News Reports on TV, Twitter and the Active Audience

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Abstract. Twitter has established itself as one of the most influential social networks. This article performs a content analysis on the five Twitter profiles of the five news programs broadcast by general-interest TV networks in Spain according to the audience ranking provided by Kantar Media.

We have defined variables that include the description of the news profiles, type of post, frequency, response and user interaction, analysing the capacity of news programs to use Twitter to disseminate content and generate conversation, their acquired reputation, and user quality.

Keywords: Journalism · Communication · Internet · Social media · Twitter · Digital media · Interactivity · Second screen · Interactive television

1 Introduction

Television is still the leading media in society, with a penetration of 88.3 % according to 2014 data from AIMC [1] and Kantar Media [2]. Despite having less penetration than television, Internet has been experiencing slight growth in recent years. Accordingly, Internet is the medium where the greatest increases in daily users and interaction are being noted. This is proved by EGM [3] figures for 2015. In 2013, 25.379 % of the population used Internet; in 2014 this figure increased to 27.015 % and in 2015 it increased further to 29.103 %.

Audiovisual is the king of the media. Television has evolved, becoming more alive than ever, as some authors have noted. We are dealing with a new medium, one whose content invades Internet. We may therefore say that television offers a new way of interacting with users, via Internet and, by extension, the social networks.

According to Castells [4], television is increasingly approaching the social media, interacting with users and creating constant feedback. While it is true that the social media have the news before television, this is also the space where the networks have their social profiles, apps and digital television.

A study published by eMarketer in 2014 [5] showed that half of all adults in North America checked their social media profiles while they watched TV and that one out of six commented on what they were watching.

According to a 2012 study by Nielsen [6], Twitter influences dozens of television programs. According to this analysis, "reality shows" had the strongest influence (44 %),

followed by comedy shows (37 %). The most striking figures came from sporting events and monthly television programming, which generated 50 % of all social activity developed around TV.

The media increasingly rely on Internet, using it as a tool to improve and increase participation.

The media have discovered in the social media an additional means of connecting with audiences. One of the social networks experiencing the greatest growth is Twitter, the micro-blogging platform that allows users or subscribers to post brief comments about their activities.

Although society still prefers TV for breaking news, Twitter proved to be an important source for the immediate transmission of information.

Social networks have changed the way we consume TV and platforms such as Twitter have become undisputed stars of TV. Indeed, according to the study, 95 % of online conversations about TV take place on Twitter [5].

Researchers from Carnegie Mellon University in the United States performed a textual analysis of Twitter posts and found that the it may be used as a means to assess public opinion [7].

With regard to the Internet sites most visited by users, social media occupy the fourth place on the list. Facebook is the undisputed leader of the social media, with 96 % growth and penetration, followed by YouTube (66 %) and Twitter (56 %). A study on social networks performed by IAB Spain [8] shows that Youtube continues to be the most highly-valued social network, followed by Spotify, Instagram and Facebook, while the least valued are Tuenti, Badoo and Google+.

Twitter is the social network that has most grown over recent years, occupying the fifth spot in the ranking of best networks.

With regard to frequency of usage, the study shows that average use is 3.6 days per week, Facebook once again featuring as the network with the highest frequency of use (every day), followed by Twitter. Instagram follows closely behind Twitter in third place, overtaking the Youtube video network.

Twitter allows all users to participate directly in the development of news messages, in what the authors call 'participatory journalism'. This is possible thanks to the built-in interactivity and referential ability provided by Twitter [9].

The media need to promote their strategies in the social networks, exploring the possibility of attracting new interest groups as audience. We are dealing now with journalism 2.0, "a new, comprehensive and totally different journalistic style: in the matters they address, in their treatment of the reader, and in providing references, links and hypertext, as well as their instantaneity, etc." [10].

At this stage, we are taking about journalism 3.0, the term coined by Dan Gillmor to refer to information made digital by the media. The audience participates in the creation of the news. Posting the article on the social media is not the end of the process, as readers comment, debate and share content, at times generating a fluid digital conversation. Up till now, with traditional media, this was not possible [10].

The main use of the social networks continues to be social, and the favourite activities of the users continue to include checking what their contacts are doing (66 %), videos and music (58 %), sending messages (52 %), publishing content (39 %) and chatting (37 %).

The novelty is commenting on current affairs, an activity that has risen since last year, achieving 34 % penetration. This figure is linked to the sectors most followed by the social media: telecommunications and technology (39 %) and culture and media (37 %).

Also interesting is the age of the users who access social media. Facebook, Youtube and Twitter, the most popular platforms, have similar sets of followers. In the case of persons who have access to Facebook, 78 % are aged 14–17 years, and 96 % are aged 18–55 years.

In the case of Youtube, 70 % are aged 14–17 years, while 66 % are aged 18 to 55 years. Lastly, Twitter reaches 61 % in the first range and 56 % in the second.

The social media are places on the internet where users can connect with other users to create a personal or professional network. One of the main objectives of social media is activity, encouraging users to participate or to increase their participation.

Twitter is a powerful communications tool. "It allows any company to open a bidirectional, interactive communication channel with customers, suppliers, readers and employees" [11]. Dorsey [12], the creator of Twitter explains, "With Twitter, we are in daily contact, we know what we're all doing without having to talk on the phone, people are less inhibited, it's a way of being more united, of sharing more stuff." Cobos [13], on the other hand, defines Twitter as "a way for users to relate with their followers, publishing posts, known as tweets", read by hundreds of people daily.

Cortes [14] defines the social network as "inviting users to publish entries with the question 'What are doing?'". Thanks to its simplicity and constant evolution; Twitter has gone from being "a communication platform to being an almost indispensable tool in some environments."

On the other hand, "DigitalNewsReport.es 2015" [15], drawn up by the Department of Communications at the University of Navarra, maintains that the social networks are the best platform on which to discover news and content (20 %), but that television, which has a larger audience, continues to be the leader among Internet users for confidence, accuracy and reliability, analysis and opinion, and speed of coverage. Twitter and YouTube tie in third position as social media for consumption, dissemination and interaction with news (22 %). In terms of consumption of video news, 27 % of users consume online news videos throughout the week, a 10 % increase over 2014; 23 % check out photo galleries.

This report reveals that what Internet users seek when the consume news is emerging news and context, rather than entertainment. "80 % of Internet users get their news through the social networks because they want to know what is happening in the world around them, and 78 % are interested in understanding the issues that may affect them."

With regard to television, the latest data on the behaviour of television audiences, from April 2015, show that Telecinco (14.8 %) was the leading network for the eighth straight month. According to the latest report from Kantar Media, Telecinco news programs are the most viewed, with the audience weighted for the midday and evening issues, while Antena 3 is leader in the afternoon segment from Monday to Sunday.

With new technologies, the traditional media are incorporating new audience participation and conversation channels, or at least that should be their aim. Viewers are no longer mere consumers of information, but active users of a service with which they decide to interact. With regard to journalists, their generally active participation in

Twitter is evident, although this may often entail the dangers of unlimited first-hand access to information [16, 17].

2   Material and Methods

The main aim of this study is to analyse the Twitter presence and use of the five most influential general-interest TV networks in Spain over 1 to 30 June 2015, as well as the results of their Twitter use.

The methodology used in this study is "a systematic, controlled, empirical, non-judgemental, public investigation, critical of natural phenomena. It is guided by theory and hypotheses regarding the alleged relations between phenomena" [18].

Content analysis was used, this being the ideal tool for studying Twitter content. According to Bardin [19], we chose this technique since as it is ideal for the aims of this study. Also according to other authors, including Castello and Ramos [20], the content analysis method makes systematic, objective and quantitative study of Twitter communication possible, measuring certain variables.

This article performs a content analysis on the Twitter profiles of the five leading news programs broadcast by general-interest TV networks in Spain, according to the audience ranking provided by Kantar Media. In this study, we have defined valuables for each network, including number of followers and profiles followed, average number of tweets per day, number of tweets in which the user mentions the network, number of links contained in each tweet, total number of tweets, number of tweets that are retweets, tweets retweeted by others, tweets favourited by others, hashtag use, number of tweets per day of the week by each network and number of tweets by time of day, in hourly segments. Analysing these data provides us with information including the description of the news profiles, type of publication, frequency, response and user interaction, analysing the capacity of the news programs to use Twitter to disseminate content and generate conversation, their acquired reputation, and the quality of their users.

The data were analysed using the Tweetchup free tool, one that is surprisingly easy to use and gives access to key statistical information.

To choose the sample, this study took into account the ranking of television media and general-interest network news programs drawn up in April 2015 by Barlovento Comunicación, using data from Kantar Media, the most popular being Telecinco, Antena 3, Televisión Española and La Sexta (ahead of Cuatro by 234,000 spectators).

The news programs of the leading networks are re-broadcast on Twitter, by means of Tweets which, in turn, may include links to photos or video. By means of this new strategy, news networks can interact with viewers, allowing them to participate in and be involved in the story.

As mentioned already, Twitter is growing daily with regard to the set of variables to be taken into account. These include: number of tweeps (coverage), number of users, level of conversation, activity, hashtags, favourites, tweets, retweets, engagement, quality of followers, etc. In order to correctly understand the variables analysed in this study, we considered defining each of the terms using Twitonomy, the Marketing and Social Media dictionary published by the PuroMarketing [21].

Hashtag: Twitter labels. Used basically to generate discussion on a particular topic. A hash symbol is placed before the keyword (e.g.,#marketing).

Tweet: short (140-character maximum) public messages posted on Twitter.

Followers: number of followers.

Following: number of users followed by the network.

Retweets: number of times a tweet is re-posted.

Favourite: number of times a tweet is marked as favourite.

Quality of followers: based on influence, interaction and number of followers.

Tweets per day: average number of tweets posted each day. The higher this number, the more active the Twitter user is.

Links: average number of links on Twitter. The greater the number of links, the more likely it is that the user is a source of information on Twitter.

Mentions: proportion of mentions that are direct responses to tweets.

Engagement: generating an emotional bond between brand and consumer.

From the point of view of the media, Twitter appears to be well accepted, because it allows headlines to be sent. The leading networks personalise their messages, seeking proximity and empathy, using colloquial language and second person pronouns to engage with users.

We have taken the following hypotheses into account in this study:

H1: Increased activity (average number of tweets per day) by news media is linked to increased follower numbers.

H2: The number of people followed by each Twitter profile is greater than the number of followers.

H3: There is a link between the number of tweets per hour and the time the news program is broadcast.

H4: There is a link between the number of tweets containing links and the number of mentions.

H5: News programs generally use hashtags to generate debate among viewers.

H6: The network with the most viewers, Telecinco, gets more retweets than the other networks.

H7: News program feedback on Twitter is bidirectional, with a high percentage of messages being favourited by users.

H8: There is a working structure which includes a number of Tweets per day.

3   Results

As Table 1 shows, the highest number of followers is held by @A3Noticias, with 931,294, followed by @SextaNoticias and @Noticias_cuatro. It is striking that @tele-diario_tve is the last in follower numbers.
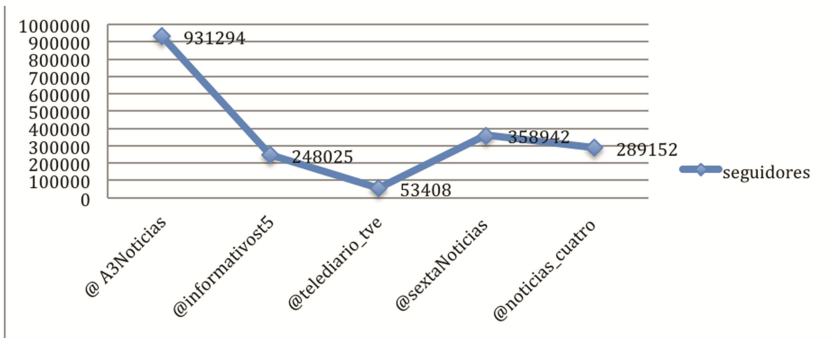
Table 1. Followers of each network on Twitter

Table 2. Number of users followed by each network
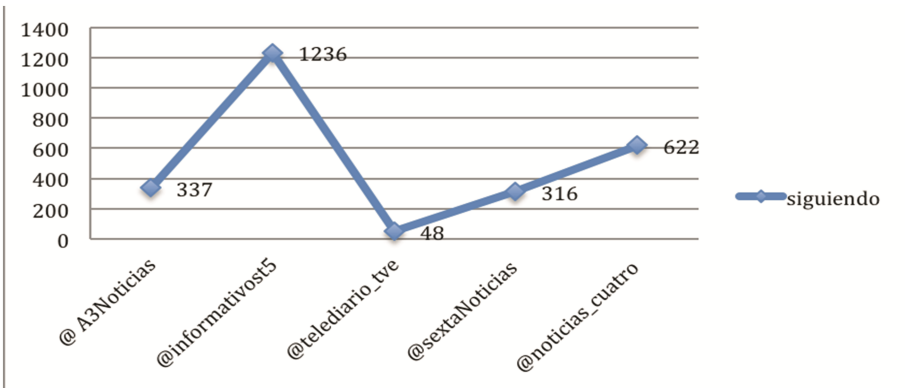

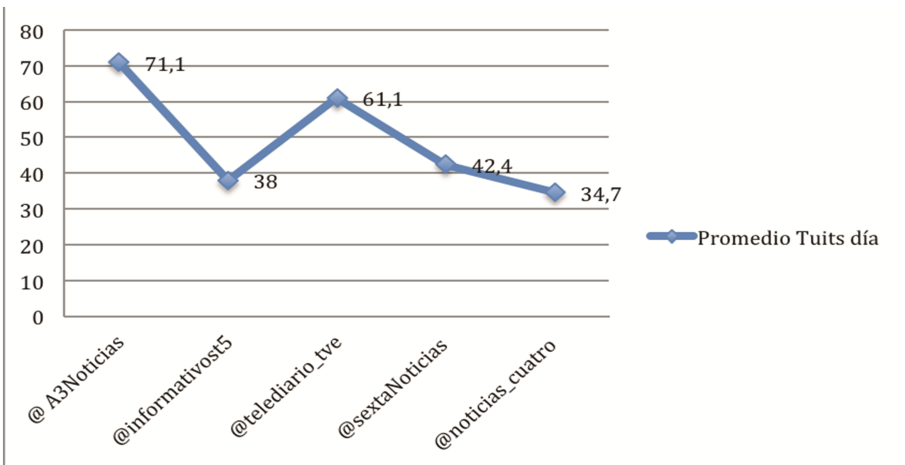**Table 3.** Average number of tweets per day

Table 2 shows that @Informativost5 is the network that follows most users, followed by @noticias_cuatro; once again, @telediario_tve brings up the rear, following only 48 users.

Table 3 indicates that the highest average of Tweets is by @A3Noticias, followed by @telediario_tve and @sextaNoticias, with @noticias_cuatro in last place.

As Table 4 shows, the best result for users mentioning the network in their tweets is for @sextaNoticias, followed by @telediario_tve, with @informativost5 in last place.

Table 4. User mentions in tweets
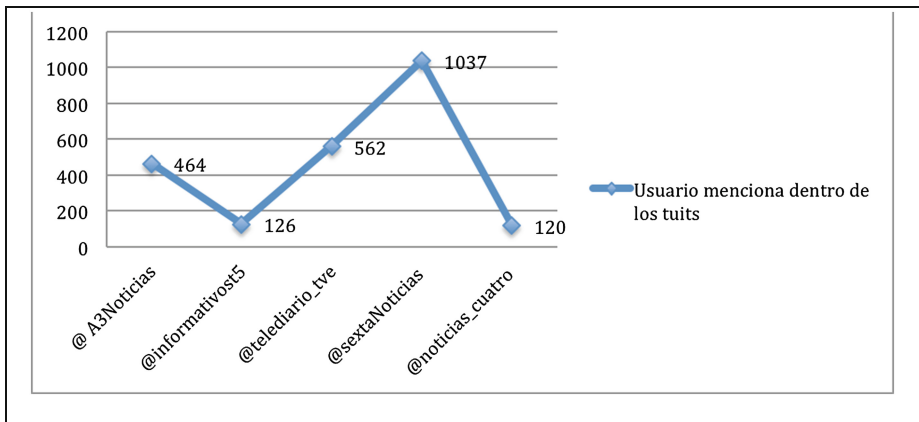
In Table 5, number of Tweets containing links posted by the networks, @A3Noticias leads the way, followed by @telediario_tve and @SextaNoticias, with @Informativost5 and @noticias_cuatro in last place.
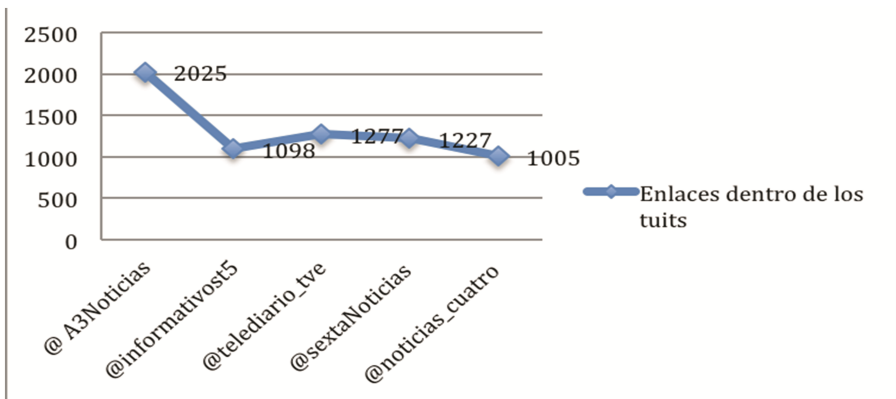
Table 5. Links within tweets
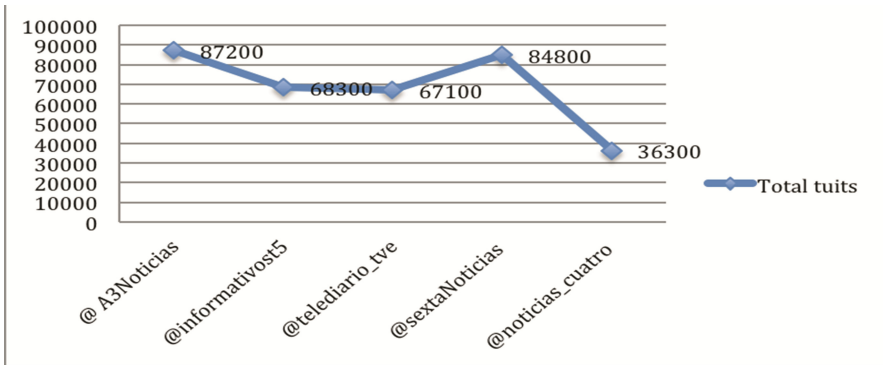
Table 6. Total tweets per network

Table 6 shows the total number of tweets published by each network. @A3Noticias is at the head, followed by @sextanoticias. @noticias_cuatro brings up the rear, with a level of activity far below the average.

Table 7 shows that @sextanoticias leads easily in number of tweets that are retweets, with 32.3 %, followed by @A3Noticias and @telediario_tve, both a long way behind.

Table 7. Number of tweets that are retweeted
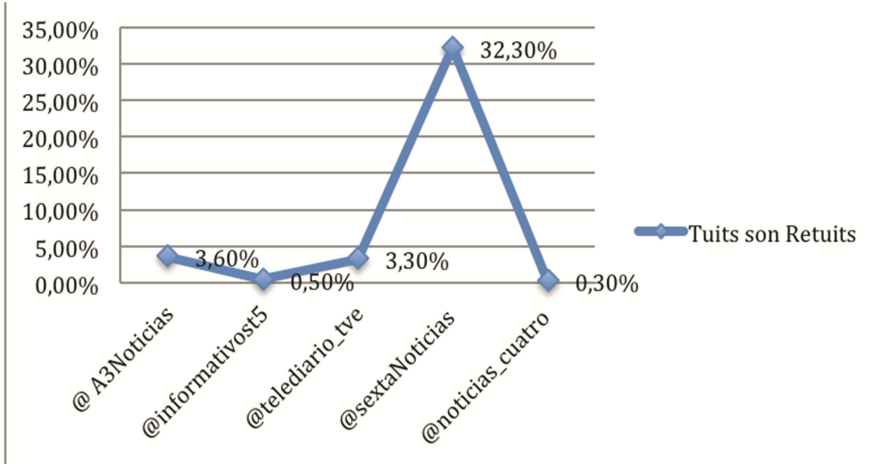
The number of network tweets retweeted by others is contained in Table 8, which shows that 99.9 % of @SextaNoticias tweets are retweeted, followed by @A3Noticias with 99.1 %, then @Informativost5 and @noticias_cuatro with 95.2 % each; @telediario_tve brings up the rear with 88.3 %.
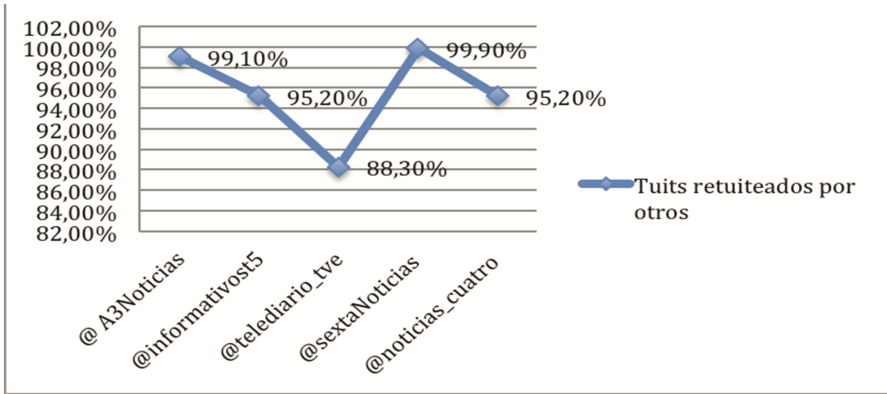
Table 8. Tweets retweeted by others

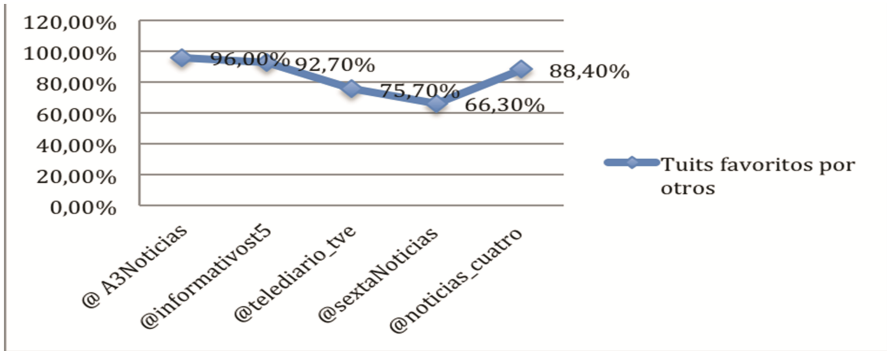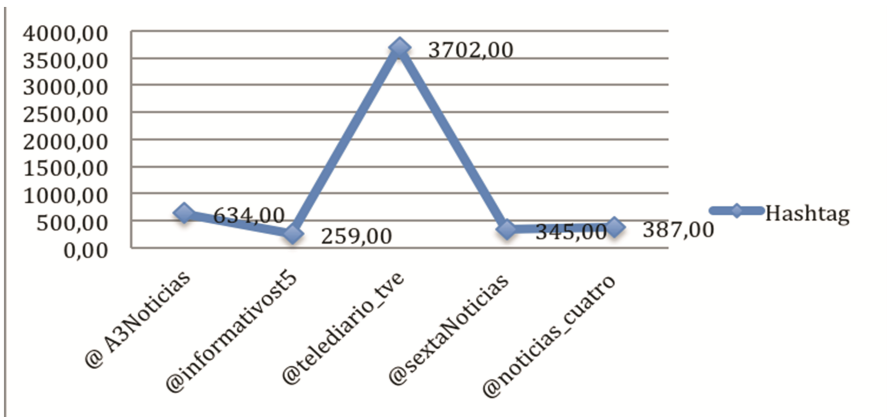**Table 9.** Tweets favourited by others

Table 10. Number of hashtags used

The favorites section is very tight (Table 9), falling within a range of 66 %–96 %. The best result is for @A3Noticias, followed by @informativost5, @noticias_cuatro with 88.4 %, @telediario_tve with 75.7 % and finally @sextaNoticias with 66.3 %.

Table 10 shows the number of hashtags used in tweets by the networks examined in this study. As we can see, @telediario_tve clearly uses more hashtags than the others.

Table 11. Number of Tweets per day

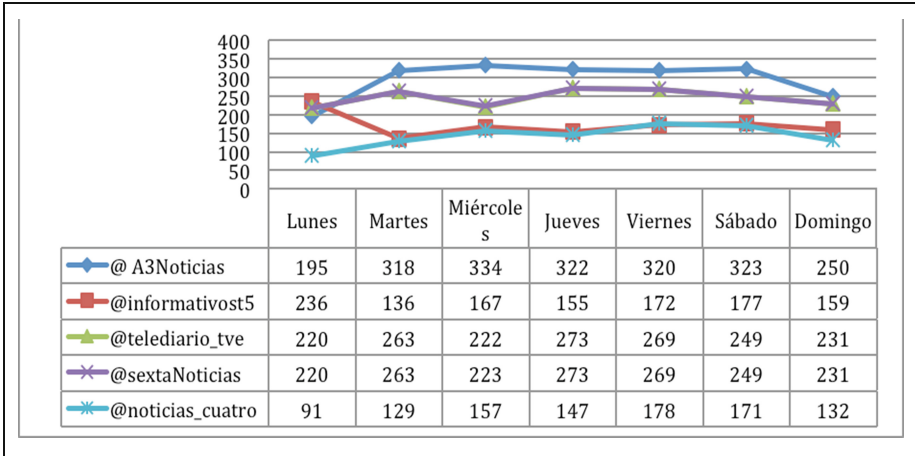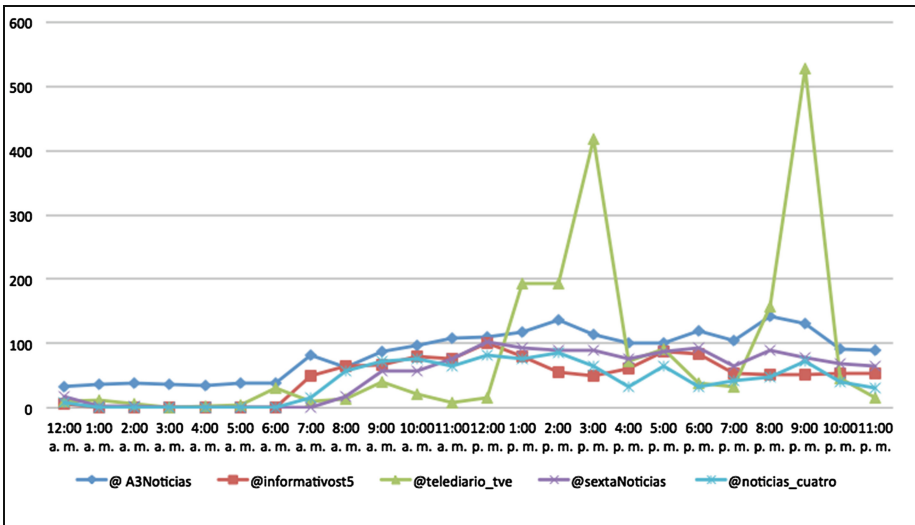|	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes	Sábado	Domingo
@ A3Noticias	195	318	334	322	320	323	250
@informativost5	236	136	167	155	172	177	159
@telediario_tve	220	263	222	273	269	249	231
@sextaNoticias	220	263	223	273	269	249	231
@noticias_cuatro	91	129	157	147	178	171	132

Table 12. Tweets per hour

Table 11 shows the number of tweets per day. On Mondays, @informativost5 tweets the most often, followed by @telediario_tve and @sextanoticias. On Tuesdays, first place is held by @A3Noticias, followed by @telediario_tve and @sextaNoticias.

Wednesdays are led by @A3Noticias, followed by @SextaNoticias and @telediario_tve. Thursdays are also led by @A3Noticias, followed by @SextaNoticias and @telediario_tve; these top three places are maintained through to the end of the week.

Table 12 indicates very clearly that the leader in temporary tweet location is @telediario_tve, at a considerable distance from the other news programs, even at the times the programs are broadcast. These times are different from those of @telediario_tve, which reaches a high point from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and peaks at 9:00 p.m

4   Conclusions and Notes

Throughout this study we analysed the Twitter profiles of the five news programs with most viewers included on the ranking of television media and general-interest network news programs for April 2015 drawn up by Barlovento Comunicación using data from Kantar Media [22].

Using the Tweetchup free tool, we analysed how TV news programs use Twitter, examining their profiles, their impact, and audience behaviour.

Our findings will be used to draw up a detailed inventory of the use of each profile on the platform, as well as giving an overview of the trends followed by the sample. We also offer an understanding of the possible relationships between the variables analysed.

Following an empirical process, a series of hypotheses were raised, to be then confirmed or refuted.

With regard to the first hypothesis: "Increased activity (tweets total) by news programs is linked to a higher number of followers". Table 6 shows that @A3Noticias is in the lead, followed by @sextanoticias, with @informativost5 in third place, @telediario_tve in fourth place and @Noticias_cuatro bringing up the rear. In Table 1, the first position is held by @A3Noticias, followed by @SextaNoticias, with @Noticias_cuatro in third place, followed by @informativost5 and finally @telediario_tve. Accordingly, this hypothesis must be refuted as, although @A3Noticias and @sextanoticias may seem to indicate a link, this is not reliably followed in the other three cases.

Second hypothesis: "The number of people followed by each profile is greater than the number of followers". Having analysed Tables 1 and 2 we must refute the hypothesis, as the number of followers is higher than the number of people followed. We should note that it seems appropriate that any media with a social media profile should aim at symmetrical two-way communication (Grünig, 2003), [23] allowing bidirectionality between news and the audience. On the other hand, interactivity and two-way communication between audience and news program may favour audience participation in the new communicative framework. This model also makes it easier to know the audience, understand their needs, ensure the sale of the news product, maintain user loyalty and increase the social influence of the program. (Salaverría, 2005). [24].

Third hypothesis: "There is a link between the number of Tweets per hour and the time the news program is broadcast." Having examined Table 12 and taking into account the time each program is broadcast, we must confirm this hypothesis, as there is a notable increase in the number of tweets while each program is being broadcast.

Fourth hypothesis: "There is a link between the number of Tweets containing links and the number of mentions." In accordance with the Tables 4 and 5, we must conclude that there is no link between the number of tweets containing links and the number of mentions; accordingly, we must refute this hypothesis.

Fifth hypothesis: "News programs generally use hashtags to generate debate among viewers." Looking at Table 10, we observe that @telediario_tve makes the most use of hashtags to generate debate among viewers, but this rule is not followed so closely by the other networks. Accordingly, we must refute this hypothesis. We should mention the increase in hashtag use by most TV programs, both to generate debate and as a tool to study and analyse the scope and impact of each news item, favouring the decision-making process.

Sixth hypothesis: "The network with the most viewers, Telecinco, gets more retweets than the other networks." A look at Table 8 shows that @informativost5 is not the profile that receives the most retweets, even though it has the largest TV audience. Accordingly, the Sixth hypothesis must be rejected.

Seventh hypothesis: "News program feedback on Twitter is bidirectional, with a high percentage of messages being favourited by users." Having examined Table 9, we see that the favourites section is very homogenous - from 66 % to 96 %. We may conclude that there is a high percentage of user favorites, which would indicate bidirectionality. Therefore, we may confirm this hypothesis.

Eighth hypothesis: "There is a working structure which includes a number of tweets per day". If we look at Table 11, we see a certain uniformity in the number of tweets published every day of the week by each profile, so we can confirm this hypothesis.

As a general note and for future research, it would be interesting to expand the research, analysing viewer profiles and including psychological and social variables, affinities and visual and auditory preferences, for a better understanding of the possible link between decision-making and Twitter use.

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