

# The use of *YouTube* by the Spanish press: A model to be defined

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## Abstract

The instability in the newspaper business model since the emergence of the Internet disrupted the value chain and has led newspapers to turn to videos as an additional source of revenue. *YouTube* has become the content distribution channel of choice for most newspapers, which benefit from the ability to generate greater traffic in exchange for a blind contract imposed by *YouTube*'s algorithm. Advertising income from this source is still scarce and depends on engagement, previous user experience, video quality, video reputation and numerous other factors. Based on an analysis of 864 videos over three randomly selected weeks, conclusions are reached, and the consequences of the management of the *YouTube* channels of six Spanish newspapers are discussed.

## Keywords

*YouTube*; Business models; Digital journalism; Digital press; Media; Press; Newspapers; Newspaper companies; Newspaper innovation; Engagement; Multimedia; Audiovisual; Online video; Social media; Youtubers; Spain.

## 1. Introduction

The transformation of the journalism industry's business model has forced newspapers to redefine their strategies regarding the creation, distribution, marketing and promotion of content. Faced with this need to restructure, newspapers have chosen, among other approaches, to seek new sources of revenue through the audiovisual value chain. Given the widespread mobility of information consumption

'as part of a pattern of convergence that has generated the broad uptake and use of social media' (Sheridan; Matthews, 2017, p. 1575),

newspapers have established a presence in this area. In this new and incomplete digital ecosystem,

'Spanish media managers consider that *Twitter*, *YouTube* and *Facebook* are the networks that have had the greatest impact on their activities and business' (Campos-Freire et al., 2016, p. 453).

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Newspaper companies focus their strategies on these social networks as a way of adapting to the new media model, enabling them to exploit the opportunities of the market of convergence.

Accordingly, newspapers disseminate their content beyond their websites, taking a lead role as producers of news on social networks, where the younger members of the audience primarily choose to seek information (Casero-Ripollés, 2012; Gottfried; Barthel, 2015; Santín; Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2017). In addition, newspapers have opted for a wide variety of content, often adapted to a transmedia interactive format in which the roles of readers (the users) and videos (the format) have taken on a level of importance in the digital press that was unthinkable just a few years ago. Text and photography now stand alongside video, and search engines and social networks have become content prescribers.

This trend reflects younger generations' preference for audiovisual language over written language because of its greater simplicity and appeal. As a result, newspaper publishers have devised strategies to attract this younger audience and thereby boost their revenues. Digital migration also entails a reduction of attention time

'that affects advertising and classic mass media models' (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2011, p. 59).

In the battle for this market of attention (Webster, 2014), the media strive to be providers not only

'of information but also of entertainment and services. Two areas in which, without a doubt, the audiovisual format can develop fully' (Masip, 2010).

From the perspective of this new reality in which video and social networks have become major components of newspapers' activity, this article analyses the role of *YouTube* in Spanish newspapers.

## 2. The vital innovation by the press

Newspapers have witnessed the rapid decline of their two main sources of revenue (advertising and sales) in the wake of the recent financial and economic crisis and the advance of digital development. After several decades, the press is now finally exploiting the Internet's potential, but major questions over the newspaper business model have yet to be answered (López-García; Pereira, 2010; Picard, 2014; Küng, 2015). Publishers today face the challenge of increasing their revenues in a number of ways to enhance their competitive advantage. Through vertical paths, companies have explored opportunities at each link in the classic value chain. In addition to these vertical paths, the press has also explored horizontal paths, moving into the value chains of other industries, and even diagonal paths, moving between distant points in different chains (López-Villanueva, 2011).

This horizontal diversification includes the creation of information products for brands and the production of videos. In both cases, this content could be posted on the newspaper's website or externally. With this type of initiative, newspapers offer a different type of content, but the orientation is the same as that of the original product. In addition to these approaches, newspapers have also diversified their businesses by embracing e-commerce, organising events associated with current affairs and organising events outside the realms of journalism. Newspapers are no longer businesses that sell advertising alongside news; instead, they generate news beyond the confines of their website and offer other sales and services, seeking new commercial margins in the convergent global market.

In short, innovation is a crucial component of the search for new sources of revenue to ensure survival. However, it is not just a question of innovating for its own sake or posting videos on *YouTube* or the newspaper website. According to Gershon, for innovation to be successful, it must meet certain conditions:

'First, the innovation is based on a novel principle that challenges management orthodoxy. Second, the innovation is systemic; that is, it involves a range of processes and methods. Third, the innovation is part of an ongoing commitment to develop new and enhanced products and services' Gershon (2014, p. 203).

Innovation in journalism has been studied from different perspectives. These perspectives are closely interrelated and difficult to consider in isolation. Examples include:

- business models, ways of monetising content and financing strategies (Carvajal; García-Avilés; González, 2012; Campos-Freire, 2015; Grubenmann, 2016);
- the culture of journalism start-ups (Küng, 2015; Carlson; Usher, 2016; Valero-Pastor; González-Alba, 2018);
- technological issues (Curran, 2010; García-Avilés; Carvajal-Prieto; Arias-Robles, 2018; Anguí-Sánchez; Cabezuelo-Lorenzo; Sotelo-González, 2019);
- changes in production processes (Carlson, 2007; Gynnild, 2014);
- the distribution and marketing of products (Aguado; Martínez-Martínez, 2008); and
- consumption and readership (Hujanen; Pietikainen, 2004; Domingo *et al.*, 2008).

The production of audiovisual content by the press is related to these areas. Studies in this field (Bock, 2012, 2015; Mitchell; Holcomb; Vogt, 2014; Kalogeropoulos; Cherubini; Newman, 2016; Kalogeropoulos; Nielsen, 2017; Mayoral-Sánchez; Abejón-Mendoza; Morata-Santos, 2016; Ortells-Badenes, 2016; Kalogeropoulos, 2017; Hallgren; Nylund, 2018) have shown that the use of videos by the press has grown as technological advances have made it cheaper to create audiovisual material, file sizes have become smaller and download speeds have increased.

There are many reasons why a medium based on textual information and reflection uses videos as a complementary or central news tool. **Kalogeropoulos** and **Nielsen** (2017) affirm that editorial considerations seem minimal and that greater importance is attached to meeting the demands of the readership, complying with the priorities established by *Facebook* and *Google/YouTube* for the positioning of information, and seeking a more lucrative approach to advertising. Newspapers often report that news stories accompanied by videos are among the most viewed news items (**García-Gómez**, 2015, p. 436; **Morera-Hernández**, 2017, p. 131). Like the other reports in the newspaper, these videos are seen not only in the pages of the newspaper but also outside the newspaper. Similarly, the managing director of *Media Hotline* has affirmed that

‘videos that refer to breaking news or highly topical issues generate more traffic than other types of content’ (**García-Murga**, 2017, p. 145),

which increases distribution platforms’ interest in this format.

In addition to the lucrative nature of videos as an online news format that captures readers’ attention, online video advertising is often perceived as less intrusive (*IAB Spain*, 2018). Thus, videos are especially attractive for advertisers and, by extension, for the press. In the European Union, online video advertising is still worth just 10% of television advertising revenue, but it is growing fast (**Fontaine; Grece; Jiménez-Pumares**, 2018).

Together, these factors make the success of online videos seem unstoppable and mean that newspapers increasingly use videos. It is estimated that around 82% of all Internet Protocol (IP) traffic in 2022 will be in this format (*Cisco*, 2019). In Spain, 95% of Internet users between the ages of 16 and 65 years watch videos online, and, according to *IAB Spain’s Online video study 2018 (Estudio anual de vídeo online 2018)*, news and information represent their fifth favourite type of content.

### 3. The role of *YouTube* as a social network leader

Digital convergence has led to the integration of text, image, sound and video. Consequently, it is increasingly common for videos to complement written news, and the power of images can be unleashed to enhance the level of spectacularisation. *YouTube* clearly seems to be the platform of choice for this integration, given the collaborative spirit with which it was created. Today, *YouTube* is the world’s largest and most popular video-sharing community of users. It is the second biggest search engine by number of searchers (after *Google*). People watch one billion hours of *YouTube* videos a day, and 400 hours of video are uploaded to *YouTube* every minute (**Smith**, 2019). Its profitability and revenue are unclear, and the business could be described as opaque. Not in vain, *YouTube*, like other multinational giants, has endeavoured to create barriers between content producers and consumers (**Whittaker**, 2019).

Music, followed by comedy, is the most watched genre of *YouTube* videos. However, in the last few years, *YouTube* has also become an essential social network for news distribution. Studies of *YouTube* from a journalism perspective have focused particularly on the phenomenon of citizen journalism as an alternative form of reporting. *YouTube* has become a key platform in that it provides reports, through images and sound, of major news stories that journalists are not always able to cover. In addition, *YouTube* enables content uploading in real time through live streaming. This service, which provides huge value through instantaneous reporting, was launched in 2011.

In reference to the type of news viewed on *YouTube*, some scholars (**Peer; Ksiazek**, 2011, p. 56) have noted that viewers seem to prefer non-formal content (a collaborative journalism style) in the digital news environment to videos that follow traditional production practices. **Peer** and **Ksiazek** (2011) examined the most popular types of news videos hosted on *YouTube*. They found that most followed traditional audiovisual information production practices but often defied traditional standards in terms of sources and impartiality. *YouTube* news is a collective creation, and the forms of news are polarised. The exchange of information and videos on *YouTube* was studied by **Sumiala** and **Tikka** (2015), who stressed that the ritual of objective news is being challenged by *YouTube*, largely through emerging forms of non-professional news and their rituals of subjectivity.

*YouTube* is becoming a source of information, and the media are increasingly developing their own *YouTube* channels. Collaboration with this platform offers a way of tackling the major problem faced by traditional journalism institutions. **Peer** and **Ksiazek** (2010, p. 47) and **Kalogeropoulos** (2017) have alluded to this problem by explaining that the media are aware that most news videos are not viewed on their websites but rather on social networks. According to the *Reuters Institute* report in 2018, 51% of news videos are viewed outside the news media, and *Facebook* accounts for 33% of views, with *YouTube* accounting for 25% (**Newman et al.**, 2018, p. 28).

Virtually all major newspapers have had their own *YouTube*<sup>1</sup> accounts for years, and the collaboration between the press and *YouTube* is becoming closer. In mid-2018, *YouTube* launched the *Google News Initiative (GNI)* programme, allocating 25 million US\$ to fund innovative journalism projects in the world of online videos. In addition to this specific initiative dedicated to video journalism, the *Digital News Innovation Fund (DNI Fund)* has been used by *Google* in recent years to finance projects by publishers to improve audiovisual offerings by newspapers and strengthen their *YouTube* presence. *YouTube* has also launched *YouTube Player*, a platform that gives newspaper publishers greater control over the content they publish.

#### 4. Video profitability and distribution agreements

In journalism, new Internet user activity and the business and regulatory problems of convergence face an inescapable reality:

‘the emerging value chain shows little sign of generating new revenue’ (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2011, p. 13).

The so-called *wealth of networks* described by Benkler (2006) seems to lag behind in the case of the press. There is also cannibalisation between digital and analogue markets, and this business has, metaphorically speaking, gone from dealing in euros to dealing in cents. After several decades, business models have still not stabilised, and they are essentially based on advertising, with subscriptions remaining insufficient in most cases, despite the rise of paywalls in recent years<sup>2</sup>.

Against this backdrop of shrinking revenues, a value chain that has been heavily disrupted by the Internet and the unstoppable process of media convergence, newspapers seek revenue from a range of sources, as explained earlier. One way of achieving this goal is through the production of videos and the use of global distribution platforms such as *YouTube*, *Vimeo* and *Dailymotion*. This process of *platformisation* is changing the media industry (Evens; Donders, 2018, p. 4). Yet therein lies the problem, as the network market has become heavily concentrated in the hands of powerful monopolies (GAFAM, *Google*, *Amazon*, *Facebook*, *Apple* y *Microsoft*) under the logic of *the winner takes it all*. Online advertising revenues are growing steadily, but this increase is not being transferred proportionally to newspaper companies; instead, the network giants are taking over advertising, with 84% of global digital advertising spend (excluding the Chinese market) going to *Google* and *Facebook* (*Financial Times*, 2017, citing *GroupM*).

Content on *YouTube* has shown an ability to influence purchasing decisions (Dehghani *et al.*, 2016), and brands have expressed an interest in establishing a presence there. Newspapers seek advertising from this alliance, but *YouTube* does not always make things easy for content creators. For newspapers, there are differences depending on whether they operate directly with *YouTube Player* or with other players such as *JWPlayer* or *Arc Video Player*.

*YouTube* offers advantages to newspapers that use its player. It prioritises these newspapers in its ad auctions and lets them control advertising formats, load ads on videos and directly handle ad purchasing (*Google Spain*, 2016). However, in return, these newspapers cannot differentiate the way they manage the advertising for the videos viewed on their website.

Newspapers that use other players have more freedom in how they manage advertising for the videos viewed on their website, but they surrender control of the type of advertising shown in the videos they upload to *YouTube*. Their relationship is based on a ‘blind’ agreement, whereby *YouTube* places advertising based on a large number of automated variables processed through its proprietary algorithm. This advertising depends on the user experience in previous searches, the engagement between users, the newspaper and advertisers, the quality of the videos, reputation, subject matter, and so on. *YouTube* even decides on saturation levels. In this context, the price of the cost per thousand impressions (CPT) or cost per view (CPV) is hard to predict. This amount is known only after payment.

The choice of a particular model is a technological strategy that results in not only differences in income but also major differences in distribution. If newspapers use the *YouTube* player, all of their videos are played through this social network, even if they can be viewed on the newspaper’s website. Using a different player lets a newspaper ensure that all its videos are viewed exclusively on its website, and only a selection of these videos, which are selected by the newspaper, may be hosted on *YouTube*.

Regardless of the chosen model, advertiser management, to a greater or lesser degree, is still handled by the *Google* subsidiary. This situation makes it difficult for newspapers to achieve economies of scale by including ads on *YouTube*. Newspapers therefore prefer to use their own platforms to distribute their videos. However, they use this social network leader to ensure their videos are distributed by the dominant market operator and to achieve extra revenue in an area where it has captured a large share of the video advertising market. According to a report published at the end of 2018 by the *European Audiovisual Observatory* of the *Council of Europe*, *YouTube* has the biggest share of the advertising market for videos shared online (with 32%), ahead of *Facebook* (Fontaine; Grece; Jiménez-Pumares, 2018).

For there to be some kind of financial remuneration, *YouTube* requires the account to have more than 1,000 subscribers and more than 4,000 hours of accumulated viewing time, which is the case for virtually all newspapers. From thereon in, determining the revenue per thousand visits (RPT) is more complicated because it varies with the audience, viewing time, published content and demand for the inclusion of advertising.

Besides the difficulties in monetising online content, producing videos is also expensive and requires considerable investment by newspapers. The cost of production varies widely, and low-cost videos stand alongside medium-quality videos (with a production cost of close to 250 euros) and higher quality videos that have longer life cycles and can generate greater revenues. In any case, it is a question of cost-benefit analysis.

From a business perspective, the inclusion of videos in newspapers and their distribution on platforms such as *YouTube* can lead to challenges that often relate to the resistance to change and the lack of skills of news professionals (Hallgren;

Nylund, 2018, p. 77). There is a need to improve human resource management and the skills of journalists (Murschetz; Friedrichsen, 2017), as well as the new working environment (García-Santamaría; Barranquero-Carretero, 2015; Álvarez-Monzoncillo; Suárez-Bilbao; De-Haro, 2016), to build a competitive advantage in the new online information ecosystem. Be that as it may, in the

coming years, there will be a battle to control the increase of advertising in news video content between the dominant operator (*YouTube*), specific newspaper channels and new operators that will try to adapt even better to the needs of advertisers and readers (*Amazon, Facebook, Instagram, Netflix* and *Vox* in business). Regulations are also envisaged in all countries to prohibit certain unfair competitive practices linked to the use of algorithms.

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## 5. Aims and method

The core aim of this study is to understand the strategies developed by newspapers for value creation on *YouTube* to increase their revenue. To meet this aim, it is important to know the average number of videos posted daily on *YouTube*, the topics they address, and the quality and style of the videos hosted on the newspapers' *YouTube* channels. The goal is to explain the repercussions that a newspaper's *YouTube* presence has on that newspaper's brand image, considering not only the number of subscribers and videos viewed but also the possible role of influencers, famous journalists or popular youtubers as regular contributors on the channel.

The newspapers analysed in this study are *La vanguardia*, *El país*, *El mundo*, *El confidencial*, *El español* and *Eldiario.es*. Three of these Spanish newspapers are representative of the digital journalism shift from print to the Internet, and three are representative of digital native newspapers that have existed for more than five years. According to *comScore* data (*PrNoticias*, 2019) when defining the sample, these newspapers are leaders in terms of the number of visits in their respective categories, and each of them has its own *YouTube* channel.

The research aims were addressed by conducting a literature review, examining the target of this study and, most importantly, performing content analysis followed by a qualitative adjustment. This method enabled rigorous and systematic analysis of the nature of the videos that the newspapers posted on *YouTube*. An analysis procedure was then designed with the corresponding variables. To design this procedure, the proposals of other authors (Peer; Ksiazek, 2011; Mayoral-Sánchez; Abejón-Mendoza; Morata-Santos, 2016; Ortells-Badenes, 2016) who have addressed similar themes were considered. The variables and categories were adapted to the specific aims of this study. The initial design was tested with a sample of videos from these six newspapers from one week in March 2019. The results highlighted the complexity of the study and showed the need to simplify some of the variables and redefine certain categories more accurately because the types of videos varied greatly. The final variables focus on technical, stylistic and functional aspects of the videos (see Annex 1).

To design the random sample, the *YouTube* channels of these newspapers and the videos published in three non-consecutive weeks in March (17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>), April (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>) and May (5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>) 2019 were chosen. The analysis was not based on selecting the most viewed, most popular or most commented videos because such an approach would distort the study sample. The final sample consisted of 864 videos. Of these,

- 361 were published by *El país*
- 277 by *La vanguardia*
- 90 by *El mundo*
- 56 by *El confidencial*
- 55 by *Eldiario.es* and
- 25 by *El español*.

In the second phase, professionals from the sector were interviewed to help interpret the data from another perspective. The experts' input led to the removal of some of the variables linked to advertising because the coding process might have distorted the results.

## 6. Results of the analysis

The analysis shows that the strategies followed by these newspapers regarding their *YouTube* profiles and the inclusion of videos on their websites are inconsistent and varied. Different players and different ways of linking to *YouTube* are used. Some newspapers, namely *El país*, *La vanguardia* and *Eldiario.es*, use Google's own player (*YouTube Player*), whereas others, namely *El mundo*, *El confidencial* and *El español*, use other players. The choice of player reveals differences in technological strategies, different levels of monetisation and different levels of control over the search for synergies with advertisers.

### 6.1. Scheduling by regular contributors on the newspapers' *YouTube* channels

*El país* and *La vanguardia* upload by far the most content to *YouTube*. Both newspapers have made a clear commitment to video content. On average, *El país* uploads 17 videos a day, and *La vanguardia* 13. This number is considerably higher

than the number uploaded by *El mundo* (four a day), and the digital native newspapers are even further behind in this measure. Despite having been created for the Internet, these newspapers have a small commitment to *YouTube* content, publishing between one and three videos a day on average. However, the potential to capture revenue does not depend on the number of videos on the channel but rather the degree of professionalisation and reader loyalty. Therefore, it is natural to seek prestigious and well-reputed collaborators in keeping with the editorial line to capture more views.

One of the strategies used to create user loyalty on *YouTube* channels is to design the scheduling in the form of a linear broadcasting grid. Youtubers also schedule the release of their videos to empathise with their followers. Engagement has its own logic and rules (Chan-Amstel; Wolter, 2018; Dehghani et al., 2016), and there is a certain routine in the way videos are uploaded to suit readers' habits. Video uploading peaks on weekdays rather than weekends, when production is substantially lower. Surprisingly, some digital newspapers do not upload any video content on Sundays.

Table 1. Distribution of weekly video production

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
18.3%	17.9%	16.3%	19.8%	12.3%	9.1%	6.3%	N. (864) 100%

In addition, the newspapers create playlists with their main content sorted by topic. Doing so creates consumption routines with respect to collaborators to enhance visibility. Most newspapers showcase videos with well-reputed journalists or figures to differentiate themselves from their rivals. Examples include Iñaki Gabilondo's videoblog in *El país* from Monday to Thursday and J. M. Gay de Lièbana's video diary, *E-Konomía*, in *La vanguardia* from Monday to Friday.

Weekly collaborations are also common. On *YouTube*, *La vanguardia* collaborates with Pablo Foncillas, a *TED Talk* speaker who publishes a youtuber-style<sup>3</sup> video on Tuesdays, which explains how digital technology influences value creation.

Around 19% of the videos posted by these six newspapers on *YouTube* are scheduled periodically. *La vanguardia* has the most clearly defined and long-term scheduling strategy. It also has the most daily, weekly and fortnightly collaborations scheduled on its channel. Some of these are directly linked to service journalism. Examples are *Corpore sano*, which deals with health and welfare issues in the style of a consultation, and the fortnightly collaboration with Andrea Vilallonga, an expert in communication and image, who provides advice on how to act in a range of social situations.

*El español* publishes the fewest videos. However, it also periodically posts offerings such as *La cena de los jaleos* on Saturdays and *El kiosko rosa* on Wednesdays. The language used is aimed at younger readers, and these collaborations reflect the newspaper's position as a leader in collaborations related to society news and gossip.

*El país* has few collaborations that follow a clear schedule<sup>4</sup>. Besides *El video blog de Iñaki Gabilondo*, which is devoted to political analysis, and *El rincón de los inmortales*, where historical chess moves are analysed, *El país* seems to focus on current affairs to offer videos with short-term scheduling that are linked to a range of journalism situations. This strategy is shared by other newspapers. Current affairs undoubtedly influence the contents of newspaper profiles on *YouTube*. In parallel, newspapers strive to incorporate a scheduling strategy. For example, *El confidencial* offers weekly summaries of the 'Procés' (in relation to the independence movement in Catalonia), and both *La vanguardia* and *El mundo* report weekly on *YouTube* on the *Supervivientes* reality show.



*E-Konomía* by J. M. Gay de Lièbana

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/autores/jose-maria-gay-de-liebana.html>



Pablo Foncillas, the anti-guru

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/autores/pablo-foncillas.html>



Andrea Vilallonga

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhkHcc7EKtBb7ZLGwnmu\\_-QayiA6EuGQS](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhkHcc7EKtBb7ZLGwnmu_-QayiA6EuGQS)

Image 1. Collaborations in *La vanguardia*

## 6.2. Technical features of the videos

The favourable strategy of using social networks to distribute content without investing in the production of that content is followed by the press. User-generated content (UGC) has been used parasitically by companies to generate revenue against the founding principles of the Internet. From an editing perspective, the videos uploaded by Spanish newspapers to *YouTube* are generally not elaborate. Almost half (44%) are live broadcasts generally provided by external sources (mainly institutions such as courts or parliamentary headquarters) or are cuts of these images, agency images or images from other sources such as political parties or national law enforcement authorities or forces that require virtually no editing. Besides the selection of the content, the journalist's work is limited to including tags to identify the type of news or the location of the news event. Although these videos include the newspaper logo, the authorship cannot be said to belong entirely to the newspaper.

A similar percentage of the videos (46%) are edited in a way that requires greater involvement from journalists, who tend to narrate the news story using captions. The complexity of the editing is inconsistent, but most videos consist of a basic montage. In general, the journalist plays less of a role in these videos than on television, and the use of voice-over by the journalist is practically non-existent, with only 3% of the videos being narrated this way. The scope of the editing of these videos varies considerably, and the media typically use only images accompanied by music or background sound. The inclusion of statements from key figures in these videos is somewhat limited (24%), and few videos use complex production techniques or graphic art. The use of immersive virtual content or 360° videos is practically non-existent (0.3%). Only *El país* used these techniques during the study period.

Just 10% of the videos are edited in such a way that the journalist or narrator of the story becomes the main element of the video by telling the story to the camera. In these cases, a talking head appears in about 50% of the videos, with the other 50% adopting a more adventurous format, in which the newspapers distance themselves from the traditional language of television. In such cases, the videos also tend to include other types of images that correspond more to the look of a programme or the look adopted by youtubers.

Newspapers seek to squeeze the most out of major news events, whether or not they are their own. This situation sometimes conveys a sense that content is being duplicated. As a general rule, some videos of major events capture the entire event, while other videos offer key statements or moments from that event in instalments.

The perception is that *El país* and *La vanguardia* have made the biggest commitment to audiovisual newspaper content on *YouTube*, not only because they upload the most videos to the social network but also because of the type of editing used on their videos.

The analysis shows that in addition to their variation in quality, the videos hosted by newspapers on *YouTube* vary considerably in duration. Longer videos can be found alongside medium-length or short videos. However, just under half (45%) of the videos are between 31 seconds and 2 minutes long. This duration is similar to the news reports aired on the television news. The exception is the digital native newspaper *El español*, which posts longer videos, with 8 out of 10 of its videos lasting between two and six minutes.

However, this newspaper does not publish what might be called long videos that exceed 30 minutes, something that the other newspapers regularly do on *YouTube*. Around 15% of the videos analysed are over one hour long, and 3.3% last between half an hour and one hour. In all cases, the majority of these videos are live broadcasts, which are not always informative in their entirety.

## 6.3. Videos at the service of citizens

The increase in newspaper content on *YouTube* has not caused newspapers to abandon their main purpose as sources of information. Just less than 83% of the videos posted on *YouTube* are intended to inform viewers. Only a minority are supposed to be for learning or entertainment.

Table 2. Main purpose of the video

Information	Learning	Entertainment	Miscellaneous	Total
82.7%	3.8%	4.3%	9.2%	864 (100%)

In addition, the style of the videos tends to be formal, which is normally associated with a journalistic style. Only 12.2% of the videos use the informal look of a home video or the casual style of youtubers.

Home videos are rare. Only 4.1% of the videos uploaded by the press to *YouTube* are non-professional videos. *El país* has the highest percentage of this type of video, with 7.2% of the videos uploaded to *YouTube* belonging to the category of home videos edited by the newspaper to increase their information value or improve their appearance. *La vanguardia*, *Eldiario.es* and *El mundo* scarcely use this kind of video. *El confidencial* and *El español* did not upload any such videos during the study period. The data suggest that news collaborations between citizens and the digital press on *YouTube* are minimal. This finding is somewhat surprising given the possibilities for collaboration and the interest of readers in non-formal approaches (Peer; Ksiazek, 2011, p. 56)

The recurring themes of the videos posted on *YouTube* by these six Spanish newspapers are national politics (38.4%), international politics and society (in the same proportion of 14.7%), culture (7.3%), sport (4.1%) and nature (3%), among others. The difference in approach by each newspaper is also evident. *El español* devotes by far the most videos to society news and gossip; the rest focus on national political issues.

The uploaded videos do not encourage much involvement from readers. A week after being published, 57% of videos had still not managed to attract 20 likes, and only 15% had more than 100. A separate issue is participation via chat feeds generated by some live shows on *YouTube* and the support that some newspapers receive from their subscribers.

#### 6.4. Plays

In general, the videos that the newspapers post on *YouTube* are linked to current events. Therefore, their chances of generating a profit from plays are greatly diminished after 48 to 72 hours, although some videos have a longer life cycle. One week after the videos are posted, the average number of plays is low, with 73.8% of the videos in the sample attracting fewer than 10,000 plays and one in four videos failing to reach 1,000. Competition seems fierce, and most newspaper videos fail to attain high viewing figures, although there are always exceptions.

During the study period, only 1% of the videos had exceeded 200,000 views one week after being posted (see Annex 2). One of these was a citizen-produced viral video<sup>5</sup>, four corresponded to a live broadcast or newspaper-edited cuts of institutional images, and only two of these videos required a more elaborate editing process and could be considered videos whose authorship belonged solely to the newspaper.

One of these two videos was produced by a journalist at *El país* with experience in audiovisual production<sup>6</sup>. The video shows the journalist talking to the camera and explaining how scientists have managed to photograph a black hole for the first time. Although this video is linked to current affairs, its purpose is mainly educational, and it could clearly be used to complement the news story but with a longer life cycle. The other was a live stream of an election debate organised by the newspaper *El país* along with another subsidiary of the *Prisa* media group.

Table 3. Percentage of plays within one week of the video's release

	<i>El país</i>	<i>La vanguardia</i>	<i>El mundo</i>	<i>El confidencial</i>	<i>Eldiario.es</i>	<i>El español</i>	Total
Fewer than 1,000	17.8	29.2	43.3	17.8	37.1	88	28.5
1,001 to 10,000	51.8	50.5	33.3	29.6	46.3	8	45.3
10,001 to 20,000	9.6	8.7	5.5	14.3	3.8	0	8.7
20,001 to 30,000	6.1	3.7	4.4	8.9	7.4	0	5.2
30,001 to 40,000	5.7	1.4	6.7	16.1	1.9	4	4.8
40,001 to 50,000	2.5	0.4	3.3	1.8	0	0	1.6
50,001 to 60,000	2	1.8	1.1	3.6	0	0	1.8
60,001 to 70,000	0.6	0.4	0	0	0	0	0.4
70,001 to 80,000	1.4	1.1	0	5.4	1.9	0	1.4
80,001 to 90,000	0.6	0.4	0	3.6	0	0	0.6
90,001 to 100,000	0.3	0	1.1	3.6	1.9	0	0.6
More than 100,000	1.7	2.5	1.1	12.5	0	0	2.4
Total	100 N = 353*	100 N = 277	100 N = 90	100 N = 56	100 N = 55	100 N = 25	100 N = 855*

\*Nine videos initially uploaded by *El país* became unavailable after one week.

Viral videos are typically rare, but newspapers are occasionally capable of attracting a high number of plays, thereby generating traffic and revenue quickly, but probably in the short term. Accordingly, some experts affirm that these viral videos are not always useful in the press and fail to create real value for the newspaper (**García-Murga**, 2017, p. 145).

In addition to the intangible value of a newspaper brand, its economic value must also be evaluated. Approximately one in four videos fails to generate any advertising revenue given that for videos with fewer than 1,000 views, *YouTube* does not pay for the ad. To avoid ad saturation, videos do not always include advertising, and the number of plays can only offer an estimate of possible revenue. This revenue must be calculated conservatively because ads will not be served in at least 20% of the videos. In short, this study reveals a high number of low-cost, long-tail videos and few premium videos with the potential for a high number of plays.

Generating a profit from a video whose content is closely aligned with current events is difficult because its short life cycle makes it harder to recover the investment. Accordingly, success in terms of number of plays is greater when the video content is less closely related to current news.

Besides the income earned from the advertising included in their videos, newspapers also resort to brand content, where the use of videos is quite common. In the sample, only the newspapers with print editions have videos that fall into this advertising category. These videos tend to have a higher production cost<sup>7</sup>.

## 7. Discussion and conclusions

The strategy of incorporating videos in the digital editions of newspapers and distributing these videos on their *YouTube* channels to increase revenue is highly complex because of certain factors that add little value in enhancing their competitive advantage. A video's success is measured by the number of views and other factors linked to *YouTube*'s proprietary algorithm, although it usually depends on the video's quality, topic or spectacularisation. Seeking a virtuous circle, newspapers encourage readers to participate by commenting and sharing on social networks to increase readership. The search for revenue through video distribution depends on the reputation of collaborators, employee know-how, the brand and the activity of a community of followers that strengthens value creation and the mix of advertising.

All newspapers devise strategies to schedule their videos and build reader loyalty. The most noteworthy model is probably that of *La Vanguardia*, which has the highest number of daily, weekly and fortnightly scheduled collaborations on *YouTube*.

Some publishers try to capture readers with attractive formats and collaborations with opinion leaders followed by large numbers of followers

Some publishers try to capture readers with attractive formats and collaborations with opinion leaders followed by large numbers of followers. Others opt for a more information-centred approach, focusing on educational videos linked to current events with, if possible, a long life cycle that allows for first- and second-time views (e.g. *El confidencial*). The most common trend is for newspapers to combine these two strategies. Informative videos are placed alongside audio-visual content that is more entertaining or educational than purely informative. In general, different looks and styles are used in the videos uploaded by the press to *YouTube*. Low-cost videos are posted alongside collaborations with a higher production cost. Every newspaper seeks a differentiating factor that makes it more attractive than its competitors and helps it grow its market share.

The Internet generally demands differential content to attract a high number of plays. In this respect, Spanish newspapers have plenty of room for improvement. One week after being uploaded, 73.8% of videos had fewer than 10,000 views, and one in four videos had failed to attract 1,000 views on *YouTube*. In addition, almost half of the content on their channels is low-value content sourced from agencies or institutions. The favourable strategy of using social networks to distribute content without investing in production has been imitated by the press. From an editing viewpoint, the videos that Spanish newspapers upload to *YouTube* are generally not very sophisticated. Although they include the newspaper's logo, the authorship cannot be said to belong entirely to the newspaper.

Most Spanish newspapers have created a *YouTube* channel. This alliance with the dominant business in this area gives them a greater chance of visibility, although they often lose control over advertising and the possibility of creating economies of scale with advertisers.

One week after being uploaded, 73.8% of videos had fewer than 10,000 views, and one in four videos had failed to attract 1,000 views on *YouTube*

Brand content can be found on the *YouTube* channels of the analysed newspapers. This approach is mostly used by non-native publications. Advertisers probably place greater trust in the larger print newspapers for their campaigns. This model is particularly lucrative and attractive for newspapers because it gives them access to a steady stream of income that does not normally depend so heavily on the number of plays or algorithms.

The videos produced by the newspapers are intended for their own website, but a second outlet is provided by *YouTube*. The revenues obtained by newspapers are a small part of their revenue structure, but it allows them to improve their brand positioning with search engines.

The situation of the sampled newspapers varies considerably. Some have exclusive agreements and others have 'blind' contracts. The CPT (cost per thousand impressions) is usually low and ranges from 1 to 4 euros in the Spanish press. Newspapers rely on low-cost videos and struggle to differentiate themselves from the competition, especially through their news content. It seems that further investment in producing better quality videos and enhancing original content is essential if newspapers wish to improve their relationships with *YouTube*, their readers and their advertisers.

In the coming years, the converging market will grow because young readers increasingly prefer videos to written text. It is essential for newspapers, which have seen their revenues shrink at an alarming rate, to seek greater engagement with their readers. To do so, they must improve their video production and distribution strategies as a key form of innovation to survive in the digital ecosystem dominated by the tech giants.

The profitability of the press on *YouTube* is for the moment scarce and unequal: private agreements with large headers coexist with other "blind" agreements where profitability will be largely determined by the algorithm

## 8. Notes

1. *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* created their YouTube accounts in 2006. These newspapers were followed by *La Vanguardia*, *Die Welt* and *Corriere della Sera* in 2007 and *El país* in 2008, among many others.
2. Two thirds of the newspapers in the United States and Europe used paywalls in 2017 (Simon; Graves, 2019).
3. Youtubers use colloquial language and inclusive styles to attract viewers. Spoken narration is also mixed with other forms of expression such as graphics, sound, text and performance (Ardèvol; Márquez, 2018).
4. Some of their regular collaborations do not follow a specific release schedule.
5. Viral content is online content that spreads extensively and rapidly as users share it, particularly through social networks.
6. Bruno Martin, head of the *Darwin, te necesito* audiovisual series at *El país*, uses an informal look and youtuber-style approach to address scientific topics to separate the facts from the myths.
7. *Las jardinetto sessions* in *La Vanguardia* and *Mujeres inspiradoras* by Accenture in *El mundo* are notable examples from the study period.

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## Annex 1

### Variables used in the analysis

Video identification
The videos used in the analysis were identified by their title, URL, newspaper and date of publication.
Technical characteristics
<p><b>Video editing:</b> A scale ranging from 1 to 6 was used.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The lowest level of editing, which corresponded to live feeds provided by another source or clean cuts of images provided by others that either were not edited or were only edited to identify the source.</li> <li>2. May be sourced from elsewhere, but more sophisticated editing was used. The video was narrated using captions to tell the story and/or background music was added. This category included videos with still images using simple editing that could be performed on a tablet.</li> <li>3. Montage of images and statements from key figures or editing of various statements from key figures with a clear narrative.</li> <li>4. In-house editing or talking head. Two levels considered.</li> <li>5. Videos with elaborate production, graphic art and special programmes or long interviews in which several cameras and elaborate editing were used.</li> <li>6. 4K videos, 360° videos, immersive techniques, . . .</li> </ol> <p><b>Advertising.</b> An assessment was performed to determine whether advertising was served in the first view of the video and what type of advertising was used: <i>pre-roll</i>, <i>mid roll</i>, <i>post-roll</i> or superimposed banner. An assessment was also performed to decide whether it was a <i>branded video</i>.</p>
Features of style or content
<p><b>Duration:</b> Length of video.</p> <p><b>Format:</b> The following variables were considered:            Traditional. Three possibilities. 1A. With voice over. 1B. Without voice over but with ambient sound or background music including narration with captions. 1C. Other.            Only voice and image (statements from key figures). Two possibilities. 2A. One. 2B. Several.            Only images with no captions. Two options: 3A. Edited. 3B. Unedited.            Broadcast of a programme or event organised by the newspaper.            Other: . . .</p> <p><b>Frequency:</b> Whether video was part of a series.</p> <p><b>Style:</b> Formal (journalistic or non-journalistic) or informal (amateur/scrappy YouTuber style or other)</p> <p><b>Topic:</b> General or specific.</p> <p><b>Genre:</b> Information (news, report, interview, . . .), opinion.</p> <p><b>Function:</b> Informative, educational, entertaining or various.</p> <p><b>Core of the video:</b> In-house, agency, institutional feed, other media, other.</p>
Interaction prompted by video
Whether there was chat interaction. Number of views, comments, likes and dislikes one week after upload.

## Annex 2

### Videos from the study sample that exceeded 200,000 plays one week after upload

Title	URL	Newspaper Date uploaded	Origin
Debate de El país con los candidatos a la alcaldía de Madrid [Debate in El país with the candidates for mayor of Madrid]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOaDcLU9sdU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOaDcLU9sdU</a>	El país 6 May 2019	Own event
La primera imagen jamás tomada de un agujero negro [The first ever image of a black hole]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfKnyYmtMI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfKnyYmtMI</a>	El país 10 April 2019	Own production
Cierran un gallinero por "molestar" a un hotel rural   Reacción de Nel Cañedo [Henhouse closed for "bothering" a rural hotel   Reaction by Nel Cañedo]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCWi-XGyRxo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCWi-XGyRxo</a>	El país 7 May 2019	Citizen
Durísima bronca del juez Marchena a la abogada de Cuixart: "Yerra usted en su estrategia defensiva" [Harsh words from judge Marchena to Cuixart's lawyer: "You're mistaken in your defence strategy"]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Kw4K4xbc6s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Kw4K4xbc6s</a>	El confidencial 6 May 2019	Institutional images
9 lecciones magistrales de Marchena en el juicio del 'procés' [9 masterclasses by Marchena in the 'procés' trial]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxZW1whOKbl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxZW1whOKbl</a>	El confidencial 18 March 2019	
Un hombre lanza unas octavillas frente al féretro de Rubalcaba [A man throws a handful of pamphlets at Rubalcaba's coffin]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYv8mAzHh5I">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYv8mAzHh5I</a>	La vanguardia 11 May 2019	
Directo: Capilla ardiente de Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba en el congreso 10 de mayo [LIVE: Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba's funeral ceremony in Congress on 10 May]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRszEtj5TTw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRszEtj5TTw</a>	El país 10 May 2019	
El lío del Guardia Civil en el juicio al procés [Confusion of a Guardia Civil in the procés trial]	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJRgrCwC7DU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJRgrCwC7DU</a>	La vanguardia 19 May 2019	

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