

News sharing using self-destructive content in digital native media from an international perspective

[ACCEPTED VERSION]

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Abstract: *Native digital media use of self-destructive content for the dissemination of news is investigated. This new format, characterized by its ephemerality, has become fashionable within the most successful social networks. Spanish media outlets are analysed and compared with European and American ones. The results indicate that native cybermedia are disseminating content through this format, increasing audience engagement, especially within the youth. Interestingly, these media focus intently on Instagram while neglecting Facebook and Youtube. Models of transmedia, like swiping up, crossmedia and cross-promotion narratives are valued, and made apparent is the usefulness of the format to improve the general public's participation, and in the sending of user generated content. This work delves into an under-researched field, offering a valuable perspective for communication companies to influence the daily spaces of social interaction by offering bite size portions of information.*

Keywords: cross-promotion; ephemeral content; news sharing; self-destructive content; social media; swipe up.

1. Introduction

Journalism has transitioned from single-channel activity to multichannel communications (Neuberger, Nuernbergk & Langenohl, 2018). This has facilitated the emergence of hybrid and innovative forms of information production on open platforms, thus dismantling the classic narrative structures (Hermida, 2013) and leading to the emergence of new models of journalism, such as the entrepreneurial (Casero-Ripollés, Izquierdo- Castillo & Doménech-Fabregat, 2016; Porlezza & Splendore, 2016), immersive journalism (Sánchez, 2017) and constructive journalism (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018). This demonstrates how communication companies and journalists have to constantly adapt to advances in mobile technologies (Bui & Moran, 2019) in order to meet the needs of audiences who are increasingly technologically sophisticated (Loosen & Schmidt, 2012).

Parallel to the popularisation of mobile and web 2.0 technologies engagement has become a media industry buzzword (Lawrence, Radcliffe & Schmidt, 2018) to the point that journalists have been forced to react to issues related to the dissemination of user generated contents (Johnston, 2016). The relationships between media and their audiences are increasingly interwoven and reciprocal in nature, (Gaudeul & Giannetti, 2013; Lewis, Holton & Coddington, 2014) and the most recent studies conclude that the dialogic relationship between the two sides should continue to be encouraged so as to increase public participation (Wang & Yang, 2020). This is especially true for young people, for whom the amount of content provided on social networks, and user interactivity rates, are of great importance. For these reasons, organizations are encouraged to invest in the production of high quality content for these spaces (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Fleming-Milici & Harris, 2020; Gibson & Trnka, 2020).

According to data from We Are Social & Hootsuite (2019), 45% of the world's population are users of social networks, and 42% use them on their mobile devices, representing an increase of 9% and 10%, respectively, when compared to last year. The same report indicates that, on average, users spend two hours and sixteen minutes a day on social media and that Facebook (2,271 million), YouTube (1,900 million) and Instagram (1,000 million users) are the networks with the highest number of users. The depth of audience participation on social networking sites has been verified, and it is also proven that they provide a channel of access to the news (Wilding et al., 2018). Again, this is especially true for the youth, who consult news as a regular part of their connections to social platforms (Boczkowski et al., 2017). This study will verify the ways that native digital cybermedia make use of new formats of self-destructive content and bind them to their brand.

2. The news on social media

Researchers have studied the use of Facebook for the dissemination of information published by the media in countries such as Argentina (Raimondo, Sambrana, & Cardoso, 2017), Brazil (De Vasconcelos & Francisco, 2018), Colombia (Villa, Jairo & Sneider, 2017), Costa Rica (Siles, Campos & Segura, 2018), United States (Beam, Hutchens & Hmielowski, 2018), Mexico (Castillo, 2019), Netherlands and Flanders (Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2019), Norway (Kalsnes & Olof, 2018) and in regions such as Central America (Carballo, 2017) or Europe (Pérez et al., 2017). In all these cases, the network is used as a mechanism for crossmedia distribution of the same news that is published on the official websites of the news sites, without specific content elaboration for Facebook. On other occasions, the network has also been used as a means to increase the virality of content (Segado, Del Campo & Soria, 2015) or to promote journalistic specialization through scientific dissemination (Batista, 2017).

Facebook has been questioned about the transparency of the algorithms it uses to determine what information is shown on their news feed, and the consequent absence of content curation in relation to traditional news values (Bucher, 2017; DeVito, 2017). This in spite of the fact that the users of this social network claim to be increasingly willing to comment on news that fits into classic news values such as negativity or personalization (Salgado & Bobba, 2019). However, a recent experimental study (Johnson & St. John III, 2019) determined that users viewed the content circulated by the media with as much credibility as that published by other users or organizations. This acutely demonstrates the challenge faced by communication companies to increase their credibility levels within the milieu of social networks.

Though research into the dissemination of journalistic content on Instagram is scarcer, the research that does exist points audiences preferring "lighter" or less-demanding modes of interaction with online news content (Olof, 2017; Gruzd, Lannigan & Quigley, 2018). This does not mean that the network has not been used to exercise citizen journalism as happened, for example, after the attack against Charlie Hebdo in 2015 in France (Al Nashmi, 2018), or to organize political mobilization and protest movements such as those arising from the 2014 presidential elections in Romania (Adi, Gerodimos & Lilleker, 2018). In sports, it has been proven that narrative or metacommunicative messaging results in greater interest and engagement by audiences through the manifestation of comments or likes (Romney & Johnson, 2018).

2.1 The features of self-destructive content

All previous research has focused on the publication of news in the social media feed. However, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have implemented a new content dissemination system that must be analysed. This is the self-destructive content, which some authors call ephemeral content (Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal & López-García, 2019), specifically when referring to the Snapchat network (Bayer et al., 2016; Soffer, 2016), due to its intrinsically temporary nature. It is a platform that rejects permanent availability in exchange for promoting the ephemeral as its main selling point. That is to say, the uniqueness of this type of content lies in its expiration, since it does not remain on the profile, but disappears after 24 hours unless the user decides to incorporate it as a featured story (in the case of YouTube the duration of the stories is one week). These stories are designed to narrate events at the same time they happen. Although they allow live broadcasting, they are used increasingly less to cover live events and more for occurrences in the very recent past. The stories are highly audiovisual and allow the incorporation of gifs, emojis, filters and stickers to make the production more visually attractive. They last approximately ten seconds, which maximises visual impact and call to action. Its perishable nature allows content that is of interest to the audience to be featured, even if it is inappropriate to remain on the profile (Sixto, 2018). Lastly, these stories favour the establishment of transmedia narratives by offering accounts with more than ten thousand followers the option of adding swipe up, that is, the inclusion of a link that leads the user to an external website, so they are required to visit it to complete the informative account.

The stories neither limit nor compromise the usual dissemination of information on the feed, but reinforce and complement the storytelling. In general, they represent the abandonment of the crossmedia techniques that are usually practiced on profiles. They are instead a new development in the evolution of journalistic production. If crossmedia practices entail the integration of cross-media or convergent media contents to provide users with complementary information combining different media to launch a common message, but adapted to the specific rules and languages of each platform (Ma, Tanaka & Nadamoto, 2006), for stories, the level of adaptation is higher than in other virtual spaces. This is because they not only entail the adaptation of different norms and languages, but also produce specific audiovisual content for this type of support and adapt to the demands of each self-destructive and perishable product.

This type of cross-content production is framed within the context of the journalistic convergence that has guided journalistic companies since the end of the 20th century. It has repercussions on the concentration of business groups, the technologies that allow cross-platform distribution, content development multimedia, and the versatility of journalists (Jenkins, 2004, 2014). These circumstances are also the ones that allow self-destructive content to be used to encourage cross-promotion between different media, as well as between platforms within the same business group. It has been proven that this type of promotion generates greater public interest, and helps to reinforce the message and increase credibility, encouraging more positive attitudes towards the promotion than those generated through the use of repetitive promotions on a single support (Tang, Newton & Wang, 2007).

When the 'swipe up' technique is used in the production of self-destructive content, that media outlet is actually executing a transmedia practice, as it requires the user to leave the social network and complete the informative account using the original source. "The transmedia narrative refers to a new aesthetic that has emerged in response to the convergence of the media, which poses new demands to consumers and depends on the active participation of communities" (Jenkins, 2006: 31), meaning that they have to

move from one space to another to get an integral view of the storytelling. In this sense, self-destructive stories act as a call-to-action spring that generates traffic to the web. On the other hand, Taddeo & Tirocchi (2018) have argued that young people are more and more capable of managing these types of narratives.

In addition to eradicating passivity (Silva & Damasceno, 2019) by facilitating the user's choice of the itinerary they wish to make, self-destructive content also enhances the participation of audiences in the original storyboard through surveys and questions. For a decade, social media users have been actively involved in the distribution and production of content related to that which they consume (Roberts, 2016), because their sense of belonging to the community has increased (Xie & Lie, 2015). In many cases, the level of engagement increases so much that users elevate from prosumers to adprosumers, recommending and prescribing their brand of choice (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Segarra-Saavedra & Tur-Viñes, 2017).

From the point of view of organizational communication, the use of stories in journalistic companies marks a step forward in innovation (Singer & Broersma, 2019), one that allows media interests to interfere within the usual spaces of public interaction. Audience measurement systems also endorse the use of stories since they show a list of people who visualized them, which is a highly valuable data not only to evaluate ROI (return on investment) (Shay & Van Der Horst, 2019) and IOR (impact on relationships), but also for the implementation of one to one strategies. If the information company considers the information disseminated so relevant that it deserves to remain in the profile, understanding permanence as the way to safeguard knowledge and preserve memory (Soffer, 2016), there is the option to highlight the story and make it perennial. In this case, although the narrative maintains the productive and formatting characteristics of the self-destructive content, it becomes an element of the profile that provides additional information about the topics that this news site considers most important.

Perhaps due to it being such a recent phenomenon, studies on self-destructive content are scarce. Modesto and De Mello (2019) analyzed stories on Instagram and Snapchat and concluded that the narratives were essentially an adaptation of traditional journalistic narratives within the frameworks and limitations of these social networks. On the other hand, Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal and López-García (2019) have pointed out that ephemeral stories conform to a visual model required by users and that their consumption is agile because their navigation model favors speed within a context of network conversation. How are native digital media, created on and for the Internet, using this content? Are stories used? If so, when, and with what purpose? Do they involve the audience? These are some of the questions around which research is centred.

3. Material and methods

At the beginning, a set of the research questions (RQs) justified the idea of an active effort to find a new way to distribute information in social networks:

- RQ1: Is self-destructive content a common way to share news in native digital media?
- RQ2: What is the most prominent social network for the dissemination of news as stories?
- RQ3: What kind of storytelling or narratives are used in self-destructive content?
- RQ4: Is the use of stories common as a cross-promotional technique between media of the same corporation?
- RQ5: Is citizen participation encouraged through this type of content?

The main objective of this research is to explore how native digital media use self-destructive content as a news sharing technique. As well as this, four other secondary objectives are posed:

O₁: To determine which of the social media that allow self-destructive content actually use it.

O₂: To analyse the frequency with which this content is published.

O₃: To examine the narrative techniques or cross-promotional strategies used in self-destructive publications and their impact on audiences.

O₄: To assess potential public participation mechanisms featured in these types of formats.

The analysis sample is composed of twenty-four native digital media outlets included in the project "Native digital cybermedia in Spain: narrative formats and mobile strategy" (Reference RTI2018-093346-B-C33) of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Among the media analyzed, fact checking platforms such as Maldita.es, as well as a hybrid model that combines simple language with thorough analysis like El Orden Mundial are also included, This is because, although they are not purely news media, their news sharing is relevant in regards to self-destructive content. Most of the media analysed are Spanish (sixteen of the twenty four), including the Spanish version of *Huffpost*, though five US media and three other European references were added (see table 1). This allowed comparisons to be drawn between Spain, the rest of Europe, and in the United States, as in other previous research on digital native media (Sixto-García et al., 2020).

Table 1. Native Digital Media included in the sample. Own elaboration.

Country	Digital Media Outlet	Founded
Spain	<i>Eldiario.es</i>	2012
	<i>El Confidencial</i>	2001
	<i>OKdiario</i>	2015
	<i>Público</i>	2007
	<i>Libertad Digital</i>	2000
	<i>El HuffPostⁱ</i>	2012
	<i>El Español</i>	2015
	<i>ElNacional.cat</i>	2015
	<i>ElIndependiente.com</i>	2016
	<i>Maldita.es</i>	2017
	<i>ElOrdenMundial.com</i>	2012
	<i>NiusDiario.es</i>	2019
	<i>LaRepublica.cat</i>	2018
	<i>ElCatalan.es</i>	2017
	<i>MetropoliAbierta.com</i>	2017
	<i>DigitalSevilla.com</i>	2016
Portugal	<i>Observador</i>	2014
Netherlands	<i>De Correspondent</i>	2013
France	<i>Mediapart.fr</i>	2008
United States	<i>Politico</i>	2007
	<i>Yahoo! News</i>	1996
	<i>MSN News</i>	2012
	<i>Buzzfeed News</i>	2006
	<i>Vice News</i>	2013

Despite being clearly justifiable cases due to their uniqueness and the strength with which they entered the digital scenario, and hence their inclusion in the project sample endorsed by the Ministry, we can also refer to the fact that it is a sample of intentional character, a non-probabilistic sampling technique that is used in scenarios where the population is variable and consequently the sample is very small, so it allows to select characteristic cases of that universe (Igartua, 2006; López-Roldán & Fachelli, 2015; Otzen & Manterola, 2017). Interest in the Spanish media is determined by the financial project in which this research is framed. It was also necessary to include other featured European and American media with the aim of exploring beyond local trends. These media outlets were selected according to scientific criteria. Selections were based on the data collected in the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019* (Newman, 2019). In Europe, the home-grown media with the highest percentage of weekly usage were selected (*Mediapart* from France and *Observador* from Portugal). *De Correspondent* (Netherlands) was added because it is officially recognized in rankings as one of the media outlets that audiences attribute more heard of brand. In the United States, the sample is made up of digital native media among the twenty-one online media outlets with the highest percentage of weekly usage, except for Vice News and Politico, which are two highly active initiatives on social media that we believed should be studied due to the observation as readers. However, the exploratory nature of this study should be taken into account to avoid generalization of the results.

For the analysis, stories published by the selected media platforms on the three social networks that allow self-destructive formats -Instagram, Facebook and YouTube- were monitored for a month (from November 20th, 2019 to December 20th, 2019). This broad timeframe was chosen to give a more accurate perspective on trends and routines that may have been altered within shorter periods, and to reduce the variability of the condition of any news cycles. Nonetheless, due to the ephemeral format, the data was always collected at the same time, 11 a.m. (UTC +1). In addition, the various media profiles on Instagram were tracked to verify the existence of outstanding stories that could have been used at specific times before the sample collection period.

The analysis items were established based on the research objectives set:

- The use of self-destructive content, the circumstances under which they are used, and the frequency of use.
- The identification of transmedia narrative techniques (swiping up). It should be noted that swipe up is a mechanism available to accounts with more than 10,000 followers that allows adding a link in the self-destructive content that generally leads the user to the corporate website.
- Narrative models: autonomous stories, reporting, live broadcasts and the existence of cross-media or cross-promotion practices.
- Visual design analysis
- The potential for audience involvement and participation.

4. Results

Most digital native media (83.33%) use self-destructive content to distribute information to their audiences on a regular basis (RQ1). This trend is seen in the Spanish edition of the media (75%) as well as in those analysed to obtain European (100%) and American (100%) perspectives. The existence of two Spanish media outlets (*eldiario.es* and *larepublica.cat*) that did not disseminate content in ephemeral format during the entire period of study -nor, therefore, on a regular basis-, but do present highlighted stories on their profiles, is also established. This goes to show that despite knowing the existence of the narrative format, the two media sources have deliberately decided not to use it in

their daily communication. Instead, this format is restricted to exceptional and sporadic moments, as well as to the circulation of institutional advertising aimed at attracting members.

According to RQ2, Instagram is the most popular site for the dissemination of stories. This is the network where the media dedicate more efforts to the creation of ad hoc content. Conversely, no cases of specific content development were detected on Facebook, except for three Spanish media (*OKDiario*, *Público* and *El HuffPost*), that very occasionally share stories with information different from that spread on Instagram. Nonetheless, no narrative models are observed on Facebook other than those used on Instagram. In addition to this, no digital native media use YouTube to disseminate information in a self-destructive format.

Despite the widespread use of this type of content on Instagram, there is no daily activity registered in more than a third of the media analysed, neither in the Spanish context nor in any of the compared ones (see table 2). In fact, the daily use of ephemeral content in Spain is limited to a quarter of native media (25%), while in the United States the most common frequency ranges from 3-4 publications per week (40%). Data referring to the occasional use of self-destructive content in America and Europe (40% and 66.66% respectively) are also noteworthy, while in the Spanish case the sporadic use proves irrelevant (8.33%). It is the European media that publish the most stories a day (8.2 on average), followed by the American ones (7.7) and the Spanish (5.97).

On Facebook, the use of stories is much more limited, since only 31.25% of Spanish native digital media, 33.33% of the European and 40% of the American (33.33% of the group) actively use them. In all cases, the content disseminated is the same as on Instagram, except for the fact that the number of stories is reduced by 59.27% (50.74% in Spain, 50% in the rest of Europe and 77.09% in the United States). Digital native media prefer Instagram over Facebook or YouTube when it comes to sharing self-destructive content. This leads us to infer that when Instagram gives the possibility to share also on Facebook –it is worth remembering that Instagram belongs to Facebook–, the option is sometimes selected and sometimes not.

Table 2. Use of self-destructive content by native digital media in social networks. Own elaboration.

	Instagram				Facebook			YouTube		
	Use of stories	Average stories/day	Frequency of use		Use of stories	Average stories/day	Frequency of use		Use of stories	
Spain	75%	5.97	Daily	25%	31.25%	3.82	Daily	0%	0%	
			3-4 weekly	25%				3-4 weekly		0%
			2-3 weekly	33.33%				2-3 weekly		40%
			< 2 weekly	8.33%				< 2 weekly		0%
			Occasional	8.33%				Occasional		60%
Europe	100%	8.2	Daily	33.33%	33.33%	17.75 (The average figure corresponds only to the only media outlet that uses Facebook stories - Observador	Daily	0%	0%	
			3-4 weekly	0%				3-4 weekly		0%
			2-3 weekly	0%				2-3 weekly		100%
			< 2 weekly	0%				< 2 weekly		0%
			Occasional	66.66%				Occasional		0%
USA	100%	7.7	Daily	0%	40%	7.12	Daily	0%	0%	
			3-4 weekly	40%				3-4 weekly		0%
			2-3 weekly	20%				2-3 weekly		0%
			< 2 weekly	0%				< 2 weekly		0%
			Occasional	40%				Occasional		100%

Of the Spanish media that use stories, 75% resort to the swipe up technique (RQ3), that is, a transmedia model that leads the user to an external website –the corporate website in this case-, in order to complete the informative account. In comparison with the other European media this technique is reproduced in all of them (100%), as well as in 80% of the American ones.

Table 3. Use of swipe up narratives. Own elaboration.

	Swipe up	Use of swipe up on days with stories
Spain	75%	81.92%
Europe	100%	63.63%
USA	80%	54.89%
All	95%	71.73%

Besides sharing an autonomous piece of news through stories, it is also common practice for media to feature a series of related stories that present the narrative nature of reporting. This practice has been observed in six out of ten media that use self-destructive content (65%). Regarding this format, it is also worth commenting on the, at time, recurring use of swipe up, especially among American media (80%). Moreover, apart from using swipe up, such reports may present the image of a media reporter, include interviews with relevant sources or incorporate the testimonies of people involved in the events. The first two cases are more frequent in the United States, whereas the third is more prevalent in European ones (see table 4).

Table 4. Use of reporting through stories. Own elaboration.

Use	Typologies							
	With swipe up	Without transmedia	With reporter	With interview	With testimonies	With survey	With mention @	Corporate advertising
Spain	50%	25%	16.66%	0%	0%	16.66%	8.33%	16.66%
Europe	100%	33.33%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	33.33%
USA	80%	80%	40%	20%	0%	20%	0%	20%
All	65%	40%	25%	5%	5%	15%	5%	20%

Also according RQ3, although stories were originally conceived to disseminate live events in real time, the ability to broadcast past events has become more and more of a feature. In fact, among those media that use self-destructive content, the inclusion of stories that feature live events is incidental and examples are only identified in one Spanish digital media -*Nius*- and in two American ones -*Politico* and *Yahoo News*-. Live modalities with reporter and broadcasts featuring corporate advertising are also observed, although in the United States the first feature prevails over the second (table 7).

Table 5. Use of live stories. Own elaboration.

	Live stories	Live with reporter	Live with corporate ads
Spain	8.33%	8.33%	8.33%
Europe	0%	0%	0%
USA	40%	40%	20%
All	15%	15%	10%

Outside of the live format, the elaboration of journalistic pieces that are spread exclusively through stories is not verified, and the publication strategies are connected

to cross-media practices. However, despite the fact that no preference pattern has been drawn for any journalistic specialization, since the topics featured are numerous and varied (politics, sports, pink press, economics, environmental awareness...), an inclination for those subjects that may cause more controversy among the audience is evident. This implies a certain relationship between information and the search for web traffic generation or even clickbait.

By studying cross-promotional actions we find out that some 20% of self-destructive reports act as a means of support for corporate advertising actions, generally aimed at attracting members or self-promoting the individual media outlet (RQ4). In this case, we refer to a cross-promotional technique that uses the ephemeral format to generate web traffic to perennial platforms. In stories that are not part of a report, but rather presented as isolated pieces, we also find cross-promotion actions. Some of them publicise the media outlet, while others share publications from the media profile or from other profiles belonging to the same group. Whilst some 41.66% of Spanish natives feature corporate advertising in their stories, the figure drops to 33.33% for the rest of the Europeans and to 20% for Americans, as presented in the following table:

Table 6. Cross-promotion practices found in self-destructive content. Own elaboration.

	Stories with corporate advertising	Stories that share profile publications	Stories that share publications from other profiles of the same group
Spain	41.66%	16.66%	16.66%
Europe	33.33%	0%	0%
USA	20%	60%	0%
All	35%	25%	10%

According to RQ5, some 15% of all reports incorporate surveys with the objective of collecting user opinions about newsworthy events, a trend that is greater in the United States than in Spain. However, the need to get citizens actively involved in journalistic contents not limited to reports, but it is also applicable to those news pieces that are presented autonomously. In fact, four models of citizen participation are identified: sharing followers' publications, close-ended surveys, open-ended questions and rating scales. All of them are designed to discern users' opinions on matters, and to provide small public opinion polls. Both in Spain and in the United States, the sharing of UGC in the official media profile and the open-ended questions that allow followers to submit their personal opinions are the most prevalent. Nonetheless, the use of citizen participation mechanisms is higher in Spanish native digital media in comparison to their American counterparts, whilst their use in the rest of Europe remains scarce (table 5).

Table 7. Implication of the audiences in self-destructive content. Own elaboration.

	Sharing follower's publications	Surveys		Audience questions	Rating scales
Spain	58.33%	33.33%	50%		8.33%
Europe	33.33%	0%	0%		0%
USA	20%	0%	20%		20%
All	45%	20%	35%		15%

Although news items are not specifically prepared to be disseminated through stories, the act of sharing news using the ephemeral model, contrary to what happens in feeds, necessarily requires the adaptation of content to the specific format of the narrative model. In this sense, most digital native cybermedia (60%) go for personalized designs for the broadcast of self-destructive content. This trend is greater in Spain than in the United States, where gifs are a more popular option to make the informative content dynamic:

Table 8. Configuration of personalised design on stories. Own elaboration.

	Personalised design	Use of gifs
Spain	66.66%	33.33%
Europe	66.66%	33%
USA	40%	60%
All	60%	35%

5. Discussion and conclusions

Spanish digital native media are mostly committed to disseminating information through self-destructive content, albeit less so than their American and European counterparts (in relation to the main objective). Nonetheless, native cyber-media have advocated for the most modern and innovative narrative models in order to increase engagement rates with audiences (Lawrence, Radcliffe & Schmidt, 2018) and meet the needs of new audiences that, as Loosen & Schmidt pointed out (2012), are increasingly technologically trained (see table 9).

Table 9. Number of contents adjusted to each of the narrative models described*. Own elaboration.

Kind of narrative	Number of stories
Swipe up	1,363
Live reporting	1,234
Implication of audience	854
Cross-promotion	664

(*) Number is not exclusive. The same story can have several narrative models, for example swipe up and public involvement.

According to the most recent studies, the amount of content disseminated on social networks is decisive for audiences, especially for the youngest (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Fleming-Milici & Harris, 2020; Gibson & Trnka, 2020), who, in addition, consume news on their mobile devices as part of their constant connection to media platforms (Boczkowski et al., 2017). In relation to objective 1, there also seems to be a preference for Instagram when it comes to the dissemination of ephemeral content, which relates to the need to reach this target audience. However, the frequency of publication is still low and, in most media, ephemeral content is not published daily (objective 2). However, when these platforms decide to publish something, they prefer to release five or more news stories on average, not just one.

In almost all cases (95%), stories are not limited to static content. According to objective 3, they would rather offer the user the possibility of exploring a transmedia story that can be accessed by swiping up. Although there are more American than Spanish media using this technique, the latter use it on a daily basis more often than the former. In any

case, this discursive modality acts as a call to action and generates traffic to the website, where the user can access the whole story, and also eliminates the passivity of users (Silva & Damasceno, 2019). Again, it is all about adapting the distribution of the news to consumption habits of young people, since studies such as Taddeo & Tirocchi's (2018) have proven their ability to manage this type of format. The use of several consecutive and interrelated stories that make up a report is another booming format, especially within US media. Once more, the use of the swipe up feature is identified, together with other narrative models such as the inclusion of a reporter, interviews or testimony statements.

In line with the contributions of Wang & Yang studies (2020), the media should continue to encourage public participation. From this perspective, native cybermedia use mechanisms such as surveys and open-ended questions to obtain participation from the audience (objective 4), both within isolated stories and interrelated ones that make up reports. Spanish media are more active advocates for citizen participation than American, whereas European media grant no space for this type of contributions. As Johnston (2016) pointed out, utilizing UGC allows yet another opportunity for involving audiences in the informative story. This type of content is shared by 45% of the digital native media, although the trend is also greater among Spaniards.

Ad hoc information preparation to be shared through self-destructive content is not observed. However, a cross-media distribution of the same content featured on corporate websites is seen. This selection includes the most controversial and breaking news, which leads us to believe there is a connection between stories and quality clickbait; that is, the click is intended for the user trying out a transmedia story that also increases the web audience. We agree with Ma, Tanaka & Nadamoto (2006) when they say that this type of integration provides users with complementary information. Combining different media to launch a common message means adapting it to the specific language of each platform. We have also verified that six out of ten native cybermedia don't just adapt their content to the narrative specificities of the formats, but also opt for a personalized design, especially in Spain and Europe. In the United States, this adaptation is done in most cases through the use of gifs to boost informational content and minimize statism.

Although Modesto and De Mello (2019) concluded that the narratives used for self-destructive content constitute only an adaptation of traditional journalistic narratives to the potentials and limitations of social networks, we have now discovered that this adaptation goes beyond what can be customised in the feeds. It is possible to include more citizen participation features and allow users to keep track of current affairs in their social interaction space through the use of bite size portions of information that they visualize quickly and sometimes, live.

Stories used to feature publications of the profiles of the media or other partners are especially useful for the media to be able to implement cross-promotion strategies. Indeed, it is verified that cybermedia are starting to use this technique both in isolated stories and reports. When the content arouses interest from the public, the mechanism of transmedia narratives is activated again, as users seek to complete the story in a different digital space.

In short, the media in general, and particularly digital native media, must continue to focus on the inclusion of self-destructive content in their informative stories, since this will ultimately allow them to reach spaces of social interaction with the publics, and especially the youth. Although this type of content is currently exclusive to Instagram, it

would be advisable for the media to take advantage of the potential of Facebook stories to reach other audiences. Similarly, at the moment there is no cybermedia that disseminates self-destructive content on YouTube. However, it would be interesting if such audio-visual pieces were also published on this network, as this would establish yet another channel for the generation of web traffic, crossmedia broadcasting potential cross-promotion action and ultimately, a wider audience. Incorporating more and more informative content on social networks, using innovative spaces such as stories, will help build a better informed society. This is an essential condition for the establishment and strengthening of democracies throughout the world.

For future lines of work, we believe it would be worthwhile to repeat the study and check the evolution of the subject of study at a later time. We also would advise expanding the sample in order to incorporate more media outlets, especially considering the exploratory condition of the study. This could cover other areas or regions, or even different social networks such as TikTok, which could potentially feature this type of content in a near future.

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NOTES

ⁱ *HuffPost* is an American media outlet. The Spanish version was analysed for the purpose of this research.

ⁱⁱ One different piece of content is identified in *OKDiario*, another one in *Público* and 10 in *HuffPost*.

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