

Strategies and treatments applied to news about terrorism on television: A study of the Spanish case¹

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Universitat Jaume I (Castelló)
onate@uji.es

Carlos FANJUL PEYRÓ
Universitat Jaume I (Castelló)
fanjul@uji.es

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Abstract

The sudden emergence of new digital technologies has led to the appearance of new forms of production, distribution and reception of audiovisual productions, whose effects are made clear in the forms of construction and consumption of audiovisual stories, particularly television news. The television channels construct news stories through spectacle, in order to achieve audience. With this paper, we attempt to provide a reflection and a study of the treatment of terrorism in the news on Spanish television in order to draw conclusions about the way the Spanish channels handle this kind of news and to see the degree of spectacle they offer their audience with the new technologies.

Keywords: Strategy, news, terrorism, television channel

Estrategias y tratamiento de las noticias sobre terrorismo en la televisión. Un estudio sobre el caso español

Resumen

La irrupción de las nuevas tecnologías digitales ha provocado la aparición de nuevas formas de producción, distribución y recepción de las producciones audiovisuales, cuyos efectos son manifiestos en los modos de construcción y consumo de los relatos audiovisuales, sobre todo, en los informativos de televisión. Las cadenas de televisión construyen el relato informativo mediante un espectáculo con el objetivo de conseguir audiencias. Con esta comunicación pretendemos aportar una reflexión y un estudio sobre el tratamiento del terrorismo en los informativos del medio televisivo español con el fin de extraer conclusiones sobre la manera en que las cadenas españolas gestionan este tipo de noticias y ver qué grado de espectacularidad con las nuevas tecnologías ofrecen a la audiencia.

Palabras clave: Estrategia, noticias, terrorismo, cadenas de televisión

Standard Reference

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location of news about television on each television channel's website; 4.1.2. In terms of the presentation of news about terrorism; 4.1.3. Concerning the analysis of the news items: text and image; 4.1.4. Concerning the strategic importance given by the groups to news about terrorism; 4.1.5. Concerning the measurement of the audience of users who read news about terrorism. 5. Conclusions. 6. References

1. Introduction

The medium of television in Spain is currently going through a period of change in which technology is once again playing the leading role. With the establishment of terrestrial digital television, the number of channels and groups has increased considerably. To this must be added the possibility of broadcasting on the Internet and by mobile phone, which means new competitors for the television market and, above all, new ways of watching television, largely characterised by the possibility of consuming asynchronously; that is, the possibility of the audience consuming specific television products (*à la carte*) at whatever time and place they like.

The sudden emergence of new digital technologies has led to the appearance of new forms of production, distribution and reception of audiovisual productions, whose effects are made clear in the forms of construction and consumption of audiovisual stories, particularly television news.

Nowadays, spectacle and news are united in television programming, but when the news is about terrorism the spectacle reaches its climax.

The news puts together items about terrorism as if they were a leisure discourse and using the composition provided by new technologies in order to compose the discourse of news: television's role in the daily life of society grows in terrorism situations. This is due to its possibilities as a medium for immediate delivery, with images that not only allow a contextualisation of the situation but also establish the magnitude of what is happening. This "power" which television possesses as a medium brings with it a social responsibility with respect to the treatment and quality of the coverage given, particularly when the news is about terrorist attacks and is propagated on the Internet.

2. Infoentertainment as a vehicle for group identity

In the medium of television, the tendency to show an Identity as an identification factor has always existed, but in the past this was from a merely graphic visual point of view, and relating to individual products. Faced with the saturation of the medium and the arrival of new channels, the medium is beginning to apply Identity as strategic identification and, more importantly, a differentiation factor, linked into an overall group strategy. It is a new trend being brought about by television groups as a result of their conception that the communicative function of graphic design must be increasingly used for self-promotion, identification and continuity². This new concept must, above all, take into account business Identity; that is, the distinctive features a particular television channel must have if it does not want to lose its hook for the audience.

² Televisual continuity understood as the set of audiovisual manifestations expressing corporate Identity that a television group establishes to serve as a homogeneous nexus to connect the discourse of its product (programming) with the projection of its corporate Image to the audience.

Televsual identity therefore attempts to manipulate the viewer's attention to promote the watching of the programmes broadcast by the operator by disseminating a series of values that distinguish the station from its competitors and place it in an outstanding position, ahead of them.

One of the functions of televsual identity is to make it easier for viewers to understand the information in the messages, through an appropriate choice of graphic variants: proper use of typographical rules, appropriate use of colour and a homogeneous arrangement in the treatment of images. Television graphics, in this context, are obliged to focus their efforts on identifying the channel rather than on a graphic explanation of the content of each programme.

When it comes to designing graphic image elements for a television group, the designer has to establish some common structural features so that it can be recognised as part of a whole. That is, in order to create a coherent image it is necessary to take into account and apply the certain key principles, maintaining a style and a common form so that the audience can recognise it correctly. But, when it comes to design in the television medium, two characteristics or items must be taken into account as specific aspects of television: time and sound, both closely linked to the movement of images in the medium (Costa, 2005: 73).

Programmes need to have graphic packaging – an Identity label – that means they fit in with the style of the channel and, above all, with the group's Overall Image.

The style of a television group would basically be characterised by the set and particular features of the programmes broadcast, as this would be the most accurate, rigorous, reflection of its ideological, commercial or any other kind of desires or intentions. But there are also other elements that contribute to constructing a channel's style. One of these elements concerns the arrangement of sets or staging techniques: the look of the spaces, as well as costume and props, make-up and lighting techniques, contribute to generating an expressive atmosphere or climate characterising the television group. In this way, a television viewer can also recognise the group through this type of item or element which establishes an aspect or sign of its corporate Identity. As well as the graphic aspects, the content (products) of a news bulletin forms a principal space, setting the main style guidelines for the channel. Hence the importance not only of the way the information is put across, but also the way it is presented to the viewers' eyes

The news is a key part of the group's schedule of contents as a vehicle for putting across its editorial line and, therefore, as a news product that includes the Identity and Image values of the television brand as well as putting across current affairs information.

Within general scheduling, the news occupies a key, strategic position that sets the style and ideological positioning of the channel, as it determines the tone, establishes priorities through the order in which the news items are broadcast and fixes the subjects it considers to have news value (Fernández García, 2003: 63-67).

The news has become the central plank around which the entire communicative flow in terms of television content (products) is structured, as it determines the three main time slots during the day, through the morning, midday and night-time news. The news also has a great deal of responsibility for the channel's positioning as,

through its discourse, it contributes to establishing a certain conception in the mind of television viewers of the world that surrounds them, depending on the selection of news items it broadcasts. This generates a responsibility for the medium as, depending on its choice of items, it will establish its audience's daily knowledge of the news. All this has led the groups' news to be managed separately from other programming, with its teams of people doing specific jobs and operating exclusively on the news side for television groups.

The news is the principal window through which viewers approach social reality and information about their surroundings; Meanwhile, it is one of the "star" genres of television programming (because of the financial investment made by the groups and the audience it attracts). Concerning duration, it should be pointed out that news has now entirely gone beyond the traditional duration of around 30 minutes. This extra time makes it possible to increase the number of news items, which means more information for the public, thereby exceeding the time limit available in the schedules. The media experience a double constraint: time, understood as the way the content fits into a format of a particular duration and the scarcity of time available for putting across a news item, investigating causes, consequences, going into depth, and so on; and the obligation to capture viewers given their dependence on advertising income, which forces them to prioritise elements characterised by spectacle and entertainment.

The communications media decide what news is and they also put these news items together before they are presented to the viewing public. This has generated competition in terms of news style when it comes to the way television groups put news programmes together. The news began in 1947 and its structure was similar to the existing format on the radio medium: a news presenter read the day's news, while looking at the camera from time to time to communicate visually with the television viewer. Later, maps, diagrams and photographs were incorporated as visual support elements until the audiovisual revolution, when video and live connections gave the news the character of a spectacle, relieving the cruelty of the "reality" which is unfortunately often broadcast to us.

We can now detect that the news has changed more in the last fifteen years than in its entire history. Diversity and competition in news, free access to the service and greater demand by an audience that requires more information has led to the different public and private audiovisual communications media wanting to pay more attention to dealing with and handling this demand for news in order to get ahead of the competition. As well as paying a fundamental role in the channel's reputation, the news is a "hook" value, used so that television viewers decide not only to watch the news but also remain with the same channel to see the programmes offered afterwards.

The production of news bulletins has been altered in the sense of applying texts with greater impact which, together with the combination that the new technologies have generated so that cameras can reach any part of the world, have established a news format in which linguistic structures, particularly morphosyntactic and lexicosemantic ones, suffer. It is the so-called telegraph and ellipsis style which displaces complements, giving rise to ambiguous sentences in an attempt to generate rhythm in the news item – a feeling of speed and, at the same time, importance, in order to capture the attention of the audience. This is why, in the news, we are looking at a new

television format closer to the language of advertising than the journalistic language of radio and traditional television.

This means the news is presented as a spectacle, an info-show or infotainment, defining a production style in which the news, and other treatments of information, are presented in a glamorous style close to entertainment formats. There is also a style approaching fiction through the dramatisation or reconstruction of real events or by presenting stories (as narrative fiction) based on real historical facts that have happened (faction)³.

The fact that news is now spectacle has also led to a greater importance being placed on the selection of news presenters. The presenter has become a fundamental figure to the point where many people choose a particular news programme because they like its presenter (Ramonet, 1998, pp 32-33). In addition, the focus on the presenters, the way they are presented to the audience, their way of reading the news (tone, voice, proxemics, etc.), and even the way they are dressed, has an influence when it comes to offering a particular orientation in news coverage. This author determines that there has been a notable change in the conception of information, as before to inform was to provide accurate, verifiable information that provided a set of textual parameters for the viewer. But now television has imposed a new model based on physically attending the event happening and broadcasting it, providing it with all its significance *in situ*⁴ In addition, concerning the reliability of the news, he writes that, in the modern media, the veracity of a fact does not lie so much in criteria subject to verification but rather in the repetition of the same information by other media, either the Press, the radio or the Internet.

Relating programming to televisual graphic design, it must be pointed out that more traditional practice tended to consider programmes as the central plank around which graphic activity revolved, rather than the overall group image. For years, this activity was reduced to simply making signs or illustrations whose appearance was limited to the beginning of the programme or, on occasion, the superimposition of signs on live images, procedures which lacked sufficient complexity to modify the

³ From a theoretical point of view, this approach is shared by the majority of news editors and presenters with the main television groups in this country, as included by the journalist Juan Cruz in the *El País* newspaper (Sunday, 5 March 2006, p. 56). In this article, Pedro Piqueras, news editor at Telecinco, said that entertainment has won the contest: *If it is not entertainment, television does not broadcast it. What used to be fodder for fashion programmes or El Caso has come to be fodder for the news. It serves the image, the message is the medium. Content that has to be explained is eliminated.* Television is seeking its own way, its language. Along the same lines, Matías Prats, presenter of the night-time news on Antena 3, said that: *We have to educate, entertain and inform, they used to say. I think that now the television is for informing and entertaining.* Alicia Gómez Montano, editor of the *Informe Semanal* (Weekly News Bulletin) on Televisión Española, confirmed the same idea, saying that television opted for spectacle rather than information some time ago: *lots of hard news, lots of cleavage.*

⁴ This structure of live connections has been applied in other formats, such as entertainment programmes or reality shows, making “live” the element that verifies the events that the medium broadcasts to the audience.

graphic artist's original. New technologies highlighted the important role of the director, because news expands the possibilities for editing and manipulation. They operate directly on the electronic image, without the constraints of traditional drawing. These procedures substantially altered the original work, making it something unrecognisable. The heads of news construct a channel image, communicating its style through graphic design. This also derives from the need to "sell" their product to the television viewer, both on television and on the Internet.

3. Spectacle in the televisual discourse: strategies for capturing audiences

In his book "El discurso televisivo; espectáculo de la posmodernidad", the author Jesús González Requena constructs a reading of televisual discourse, pointing out that it is fragmented, heterogeneous and repetitive, something that is undeniable. However, he concludes that "The dominant televisual discourse, empty of ideologies and a long way from sustaining one (an ideology) tends to empty the universe of ideologies, value systems, etc. Everything becomes spectacle, a value of visual change."

According to Cristina González, one of the genres of television programming is news. He maintains that the excess of fragmented news prevents the subject from establishing a relationship with them in terms other than the consumption of spectacle. In this sense, he points out that "it always ends on a positive note, as in show business (the happy ending)".

In fact, news programmes are constructed with a good dose of "show business": they offer brief, decontextualised and anecdotic items. But this also responds to particular interests and to the demands of advertising. At no time are they detached from the ideology and conceptions of whoever runs the programming. There are two criteria used by television producers in Spain: selection and codification.

So, faced with a growing number of news items received every day by cable, Internet, fax, telefax, direct sources, etc., the producer decides which news items should be broadcast and which rejected. The selection criteria, however, are curious, and frequently coincide among news broadcasters: at national level, they almost always interview the same opinion formers and, at international level, almost all the channels broadcast the same images as CNN or CBS; in this case, the world decision-making centres ultimately determine the news items and pictures that the world must see.

There is no objective news, but rather the interpretation of whoever is producing it. González Requena, (1992: 55) goes further in pointing out that not even live news can be compared with the direct reception of the event, nor is it free of manipulative distortion. The use of different cameras, a focus on certain images at certain times, the change of lenses and frames, the commentary and other factors intentionally construct the public representation of the event; reality is constructed through news.

Thematic diversity is automatically generated because a news bulletin includes all kinds of events but, at the same time, there are some constants among all groups that remain practically invariable, and it is these that generate homogenisation (Lacalle, 1988). These are thematic repetitions or coincidences of the news treatment of certain events which are the result, as has been said, of the standardisation of the way news is produced. This phenomenon is strengthened with the implementation of identical

formulas, often deriving from working systems imposed as a result of the computerisation of newsrooms and production routines. Technological advances make everyday work easier but, at the same time, they bring with them a series of risks that could directly affect the treatment of content (Prado, 1995).

The news is a key part of programming for television groups as, firstly, it determines the editorial line when it comes to broadcasting information, although it also contributes towards communicating group brand image through the sets, props, headlines and graphic lines of the news bulletin and through the presenters who provide the voices and faces of the news programme for the viewer. As Inmaculada Gordillo (1999) states, it is another narrative product in which “news-spectacle” is a strategy in the battle for audience. The groups’ attempt to connect with an audience that is keener on superficial entertainment and enthusiastic about new trends like reality shows has ended up transforming the essence of these programmes.

The way of putting across the news – the presentation and prioritisation of the content – mean news programmes as a whole are a strategic part of the broadcasting channel’s brand image. “The formulas of the infoshow macrogenre include elements of the news, fiction and entertainment genres. This represents a new way in which news is presented, turning it into spectacle,” (Prado, 1999: 9).

“News-spectacle” shows itself to be one more strategy in the competition for television audience which is why it is included in television news summaries [...] Rigorous treatment of the news becomes emotional treatment - a dramatic spectacle in which seriality, personalisation, televisual language and news editing encourage the viewers to watch as voyeurs, making the audience into an accomplice happy to look at a tragedy that is divorced from them”. (Luzón and Ferrer, 2008)

News as the object of consumption has become one of the target values of the groups, who see in this not only the discourse of quality, but also one more unit in the economic formula that makes programming cost-effective. Personalisation, a distinctive style and prestige are arguments brought into play by the schedulers for the construction and programming of this kind of discourse in the channels’ schedules as part of a strategy in the battle for spectators.

Concerning treatment of terrorism in the news, we should note that one of the most important events, which has led to a fundamental change in the treatment of terrorism, occurred on 11 September 2001 (9-11). This is due to the fact that this attack was handled discreetly by the television groups: no corpses or dramatic pictures of bodies were shown. The groups did show pictures of people throwing themselves out of the windows of the two skyscrapers before they were surrounded by flames, but what the television showed were a few black spots moving on the façade. Viewers knew that they were people falling into the void but they could not make out any details of the event. In this way the coverage played with the viewer’s imagination: suggestion took precedence over the evidence of the image. In addition, the channels concentrated much more on showing the more human and dramatic side of the people who witnessed the attack: their testimony, as well as statements by the families of the people who died, the medical staff, the firefighters, the police, etc., stood out more than the image of bodies.

This approach to the news was repeated with the attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid, Spain: the crudest images were rigorously avoided by the conventional media, which highlighted the drama of the situation, the context and the families rather than the bodies of the dead. The pictures basically included general shots of the wrecked trains, the action of the rescue teams, bodies lined up in storage entirely covered with blankets, and victims who were injured but generally not very seriously. And, of course, they showed family members anxiously asking for information about the victims, and survivors of the tragedy. Never had the Spanish Press been so willing to contain itself when showing horror.

We can therefore see that, although news-spectacle continues to have a strategic interest for television groups, the approach and treatment have changed, based on the 9-11 and 11-M attacks. "News-spectacle" is shown to be one more strategy in the competition for audience and, because of this, a large part of the effort of television groups is focused on strengthening news as a key editorial element for the channel providing, as well as audience through the conversion of news into spectacle, personality for the group when it is broadcast. This is why the groups have focused their efforts on their websites as vehicles for putting across their image, as well as providing extra news for viewers.

The question is: **how are television groups approaching news about terrorism on the Internet?**

We will now try to provide an analysis of the strategies and news treatment of items involving terrorism on the websites of the main television groups in Spain.

4. Study of the strategic management of news about terrorism on Spanish television groups' websites

We are going to carry out an analysis of how Spanish television channels have approached and treated the latest news about international terrorism on their respective websites.

The sample we are going to analyse consists of the websites of the following Spanish television groups:

- Televisión Española: <http://www.rtve.es/noticias>
- Antena 3: <http://www.antena3.com/noticias/>
- Cuatro: <http://www.cuatro.com/noticias/>
- Telecinco: <http://www.telecinco.es/informativos/>
- La Sexta: <http://www.lasextanoticias.com/inicio>

These groups have been selected because, although the number of television channels has increased within the medium as a result of the final implementation of digital television, they are currently still the ones with the largest audience shares⁵.

⁵ Televisión Española: 21.1% of the audience; Telecinco: 17.4% of the audience; Antena 3: 15.5% of the audience; Cuatro: 6.3% of the audience; La Sexta: 7.2% of the audience. Figures obtained from the General Media Study of October 2011 to May 2012. See complete study at <http://www.aimc.es/aimc.php>. Day consulted: 2 July 2012.

The main aim of this study is to analyse the strategic treatment given by television groups to news about terrorism in order to evaluate their approach on the Internet medium. What we are trying to do is to study and analyse how television groups use the Internet medium to treat this kind of news to find out if there are differences with the television medium and, particularly, to detect similarities between the strategic tools used by the sample in order to obtain a greater audience on the Internet medium.

The methodology we use to achieve the aims we have established is based on a qualitative analysis methodology and the main scientific tools for collecting information are the in-depth interview with the principal news managers of the sample television groups' websites and analysis of their websites through the creation of an ad hoc methodology for achieving the aims established.

To find out about the treatment of news about television in the selected sample, the established analysis methodology looks at the following aspects:

1. Structure on the website: The location of news about terrorism on each television channel's page
2. Presentation of news about terrorism
3. News Analysis: text and image.
4. Strategic importance given to the news items by the group
5. Audience measurement of users who read news about terrorism

In our methodology we incorporate the approach of Professors Luzón and Ferrer (2008), according to which they consider that "news becomes spectacle when any of the following parameters is used or applied, individually or combined: impact image, "the image becomes the central focus of the information, and is more attractive not because of its news content but in itself, because it is an image" (Luzón and Ferrer, 2007: 270); dramatised structure of the discourse : "the news selection principle consists of seeking the sensational or the spectacular. Television incites dramatisation in a double sense: it sets out an event and its importance – its seriousness – in images, along with its tragic, dramatic nature" (Bordieu, 1997: 25); or hybridisation of contents: "The formulas of the infoshow macrogenre include elements of the news, fiction and entertainment genres. This represents a new way in which news is present, turning it into the format of spectacle" (Prado, 1999: 9).

4.1. Main results

4.1.1. Concerning the structure and location of news about television on each television channel's website

On the home pages of television groups' websites we can see that all of them have the news divided into sections considered by the group to be of greater or lesser importance and depending on the place occupied by each section. The whole sample begins by organising the news into international/national or world/Spain, so that the user can, a priori, place a news item depending on its geographical location.

Some other very common sections among the sample are Culture, Business, Technology and Society, while other sections are more personalised depending on the group's editorial line. The heterogeneity of news items is a constant in these spaces.

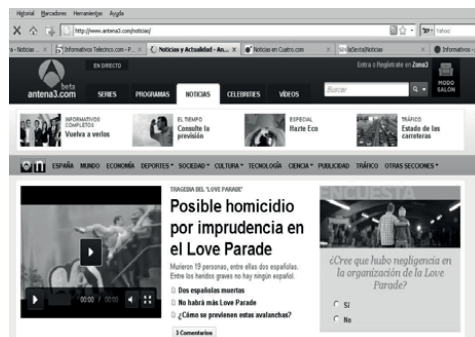
It is a reflection of the many different types of event occurring in society every day, making up the news. Although the heterogeneity of subjects remains, the need to organise the content means it is necessary to establish a structure for grouping events, in accordance with criteria which are not mutually exclusive and which often coexist: geographical and thematic criteria. This classification makes it possible to analyse the content coherently and to establish suitable parameters for discovering the characteristics of each section. But the thematic diversity of news content coexists with another absolutely opposing feature: homogenisation, the result of increasingly standardised news production processes and the hegemony of news nerve centres, which are becoming smaller and more tightly controlled (Gomis, 1990). Proof of this is that the same news items can be found on all the websites in the same sections which each one has established.

We can also appreciate that on all of them, and only from the point of view of the website structure they offer, there is a desire to interact with the public through their participation in sections such as blogs, forums, competitions and surveys. Interaction therefore forms one of the priorities in the Internet medium as this is an aspect that the groups cannot currently achieve using the television medium.

In addition, we see that all the groups incorporate the possibility of showing news that has already been appeared on television again – that is, à la carte – as not only can users watch a news bulletin from the same day again, they can also watch those from previous days, and even previous weeks and months. They also include the opportunity to see specific news items through live broadcasting.

It must also be highlighted that all the groups' news home pages have very similar structure and design: a horizontal browsing bar with all the sections together with the group logo, the main news item occupying the left-hand side and centre of the page and incorporating a video, and the rest of the news distributed around and below the main item. All the groups except for the public channel Televisión Española (TVE), include advertisements.

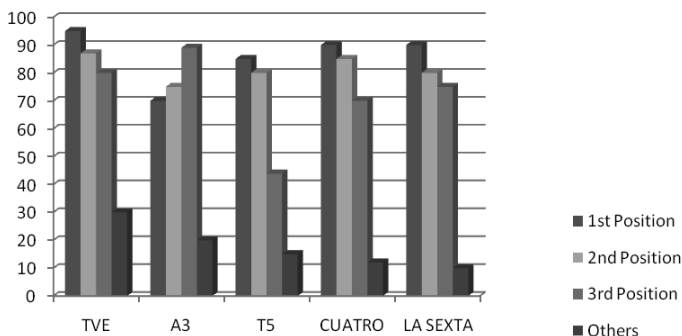
Let's look at some examples (Website home pages of the main television groups in Spain. Day consulted: 26/07/2010)





Graphic 1: Website home pages of the main television groups in Spain. Day consulted: 26/07/2010

In the case of the news about terrorism, we see that, when this type of catastrophe occurs, the television groups put this news on their home pages and do not resort to dividing it into national/international sections, as they usually do. We therefore see that when the groups inform users of these news items about terrorism they immediately place them strategically on their home pages, thereby getting ahead of the television medium. This is a way of counteracting the synchronous nature of television with the time opportunities offered by the Internet medium.



Graphic 2: Location of news items about terrorism on websites and Position occupied by news about terrorism on the home page

4.1.2. In terms of the presentation of news about terrorism

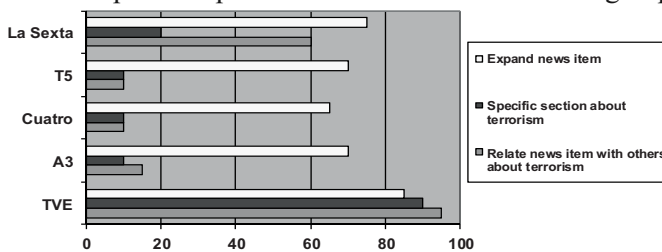
News about terrorism is presented similarly by all groups: a photograph summarising the attack and a section where users can leave their comments about the news item and their rating (popular vote collecting their opinion) as well as a section where users can become fans or share and/or recommend the news item using the country’s main social networks (Facebook and Twitter).



Graphic 3: User interaction with the news

The fact of providing users with the opportunity to send comments provides the group with a database including the e-mail addresses of Internet users interested in this type of news item, because on most group websites it is compulsory to register or to leave a name and e-mail address.

Most of the sample also provide the opportunity to expand the summarised news item about terrorism, but Televisión Española is the only group allowing users to access other related news items on the same subject and takes them directly to the specific section (news library) where all news items are compiled, whether they are about terrorism in general, about a particular conflict occurring in a country at a particular period, or even other previous attacks or specific terrorist groups⁶. We understand that this fact is determined by Televisión Española’s position as the national television group.



Graphic 4: Relationship between news about terrorism and other news

Most of the sample include photographs and/or videos in the news item about terrorism to provide it with an audiovisual element.

⁶ In Spain, there is one organised terrorist group – ETA – and, on the Spanish television group websites, we can find sections about the terrorist history of this organisation.

4.1.3. Concerning the analysis of the news items: text and image

The texts of the news items about terrorism are usually very similar for all the television groups. In fact, we can see that most headlines are repeated verbatim and that they usually coincide with the phrase used to present the news item on television. Then, following the basic, classical scheme of written journalism, the news item is accompanied by a sub-headline which clarifies the facts and gives more details, before we finally have a longer text explaining what has happened in detail.

On the group's websites, the words or phrases considered essential for a quick, at-a-glance understanding of what has happened are highlighted in bold. In fact, we have created a graphic with the words most often repeated and most commonly used in news items about terrorism: 61% death, 14% attack, 10% terrorism and explosion, and finally 5% sentence. As for the photographs, we should point out that they generally do not include crude images of victims' bodies, preferring images largely showing the context in which the terrorist attacks have occurred.

The aim of the groups is therefore focused on involving the user and contextualising the events in the place where they have occurred in order to set the scene for the news item, rather than dramatising it. This usually also occurs in the television medium where dramatic images of dead victims of the attacks have been shifted to the background since the events of 9-11, and the journalism that accompanied that attack, which set a trend.

We can see the same thing in videos: they are usually taken from the news programme on which the news item has already been broadcast. Specific videos are not created for the Internet medium and the groups tend to reproduce what has already been broadcast on television. What all the channels do have, except Televisión Española, which is prohibited by law from doing so, is the insertion of advertising prior to the showing of the news item.

4.1.4. Concerning the strategic importance given by the groups to news about terrorism

The business policies of the television groups in the sample reflect the great importance given to news as a key part of their strategies and, above all, as a vehicle for differentiation because they make possible an editorial line in accordance with each group's identity.

For the sample, the news is considered a fundamental piece articulating website programming because it is the one which puts across most corporate values to users, both because of the way the news is presented and because of the immediacy provided by the medium. Specifically, we see that, on their websites, the channels have a specific section for the news and news items and, in term, these are distributed into sections, giving the reading of items related to terrorism a preferential position.

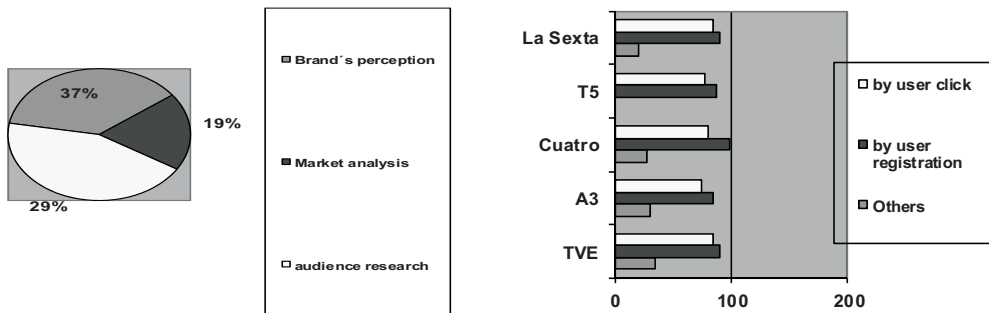
This is due to the fact that news items about terrorist attacks generate social alarm and the Internet is a news medium where users can get information immediately. Proof of this is that, according to the Communication Media Research Association (AIMC), 90.4% of the population looks at the latest news on the Internet, and it is the second most popular activity among Internet users. In addition, the Televisión Española (29th

place), Telecinco (50th place) and Cuatro (76th place) are three of the one hundred most visited websites, according to the ranking established by the last published study of the profile of Spanish Internet users⁷.

Therefore, and taking into account the importance placed both by groups and users on the information due to the emotional charge and social alarm it arouses, news about terrorism becomes a vitally important strategic element on the Internet medium and as a tool for compiling audiences.

4.1.5. Concerning the measurement of the audience of users who read news about terrorism

In the sample selected, most of the websites do have a system for measuring and monitoring the users who have read a specific news item. The two systems most commonly used are created within the group's own website via the advertising system, based on counting the clicks on particular content and, above all, by the Internet user registering on the website in order to comment on the news and participate in blogs, chats, competitions and other activities on offer. Internet audience studies on brand perception and market analysis are also often carried out, generally commissioned to outside companies specialising in these matters.



Graphics 5 and 6: Studies by the channels in the Internet medium and measurement of hearing users reading news on terrorism

5. Conclusions

The television medium and the Internet offer many joint news opportunities for the digital era we are approaching: the synergies are closer between these media than with other possible ones. The key aim for professionals in the communications sector is to be able to interweave their means of expression and make the most of the advantages of each medium.

Synergy between the communications media will tend to increase if what is intended is survival in the future television system: relationships with other media and making the most of the features of each of them will be fundamental for strengthening television brands.

⁷ See complete study "Navegantes en red" (Net browsers) at <http://www.aimc.es/aimc.php>. Day consulted: 2 July 2012.

Communication is therefore instrumentalised on the Internet medium when it is used for one of these actions, both in order to be a strategic nexus of influence for organisations with their audiences and because of the importance new and old (but renewed) communication technologies acquire in carrying out this strategy. News messages will be increasingly individualised and the final result will have a definite effect on the change and development of modern societies, fundamentally based on mass culture.

From the very beginning of their professional careers, journalists, as broadcasters of digital messages, will need to have a technical mastery of a set of new skills, added to their old skills and knowledge. However, above all, they will have to have a very good knowledge of the lifestyles, profile, knowledge and skills of individuals in the digital age.

These new viewers like the new form of television linked to the Internet medium and consider it an added value: it is a concept of value based on two variables - time and usability - together with the ease and accessibility of browsing. This fact is directly related to the fact that the medium makes it easy to get information at any time of day and to stay up to date about news happening around the world. Viewers, who are increasingly demanding of the medium, will require greater levels of interaction and experience from the group brand, which guarantees the news presented on the Internet medium. The reliability of the source is therefore an essential element that must be strategically managed by television groups.

In the current digital context, viewers need more information and clarity when it comes to news presentation: in the face of more diversity, a greater dose of information is required to articulate the increase in messages aimed at the audience.

Overall, the most important change in recent times, aside from the increase in news space, time and resources, has been the approach to information.

The content, particularly news programmes, continues to form the central plank of the range a television group has to offer. But, as a result of the gradual increase in competition and the lack of variety and quality in the range of programmes and the way of presenting and promoting products to viewers, it is playing an increasingly important role in the strategic plans of group managers.

The treatment of news content about terrorism corresponds to very similar parameters on television and on the Internet: there is therefore work still to be done in improving the added value offered by this medium. The predominant criteria when it comes to selecting news items and presenting them on the website obey specific editorial lines for each group. However, and as we have been able to show in the study, there is unanimity of treatment when it comes to news about terrorism. There is no great difference between news items about terrorism on public television (TVE) and private television websites. The similarities of approach and the differences in treatment of each subject by each group making up the study sample are nearly always conditioned by the nature of the events.

The sections maintain stable trends with small changes due to extraordinary circumstances, particularly in news about terrorism. The normal division of the content obeys very similar, predetermined structures between the television channels' web-

sites, but with margins of flexibility making it possible to maintain the basic system and, at the same time, adapt to the demands of a news situation marked by events related to terrorist attacks and/or natural disasters.

We have been able to show how news about terrorism is usually accompanied by images and/or multimedia videos, but that the selection of images for news items about these matters is very careful: the trend is more towards contextualising what has happened than showing the results of the catastrophe. The bodies of victims do not usually appear; instead the websites usually concentrate on showing the atmosphere at the time due to the circumstances.

The communication media are the ones who can (and should) use news to promote reflection about situations connected with terrorism and serve as a vehicle for denouncing terrorism and mobilising social rejection of it.

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