per se, so we simply start from a probability, a hypothesis on the basis of the social networks that the media themselves advertise on their websites.

It is on these social networks that a hypertextual, multimedia, and interactive language (**Ruiz-Paz**; **Rodríguez-Fidalgo**; **Paíno-Ambrosio**, 2022; **Salaverría**, 2005), as well as multidirectional (**Arjona-Martín**, 2012), is combined. Therefore,

> "journalistic practices have consequently shifted to the use of such channels and applications" (**Longhi-Heredia**, 2022, p. 19),

paying special attention to social networks (**Herrero-Gutiérrez**, 2019; **Salaverría**, 2019).

Within these social networks, this study puts particular emphasis on *Instagram*, as it is the one that "gives preference to audiovisual image culture" (**Longhi-Heredia**, 2022, p. 19) over textual or argumentative languages (**Longhi-Heredia**, 2022), thus constructing a visual journalistic narrative (**Mañas**; **Veloso**; **Cuesta**, 2019).

> "This is how *Instagram* has managed to position itself as a reference space in the consumption of fast-content-type news" (**Longhi-Heredia**, 2022, p. 19).

In terms of news consumption, *Instagram* is the second most used social network by young people for getting online news, and is first if only the 18-24-year-old age group is considered, according to the *Digital News Report 2021*. In terms of motivations, according to the same study,

> "Instagram is associated with a 'fun and entertaining way to pass the time' (26%), incidental news consumption, (18%) and offering 'perspectives not available in mainstream media' (16%)" (*Digital News Report*, 2021).

### 1.2. *RTVE* and its commitment to social networks

Within this framework, European public service media have undertaken in recent years

> "an accelerated process of incorporation into social networks and the development of mobile applications" (**Crusafon**; **González-Saavedra**; **Murciano**, 2020, p. 50).

*RTVE* has also been able to use social networks to obtain greater visibility, as mentioned previously. The first major social network that the *RTVE* joined was *YouTube*, on March 30, 2006, and as of May 2023, it has 2.31 million subscribers and currently around 1.5 billion views.

Three years later, on February 4, 2009, *RTVE* joined *Facebook*, according to its official and verified page, where it currently has more than 936,000 followers. In March 2009, *RTVE* joined *Twitter*, where it currently has 1.2 million followers. *RTVE* also has accounts on social networks such as *TikTok*, *Twitch*, and *LinkedIn*, among others, as well as others that were important in the past but have since disappeared, such as *Tuenti*. In July 2013, *RTVE* joined *Instagram*, the social network addressed in this article, and since its inception, has published more than 10,000 posts, has more than 436,000 followers, and follows 444 accounts.

Within *RTVE*, there are many programs and/or sections, apart from journalists, that also use their own social network accounts, and are aimed at more specific audiences, for example, *RTVE Noticias*. *RTVE Noticias* has accounts on networks such as *Facebook* since March 24, 2017, with more than 139,000 followers; *Twitter* since May 2009, with more than 1.5 million followers; *YouTube* since March 18, 2020, with more than 1.63 million subscribers (Figure 1); and *Instagram* since January 2018, with more than 210,000 followers.

Given *RTVE*'s commitment to social networks, as well as many other journalistic companies, it was deemed necessary to carry out a more precise and limited study of the use of *Instagram*, which had not been done until now, although other studies have also used other cases as their object of analysis (**Arreguez-Manozzo** and **Merlo**, 2020; **Castelló-Martínez**, *et al*., 2023; **Rodríguez-Hernández** *et al*., 2022; **Román-San-Miguel**, **Olivares-García**, and **Jiménez-Zafra**, 2022; **Sancho-Belichón**, 2023).

## 2. Methodological Approach

### 2.1. Sample object of study

The sample analyzed consisted of 358 reels, which were collected in two phases. The first phase included all reels published between February 11, 2021, when *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias) published its first reel, and June 30, 2022. This data collection yielded a sample of 179 reels for further analysis. In the second phase, a sample of another 179 reels published between August 1 and October 31, 2022 was randomly selected. The reason for this second selection lies in *Instagram* announcing a relevant change in July of this year that affected video-type publications: all videos with a duration of less than 90 seconds would be integrated into the "reels" category, with no differentiation between "videos" and "reels" as had been done until then; in fact, the "videos" category no longer exists (Figure 2).

Moreover, this measure has been retroactive, so that all videos published on *Instagram* since *RTVE Noticias*
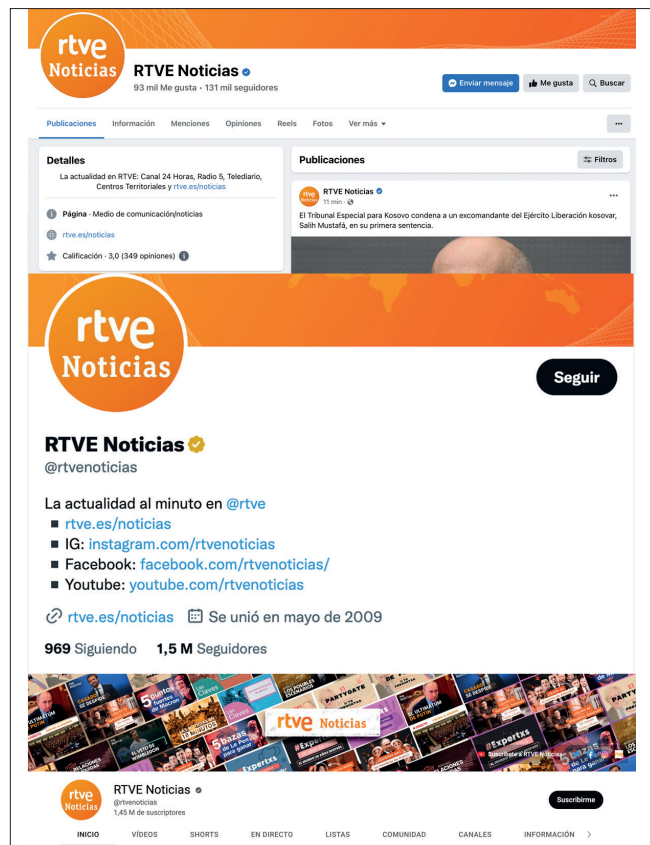


Figure 1. *RTVE Noticias Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube* profiles.
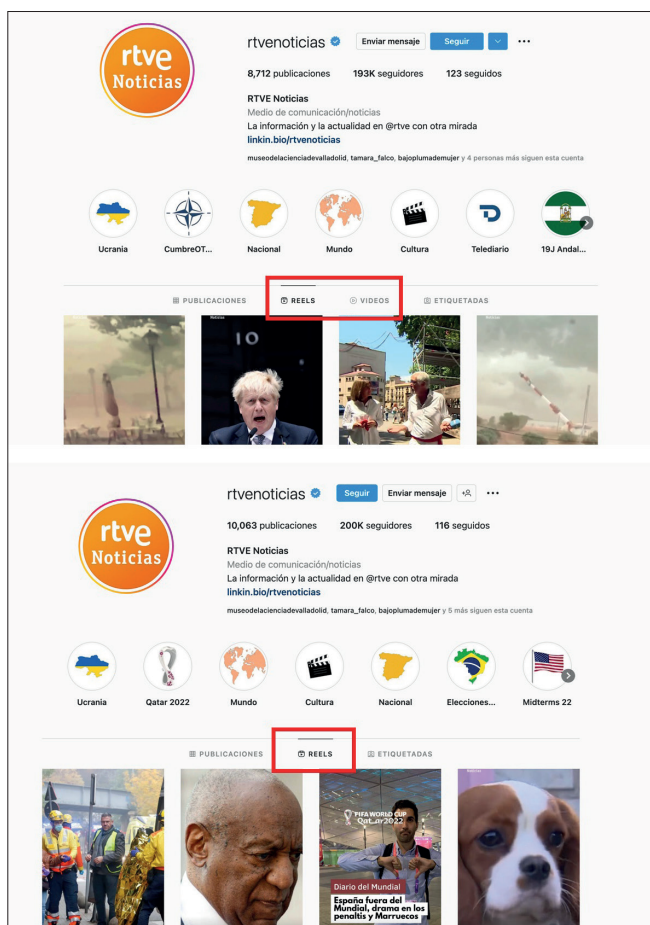Source: *RTVE Noticias.*



Figure 2. Comparison of the tabs available on *Instagram* before and after the change of cataloging videos as reels.
Source: *RTVE Noticias*' profile on *Instagram* (@rtvenoticias).

opened its account and that met the aforementioned duration requirement now appear in the "reels" category. As a result, the number of reels has increased significantly, so much so that in the 3 months consulted in the second phase, a total of 733 reels were published. For this reason, and to have a volume equivalent to that of the first phase, it was decided to select a sample of 179, which represents 24.4% of the total number of reels published between August and October 2022. It is necessary to specify that the reels corresponding to the month of July 2022 have not been part of the sample, since this was the time when the changes were taking place and the intent was to avoid sampling errors.

> *RTVE* has also been able to use social networks to obtain greater visibility

## 2.2. Research objectives

The general objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Analyze *RTVE*'s use of reels on its *Instagram* profile (@rtvenoticias).

2. Determine the communication strategy used by *RTVE Noticias* when publishing reels before and after the policy changed what *Instagram* considers to be reels.

From these general objectives arise the following specific objectives that will be approached from a comparative perspective:

1. Identify the characteristics of the reels, in terms of date and type of publication, topics addressed, and use of resources such as mentions, hashtags, emoticons, geolocation, and sound.

2. Analyze the interaction (views, likes, and comments) generated in the reels published in the periods under study.

## 2.3. Methods

To carry out this research, we have chosen the methodological technique of the case study (**Savin-Baden**; **Howell**, 2022; **Yacuzzi**, 2005; **Yin**, 1994). More specifically, this analysis focuses on the *Instagram* profile, @rtvenoticias, of the public broadcaster *RTVE*.

For this purpose, from the quantitative point of view, a series of ad hoc variables have been designed for this study, scientifically proven in previous works (**Bonilla-del-Río**; **Figuereo-Benítez**; **García-Prieto**, 2022; **Paíno-Ambrosio**; **Rodríguez-Fidalgo**; **Rodríguez-Monge**, 2021; **Rodríguez-Monge**; **Rodríguez-Fidalgo**; **Paíno-Ambrosio**, 2022). A content analysis will thus be carried out because it is a

"method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative way, with the purpose of measuring certain variables" (**Wimmer**; **Dominick**, 1996, p. 70);

the same ideas, in this sense, are defended by **Berelson** (1952). In addition, content analysis is a technique that can be replicated with some ease because it is considered by many authors to be the most objective, as it is quantifiable (**Riffe**; **Lacy**; **Watson**; **Fico**, 1998). Thus, **Krippendorff** defines it as

"a research technique aimed at formulating, from certain data, reproducible and valid inferences that can be applied to its context" (1998, p. 20).

To extract the activity data on *Instagram*, the social network analysis and management tool *Fanpage Karma* was used, and to carry out the aforementioned quantitative content analysis, a file was prepared that included the variables shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis sheet.

| | |
|---|---|
| Reel identification | Specify exact date |
| | Day of the week (publication strategy) |
| | Type of publication (original, *TikTok*, newscast, or other *RTVE* program) |
| Reel content and resources | Topic |
| | Includes text |
| | Sound (original audio, music, no sound) |
| | Includes geolocation |
| | Includes hashtags |
| Content and resources of the text accompanying the reel | Includes hashtags |
| | Includes emoticons |
| | Includes mentions |
| Activity generated | Number of views |
| | Number of likes |
| | Number of comments |
| | Engagement rate |

Sample coding was performed between July 1 and July 15, 2022 for the first phase of analysis, and between November 1 and November 15, 2022 for the second phase. This was carried out by two researchers. To calculate process reliability, a subsample of 50 reels, corresponding to 14% of the total number of reels under study, was randomly selected and analyzed simultaneously by the two coders to calculate Krippendorff's alpha (**Krippendorff**, 2011). The results yielded an average of *Kα* = 0.95 for the 15 variables analyzed.

> The sample analyzed consisted of 358 reels, which were collected in two phases. The first phase included all reels published between February 11, 2021, when *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias) published its first reel, and June 30, 2022. This data collection yielded a sample of 179 reels for further analysis

## 3. Analysis and Results

### 3.1. Characteristics of the reels that were the object of study

#### 3.1.1. Identification of reels

The analysis of the distribution of reel publication by months shows that, although *RTVE Noticias* started publishing a high number of reels between February and March 2021, its interest in this type of publications quickly decreased until January 2022, when a significant increase was observed, which remained constant in the following 5 months (Graph 1).

This frequency varies depending on the current news. As will be seen in the analysis of the topics addressed, certain events lead to a greater publication of reels covering that event. This happens most notably with the *Benidorm Fest* (the music contest held in 2022 for the selection of the Spanish song that participates in *Eurovision* that year), with 6 reels being published on consecutive days (from Monday to Saturday); the *Goya Awards* gala, with 5 reels (on two days, Saturday and Sunday); and the war in Ukraine, with reels beginning to appear at the end of February 2022 and appearing continuously during the period under study. Furthermore, in the study of the distribution of publications by days of the week, the results do not identify a clear trend in any "preferred" day for publishing: Monday (13%), Tuesday (12%), Wednesday (11%), Thursday (19%), Friday (12%), Saturday (19%), and Sunday (14%). These very similar percentages indicate that the day of the week is not a criterion used by *RTVE Noticias* when uploading reels to *Instagram*.

In the second phase of this study, a significant increase in the number of reels was noted, coinciding with the policy change made by *Instagram*. The data analyzed show that there is an average publication rate in the months of August–October 2022 of 8.5 reels per day, while in the previous period the average publication rate is 0.3 reels per day. However, *RTVE Noticias* still does not have a preferred day of publication. This means that in general, this type of publication is more linked to current news, and therefore does not follow the logic of social networks whereby there are days more conducive to obtaining greater engagement.

The origin of the 358 reels under study is unevenly distributed, as shown in Graph 2.

When taking into account the two phases of analysis, there is a difference in relation to origin. While in the first period the reels published come from the news, that is, they are small fragments that had previously been broadcast on the news, in the second period analyzed, the largest volume of reels corresponds to an original format that is created specifically for publication on *Instagram* or another social media platform.

The reels that come from *TikTok* show that there is a change when publishing this type of content before and after *Instagram*'s implementation of the policy that converted all videos with a duration of less than 90 seconds into reels, such that, as the previous graph shows, they have completely stopped being used. Something similar happens with the reels of another type of origin, catalogued as "other," where a marked
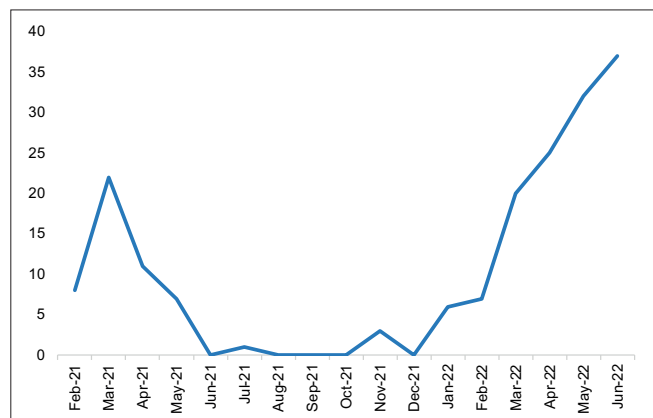


Graph 1. Distribution of reel publication by month in the first period under study.
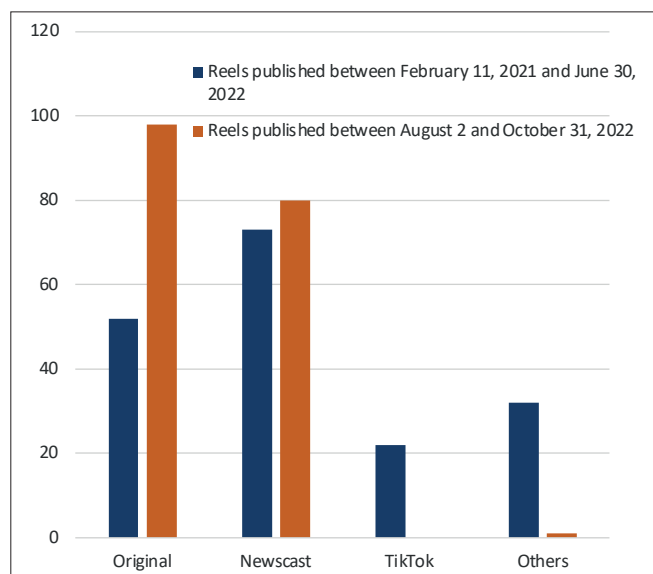


Graph 2. Reel origin.

decrease is also evident. In this regard, it should be noted that these publications in the first phase of analysis corresponded to content from *Radio 5 Actualidad*, specifically the chronicles sent by Fran Sevilla, published on the web as well as broadcast on the 24-hour channel.

The following two sections address the reels themselves, taking into account on the one hand, the analysis of audiovisual content, and on the other hand, the descriptive text that accompanies it from a double perspective: content and resources used.

> ‘ The analysis of the distribution of reel publication by months shows that, although *RTVE Noticias* started publishing a high number of reels between February and March 2021, its interest in this type of publications quickly decreased until January 2022, when a significant increase was observed, which remained constant in the following 5 months ’

### 3.1.2. Content and resources of published reels

When it comes to the audiovisual content of the reels, the topics identified differ very little between the two periods of analysis (Table 2).

In the first period, there are differences in the content catalogued within the thematic areas of *RTVE Igualdad* and *RTVE Verifica*, and there are no reels on the environment or health; while on the contrary, the opposite is the case in the second period. Furthermore, and taking into account the percentages for each period of analysis, the differences found are more pronounced. The preferred topics from February 11, 2021 to June 30, 2022 were the war in Ukraine, as well as aspects of culture and science and technology; and from August 1 to October 31, 2022 the topics of politics, events, and society were preferred, respectively.

Another of the characteristics of the content related to the topics is their connection with immediate news, an aspect that can be observed in the reels on the war in Ukraine; in fact, the first reel of this type was published on February 25, 2022, one day after the invasion by Russia took place. Ukrainian war reels are short video clips of chronicles that, in most cases, have been previously broadcast. They feature well-known news correspondents (Figure 3), including Fran Sevilla (*Radio 5 Actualidad*) and Almudena Ariza, Óscar Mijallo, Carlos Franganillo, and Ebbaba Hameida (*TVE*).

This aspect has also been observed in cultural content, in which the *Goya* gala and *Eurovision* have been identified as protagonists in several reels; and in the case of political content, with the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The same applies to sports, coronavirus, and economics. On the contrary, in the case of science and technology and other culture content of *RTVE Verifica* and *RTVE Igualdad*, mostly reels that do not have to do with current events are found. Among the particularities of science and technology and other culture, there is the specific case of three collections of reels: #AlHilo, #ConCiencia, and #CuandoNoEraViral (figure 4). These are groups of content created by three women who gather news in an informative tone for a young audience accustomed to the consumption of social networks. The reels are characterized by using a medium-short shot speaking directly to the camera (mobile) and recorded in vertical format,

Table 2. Characteristics of the reels that were the object of study.

| | Reels published between February 11, 2021 and June 30, 2022 | | Reels published between August 1, 2022 and October 31, 2022 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| Science and technology | 21 | 11.73 | 6 | 3.35 |
| Coronavirus | 10 | 5.59 | 5 | 2.79 |
| Culture | 30 | 16.76 | 9 | 5.03 |
| Sports | 10 | 5.59 | 7 | 3.91 |
| Economy | 6 | 3.35 | 10 | 5.59 |
| War in Ukraine | 65 | 36.31 | 21 | 11.73 |
| Environment | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1.68 |
| Politics | 9 | 5.03 | 46 | 25.70 |
| Self-promotion | 2 | 1.12 | 2 | 1.12 |
| *RTVE Igualdad* | 3 | 1.68 | 0 | 0.00 |
| *RTVE Verifica* | 1 | 0.59 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Health | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5.59 |
| Society | 8 | 4.47 | 24 | 13.41 |
| Current events | 14 | 7.82 | 36 | 20.11 |
| Total | 179 | 100 | 179 | 100 |



Figure 3. Reels of correspondents in the Ukrainian War.
Source: *Instagram*, *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias).

with the use of emoticons and resources that attract the user's attention. However, after the sharp decline in the publication of reels in May 2021, this type of content does not appear again.

This section is completed by the analysis of the resources used in the reels, which specifically addresses the use of text, sound, music, geolocation, and hashtags, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of resources used.

| | Reels published between February 11, 2021 and June 30, 2022 | | Reels published between August 1, 2022 and October 31, 2022 | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | % | *n* | % | *n* | % |
| Text | 66 | 36.9 | 94 | 52.5 | 160 | 44.7 |
| Sound (original audio) | 173 | 96.6 | 76 | 42.5 | 249 | 69.6 |
| Music (*Instagram* library) | 5 | 2.8 | 7 | 3.9 | 12 | 3.4 |
| Geolocation | 31 | 17.3 | 4 | 2.2 | 35 | 9.8 |
| Hashtags | 8 | 4.5 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2.2 |

The incorporation of text in this type of audiovisual publication has been recurrent in both periods under study, and is more common in the second one. These are short texts that act either as small informative headlines or as subtitles. In the first period of analysis, they appear mainly in those related to science and technology, followed by those related to culture and the coronavirus; and in the second period they are appear mainly in politics, current events, and the war in Ukraine. Regarding the use of headlines or subtitles, the particularity of a still photo being combined with a headline that appears and disappears when the reel is published has been identified in the second period of analysis. This is due to a new *Instagram* policy that allows for the use of a new "informative reel" format, which previously did not appear catalogued as a reel and relies precisely on the use of this text resource (Figure 5).
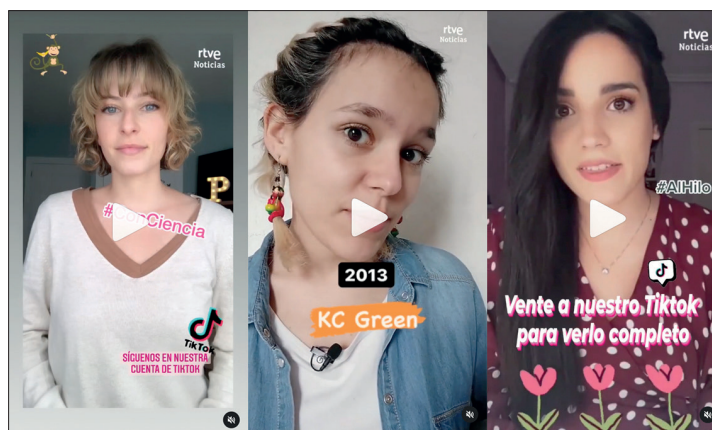

Figure 4. Reels #ConCiencia, #CuandoNoEraViral, and #AlHilo (from left to right). Source: *Instagram*, *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias).

Sound is the most widely used element in all the reels published, and is mainly an original type of audio, that is, unique audio created by *RTVE Noticias* in a video uploaded to its profile or in a reel made through *Instagram*. Among the reels analyzed, there is a high percentage –almost 30%– of content that does not use sound, an aspect that is identified with the new "informative reel" format. Also worth mentioning is the low use of the functionality that allows for the incorporation of music available through the platform's library in both periods. There was no relationship found between the subject matter and the use of this resource.

The use of the geolocation resource is scarcely identified, although in the first period of analysis it appears to a greater extent, largely linked to the war in Ukraine, where special envoys indicate the location from which the video was uploaded to *Instagram*. A deeper analysis reveals that the geolocalized reels do not have a clear criterion in their usage, so that among the content of the same correspondent, some are geolocalized while others are not.

The use of hashtags is also not common within the reels, since, as will be seen later, their use is more common in the descriptive text that accompanies the video; in fact, they have only been identified in the first period of analysis. What's worth highlighting here is the connection of this resource with the #AlHilo, #ConCiencia, #CuandoNoEraViral, #DatosRTVE, #VerificaRTVE or #LoDeHoy reel collections, and that they respond to original content from the channel.


Figure 5. Reels with animated text. Source: *Instagram*, *RTVE Noticias* (@rtvenoticias).

### 3.1.3. Content and resources of the descriptive text accompanying the reels

If there is one thing that characterizes the content published on *Instagram* besides the use of video, it is undoubtedly the text that accompanies it. This is seen to an even greater extent on the media accounts, since they use this resource to expand information about the news event they are describing. A more detailed analysis has identified the use of three types of resources: mentions, emoticons, and hashtags. Specifically, in the first period of analysis, hashtags were identified as the most used (171 publications), followed by mentions (85) and emoticons (64). These data differ when compared with those identified in the second period where, although the hashtag remains the most used resource (177), emoticons are now used in second place (82), and in last, mentions (27).

> Regarding the use of headlines or subtitles, the particularity of a still photo being combined with a headline that appears and disappears when the reel is published has been identified in the second period of analysis. This is due to a new *Instagram* policy that allows for the use of a new "informative reel" format, which previously did not appear catalogued as a reel and relies precisely on the use of this text resource

A deeper analysis of these data shows that these resources appear abundantly within the same reel, which increases significantly in the second part of this analysis, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency and average of the resources used in the descriptive text.

| | Reels published between February 11, 2021 and June 30, 2022 | | Reels published between August 1, 2022 and October 31, 2022 | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | Average | *n* | Average | *n* | Average |
| Hashtags | 926 | 5.2 | 1310 | 7.3 | 2236 | 6.2 |
| Emoticons | 114 | 0.6 | 144 | 0.8 | 258 | 0.7 |
| Mentions | 108 | 0.6 | 47 | 0.3 | 155 | 0.4 |

Furthermore, the analysis of the average indicates that, while the use of hashtags and emoticons is comparatively increasing, the use of mentions is decreasing.

A total of 1,094 of the hashtags used are different, while the rest are repeated. The most frequently used are those related to the war in Ukraine, which is explained by the fact that it is the most frequently addressed topic. Table 5 lists the 20 most frequently used hashtags.

Table 5. Most used hashtags.

| Hashtag | N. of reels | Hashtag | N. of reels | Hashtag | N. of reels | Hashtag | N. of reels | Hashtag | N. of reels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #ucrania | 81 | #news | 38 | #dombás | 9 | #politica | 15 | #uk | 11 |
| #rusia | 78 | #ciencia | 20 | #technologia | 9 | #madrid | 13 | #zelenski | 11 |
| #guerraucrania | 72 | #europe | 18 | #guerraenucrania | 8 | #BenidormFest | 12 | #canal24horas | 10 |
| #españa | 57 | #linkinbio | 16 | #madrid | 8 | #reinounido | 12 | #dombás | 10 |
| #conflictosarmados | 44 | #putin | 16 | #sabiasque | 8 | #economia | 11 | #zaporiyia | 10 |

As for the use of emoticons, among the total number identified, 40 are different. Several issues should be mentioned here: firstly, emoticons are frequently used to point out or highlight some relevant information or data, or to establish categories or classifications (squares, diamonds, dots, arrows, pointing fingers). Secondly, emoticons linked to the journalistic profession are also common, indicating who is recording (the video camera), who is speaking, or who is responsible for the information (microphone and pen). Lastly, it should be noted that, although in the first period there is a high number of "trophy" emoticons, these come from the same reel



Graph 3. Most used emoticons in reels published between February 11, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

(relating to Rafael Nadal's victories), while the rest are distributed throughout the sample.

As can be seen in graphs 3 and 4, there have been some changes between these two periods of analysis. While in the first period a greater variety of emoticons is used, in the second period, some of them are repeated. Furthermore, perhaps the most significant change can be seen in the play button emoticon, very significant within the media context, which is little used in the first period of analysis but used recurrently in the second.



Graph 4. Most used emoticons in reels published between August 1 and October 31, 2022.

Finally, mentions allude both to the channel itself (@rtve) or any of its programs (@aquilatierra, @rtvenoticias, @eurovision, @eltiemportve, @rtveplay, etc.), as well as to the journalists covering the information and to the protagonists of said mentions (athletes, politicians, singers, actors, etc.). Specifically, 61 different mentions are identified, some of which are repeated more frequently. For example, @rne has 31, which mainly appear in the reels on the war in Ukraine reported by journalist Fran Sevilla. Also noteworthy are the 15 mentions of correspondent Almudena Ariza (@almudena.ariza) and the 10 of journalist Rosa Frasquet (@rosafrasquetgregori), in charge of covering *Benidorm Fest* and *Mercedes Fashion Week*, with the reels in which they appear including mention of their personal profiles.

### 3.2. Interactivity generated by reels of @rtvenoticias

Among *Instagram* users, especially those who watch reels, the main interaction of a video publication or reel are views, with likes and comments having much lower figures, and those published by *RTVE Noticias* are no exception. Some reels do not even have any comments at all during the observation period, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Interaction received.

| | Reels published between February 11, 2021 and June 30, 2022 | | Reels published between August 1, 2022 and October 31, 2022 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total** | **Average** | **Total** | **Average** |
| Views | 3,800,000 | 21,229.1 | 5,132,056 | 28,670.7 |
| Likes | 110,307 | 616.2 | 141,130 | 788.4 |
| Comments | 3,886 | 21.7 | 6,835 | 38.4 |

The interaction aspect is completed by the calculation of the interaction rate, which indicates the number of social interactions that content receives in relation to the reach or audience figures. This is materialized in the following formula: number of likes + number of comments / total followers in the period under study. Thus, in the first period of analysis, this rate ranges between 0.005 and 14.02, and in the second period between 0.01 and 9.62.

These figures reveal that, in general, all the reels under study have obtained a very low interaction rate; i.e., *Instagram* users do not interact with these types of posts. Though it is true that, on an individual basis, there are some topics that arouse greater interest among an account's followers, such as those related to sports, the war in Ukraine, or certain specific events such as the death of Queen Elizabeth II, those that have addressed other topics, such as the economy, or to a large extent, politics, barely generate any interaction.

### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrate how *RTVE* has been adapting to new technologies, mainly through the utilization of various platforms and social networks to connect with all types of audiences, from the oldest to those encompassed by Generation Z to the present day. Therefore, *RTVE* has always been present in this type of digital platform, from the longest lasting, *Facebook*, to the one most popular in Spain currently, *TikTok* (**Quiroz**, 2020).

The analysis of *Instagram* shows that *RTVE Noticias* has been modifying the use it makes of this social network in terms of what and how it publishes, aspects that allow for the analysis of their communication strategy through this profile in the period analyzed.

*RTVE Noticias*'s use of reels, as well as other content it publishes, highlights the use of reels with topics relating

> The reels under study have obtained a very low interaction rate, i.e., *Instagram* users do not interact with these types of posts

to current events, a fact that is in line with the same strategy traditional media utilizes, where certain issues such as cultural topics are not necessarily linked to immediacy. This is related to the first idea set out in this section, that is, the effort made to ensure that the same reality reaches different audiences, even if this requires the use of all types of audiovisual platforms, and especially taking into account the capacity that young people have to switch between social networks (**Marcelino-Mercedes**, 2015; **Pérez-Escoda**; **Barón-Dulce**; **Rubio-Romero**; 2021). The use of the content is a different matter, as will be explained later.

> *RTVE* has been adapting to new technologies, mainly through the utilization of various platforms and social networks to connect with all types of audiences, from the oldest to those encompassed by Generation Z to the present day

The results also show that the way in which *RTVE Noticias* publishes, i.e., aspects having to do with the content's format, has changed: while at first it seemed that *RTVE Noticias* opted for a type of reels oriented to young audiences, in a more casual tone, with a more attractive esthetic, and adjusted to the medium (both in the audiovisual and in the text that accompanies it), a drastic change has been observed in which it now prefers the use of videos that come from content previously broadcast in news programs such as newscasts. One might ask why this is the case, as it does not seem entirely logical to be present on different platforms and then use the same content instead of adapting that content to the platform being used (in this case, *Instagram*).

This trend has been accentuated by the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, which for a long period has had virtually all the focus when it comes to reel content, and has become more noticeable in the second period of analysis. These data are especially relevant when compared with the second period of analysis, which coincides with the changes introduced by *Instagram* at the time of publication. As a result, *RTVE Noticias* not only continues to publish in the way it had been previously, but also publishes mostly in a new format that has been identified as "informative reels," which consists of a photograph with text as an informative headline reproduced in a loop. When taking into account the potential that *Instagram* has to tell stories in reel format, these "informative reels" are actually scarce in novelties, due to being "animated still photos" and not audiovisual content that corresponds to a classic narrative. As a result of this measure and given its ease of production, the @rtvenoticias reel section has now significantly increased in amount of content from a quantitative perspective. This increase can be characterized as impressive, because the modifications introduced by *Instagram* are still very recent and represent a fairly abrupt change in how publications are made on social media, given that before the focus was on photo format and now the preference is on video in order to compete with other social networks such as *TikTok*. This aspect is directly related to other research that shows that young people prefer to consume short videos, leading them to jump to platforms such as *TikTok* (**Cuesta-Valiño**; **Gutiérrez-Rodríguez**; **Durán-Álamo**, 2022).

The data analyzed make it clear that *RTVE Noticias* still does not have an explicit strategy when it comes to what it publishes, demonstrated both in the resources used in the videos and in the accompanying text. This lack of strategy can also be seen in the use of emoticons, hashtags, and mentions, clearly seen in examples such as reels using several resources to address the same topic, sometimes written in different ways (i.e., #covid, #covid_19, #COVID19); in the mention or non-mention of the journalists covering the information; the option to geolocate some reels made from the same locations but not all of them; the use of one or other emoticons; or the use of both sound and music.

In addition, there is a deficit in the interaction generated by this type of content, given that it is mainly focused on views and the scarce interaction achieved through likes and comments, with some reels not even having any comments at all. *RTVE Noticias* is concerned about what it posts, i.e., about being present on social media, but this effort does not translate into real interest on the part of its followers, since there is hardly any interaction with the content.

The issues raised thus far are discursively linked to the contributions of authors such as **Sobrados-León** and **Ruiz-Acosta** (2021), who allude to the fact that the use of social networks from a journalistic perspective is still in the process of configuration, especially if we take into account their rapid evolution, both technologically and in terms of use.

Another topic of discussion arises linked to the "target audience" variable and the interest that this audience may have in the information provided by *RTVE Noticias*, as well as the question of adapting public television information to the younger generations and the need not only to adapt to the new platforms –as *RTVE* seems to be doing– but also to create new and more attractive content. All of this, of course, should also emphasize the possibilities that social networks have to offer in terms of the narrative point of view and the contributions that information created within these journalistic formats provide.

One limitation of this study is that it is based on a case study, and thus not intended at any time to extrapolate the main findings to other media contexts. The hope is that it will serve to raise other future avenues of research that will contribute to the academic debate within this object of study: the social network *Instagram* from the journalistic perspective.

> There is a deficit in the interaction generated by this type of content, given that it is mainly focused on views and the scarce interaction achieved through likes and comments, with some reels not even having any comments at all

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