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New audiovisual formats in the cybermedia: from TV reports to videonews

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Abstract

The new digital communication ecosystem has brought about a reconfiguration of its uses as a result of adapting the new media and electronic devices to the existing ones. Hypermediality, facilitated by the Internet and the media's conversion to multiplatform media, has redefined content. This has led to the emergence of new formats exclusive to electronic media, due to the synergistic merging of written press narrative strategies integrated into audiovisual reports. This study aims to analyze the electronic media's audiovisual content and to determine different formats. For that purpose, a methodology is developed based on the description of the formal elements of these types of items from a reading of the narrative and audiovisual language, identifying the elements founded on conventional television journalism formats. The methodology is based on the analysis of a representative sample of the audiovisual contents from *El País*, *El Español*'s and Playground's digital portals from June and July 2018. The analysis concludes by categorizing the audiovisual

contents into four formats, which are grouped according to their structure, coverage, and production complexity. Audiovisual content in cybermedia is not only articulated as an extension of the news text by illustrating facts and the main figure's statements, but it can also be integrated into the text autonomously, and even makes up independent sections in the medium.

Keywords

Digital journalism, cybermedia, digital media, videonews, audiovisual information.

1. Introduction and the state of play

The traditional newspaper media's conversion into multiplatform portals has been the most immediate result of the media's digitalization process. The digitalization of images and sound has paved the way for new communication capabilities, thus reinforcing the virtual nature of image and sound (Bandrés *et al.*, 2004; Deuze, 2004). The traditional written press' digital paradigm is present in electronic journalism; it has evolved to provide more specialized content and immediacy. The new media embody the redefinition of the traditional media adapted to the new digital reality (Alberich & Roig, 2005; Fidler, 1998). Creating new media does not simply involve digitalizing the traditional medium and changing its format in new technology. Instead, it requires that the very nature of the medium be reconfigured, thus allowing us to delve into issues, randomly access contents and to experience an interactive and specialized communication process.

In a short time, the digital versions of traditional newspapers have appeared alongside other new digital newspapers. These electronic media have been transforming or experiencing a *mediamorphis* founded on the traditional press' stylistic and narrative techniques in order to develop their language, just as radio and television did at the time (Fidler, 1998; López, 2002). The Internet has become a news media where both textual information and still images with sound, audiovisuals, and even infographics all coincide. This synergic union of different expressive systems, fostered by the hypermediality of the network, allows us to contrast and boost contents (Larrondo, 2004), and redefines journalistic production in a new multimedia context. However, this information content hypermediality through other genres and formats inevitably means that the traditional genres in the press, radio, and television need to be revised (Marta Lazo, 2012).

The electronic media have adopted video as a new format and powerful narrative resource since its creation, consequently calling for new contents and ways of narrating that meet the demands of the audience's new consumption habits, thus highlighting the need to redefine the traditional categories of journalistic genres (Schultz, 1999; Fernández, 2001). The professional sector's interest in applying effective journalist practices is supported by the academic bibliography on cyber journalism, where the importance of audiovisuals in electronic media is confirmed (Greer & Mensing, 2006; Guallar, Rovira & Ruiz, 2010), in addition to the study of the possibilities of hypermedia's discourse and rhetoric. Traditional journalistic genres' are adapting to the Internet in a novel context in which new genres are emerging. The electronic press has continued to advance by tapping into hypertextual possibilities, multimedia and the interaction of the medium as is the case regarding special interactive reports, where the contents are organized on efficient, user-friendly interfaces (Freixa, 2015; Manovich, 2005; Nielsen, 1999).

Audiovisual media and digital newspapers have formed a part of this regeneration process, fostering the creation of multiplatform portals where news texts and audiovisual content coincide with multimedia and transmedia narratives. Digital media are emerging as global information portals in this new context. Also, television and digital press have taken on the language and elements that have traditionally been characteristic of other channels and mediums. Audiovisual items that complement digital media news are booming due to this *mediamorphis*, the prominence of the Internet and new distribution channels. Audiovisual narratives adapted to the format are being implemented, therefore confirming that there has been a change in mindset about the way information is produced (Casado, 2011; Bandrés *et al.*, 2004).

Consequently, different audiovisual content formats have increased on cyber media, some are novel, and others are directly associated with traditional television news genres. All of them are based on consolidated audiovisual language from news and reports "deliberately developed for options that allow for the creation of this big global platform in terms of thematic accessibility, spatial, temporal availability, navigation, hypermediality, interactivity and web authorship" (Marta Lazo, 2012, p.125). Other new formats that continue to develop and adapt to the new environment are emerging, finding their place in this new digital ecosystem. The new formats hybridize information and entertainment on a multiplatform logic called cross-media or 360, among which the interactive report and interactive documentary stand out in this context (Gifreu, 2011). An in-depth aesthetical and ethical audiovisual discourse has expressive potential, and it can be developed significantly in these types of newly created formats.

2. Objectives and methodologies

This study aims to examine delimited audiovisual content production in the new formats emerging in electronic media. For this reason, it is necessary to categorize them by describing the characteristic formal elements, understanding the narrative and audiovisual language,

and analyzing the common formal elements together with other types of representation similar to conventional television journalism formats.

These types of audiovisual items in cybermedia are traditionally linked to important news and are occasionally complement the journalistic text as a discursive element, in other cases they appear as an autonomous news item similar to daily and non-daily television news formats. For this reason, our starting point is a classic standardized *mise-en-scène* and narrative structure, such as a daily television news program's audiovisual item. The comparison is based on the following structural elements: the images, voice-over, statements, or graphic design or postproduction insert, as well as a standardized 1-minute duration (Bandrés *et al.*, 2004).

Consequently, this hypothesis is based on the evidence that the new digital medium fosters a different type of communication from conventional television. "What you do is adapt the stories you tell your target audience, knowing that the medium on which they are disseminated conditions the way they are told" (Pérez, 2010, p.79). The fundamental features of television narrative have been addressed in several academic works (see Gordillo, 1999; Artero, 2004; Larrañaga, 2006; Canet & Prósper, 2009, among others). These authors have been taken into account as the baseline of this study for the comparative analysis of cybermedia's audiovisual narrative features that are like the television format. However, such an approach means that we must focus on the audiovisual discourse, leaving a more in-depth theoretical analysis on the relationship between the cybermedia texts and audiovisual items for further research.

A primarily qualitative methodology has been used in this study based on an analysis sample of audiovisual items from *El País'* digital version, a traditional newspaper, and reference in Spanish journalism, and *El Español*, one of the most recently created electronic media. This methodology was used to meet the aforementioned objectives of determining the audiovisual formats in electronic media, analyzing the specific audiovisual language and defining the strategies and techniques of audiovisual production and editing. These digital portals have allowed us to examine and contrast audiovisual usage in *El País*, one of the major traditional print newspapers, as opposed to the recently created and exclusively digital newspaper *El Español*. The videos from Playground have been analyzed to obtain a more comprehensive analysis as it is the main reference for short informative audiovisual content production.

Media or content must be redefined due to digitalization, new channels, and electronic devices brought about by new technologies, how we experience contents instead of what we experience is also affected. Each new medium pushes the envelope of the experience obtained by the previous ones, contributing to furthering changes (McQuail, 1985). Playground is a benchmark for videonews production, characteristically concise and attractively designed, it has become one of the most prominent media on social networks, gaining nearly 15 million followers on Facebook. Its audiovisual model has begun to appear on other electronic media (Zomeño & Blay, 2017). Therefore, more than 100 audiovisual items have been analyzed from the Playground page as well as the Reports section of *elpais.com* and *elespanol.com* during June and July 2018.

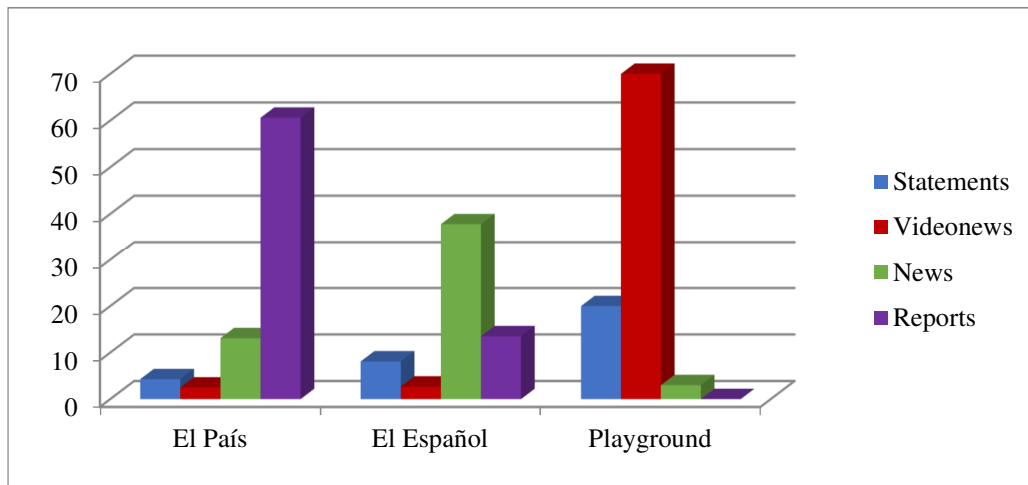
We have analyzed and compared the discursive *mise-en-scène* of the audiovisual items in this study as well as their connection to the news reference text, taking their "function of contrast and complementarity" into account (Castillo, 2005, p. 56). The analysis has focused on feature stories out of all the sections in the digital press, so as to categorize the audiovisual contents from a section that enables coverage to be in-depth. These texts are written following standard journalism norms that are adapted to the audiovisual format, differentiating them from conventional news and television reports. On the other hand, Playground's creative and unconventional format is founded on aesthetics, graphic design,

Sound:	<input type="checkbox"/> OFF	<input type="checkbox"/> Background noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Music
Insitu:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Graph Design:	<input type="checkbox"/> Signage	<input type="checkbox"/> Graphic design or Infographics (aesthetic /formal)	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate visual identity of the media.
	Location:	Location:	Location:
Editing:	<input type="checkbox"/> Cut editing	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Special effects and/or postproduction Observations:	

3. Analysis and results

Below are the analysis results and discussion from the period June-July 2018 of the 112 audiovisual items in the Reports section of elpais.com and elespanol.com, and the front page of playgroundmag.net, which make up the study sample. They are organized according to the extent to which they are developed and the amount of coverage they receive, which range from including statement fragments to the camera (statements) to longer and broader scope formats such as the television report. The results (Graph 1) verify the prominence of audiovisual content originating from television news formats such as news and reports, as well as newer formats like videonews, which are finding their space in the new communicative ecosystem.

Graph 1: Audiovisual formats in elpais.com, elespanol.com, and playgroundmag.net.



The presence of audiovisual content in cybermedia is not just the result of uploading contents; instead, it needs to be produced so that it is adapted to the new medium. A hybridization process is occurring, as a new information discourse has emerged due to the Internet's hypermediality, in which audiovisual content synergizes with texts that follow conventional press journalism standards. As a consequence, cybermedia news has become comprehensive, since the news text is not only accompanied by a photograph or a gallery of images, but also

the main figure's statements and video of the events. These audiovisual items are even edited by following the same standards as traditional television formats such as the news or reports.

Analyzing the audiovisual items in the electronic media implies a deviation from the traditional news or informative television report models. The audiovisual nature of the format makes it difficult to standardize the products in regards to television news programs if we are to use the journalistic text itself or script as a reference (Castillo, 2005). In addition to the traditional television news format, other variants can be more creative in terms of design and *mise-en-scène*, which are intended for mobile devices. Playground videos have become relevant, gaining widespread popularity on social networks. These audiovisual items are not only original because of their on-screen configuration, but meticulous editing and post-production work that goes into making them creates an unusual visual *mise-en-scène* and a narrative discourse different from conventional television news.

Video in the electronic media as an informative audiovisual format is evident in four different configurations, which are a complement to the news text and the news story in general. These items are arranged from lesser to greater structural complexity and their degree of technical development (editing and post-production). They range from selecting the main figure's statements to designing short creative items that are post-produced to be consumed on mobile devices and shared on social networks, to a more elaborate audiovisual production, which is comparable to current news or television reporting formats.

3.1. *The importance of statements*

The first differentiating factor observed in the audiovisual items that complement the journalistic texts from *El País* and *El Español* is the incorporation of testimonies or statement fragments, known as statements on television. They are comparable to radio edits but on camera, featuring those individuals who are directly related to the event or who have enough authority to express their opinion about it. Statements are delimited after viewing the recorded material, searching for "those phrases in which that person's speech can be condensed. The most important part is selected, the part that tells the story better, whatever is the most significant" (Pérez, 2010, p. 105).

Camera statements are used extensively in the informative audiovisual genre (Table 2) since they enrich the information and add credibility to the news. These statements appear mainly in two ways in the electronic media: they are included during the editing of the news item as another element of the audiovisual story, or they appear on the webpage autonomously and complement the news text. This modality usually appears on digital press portals as an inserted image in the upper part of the body of the news text. This image serves as a link or window for playing the video, allowing the user to see and hear the main figures' statements in the news; moreover, the information is based upon this video.

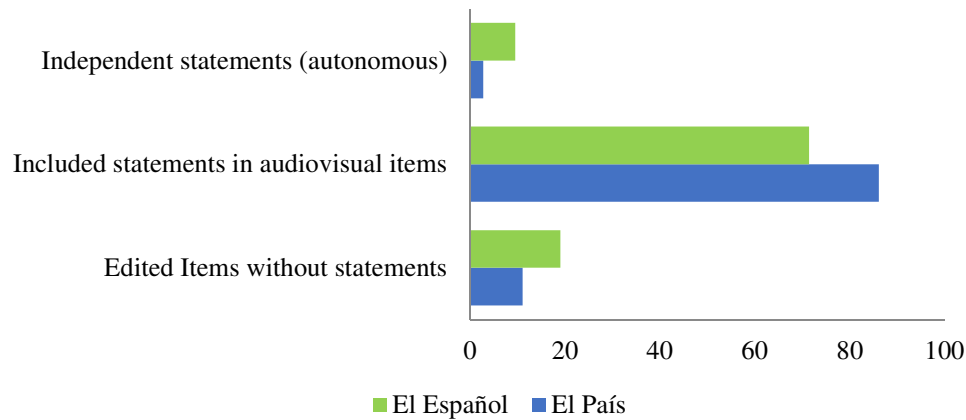
Table 2: Use of statements with respect to total audiovisual content (percentage).

Formats	elpais.com	elespanol.com
In house produced news	10.5%	27.0%
Externally produced news (agencies)	2.6%	10.8%
Individualized use of statements	2.6%	9.5%
In-house audiovisual report	60.6%	13.5%
Statements for total audiovisual content	76.3 %	60.8 %

Statements used as autonomous audiovisual content are present in both *El País* (2.6%) and *El Español* (9.5%). Despite being limited, they are an extension or complement to the written news text and have an added discursive value. On the other hand, the comprehensive news

items monopolize most audiovisual content on digital press portals (Graph 2), mainly from the two most popular formats such as the news (*El País*, 13.1%; *El Español*, 37.8%) and the report (60.6% and 13.5%, respectively).

Graph 2: Distribution of statements according to format.



We are therefore dealing with the first type of item that has a differentiated use in the electronic media: digital video as a complement to the written news, featuring statements from leading or relevant figures. This type of item does not incorporate any remarkable narrative strategy and is barely edited. It only includes the chosen statement segment with infographics and the electronic medium's logo, which is either in the form of an opening or closing header. Its sole aim is to complement the journalistic text written on the page. Both digital media choose this audiovisual modality since it is not difficult to produce, upload, and insert on the Internet; it is also an instrumental complement to the informative discourse. It pushes the boundaries of traditional still photos that illustrated the news in any traditional print newspaper.

3.2. Commitment to creativity and aesthetics: Playground's videonews

The second modality on electronic media is a more developed than the previous one. This format is shorter, more creative and notably formal, it is based on carefully editing still or moving image sequences, and large-format text posters are later superimposed over them. Playground's videonews has become a reference format both on its electronic portal and social networks such as Facebook or Instagram, thus showing that it is versatile as it can adapt to the demands of different platforms. Zomeño and Blay Arráez highlight how some characteristic features such as the brevity of this item (no more than 90 seconds), the conciseness of its texts and careful audiovisual syntax where the combination of image and text allows it to go "beyond its communicational mission and be creative" (2017, p. 1187).

Informative items are therefore elaborated to a lesser extent and are a far cry from formats such as the report or television news; these items have a very particular *mise-en-scène* halfway between a photogallery with headlines and a conventional television item. This type of video is designed for an audience that mainly consumes content through social networks on mobile devices, allowing for concise information to be disseminated in a few seconds. Videonews has an intrinsic value and meaning, which facilitates its vitalization on social networks, unlike other formats which are linked to the written news and thus more dependent on it. Therefore videonews appear very little on the conventional press' digital portals compared to the rest of the audiovisual contents (10.5% on *elpais.com* and 2.7% on *elespanol.com*), as mainly other audiovisual formats such as news or reports are found.

The new digital ecosystem has determined the traditional modes of news production and consumption. Electronic devices such as smartphones or tablets enable immediate access to information (Orihuela, 2002) while consuming little data, making it more attractive to younger users who are more likely to consume short videos than read a news text.

These videos have a square (1:1) aspect ratio, thus facilitating optimal viewing on any portable device. They are the most relevant videos on Facebook feeds and can also be shared on other social networks such as Instagram, whose content viewing design is also square. The audiovisual discourse is articulated based on two fundamental elements; the image and superimposed text which allow viewers to understand the content without needing sound. The text replaces the narrator's voice-over, drawing the user's attention to the signage and graphics superimposed on the images; the audio is transferred to the images' background sounds and music. The use of font with large bodies of texts in bold allows the videos to be easily read on mobile devices and the text to be legible when superimposed over the images.

3.3. *The conventional informative item: the news*

The third model, which is developed to a greater extent, can be found in both elpais.com and elespanol.com, and in practically all electronic media. The news item is the most extended audiovisual format, and it directly references traditional TV news. The new communicative ecosystem has fostered multiplatform media production. Consequently, the media is more involved in the production and distribution phases of the contents that they generate, audiovisual information consumption is now more than just a television broadcast.

With an average duration of 1 minute (Table 4), this type of audiovisual item in the electronic media is based on a spoken text (voice-over), accompanied by images (cover shots) and central figures' statements, and there is no journalist in front of the camera. The in situ or street entrance allows the journalist to speak in front of the camera at the scene of the events, "giving them credibility and prestige, besides making the man authority on the matter" (Pérez, 2010, p. 89), but the lack of a journalist in these types of items is evident.

Electronic media content production is usually carried out at the newspaper itself. In this study the in-house production content is edited in the same newspaper, it is differentiated from pre-edited items provided by news agencies (recognizable thanks to the use of headers or watermarks), videos taken from the Internet or home recordings via smartphones, among others. Consequently, we have focused on the editing and creation process of audiovisual items regardless of the origin of the audiovisual material used by different cybermedia, which is generally diverse and challenging to determine. *El País* (92.1%), *El Español* (46.2%) and Playground (100%) choose typically to self-produce audiovisual contents (Table 3). However, contents provided by news agencies (EFE, 34.6% in elespanol.com) are apparent. This explains the journalist's absence in the digital media during the entrance or situate the scene of the events; as he/she is not at the shooting, instead the news item is created from the images provided by others. Playground's videonews is mainly produced with third-party images. However, their post-production is what makes them appealing as it enables them to acquire the status of a new audiovisual format.

Table 3: Editing of the contents distributed in elpais.com y elespanol.com.

Contents	elpais.com	elespanol.com	Playground
In-house-editing	92.1%	46.2%	100%
Pre-edited by news agencies (EFE)	2.6%	34.6%	-
Youtube and home recordings (<i>smartphones</i>)	5.3%	19.2%	-

On other occasions, the journalist's absence is noted because there is no voice-over (Table 4), since audiovisual material provided (pre-edited) by agencies is used, in which the voice-over text is inserted over the selected resources (establishing shots) and statements. Similarly, they do not write the text or include a voice-over on some occasions. The video appears on the portal with cover shots and statements, alongside the written news (10.8% of the pieces in elespanol.com, and 2.6% in elpais.com); however this option is not appealing due to the unfinished look of the news item.

The pure video is another frequent element in television news production, which is used together with resources and statements (Table 4). It is a recording that is only made up of images and background sound. However, it is not considered to be a cover shot because it has enough relevance to show actions or events or main actors related to the informative fact as images that "speak for themselves" (Bandrés *et al.*, 2004, p. 116). This is a common element in news and television reports, and it is used occasionally in the electronic media to illustrate the information in a news text (7.9% in elpais.com and 5.4% in elespanol.com). It is none other than a visual reinforcement of the narrated facts, and its discursive efficiency as an autonomous audiovisual format complementary to the written news is doubtful. Furthermore, cover shots were observed on some occasions (raw footage) or the repetition of the same item in one or another news item on the digital portals as an alternative resource to editing an informative news item. The use of these elements is usually limited (5.4% on elespanol.com).

3.4. Audiovisual reporting

Finally, the most elaborated model has a similar format and *mise-en-scène* to a television report. As a journalistic genre, reporting allows the information to be dealt with in greater depth, as more time is dedicated to documentation, accessing sources, and production. Also, it is a format that has managed to evolve as it has adapted to different media and circumstances, its flexibility and progressively sophisticated form and content are also characteristic (Barroso, 2002; Marta Lazo, 2012).

There has been a significant increase in audiovisual content, as all digital media have incorporated it in their reports section. With an average duration of three minutes (Table 4) – which is much longer than the news–, these audiovisual items are carefully produced journalistically, photographically, and in the *mise-en-scène*, editing and post-production. Audiovisual reporting complements written journalistic reporting well. *El País* and *El Español* have a permanent section for reports, and the way the audiovisual reports are integrated into the written reports is remarkable. Moreover, they coincide in the same reports section (on both digital portals). However, elespanol.com also has a separate section called Multimedia, where all audiovisual content on the portal is extracted from news texts and grouped, thus giving them autonomy. Therefore, audiovisual content is valued on this portal, as it is organized and structured in an independent section.

Table 4: Audiovisual content in the Reports section of *El País* and *El Español*.

		elpais.com		elespanol.com	
Selection of reports		Written reports	61.2% (60)	Written reports	80.7% (155)
		Audiovisual content	38.8% (38)	Audiovisual content	19.3% (37)
Conventional news ítem (<i>television news</i>)	Complete television ítem, edited with a voice-over, cover shots, and statements.	10.5%	Average. dur. 1 min. 14sec.	27.0%	Average dur 1 min. 14sec.
	Television ítem from agencies, edited with resources and statements, but without a voice-over	2.6%		10.8%	
<i>Videonews</i>		10.5%	Average dur 56 sec.	2.7%	Average dur 60 sec.
Raw footage		5.3%		13.5%	
Pure videos		7.9%		5.4%	
Statements		2.6%		8.1%	
Items repeated in previous reports		--		5.4%	
Youtube		--		16.3%	
Audiovisual report		60.6%	Average dur 2 min. 30 sec.	13.5%	Average dur 3 min. 1 sec.

Elpais.com is firmly committed to incorporating audiovisual content (60.6%), as the *mise-en-scène* and average duration in the videos are carefully standardized. Regarding the audiovisual report, Elpais.com articulates most of its audiovisual contents along with informative items and videonews, avoiding unedited footage or repeating previously used items. On the other hand, audiovisual reports on elespanol.com are less frequent, making up only 13.5% of the audiovisual contents on the Reports section, the news items are used to a greater extent (27%), and other elements such as raw footage (13.5%), Youtube videos (16.3%) or even repeating the same item (5.4%) in more than one report or similarly themed news items.

The news media are aware of the quality, scope, and impact needed for these audiovisual contents. This can be evidenced through corporate visual identity elements which are increasingly appearing in the cybermedia videos because they can potentially be distributed by other channels such as social networks. The presence of corporate infographics and graphics on headers, as well as identifying graphics and watermarks are inserted in the videos due to this. We have centered on Playground, and how its videonews has gained popularity on social networks such as Facebook, as well as their use of graphic animation with the name of the media in all the closings of its videos. Similarly, the presence of corporate visual identity can be seen in the audiovisual items of elpais.com (92.1%), where animated headers for the beginning or closing of the items with the initials of the media are used, or the superimposed image of an on-screen logo based on the logo ELPAÍS. These types of corporate identity elements on elespanol.com are far less frequent (23.1%). The logo is used sporadically as a

watermark or on a static screen at the beginning of the video on this portal, and the logo printed on a mic flag occasionally appears during the recorded statements.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The segmentation of content fostered by the multiplicity of channels, which is the outcome of digitalization, has also led to a variety of formats that address new ways of using technology and condition electronic devices and media. The new communication ecosystem has determined the new media's complementarity and the use of electronic devices alongside already existing ones by reconfiguring applications, languages, and adjusting to target audiences.

Consequently, traditional print media contents have evolved and transformed, as it adapts to new electronic devices, thus pushing the envelope of print news texts as it is gradually making up most of the video information flow. A gallery of images or the central figure's statements is incorporated in the video as well as well produced audiovisual items similar to television formats, elements, and *mise-en-scène* depending on the relevance of the information or the extent to which it is developed.

The significant increase in audiovisual content in digital press portals can be confirmed upon reviewing the data obtained during the period of study, both in traditional newspapers such as *El País* and in more recent and exclusively digital ones like *El Español*. In this cybermedia, the amount of audiovisual content has increased and is articulated in synergy with news texts. Its structure in different formats or variants allows for them to complement the media's news, adapting it to the needs or relevance of the information. The *mise-en-scène* of the item is different, setting it apart from the conventional television format, and allowing it to establish itself as a new format originating from electronic media.

Therefore, these digital portals have been able to articulate different tools adapted to their needs, enabling them to complement or broaden the written news founded on basic elements such as statements or the main figure's statements to more developed items such as reports, news or videonews. This tendency responds to the use and development of audiovisual discourse based on fundamental iconic values of the image and the information of the text (either written or voice-over), which are all constructed through digital editing and postproduction. Occasionally the media uses other audiovisual resources such as videos edited exclusively from background noise shots (B-roll), links to contents on Youtube, home recordings on smartphones or even the same video repeated on many news items related to news events. As a consequence more information is produced while using resources efficiently. Written texts comprise most audiovisual media content, more so than videos both in *elpais.com* (61.2%), *elespanol.com* (80.7%) and even on *playgroundmag.net* (61.5%). Therefore, each media outlet uses the resources that increase the number of videos, thus completing its information supply.

In short, the rise of videos on the internet has led to the creation of specific sections for audiovisual contents on digital media, and innovative formats have been developed which are adapted to new uses and users. Videonews fosters the consumption of this shared content on social networks on any electronic device by a younger generation of consumers accustomed to video consumption.

The power of the image, the media's multiplatform leap forward, and the hegemony of access to information through intelligent portable devices have fostered this new way of accessing information.

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