

## INTRODUCTION

The world of information is living through fluctuating times - through profound changes which affect the world media ecosystem, the internal structure of each media outlet and also their users. The (latest) journalistic crisis that began to raise its head back at the beginning of 2000 was made worse by the world financial crisis of 2008 (Ramírez de la Piscina et al., 2015). But the transitional shifts experienced 'in the media of news transmission', are not new: they are produced 'whenever significant social, economic and technological changes take place' (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003: 22).

Haste and speed in dealing with information, competition among journalists and/or media entities to be the first to break the news - even at the cost of a lack of precision and concern about the interests of the audience - were the initial ways that the print media attempted to adapt to digital formats (López, 2004), but these have been reinforced and have become integrated into our daily lives over the last 15-20 years. Relevant information and treating it in all its complexity is too inconvenient in the productive routine and gives way to simplicity and an unvaried treatment of the daily agenda. So in daily practice the usual journalistic procedures do not allow for an in-depth analysis of the subject in question and this hinders the journalistic treatment of this complexity (Gómez-Mompart, 2013: 222).

Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2021) have pointed out the 'pseudo-information' nature of media 'related to infotainment, sensationalism, tabloidization and the "pink press" (...) that 'try to survive in an ocean of entertainment options'. These outlets concentrate their task more on overstimulating the audiences than on providing accurate pieces of information.

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3 Journalism's drift not only affects its production conditions (including the ethics  
4 of its professionals), it is also important to consider the reception of the news,  
5 where significant changes have occurred in relation to previous eras. We have  
6 produced more information in the last 30 years than in 500 years of history  
7 (Sauvajol-Rialland, mentioned in Demuyter, 2019); this author also talks about  
8 *info-obesity* and Gottfried (2020) of the *news fatigue* of readers in the U.S. who  
9 feel overwhelmed by the huge amount of information they receive every day  
10 and are unable to 'digest'.  
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12 In this damaged media sector, the general public is also distrustful of journalists  
13 and the media (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). This has been corroborated by  
14 a number of studies, such as that of the *Digital News Report 2020* (conducted  
15 by the Reuters Institute) that summarises the opinions of 233 digital experts; or  
16 *The 32 percent project 2018* (conducted by the University of Oregon) that  
17 collates the opinions of citizens in the U.S.A. about their confidence in  
18 journalists.  
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20 Reactions to this panorama are being produced in all fields of the news chain.  
21 In this sense, Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2021) believe it necessary to  
22 reformulate communication from two viewpoints. On the one hand journalism  
23 must be given its corresponding role and the social function inherent to the  
24 media must be revised and remembered; it is also necessary to put quality  
25 before quantity, enabling it to recuperate its credibility and public trust. On the  
26 other hand, the aforementioned authors insist on appealing to user  
27 responsibility in communication; they underline that it is necessary to educate  
28 future generations in the critical spirit in order to have an audience capable of a  
29 high degree of reflection and autonomy of thought.  
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3 Tejedor-Calvo et al. (2020) speak of 'immersive journalism' as that which,  
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5 relying on interactive and visual narrative techniques, produces a sensation in  
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7 the user of being total absorbed in the information. These authors have  
8  
9 highlighted the great advantages involved in using augmented reality (AR) in  
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11 the treatment of journalistic content, since it will result in the user being able to  
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13 take on a more central role in interactive communication.  
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17 Currently, the meeting point between the conscientious professionals and their  
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19 work, and users may be *slow journalism*.  
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## 22 23 24 **ON SLOW JOURNALISM AND QUALITY**

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26 According to Nic Newman (2019) trust and quality go hand in hand, they are  
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28 two sides of the same coin: he considers that it is not enough to renovate and  
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30 diversify news desks, widen the media agenda and modernise the appearance  
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32 of the media to attract more users and improve the business; according to this  
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34 expert, the real challenge for the future of the news industry lies in a  
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36 commitment to quality.  
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40 Many intellectuals and professionals worried about the loss of direction within  
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42 journalism and the precariousness of the profession have attempted to tackle  
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44 the subject of quality, underlying the gaps in the news' production and  
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46 presentation (Amado, 2007; De Pablos and Mateos, 2004; Deuze, 2005;  
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48 Gripsrud and Weibull, 2010; Gómez-Mompart et al., 2015; González-Gorosarri,  
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50 2011; Pellegrini and Mújica, 2006; Ramírez de la Piscina et al., 2015).  
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54 David et al. (2010), authors of the *Slow Media Manifesto*, also specifically  
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56 mention quality. From 14 observations or characteristics that they attribute to  
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58 slow media, quality is an indicator of the high standard to which these  
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3 publications should conform (both in their content and aesthetic form). Quality  
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5 would mean creating a more sincere and lasting media-user relationship, rather  
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7 than a mere perishable product.  
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10 Barranquero-Carretero (2013); Juntunen (2010); Le Masurier (2015), Neveu  
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12 (2016); Rauch (2011); Rosenberg and Feldman (2008); Rosique-Cedillo and  
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14 Barranquero-Carretero (2015), Whitworth (2009), among others, have made  
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16 reference to the need to practice this type of slow, quality journalism  
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19 Following the aforementioned academics and experts we specify below the  
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21 most common guidelines that should channel the course of action of slow  
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23 journalism, always taking as an unquestionable premise that 'the primary  
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25 obligation of journalism is truth' (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003).  
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29 -Employ the necessary time to guarantee inquiry and the elaboration process of  
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31 the professional's informative piece, with the freedom to access the scene  
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33 and/or the sources and attend to the contacts with due respect, without the  
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35 obligation of staying in front of a computer and not leaving the news desk.  
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38 -Process and formulate the piece in context, with all the necessary data for  
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40 providing good follow-up to the information, perfectly situated in time and space,  
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42 incorporating diverse viewpoints — without leaving out that which 'isn't  
43  
44 convenient' to the media outlet itself, to the authorities and to power in general  
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46 — in order for the user to arrive at their own interpretation of events.  
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49 -Allow users to read unhurriedly: adequately provide informative, narrative and  
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51 aesthetic resources for a meaningful reading of the information, without the  
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53 audience feeling overwhelmed by the quantity of news and data each day.  
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56 -Do not contribute to an overload of informative channels, not use unnecessary  
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58 formats, not least when dealing with sensationalist, gossip, or pieces focussed  
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3 on celebrity news. Instead think about exemplary, educational and interesting,  
4 and above all instructive news for the reader. The time dedicated to this type of  
5 pseudo-news does not constitute the differentiation criteria for being considered  
6 slow journalism.  
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12 -Base the work on friendly, fair relationships with both work colleagues and  
13 sources. To be the voice of the voiceless, and co-assist in the formation of  
14 ecological relationships with the immediate environment, being responsible and  
15 empathising with the most disadvantaged social classes.  
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21 -Institute participative communities in the interest of sharing knowledge and  
22 resources, in order to encourage the idea of building a better and more  
23 democratic future together.  
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28 As can be seen, these quality criteria cover pre-production and production of  
29 information, but also include the user's role in the communicative chain.  
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33 We agree with Megan Le Masurier (2015) and Erik Neveu (2016) in that there is  
34 more than one journalism – journalism is a plural activity; it depends on context:  
35 different factors determine the shaping and activity of media in each society at  
36 different moments in time. That is why it is so difficult to classify, to submit it to  
37 the characteristics of a single taxonomy. Similarly, according to Salaverría et al.  
38 (2017), it is clear that not all the digital publications that have recently invaded  
39 the Latin American panorama can be classified within one single category.  
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44 There is an interesting work on assessing the quality of printed news media by  
45 Romero-Rodríguez and Aguaded (2017). The researchers tested this  
46 quantitative-qualitative method for assessing and evaluating the quality of media  
47 information in two Venezuelan media outlets. They concluded that the quality of  
48 information in the printed news media 'cannot only be evaluated and/or verified  
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3 through the final product', because of the incidence of political-economic  
4 conditions within the journalistic context.  
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7 Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2016) have build up a taxonomy of 75 items covering  
8 three main aspects of journalism: the business dimension, the social-labour  
9 dimension and the content dimension. This system was firstly validated by 40  
10 experts, and then has been tested in various works to evaluate information  
11 quality of digital media. That is the case of a partial analysis carried out on 20  
12 Latin American digital native media (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020). Only 10  
13 items of the content part are considered in this analytical work. The authors  
14 recognise that more dimensions other than just those of the content part need  
15 to be assessed. Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2021) have also come to this  
16 conclusion.  
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19 At this point it is worth remembering here what the Argentinian journalist and  
20 writer Martin Caparrós stated in his column in *The New York Times* (2020): 'the  
21 crisis of journalism is a crisis of its readers'. He means that the journalist's effort  
22 does not always correspond to the real use that readers make of it (it is enough  
23 to track the list of most read articles in each publication). He appeals to the  
24 responsibility that readers/users have in current journalism.  
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27 We authors have also looked at the role and profile of the users of the digital  
28 publications studied in this study; we considered basic to achive the aims of this  
29 research.  
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## 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 **METHODOLOGY**

54  
55 This research study was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative  
56 techniques, subjected to a process of triangulation to enrich the results (Ruiz  
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3 Olabuénaga, 2012), and understand the plurality of content, characteristics and  
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5 actions that lie beneath slow journalism.  
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8 In 2017, for the initial Media selection the researchers were guided by the  
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10 existing relevant reference bibliography, using Google and the Scopus  
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12 database (SJR), and taking into account classifications already in existence.  
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14 Subsequently, from a core of the thirty most quoted magazines in the articles,  
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16 an assessment was made based on the criteria derived from a direct  
17  
18 observation study.  
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21 The process began with the tracing of over 30 websites related to 'slow  
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23 journalism', 'periodismo lento' ('unhurried journalism'), 'narrative journalism',  
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25 'digital narrative journalism' and 'slow media'. The following criteria were used:  
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27 degree of content updating, presence of context in the published texts (about  
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29 facts and/or protagonists), presence of narrative texts, plurality of genres used  
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31 (feature, interview, report, profile, review, essay, opinion...), level of  
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33 referentiality and/or influence of the website, be it outside of its own country or  
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35 for its thematic field (certified readership, social media followers etc.) and, lastly,  
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37 the quality of the website design. For the selection, each of the six sections was  
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39 given a score between 0 (zero contribution) and 5 (maximum). The total  
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41 maximum possible score was 30 points. Finally, the research team considered it  
42  
43 very important for the sample to reflect a wide geographical and thematic  
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45 balance. This led to the identification of ten referential websites within digital  
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47 narrative journalism in Spanish, most of them created in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Table  
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56 **Table 1.** Narrative journalism websites in Spanish. Score, country and thematic  
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58 field.

Magazine (year of launching)	Score	Country	Predominant thematic field
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<a href="http://www.jotdown.es">www.jotdown.es</a> (2011)	26,54	Spain	Culture
<a href="http://www.letraslibres.com">www.letraslibres.com</a> (1999)	25,5	Mexico	Culture
<a href="http://www.revista5w.com">www.revista5w.com</a> (2015)	24,5	Spain	International politics
<a href="http://www.gatopardo.com">www.gatopardo.com</a> (2000)	23,2	Mexico	Culture
<a href="http://ctxt.es">http://ctxt.es</a> (2015)	22,4	Spain	General (politics)
<a href="http://www.revistaanfibia.com">www.revistaanfibia.com</a> (2012)	22,31	Argentina	General (politics)
<a href="http://www.lasillavacia.com">www.lasillavacia.com</a> (2009)	22	Colombia	Investigative journalism
<a href="http://www.revistaarcadia.com">www.revistaarcadia.com</a> (2005)	21,88	Colombia	Culture
<a href="http://www.yorokobu.es">www.yorokobu.es</a> (2009)	21,05	Spain	Creativity
<a href="http://www.panenka.org">www.panenka.org</a> (2011)	20,88	Spain	Football culture

Source: Own creation.

Beginning in 2018, a systematic study of these media was carried out using the case study method, ideal for compiling detailed, in-depth information about slow journalism and of the real practice of each media. Whilst recognising that this technique is not perfect, we can obtain 'a more systematic, in-depth and complete knowledge of reality than that which is observed' (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2012: 125).

This description was completed by 26 in-depth interviews carried out during the first semester of 2018 with journalistic, business and technological directors of the aforementioned publications: Ángel L. Fernández (*Jot Down*), Agus Morales, Maribel Izcue, Marta Arias and Quim Zudaire (*5W*), Miguel Mora and Vanesa Jiménez (*CTXT*), Mar Abad, Marcus Hurst, Juanjo Moreno and Fermin Abella (*Yorokobu*), Carlos Martín Río, Roger Xuriach, Álex López Vendrell and Marcel Beltrán (*Panenka*), Sara Malagón, Camilo Jiménez and Felipe Sánchez (*Arcadia*), Juanita León and Pablo Isaza (*La silla vacía*), Cristián Alarcón, Sol Garcia Dinesrsten and Tomás Pérez Vizzón (*Anfibia*), Eduardo Huchín, Leticia Gaona and Pablo Majluf (*Letras libres*), Felipe Restrepo (*Gatopardo*). With the



1  
2  
3 exception of the directors of *Anfibia* (Argentina) and Juanjo Moreno (*Yorokobu*),  
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5 the rest of the interviews were carried out in person and recorded.  
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8 Between 2018 and 2019 a study was done using the Delphi technique, in which  
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10 a series of structured questions about slow journalism were drawn up and  
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12 directed at a panel of international specialists including representatives of the  
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14 countries where the analysed magazines are published. The reason for using  
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16 this technique was to see whether there was a consensus within this group of  
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18 informants (Juaristi, 2003), relating to the subject of quality within slow  
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20 journalism.  
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24 Of the 29 experts who agreed to take part in the Delphi study, 28 completed the  
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26 first round and 25 the second; the participants were from Australia, Europe,  
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28 Latin America and the U.S. The final panel was made up of 48% women and  
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30 52% men; 35.71% were between 30 and 39 years of age; 39.28% between 40  
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32 and 49; and 25% were aged 50 or less.  
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36 Also within the research a survey was carried out among the readers by CIES  
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38 S.L., to complete the description of the real situation of digital slow journalism in  
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40 Spanish and discover at close quarters the opinion and habits of the readers of  
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42 the digital press in the four countries where the headquarters of the digital  
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44 media outlets studied are located.  
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48 The survey was carried out between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019, via 2,000  
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50 questionnaires (500 in each country) distributed online in Argentina, Colombia,  
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52 Spain and Mexico, among people from the ages of 18 to 65 who had at some  
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54 time read the digital press. The research sample provided a confidence level of  
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56 95% and a maximum error margin of 2.2% for global results.  
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3 The main issues pertaining to this article were formulated in the following  
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5 Research Questions:

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7 RQ1: What differentiates the ten analysed digital slow journalism media in  
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9 Spanish and what features do they share?

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11 RQ2: Do users, academics and professionals have the same opinion about the  
12  
13 quality of these slow journalism media?

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15 RQ3: Do consumers agree with academics/professionals in that quality  
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17 information should be paid for?

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19 RQ4: What are reader usages and habits in relation to slow journalism in  
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21 Spanish?  
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## 28 **RESULTS**

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30 This article aims to answer the four questions above relating to digital slow  
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32 journalism in Spanish practiced by the ten publications in our study: *5W*,  
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34 *Anfibia*, *Arcadia*, *CTXT*, *Jotdown*, *Gatopardo*, *Letras libres*, *La silla vacía*,  
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36 *Panenka* and *Yorokobu*. Using the previously outlined study techniques we  
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38 have elucidated the following aspects:  
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### 41 **1. Characteristics of Slow Journalism**

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43 The most outstanding common features of the ten digital publications can be  
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45 gathered in the four following issues:  
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#### 48 ***Content and elaboration***

49  
50 Despite covering a varied subject matter (culture, international politics, general-  
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52 interest politics, creativity, investigation and football culture), they each  
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54 constitute, in their own field of dissemination, a reference model within quality  
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56 digital journalism in Spanish. Their content sets itself apart from more  
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3 immediate current affairs and their texts add context, in-depth information,  
4 didactic perspective and analysis. Similarly, they contrast sources and invite  
5 their readership to develop critical thought. The content of the magazines  
6 stands out for its careful editing and relevance of the design and photographic  
7 aesthetics. Ultimately, the results of our research coincide with other research  
8 such as that of Rosique and Barranquero, in which slow journalism is something  
9 that stands out 'for offering and producing rigorous, creative, quality information'  
10 (Rosique-Cedillo and Barranquero-Carretero, 2015: 453).

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12 The results obtained via the Delphi study and the structured questionnaire  
13 outlined below point in the same direction. The characteristics of slow  
14 journalism mentioned by the Delphi participants refer to the time and distance  
15 needed to analyse the facts and their contexts, informative neutrality and  
16 audience collaboration. They also indicate that investigation is the most  
17 appropriate for going deeper into the facts and that this contributes to greater  
18 journalistic credibility.

19  
20 The three most outstanding reasons given by those surveyed for valuing slow  
21 journalism are: critical opinion (61%), reflexive attitude (52%) and capacity for  
22 analysis (52%). In terms of the informative quality and clarity of this journalism,  
23 users place these 10 points below the previous reasons (41%), but this is not a  
24 figure to be ignored.

### 25 ***Journalistic genres***

26  
27 The data extracted from the case studies shows that in-depth articles, interview  
28 and feature sections are highly present in all the magazines, being, a priori, the  
29 most relevant and characteristic of slow journalism (Benaissa, 2017: 140;  
30 Rosique-Cedillo and Barranquero-Carretero, 2015: 254). However, each  
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publication has its own unique aspects that distinguish it from the rest (in boldface, Table 2). In the following table we can see the percentage ranges obtained via direct observation and the in-depth interviews:

Table 2: The most notable journalistic genres in each publication.

MAGAZINES	Report	Interview	Feature	Profile	Analysis	Review and Essay	Other (hybridisation)
5W	<b>35-40%</b>	10-20%	<b>40-50%</b>	5-10%			5%
Anfibia			<b>35-45%</b>			<b>35-45%</b>	10%
Arcadia	<b>20-30%</b>	<b>20-30%</b>		5-10%	10-20%	10-20%	5%
CTXT	10-20%	<b>40-50%</b>	10-20%		25-35%		
Letras Libres	10-20%	10-20%	10-20%			<b>40-50%</b>	10-20%
Gatopardo	<b>30-35%</b>	20-30%	20-25%	10-15%	20-30%		10%
Jot Down	<b>30-40%</b>	<b>40-50%</b>			10-20%		
Panenka	<b>40-45%</b>	<b>40-45%</b>					10-20%
La Silla Vacía	<b>30-40%</b>	<b>30-40%</b>	10-15%		20-30%		10%
Yorokobu	<b>20-30%</b>	<b>20-30%</b>	10-15%		10-15%		<b>20-30%</b>

Fuente: Own creation.

In general, the most characteristic genres of slow journalism are the most usual in each media; in addition it should be noted that in most outlets genre hybridisation and the search for new narrative forms – in some cases via all kinds of audiovisual material –, are increasingly more habitual.

The Delphi participants believe that the journalistic genres par excellence are in-depth articles, interview and feature sections. Similarly, they point out that audiovisual material has a great potential for accompanying the narrative, as long as it doesn't replace the text. They indicate that interpretive genres lend themselves best to the development of slow journalism and highlight the potential of hybrid genres and the use of technology.

As is reflected in the surveys carried out in the four Spanish speaking countries in this study, the journalistic genres preferred by the readers are analysis (30%) and feature sections (23%). In Spain, it is the article genre (33%) that stands out before analysis and feature.

### ***Slow journalism professionals***

The five Spanish magazines were born at a time when the traditional media, mainly the written press, was experiencing the hardest consequences of the 2008 economic crisis (a change in consumer habits, the collapse of advertising income, job losses, closure of media outlets...). What this shows, in most cases, is that they were clear examples of enterprising initiatives. Meanwhile, the origins of the Latin American magazines are connected to publishing groups, universities or political parties, and are not so clearly linked to teams of enterprising people. Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2021) also point to this idea.

The conclusions of the case studies reveal that these are small groups made up of an average of 15 workers with both full and part time contracts, with the exception of *Gatopardo* that employs 60 people full time.

Table 3: Number of permanent workers on staff in 2018.

MAGAZINES	FULL TIME	PART TIME
5W	5	
Anfibia	11	
Arcadia	4	
CTXT	3	2
Letras Libres	15	
Gatopardo	60	
Jot Down	9	5
Panenka	6	
La Silla Vacía	18	
Yorokobu	21	

Source: Own creation.

Despite the fact that the core staff is made up of both men and women, all the projects are led by men, who, in the cases of *Anfibia*, *Arcadia*, *Gatopardo*, *Letras Libres* and *La Silla Vacía* are recognised figures within the fields of journalism, culture and literature in their countries. Salaverría et al. (2018), in their article about New Digital Journalism in Latin America have also pointed out the lack of women in charge of these media outlets.

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3 In order to guarantee quality content and thus attract the public's attention, all  
4 the magazines have opted for contracting prestigious names, and they draw on  
5 large groups of collaborators (100-200 people) among which are renowned  
6 professionals. This undoubtedly adds greater interest and attractiveness to the  
7 projects. [As Romero-Rodríguez et al. \(2021\) show following an analysis of 12](#)  
8 [slow media in Latin America, the majority of them opt for 'signature journalism'.](#)  
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10  
11 The profile of the professional who practices slow journalism should, according  
12 to the Delphi results, be that of someone with specialised qualifications and a  
13 knowledge of the basic rules of journalism: the art of writing, rigour,  
14 transparency, independence, contrasting of sources or the ethics and  
15 deontology of the profession.  
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18 However, those surveyed in Argentina, Colombia, Spain and Mexico did not  
19 think that the journalist's name was relevant when consuming the news. When  
20 asked about what they look for in the media, the least valued answer, with just  
21 9% of the total, in all the countries, was that referring to 'admiration for the  
22 journalists who work (on that media publication)'. On the other hand, the most  
23 esteemed options for readers were 'Trust in or quality of certain media' (61%)  
24 and 'Subjects that don't appear in other media' (43%). Therefore, a priori, the  
25 readership appears to be more attracted by quality and subject matter than by  
26 the professional who produces the texts. Our interpretation of this 'discord' is  
27 that the readers are devoted to quality journalism without paying too much  
28 attention to the name of the professional behind the piece.  
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### 30 ***The future and challenges of slow journalism***

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32 Although all the analysed magazines are digital and most have a printed edition,  
33 none of them has implemented a specific mobile phone application. Albalad  
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3 (2018) already pointed this out as one of the challenges facing these media in a  
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5 future which is now the present.

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8 Among the challenges highlighted by the management teams of these  
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10 magazines are the following: to continue practicing slow journalism without  
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12 renouncing quality, to implement markedly innovative projects, to approach  
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14 younger audiences, to increase digital subscriptions, examine new forms of  
15  
16 financing apart from advertising and offer more audiovisual content of their own  
17  
18 creation (without specifying more technological resource).

19  
20  
21 The Delphi participants think that there will always be a place for this journalism  
22  
23 that they consider of quality, because the differences between it and the current  
24  
25 hasty, rapidly consumed journalism will become more and more evident.

26  
27  
28 The majority believe that the future challenge will be to develop new content  
29  
30 and increase readership and visibility in the digital field, and they point out that  
31  
32 this evolution will happen at different rates, depending on each country and  
33  
34 geographical reference zone.

35  
36  
37 In general, the people surveyed value slow journalism positively and they  
38  
39 foresee its continuity in the future (giving it a score of 3.9 out of 5).

## 40 41 42 43 44 **2. The Quality of Slow Journalism: opinions of experts and readers**

45  
46 Quality is one of the main conditions and characteristics highlighted by most  
47  
48 writers (Albalad, 2018; Benaissa, 2017; David et al., 2010; Greenberg, 2007;  
49  
50 Neveu, 2016; Rosique-Cedillo and Barranquero-Carretero, 2015), as a defining  
51  
52 feature of slow journalism.

53  
54  
55  
56 From the in-depth interviews carried out in the research, the managerial teams  
57  
58 pointed the following reasons for launching the new digital outlets: there is a  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 gap in the market; they cannot find cultural, political and sporting information on  
4  
5 offer responding to their needs; they need to explain what is behind established  
6  
7 power; they admit being dissatisfied with the dynamics of the traditional media  
8  
9 (only covers the most immediate current events); they believe it vital to carry out  
10  
11 quality journalism in order to cultivate thought and culture.  
12  
13

14 When those responsible for the studied publications speak about quality they  
15  
16 are referring to: informative rigour, contrasting of data and sources,  
17  
18 documentation for contextualising the facts, transparency of the information,  
19  
20 elaboration of texts following the ethical and deontological rules of journalism,  
21  
22 and writing excellence. In other words, they allude to the most basic and  
23  
24 traditional values of journalism that appear to have been forgotten or are in  
25  
26 need of recuperation (Arrese, 2016). In order to achieve all this, they point to  
27  
28 time as a necessary requisite, essential for creating and elaborating news  
29  
30 information and also for its consumption.  
31  
32  
33

34  
35 Even though the international panorama is diverse and casuistry varied, the  
36  
37 Delphi study experts perceive a clear drop in the quality and credibility of  
38  
39 journalism. However, they also believe that there is room for optimism, given  
40  
41 that there is an increasing demand for quality, and the independent projects  
42  
43 created on digital platforms can also be of quality.  
44  
45

46  
47 Some believe it appropriate to distinguish between quality information and the  
48  
49 credibility of the media. The participants who disagreed with the subject of  
50  
51 quality underline that the profession's most important problem lies in the crisis  
52  
53 within the news companies, while others see a financing opportunity through  
54  
55 subscriptions, and the growth of the slow culture encouraged and practiced by  
56  
57 younger generations as ensuring quality.  
58  
59  
60



Table 4 shows that quality is an essential element that all those surveyed demand from the media, regardless of gender, age or country of residence.

**Table 4. What do you look for in the media?**

VERTICAL % with Jhi <sup>2</sup> score	Total	COUNTRY				GENDER			AGE (years)		
		Argentina	Colombia	Spain	México	Male	Female	Non binary	18_34	35_49	50_65
<b>Total</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>565</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>1</b>	61	58	65	59	62	61	60	73	65	59	58
<b>2</b>	43	36	52	34	50	43	44	35	48	39	38
<b>3</b>	21	20	22	19	23	23	19	24	23	23	17
<b>4</b>	17	18	20	17	16	21	13	22	14	16	24
<b>5</b>	11	16	13	6	9	10	11	16	13	10	11
<b>6</b>	9	10	7	8	10	9	8	12	8	8	10
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trust in or quality of certain media.</li> <li>2. Subjects that don't appear in other media.</li> <li>3. A specific media.</li> <li>4. Editorial line.</li> <li>5. Feeling part of a community.</li> <li>6. Admiration for the journalists who work on it.</li> </ol>											

In general, for every 10 readers, more than 6 look for informative quality. The youngest readers are the ones who demand the most quality, and at the same time, are most prepared to pay for that quality, as can be seen below, in Table 5. By country, users in Colombia are the most demanding of media quality and those who demand the most trust (even above the average).

Readers in Mexico and Colombia are the most interested in subjects outside the daily agenda, specifically those between the ages of 18 and 34. They look to satisfy their thirst for information above and beyond the mainstream news.

The editorial line is not a decisive factor when it comes to choosing one media publication or another in any of the countries where the survey was carried out.

However, the percentage of men who consider it important (21%) is almost twice that of women (13%). Age is also a variable to be taken into account:

those in the 50-65 age bracket give most importance to the editorial line.

### 3. Paid Quality Digital Information?

According to the data extracted from this study, the observed user tendency does not coincide with the opinion of the experts (academics and professionals).

**Table 5. Willingness to pay more for the quality offered by slow journalism.**

% Horizontals with Jhi <sup>2</sup> score	Total	Willingness to pay more for the quality offered by slow journalism	
		Yes (%)	No (%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>COUNTRY</b>			
<b>Argentina</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Colombia</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Spain</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>GENDER</b>			
<b>Male</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Non binary</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>AGE (years)</b>			
<b>18_34</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>35_49</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>50_65</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</b>			
<b>Compulsory Education or less</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Further Education</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>University degree</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Post grad studies</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>ACTIVITY</b>			
<b>ACTIVE POPULATION</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>INACTIVE POPULATION</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>HABITAT</b>			
<b>&lt;50.000</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>50.000-500.000</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>OVER 500.000</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>READERS OF SLOW JOURNALISM</b>			
<b>YES</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>NO</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>73</b>

There is no doubt about the data reflected in Table 5: The majority of those surveyed do not see a need to pay for quality information (Table 5). Some 63% would not pay, against 37% who would. Readers in Colombia (49%) and Mexico (47%) would be most willing to pay. Despite there being no relevant differences, women and non-binary gender individuals would be more willing to pay than men. In general, middle aged people, with a lower level of formal education, living in small towns and who are not consumers of slow journalism show a lower disposition to paying for the quality of slow journalism.

Running parallel to this, there is another data in the survey that confirms this preference for cost-free status, and it is that 76% of those surveyed has never been subscribed to a digital news media (66% doesn't have or has never had a subscription to a printed news media), and 85% doesn't have or has never had a subscription to any digital slow journalism media.

The Delphi participants consider that subscriptions, crowdfunding, patronage or donations can form part of slow media financing, as long as they do not condition the independence of the professionals or the legitimacy of their work.

All this corroborates even further the results obtained in previous research. As AUTHOR (2016) point out, 55% of users claimed to be unwilling to pay for quality content in the press – just the opposite of most of the professionals (57%) who believed that citizens would be willing to pay.

#### 4. The Slow Journalism Audience

The profile of a user who reads the slow media could be defined as that of someone who demands quality products (Albalad, 2015; Rosique-Cedillo and Barrenquero-Carretero, 2015), who is curious, critical, with an interest in

1  
2  
3 discovering things not previously published that offer analysis and are distanced  
4  
5 from the mainstream (Benaissa, 2017: 142).  
6

7  
8 The responses of the Delphi participants support what has been outlined so far,  
9  
10 given that they consider that the person who consumes slow journalism is more  
11  
12 attracted by quality than by the rapid consumption of the news. They point to a  
13  
14 well-educated reader, with curiosity, a capacity for analysis, sensitive to certain  
15  
16 subjects and with the necessary time for reading at their disposal.  
17

18  
19 Likewise, the experts think that contact between the media and its audience is  
20  
21 fundamental since it contributes to improving results and to the creation of  
22  
23 reader communities. Some of the Delphi participants qualified their comments  
24  
25 by indicating that 'It is not journalism for majorities' (Participant 16). Others refer  
26  
27 to the plurality of the audience: 'A large part of the readers come from the  
28  
29 traditional media with interest in a particular subject, a greater depth or a style'  
30  
31 (Participant 3). Some, however, point out that it is 'A readership that cannot  
32  
33 cope with a journalism of more than 5,000 words or more than two minutes on  
34  
35 the same page' (Participant 22).  
36  
37  
38  
39

40 **Table 6. Knowledge of Slow Journalism.**

VERTICAL % with Jhi <sup>2</sup> score	Total		COUNTRY								GENDER						AGE(years)							
			Argenti na		Colomb ia		Spain		Mexico		Male		Female		Non binary		18_34		35_4 9		50_6 5			
Total	2000		500		500		500		500		946		959		95		854		581		565			
	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	% No	% Y e s	
<b>1</b>	16	84	12	88	20	80	16	84	18	82	17	83	16	84	15	85	19	81	16	84	12	88	18	82
<b>2</b>	36	64	25	75	56	44	24	76	38	62	35	65	36	64	44	56	40	60	35	65	31	69	36	64
1. HEARD the term <i>slow journalism</i> .																								
2. READ (at least one of the suggested media).																								

54  
55  
56  
57 Table 6 is proof of participant 16's comment in the Delphi study: slow journalism  
58  
59 is a journalism of minorities. In the survey carried out among people aged 18 to  
60

1  
2  
3 65 who have consumed the digital press at some time, only 16% had heard of  
4  
5 the terms *slow journalism*, *unhurried journalism*, *narrative journalism*. As can be  
6  
7 seen in Table 6, those most familiar with these terms are Colombians and  
8  
9 young people.  
10

11  
12 After informing those surveyed of what is meant by slow journalism and giving  
13  
14 them the names of some of the magazines that practice this type of journalism,  
15  
16 just 36% confessed to having read the slow media at some time. This  
17  
18 proportion is significantly higher in Colombia (56%) in comparison to the other  
19  
20 countries. It is also the case among people who do not identify as gender binary  
21  
22 and in the youngest age group. In general, people with a university degree  
23  
24 (41%), a post grad qualification (49%), those who live in big cities (39%) and  
25  
26 those who are members of the active population (37%) are those who have  
27  
28 most read the slow media.  
29  
30  
31

32  
33 Half of those who read the slow media do so at least once a week, and 52%  
34  
35 spend between 15 and 30 minutes each time.  
36

37  
38 Almost all (91%) of the people surveyed use a digital device, mainly a  
39  
40 smartphone (80%), to read the slow media. Some 90% of these are young  
41  
42 people between the ages of 18 and 34. Social media (71%) are the platforms  
43  
44 most used to access this type of news media.  
45

46  
47 Slow journalism is highly valued among the people who consume it, and proof  
48  
49 of this is the score of 4 out of 5 that they give it. Above all, it is the quality and its  
50  
51 future possibilities that are most valued.  
52

53  
54 Some 47% of those who responded to our survey think that journalism should  
55  
56 redirect itself towards slow journalism on the Internet. As with previous  
57  
58 questions, the percentages are higher in Colombia (57%) and in Mexico (56%),  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 and among readers of slow journalism (59%). These people argue in favour of  
4  
5 this as a way to attract more readers and because it is more easily accessed  
6  
7 from different places (37%). The quality argument is the second reason for this:  
8  
9 15% of the responses point to the higher quality offered by slow journalism on  
10  
11 the Internet (more truthful and capable of counteracting fake news). It is  
12  
13 surprising that, in order to justify this redirection towards slow journalism, those  
14  
15 surveyed practically ignored the characteristics mentioned in this article as  
16  
17 belonging to it: 'understanding of the events' was only chosen by 6%; 'depth  
18  
19 and development of the information', also only mentioned by 6%; 'aids reflection  
20  
21 and the formation of own criteria', again just 6%; 'It is a more interesting  
22  
23 journalism', a mere 3%, and 'allows interaction', only noted by 1%.

## 30 **CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

31  
32 The differences between the 10 magazines studied for this article can be seen  
33  
34 fundamentally in the main subjects covered by them – ranging from culture,  
35  
36 international politics, general-interest politics, creativity, to investigation and  
37  
38 football culture. Likewise, each one stands out for using its own journalistic  
39  
40 genres, both interpretative and of opinion and which make them unique and of  
41  
42 reference.

43  
44 Despite the mentioned differences, these 10 publications have more things in  
45  
46 common: their content is in line with slow journalism – they are not subject to  
47  
48 the most urgent current affairs, the texts they publish contextualise the facts,  
49  
50 they are profound, they use a variety of contrasted sources and encourage the  
51  
52 reader to reflect in a critical way.

53  
54 Although we have mentioned some singularities in the journalistic genres that  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 each of these magazines uses, what predominates in all of them are in-depth  
4  
5 articles and interviews, feature sections and genre hybridisation.  
6

7  
8 The staff of these projects are characterised by their reduced size – around 10-  
9  
10 15 employees, all led by men. However, all the magazines draw from a wide  
11  
12 pool of prestigious, recognised collaborators. [From now on, women working on](#)  
13  
14 [this media should be identified in their professions \(Salaverría et al., 2016\) and](#)  
15  
16 [also should be encouraged and empowered to take charge of these media](#)  
17  
18 [outlets.](#)  
19

20  
21 In terms of the most immediate aims and future challenges, they all opt for slow  
22  
23 journalism, quality, innovation, attracting younger readers, gaining more  
24  
25 subscribers and new sources of financing. [In agreement with Tejedor-Calvo et](#)  
26  
27 [al. \(2020\) the use of augmented reality \(AR\) should be promoted, both ‘for the](#)  
28  
29 [design and the production of new content and formats’, and incorporated as](#)  
30  
31 [soon as possible into university curricula.](#)  
32  
33

34  
35 The concept of slow journalism is quite a widespread term amongst academics  
36  
37 and professional experts, but readers are not aware of the reach of its meaning:  
38  
39 84% of those surveyed had never heard of the terms slow journalism, and just  
40  
41 36% admitted to having read the slow media after being told the definition and  
42  
43 the names of some magazines. Colombian readers are most familiar with slow  
44  
45 journalism, which seems logical given that Colombia was a pioneer of this  
46  
47 journalistic current in Latin America with the publication of *Malpensante* in 1996.  
48  
49  
50 Whilst the experts did identify what slow journalism is, they were reluctant to  
51  
52 propose a specific definition. It is not easy to suggest a canonical definition, and  
53  
54 even if one existed it is not sufficiently well known outside academic and  
55  
56  
57  
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59  
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1  
2  
3 professional circles, thus making it difficult to speak to readers about slow  
4  
5 journalism.  
6

7  
8 Nevertheless, experts and readers coincide in highlighting quality as one of the  
9  
10 characteristics that defines slow journalism. The Delphi participants underline  
11  
12 the deterioration of the quality and credibility of journalism in general, but they  
13  
14 point out that readers increasingly demand it, as is reflected in the data  
15  
16 produced by the survey carried out in the research. Over half of the people  
17  
18 surveyed (61%) in the four Spanish speaking countries demand trust and  
19  
20 quality from the media.  
21  
22

23  
24 When referring to the quality of their projects, the directors interviewed  
25  
26 underline the following: informative rigour, contrasting of data and sources, the  
27  
28 necessary documentation work for contextualising the facts, transparency of the  
29  
30 information and text elaboration following the ethical and deontological rules of  
31  
32 journalism, together with a scrupulous correction of the writing. [Their aim is for](#)  
33  
34 [readers to have a more meaningful experience of the information they read and](#)  
35  
36 [to be able to cultivate a critical spirit and communicative competence.](#)  
37  
38 [Nevertheless, the quality of media information 'cannot only be evaluated and/or](#)  
39  
40 [verified through the final product' \(Romero-Rodríguez and Aguaded, 2017;](#)  
41  
42 [Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2020\).](#)  
43  
44  
45

46  
47 Slow journalism obtains a score of 4 out of 5 from its readers and,  
48  
49 fundamentally, they value its quality and future possibilities. Likewise, the  
50  
51 experts believe that the reader of slow journalism is more concerned with  
52  
53 quality than quantity, but they warn that it is a minority journalism.  
54

55  
56 Despite the majority of those surveyed being of the opinion that quality is a  
57  
58 feature that defines slow journalism, when it comes to the possibility of paying  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 to consume quality information, the data is quite revealing: 63% of those  
4 surveyed do not consider it necessary to pay for quality. The most reluctant are  
5 the Argentines (75%) and the Spanish (73%), distantly followed by the  
6 Colombians (51%) and Mexicans (53%). Young people demand informative  
7 quality and appear to be the sector of the population most willing to pay for it  
8 (39%), although the cost-free culture is alive and well in all reader age groups.

9  
10  
11  
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16  
17 As far as Spain is concerned, the tendency was very similar in 2013 when a  
18 survey was carried out in Germany, UK, Italy, France and Spain (Ramírez de la  
19 Piscina et al., 2015). On that occasion, Spain headed the ranking with 64% of  
20 those surveyed being unwilling to pay to consume quality information on the  
21 Internet.

22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28 It seems difficult to change a habit that, in less than two decades, has taken  
29 root in Western societies. In the Spanish and Latin American context it is also  
30 an extended practice throughout all age sectors, and apparently widely  
31 accepted culturally.

32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38 In terms of the habits and routines of the readers of slow journalism in Spanish,  
39 it is worth pointing out that the reading frequency of 50% of readers is once a  
40 week, whilst the time spent on it is 15-30 minutes. The majority of those  
41 surveyed (91%) read in digital format and 80% use a smartphone to consume  
42 slow journalism.

43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49 The reader profile is almost entirely (90%) a young person (ages 18-34) that  
50 uses social media (70%) to access slow journalism news outlets. Similarly, the  
51 questionnaires reflect that those who most consume slow journalism are people  
52 with a university degree or postgraduate studies, who live in big cities and are  
53 active members of society.

1  
2  
3 As is widely accepted, the social service of journalism is crucial for giving  
4 citizens confidence; journalists have a duty to their readers. In the current  
5 uncertain times the media must provide the population with crucial support so  
6 that they are able to determine for themselves the destiny, environment and  
7 culture in which they wish to live. This will only be possible if the citizenship is  
8 assured access to a media which offers independent, quality information,  
9 unquestionable in its character and worked by professionals who constantly  
10 renew their commitment to their readers. On the other hand, readers must be  
11 conscientious of their role in the communicative activity: they are not mere  
12 users in the news media; they are citizens contributing to the future informative  
13 health of societies and democracies.

14  
15 Further studies have to be done on audiences in different places, not only in  
16 order to know their reception habits and content preferences, but to study how  
17 to provide them with the resources necessary to have independent criteria in  
18 order to assess quality information in the digital world. The aim should be to  
19 create a critical mass of more and better educated citizens.

20  
21 It is equally important to study the role of the Latin American woman in these  
22 media: what kind of jobs do they do and what are their aspirations.

## 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

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