

Radiography of the journalistic uses of WhatsApp: Audience consumption and media strategies

WhatsApp has become one of the main platform for news consumption (Batra, 2016). According to the *Digital News Report* (Reuters Institute, 2017), its penetration in Spain for this usage is 32%. This study also aims that 56% of users access news through mobile phones. This reality produces a new media ecosystem that evolves and mutates in the digital era (García, Carvajal and Arias, 2018). These data represent an unprecedented paradigm shift (Lee and Man Chan, 2015). In this context, it is necessary to understand users behaviour patterns and verify how the media adapt their strategies to these practices. Previous research focus on WhatsApp and journalism suggest new professional routines (Bradshaw, 2015), analyze coverages (Reid, 2014) or highlight its potential (Silva, Lopez, and Westlund, 2015). However, at a time when instant messaging applications have more global users than traditional social networks (Barot and Oren, 2015), it is imperative to discover new approaches to determine the shortcomings and strengths of "whatsapping news".

To reach these goals, we applied a mixed methodology. Our research collects data from 5,021 WhatsApp users of 18 Spanish news sites. Preliminary results confirm that 481 of the respondents share news through the application almost every day. This quantitative study is complemented with a content analysis of 123 Spanish media. During one week, all messages sent by these media were analyzed. Only 10 newspapers of that directory have a sender role through WhatsApp, generating great expectations on audience participation.

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Keyword

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