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## Use of social networks by high-impact journals in Communication and Information Sciences

### Uso de las redes sociales por las revistas de alto impacto en Comunicación y Ciencias de la información

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#### Abstract

This research sought to examine the adoption of social networks by the Communication and Library and Information Sciences (LIS) scientific journals with the greatest impact (Q1) according to the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR). A descriptive methodology was followed with a quantitative approach through a review of the websites and social networks of the journals. The profiles and their activity on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube were identified, their activity was analysed according to types of publishers in relation to their size and the results between the two areas were compared, revealing their similarities and differences. Among the main contributions, there is evidence of a different behaviour between the two categories studied, with a greater adoption of social media in the Communication area, a clear predominance of the X platform in all cases, and a greater presence in networks of small journals and independent publishers than from major publishers. Among the limitations of this research, we can point to the absence of a content analysis of the publications; this is proposed for future studies.

#### Keywords

Science communication; Scientific journals; Social media; Publishers; Communication; Information science

#### Resumen

Se presenta un estudio sobre la adopción de redes sociales por parte de las revistas científicas de mayor impacto (Q1) según el indicador Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) en las categorías de Communication y Library and Information Sciences (LIS). Se ha seguido una metodología descriptiva con un enfoque cuantitativo a través de la revisión de los sitios webs y las redes sociales de las revistas. Se han identificado los perfiles y la actividad de estas en las plataformas X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn y YouTube, se ha analizado su actividad según tipos de editoriales en relación a su tamaño y se han comparado los resultados entre las dos áreas, mostrando sus similitudes y diferencias. Entre las principales aportaciones se evidencia un comportamiento diferente entre las dos categorías estudiadas, con una mayor adopción de los medios sociales en el área de Communication, un claro predominio de la plataforma X en todos los casos y una mayor presencia en redes de las revistas de editoriales pequeñas e independientes que de las editoriales grandes y gigantes. Entre las limitaciones de esta investigación se puede señalar la ausencia de un análisis de contenido de las publicaciones, que se propone para futuros estudios.

#### Palabras clave

Comunicación de la ciencia; Revistas científicas; Redes sociales; Editoriales; Comunicación; Ciencia de la información.

## 1. Introduction

The technological revolution and changes in communication brought about by the advent of Web 2.0 have led to a highly connected world and an information-based economy (Castells, 2004). For over a decade, there has been a warning about the transformative role of emerging social networks, the most recognizable and notable product of Web 2.0 (Grabner-Kräuter, 2009), and their impact on traditional communication (Campos Freire, 2008). Social networks have integrated into all areas of society, completely transforming the traditional forms of consumption and dissemination of news from traditional media (Bright, 2016). Thanks to these new tools, the communication of these media has become bidirectional, and a dialogue with the audience has been established (Lara Padilla, 2008).

In the field of science, the changes that have arisen with the advent of social networks are equally palpable. The way in which science is done and communicated has been benefited by all the tools derived from Web 2.0 (Codina, 2009). Thus, scientific communication has evolved beyond a linear process and has become more complex, encompassing not only interactions between professionals and scientists, but also among society as a whole (Bucchi and Trench, 2021; Lewenstein, 2022). Thanks to the use of general social networks like X (formerly Twitter) or Facebook, with a significant presence of users outside the academic sphere, a valuable opportunity has emerged not only for peer-to-peer communication, but also to bring science closer to society and make science public (Bucchi and Trench, 2008). This has led to the use of the extensive range of channels for the dissemination of research results, while at the same time giving rise to new efforts and challenges for efficient communication (Hunter, 2020). These tools have been adopted across the scientific ecosystem, from scientific journals to institutions such as universities and research centres, as well as researchers themselves. Thus, scientists use them in their daily lives to promote their research, communicate with colleagues, or follow live updates from a conference (Collins, Shiffman, and Rock, 2016). Within this broad digital territory, each scientific area has managed to articulate itself and find its own niche, thereby optimizing community dialogue (Torres-Salinas et al., 2023).

It is in this context that "altmetrics" (Priem et al., 2010) emerge, metrics that quantify interactions in social media related to science. The counting of mentions that a work receives on a social network, the visits or downloads it receives, or the number of times it is commented on, is a potential indicator of impact outside the academic sphere (Torres-Salinas, Clavijo, and Contreras, 2013). That is why, initially, efforts have focused on defining the relationship between citations and these indicators, but without success, demonstrating that this relationship is non-existent (Costas, Zahedi, and Wouters, 2015). Afterward, the focus has shifted from counting raw interactions and predicting citations to delving into the communication itself and the context of activity on social networks. Thus, new proposals have begun to emerge aimed at understanding the extensive interactions produced in these media and their context (Díaz-Faes, Bowman, and Costas, 2019). An example of this can be found in the study of the presence and activity of different academic actors and their environment, exploring everything from the communication and attention community of researchers (Robinson-García, Van Leeuwen, and Ràfols, 2018) to the factors that can influence interactions with universities' social media accounts (Lund, 2019).

Scientific journals and publishers are frequent subjects of study, exploring their presence in the digital environment along with their communication strategies, which vary depending on the knowledge area. In Medicine there is a tendency to disseminate publications which are oriented towards researchers (Erskine and Hendricks, 2021), while in Humanities and Social Sciences share web content and try to connect with the public (Raamkumar et al., 2018). This has led to new ways of communicating science through audiovisual resources such as podcasts and infographics, which reach a more diverse audience than traditional communication (Fox et al., 2021). Due to the ease with which social networks reach a large audience, journals and publishers have integrated into this ecosystem to achieve this goal, particularly for X and Facebook (Zedda and Barbaro, 2015). Within the academic environment, activity on media is rewarded with greater visibility and scientific impact, although this influence is of a reduced magnitude (Ortega, 2017; Özkent, 2022). The characteristics of the journal itself have been shown to be key in the dissemination of research, with high-impact journals having a greater reach (Cao et al., 2023). However, the strategies followed to adopt these tools and their implications for scientific communication have been disparate from the outset (Stewart et al., 2013), so much so that years after social networks became part of the scientific routine, the percentage of journals with a social media presence is small (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2023; Zheng et al., 2019). Although editors perceive their use positively (Arcila-Calderón, Calderín-Cruz, and Sánchez-Holgado, 2019), there are noticeable differences in their use across research areas, with a significant number of studies analyzing the communication strategies of medical journals (Erskine and Hendricks, 2021).

It has been shown that the adoption rate of social networks and communication strategies in journals is heterogeneous and varies depending on the field of knowledge. However, there are no results that delve into these strategies according to the journal's scientific impact, comparing two areas to

emphasize the differences and similarities. These results would be useful for information professionals, editors, and managers of journals and their social networks. Library and Information Sciences (LIS) and Communication (COM) were chosen, and the Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) was used due to their thematic proximity, both within the same area (Social Sciences), and the knowledge we have about these disciplines. This similarity is evident in the overlap of four journals in both disciplines: "Profesional de la Información," "Information Communication and Society," "Big Data and Society," and "Journal of Health Communication." Additionally, while the analysis focused on high-impact journals is common, most make this selection based on the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) using data from WoS (Haustein, 2019). This is why using the SJR with data from Scopus provides a novel approach in this type of study.

The research questions (RQ) set for this work are as follows:

RQ 1 - What is the level of adoption of social networks in high-impact scientific journals in the LIS and COM categories according to the SJR?

RQ 2 - Which social platforms prevail among high-impact (Q1) journals in the LIS and COM categories?

RQ 3 - Are there different social media behaviour patterns depending on the size of the publishing house?

RQ 4 - What similarities and differences exist between the two areas studied?

To answer these questions, the main objective is to explore the use of social networks by high-impact academic journals in two different SJR categories (Library and Information Sciences and Communication). The specific objectives are as follows:

Identify the profiles of Q1 journals in the LIS and COM categories on X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Determine the use of the journals on the social networks where they have a presence.

Analyze the presence and activity of journals on networks according to the size of the publishing house.

Study the similarities and differences between the two areas to highlight their key points and verify whether Communication journals disseminate their content better, as this research suggests.

## 2. Methodology

To achieve the research objectives outlined, the research methodology followed the Ferran-Ferrer et al. (2017) classifications, which is descriptive with a quantitative approach regarding the presence of the items studied.

The research material consists of data from the Scimago Journal & Country Rank (SJR) indicator about the journals included in the Scopus scientific database, as well as the websites of the journals studied and their profiles on different social media platforms.

To obtain the SJR data, the Journal Rankings product was consulted in February 2023, using an initial filter of Social Sciences, and two subsequent filters for the categories studied, Communication (hereafter, COM) and Library and Information Science (hereafter, LIS), with the options of all region/countries, Journals, 2021. Journals from these categories were chosen because they are the closest to the researchers' field of study. Furthermore, these two areas are close to each other, making it viable to compare them. The data was exported, and only the journals in the top quartile or highest impact (Q1) were selected to determine whether high-impact journals achieve greater dissemination or not, as stated in the study by Cao et al., (2023).

Then, in March-April 2023, open social media profiles of Q1 journals in COM and LIS were searched based on the official websites of the journals or through searches on Google and the search engines of the analysed social media platforms: X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

The following scenarios were found and recorded:

1. The journal has one or more active social media profiles. Coded as: "Yes" along with the platform names. Example: Yes (X and Facebook).

2. The journal does not have its own social media profile, but its publisher does. Coded as: "No, from the publisher."

3. The journal does not have its own social media profile, and neither does its publisher. Coded as: "No."
4. The journal has a social media profile, but it has been inactive for a year or more. Coded as: "Yes," along with the platform name and the term "inactive." Example: Yes (X, inactive).
5. The journal has an open social media profile, but it has no content (it is unknown if it has never been posted, or if it was posted and subsequently deleted). Coded as: "No, (platform name) without content." Example: No, Instagram without content.

The resulting database used for this research can be accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.34810/data767>.

Finally, the data of the publishers of the journals from the downloaded SJR database was compared with the data provided on the official websites of the journals themselves, and any changes were noted.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1 Use of Social Media by COM and LIS Journals in SJR Q1**

Firstly, in analysing Communication journals (as seen in Table 1), of the 112 journals in the top Q1 quartile according to the SJR indicator, with data from the Scopus database, it is observed that just over half of them (63 journals, 56.25%) have active profiles on social media platforms. Additionally, 3 journals have open but inactive accounts (the Facebook profiles of Chinese Journal of Communication, JMM International Journal on Media Management, and the X and Facebook profiles of Journalism & Communication Monographs). In terms of distribution by region, a large majority are from Europe (44, 69%), nearly a fifth are from North America (18, 18.2%), and only one is from Oceania. There are no journals with a social media presence from other regions of the world such as Asia, Central or South America, or Africa.

It is evident that Communication journals tend focus on one or two social media platforms. Most journals use a single social media platform (41 journals, 65.07%), a significant number combine two of them (18 journals, 28.57%), and only 4 journals use 3 or more social media platforms: Comunicar, Profesional de la Información, Revista Latina de Comunicación Social, and Nordicom Review, with the interesting fact that the first three are from Spain.

On the other hand, of the 61 journals in the LIS area in the top Q1 quartile of SJR, the opposite scenario to that of the COM area is observed. In this case, a large majority of LIS journals do not have their own open profiles on any social media platform (45 journals, 73.7%). Only about a quarter of the LIS journals in Q1 have their own active social media profiles (16 journals, 26.22%), and three other journals have open but inactive profiles at the time of the study: Journal of Web Librarianship, Scientometrics, and Education for Information. A similar regional distribution to that of the COM area is observed, with a large majority of journals from Europe (13 of them, 81.25%), three from North America (18.7%), and none from other areas of the world, including Asia.

As was noted with Communication journals, the majority of LIS journals use a single social media platform (12 journals, 75%), and in addition, two journals combine two platforms and two other journals use three or more platforms (in this case, the Spanish journal Profesional de la Información and the North American journal College and Research Libraries).

In addition to the information about the social media presence of COM and LIS academic journals, it is interesting to note a related issue, which is that some journals' publishers have a social media presence. In both categories, around 90% of the journals have their publisher's open profile on social media, a very high percentage that contrasts with the data on the individual profiles of each journal. Furthermore, for 40% of COM journals and 65% of LIS journals, their only connection to social media is through their publisher's profile.

**Table 1: Social networks presence of the COM and LIS journals of SJR Q1**

SJR Area	Total Journals	Journals with their own profiles active on social networks		Journals with only social media profiles of their publishers		Journals with publishers social media profiles (they may or may not have their own)		Journals with their own inactive networks		Journals that never had a profile on social networks
		AF	RF	AF	RF	AF	RF	AF	RF	AF
COM	112	63	56,25%	45	40,17%	100	89,28%	3	2,67%	1
LIS	61	16	26,22%	40	65,25%	55	90,16%	3	4,91%	2

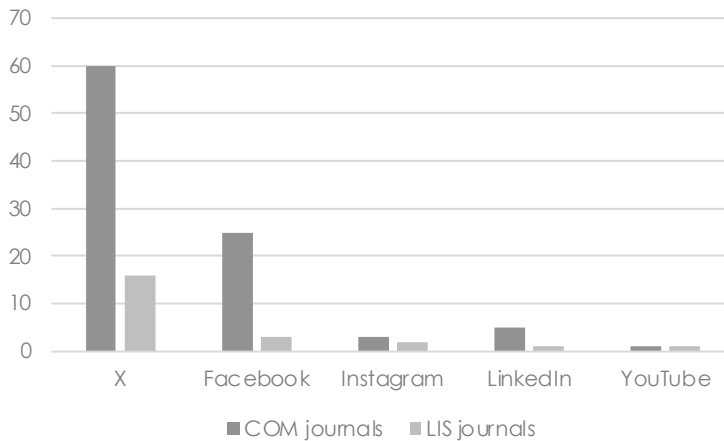
SJR Area	Journals with their own active profiles	Use of a single social platform		Use of two social platforms		Majority of magazines continent	
	AF	AF	RF	AF	RF	AF	RF
COM	63	41	65,07%	18	28,57%	44	European (69,84%)
LIS	16	12	75%	2	12,5%	13	European (81,25%)

Source: created by the authors.

**3.2. Social platforms used by SJR Q1 Communication and LIS scientific journals and number of users/followers of said platforms.**

Five social media platforms used by the scientific journals were analysed: X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. The 63 COM journals and the 16 LIS journals with medium social presence distribute their profiles on social networks as follows (Graph 1):

**Graph 1. Social network profiles by platforms of the Communication and LIS journals of SJR Q1.**

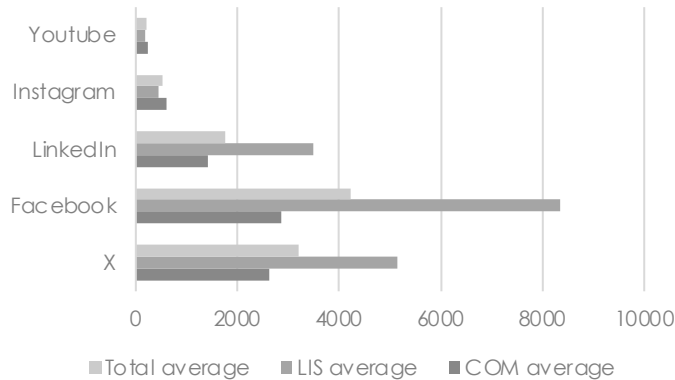


Of these five platforms, X is clearly the most widely used, far above the rest, as it is used by 95.23% of COM journals and 100% of LIS journals. X is also the only platform exclusively used by many journals; specifically, 33 from COM (51.56%) and 10 from LIS (62.5%). Additionally, there is a notable combined use of X and Facebook, with 3 LIS journals (18.75%) and 17 COM journals (26.98%) utilizing both (these figures also include journals that use X, Facebook, and other social media platforms, not just the two exclusively).

The second most-used social network is Facebook (by 25 COM journals and 3 LIS journals), and it is the only social network used by three COM journals. It is worth noting that a Facebook profile is shared by the journals Digital Journalism, Journalism Practice, and Journalism Studies. The remaining social media platforms, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, are less used by the studied journals, unlike their prominence in other professional sectors outside academia. YouTube, in fact, is only used by a single journal, Big Data and Society, which is present in both categories studied.

In contrast to the platforms, where X was found to be the most widely used, an analysis of all COM and LIS journals shows that, on average, Facebook profiles have the highest number of users (4233), followed by X in second position (3213), and then and at some distance LinkedIn (1752), with Instagram being less common (521) and YouTube almost negligible (197), as shown in Graph 2. The differences in users and their ranking from highest to lowest are consistent in the COM and LIS categories, following the same pattern of Facebook in first place, followed by X, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. The most notable difference occurs in the LIS category, where Facebook stands out with 8344 users compared to X's 5141.

**Graph 2. Average number of users per social network in both categories and total average.**



These data should be approached with caution due to the distortion caused by one profile in LIS, which also affects the overall average: the Facebook profile of Scientific Data, with 57,000 users. If we exclude this journal from both the total and LIS averages, X becomes the platform with the most users. The hypothesis before conducting this study was that X would dominate in terms of users, and the fact that Scientific Data distorts this hypothesis would seem to confirm it. However, in the COM category, where Scientific Data is not present, Facebook is the slightly dominant social network in terms of users (2863) over X (2625).

It is also interesting to note that despite there being a higher percentage of journals with profiles on social media in COM compared to LIS, conversely, in terms of users on X, Facebook, and LinkedIn, LIS has more. Almost double in X, over three times in Facebook, and more than double in LinkedIn. Despite this, both Instagram and Youtube have fewer users in LIS than in COM, although only slightly. Below is some data about the profiles with the most users in each of the categories:

- Overall Top: Scientific Data (Facebook, 57000), Scientific Data (X, 25800), Big Data and Society (X, 22669).
- Top in COM: Big Data and Society (X, 22669), Social Media and Society (X, 12910), Comunicar (Facebook, 12000).
- Top in LIS: Scientific Data (Facebook, 57000), Scientific Data (X, 25800), Big Data and Society (X, 22669).
- Top in X: Scientific Data (25800), Big Data and Society (22669), Social Media and Society (12910).
- Top in Facebook: Scientific Data (57000), Comunicar (12000), Journalism Studies (9551).
- Top in LinkedIn: Profesional de la Informacion (3476), Journal of Advertising (1727), Comunicar (937).
- Top in Instagram: Profesional de la Informacion (712), Journalism Studies (477), College and Research Libraries (181).
- Top in Youtube: International Journal of Geographical Information Science (253), Big Data and Society (235), Journal of the Medical Library Association: JMLA (66).

### 3.3 Social Media Publication in Relation to Publisher Size

#### 3.3.1 Giant, Large, Small, or Independent Publishers

To better understand the social media behaviour of scientific journals based on their publisher, this study proposes dividing publisher size into three categories: small or independent, large, and giant publishers.

Giant publishers are the top ten scientific publishers by the number of published articles. According to the well-known study by Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon (2015), the top five are Reed-Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer, and Sage. According to Delgado López-Cozar and Martín-Martín (2022), the top 10 publishers indexed in the Web of Science core collection in 2021 were: Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley, MDPI, Taylor & Francis, IEEE, SAGE, Frontiers, Oxford University Press, and Lippincott Williams.

In our own search within the WOS Core Collection over the past ten years (2012-2021), the top ten publishers by published articles are essentially the same as those identified by Delgado López-Cozar and Martín-Martín (2022), with the exception that Frontiers does not appear in our list, but Amer Chemical Soc. does, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: 10 publishers with the most articles published in the years 2012-2021 according to WOS Core Collection<sup>11</sup>**

Publisher	Number of records	% of records over the total
Elsevier	5555136	17,686
Springer Nature	3625670	11,543
Wiley	2599167	8,275
IEEE	1981859	6,31
Taylor & Francis	1348945	4,295
Oxford Univ Press	751396	2,392
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins	694178	2,21
Amer Chemical Soc	675252	2,15
Sage	658395	2,096
Mdpi	634308	2,019

Source: WoS Core collection.

Secondly, we consider large scientific publishers to be those that, in the aforementioned search, have more than 10,000 articles published in that period and, at the same time, are not among the top ten giants.

Finally, the rest of the publishers located in the SJR indicator of COM and LIS are considered small or independent scientific publishers.

#### 3.3.2 COM and LIS Journals by Publisher Size

In the Q1 of the SJR in the field of Communication, the presence of journals belonging to the group of giant scientific publishers is very prominent, as 3 out of 4 journals have this profile; specifically, 84 out of 112 COM journals (75%). The rest of the journals are distributed closely between the other two categories: 11 journals belong to large publishers (9.8%), and 17 are from small or independent publishers (15.1%).

Furthermore, as observed in Table 3, in the COM category, giant publishers have many more journals than large publishers; among the former, Taylor and Francis and Sage stand out, which is logical considering that both are leaders in the field of social sciences knowledge (<https://taylorandfrancis.com/about/>) (<https://group.sagepub.com/>). It should be noted that 38 (33.9%) of the highest-impact journals in COM are from Taylor and Francis, specifically 23 from its subsidiary Routledge. On the other hand, in the category of large publishers, Emerald Group Publishing and John Benjamins Publishing Company slightly stand out, each with three journals.

**Table 3: Journals from Giant and Large publishers in the COM and LIS categories of SJR Q1**

<b>Communication Journals</b>			
<b>Giant Publishers</b>		<b>Large Publishers</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Number of journals</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Number of journals</b>
Taylor and Francis (Routledge <sup>[2]</sup> )	38 (23)	Emerald Group Publishing	3
SAGE Publications	27	John Benjamins Publishing Company	3
Elsevier	9	American Psychological Association	1
Wiley-Blackwel	5	De Gruyter Mouton	1
Oxford University Press	2	MIT Press Journals	1
Springer	2	University of Chicago Press	1
<b>LIS Journals</b>			
<b>Giant Publishers</b>		<b>Large Publishers</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Number of journals</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Number of journals</b>
Taylor and Francis (Routledge)	13 (7)	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	8
Springer Nature	10	Johns Hopkins University Press	2
Elsevier Ltd.	9	University of Chicago	1
SAGE Publications Ltd	5	IOS Press BV	1
Oxford University Press	2		
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc.	1		
American Chemical Society	1		

Source: created by the authors.

In the LIS category, 42 journals from publishers considered as giants (68.8%) and 12 journals from large publishers (19.6%) have been found. In total, 54 out of the 61 journals in the category are from large or giant publishers (88.5%). Therefore, once again, most LIS category journals are from large or giant publishers, with less than 12% being from independent publishers.

As shown in Table 3, in the Q1 of the SJR for LIS, giant publishers have more journals than large publishers, with Taylor and Francis, Springer Nature, and Elsevier standing out. It is worth noting that 21% of the highest-impact journals in LIS are from Taylor and Francis, specifically seven of them from its subsidiary Routledge. Meanwhile, among large publishers, Emerald Group Publishing stands out above all others with eight journals, which has, as one of its pillars, library science and information science.

Finally, it should be noted that there have been various changes in the publishers of journals between the data from the SJR database query in February 2023 and the subsequent query to the journal websites conducted in March-April 2023, which are outlined below:

- In COM, there are four cases of publisher changes: Journalism & Communication Monographs, which moves from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication to Sage; Digital Communications and Networks, which moves from Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications to Elsevier; Journal of Advertising, which moves from M. E. Sharpe to Taylor and



Francis; and finally, Metaphor and Symbol, which moves from Psychology Press Ltd to Taylor and Francis. In all these cases, there is a phenomenon of journals transferring from independent publishers to giant publishers.

- In LIS, there are three more publisher changes, also from independent to giant publishers: Journal of Information Technology, which moves from Palgrave Macmillan to Sage; Journal of Cheminformatics, which moves from Chemistry Central to Springer Nature; and Education and Information Technologies, which moves from Kluwer Academic Publishers to Springer Nature.

### 3.3.3 Social Media Use by Publisher Type

Firstly, it is observed that in the COM category, of the 17 journals belonging to an independent or small scientific publisher, 12 have an active profile on at least one social media platform. Among these 12, X dominates as the platform, with 11 journals having a profile on this social media platform; of these, four have a profile exclusively on this platform. Facebook comes in second with eight profiles, followed by LinkedIn and Instagram with two profiles each. Five journals have only one profile on a social media platform, four journals have two profiles, two other journals have three profiles (Nordicom and Comunicar), and a single journal maintains four profiles (Profesional de la Información).

Therefore, 70.5% of these journals have a presence on at least one social media platform, and 41.7% have profiles on two or more platforms. Detailed results can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4: Use of social networks in independent and large journals COM from SJR Q1**

#### Journals from independent publishers COM

Journal name	Publishing name	Social media profiles
Internet Policy Review	Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society	Yes (X)
Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies	Bastas Publishing	No, from the publisher.
Media and Communication	Cogitatio Press	Yes (X)
Profesional de la Informacion	El Profesional de la Informacion	Yes (X, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn)
Comunicar	Grupo Comunicar Ediciones	Yes (X, Facebook and LinkedIn)
Journal of Media Psychology	Hogrefe Publishing	Yes (X and Facebook)
Informatics in Education	Institute of Mathematics and Informatics	No.
Communication Culture and Critique	John Wiley & Sons	No, from the publisher.
Cyberpsychology behavior and Social Networking	Mary Ann Liebert Inc	No, from the publisher.
Cyberpsychology	Masaryk University Press	Yes (X and Facebook)
Review of Communication Research		Yes (X and Facebook)
Nordicom Review	Nordicom	Yes (X, Facebook and Instagram)
Journal of Advertising Research	The Advertising Research Foundatio	Yes (Facebook)
Journal of Interactive Media in Education	Ubiquity Press	Yes (X)

Revista Latina de Comunicacion Social	Universidad de la Laguna	Yes (X and Facebook)
International Journal of Communication	USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism	Yes (X)
Lodz Papers in Pragmatics	Versita (Central European Science Publishers)	No, from the publisher

#### Journals from large publishers COM

Journal name	Publishing name	Social media profiles
Psychology of Popular Media	American Psychological Association	No, from the publisher.
Intercultural Pragmatics	De Gruyter Mouton	No, from the publisher.
Internet Research	Emerald Group Publishing	Yes (Facebook and LinkedIn)
Journal of Professional Capital and Community	Emerald Group Publishing	Yes (X)
Journal of Communication Management	Emerald Group Publishing	No, from the publisher.
Information Polity	IOS Press BV	Yes (X)
Translation Spaces(Netherland)	John Benjamins Publishing Company	Yes (X and Facebook)
Target	John Benjamins Publishing Company	Yes (X)
Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict	John Benjamins Publishing Company	Yes (Facebook)
Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics	MIT Press Journals	No, from the publisher.
Signs and Society	University of Chicago Press	Yes (Facebook)

Source: created by the authors.

Regarding large publishers, of the 11 journals with a social media presence, seven have at least one active profile on a social media platform, while the remaining four journals do not have their own social media profile, although their publisher does. In terms of the number of journals, both Emerald and John Benjamins Publishing Company have three journals. In Emerald, two of the journals have a profile on a social media platform, while for the second publisher, all three journals have profiles on social media, with one of them having two profiles. There are four journals with a profile on X, three on Facebook, and one on LinkedIn. Only two of the journals have two profiles on social media (Translation Spaces and Internet Research), while the rest have only one social media profile. In total, 63% of the journals in this category have at least one active profile on social media. Detailed results can be seen in Table 4.

Of the 84 journals belonging to giant publishers, 37 do not have their own social media profile (44%), 44 have active social media profiles of their own (52.3%), and three had their own social media profiles but have not posted for over a year (3.5%). The three journals have Facebook, and one of them also has X but has not posted since 2014 (Journalism & Communication Monographs); on Facebook, it has not posted since 2021, another has not posted since 2015 (Chinese Journal of Communication), and the other has not posted since 2018 (JMM International Journal on Media Management). Again, X dominates the dissemination of scientific journal publications on social media: 41 journals have a profile on this social media platform (48.8%), with 29 having a unique profile on X (34.5%). This is followed by Facebook with 16 profiles (19%), and four with a unique profile on Facebook (4.7%). Finally, only one journal, Journalism Studies, has an active profile on Instagram, which is also the only one of all the

journals from giant publishers that has open profiles on three social media platforms. Finally, 12 journals (14.3%) have two profiles on social media, on X and Facebook. It should be noted that, due to the high number of journals (44) and therefore social media profiles in this category (and to a lesser extent in LIS), instead of displaying detailed data as in Table 4 (and Table 6 for LIS), the data for giant publishers is summarized in Table 5.

In summary, it can be highlighted that, among the journals in the COM category belonging to a small or independent publisher, 70.5% have an active social media profile, a slightly higher percentage than that of giant publishers, where 52.3% have an active social media profile (55.8% if we count inactive social media profiles); and slightly below that of large publishers, where 63% have an active social media profile. On the other hand, X is the dominant social media platform across all types of publishers, followed by Facebook.

Next we will analyse how the giant publishers (none of the large publishers have more than 5 journals) with the highest number of journals in this category behave (see Table 5) and compare their results.

**Table 5: Number of Journal per giant publisher, active profiles and non-active profiles, in both categories, from SJR Q1**

<b>Giant publishers Journals from COM</b>			
<b>Publishing Name</b>	<b>Total journals</b>	<b>Journals with active profiles - number of active profiles</b>	<b>Journals with non-active profiles (more than a year)</b>
Taylor and Francis (Routledge)	38 (23)	21 (15) - 31 (24)	2
Sage	27	17 - 20	1
Elsevier Ltd.	9	1 - 1	0
Wiley-Blackwel	5	4 - 5	0
<b>Giant publishers Journals from LIS</b>			
<b>Publishing Name</b>	<b>Total journals</b>	<b>Journals with active profiles - number of active profiles</b>	<b>Journals with non-active profiles (more than a year)</b>
Taylor and Francis (Routledge)	13 (7)	3 (1)	1 (1)
Springer	10	4	2
Elsevier Ltd.	9	0	0
Emerald	8	1	0

Source: created by the authors.

In the case of the COM category, as can be seen in Table 5 and in line with what was mentioned earlier about giant publishers, it is evident that these publishers have a larger number of journals in this category, and they behave reasonably well in the sense that they own more than half of the journals with profiles on social media. However, Elsevier, with nine journals, only has one with a profile.

As for the LIS category, of the seven journals belonging to an independent or small publisher, five have active social media profiles: College and Research Libraries, Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA), Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, Profesional de la Información, and Journal of Information Literacy. All five have a presence on X, three of them are on Facebook, two on Instagram, and only one has a presence on LinkedIn (Profesional de la Información, which is present on four social media platforms). Therefore, 71% of these journals have at least one active social media platform, and 42% have two or more. Detailed results are shown in Table 6:

**Table 6: Use of social networks in independent and large journals LIS from SJR Q1**

<b>Journals from independent publishers LIS</b>		
<b>Journal name</b>	<b>Publishing name</b>	<b>Social media profiles</b>
Information Systems Research	INFORMS Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences	No
College and Research Libraries	Association of College and Research Libraries	Yes (X, Facebook and instagram)
Journal of the Medical Library Association: JMLA	Medical Library Association	Yes (X and facebook)
Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology	John Wiley and Sons Ltd	Yes (X, inactive Facebook)
Profesional de la Informacion	El Profesional de la Informacion	Yes (X, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook)
Journal of Information Literacy		Yes (X)
Information Technology and Libraries	American Library Association	No
<b>Journals from large publishers LIS</b>		
<b>Journal name</b>	<b>Publishing name</b>	<b>Social media profiles</b>
Library Quarterly	University of Chicago	No, from the publisher
Portal	Johns Hopkins University Press	No, Facebook without content
Library Trends	Johns Hopkins University Press	No, from the publisher
Information Technology and People	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Journal of Enterprise Information Management	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Reference Services Review	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, Instagram without content
Information and Learning Science	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	Yes (X)
Journal of Documentation	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Online Information Review	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Bottom Line	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Aslib Journal of Information Management	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	No, from the publisher
Education for Information	IOS Press BV	Yes (inactive X)

Source: created by the authors.

In terms of the large publishers, of the 12 that exist, only one, Information and Learning Science, has an active social media profile (X); the rest either have limited interaction through the social media profile of their publisher (University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins University Press, Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.), or they have social media profiles that have been inactive for more than a year (X profile of Education for Information, from IOS Press BV). It is also worth noting that Emerald Publishing, which, with eight journals in the category, only has one with social media presence. This suggests that the publisher does not prohibit or limit its use, but it also does not actively promote it. Detailed results can be found in Table 6.

Of the 42 journals from giant publishers, 30 do not have their own social media profiles, 10 have active social media profiles, and two had their own social media profiles, but it has been more than a year since they posted on it. These are the Journal of Web Librarianship, which has had an X profile since 2015, and Scientometric, which has an X profile that has not been active since 2021, as well as a Facebook profile with no activity. Among the active profiles, all 10 journals that have active profiles use X, and only one of them uses two social networks, X and Facebook (Personal and Ubiquitous Computing). As for the profiles that are no longer active, Facebook dominates with four profiles that have not been used, and two X profiles that have not been used for some time. If we add these six profiles that have not been used in recent years to the fact that the ten active profiles were (except for one that is more recent) created between 2009 and 2016, it shows that the giant publishers in this field tend to have profiles on social media for the publisher, rather than for the individual journals. This worsens the quality of dissemination, as a social media profile for a publisher with hundreds of journals will not typically promote publications or other interesting information from a specific journal and, therefore, to its audience.

To summarize, the percentage of journals in the LIS category that belong to a small or independent publisher and have their own active social media profile is 71%, a much higher percentage than for giant publishers, where only 23.8% have an active social media profile (28.5% if we include inactive profiles); and much higher than for large publishers where only 8.3% have an active social media profile (16% if we include inactive profiles). On the other hand, X is the dominant social media platform among all types of publishers, followed by Facebook in second place.

Table 6 shows how the giant and large publishers with the greatest number of journals in this category behave, allowing us to compare their results. As can be seen in that table and in line with what was mentioned earlier, giant and large publishers have very few social media profiles, highlighting the fact that Emerald and Elsevier have only one and no profiles on social media, respectively, while Taylor and Francis and Springer achieve better results.

### **3.4 Comparison between journals in the LIS and COM fields in the use of social media.**

#### **3.4.1. General comparison**

The main difference noted was that Q1 Communication journals (56.2%) use social media more than Q1 LIS journals (26.2%). However, even though the use of social media in communication reaches 56%, it is still a low percentage. Therefore, it can be stated that there is a greater COM presence on social media compared to Q1 LIS journals, but a better result was expected for Communication due to the nature of its, considering that many COM journals feature studies related to social and digital media.

As for similarities, it's worth noting that the most-used social media platform in both categories is X; that in both areas, a single journal using multiple social media profiles is not common; that the use of X as the sole social media platform for dissemination is established; that if a journal has two or more social media profiles, they are usually X and Facebook; that Facebook is the second most used social media platform by journals; and that Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, in that order, are the least used social media platforms.

#### **3.4.2 Comparison by publisher type**

Although both categories operate within similar parameters, there are certain differences that need to be pointed out. COM is 6 percentage points higher than LIS in terms of journals owned by giant publishers (75% versus 68.8%) and small independent publishers (15.1% versus 12%). In addition, although Taylor and Francis is the publisher with the highest number of journals in both categories, the percentage of ownership by giant publishers is significantly higher in COM (33.9% versus 21%). Therefore, in the SJR category of Communication, in terms of high-impact journals (first quartile), there is a greater concentration of journals in the hands of giant publishers, particularly because Taylor and Francis owns a third of these journals.

On the other hand, in the LIS category, there is a greater number of journals in the hands of large publishers (19.6% versus 9.8%), with Emerald standing out, having only three journals out of 112 in COM compared to 8 out of 61 in LIS.

### 3.4.3 Comparison in use in social networks

**Table 7: Comparative summary table of categories. Percentage of journals with at least one active profile and dominant social network**

Category	Small publi.	Large publi.	Giant publi.	Majority social network
COMM	70,5	63,6	52,3	X
LIS	71	8,3	23,8	X

Source: created by the authors.

If we compare the two categories (as shown in Table 7), there are several interesting elements to highlight. First, in terms of similarities, small independent publishers behave similarly in both categories regarding their presence on social media. The dominant social media platform in both cases is X, with Facebook in second place. Similarly, in both categories, there is a negative trend regarding the use of social media by the world's largest publisher, Elsevier, as it has very little presence on these platforms. Another similarity is that Elsevier ranks third in terms of the number of journals owned in both categories.

Secondly, regarding the differences, the most significant discrepancy between categories is in the social media participation of large publishers: in COM, 63.6% have at least one active social media profile, compared to 8.3% in LIS, a very notable difference. Likewise, there is also a significant difference between the giant publishers in COM, with a 52.3% presence, and those in LIS, with only 23.8%, less than half. These two differences indicate a significant gap in the presence of journals in COM and LIS, given that most journals in both categories belong to large or giant publishers. Therefore, and in line with what has been said before, journals in the COM category have a stronger social media presence.

Finally, among the giant and large publishers, there are some differences among the four publishers with the most journals in each category: Sage, which is second in COM, does not appear in LIS; Wiley-Blackwell, which ranks fourth in COM, does not appear in LIS, where Emerald is present. Another notable difference is that of the four publishers with the most journals in COM, there are no large publishers, only giants.

## 4. Discussion

This work presents the results of the study of the adoption of social media by the highest impact journals in the SJR categories of COM and LIS. First, their profiles and activity on X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube were identified. Then, this activity was analysed at the editorial level, differentiated by size. Finally, the results were compared between the two categories.

As the early studies that analysed the communication strategies of scientific journals on social media have highlighted, there is a clear preference for X and Facebook (Zedda and Barbaro, 2015). This has not changed over time, as journals in COM and LIS continue to strongly favour both social media platforms, especially X, where practically all high-impact journals in COM and LIS are still present. Recent studies in the Ibero-American area have also pointed out this phenomenon (Artigas and Guallar, 2022; Cascón-Katchadourian, Artigas, and Guallar, 2023). This is consistent with the status of X as the main channel for the dissemination of science (Haustein, 2019), or specific studies for more specific areas like health in the case of Facebook, where it shows average use for journals in Scielo Spain (Cueva et al., 2023). Usage of platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, or YouTube by journals are in the minority and have anecdotal adoption. This contrasts significantly with the current reality of X. After Elon Musk's acquisition of the company in 2022, this platform has undergone profound and transformative changes, pushing part of the scientific community to other platforms (Arroyo-Machado, 2023). Therefore, this dynamic may change in the future, although it currently shows no signs of transformation.

Despite the predominance of X, social media usage rates remain low, and the differences between scientific areas persist (Zheng et al., 2019). High-impact journals in COM have the highest rate of usage (57% of journals have a profile on a social media platform), while LIS lags far behind (21%). However, while the usage rate of COM is positive compared to LIS, it is necessary to point out the fact that this first category directly addresses social communication, so higher participation in these media is expected. When contextualizing these values with the general presence of journals in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), we find a clear difference, as 35% of the journals in the SSCI have a presence on X (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2023). Therefore, it is evident that LIS is below the general field average. This also contrasts with the expectations of editors regarding the use of social media, especially X and Facebook (Arcila-Calderón, Calderín-Cruz, and Sánchez-Holgado, 2019), and the evidence indicating the influence of these channels on impact, especially in COM (Öz Kent, 2022).

The uneven presence by publishers is consistent with what has been observed in other research (Nishikawa-Pacher, 2023), which found that adoption and use policies of social media are significantly influenced by the size of the publisher, with independent publishers taking the lead with close to 70% presence on at least one platform. However, there is considerable variability between large and giant publishers, especially between the two categories studied. While publishers like Emerald and Elsevier (which have a large number of journals) show limited participation on social media, others like Taylor and Francis and Springer demonstrate a more active adoption. The large publishers have seen an increase in the number of journals in recent years (Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon, 2015). However, it must be considered that the distribution of journals by publisher size varies in both categories, and while small publishers tend to prefer X, large publishers do not show such a clear preference, especially when compared with their usage of Facebook. This trend is more notable considering that many journals from large publishers often operate under the social media profiles of the publisher itself rather than maintaining individual profiles, which could diminish the effectiveness of content dissemination.

The proliferation and dependence on information technologies have revolutionized how scientific knowledge is consumed and disseminated (Howell and Brossard, 2019). Social media platforms have become crucial channels for the dissemination of academic content. Journals that overlook their potential are at risk of falling behind, missing the opportunity to amplify their reach and, therefore, their impact on the scientific community and the dissemination of science to the general public. Optimizing their presence on social media is not only a matter of activity but also of strategy; it is essential to have a deep understanding of the target audience and prioritize communication channels to offer content that resonates and generates engagement.

The trend that high-impact journals are predominantly owned by giant publishers, especially in the COM category, paints a landscape controlled by only a few entities. Despite their vast resources, these publishers do not seem to be fully capitalizing on the opportunities that social media offer. In contrast, smaller publishers, with more limited resources, appear to be more adaptive and agile in the face of digital innovations, likely driven by the urgent need to carve out a space in a saturated market dominated by giants.

## 5. Conclusions

In this final section, we will provide detailed answers to the research questions posed in this study.

Regarding RQ 1, it can be concluded that the presence on social media of COM and LIS journals in the Q1 quartile of the SJR varies significantly in both categories, being much higher in COM than in LIS. Likewise, it is not common for journals to have multiple profiles on social media in either of the areas analysed; in fact, 75% of LIS journals use only one social media platform, while in COM, the majority (65%) also use only one social network.

On the other hand, certain interesting trends are observed: some giant publishers (especially Elsevier and Emerald) seem to not prohibit or limit their journals from having their own social media profiles, as some journals do have them, but they do not actively encourage or support their journals in having them. As noted in this research, the percentage of journals without a social media presence, whose only relationship with social media is through their publisher's profile, is very high - 40% in COM and 65% in LIS. Additionally, the sampling conducted on the social media posts of publisher profiles reflects little or no dissemination of the specific content of the hosting journals.

It is interesting to note the variety of social media usage scenarios by scientific journals in COM and LIS, as well as by their publishers. This includes journals with their own social media profiles, journals without their own profiles but with profiles by their publishers, shared profiles by two or more journals from a publisher, social media profiles of an association that owns three or four journals, and so on. However, this research considers that an effective way for a journal to promote and disseminate its scientific content among its audience on social media is through its own exclusive social media profile, which, as we have seen, is far from being the majority.

Regarding RQ 2 about the usage of mainstream social media platforms by high-impact scientific journals in COM and LIS, X stands out prominently, well above the rest, both in COM with 60 profiles (more than twice as many as Facebook with 25), and in LIS with 13 (four times more than Facebook with three). X is also noteworthy as it is the sole dissemination profile in both COM and LIS, exclusively used by more than half of the journals. In second place is Facebook, several positions below X, but also several steps above the rest of the social media platforms. As we have seen in the results, X and Facebook usually appear together in the journals. Similarly, it is interesting to note that Facebook is increasingly not being used by some journals to disseminate content, as a good number of profiles on this social network are currently inactive. Finally, LinkedIn and Instagram, and even more so, YouTube, play a secondary role for journals and their usage is far below that of X and Facebook.

Regarding RQ 3 about social media behaviour according to the size of the academic publisher, journals from small and independent publishers have a greater presence on social media compared to journals from large and giant publishers: in COM in that same order (large and giant publishers), while in LIS the giants have a greater presence than the large publishers. An interesting related issue is that the percentage of high-impact journals belonging to large and giant publishers is very high - 85% in COM and 88.5% in LIS. These data clearly show the dominance of large and giant publishers over the Q1 journals. Furthermore, the concentration of journals by the most powerful publishers is not in decline, but rather, our data shows that it is increasing. Therefore, the group of small and independent publishers survives against large companies with more resources. A possible explanation/hypothesis (which could be a subject for further research) for the different behaviour of both types of publishers regarding social media is that journals from small publishers promote the dissemination of their content more on social platforms because they urgently need to be visible to the academic community in order to survive in a certainly difficult environment, while large and giant publishers probably do not need to make the vast amount of content they generate as visible.

The pattern among small publishers in COM is similar to the general pattern: dominance of X, in several cases exclusively, second place for Facebook, with the rest of the social media platforms following behind. Small publishers stand out, however, for having a significant percentage of journals with two or more profiles (41.7%). For the large journals, only two out of seven journals have two profiles on social media. For giant journals, it is worth noting a low percentage of journals with more than one profile. Out of the 13 journals, only one journal has 3 profiles. The other 12 have two profiles, always the X and Facebook combination.

In the case of LIS, independent journals almost mirror the behaviour of their counterparts in COM in terms of percentages, dominant profiles, etc. There is a significant change regarding large publishers with an extremely low percentage of their own profiles, largely due to the poor performance of the dominant publisher in this regard, Emerald. On the other hand, in giant publishers, all journals with active profiles use X and only one of them has two profiles. Finally, it is also noted, due to the disuse of several profiles and the age of the active profiles, that giant publishers in this field tend to have social media profiles for the publisher rather than the journal's own profile.

For RQ 4 about similarities and differences between the two areas studied, LIS and COM, the expected better performance of journals in the COM category over those in LIS should be highlighted. However, the performance of COM is certainly improvable given the field of study it represents. It is also worth noting that LIS journals have a fairly poor performance. It can be pointed out that both of these things are surprising, and therefore, journals in these categories have a wide margin for improvement in the opinion of this research. Secondly, it should be emphasized that, there is a greater concentration of journals in the hands of giant publishers than in LIS (75%) in the COM category, among the highest-impact journals; and similarly, the most powerful publisher in both categories, Taylor and Francis, owns more journals in COM, more than a third of the category, which is most relevant regarding the dominance of this publisher in high-impact journals in the category.

Finally, in terms of the use of social media by the type of publisher, it is noted that, since small publishers behave similarly in both categories in terms of the percentage of journals with at least one active profile, it is the large and giant publishers that make the difference (of COM over LIS) in the adoption of social media by academic journals. This is particularly evident among the large publishers (63.6% in COM; 8.3% in LIS), and also in the giants, where the percentage is more than double. It should also be noted that there are similarities between areas, such as the negative case of Elsevier, which has almost no presence on its own social media, so its almost 3000 journals (as stated on its website (<https://www.elsevier.com/es-es/books-and-journals>)), would disseminate their updates through the single social media profile of the publisher.

The results of this research provide an approximation of the use and adoption of social media in the highest-impact journals in COM and LIS. This detailed analysis could be highly valuable for scientometric and social media researchers, as well as for journal editors, in identifying current and future trends in dissemination strategies. The findings underscore the need to adapt to recent changes in platforms like X, given its prominent role in scientific dissemination, and also highlight the importance of exploring other platforms. Additionally, it emphasizes the differences in social media adoption among different scientific areas and among publishers of varying sizes, which could inform more effective communication and dissemination strategies. Finally, by illustrating the value of a social media presence for academic journals, these results may encourage publishers and journals to expand their presence and explore more proactive and diversified strategies to maximize their reach and impact. In conclusion, this study not only emphasizes the relevance of social media in contemporary scientific communication but also underscores the urgent need to adapt and evolve in response to rapid technological and information consumption changes. Scientific journals, regardless of their specialty or editorial size, should view social media as indispensable tools in their communicative arsenal.



## 6. Limitations and Future Studies

One limitation of this work is that a content analysis to understand aspects such as the themes of their posts or the content curation techniques used by the publications on social media by the journals was not conducted. Likewise, although the social media of the publishers was tested and no posts disseminating content from the analysed journals were found, another limitation of this study is the lack of complete data for all the giant and large publishers to determine if they publish content from the studied journals.

Similarly, another limitation of this study is that it provides a snapshot of a specific moment, and in a context as dynamic and changing as social media, it would be very interesting to study the evolution of social media practices of scientific journals in the medium and long term. Additionally, other related questions of interest regarding the social media strategy of journals and their publishers may be more appropriately addressed with qualitative methods such as interviews with responsible parties from publishers, journals, and/or their social media.

All of these possible limitations can be addressed in future research, such as a content analysis of posts on social media from high-impact scientific journals in COM and LIS, as well as from their publishers, studying the themes and curation techniques; interviews with those responsible for journals, publishers, and social media; or a longitudinal study to understand the evolution of the areas studied. Finally, it would also be interesting to apply the type of study conducted here, as well as the proposed future work, to other scientific fields.

## 7. Contributions

Contributions	Authors
Conception and design	Author 1 y 4
Literature review	Author 3
Data collection	Author 1 y 2
Data analysis and interpretation	Author 1, 2, 3 y 4
Funding acquisition	
Methodology	
Project administration	Author 1, 2 y 4
Resources	Author 4
Supervision	Author 4
Validation	Author 4
Writing – original draft	Author 1, 2, 3 y 4
Writing – review and editing	Author 1 y 4

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## 10. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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**Notas**

1. A normalization process has been carried out, since the database offers data on publishers with the name of subsidiaries or regional offices.
2. The SJR database separates journals owned by Routledge from those of Taylor and Francis, although the former is actually owned by the latter. Due to the entity of both publishers, a division has been maintained in the tables and in the manuscript, in this case putting the Routledge data in parentheses.
3. On July 23, 2023, the social network Twitter changed its name to X. In this new version of the manuscript, the name has been replaced in all the noted places, except in the bibliography.