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## **The challenge of measuring traditional and digital audiences in a global market**

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## Editorial 2

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### The challenge of measuring traditional and digital audiences in a global market

#### *El reto de la medición de audiencias tradicionales y digitales en un mercado global*

##### 1. Introduction

The multiplication of screens where all types of content can be consumed has complicated the way to measure the success and impact of any type of audiovisual work or strategic communication campaign. This number raises the problem of audience measurement, quantification, and comparison in the new digital age. When we convened this Call For Paper, we asked these questions: Will television in the living room stay hegemonic? Will the cell phone maintain most of audiovisual consumption share as it has already done with web browsing compared to other devices? How are the new advantages of distribution affecting the consumption and behavior of the public? Not all of them are easy to answer, but it is crucial to open new lines of research that help clarify the future of audiences in the audiovisual world.

Audience measurement is going through its worst or best moment, depending on how you look at it. On one hand, the worst because there are thousands of audiovisual consumptions that are not being registered and are being lost. On the other hand, because all the agents involved in the production of content have realized that measurement needs to be improved. Currently, a hybrid solution is being sought to quantify the impacts of traditional media in the offline world and in the digital world. It is difficult, but the entry of Netflix and other OTT (Over The Top) video platforms in the advertising sector will require audited and reliable measurement of the impact of their series and films (Gallardo, 2022). There is academic and professional consensus in the field of television measurement, but also in the measurement of digital audiences since "the current model hardly reflects digital consumption in Spain despite having introduced new monitoring technologies" (Quintas-Froufe and González -Neira, 2021: 1). Neira, Clares-Gavilán and Sánchez-Navarro (2021: 14) analyze the new audience dimensions on streaming platforms and conclude that "the very heterogeneity of the business model of these platforms introduces elements that significantly hinder the construction of a global audience concept". In sum, with "the potential of time-shifted consumption, new possibilities related to the life and creation of certain television programs open up, since the criterion of success varies and no longer falls exclusively on their linear broadcast" (Gallardo-Camacho, Sierra y Lavin: 41). In addition, video platforms have facilitated the release of content at a global level in millions of homes while television audience measurement systems are regionalized by country.

In this context, while the taste for the consumption of content maintains and is across generations, what changes is where this consumption takes place. This aspect complicates the measurement of the phenomenon. In fact, "streaming consumption happens in the mobile phone, which is the tool to connect to the Internet used by 9 out of 10 Internet users" (Marín, 2021). The global audience

measurement company Nielsen is aware of the need for improvements in quantitative and qualitative solutions: "With the explosion of connected devices and the use of multiple devices among people, it is essential to measure the reach and frequency of the audience deduplicated across publisher devices and platforms" (Miller, 2022).

## 2. Cross-field studies to analyze the complexity of audiences

In this monograph titled *Audiences and New Forms of Broadcast: Linear, on-Demand, Streaming and/or Social*, we have five articles that represent the complexity of the phenomenon of audiences in across fields from different perspectives: Traditional television consumption, visualizations of Netflix, the social audience of video platforms, the new tastes of viewers for vertical formats driven by mobile phones, and the relationship of influencers with their audiences.

First, we find the article **The virus on the screen: consumption habits of the television audience in Spain and Italy (2019-2022)** by the authors Ana González-Neira, Natalia Quintas-Froufe and Massimo Scaglioni, who evaluate the consequences of the COVID-19 lockdowns in the audiences. This research confirms that the pandemic did not introduce new consumption patterns, but instead accelerated already existing audiovisual trends in Spain and Italy. Second, another article focuses on the effects of the pandemic but this time focusing on the largest OTT platform in the world: Netflix. The author César Bárcenas-Curtis presents the article **Netflix consumption in Mexico during the COVID-19 pandemic**, where he concludes that the consumption of the platform skyrocketed during the pandemic. Some features were as follows: There was a greater selection of content, greater shared access, intensive use of the platform's recommendation functions, and a reinforcement of corporate interests. Third, the line of research related to the social audience linked to video platforms aimed at young people is opened with the article **Communities of Instagram and Twitter users of the online audience platforms aimed at youth: PlayZ, MTMAD and Flooxer** from the authors Gaizka Eguzkitza-Mestraitua, Miguel Ángel Casado del-Río and Josep Ángel Guimerá-i-Orts. The findings of these researchers are noteworthy because they propose a way to link social audiences with audiovisual consumption by concluding that the user communities of Instagram and Twitter are grouped around professionals and hobbies. Fourth, we find an article that focuses on how audiences consume audiovisual content: **Video in vertical format. A review of the communication literature**. The author Héctor Navarro-Güere carries out a review of the literature related to the consumption of vertical video that is now triumphing thanks to the mobile phone on social networks such as TikTok or Instagram. Finally, the authors Raquel Martínez-Sanz, Álex Buitrago and Alberto Martín-García present an investigation focused on the audience of influencers on TikTok: **Communication for health through TikTok. Study of pharmaceutical-themed influencers and connection with their audience**. The researchers conclude that the colloquial, non-technical language of these influencers serves to positively connect with their audiences after analyzing 79,696 comments.

And finally, we would like to thank the *Revista Mediterránea de Comunicación* and its editor-in-chief, Victoria Tur-Viñes, for giving us the possibility of collaborating as editors in this much-needed issue to keep open the professional, academic and research debate on the present and the future of audiovisual audiences in all its aspects.

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