

Editorial 2

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Communication, Social Innovation, and Sustainability [Editorial]

Comunicación, Innovación Social y Sostenibilidad [Editorial]

In the current context of unstoppable technological evolution that media and creative industries are going through, it is a proven fact that innovation has become an essential tool for survival. Historically, innovation has been linked to functional efficiency and economic profitability. However, in the last decade, the climate crisis and growing awareness of inequalities have led to a reconsideration of this approach. It has been understood that certain innovations are not sustainable in the long term, not only economically, but also in ecological and social terms. This awareness has led to a profound revision of the traditional conception of innovation, giving importance to the term "sustainable" (Boons & McMeekin, 2019).

In this sense, innovation must not only aim to provide profitable solutions but also be oriented towards providing responses that are sustainable both for the environment and for people. The world of social communication has a commitment to society ingrained in its DNA and the goal of improving it. Social and sustainable innovation designates those novel forms of creation, development, or implementation that, beyond effectiveness and profitability, imply a horizon of environmental sustainability, social justice, integration, accessibility, and inclusivity that makes them viable in human terms from a comprehensive perspective (Boons & McMeekin, 2019). At the same time, social and sustainable innovation shifts the focus from "innovation adoption" (how to effectively integrate innovations) to "innovation ecosystems" (social configurations of actors and interactions that favor the creation of sustainable innovation). At this point, the relationships among public administrations, universities, the cultural sector, and companies—the so-called "quadruple helix" (Leydesdorff & Ahrweiler, 2014)—constitute a characteristic engine in which the generation of innovation is subjected not only to criteria of economic viability but also environmental and social considerations. Social innovation and sustainability in communication thus constitute a key aspect in the framework of digital transformation of consumption, creation, and distribution of content, both fictional and within advertising and communication strategies (Colapinto & Porlezza, 2012), as well as in the field of information and the fight against misinformation (Anger, 2019). In this sense, there will be no sustainable social innovation without media education since it is necessary to address problems inherent to new scenarios of communicative innovation (misinformation, hoaxes, deep fakes, polarization, algorithmization, and datafication...). These "communication pathologies" constitute a challenge for media education at different levels, which also includes as protagonist agents that traditionally have not been involved actively in media literacy strategies such as journalists (Frau-Meigs, 2022; Sádaba and Salavería, 2022).

The challenge of initiatives developed in cultural and informational arenas is therefore as exciting as it is complex. It's difficult due to the multiple factors that must be addressed, but equally attractive due to the endless possibilities of improving people's quality of life. And all of this is seasoned with the unstoppable technological development that requires constant updating, a marathon in which media compete with large digital platforms, much further away from social commitment and democratic values.

The aim of this issue is to analyze the main challenges and difficulties facing socially focused innovation in the communication world, focusing on new digital trends such as the analysis of the metaverse situation or the possibilities offered by 360° video. Additionally, this issue gathers works that debate the role that social networks are adopting as information platforms, especially among the younger generation. This is an area where content verification and the need to offer attractive products to the audience are equally fundamental. And, of course, it addresses the possibilities and challenges surrounding artificial intelligence, which emerges as one of the areas with the greatest influence by playing a technological role that cuts across all fields.

1. Articles

Among the questions addressed by the contributions of this issue of the Mediterranean Journal of Communication are the following: Are the implications of artificial intelligence adequately reported? In what ways is this technology impacting cultural industries? Are ethical and legal aspects of the use of generative artificial intelligence taken into account? Will the metaverse continue to develop as the main immersive format? What possibilities does 360° video offer in the production of attractive content capable of connecting with the audience? Is there rigorous reporting on social media? What characteristics should digital formats have to be both attractive and rigorous? Can ad campaigns and commercial content be designed with social commitment?

This special issue begins with the work of Sonia Parrat-Fernández, María-Ángeles Chaparro-Domínguez, and Isabel-María Martín-Sánchez titled "Media Coverage of Journalistic Artificial Intelligence in Spain: Relevance, Themes, and Framing." This research focuses on the need to inform rigorously and reach a non-specialized audience about technological advances in general and AI in particular. It is urgent to address this issue, considering the undeniable weight of artificial intelligence in the present and future of crucial areas for human development, such as health, the environment, education, employment, or security, among others.

Next, a research is presented focusing on addressing the "Challenges of AI in the era of music streaming: an analysis from the perspective of creators," by Alberto Arenal, Cristina Armuña, Juan Miguel Aguado Terrón, and Sergio Ramos. The object of study analyzed in this work is entirely innovative as it tackles the challenge of artificial intelligence in the music industry landscape through the opinions of different actors involved and affected by streaming. Exploring the issues and challenges arising from the integration of this technology in their processes raises questions of great interest and constitutes a valuable source for understanding what is also happening in other cultural sectors.

Considering that the development of the metaverse is going through a phase of uncertainty after the excitement of recent years, the research article titled "The metaverse as immersive social innovation: early experiences of European public media in virtual worlds" by César Feiras Ceide, José Miguel Tüñez López, and Verónica Crespo Pereira is a highly current work that analyzes the metaverse as a resource that allows media to offer more attractive proposals. The main objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive view of the early approaches and current interaction of public broadcasters with this technology, which is in an initial phase of exploration and experimentation but promises future growth.

A promising future is also glimpsed for audiovisual content produced in 360° video format, as proposed by Sara Pérez-Seijo in her work titled "Rise and fall of 360-degree video: evolution and characteristics of immersive production in European public service media (2015-2023)". The relevance of this research is fully justified in a context where media need to innovate and take advantage of the possibilities offered by new technologies. The research addresses the challenges faced by immersive journalism and suggests a decline in interest in the 360° format due to its technical complexity.

From the perspective of content innovation in new formats, the article "Playing with truth: newsgames as a tool for sustainable literacy for verification" by Sergio Albaladejo-Ortega, Juan-Francisco Hernández-Pérez, and Marta Pérez-Escobar, proposes a content analysis of a sample of newsgames addressing themes related to social sustainability, social justice, integration, accessibility, and inclusivity. From a playful approach, these narratives also act as instruments for literacy, awareness, and debate on the importance of teaching good journalistic practices, especially regarding fact-checking.

This need to provide truthful information becomes more evident in the case of social media, where accounts of media outlets coexist with those of influencers or anonymous profiles. Faced with this

hybridization of content that has surpassed the logic of traditional media, it is of interest to analyze how journalistic genres transform when it comes to reporting on current topics. This is the objective of the research conducted by Antonio García-Jiménez, Rebecca Suárez-Álvarez, and Beatriz Catalina-García titled "Russia-Ukraine War. Blurring the boundaries of news: current affairs through profiles on TikTok," where the abuse of emotionality is evident, used as the main resource to arouse the audience's interest.

Lastly, the text presented by Araceli Castelló-Martínez analyzes in her study titled "Social commitment and sustainability in award-winning campaigns at advertising festivals" the presence of social commitment and sustainability in the awards of advertising festivals, addressing both categories/subcategories and special awards as well as the creative concept of the winning campaigns.

2. Conclusions

The articles compiled in this issue highlight the predominant impact of technological innovation in various communicative domains, such as informative, creative, and persuasive, and point out the considerable social challenges that this entails. In this sense, it is evident that any form of creative expression can integrate narrative innovations or strategies that promote sustainability, although it faces certain issues that require attention. It is noteworthy how innovation in vertical formats, such as videos on TikTok, seeks to establish connections with audiences, especially with younger audiences, but there is also an excessive reliance on emotionality in informative and persuasive contexts in some cases.

It is crucial to recognize that we live in a world of uncertainty where we must learn to coexist with the implications of constantly evolving technology. In this regard, the rapid advancement of technological innovation, especially the use of artificial intelligence in content creation, presents both exciting possibilities and considerable challenges, and both aspects are inherently intertwined. Advances in digital technologies, including generative artificial intelligence, present potentially significant challenges for individual, organizational, and societal well-being. In fact, their effects could be far-reaching, impacting labor demand, job security, and the overall quality of work within the cultural industries sector.

Technological innovation in media and creative industries should not be limited to simply adopting new tools but should be truly transformative, positively impacting how content is produced, distributed, and consumed. We advocate for an ethical approach and digital well-being to ensure sustainable innovation over time as a citizen's right. It is essential to recognize that, along with technological progress, arises the responsibility to educate about its responsible use. This education and promotion of digital well-being not only involves mastering the technical aspects of new tools but also understanding their personal, social, and cultural impact.

Only through a comprehensive approach that promotes transformative innovation and encourages responsible use of technology can media and creative industries move towards a more sustainable and ethical future.

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