

Television beyond TV: YouTube and regional channels

La televisión más allá de la televisión: YouTube y los canales autonómicos



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Abstract:

Linear television channels have been forced to reconsider their broadcasting strategy in response to the emergence of new media players. This research addresses the offering and consumption of videos on YouTube from the regional channels that comprise the Federation of Regional Radio and Television Organisations (FORTA),

Resumen:

Los canales de televisión lineal se han visto obligados a replantear su estrategia de difusión ante la llegada de nuevos actores emisores. Esta investigación aborda el estudio de la oferta y consumo de vídeos en YouTube procedentes de las cadenas autonómicas que conforman FORTA (Federación de organismos de radio televisión autonómicos) y

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which are influenced by budgets and resources that are very different from those of other audio-visual actors. In the first phase, an analysis was carried out regarding the offering of these channels on this platform. Afterward, viewing was monitored and compared with the audience data collected by comScore, in order to confirm the strategy used by these traditional broadcasters in offering new viewing outlets. The results point to a wide variety of format offerings, yet with a lack of exclusive content. Moreover, the most prevalent access route is through the smartphone.

Keywords:

Digital video; audience; television; YouTube; innovation; FORTA.

que están condicionadas por unos presupuestos y recursos muy diferentes a otros actores audiovisuales. En una primera fase se realiza un estudio de la oferta de estos canales en dicha plataforma. Posteriormente se monitoriza el consumo y se contrasta con los datos de audiencia que recoge comScore, con el fin de comprobar la estrategia de estos emisores tradicionales hacia la apertura de nuevas ventanas de visionado. Los resultados indican que existe una gran variedad de modelos de oferta, con una ausencia de contenido exclusivo. El acceso desde el smartphone es mayoritario.

Palabras clave:

Vídeo digital; audiencia; televisión; YouTube; innovación; FORTA.

1. Introduction

For years, television has been immersed in a major crisis due to the emergence of new players and new ways of viewing. This situation has forced TV stations to reconsider and change their production dynamics, audio-visual offerings, and their approach to audiences. They have developed various innovations that are focused on the product as well as the distribution of audio-visual content (García-Avilés, 2021; Zaragoza-Fuster and García-Avilés, 2018). In the context of liquid television (Quintas-Froufe and González-Neira, 2016), which describes the current situation, it has not been feasible to maintain structures from the pre-digital era, especially when a lack of interest toward conventional television by the younger generations has been increasing (Úbeda, 2022; Forteza Martínez, de Casas Moreno and Vizcaíno Verdú, 2021; Bernal and Carvajal, 2020; Crusafón Baqués, González-Saavedra and Murciano Martínez, 2020; García Orta, García-Prieto and Suárez-Romero, 2019; Guerrero Pérez, González-Oñate and Kimber Camussetti, 2018). Thus, now that the initial phase of creating websites and social media accounts has been completed, conventional television channels have embarked on expanding into new viewing windows that are closer to young audiences, including social networks, apps, and platforms such as YouTube.

In an audio-visual ecosystem defined by hybridisation at various levels, such as media, content, formats and audiences, this research focuses on one of the most recent examples of innovation in television: the presence of Spain's regional television channels on YouTube. As such, we have analysed the extent of television's expansion beyond the TV set in public sector channels, with business strategies far removed from private channels.

1.1. The television context

Television channels have lost the leading role they held until a few years ago in the audio-visual landscape. They are no longer the only broadcasters, as they have lost their monopoly and now share the market with new players that are highly diverse, such as hardware and software producers, agents of online businesses, or over-the-top media (OTTs), which is a media service offered directly to viewers by the Internet (Andò and Marinelli, 2018). The emergence of these new players, together with the improvement of mobile devices and connection quality, have led to new consumption habits that have broken down time and

space barriers that have existed until recently. In this new environment, the audience is embracing consumption patterns to which conventional television channels must respond (D'Arma, Raats, and Steemers, 2021). Faced with strong competition, they have experimented with new viewing windows such as the web or social networks (Peñafiel and Echegaray, 2022), in which the target audience is often the youngest segment of the population. As pointed out by Andò and Marinelli (2018), it is a question of searching in this media ecosystem for all points of contact with consumers. Thus, a few years ago the three largest free-to-air television groups in Spain decided to launch three platforms aimed primarily at young digital users: Playz (RTVE), Flooxer (Atresmedia) and Mtmad (Mediaset). As highlighted by Mendieta Bartolomé (2022), regional channels have taken several steps to promote the process of digitisation of their audio-visual content. The case of Public Television of Castilla-La Mancha bears mentioning, as it was the first among all the members of *FORTA* (the federation of regional radio and television organisations) to launch a regional *OTT* on 18 October 2018.

The alliance with YouTube has also emerged as a new way of conducting business for traditional television stations. In fact, according to Ha (2018), YouTube is a genuine alternative to traditional television for young people, although in recent years Twitch has also increased its prevalence among younger audiences.

Nevertheless, this approximation has been a two-way street. In fact, as pointed out by Kim (2012), TV channels approached YouTube in the same way that YouTube approached the media in order to become mainstream. Since 2008, media companies have seen this platform as a promotional tool (Del Campo and de Lara, 2016). In some cases, it has even become part of the cross-media framework of some television productions that lead viewers to other platforms or social networks (De Lara and Arias, 2015). A clear example of this concept of *Television beyond TV* is the phenomenon of *TVE's* talent show known as *Operación Triunfo*, which has its own channel on YouTube with a 24-hour live broadcast. This channel managed to increase the audience of *Operación Triunfo* by more than 200% in 2018.

However, this has not been the only alliance between traditional and new players in the media ecosystem. Recent experiences by some groups show that the expansion of viewing windows has not diminished linear broadcasting. In fact, Mediaset has reached agreements with Amazon Prime Video to broadcast some of its series before airing them on its television channels, just as Atresmedia has done with Netflix in order to give new life to its fictional series, such as *La Casa de Papel* (Neira, 2020). In the case of regional channels, there are numerous alliances between TVG, Aragón TV, EITB and platforms such as Netflix, or between TVG, EITB and IB3 in the case of Amazon Prime Video.

On the other hand, the effect of the pandemic on the proliferation of digital video consumption should not be forgotten. During the confinement, the viewing of audio-visual content in digital format increased by 55%, especially among children's programmes (Pérez, 2020). These viewing habits have become reinforced to the point where one in five, or 20% of the consumers worldwide, see no difference between YouTube and linear television consumption, according to research by AudienceProject (2022). The figure rises to 42% in the US and 29% in Norway. This is a reality that broadcasters must acknowledge when defining their future strategies for growth.

In this globalised digital landscape, regional public channels are trying to find their place as public service broadcasters (PSBs). This is not an easy task, as they are competing with large corporations with far more economic, technological and professional resources, as well as commercial interests that are far removed from public service (Rosique Cedillo, 2021). It bears recalling that

PSBs have a public service mandate that influences any strategic decision they make (Miguel, Zallo and Casado, 2017). Diverse laws, including 46/1983 and 7/20109, as well as various framework mandates of each of these autonomous regional organisations, determine programming guidelines in which public service, attention to minorities, the universal nature and access of the content, and the values of political pluralism, social cohesion and cultural diversity are very much present (Peñafiel and Echegaray, 2022). As highlighted by Mendieta Bartolomé (2022: 354), “With regard to the social aspect, the new digital scenario is forcing public broadcasters to review their public service mandate in a process of adaptation that involves expanding their strategy toward multiscreen communication, and increasing their transparency and accountability”. Moreover, limited budgets, as will be seen below, hinder the strategic plans of these channels (Table 1).

In this sense, within the abundant corpus regarding PSBs, public regional channels have been studied from different perspectives, among which convergence stands out (López-Olano, Soler Campillo and Marzal Felici, 2022; Del Campo Lozano and Fernández-Gómez, 2020; Fontenla Pedreira, 2019; Rodríguez Castro and López Golán, 2018; Gómez-Domínguez, 2016), as well as audiences (Mendieta Bartolomé, 2022; Latorre-Martínez, Orive-Serrano and Íñiguez, 2018; Medina, Portilla, 2016). Special mention should be made of the reports carried out by various researchers within the framework of the project entitled, *Los retos de la televisión pública ante el Mercado Único Digital Europeo estrategias multipantalla, innovación y renovación de los mandatos del servicio público* [The challenges of public television in the European digital single market: multiscreen strategies, innovation, and the renewal of public service mandates] (2021), directed by Professor Carmina Crusafón (Carniel Bugs, 2021; Crusafon Baqués, 2021; Pérez, 2021; Rubio García, 2021 and Subires Mancera, 2021). Their peculiar nature in the European scenario makes them an interesting object of study within the current media ecosystem. Sacaluga Rodríguez, Pérez Sánchez and García have pointed out the following:

Thus, with increasingly segmented content and consumers who have turned into prosumers, regional public television must find its place given the context of a new type of viewer who consumes what they want, when they want, and where they want, and does not accept imposed scheduling. Moreover, such viewers feel more comfortable accessing content through social networks on the recommendation of other like-minded users, and they respond to the multitasking stimuli of the social audience (2018: 1722).

Based on previous studies, such as that of the *Observatorio Iberoamericano de la Comunicación* [The Ibero-American Observatory of Communication] (2021), which have pointed out a notable increase in the consumption by regional organisations on YouTube, it is necessary to delve deeper into the parameters related to the offering, and to carry out monitoring over a four-month period of time, in order to discover which content is the most successful, which device is used for its consumption, and which age groups comprise the highest number of followers.

1.2. YouTube

Since its creation in 2005 by three young Californians (Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim), the success of YouTube has increased exponentially. It has become the world’s leading video website and the second in terms of traffic after Google, with more than one billion hours of video played, 2 billion users per month, and more than 500 hours of content uploaded every

minute¹. Its leading role in the Spanish audio-visual market is also evident. According to the EGM (2022), the site was the most visited by Spanish internet users in the first and second wave of 2022, when it had nearly 29 million unique visits. According to Barlovento (2022a), the 18-24 age group consumes 67 minutes on average; this number decreases by age to a low of 16 minutes of average viewing for people over 55. This platform is the clear leader among the 18-24 category, as one in every three minutes of audio-visual content viewed by individuals in this age group is from YouTube. Given this situation, it is necessary to look at the strategies of the offering, as well as the consumption of regional broadcasts on YouTube in Spain.

As this platform initially focused on the exchange of videos by anonymous users, its relationship with traditional television channels was stormy in the beginning. The latter viewed it with some mistrust (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Tur-Viñes and Contreras, 2016), and there were even major legal disputes (Viacom in 2007; Mediaset España in 2008). This was the *resistance response* proposed by Napoli (1998). However, due to YouTube's success, in the end most of the channels chose to sign agreements with the platform and open their own channels, because "after seeing the evidence, if their fragments were on the Internet, it was better for them to have control over those pieces" (Antolin-Prieto, 2012: 553). In Spain, within the national television system, the first station to create an account was a public regional channel. In January of 2006, the IB3 channel was launched, and just two months later the accounts of TVG and TV3 were created. The public corporation RTVE joined on 30 March of the same year. Consequently, although its presence on this platform dates back several years, its major financial benefits have been obtained more recently. Thus, the initial user-generated content (UGC) eventually coexisted with material developed by professionals (Vonderau, 2016; Lobato, 2016), up to the point where some authors, such as Kim (2012), have stated that YouTube became a kind of institution Kim (2012), and even asserted that YouTube would eventually become the prototype of a ubiquitous online video library.

As pointed out by Van Es (2019), YouTube has been the subject of multiple studies, as summarised by Arthurs, Drakopoulou and Gandini (2018), or in the monograph by Snickars and Vonderau (2009). It has been approached from different perspectives, including the following: the culture of participation (Strangelove 2011; Burgess and Green, 2009); the political economy point of view (Abuljadail et al., 2018; Cunningham, Craig and Silver, 2016; Vonderau, 2016); as part of studies related to algorithms (Bishop, 2018; Rieder, Matamoros-Fernández and Coromina, 2018) with an emphasis on user preferences (Paolillo, Ghule and Harper, 2019); and regarding the study of uses and gratification of the audience (Steiner and Xu, 2020). Likewise, various authors have studied formal aspects of the content offered by this platform, such as the features that contribute to the popularity of a video (Altman and Jiménez, 2019; Bentley, Silverman and Bica, 2019; De-Aguilera-Moyano, Castro-Higueras and Pérez-Rufí, 2019; Bärtl, 2018).

In the study at hand, this platform will be examined as a current example of technological convergence (Jenkins, 2008) based on traditional television channels. In this sense, there are other studies from previous years that refer to different media contexts, including analyses carried out by Budzinski, Gaenssle and Lindstädt-Dreusicke 2021; Marín Pérez 2021; Lobato, 2016; Sánchez-Olmos and Hidalgo-Marí, 2016; and Gallardo-Camacho, 2013.

¹ Data gathered from YouTube's own website: <https://www.YouTube.com/about/press>

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

This research focuses on the presence of regional television channels on the YouTube platform, which has the largest audience share in Spain, in order to assess whether they are making the most of the new opportunities to broadcast content, given the challenges posed by digitisation.

The specific objectives of this research, grouped into two large sections related to supply and demand, are as follows:

(O1) To analyse the offerings of regional television channels on the YouTube platform in Spain.

(O2) To verify how the audience follows these offerings, or in other words, to reveal how the content is consumed, as well as the characteristics of the content that has the largest audience.

The research questions of this study are as follows:

Q1: Is the offering merely a transposition of content previously broadcast, or is there unique material that diversifies the offering of this distribution window?



Q2: Does the offering use a repository or archive strategy, or does it use an approach that is more focused on a corporate and advertising communication window?

Q3: What is the audience profile of these channels?

2.2. Sample and methodology

This research focuses on the regional channels that comprise *FORTA*² (Table 1). The combined channels of this federation account for 8.6% of the linear television audience in Spain (Barlovento, 2022b).

Table 1. Regional channels that comprise the sample

Logo	Name	Corporation	Autonomous Region	Budget for 2020 in millions (budget/inhab.)
	TVG	Corporación radio e Televisión de Galicia (CRTVG)	Galicia	111.2 (41.18 €)
	EITB	Radio Televisión Pública Vasca (EITB)	Basque country	148.8 (67.20 €)

² Other regional public channels, such as Televisión Melilla, Televisión Ceuta, and Canal Extremadura TV are not part of this organisation.

	TV3	Corporación Catalana de Medios Audiovisuales (CCMA)	Catalonia	248.3 (32 €)
	Telemadrid	Radio Televisión Madrid (RTVM)	Madrid	83 (12.16 €)
	Canal Sur	Radio y Televisión de Andalucía (RTVA)	Andalusia	164.8 (19.30 €)
	CMM TV	Ente Público Radiotelevisión Castilla-La Mancha (CMM Media)	Castilla-La Mancha	51.6 (25.17 €)
	7 Televisión	Radiotelevisión de la Región de Murcia (RTRM)	Murcia Region	5.3 (3.49 €)
	Aragón TV	Corporación Aragonesa de Radio y Televisión (CARTV)	Aragón	54.3 (40.20 €)
	TPA	Radiotelevisión del Principado de Asturias (RTPA)	Asturias	24.4 (24.40 €)
	Televisión Canaria	Radio Televisión Canaria (RTVC)	Canary Islands	50.4 (23.19 €)
	IB3 Televisió	Ente Público de Radiotelevisión de las Islas Baleares (RTVIB)	Balearic Islands	33.7 € (27.63 €)
	À Punt Mèdia	Corporación Valenciana de Medios de Comunicación (CVMC)	Valencia Region	64 (12.65 €)

Source: budgets from the Official State Gazette (BOE) and corporate websites. Created by the authors

The data collection was carried out in different phases. Initially, an analysis was made of all the YouTube accounts of the regional channels that comprise FORTA by means of a file that included the following items: channels, sub channels, playlists, date of incorporation, views, number of subscribers, and videos published. Regarding the videos, their duration and updated status was analysed. It was also determined whether the material was unique or not, or in other words, whether they had previously been broadcast on a linear channel through the matrix of the transmedia universe (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Tur-Viñes and Contreras, 2016; Jenkins, 2012). The data related to the offering of the more than eighty channels and sub-channels that the eleven media

groups have on YouTube were collected in December of 2020 (Table 2). The comparison between regional channels in terms of subscribers and views, which are audience indicators, cannot be made in absolute numbers. The reason is, although YouTube does not always have limited geographical coverage like the linear versions of the channels, it is true that these broadcasts are mainly viewed from their autonomous regions of origin due to the identity-related nature of these regional corporations. For this reason, the decision was made to draw up a ratio between inhabitants and subscribers (Table 2).

The second phase focused on audience behaviour. Between January and April of 2021, monitoring was carried out through the monthly viewing of fifteen videos published by each of the 30 YouTube channels and sub-channels of regional television, with a total of 1,260 videos. Forty-five videos were monitored on each of the main channels and most of the sub-channels, although some of them did not publish fifteen new videos each month.

For their analysis, we selected the most heavily watched proprietary channel in each group, and all the sub-channels that reached at least 10% of the subscribers of the main channel, based on the first sample (shown in Table 2).

Likewise, during the months mentioned above, the data offered by comScore to its subscribers regarding digital video consumption through Videometrix³ was analysed in order to estimate the user profile according to age groups. The company comScore is the multinational that was in charge of digital measurement in Spain at the time. Finally, once all this information had been collected, we contacted all the heads of the digital divisions of each of the regional channels under study to compare the data collected and gain knowledge regarding the strategies of these companies. Unfortunately, however, only four directors responded to the semi-structured interview: Esther Medina, head of Innovation Service in the digital environment at TVG; Joan Carles Martorell Velásquez, director of IB3 Televisió; Isaías Blázquez, head of digital content at Castilla-La Mancha Television; and Iñaki Gurrutxaga, director of digital content at EITB. The questions addressed the approach of each regional channel to other viewing windows, the objectives of their presence on YouTube, an analysis of consumption, and future plans in the new and evolving television landscape.

3. Results

3.1. Offering

After the research was carried out, it was confirmed that of the twelve regional groups that comprise FORTA, only Televisión del Principado de Asturias does not have an institutional account on YouTube. Thus, the overwhelming majority of these types of public companies are present on this platform.

Another important point bears mentioning. The analysis shows that the offering is not simply a transfer of the programming offered on linear channels. Instead, there is variety in the offering (Table 2). Most of the sub-channels created use an online strategy and do not simply copy the existing linear programming to the online world. On the one hand, some organisations such as Radio Televisión Madrid and Castilla-La Media have no sub-channels whatsoever. On the other hand, some groups have a

3 The comScore tool collects data related to digital video consumption, both streaming and downloads, on smartphones, tablets and desktops, while avoiding duplication.

large number, such as Corporación Aragonesa, which has 32 sub-channels (although some with only a few dozen subscribers), and Radio-Televisión de Andalucía with eleven sub-channels. After analysing the more than 80 channels and sub-channels, the following trends have been observed in this regard:

- The sub-channel belongs to a linear channel: this only occurs on 3Kluba (ETB's children's channel which reproduces ETB3) and Catalan Super 3, which uses the same name as the namesake of its linear television.
- The sub-channel belongs to a programme broadcast in linear mode: in general, these are star slots in linear programming. Examples are the following: *Tierra de Talento*, *Los Reporteros*, *Toros para todos*, and *Al Sur* on Canal sur, *APM? TV3* and *Polònia TV3* on the Catalanian broadcaster; *Aragón en abierto*, *Oregón TV*, and *En ruta con la ciencia* on Corporación Aragonesa.
- Other examples of sub-channels belonging to linear programmes are *De Grana y Oro* on Murcian television, *Informativos TVC* and *En Otra Clave* on Televisión Canaria, and *Uep! Com Anam?* on Balearic television.
- The sub-channel reflects the broadcasting of several examples of the same format: *Enserie* (TVG) groups together TVG's own fictional productions, as does *Ficción Aragón* in the case of *Maño*, although the latter only includes promotional videos.
- The sub-channel is created for other reasons: this is the most common option for which there is a larger variety of examples: archive content such as *Pasouoquepasou* (TVG), *Memoranda* (Canal Sur), and *Carnavales* (Carnaval TVC and Carnavalsur).

Thus, it is difficult to establish common strategies for the channels, as each one makes different decisions, as we have seen. However, one can observe that the Andalusian and Aragon groups have a greater transposition of the linear format to YouTube.

Table 2. Distribution of regional channels and sub-channels on YouTube

NAME OF THE GROUP	Linear channels (broadcast in Spain)	YouTube sub-channels	Date of incorporation on YouTube	Subscribers of the main channel	Ratio inhab/suscribers	No. of videos	Views
Corporación Radio Televisión de Galicia	TVG TVG 2	Pasouoquepasou (2,000) Enserie (367)	2/3/2006	52,500	51.4	4,363	35,707,917
Agencia Pública Empresarial de la Radio y Televisión de Andalucía	Canal Sur 1 Canal Sur 2	Tierra de Talento (42,400) Los reporteros CSTV (7,970) Toros para todos (245,000) Tierra y Mar & Espacio Protegido (49,000) Solidarios CanalSur (4,670) MemorANDA (222,000) Al Sur (2,990) Carnavalsur (114,000) Canal Sur Turismo (62,200) Canal Andalucía Flamenco (102,000) Canal Andalucía Cocina (36,900)	15/1/2007	1,050,000	8.06	27,162	591,144,338

Euskal Irrati Telebista	ETB1 ETB2 ETB3 ETB4	3 kluba (2,370)	11/03/2009	597,000	3.71	44,154	491,260,859
Corporació Ca- talana de Mitjans Audiovisuals	TV3 EL33 Super3 3/24 Esport3	APM? TV3 (61,300) Polònia TV3 (99,000) Super3 (38,400) Cuines (13,000) Adolescents (30,100) Està passant TV3 (6,280) Les tres bessones (17,200)	29/03/2006	343,000	22.68	33,250	343,794,910
Corporación Aragonesa de Radio y Televi- sión	Aragón TV	Aragón Noticias (5,450) Aragón en abierto (38,600) Un lugar para quedarme (245) Esta es mi tierra (401) La Pera Limonera (2,390) De propio (15) Chino Chano (746) Encontrados (32) Unidad Móvil (22,000) Oregón TV (22,100) El Tiempo (38) Atónitos Huéspedes (190) Aragón Deporte (280) Nos vemos (20) Tempero (600) Charrín Charrán (473) La voz de mi calle (119) El último show (27) Yo sé más que tú (44) La Jornada (183) En ruta con la ciencia (6,630) Objetivo Aragón TV (111) Ficción Aragón TV (1,420) Lo tuyo es puro teatro (726) Comedyantes (4,340) Vuelta atrás (232) Aragón en pleno (18) Motormanía (782) Otro punto de vista (882) Aftersun (531) Rural Chef (37) MadeInAragon (8,480) Deratonesyvinilos (11)	25/4/2007	56,500	23.5	4,562	14,055,410
Radio Televisión Madrid	Telemadrid La Otra	----	17/8/2006	880,000	7.7	9,488	501,422,595

Castilla-La Mancha Media	CMMTV	----	18/12/2007	543,000	3.76	49,016	231,628,789
Radiotelevisión de la Región de Murcia	TVM	Hablamos de MurciaDiario (155) Radio Marca (92) De Grana y Oro (374)	12/1/2015	2,050	740	2,070	575,777
Radio Televisión Canaria	Televisión Canaria	Informativos TVC (21.600) En otra clave (123.000) Carnaval TVC (52.000)	25/01/2008	100,000	21.75	9,938	40,929,149
Ens Public de Radiotelevisió de les Illes Balears	IB3 Televisió	IB3 NOTICIES (6.240) IB3 Junior (187) Els Entusiastes IB3 (1.090) Uep! Com Anam? IB3 (10.800) Esports IB3 (14.300) IB3musica (249)	19/01/2006	75,600	15.49	34,961	56,306,024
Corporació Valenciana de Mitjans de Comunicació	À Punt	La Colla (2.220) Family Duo (2.170) La Vall Sèrie (90) Va de bo Pilota (416) Caixa de Ritmes (40)	15/11/2017	9,810	515.5	1,763	3,236,024

Source: created by the authors

As mentioned above, it is worth noting that the regional channels were the pioneers in developing strategies with YouTube. The longest-running channel on this platform is Balearic's IB3 (launched in January 2006), followed by Galicia's TVG and Catalonia's TV3 (March 2006). On the other hand, the most recent incorporations have been Murcian Television (2015) and Valencian TV (2017), which are the newest channels.

In terms of the ratio between inhabitants of each community and subscribers, it should be noted that there is a majority of subscribers in the Basque Country (3.71), Castilla-La Mancha (3.76), and Madrid (7.7). On the other hand, the number of subscribers is lowest in the two newest channels: À punt (515.5) and TVM (740). In absolute numbers, the range is very broad, with certain sub-channels having only eleven followers, such as Deratonesyvinilos (Aragón TV), compared to 250,000 for Toros para todos (Canal Sur).

In terms of numbers of views, the Andalusian channel stands out with 591,144,338 views, followed by the Madrid channel with 501,422,595. On the other hand, the channels with the lowest number of views are the two most recently created, À punt (3,236,024) and Murcian television (575,777), which is obviously due to their being the newest additions to the mix.

The accounts with the highest level of video production belong to the television services of Castilla-La Mancha (49,016), the Basque Country (44,154), the Balearic Islands (34,961) and Catalonia (33,250). On the other hand, the accounts with the lowest production were found in Murcia (2,070), Galicia (4,363) and Aragon (4,562).

Following the analysis, it has been concluded that the updating of the channels differs greatly from one channel to another. All the main channels upload audio-visual content on a weekly basis. EITB adds at least ten new videos per day, and Castilla-La

Mancha TV inserts 120 per week. However, there are sub-channels that have not been updated for years, including Made in Aragon (inactive for more than 5 years), Pasou o que pasou (the most recent video is from 19 August 2020), and enserie (no new content since 14 May 2018). The case of Telemadrid also stands out. Despite having a large number of subscribers, this channel tends not to update its playlists as often as Televisión de Murcia.

The research carried out indicates that fictional content hardly ever appears in the offering of the regional channels on YouTube. None of the channels, with the exception of TVG and IB3, offers content in this format. In the specific case of CRTVG, a fictional sub-channel has been created, which is called enserie.

In general, the broadcasts that appear on YouTube are not exclusive to this platform. Instead, these programmes have appeared on linear television as well. The content is usually presented in the form of clips from the channel's linear broadcasts: short highlights that are interesting, amusing, relevant, and that come from other programmes.

Exclusively produced audio-visual material is rarely found. This would be the case of original content for networks such as #VideoSelfie, #DetrásDaCaruta, #InstaGall for TVG, and even videos from the IB3 programme *Els Entusiastes* which, being a transmedia project, sometimes premieres on YouTube and social networks.

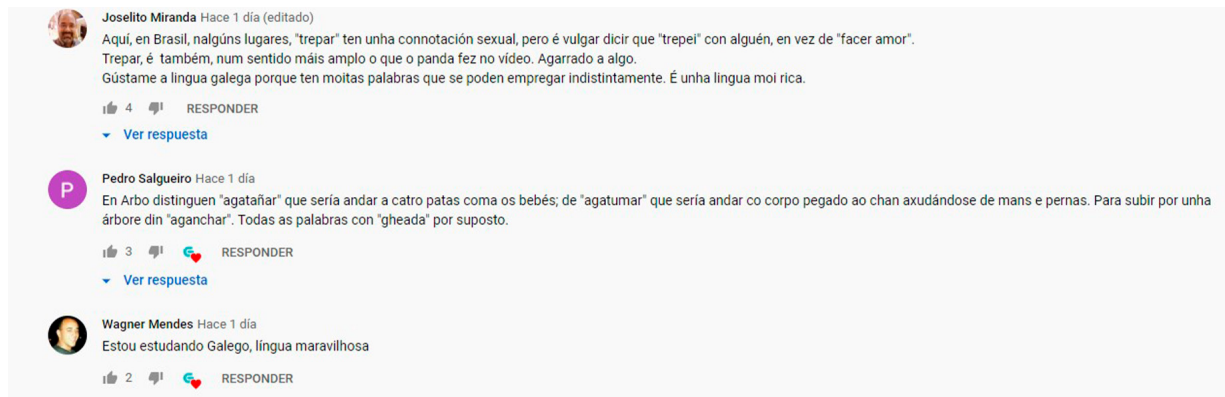
Although short and medium-length videos predominate (no longer than 10 minutes), there are sometimes complete programmes, such as the following: *Land Rober Tunai Show*, *Era visto*, and *Galegos polo mundo* in the case of TVG; *Voces del Deporte* on Murcian Television; and other programmes on Canal Sur or television channels from the Canary and Balearic Islands. In fact, among the three latter channels, YouTube is used almost as an archive, or as a type of *drawer* where they store a percentage of their programming as part of their *long tail* strategy. Thus, the life span of content broadcast in linear mode is extended, especially that of a more timeless nature. This long duration is undoubtedly an anomalous practice in the YouTube environment, where short videos are more successful. The most extreme cases are certain broadcasts on Canal Sur's sub-channel about carnivals, an example of which is the COAC20 Final, which lasts nearly twelve hours. Another is the Esports channel on Balearic television with programmes about matches such as *A l'estudi // Mallorca-Almeria amb l'equip d'esports 3 en joc* [In the studio // Mallorca vs. Almeria: with the 3rd sports team at stake], with a duration of more than four hours.

On the other hand, short videos last two to three minutes, in which the viewer can watch summaries, interesting highlights of programmes, and mini-videos typical of social networks, as well as productions of 5 to 15 minutes where the viewer can enjoy longer sections of programmes.

It bears mentioning that YouTube offers the option of commenting on videos, although this option is sometimes deactivated, as in the case of certain sub-channels of Canal Sur. However, it has been observed that viewers do not take advantage of this option, as confirmed by the case of TVG, where only five or six comments were made about videos with 30,000 views, and no comments were made about the others.

With 60,000 views, *Polònia* TV3 had a total of 170 comments. It has also been observed that viewers living outside Spain are the ones who often comment on these videos, as can be seen in the screenshots in Images 1 and 2 below from TVG and Canal Sur.

Image 1. Screenshot of comments made about #DigochoEu of TVG



Source: YouTube

Image 2. Screenshot of comments made about Tierra de Talentos of Canal Sur



Source: YouTube

As there is hardly any interaction between the viewers of the channels on this platform, this communication medium is not used to its full advantage. It has the potential to reach a target audience beyond the usual geographical limits of linear broadcasting, which could foster engagement and create a community that revolves around audio-visual productions with which they strongly identify.

3.2. Consumption

With regard to the analysis of the most viewed videos on each channel and sub-channel, according to the data collected in the previous section, it can be affirmed that the videos with the highest number of views are among those that are several years old. Thus, time is a key factor. The most recent of the 10 most viewed videos is from 2018, while the oldest is from 2010. In all cases, they exceed 10 million views, yet the most viewed video is related to the mating of a donkey on IB3 in October of 2014, which reached 33 million views.

Given the variety of topics offered, it is difficult to categorise the most viewed videos (Table 3). In general, humour tends to prevail in digital video content, including programmes such as *Land Rober* on TVG and *PolóniaTV*, just to give a few examples. Music is also an important topic, as in the case of *Luar* on TVG, as well as social and emotional content, as in *Gente maravillosa* on Canal Sur.

Table 3. Top ten videos with the highest number of views (1 May 2021)

Video title	Channel	Views (in millions)	Date uploaded	Duration
<i>Laparellament de l'ase i la somera</i> by Víctor Martí [The mating of a donkey and his female partner]	IB3 Televisió	33 M	31 October 2014	2 min, 33 s
<i>Especial Rastreadores: Civilizaciones perdidas</i> [Special investigation: lost civilisations]	Telemadrid	22 M	26 October 2012	40 min, 44 s
<i>Cámara oculta de Gente Maravillosa</i> "Es mi criada" [Hidden camera on marvelous people She's my nanny]	Canal Sur	16 M	25 May 2018	14 min, 30 s
<i>Mariachi Azteca - Felicidades Viva la Fiesta</i> [Aztec mariachi - Felicitations and long live the festival]	TVC	15 M	5 June 2013	2 min, 30 s
<i>Fenómeno Fan</i> <i>Un rapero de tan solo 5 años</i> [Fan phenomenon A rapper who is only 5 years old]	Canal Sur	13 M	12 June 2016	7min, 01s
<i>El dúo Adexe y Nau, regalados para Reyes</i> [The Adexe and Nau duo, given as a gift for Three King's Day]	Canal Sur	11 M	6 January 2018	5 min, 37 s

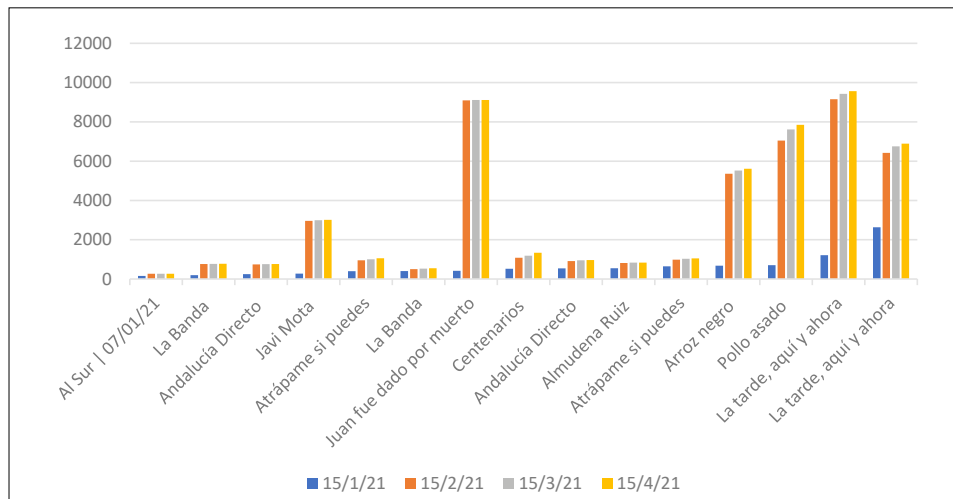
<i>Casillas es deixa marcar un gol per Carbonero</i> [Casillas lets Carbonero score a goal]	TV3	11 M	10 November 2010	2 min, 9 s
<i>¿Se puede freír un huevo en plena calle?</i> [Can you fry an egg on the street?]	Telemadrid	11 M	16 June 2017	3min, 01 s
<i>Cámara oculta en el baño de mujeres</i> [Hidden camera in the women's bathroom]	Canal Sur	10 M	15 December 2009	2 min, 03 s
<i>¿Bailamos? Dos hermanos se ven por primera vez en su vida, bailando</i> [Shall we dance? Two brothers see each other for the first time in their lives while dancing]	Canal Sur	10 M	30 October 2015	42 min, 49 s.

Source: YouTube. Created by the authors

Table 3 shows the huge variety of topics among the most viewed videos. Although many of them comply with the characteristics of viral videos, such as the humour used in the TV3 piece on Casillas-Carbonero, interesting oddities such as frying an egg on the street, or emotional issues such as two brothers dancing together for the first time, sometimes breaches the classic features of viral videos such as length, as some are up to 42 minutes long.

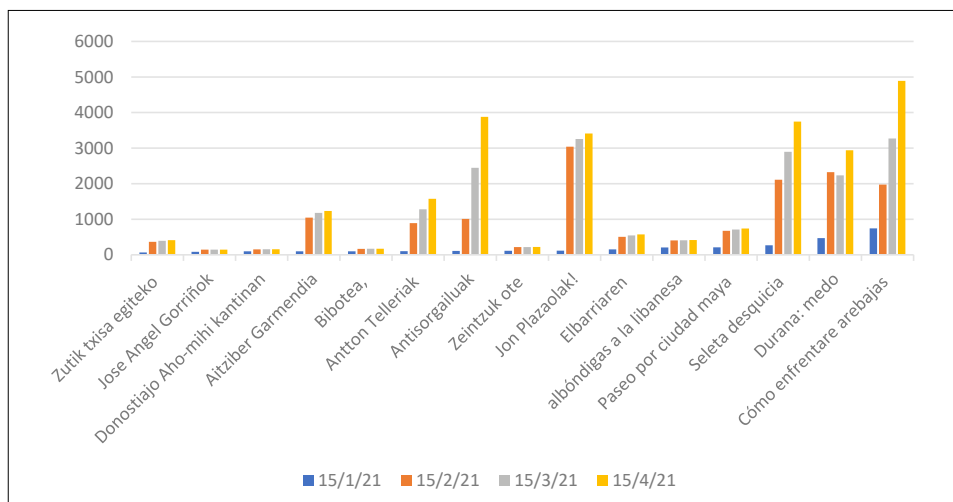
This research also monitored the performance of the videos for a period of four months, from January to April of 2021, to see how they evolved during this time span. With rare exceptions, a larger increase has been confirmed during the first month, which slows to nearly a constant trickle in subsequent months. This is shown in the following graphs related to the performance of the sample of videos for the month of January 2021.

Graph 1. Increase of Canal Sur views



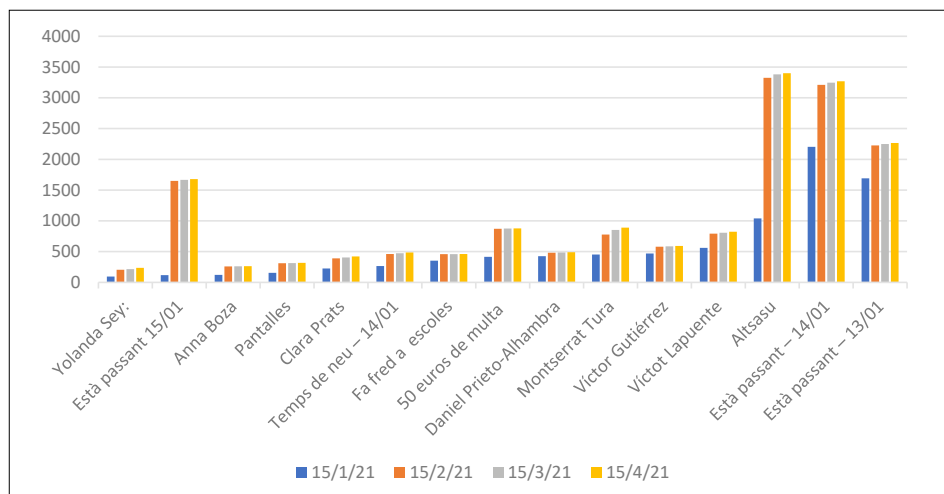
Source: YouTube. Created by the authors

Graph 2. Increase of EITB views

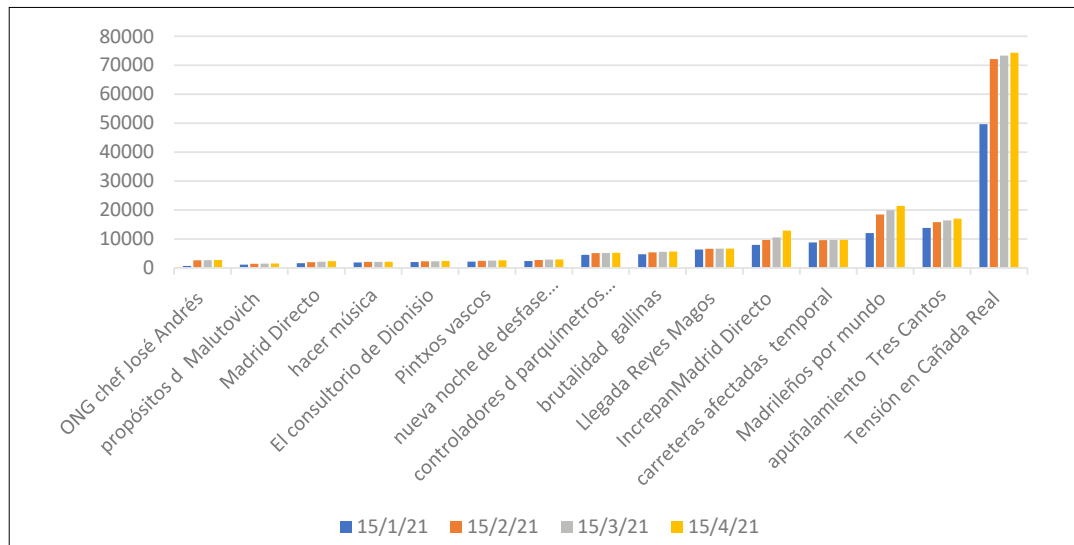


Source: YouTube. Created by the authors

Graph 3. Increase of TV3 views



Source: YouTube. Created by the authors

Graph 4. Increase of TeleMadrid views

Source: YouTube. Created by the authors

As previously mentioned, there is an enormous variety of topics in the videos with the highest number of views during these months, due to the multiple channels monitored. Sports are the main focus of attention on TVG with the re-airing of the Celta B-Deportivo derby, and the broadcasts of matches on the Balearic sub-channel Esports. Meanwhile, the comedy sketches of *Polònia* are a big hit on TV3.

On the other hand, some channels have a very low viewing rate. Those belonging to Murcian and Castilla-La Manchan television have no more than one thousand views per month, with rare exceptions. Likewise, videos broadcast by Telemadrid attain a fairly low figure in comparison with the number of subscribers. During the monitoring, the most successful video of this channel obtained 74,000 views, which was far from those achieved by others such as the Basque or Catalanian channels, referring to the video entitled, “*Tensión en la Cañada Real por los cortes de luz en la zona*” [Tension in Cañada Real over power outages in the area], from 3 January 2021.

As mentioned earlier, the third way of approaching this audience is through comScore data, which was the official company for digital video metrics at the time of this research. It should be noted that the monitoring does not cover the entire YouTube activity of all the channels analysed in this study. Table 4 shows the details of the channels that have been monitored.

It is very difficult to study digital audiences due to the lack of standardisation of units and the dearth of systemisation of the object of study. A clear example is the channel Crakòvia TV3. It does not appear on YouTube as part of the offering of the Catalanian regional channel, and instead has its own regional channel. However, on the comScore reports, it is included in the offering

of TV3. This succession of divergences between the offering on YouTube and the measurement systems are solely due to the decisions of the channels themselves.

Table 4. Audience data for the regional channels. January and March of 2021

Channel	January 2021				March 2021			
	Reach (000s)	Views (000s)	Videos per viewer	Minutes per viewer	Reach (000s)	Views (000s)	Videos per viewer	Minutes per viewer
TV3	375	1,944	5.2	43.5	375	1,922	5.1	43.4
Polonia	69	522	7.6	26.4	108	855	7.9	24.9
Super 3	53	647	12.3	30.7	47	505	10.7	28.8
APM?	32	169	5.2	68.5	25	145	5.9	82.3
Crakòvia TV3	20	173	8.7	19.7	35	268	7.8	17.6
Les tres bessones	15	99	6.7	45.3	17	92	5.5	41.4
Telemadrid	1,149	2,887	2.5	16.0	712	1,694	2.4	16.2
TVG	124	626	5.0	17.8	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA
RTVA	4,037	20,517	5.1	24.7	3,923	20,590	5.2	24.7
EITB	1,017	4,043	4.0	18.5	1,351	6,449	4.8	20.4
Aragón TV	13	58	3.3	13.1	16	61	3.9	11.1

Source: comScore. Created by the authors

According to these data, the most heavily watched channel of those monitored was Canal Sur (4,037,000), followed by Telemadrid (1,149,000) and EITB (1,017,000). At the other end of the scale were TV3 (375,000), TVG (124,000), and finally Aragón TV (13,000). This datum coincides with that obtained by the number of views mentioned previously. On the other hand, TV3 viewers spend the most time on this channel, with an average of 43.5 minutes per viewer (during the month of January 2021), followed by Andalusians with 24.7 minutes per viewer. Once again, the Aragón channel is at the bottom of the list in this ranking with 13.1 minutes per viewer.

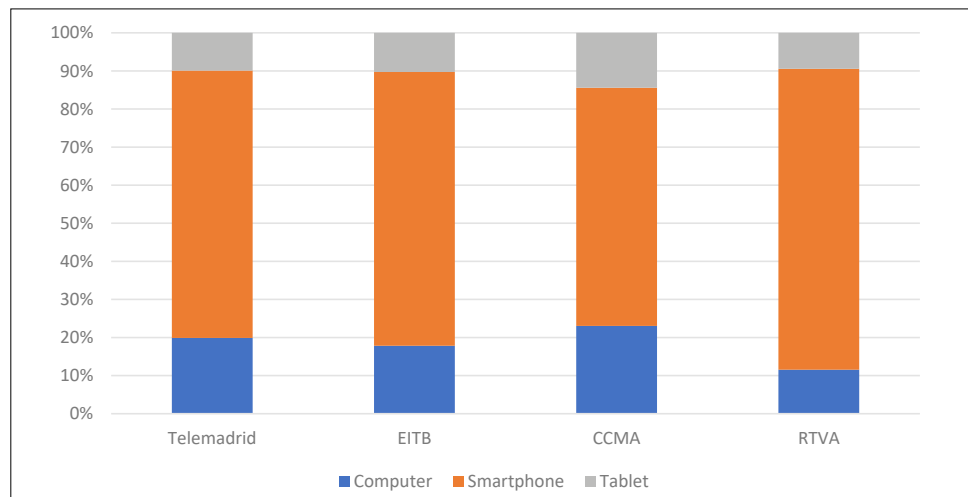
Nevertheless, the humour channel known as *APM?* has the highest figure in this regard, with 68.5 minutes per viewer in January, which rises even higher in March to 82.3 minutes. Once again, humour demonstrates its power in attracting audiences. The data gathered indicate that there is no similarity between the linear audience and those originating from this platform. During

the month of January 2021, the most watched regional channel in linear broadcasting was TV3 (14.5), followed by ETB2 (11.2), Aragón TV (10.9), and TVG (10.5). Canal Sur stands at 9.1 and Telemadrid reaches 6.8 in audience share (Barlovento, 2021).

In terms of the number of videos per viewer, it is striking that the highest figures were obtained by the Catalanian TV sub-channel dedicated to children, *Super 3*, with 12.3 videos in January and 10.7 in March, followed by *Crakòvia TV3*, with 8.7 and 7.8, respectively. The latter is noteworthy, due to its being a sub-channel that is rarely updated, as it disappeared from linear television years ago. As far as *Super 3* is concerned, it confirms the large number of children's videos disseminated on this platform.

Regarding the kind of terminal used to access content on YouTube, comScore data show that consumption is completely dominated by mobile devices. Most of the viewing takes place on smartphones in 70% of the cases (Graph 5); in second place is the computer (17-19%); and finally the tablet. The reign of the smartphone as a digital device for video viewing has once again been confirmed, especially since the pandemic.

Graph 5. Viewing devices used (April 2021)



Source. comScore. Created by the authors

As shown in Table 5, with regard to gender, there is a majority of male viewers on all the channels monitored by comScore. On some stations, the difference is more pronounced, as in the case of Aragón TV, EITB and TVG, while in TV3 they are nearly equal.

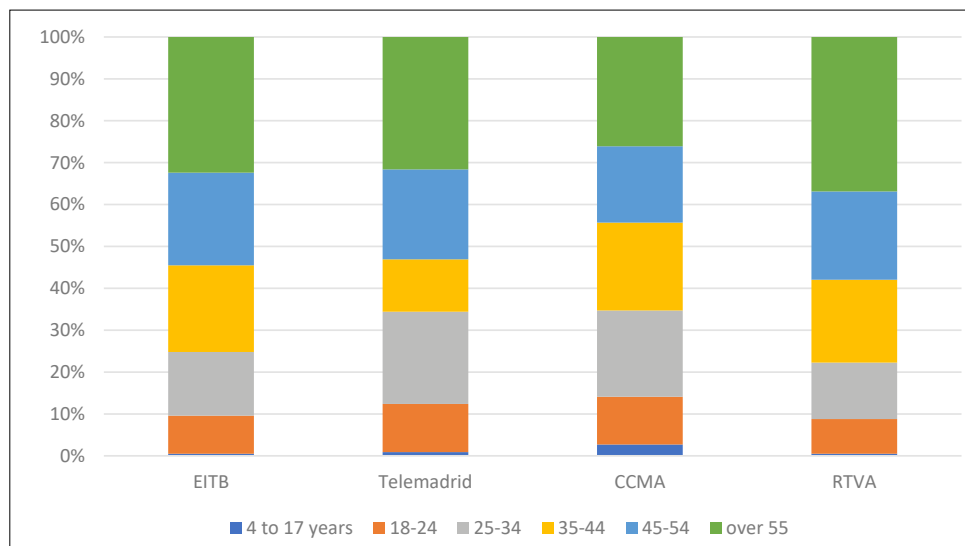
Table 5. Distribution of views by gender. February 2021

	Female	Male
Aragón TV	31.2	68.8
TV3	49.8	50.2
RTVA	47.9	52.1
EITB	33.6	66.4
Telemadrid	40.7	59.3
TVG	37.1	62.9

Source: comScore. Created by the authors

As far as age groups are concerned, despite the reference to a digital medium with which young people are more associated, the data indicate that the 55+ age group is the largest consumer of this type of video. Moreover, this group is the most likely to watch these channels in linear broadcasting as well. However, there are certain differences among channels, as can be seen in Graph 6. The 55+ group is closely followed by the 45-54 age group.

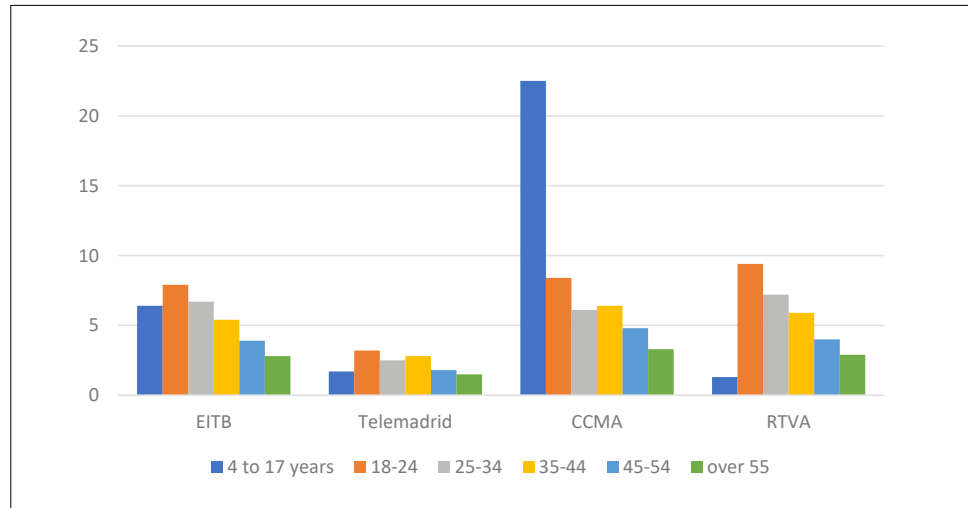
Graph 6. Reach according to age groups



Source: comScore. Created by the authors

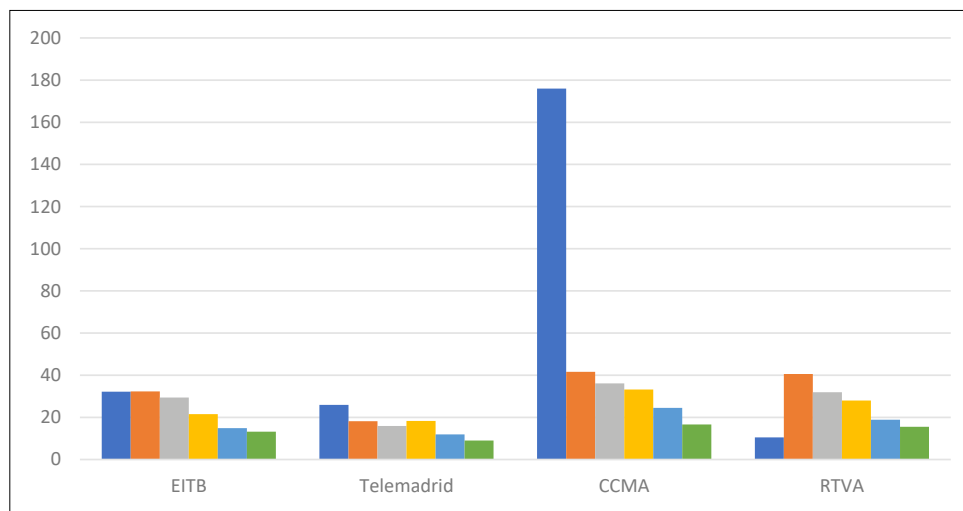
On the other hand, if we look at the parameter related to videos per viewer, young people reach the highest figures. According to comScore data, the categories of 4-17, 18-24, and 25-34 years of age consume the highest number of videos per viewer (Graph 7). In this regard, the high figures of consumption by children on the Catalan channel are striking. On the other hand, the 55+ age group is the one that watches the fewest videos. This situation is undoubtedly due to the familiarity of young people with digital content.

Graph 7. Videos per viewer (April 2021)



Source: comScore. Created by the authors

Likewise, the dominance of digital consumption by the youngest group is shown in Graph 8. In fact, the youngest age groups use more minutes per video viewed than the older groups. Differences in digital skills among the various generations is evident, as the oldest group barely manages to exceed fifteen minutes of viewing time per video, compared to an average of 35 minutes for the 18-24 age group. In this case, once again it is striking to see the high level of consumption by the children's group in terms of time spent on the Catalan channel.

Graph 8. Minutes per viewer

Source: comScore. Created by the authors

In comparison to the consumption of content on YouTube through generalist channels in Spain, the level is lower for the regional stations. On generalist channels, the average user consumes between 8 and 12 videos per month, spending between 39 and 55 minutes viewing content from Spanish television channels on YouTube, which are figures that surpass those of the regional channels (González-Neira, Vázquez-Herrero, Quintas-Froufe, 2022).

3.3. Interviews

Finally, a series of interviews were conducted with the heads of some of the regional channels in order to compare part of the results obtained. The reasons for their presence on YouTube are wide-ranging. For Esther Medina, head of Innovation Services in the digital department of TVG, there are three reasons: commercial interests; the distribution of content that allows the broadcaster to reach an audience that is different from that of linear television; and finally, an interest in positioning new and innovative content. Isaías Blázquez, director of Digital Content at Castilla-La Mancha Television, indicates that this media company started using YouTube in order to give a “second life to the content broadcast on CMM, and to increase the number of consumption windows of the channel as well”. However, its presence on YouTube is part of a broader strategy of involvement in the digital environment, which includes Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, where the channel also introduces exclusive content. This incorporation of a broader strategy has also been followed by EITB. Iñaki Gurrutxaga explains that it was “a strategic commitment; it was the window we chose beyond our own platforms to disseminate content in the Basque language, and about Basque culture. The presence of our language on the Internet is the most important challenge we set for ourselves from the start”. Joan Carles Martorell, director of IB3 Televisió, says that in the case of Balearic television, from 2016 onward their YouTube

channels were boosted by uploading “complete programmes and series in HD in order to compensate for the user experience that we offered to our on-demand service, which had become fairly outdated”. In fact, this is one of the channels that produces exclusive content, such as *Els Entusiastes*, which was later broadcast in linear TV and includes fictional content. However, Blázquez points out that development on this platform is sometimes influenced by technical and legal issues, such as the use of music subject to copyright, so there are various initiatives that cannot be put into practice. Looking to the future, Martorell believes that YouTube is likely to lose its prestige with television services due to competition from OTTs.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The research carried out shows the absence of a common strategy in the offerings by regional channels on YouTube. There is no direct transposition of the linear structure to the platform under study. Instead, a wide variety of offerings are provided (O1). Most of the sub-channels launched are part of an online strategy that does not simply copy the existing linear structure to the online world. Thus, no general patterns of offerings between them can be observed, as their programmes are highly diverse, ranging from video broadcasts of a few minutes to transmissions of several hours. Channels such as Canal Sur, TV Canaria and IB3 mainly follow a repository strategy with broadcasts that exceed one hour (Q2), thus breaching the general dynamic of short clips on YouTube. In contrast to the general trend on YouTube of watching short videos, several of the monitored channels included entire slots, which sometimes exceed one hour, and are sometimes among the most viewed videos. Furthermore, the material displayed is taken directly from the traditional channel, so there is hardly any focus on exclusive and diverse content of the transmedia matrix (Q1). Thus, YouTube is not part of cross-media strategies.

The research reveals that the content of the most viewed videos is highly diverse, including humour, music, emotional issues, and sports (O2). The length of these successful videos is usually only a few minutes.

The highest consumption rates of the videos takes place in the first few days after their publication, and in the following months there is hardly any increase in the number of views (O2). However, it is striking that certain content, such as that of Crakòvia TV, continues to be strongly consumed, even after several years without being updated. Therefore, this platform makes it possible to extend the life of content broadcast in linear format.

According to the analysis, despite being a digital medium that is familiar to the youngest age groups, people over 55 consume this type of video the most (Q3), although they spend the least amount of time viewing in terms of minutes per video. Digital skills account for the level of intensity of this consumption. It has also been concluded that most of this content is viewed on smartphones.

Among the limitations of this study, one that stands out is the constant state of adaptation of the situation under study, which is undergoing continuous assimilation and restructuring. In fact, TVG launched its live channel on YouTube in May of 2021, where in addition to being able to access live broadcasts of TVG Europa’s programming, it is also possible to watch the previous 12 hours. Furthermore, the lack of standardised digital consumption data for each of the channels and sub-channels prevents us from having a complete picture of the true viewing of this content. On the other hand, the interview section is somewhat skewed, as several of the people in charge did not respond to our request for an interview.

This research focuses on a very specific type of broadcaster with very clear factors in their innovation strategies. Regional channels are a type of PSB in which the framework guidelines determine the type of programming offered. Moreover, the budget allocated to these organisations separates them from large Spanish audio-visual groups, and from new broadcasters such as OTTs. Innovation requires a strong economic investment and, in general, these channels have very tight budgets (Table 2). Specifically, the forthcoming creation of their own OTTs is the most recent step in this innovation strategy, in line with the concept of *imitation* set forth by Napoli (1998).

In addition to keeping in mind these determining factors, the rules of the game of a platform itself influence this development, as there are a series of technical and legal limitations. Thus, there is nearly a total absence of fictional content on these channels and sub-channels, as they focus more on information and entertainment.

As previously mentioned, these goal of these innovation initiatives is to attract audiences who are younger and more digitally savvy. The aim is to encourage the participation of people who are younger than 30-40 years of age.

However, as in the case of social networks, not all the options of approaching the audience have been exhausted, as a comments section is not available on many channels, and in those where it is included, it is far from being dynamic. Nor are they taking advantage of creating communities related to content on channels with a common affinity for users. In today's globalised world, such content could be attractive to groups who have emigrated to different Autonomous Regions. These channels are not taking advantage of the opportunity to broaden their target audience beyond their geographical borders.

At a time of crisis in linear television viewing, regional corporations should exploit the potential of YouTube in order to position themselves in a digital scenario where a significant percentage of the younger population is active. Due to their public service mandate, these organizations could expand windows with an organised strategy. These broadcasters should make a stronger commitment to scenarios with higher rates of audio-visual consumption by increasing investment in the area of digital video, as this is one of the trends that is clearly expanding.

These channels should develop a more active strategy within new viewing windows such as YouTube. As pointed out by Campos (2016), it is necessary to retain the current audience, but also to enter new territory with novel strategies and narratives to attract new viewers.

Thus, based on the results obtained, it is clear that the potential of YouTube must be perfected and exploited, not only as a repository or promotional tool, but also through cross-media initiatives aimed at a younger audience with the goal of fostering the loyalty needed to create a community. In this way, new audiences could be approached while extending the life of linear television content at the same time. In the coming years, we will see the fruits of coexistence between the regional channels' own strategies, such as having an in-house OTT, and those that are outsourced, referring to its offering on YouTube, in a clear context of new audio-visual consumption patterns.

This research opens up several new lines of investigation, such as conducting a diachronic analysis to show the evolution of this digital consumption of videos by regional channels, a comparative study with other European regional public media, an exploration of the presence of these channels on new audio-visual platforms such as Twitch, and the consumption of such content outside the geographical limits of the autonomous regions of origin.

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6. Specific contributions of each author

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Conception and design of the work	Ana María González Neira
Methodology	Ana María González Neira and Carlota Fiaño Salinas
Data collection and analysis	Ana María González Neira and Carlota Fiaño Salinas
Discussion and conclusions	Ana María González Neira and Carlota Fiaño Salinas
Drafting, formatting, version review and approval	Carlota Fiaño Salinas

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