General Topics Editorial

Manifestaciones de la comunicación en los espacios digitales y offline

Communication manifestations in digital and offline spaces

Manifestações de comunicação em espaços digitais e espaços offline

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The research agenda in the field of communication is probably one of the most challenged by the dizzying changes in the media field, especially in the digital realm, where new interactions and agencies are emerging in the context of technological globalization and the algorithmic information economy. Towards the phenomenon that Casilli and Posada (2019) call the platformization of work and society, with an uncertain outcome, the purchase of Twitter was made in October 2022 for 44 billion dollars (Conger & Hirsch, 2022). Until then, this freely accessible microblogging platform was widely used by various media as an essential information tool and, as Vergeer (2015) notes, was an important political communication resource.

With this in mind, the General Topics section begins with Sofia Ferro Santos, Gustavo Cardoso and Susana Costa's investigation into the use of Twitter in politics, particularly by Portuguese MPs in 2022, a few months before Elon Musk took over the platform and renamed it X. The authors wonder why these politicians use Twitter, as in principle there would be no incentive in Portugal to use Twitter as a tool to engage with their constituents: The country does indeed have the lowest Twitter usage rate in Western Europe and at the same time - according to the researchers - the system does not encourage direct contact with voters due to its electoral rules (closed lists by party). Looking at the non-election period, the study finds that around half of parliamentarians do not have a Twitter account and only half of them used it in the four months studied. The analysis shows that they mainly use Twitter as a working tool, focusing on the niche of the tweeting elite.

In the context of changes in the digital network ecosystem, it also examines how new platforms can displace the use of previous platforms and how this affects

the discouragement of investment in the affected social network (Cassell, 2023). In the case of Chile, the country with the second highest penetration of social networks in Latin America and the Caribbean according to Statista ("Las redes sociales"..., 2024), around 84.5% of the population interacts on these platforms, and Facebook is in first place.

In this regard, the work of Percy Peña-Vicuña, Vicente Fenoll and Pamela Romero-Lizama, which focuses on Facebook and its use by the seven presidential candidates and their parties in Chile during the 2021 election campaign, is particularly relevant in terms of reach. The study shows that the newest and most radical groupings are those that use the most populist rhetoric and appeal to divisive issues, in a context where their use in the presidential campaign is comparatively low in contrast to what has been observed in other countries. According to the authors, the lack of exclusionary populism towards ethnic or cultural minorities is a Chilean peculiarity. The analysis of user participation shows that the newest parties are the ones that generate the most interactions with their content. This work also contributes to the regional discussion on populism and this digital network in particular, such as the work of Sarsfield (2023) for the case of Mexico or Prior (2021), who refers to the relationship between digital populism and politics in windows of opportunity such as Facebook and Twitter.

In terms of opportunities, the Internet has also enabled people with disabilities to gain visibility and notoriety in the media, in addition to their self-presentation on these platforms for various purposes (Méndez Majuelos et al., 2023). Although their representation in the media has been less addressed, it is in line with the right of these groups to be reflected in social life (Vidal-García, 2021).

Khadija Ftah Ftah and Hada M. Sánchez Gonzales investigate what is communicated about disability and entrepreneurship in six Spanish digital media. Over a period of two and a half years, 55 journalistic articles were found that link entrepreneurship and disability. A total of 20 news items dealing with entrepreneurship by people with disabilities were analyzed in detail. The study concludes, among other things, that three approaches are taken: Success stories, inspirational stories that emphasize the difficulties of starting a business, and examples of overcoming that highlight the challenge of entrepreneurship with a disability, which is accompanied by a predominantly positive sentiment.

Another phenomenon related to the importance of digital for interaction between people, which is increasingly addressed with the growing interest in communication, is the need for media literacy. As Buckingham (2013) states, contemporary culture requires the inclusion of media education in the curriculum of new generations. Unesco (https://www.unesco.org/es/media-information-literacy)

considers it as a set of essential skills to cope with the current century and the challenges of citizenship in the context of the digital society.

Patricia Jarpa-Candia, Mario de la Torre-Espinosa and Francisco Javier Gómez-Pérez examine current educational policies in Chile in order to understand the State's vision of media education and to determine the extent to which the Chilean curriculum provides opportunities for media education. To this end, they systematically examined 40 study programs of ten compulsory subjects that are part of the education period aimed at educating young people between the ages of 12 and 15. The results show that there is a promotion of media literacy that manifests itself in a general objective that runs through all the subjects analyzed and is specifically geared towards the critical and effective use of media and information technologies.

While the possibilities of the digital have focused much of communication studies on the Internet space, the offline public space continues to be of great importance for understanding the forms of communication inscribed in the city and our daily lives. Rodriguez and Clair (1999) argue that objects such as graffiti represent a communicative way of gathering information about the discursive tensions of a culture, especially of marginalized groups. According to Shobe (2020), graffiti is a means of communication, an expression of street art and an instrument of resistance and protest (Marche, 2012).

In this context, the case study by Igor Fonseca Silva, Giordano de Carvalho Soffiati and Verbena Córdula Almeida, in which they analyze three graffiti created in the city of Ilhéus, Brazil, is of great relevance. The researchers attempt to confirm that this expression of street art can be seen as a sociopolitical manifestation of a people. Using discourse analysis, they discuss the interpretations expressed by the graffiti artists in relation to the historical, political and social context of the place where the works were applied. They conclude that graffiti can function as a historical document that expresses a collective perspective on the experiences of individuals inserting themselves into urban space and expressing discourses in the form of artivism.

Scripting is another form of creative communication that has been explored in the field of communication. In recent years, the boom of digital platforms has multiplied the need for the creation of audiovisual content. A decade ago, Millard (2014) considered what characteristics the digital age imposes on the creative and professional work of screenwriters and how this craft can be made sustainable. As Pujol Ozonas and Sánchez-Navarro (2023) argue, screenwriters have moved to the center of the audiovisual media industry in the context of audiovisual platforms. So what do we know about their training in Ibero-America?

Rubén Dittus and Álvaro Elgueta-Ruiz present a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory project for which ten semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with renowned Chilean screenwriters: six men and four women between the ages of 25 and 55. Open-ended questionnaires were used, based on certain predefined thematic cores. These interviews were developed in a flexible form to reinforce the non-standardized nature of the instrument. It is concluded that the screenwriting profession is one of the weakest jobs in the whole audiovisual industry, which is becoming increasingly demanding and competitive. In addition to the diversity of professional backgrounds, the relative job insecurity also stands out in this group.

Digital social networks also make it possible to address sustainability narratives. In this case, communication plays a crucial role, especially because sustainability is characterized by its complexity and uncertainty (Newig et al., 2013). In a similar vein, Nalleli Salazar-Chapa, Gabriel Valerio-Ureña and Juan Milton Jair Aragón Palacios explore the role of digital media in key societal debates. They examine how reference is made to the anthropocentric and ecocentric paradigms in the case of sustainable development and which of the two predominates. Based on content analysis of a sample of 100 scientific articles on sustainable development from different disciplines, complemented by analysis of images, videos and tweets associated with this keyword, they find that the ecocentric paradigm is more present, although they later discuss whether in this case this could be due to strategic communication practices related to image-washing or greenwashing.

We would like to thank the researchers Andréia Athaydes, Cecilia Claro and Claudia Labarca for their work on the dossier on organizational communication and public relations in Latin America included in this issue. We would also like to thank the entire network of peer reviewers who participated in the revision of the articles and contributed to their enrichment. *Cuadernos.info* is supported by the Fund to Support the Indexing of UC Research Journals. In this issue, we bid farewell to Paola Franzani, who has been the journal's editorial assistant since September 2022. She has started a Ph.D. program with a scholarship from the Chilean Science Agency (ANID) and we welcome her successor, Daniela Bueno, UC journalist and graduate in strategic communication from the same university, who has a wide range of experience in the editorial field.

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