

Contexto de uso e acesso a notícias em smartphones por estudantes de pós-graduação em Comunicação na Espanha

The context of smartphone use and access of news by graduate students in Communication in Spain

*Tássia Becker Alexandre*¹

*Maria Clara Aquino*²

*Inmaculada J. Martínez*³

*Juan Miguel Aguado*⁴

Resumo: *Este trabalho objetiva compreender o contexto de uso e o acesso a notícias no smartphone por jovens. A pesquisa foi conduzida em 2019 com oito estudantes de pós-graduação residentes em Múrcia, Espanha, a partir da coleta do consumo de bateria ou dados móveis dos aparelhos dos participantes e entrevistas semiabertas individuais. Com base no estudo, identificamos que os aplicativos de mensagens instantâneas e de redes sociais são os mais utilizados pelos estudantes. As redes sociais digitais também foram indicadas como principal fonte de informações, em uma ação que nem sempre é proativa ou contempla a atenção total dos usuários. Ainda, aspectos como a capacidade técnica dos smartphones, gratuidade de acesso e tipo de conteúdo ofertado possuem relação com o contexto de uso dos aparelhos e consumo de notícias, indicando desafios ao jornalismo nesse cenário.*

Palavras-chave: *smartphone; contexto de uso; acesso a notícias; jovens.*

1 Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). São Leopoldo, RS, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2383-3358> E-mail: tassia.becker@gmail.com

2 Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). São Leopoldo, RS, Brazil. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8230-5921> E-mail: jaquino@unisinobr

3 Universidad de Murcia. Murcia, Spain. <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3807-1325> E-mail: inmartin@um.es

4 Universidad de Murcia. Murcia, Espanha. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8922-3299> E-mail: jmaguado@um.es

Abstract: *This paper seeks to comprehend the context of smartphone use and access to news among youths. The study was conducted in 2019 with eight graduate students living in Murcia, Spain, based on battery and mobile data consumption on participants' mobile devices and individual semi-structured interviews. Through the study, we identified that instant messaging applications and social networks are the most popular among students. Digital social networks we also mentioned as the leading source of information, in an action that is not always proactive and involves complete user attention. Furthermore, aspects like the technical capacities of smartphones, free access and the type of content offered related to the context of device usage and news consumption, which point to challenges for journalism within this scenario.*

Key Words: *smartphone; use context; access to news; youths.*

Introduction

In the last two decades, we've experienced social, cultural and technological changes related to smartphones. From a device with limited resources in the early 2000s, the mobile phone today resembles a pocket computer, with tools that enable the execution of different tasks on the touch of a finger. They also became identity elements, especially to young people, as a way to create bonds and demarcate autonomy (CASTELLS, 2006). These transformations follow a rhythm of contemporary society, which lives in a "mobile life" (ELLIOT; URRY, 2010), characterized by the need of being in constant movement.

Different sectors were impacted by these transformations, including journalism, which needed to adapt their routines, products and distribution to fit into new technologies and keep the increasingly fast and mobile pace of society. Despite the uncertainties of this scenario, smartphones can be taken as an opportunity of innovation, with the possibility to experiment narratives and formats and test new business models. To do so, in addition of exploring the device and its potentialities, it is vital to know the profile of users to project more assertive solutions aligned with social practices.

This research aims to contribute in this direction when seeking to understand the context of use and access to news in smartphones by young people. The study was conducted in 2019 with eight graduate students living in Spain, counting with the data collection of battery consumption or mobile data of the devices of the participants and semi-open individual interviews. The activity was done during a period of International PhD by the program Capes PrInt⁵.

The study integrates the PhD research of one of the authors, who elaborated a proposal of parameters to a autochthonous mobile journalistic language through an applied research (ALEXANDRE, 2021). Despite the particular interest, we believe that the study contributes to

5 Available at: <http://www.unisinos.br/global/pt/print/apresentacao>.

expand and strengthen the field of studies in journalism and communication, reflecting and tensioning the issue at stake.

Initially, we approached the process of news in smartphones. Then, we presented the methodological procedures and data from the screen captures and interviews. Finally, we've developed our considerations about the research.

Smartphone and news consumption

Due to characteristics such as pervasiveness, ubiquity and permanent connectivity, mobile devices are constantly linked to people's routine, integrating and shaping social practices and being appropriated by individuals for the manifestation and (re)formulation of their identities – especially smartphones, smaller and easier to carry (AGUADO; CASTELLET, 2013; AGUADO; MARTÍNEZ, 2014; PELLANDA, 2010).

In the beginning of the smartphone era, Fidalgo and Canavilhas (2009) highlighted that mobile phones were transformed in identity elements indispensable to individuals. According to the authors, the relation with the device is increasingly more accentuated between the young population, that sees in cellphones a way of social insertion, which is also corroborated by Castells (2006), who affirms that youth culture has found in mobile phones a tool to express the need of safe autonomy and ubiquitous connectivity.

The social practices related to these devices, combined to the technical specificities of smartphones, introduce different logics to the access of media contents in comparison with other supports. We observe that, after a long period of centrality of media, marked by the collective consumption, the media ecosystem lives the era of mobile and individualized consumption, whose highlight is attributed to the user and the platform (CANAVILHAS, 2012). Individual demands and preferences of access to news ended up prevailing, changing different habits related to journalism.

If in the first attempts of mobile journalism the access happened in periods of interstice and when other media weren't available

(WESTLUND, 2013), studies show that currently the news consumption in the device is bigger in comparison to other digital supports, is given especially through social media platforms and replaces or complements other media (KNIGHT FOUNDATION, 2016; NEWMAN *et al*, 2020).

The smartphone also expands the possibilities of an active consumption of information, in which the content stop being passively consumed to be shared, transformed, commented and used to interact with others (AGUADO; FEIJÓ; MARTÍNEZ, 2016). The user can not only interact through the channels made available by the outlets but also make information travel in digital social media and produce and distribute their own content.

With users always on (PELLANDA, 2010, 2016), content follow people's routines, at any time, anywhere. There's a wide offer of information and outlets dispute even more the audience's attention with other sources – some not even journalistic – in addition of sharing space with other products and services, as signaled by Pase, Pellanda and Cunha (2019). According to the authors, even the technical capacity of the device is a limiting agent, because the restricted storage space can lead to a user choosing to keep one app or the other installed.

A relevant issue about journalism consumption in mobile devices is referred to the profile and habits of the audience. In a research with Americans in 2012, Thorson *et al.* (2015) had observed that older users tend to be more faithful to press, using less smartphones and tablets to access news and attribute more credibility to the professional journalism. Younger users, on the other hand, are the ones who use devices the most, but are less concerned with the credibility of the source they access.

Another research, developed in 2011 by Casero-Ripollés (2012) with Spanish people from the age between 16 to 30 years old, identified that the mobile phone is a support of consumption of information consolidated amongst the participants, however, there is a fragmentation of access across different media, without focus on one or other media. The

research explicit that the low consumption of information by young people in newspapers is not related to a low “appetite” for news, but to a lack of relevance of publications made by newspapers for the younger audience, reinforcing the absence of connection between what is reported and young people’s personal experiences and interests.

A study produced by the Flamingo consultancy for the Reuters Institute also exposes the complex relationship between young people and news. With participants from the United States and the United Kingdom with ages between 18 and 35 years old, the research evidence that mainstream media is not the main source of information of this audience, who has less chances of directly accessing news apps and websites and spends most part of their time on line in digital social media and entertainment websites. The exposure to news usually occurs in an indirect manner, in which is not necessary to search for information, they arrive to them. According to the research, there is a mismatch between the way mainstream media outlets see the news and how young people see news content. They continue to be interested in information, however, news need to add value as individuals, supporting the desire to make progress in life, as well as entertaining and engaging them (FLAMINGO, 2019).

With the goal of understanding the context of use and access to news in smartphones by a specific group of young people, expanding the research in the area, the next section is detailing the methodological procedure of research.

Methodological Procedures

The activity was conducted in Múrcia, Spain, between the months of November and December 2019 with eight students of a graduate course in Communication. As the study integrates a PhD research, the choice for this profile of participant sought to be aligned to the other processes developed in the thesis, which also counted with a usability test and data collection with university students (ALEXANDRE; AQUINO, 2019a, 2019b) The selection of this specific group, in turn, was related to the previous contact with students during the activities of the international

PhD in the country, which enabled the approximation and invitation for the participation in the research.

Initially, there was a conversation with students through the class' WhatsApp group, in which we commented the execution of the research and we requested if they could inform their e-mail addresses for sending more detailed information on the study. In a group of 15 students, 10 gave their contacts. We sent an e-mail explaining the goal and the steps of research and eight students responded the message indicating their agreement to join. After that, we had a face-to-face conversation to confirm the acceptance and clarify any doubts. The final sample was formed by eight students, three women and five men (six Spaniards, one Colombian and one Panamanian), with ages between 22 and 33 years old (Chart 1). The research did not identify names, since we sought to preserve anonymity and we have the focus of smartphone use, not the subjects themselves.

Chart 1 – Profile of research participants

Identification	Age	Gender	Original Country
User 1	22 years old	Female	Spain
User 2	33 years old	Male	Colombia
User 3	23 years old	Male	Spain
User 4	24 years old	Female	Spain
User 5	24 years old	Male	Spain
User 6	23 years old	Male	Spain
User 7	28 years old	Male	Spain
User 8	24 years old	Female	Panama

Source: Created by the authors (2020)

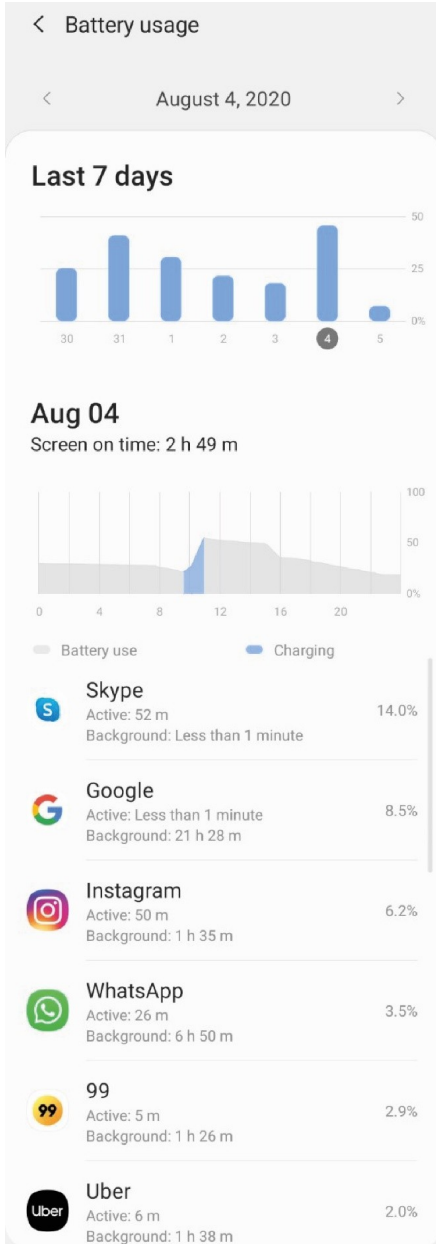
The data of smartphone use were obtained through weekly screen captures of section, which indicates battery consumption or mobile data expenditure of their devices, as illustrated in the example (Image 1). On Fridays, between November 15th and December 13th, 2019, we asked each student to send a screenshot via WhatsApp. Since the collection was individual and voluntary, there were cases in which the capture

surpassed seven days or were made in reference to the day, not the week. There were also situations in which the image registered only a few apps used, not being possible to keep the pattern of tab of information for all of them. In addition, there is a disparity in the way the data is presented according to the model of the cellphone and version of the operational system. Despite the divergences, we preferred to approach the entirety of participations, keeping in mind that the proposition is not to generalize the results, but to expand the knowledge about the context of smartphone usage by young adults.

After the reception of the screenshots, data were organized by week and participant. Through this tabulation, we excluded from the sample apps related to the smartphone's operational system (Android System, Google Play Services, Keyboard, System Interface, and others) in order to consider only the apps proactively used by the participants. The remaining apps were organized into seven categories (Chart 2) to facilitate the analysis of the information, and we generated a weighted average⁶ of the individual and collective use per week per category. Through the collection, it was possible to identify which apps were used the most by the users.

6 The calculation to generate the average corresponded to the sum of values of the app usage in the week for all the users divided by the total sum of the use of all the apps that week. For instance, on week 5, for Instagram, the sum of all participants was 204,75%, while the total sum of the apps used throughout the week was 800%, in which Instagram corresponded, therefore, to 25.59% of the total.

Image 1 – Example of data of smartphone usage



Source: Screenshot captured by the authors (2020).

Chart 2 – Apps used per category

Category	Apps
Social Media	Facebook Instagram Tinder Twitter
Browsers	Chrome Firefox Google ⁷ Safari
Instant Messengers	Messenger Telegram WhatsApp
Games	Discord Game of Sultans Lichess Pokémon Go Spirit Board Twitch
Shopping	AliExpress
Services	Appy Builder BBVA Blablacar Caixa Bank Gmail Keep (notes) Maps Outlook Univ. de Murcia Whoosh!
Streaming	Música Netflix Prime Video Spotify TV Colombia YouTube

Source: Created by the authors (2020)

7 Google as considered a browser because it gave access to other sites within the tool.

In order to complement the collection, we realized individual interviews with the eight students. As Rosália Duarte (2004) emphasizes, the interviews are a crucial tool for mapping practices in specific social universes, allowing a deep dive in a certain reality. Complementarily, Jorge Duarte (2011, p. 63) highlights that this technique of research doesn't allow the quantification of a phenomenon, in which their goal is more related to "[...] learning through the identification of wealth and diversity, through the integration of information and synthesis of discovery than the establishment of precise and definitive conclusions".

According to the authors, we assume that the results obtained do not correspond to an objective view on the theme, once the knowledge is produced through the interpretation of subjective stories of experiences of the source (DUARTE, 2004; DUARTE, 2011). What is narrated to the researcher reflects the subject's point of view, how he observes and experiences reality, and individuals are not always aware of how they act towards certain situations. Therefore, we understand that the interviews do not supply a complete and precise perspective of the context of smartphone usage, but combined with the data of the mobile phones, they allow to expand the understanding of the theme.

In this study, we developed semi-open interviews (or semi-structured) which, according to Martino (2018), are guided by a script of questions, but open space to the interviewee adds other elements referring to the theme. According to the author, "semi-open interviews are used when the goal is to know the thought of the interviewee about a certain subject, giving freedom to their own remarks and changes of pace, but without losing the specific research framework" (MARTINO, 2018, p. X).

Face-to-face conversations with students took place between December 05th and 13th, 2019, in classrooms and in the hall of the Communication Course of the university where they study, according to the choice of the participants themselves. The interviews had about 14 to 28 minutes and were guided by a previous script with 23 questions related to smartphone usage and access to news.⁸

8 The questionnaire can be accessed in this link: <https://bit.ly/35hTDQ3>.

Notes were taken during each interview and the interview was audio-recorded. Later, the content was transcribed and analyzed in conjunction with the screenshots. Information was also contrasted with the results of Digital News Report 2020 (NEWMAN et al., 2020) with the goal of establishing parameters with the reality of the world and Spain of on-line news consumption.

Results

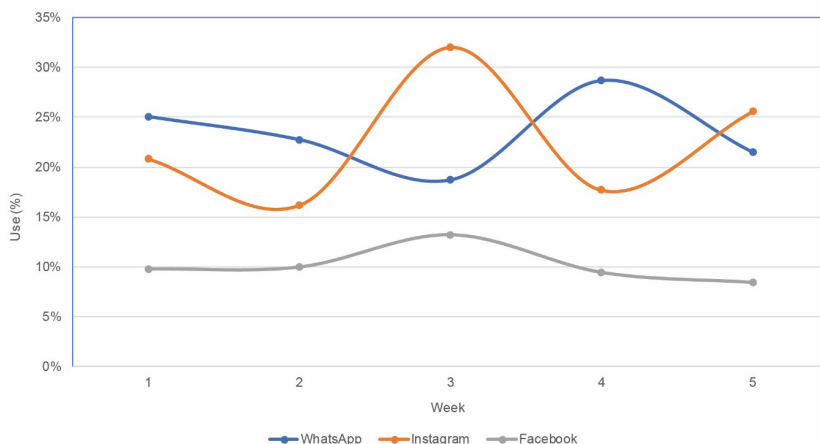
From the interviews, it was possible to identify that the contact of the participants with the mobile phone started in the teenage years (age 12 to 16) – with the exception of User 2, older, that had his first cellphone with 23 years old. The first smartphone, device with more resources and connectivity, arrives to the students two to four years later, following the own development of the mobile technology, that becomes more accessible to the population in the years 2010 (PELLANDA et al., 2017). In the date of the study, four users (1, 4, 5 and 8) also had tablets, signaling as the most common use the consumption of audiovisual content.

Despite making use of the 3G and 4G connectivity, students use more and prefer the Wi-Fi connection due to being more time in environments that offer this type of network and as a form of consuming fewer mobile data. Some declared that there is the concern with the type of content accessed via 3G and 4g, avoiding the visualization of videos, for instance.

According to the students, smartphone access happens in different times throughout the day, especially in their free time, like waking up, before bed, gaps between activities and in transportation. In the mornings and at night are the preferred moments to consult the device, since that in the afternoon they are in the university. Users 1 and 4 prefer to use the laptop to, respectively, conduct other activities in this support and because the size of the screen is more comfortable. In turn, Users 2 and 8 said that the consult to the smartphone is continuous, being one of the reasons the distance from their original countries, in which the device works as a way of communicating and getting information.

Questioned about the main activities performed with the smartphone, students highlighted communication, with emphasis on the use of WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. This indication corresponds to the data collected in the devices, which show that the apps that consume battery the most (which we can understand as the most used) are WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. Chart 1 illustrates the use of the three apps in five weeks⁹. The results also meet the study of Digital News Report, in which WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram are among the five digital social media and messengers most used in Spain and in the world (NEWMAN et al., 2020).

Chart 1 – Apps with more app consumption/mobile data



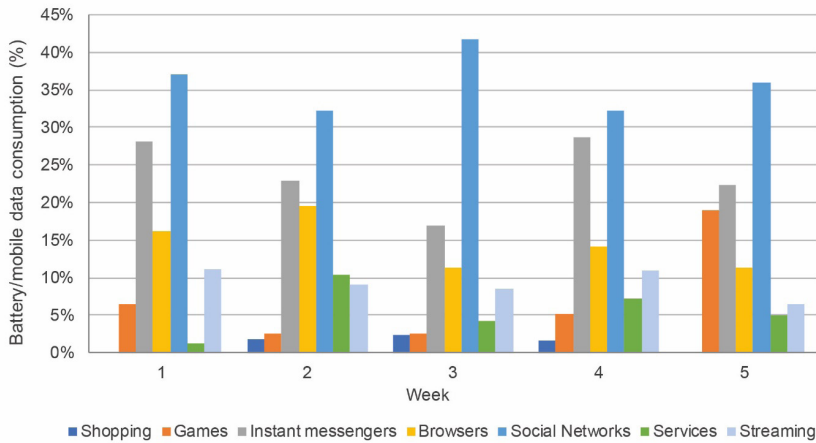
Source: Created by the authors (2020)

Screenshots show that the eight apps that consumed batteries and/or data the most in this period were WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Firefox, Google, Twitter, YouTube and Pokémon Go. Observing the total set of apps by category, social media and instant messengers were the

⁹ In the analyzed period, there wasn't a registration of use of Instagram by User 1 and Facebook by Users 3, 4 and 8.

most used by students, followed by browsers and streaming platforms (Chart 2).

Chart 2 - App usage by category



Source: Created by the authors (2020)

According to the interviews, the battery use of the smartphone is not a concern for most participants. They said to have moderation when it is close to the end, recharging the device as soon as possible. However, storage space is or was a problem for five students, which emphasized that they have uninstalled an app to install another one.

All the interviewees informed they have app notifications activated with social media, WhatsApp, and e-mail. Only User 6 pointed out he didn't select which ones they would like to receive, and considered that some warnings could be suppressed. However, the other participants elected which notifications are shown, emphasizing the importance of having the ability to receive them or not.

Regarding news, all of them responded they like to be informed about what happens around them or about specific themes. However, none of them uses news apps to get informed – two have apps installed (Flipboard, pre-installed on the phone, User 5, Menéame, User 7) but they

don't use them. When questioned whether they would download a news app, three students (Users 5, 6 and 8) responded they wouldn't, because they'd rather get information in other channels. Others evaluated they could download it if the app presented content related to their interests, was light, functional, and optimized for the mobile device, and counted with resources such as offline visualization, personalization and interaction with other users.

The main source of information is the internet, in digital social media, being Twitter and Facebook the most cited. This behavior is also identified in the Reuters Institute study, which shows that gen Z (young adults from 18 to 24) use less news websites and apps and have more than double the possibility of accessing information on social media (Newman et al., 2020) Among the reason they could explain the biggest consumption of these platforms are the sociability and the ability of performing different actions in one environment, as highlighted by User 1: "Facebook, for instance, makes easier for me not only to get in touch with my friends, and, in my spare time, publish memes, jokes, things, images and photos, but also has its news section." And because I'm linked to these specific profiles, news come to me. It is like having different things in one app, and it doesn't take too much space"¹⁰.

In social networks and instant messengers, journalistic content is also accessed through friend recommendation. In these situations, following the participants, not only the interest for the theme of the information is considered, but including the reliability of who is sharing, in other words, they evaluate whether the person usually shares real links or not.

Besides the internet, four students watch TV (in general, when they are at home, with their families) and one user listens to radio in transportation. For five users (1, 2, 5, 6 and 8) the access to news happens more via smartphone due to its instant nature and easiness of access, while the

10 In the original: "Facebook, por ejemplo, me facilita no sólo estar en contacto con mis amigos y a partir de su punto de ocio subir memes, chistes, cosas, imágenes y fotografías, sino también tiene su apartado de noticias. Y al estar vinculada a esos perfiles específicos, pues me llegan las noticias. Es como que en una sola aplicación tengo bastantes cosas y no ocupa un espacio".

other three (3, 4 and 7) reinforced they would rather use the computer due to convenience and comfort.

Based in these answers, it is possible to understand that news consumption isn't always intentional, in which students have contact with events when scrolling through the social media feed. When the theme is interesting and they are willing, they access the complete link of the information or make a web search, as we can see in the interview of User 2: "If I access a news on Facebook or Instagram it is because I found it on my feed, it seemed interesting and I clicked on it. But it wasn't because I was looking for it. [...] If I'm searching for an information I need or I want to know, I search for it myself¹¹". Still, according to the speeches, the access to journalistic content happens more on demand, in the moment and place where they wish and about specific subjects.

Despite mentioning journalistic websites, they consult and/or follow on social media, such as Agência EFE, El Tiempo and El Mundo, seven students responded they don't have favorite news outlets. The access has more to do with the theme, but there is a concern with the authenticity of the content and credibility of the source, in which participants reported they seek for the information in more than one channel, as told by User 5: "I usually compare different sources. For instance, imagine there is news on Donald Trump. Well, I maybe see what ABC, El Mundo and El País had to say about it. And all of that gives me an idea of what really was the news"¹². There was also a reference to websites that make fun of news, such as El Mundo Today and El Jueves, which do not have a commitment with the truth, but they seem to base themselves in real events – what would compare, in Brazil, with Sensacionalista¹³, for instance.

11 In the original: "Si yo accedo a una noticia por Facebook o por Instagram es porque las encontré en el muro y me pareció interesante e ingresé. Pero no es que yo las haya estado buscando. [...] Si yo voy a buscar una información que necesito o que quiero saber, lo busco".

12 In the original: "Utilizo mucho comparar distintas fuentes. Por ejemplo, imagínate que hay una noticia sobre Donald Trump. Pues a lo mejor ver lo que ha dicho el ABC, lo que ha dicho *El Mundo* y lo que ha dicho *El País*. Y todo eso me hace hacerme una idea de realmente cuál ha sido la noticia".

13 Available at: www.sensacionalista.com.br.

The issue of reliability in the source reached in the research with the students is also verified on Digital News Report 2020, which registered that less than half of the participants trust the news they access (42% in Spain, 46% in all of the countries of the sample), with number increasingly smaller when we talk about information circulating social media. The trust had a more accentuated fall in the coverage of Spanish political events in 2019. Although research had registered a high level of reliability in all the world in the media coverage related to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (NEWMAN et al., 2020).

According to interviews, the time of day dedicated to the access of news by youth in smartphone conform with the moment in which the use the device the most, morning and night, especially during their free time and/or in transportation. When they are not in traffic, the consultation happens more at home, because, for students, it sets as an environment where they are more comfortable, relaxed and have more time and freedom. Just like in the question about the use of the mobile phone, Users 2 and 8 had indicated they view information in their mobile anywhere, at any time of the day.

Students responded to prefer news in text followed by photos, reinforcing as the main reasons the easiness in adapting the reading to their pace, the possibility of reading anywhere and time and the best contextualization of information. Video is also indicated as a format of interest because they are attractive and they present a summary of information, being preferred short videos of up to one and a half minute. User 3 clarifies why he prefers texts: “Because that way I can read [the news] in my own pace and, also, in text, I can consume it anywhere [...]. However, when we play a video, or see images, but the text part is missing, which in this case would be audio, and the audio cannot be heard anywhere”¹⁴. In turn, User 7 says he’s interested in the mix of both formats: “The text because the information is more detailed and more, how can

14 In the original: “Porque así puedo leerla [noticia] a mi ritmo y a parte también en texto yo puedo consumirla en cualquier sitio [...]. Sin embargo, video, reproduce el video y solo ve unas imágenes, pero te falta la parte del texto, que en este caso sería audio y el audio no lo puedes escuchar en todo sitio”.

I put it? impartial. While the video is more attractive [...]”¹⁵. Politics, environment, culture and games are the favorite themes among the participants, being politics the most cited theme (five users).

For five interviewees, it is crucial that an app or news website accessed through smartphone is fast, simple, light and easy to use, enabling a comfortable experience anywhere, anytime. Three students reinforced the importance of journalistic precision, with truth and well written information. Still, was pointed the possibility of personalizing the navigation.

Advertisement (excess and format of ads) was highlighted by four students as an element they don't like in journalistic content they consume in the mobile telephone, as exposed by User 4: “When the banner jumps at you right in the middle of the screen, I really don't like it. Because, sometimes, I mean, it bothers you when you need to see the screen and sometimes it opens without warning. So it redirects to the page and it makes you lose time and data”¹⁶.

The student's responses had varied when asked about what they miss in the news available on smartphones: Five students said not to remember any specific points. The others, in turn, had cited that the productions could count with an offline content, attribute a bigger highlight and space for interaction with the vehicle and among users and that the personalization of access could be more precise. Two participants emphasized that they do not see issues in the way information are presented in the mobile device, but rather in the journalistic practice and approach.

Completing the data, all students had said on interviews that they don't pay to access journalistic productions. User 6 had revealed he wouldn't pay to consume news on his smartphone because he already finds the information he wants in a free form. Users 2 and 8 maybe would pay if it was something that interested them a lot, because they

15 In the original: “El texto porque la información es más detallada y más, ¿cómo decirlo? Imparcial. Mientras que el vídeo, pues, es más atractivo [...]”.

16 In the original: “Cuando salta el banner ahí justo en medio de la pantalla, eso sí que no lo gusto. Porque a veces, o sea, molesta cuando tienes que ver la pantalla y a veces da sin querer. Entonces se redirige a la página y te hace perder tiempo y datos”.

can also view what they need without having to pay. The remainder evaluated they could invest around 3 euros a month (answers varied between 1 and 5 euros) to access, however, just like Users 2 and 8 pointed out, the content would have to be of their interest, with journalistic quality (Users 1, 5 and 7), approach of general and/or specific themes (Users 1, 3 and 4), with project thought for the mobile environment (User 7) and similar structure to Netflix (User 5).

In fact, the portion of society that pays to access journalistic content on the internet is still very small, as shown on the Reuters Institute research. Only 12% of Spanish people pay for online news and a great part of the interviewees around the world are feeling satisfied with the information available for free (NEWMAN et al., 2020). According to the study, the most important factor for those who sign journalistic content is quality, reason that was also pointed out by the students of our research.

After the approach of research results, it is possible to identify some aspects about the context of use and consumption of news on the smartphone, highlighted next.

Considerations

The study developed contemplates a specific reality of a small group of students and with data that could not be generalized and employed for the comprehension of of all young adults use their smartphones and access news in their device. After the singularity, we identified aspects reinforced by other research, as Casero Ripollés (2012), Alexandre and Aquino (2019a), Flamingo (2019) and Newman et al. (2020), that expand the knowledge on the theme and allow us to reflect and question strategies for mobile journalism.

It is necessary for us to ponder that, because they are Communication students, maybe the participants are more familiarized with the use of smartphone and access of news in this device – this is an assumption, not empirically confirmed. This observation also reinforces the care in

avoiding generalizations and the importance in making other studies that investigate the thematic.

Another aspect of the sample that needs to be pointed out is about the fact that two students are from Latin American countries, living in Spain only to finish the course. During the interviews, both reinforced the use of message platforms and social media as a way of communicating with their family and friends. One of them had also emphasized the access to media outlets of their original country as a strategy to keep up with the events of the region. Therefore, the increased use of some applications such as WhatsApp and Instagram by the two young adults could be related with the search for keeping the relationship with their motherland. However, it is crucial to highlight that we didn't observe in the interviews and data collected other significant differences in relation to other students.

In a general sense, the wide use of instant messengers and social media evidence that the basic role of the phone of communicating and interacting with other people is essential for the users. However, it is about an interaction that depends on Internet connection and has specificities related to the digital environment, such as the appropriation of more textual and visual tools, including emojis, and characteristics of the so-called network conversations, such as the spread, searchability and permanence of interactions (RECUERO, 2012).

It is also through the network that students affirmed they get information, data that corroborates with research that point towards the consumption of news in these platforms (KNIGHT FOUNDATION, 2016; NEWMAN et al. 2020). In this context, journalism is inserted into a scenario of hyper competition, sharing the audience's space and attention with other types of content, tasks, and sources, and beginning to compete not only with other journalistic companies, but also with different products and services (CHARRON; BONVILLE, 2016; PASE; PELLANDA; CUNHA, 2019).

In addition, the biggest use of digital social media as source of information is concerning due to algorithm-based logics of distribution¹⁷, excessive personalization and the propagation of fake news. The circulation of posts in some social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram, is guided by algorithms, which limit the organic reach of pages, making information visible based on user behavior and commercial interests (BARSOTTI, 2019). Therefore, as much as the individual decides which journalistic outlets to follow, the spontaneous access to content will always be conditioned to the network dynamic.

Complementary to that, Pariser (2012) highlights that the personalization of access through social media algorithms could end up inserting individuals in what he calls “filter bubble”, in other words, the universe with which they identify and interact the most. According to the author “if the personalization is excessive, it could impede us from getting in touch with breathtaking experiences and ideas, destroying prejudice, changing the way we think about the world and about ourselves” (Ibid, p. 15).

In addition to these issues, there is a lack of trust in the news and the global phenomenon of misinformation, in which digital social media are the main channel of circulation of fake news (TANDOC JR.; LIM; LING, 2017). Such scenario is set as a challenge to the news outlets in which it is necessary to develop tactics to reach the young and digital audience, highlighting in the midst of so many sources, producing qualified journalism and finding alternatives for the distribution of content in social media.

Through the publications filtered by the digital social networks, there is still another form of selection of content by youth itself. Research showed that the consumption of information depends more on personal interest for the theme and availability of information (being free and having a pleasant layout, for instance), than the outlet where the publication was made, results that reinforce data from the studies of Thorson *et al.* (2015) and Flamingo (2019).

17 Algorithms are a set of automatized instructions which, based on specific calculations, transform data in their desired results (GILLESPIE, 2018).

The technical aspects of the device and the Internet connection also have reflections on the use of the smartphone and access to news, in which participants are concerned with the capacity of storage of their devices, type of content viewed in each network (preferring lighter files when they are connected to mobile data, for instance) and usability. Therefore, journalism for smartphones must invest in content and in form, be well produced, attractive, be easy and have quick access and be adapted to the characteristic of the mobile device.

Research had also evidenced that apps should not be main bet to arrive to this audience, since not all devices have space to support more apps and there is not an exclusive relationship with a journalistic brand. Participants prefer to check news on social media and websites accessed through the browser, picking the source that best delivers the information and performing the access according to their availability and desire. To generate the download and use of an app, personalization and segmentation are fundamental characteristics, because, as some students previously pointed out, the overall coverage of events is already performed by different outlets.

Another relevant aspect corresponds to the business model, in which none of the young adults had said they paid to get news and revealed to be bothered with the way ads are shown in the content they access. If they need an information and find limitations, they seek other sources. For the participants, who show to make use of streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime (whose access are exclusive to paying members), it is more natural to pay for entertainment than information. Again, it is taken the possibility of investing in segmented and personalized productions – specificities that also were enhanced as necessary for the payment of a journalistic service.

We believe the investigation developed allows us to reflect about the issues and think about propositions for a mobile journalism. However, we reinforce the need to make other studies that comprise the consumption of news in mobile devices and the relationship between individuals and their devices, enabling to tension even more the issue and expanding the understanding regarding the theme.

References

- AGUADO, J. M.; CASTELLET, A. Periodismo móvil e información ubicua. In: AGUADO, J. M.; FEIJÓO, C.; MARTÍNEZ, I. J. (Orgs.). *La comunicación móvil: Hacia un nuevo ecosistema digital*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2013. p. 187-218.
- AGUADO, J. M.; MARTÍNEZ, I. J. The Relationship is the Medium: Understanding Media in a Mobile Age. In: KATZ, J. E. (Ed.). *Living inside mobile social information*. Moraine: Greyden Press, 2014. p. 77-106.
- AGUADO, J. M.; FEIJÓO, C.; MARTÍNEZ, I. J. A mobile revolution inside a digital Revolution. In: AGUADO, J. M.; FEIJÓO, C.; MARTÍNEZ, I. J. (Orgs.). *Emerging Perspectives on the Mobile Content Evolution*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2015. p. XVI-XXV.
- ALEXANDRE, T. B. *Linguagem jornalística autóctone para dispositivos móveis*. 2021. 276f. Tese (Doutorado) – Programa de Pós-graduação em Ciências da Comunicação, Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, São Leopoldo, 2021.
- ALEXANDRE, T. B.; AQUINO, M. C. Acesso de notícias via dispositivos móveis por estudantes universitários brasileiros. In: CANAVILHAS, J.; RODRIGUES, C.; GIACOMELLI, F. (Orgs.). *Narrativas jornalísticas para dispositivos móveis*. Covilhã: Livros Labcom, 2019a. p. 77-99.
- ALEXANDRE, T. B.; AQUINO, M. C. Avaliação da Usabilidade do Aplicativo Jornalístico *Deutsche Welle* por Estudantes do Ensino Superior. In: BURGOS, T.; CUNHA, R. (Orgs.). *Interfaces Contemporâneas no Ecosistema Midiático*. Aveiro: Ria Editorial, 2019b. p. 127-142.
- BARSOZZI, A. Quando a visibilidade da notícia depende dos algoritmos: os riscos para a sociedade. *Trama: Indústria Criativa em Revista*, a. 5, v. 8, n. 1, jan./jun. 2019.
- CANAVILHAS, J. Jornalismo para dispositivos móveis: informação hipermultimidiática e personalizada. In: CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL LATINA DE COMUNICACIÓN SOCIAL, 4., 2012, Santa Cruz de Tenerife. *Anais...* Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Sociedad Latina de Comunicación, 2012.
- CASERO-RIPOLLÉS, A. Más allá de los diarios: el consumo de noticias de los jóvenes en la era digital. *Comunicar*, n. 39, v. 20, p. 151-158, 2012.
- CASTELLS, M. *Comunicación Móvil y Sociedad: una perspectiva global*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 2006.
- CHARRON, J.; BONVILLE, J. de. *Natureza e transformação do jornalismo*. Florianópolis: Insular; Brasília: FAC Livros, 2016.
- DUARTE, J. Entrevista em profundidade. In: DUARTE, J.; BARROS, A. (Orgs.). *Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa em Comunicação*. 2. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2011.
- DUARTE, R. Entrevistas em pesquisas qualitativas. *Educar*, n. 24, p. 213-225, 2004.
- ELLIOTT, A.; URRY, J. *Mobile lives*. Abingdon; Nova York: Routledge, 2010.
- FIDALDO, A.; CANAVILHAS, J. Todos os jornais no bolso: pensando o jornalismo na era do celular. In: RODRIGUES, C. (Org.). *Jornalismo on-line: modos de fazer*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora PUC-Rio; Sulina, 2009. p. 99-117.
- FLAMINGO. *How Young People Consume News: and The Implications For Mainstream Media*. 2019. Disponível em: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/>

how-young-people-consume-news-and-implications-mainstream-media. Acesso em: 20 set. 2019.

GILLESPIE, T. A relevância dos algoritmos. *Parágrafo*, Brasil, v. 6, n. 1, p. 95-121, jan./abr. 2018.

KNIGHT FOUNDATION. *Mobile-First News: How People Use Smartphones to Access Information*. 2016. Disponível em: <https://medium.com/mobile-first-news-how-people-use-smartphones-to>. Acesso em: 17 abr. 2019.

MARTINO, L. M. S. *Métodos de Pesquisa em Comunicação*: Projetos, ideias, práticas. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2018.

NEWMAN, N. et al. *Digital News Report 2020*. Oxford: Reuters Institute; University of Oxford, 2020.

PARISER, E. *O filtro invisível: O que a internet está escondendo de você*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2012.

PASE, A. F.; PELLANDA, E. C.; CUNHA, M. R. da. Jornalismo em forma de app: a ruptura na hierarquia da informação. In: CANAVILHAS, J.; RODRIGUES, C.; GIACOMELLI, F. (Orgs.). *Narrativas jornalísticas para dispositivos móveis*. Covilhã: Livros Labcom, 2019. p. 15-32.

PELLANDA, E. C. Mobilidade: O crescimento das mídias móveis e o impacto nas relações sociais. In: COMITÊ GESTOR DA INTERNET NO BRASIL. *Pesquisa sobre o uso das tecnologias da informação e da comunicação no Brasil: 2005-2009*. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2010. p. 61-66.

PELLANDA, E. C. Jornalismo, Mobilidades, Manipulação e Transmídiação. *Revista Latino-americana de Jornalismo – Âncora*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 244-250, 2016.

PELLANDA, E. C. et al. Mobilidade e jornalismo digital contemporâneo: Fases do jornalismo móvel ubíquo e suas características. In: CANAVILHAS, J.; RODRIGUES, C. (Orgs.). *Jornalismo móvel: Linguagem, gêneros e modelos de negócio*. Covilhã: Livros Labcom, 2017. p. 197-218.

RECUERO, R. *A conversação em rede: comunicação mediada pelo computador e redes sociais na Internet*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2012.

TANDOC JR., E. C.; LIM, Z. W.; LING, R. Defining 'Fake News': A Typology of Scholarly Definitions. *Digital Journalism*, v. 6, n. 2, p. 137-153, 2017.

THORSON, E. et al. News use of mobile media: A contingency model. *Mobile Media & Communication*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 1-19, 2015.

WESTLUND, O. Mobile news. *Digital Journalism*, v. 1, n. 1, p. 6-26, 2013.

On the authors

Tássia Becker Alexandre – PhD at the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences of Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos). Substitute teacher in the Journalism course at Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso (UFMT). In the present article, the author participated in the collection and analysis of data and the writing and revision of the text.

Maria Clara Aquino – Professor of the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences of Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos). PhD in Communication and Information at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). In the present article, the author guided the study, also participating of the writing and revision of the text.

Inmaculada J Martínez – PhD in Communication Sciences (Advertising) at Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Master's in Marketing at Know How Business School. Full processor of Advertisement Business in the Communication and Documentation course at Universidad de Múrcia. In the present article, the author guided the study, also participating of the writing and revision of the text.

Juan Miguel Aguado – Doctor in Communication Sciences (Journalism) and Graduate in Social Research at Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw, Poland). Professor of Theory of Communication in the Communication and Documentation Course at Universidad de Múrcia. In the present article, the author had guided the study, also participating in the writing and revision of the text.

Date of submission: 8/5/2020

Date of acceptance: 5/9/2021