

Digital Competences and Information Consumption in University Students of Bogotá in Colombia

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Abstract

This paper analyses the new informative consumptions and uses of social media among university students in Colombia. From the analysis of various surveys carried out in 2018 and in 2019, Colombian university students will be able to study how the processes of news reading and the uses of social media have evolved. Since the arrival in our lives of social networks sites and the use of numerous hours of the cell phone with an Internet connection, reading habits and news consumption have changed considerably; to the press, to the radio and to the television, the mobility of the news is added through the newsfeed of Facebook and Twitter. With this research, it is desired to observe the evolution in the uses and informative consumptions from the use of social networks sites by means of the quantitative survey technique and a selected sample of university students in the city of Bogotá.

Keywords: Social Media • Information Consumption • Social Networks • University • Colombia • Digital Journalism

Introduction

The new century of information is mainly characterized by the consolidation of the massive use of the Internet and the establishment of digital social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which provide both public and private information permanently and for free. Apps of several digital social media are available on our cell phones or mobile phones and they are frequently used proactively by daily users and by thousands of people during long hours, both during the day and at night. Hence, as it is important for this research study to analyze how youngsters use social media nowadays, we have carried out a survey on university students from Bogotá (Colombia), considering their habits and the information that they consume on their smartphones. We propose the following three hypotheses:

- The youth, including teenagers and university students, represents the major portion of the population that uses the Internet to sign-in to digital social networks, oftentimes in an abusive manner, or to spend excessive time on this activity.
- In addition to the excessive use of social networks by youngsters, there is a shift from traditional communication media to digital communication media and social media.
- The university students from Bogota who participated in our survey, to a man, have an account, at the least, on several social networks, and they usually use them in their daily routines. Even though they do not believe everything that they read on social media, social networks have become their main source of information as a means of communication through which they can get free information by using networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on a daily basis.

In their research, 'Consumed informative y competencias digitalis de estudiantes de periodismo de Colombia, Peru y Venezuela' [Information consumption and digital competences of Journalism students in Colombia, Peru and Venezuela], Romero and Aguaded [1] refer to a survey carried out by the Pew Research Center in 2014, which concluded that in 21 nations, the population had embraced the use of the Internet, particularly the use of social

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networks on smartphones, and that these technological tools were most popular within people aged under 30 and with university-level education. As Bárbara Yuste states in her article 'Las nuevas formas de consumer información de los jóvenes' [The new ways of youngsters' information consumption], youngsters have stopped reading the press as a means of getting information. In view of this reflection presented by Yuste in her article, there are two main aspects that determine the way that youngsters get information nowadays: a social aspect and a mobile aspect. In addition, there is an aspect related to speed and another aspect related to triviality. "The Internet provides a great amount of content, but it is also true that it is consumed quickly and simultaneously with other activities, which sometimes prevents reflecting on and analyzing what is being consumed," adds the Spanish professor of Journalism.

[2] Research thesis (2009) reveals that youngsters have positive attitudes toward news websites. According to Kang, convenience is the first aspect pointed out by American youngsters, that is to say, the information is available anywhere and at any time. The second aspect to be highlighted is the quality of information, which is followed by its instantaneity. This research study is consistent with other works of research on this topic carried out in Europe on university students. Nonetheless, if we consider the trend identified by the [3] institute for the Study of Journalism in the last Digital News Report published in 2018, a decrease can be observed in the use of digital social media. NicNewman, a Research Associate at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, explains this as follows:

'In the last seven years we have followed the sources of news of the biggest countries, and an unstoppable growth in the use of social media for news has been reported. Now, in many countries, such growth has either stopped or is experiencing a decrease. In the United States, for example, the weekly use of social media for news increased from 27% in 2013 to a peak of 51% before decreasing significantly, by 45%, this year. For some people, this represents a readjustment after the boom of social media use and the election of Donald Trump. In the United Kingdom, the use of social media for news increased from 20% in 2013 to 41% in 2017 before decreasing, whereas in Brazil, such decrease has been observed since 2016.'

Now, well, it would be interesting to confirm the trend in the use of social media in Latin American countries such as Colombia, to analyze whether it has increased or decreased among university students from 2018 up to the present day. La Republican newspaper [4] on the basis of a survey conducted by mobile operator Tigo UNE and EAFIT University, concludes that as people grow up, the time that they spend on surfing the Internet increases: 'The national average of daily hours spent on the Internet is one hour and forty-six (46) minutes among kids between 9 and 10 years old; two hours and thirty-four (34) minutes among kids between 11 and 12 years old; four hours and nineteen (19) minutes among teenagers between 13 and 14 years old; and five hours and five (5) minutes for

teenagers between 15 and 16 years old.'

According to this survey, 46% of the children and youngsters in Colombia accessed the Internet every day last year. Smartphones (75%) and tablets (55%) were the most used devices. Furthermore, the survey showed that 97% of the kids and youngsters used the Internet to do school assignments; 93% to download or listen to music; 84% to sign-in to social networks; and 78% to play videogames. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the survey also concluded that 64% of the participants surfed the Internet because they did not have anything else to do. Following this survey depicting the reality in Colombia, the aforementioned newspaper, with the support of ComScore, recently conducted a survey to show the reality in the whole region (Riaño, 2019). According to this new research study, Colombia is the 5th country in the region where the Internet is used the most, following countries such as Peru, which tops the list in the category of social media with 93.2%; Brazil with 89.1%; Mexico with 87.8%; and Argentina with 83.2%. As it can be seen, social networks have become an integral part of our daily lives. As pointed out by a digital consumer survey carried out in 2017 by the Telecommunication Research Center (CINTEL, which is its Spanish acronym), Colombians mainly use the Internet to sign-in to social networks (88%), followed by chatting (86%), sending messages (79%), and sharing pictures and videos (78%) [5].

Materials and Methods

The research method used was that of the survey to extract data of interest

in relation to the uses of social media and information consumption. In the words of researchers Casas, Repullo, and Donado (2003, 143), the survey as a research tool is widely used as a research procedure as it allows the obtainment and production of data in a fast and efficient way. Taking these researchers' theory into account, the planning of a research study using the survey method can be established as follows: identification of the problem; determination of the research design; specification of the hypothesis; definition of the variables; selection of the sample, design of the questionnaire; organization of the fieldwork; gathering and treatment of the data and analysis of the data; and interpretation of the results [6].

The survey, which was carried out by researcher Fatima Martínez of the Universidad del Rosario of Bogotá (Colombia), has been named Usos de los social media y consumes [Social media uses and consumption], and it is divided into four different sections: three demographic questions about sex, age, and country of birth, followed by 20 questions distributed into three sections called devices and mobile uses, social media uses, and last, means of communication and information consumption. Next, the questions asked in the survey are reproduced, which, as can be noticed, are focused on students of the Journalism course of studies mainly because of these students' profiles, which are prone to work with information and to develop digital skills in their professional careers (Table 1).

The sample taken shows two university student group profiles; one side, there are first semester students from the Journalism and Public Opinion program taken as sampling subjects from one of the most important private

Table 1. Social Media Uses and Information Consumption.

Social Media Uses and Information Consumption	
1	Demographic questions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Age 1.2. Sex 1.3. Country of birth
2	Devices and mobile uses(cell phone use habits) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 What type of cell phone do you have? Mark just one answer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smartphone with Internet connection - Cell phone without Internet connection - I do not have a cell phone (with or without Internet connection) 1.2 Why do you use your cell phone? Mark all the answers that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phone calls - Social Networks uses - Surf online - Check emails - Other: 1.3 Do you turn off your cell phone when you go to sleep? Mark just one answer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - Sometimes yes, sometimes no 1.4 Who is the person in charge of paying the cell phone bill? Mark just one answer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally, my family - I usually pay for my cell phone expenses - It is shared, sometimes my family, other times myself 1.5 What do you like most about having a cell phone with an Internet connection? You can mark several options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making phone calls - Being able to access Internet whenever I want - Read digital news - Check my emails once in a while - Use social networks to connect with others - Being able to work wherever I am without needing a laptop - Taking photos and recording videos - Other: 1.6 In your daily routine, do you consider your cell phone to be one of the most important tools for your professional or personal development? Mark just one answer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - At present, would you be able to live without a mobile or a cell phone in your daily life? Mark just one answer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No

3	<p>Social media uses (habits in the social network uses)</p> <p>3.1 On which social networks do you have an active account? Mark all the answers that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - whatsapp - YouTube - Other: <p>3.2 What social networks do you use every day or use most frequently? Mark all the answers that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - whatsapp - YouTube - Other: <p>3.3 Why do you use the social networks? You can mark several options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be informed about what is going on - To stay in touch with family and friends - For pure entertainment - To share news, pictures, videos, and various pieces of information - Other: <p>3.4 In which social network do you usually post more personal information Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - whatsapp - YouTube - Other: <p>3.5 Which is your favorite social network? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - whatsapp - YouTube - Other: <p>3.6 Do you think that social networks are useful for communication in your daily life? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No <p>3.7 In your opinion, must a professional journalist know how to use social networks in their daily life to better manage information? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No <p>3.8 What social network do you think is more useful to be informed or updated? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - whatsapp - YouTube - Other: <p>3.9 Could you give us an estimate of the number of hours you sign-in, generally speaking, to your social networks? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I do not waste time on social networks - 1 to 5 hours weekly, I do not use it very much - 1 to 5 hours daily, I spend many hours online per day - More than 7 hours daily, I am connected to the Internet most of the time through the use of my cell phone.
4	<p>Means of communication and information consumption</p> <p>4.1 Through which means of communication do you usually inform yourself mainly? Mark all the answers that apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Print media - Radio - TV - Digital media: press, radio, and digital TV - Social networks <p>4.2 What communication method is your favorite to stay updated with breaking news? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Print media - Radio - TV - Digital media: press, radio, and digital TV - Social networks

<p>4.3 What means do you think that has greater credibility than the rest of the communication media? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Print media - Radio - TV - Digital media: press, radio, and digital TV - Social networks
<p>4.4 What means of communication is, in your opinion, the least credible of all? Mark just one answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Print media - Radio - TV - Digital media: press, radio, and digital TV - Social networks

universities in Colombia, the Universidad del Rosario; on the other side, there are university apprentices from the National Service of Learning (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje, SENA) in Colombia, who receive free training from the Colombian government. In total, 143 surveys have been processed, 72 of which correspond to the Universidad Del Rosario, mostly from first and second semester students from the Journalism school, with a high socioeconomic profiles, and 71 correspond to the National Learning Service (SENA), from apprentices from the technical program of Commercial Communication, with a medium to low socioeconomic profile. All the students were surveyed in Bogotá, capital city of Colombia [7].

The chronological distribution of the surveys was done in three periods with similar samples: the students of the Universidad del Rosario, consisting of 40 Journalism students of the second semester of 2018 and 32 students of the first semester of 2019, with most of them studying something related to the Journalism course of studies, while SENA's students were surveyed during the first semester of 2019. As regards the students of Journalism in the Universidad del Rosario, we agree with the reasoning used by researchers Romero and Aguaded (2016) because they are students in the training stage for the exercise of this profession, the foundation of which is the responsible management of informative content in that this will be the content that will serve as event re-encoder and media discourse creator. However, analyzing Journalism students is not the only worthwhile activity. It is also worth contrasting different data with the profiles of other young students from other social and economic classes who have more technical training. Hence, it is relevant to note the answers obtained from a sample of SENA students of Bogotá.

The design of the survey forms was made by using the Google application specialized in surveys, which goes by the name Google Forms. The delivery of these forms to the students was done by e-mail; in some cases, the surveys were completed during class time. [8] The obtained final results obtained have been provided by the graphs and the automatic count facilitated by Google Forms in the three moments of the survey. The first period (2018) obtained 40 answers, the second one (2019) obtained 32 answers, in both periods answered were obtained from the students of the Universidad del Rosario, and in the third and final period (2019), 71 answers were gathered from the apprentices of SENA in Bogotá's branch office.

Results

The information provided in the surveys conducted in the three periods was analyzed following a comparative model. The survey of period number 1 was completed by first semester students of Journalism of the Introduction to Journalism course in the Universidad Del Rosario in the second semester of 2018, which was answered by 40 students. Survey number 2 was completed by students of the basic core cycle of the Communication and Language course, which gathers Journalism, Liberal Arts, Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, and History students from the Human Sciences School of the Universidad del Rosario during the first semester of 2019. Survey number 3 was completed by SENA apprentices in Bogotá, from the Commercial Communication program, and was answered by 72 young Colombians throughout the first semester of 2019. The segment of all the Colombian university students surveyed in the three moments includes those aged between 18 and 25 years old, that is to

say, it refers to the young population in Colombia that initiates its higher studies education.

Journalism students of the Universidad Del Rosario

The sample was taken from Journalism students of the first semester of the Universidad Del Rosario. The demographic answers point out that they all have Colombian nationality, that their ages range from 18 to 25 years old, and that 70% of them were women and 30% were men.

Devices and mobile uses

In the answers, it is observed that 92% of the students have a smartphone, that they are used in more than 97.4% of the cases to use social networks, and that 94.9% use them to make phone calls. 65% of students do not turn their cell phones off before going to sleep; only 12.5% do it; and 22.5% affirm that they do it sometimes. In question number 5, which refers to what they like the most about having a cell phone with an Internet connection, 90% of the answers were in agreement with the answer that they use social networks to be connected, while the second most significant answer with 72.5% refers to reading digital news. On their daily life, 90% of the Journalism students consider the use of their cell phones as one of the most important tools for their personal and professional development, and 72.5% assure that they could not live without having a smartphone in their daily lives.

Uses of the social media

In the section about social media uses, the two social networks mostly used, in 95% of the answers for each, are Facebook and Whatsapp, followed by the 90% who chose the use of Instagram. The answers become more specific, as, from question number 9, regarding the most commonly used social network of all, 92.5% assure that it is Whatsapp, followed by 85% of answers that point out two social networks previously mentioned, Facebook and Instagram. In the question regarding the reason for using social networks, the answers that exceed 80% are: 87.5% choose "to stay in touch with family and friends," 85% choose "to be informed about what is going on," and 82.5% chose the option of using them for mere entertainment. In question numbers 11 and 12, in which the questions refer to the social network where users publish more personal information and which is their favorite social network, over 40% of the answers agree on the same social network among Journalism students: Instagram. 100% of the surveyed students agree on the answers provided to questions on why they consider social networks to be useful for their communication in their daily lives (question 13), and in their opinion, a professional journalist must know how to use social networks in their daily life to better manage information.

In question number 15, which asks about what social network they think is more useful in order to be informed and updated, 79.5% believe that the answer is Twitter and 20.5% think it is Facebook. None of the surveyed subjects makes reference to Instagram. With regard to the number of hours used by students to stay connected to their social networks, 55% answers said that they are connected to the Internet during the day from 1 to 5 hours, while 25% claim that they spend more than 7 hours daily, that is to say, most of the time, they are connected to the Internet through the use of their cell phones, which have Internet connection.

Means of communication and information consumption

The last section, named Means of Communication and Information

Consumption, reveals interesting findings. For example, question number 17 asks students as to which means of communication they use as their main source of information; the two predominant answers obtained with 77.5% each highlight that their main source of information are the social networks and the digital means that include digital press, radio, and TV. The preferred means to stay updated with breaking news (question 18) is the use of social networks as answered by 50% of the surveyed students. However, it is curious that in question number 19, which refers to the means of communication that they consider to be most reliable when compared to the rest of them, 60% of the answers choose print media, and social networks were barely mentioned. Furthermore, in question number 20, which asks about the means of communication that they believe is the least credible of all and the most prone to spread fake news, 85% agree on choosing social networks as their answer and 10% choose TV.

Students of the Basic Core Cycle of the Universidad Del Rosario

This survey was conducted during the first semester of 2019 with students from the Basic Core Cycle of the Universidad del Rosario, which includes students of the first semester, where a great portion of the student body studies something linked to the Journalism course of studies. The profile of students is more varied because they belong to different courses of studies; therefore, the results change when compared with the first survey performed. Mainly, these are students who range from 17 to 25 years of age; who are born in Colombia; and almost 70% of whom are women. Thirty-two answers were obtained in total from this second period.

Devices and mobile uses

More than 90% of the surveyed students have smartphones with an Internet connection. In more than 90% of the cases, the use of the cell phone is mainly to make calls, surf the Internet, and check e-mails, and in 96.9% of the cases, that is 31 of the 32 answers, the students mention that they used their social networks in their cell phones. 78% of them assure that they do not turn off their cell phones before going to sleep. Only 12.5% states that they do turn them off. In question number 5, which asks whether they like having a cell phone with an Internet connection, almost 97% of them answer that they do because of the fact that they can use their social networks to stay connected. 90% of the students consider their mobile phones to be one of the most important tools for their professional and personal development. 62.5% of them state that they cannot live without their mobile phones in their daily routines.

Uses of the social media

The students have active accounts in social networks such as Whatsapp, which is chosen by 100% of the surveyed students, followed by Facebook and Instagram with 96.9% each and YouTube with 93.8%. However, according to the results obtained from question number 9, the applications that are most widely used are Whatsapp with 96.9% and Instagram with 93.8%. Question number 10 provides the answer to the question as to why they use social networks, with 87.5% stating that they do it for mere entertainment, and with 81.3% of them pointing out two answers with the same percentage: to be informed of what goes on and to stay in touch with family and friends. Instagram, just as in survey number 1, is the social network where 48.4% of students publish more personal information, followed by Whatsapp with 25.8%, according to the answers obtained from question 12 about their favorite social network. The favorite social network answers also featured Instagram (according to 59.4% of the answers), followed by Twitter with 18.8%.

For 90.6% of the university students, social networks are useful for their daily communication; likewise, 93.8% of the students consider that a professional journalist must know how to use social networks in their daily life to better manage information. This is what the results from question numbers 13 and 14 point out. Once again, in this second questionnaire, Twitter is seen as the most useful social network to be informed or updated, with 61.3% of the obtained answers against 16.1% who chose Instagram and 12.9% who choose Facebook. Other significant data include 75% of students claiming to be connected to their social networks from 1 to 5 daily hours, as it can be seen in graph number 16 of the questionnaire.

Means of communication and information consumption

In question number 17, again, students gave the same answers as those provided to the questions from survey number 1, highlighting that the means of communication they use to be informed are mainly, with 81.3% each, the digital media (online press, radio, and TV) and the social networks.

Question 18 reinforces this idea in the answers: 53.1% of the answers state that Twitter is the preferred means of communication to stay updated with breaking news, and 40.6% of them point out that they prefer digital media, such as digital press, radio, and TV. There are more interesting answers taken from the question about the means of communication that they consider to have the greatest credibility of all: 38.5% of the answers chose the print media; however, 25.8% refer to the digital media, such as digital press, radio, and TV. Social networks obtain a minimum percentage in this sense from the surveyed students. The last question, number 20, shows once again the same results as the ones obtained in survey number 1 of 2018: the least credible means of communication of all and the most prone to spread fake news are the social networks with 71.9% of the answers obtained, followed by TV with 21.9%.

Apprentices of Commercial Communication of SENA, Bogotá

The survey from period number 3 was answered by 71 apprentices of Commercial Communication of SENA, in Bogotá, during the first semester of 2019. The apprentices' profiles of SENA are different from the ones of the Journalism students of the Universidad del Rosario, both in age group and social class. In this survey, there is an extra demographic question that consists in knowing the name of the course of study that the student is currently studying. The ages of survey participants included in this period are from 16 to 44 years old, and the range between 17 and 25 is the highest percentage found. Interestingly, the result was similar in the answers: 50.7% of apprentices are women and 49.3% are men, according to the results. All of them are Colombian students, according to the country of birth chosen in the answers.

Devices and mobile uses

From the SENA's apprentices in Bogotá, at least 88.6% have smartphones with an Internet connection. 91.55% point out that they use their cell phones to use social networks, followed by 88.7% who assure that they use it to surf the Internet and 83.1% who say that they use them to make or receive phone calls. 71.8% of the surveyed students do not turn off their cell phones when they go to sleep; in fact, only 9.9% stated doing it. To the question referring to what they like the most about having a cell phone with an Internet connection, 87.3% answer that it is "being connected to the Internet whenever they please," and 83.1% choose the answer "use social networks to connect with others". As for question number 6, 81.7% positively answered that in their daily lives, they consider the use of the cell phone to be one of the most important tools for their professional and personal development, while with regard to question number 7, 56.3% affirm that at present, they could live without having a mobile phone in their daily routines.

Uses of the social media

Question 8 asks about the active accounts that the surveyed subjects have regarding their social networks. Apprentices of SENA, in 98.6% of the cases, declare to have Whatsapp accounts, followed by Facebook with 94.4%, YouTube with 87.3%, and Instagram with 83.1%. These answers are reinforced by question number 9, which asks about the social networks they use every day or most frequently: SENA's apprentices remark that 88.7% of them use Whatsapp; 73.2% YouTube; 67.6% Instagram; and 64.8% Facebook. Question number 10, which refers to the reason for using social networks, where the surveyed subjects were able to provide more than one answer, the apprentices mark in 80.3% of the cases that they use it for sheer entertainment, 78.9% chose the option that referred to staying in touch with family and friends, and 74.6% said that they use them to be informed about what goes on. With regard to question number 11, which asks about which social network they use the

most to publish personal information, there is a significant variation regarding the two previous surveys as 47% of them affirm that the social network where they publish more personal information is Whatsapp, followed by Instagram with 25% of the answers and Facebook with 16.2%.

Question number 12 also serves as reinforcement of question number 11. To the question referring to their favorite social network, 31% choose Instagram and 29.6% choose WhatsApp, followed by YouTube with 21.1% and Facebook with 14.1%. However, in question numbers 13 and 14, they do follow the tendency existing in the students of the *Universidad del Rosario* because 94.3% believe social networks are useful for communication in their daily lives and 98.6% think that a professional journalist must know how to use social networks to better manage information. As to the question that asks about which social network they believe is more useful in order for them to be informed or updated, 35.2% point out that the answer is Facebook, 28.2% Twitter, and 16.9% Instagram. These answers are different from the ones obtained in questionnaires 1 and 2.

Another significant datum is related to question 16 and the approximate number of hours that they are connected to social networks: 50.7% recognized spending from 1 to 5 daily hours (spending many hours a day connected), and 19.7% admit to their being connected for more than 7 hours daily. That is to say, for most of their time, they are connected to Internet using their cell phones or mobile phones.

Means of communication and information consumption

This section is quite clarifying, for example, to the question referring to which means of communication is their main source of information, 76.1% of the surveyed subjects state that they use social networks to be informed, followed by 49.3% of the answers that point to digital media such as digital press, radio, and TV. 54.9% of the surveyed subjects choose social networks as their preferred means of communication to stay updated with breaking news, while 21.1% consider digital media such as digital press, radio, and TV as their favorite means to stay updated with the latest news. Question 19 is focused on obtaining the answer for the means of communication that they believe has greater credibility when compared with the rest of the means. In this question, 37.1% choose the print press; however, there are two percentages worth mentioning, such as the 18.6% who choose digital media such as digital press, radio, and TV and the 17.1% who choose social networks as the most credible means. Both percentages represent 35% of the sample, following the 37% garnered by the print press.

However, question number 20 is also clarifying in this sense. 50% of the surveyed subjects think that social networks are the least credible means of communication of all and the most prone to spread fake news; this is followed by 41.4% that think TV is the answer to this question, which paradoxically is one of the means of communication with greater impact on the Colombian Society.

Conclusions

Although the immediately preceding Digital News Report 2018 from the Reuters Institute of Oxford University informs that the social networks fever is decreasing among teenagers and youngsters of countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom; however, in Colombia we can prove, by means of our selected sample of university students of Bogotá, at the time being, that there is no decrease in the use of social networks. Quite on the contrary, excessive use of digital social networks is noticed, which are used, mainly, from mobile devices of cell phones which keep users permanently connected to the Internet, in communication with family and friends, as well as the information from digital media scattered over social media on Internet.

With this research study, we illustrate something that was mentioned in the first hypothesis: the particular importance that social networks have among Colombian university students. Thus various conclusions of interest that verify the three proposed hypothesis arise from this study. The population of university youngsters is one of the segments that use social networks from the use of cell phones the most. Such social network use by youngsters promotes

the consumption of social networks as channels of means of communication from where, mainly, they obtain the news and information, and thus, the traditional media of communication are being replaced by digital and social media. Next, we highlight three conclusions related to the three most important paragraphs of the survey: the devices and mobile uses in relation to the use of the cell phone; the uses of social media with regard to the uses of social networks; and last, the means of communication and information consumption with regard to the replacement of traditional means with digital means, which are scattered over the newsfeed of social networks.

Devices and mobile uses

During the three moments in the survey, the sample subjects declare having in 90% of the cases a cell phone or mobile device with an Internet connection. Their main use when it comes to being connected to the Internet is oriented toward the consumption of social networks, as indicated by the highest percentages obtained from question number 2, with percentages that are close to 90% as well. Around 70% of the sample state that they do not turn off their mobile devices when they go to sleep. The thing that university students say they enjoy the most about having a cell phone with Internet access is connecting to their social networks and reading digital news, according to the information obtained from the answers to question number 5. In the case of Journalism students, generally speaking, the mobile device is considered to be a useful tool in their daily life, which is confirmed by the results in the two relevant questions of the survey with 90%.

Uses of the social media

The selected sample subjects state that they have various social networks accounts, and in a high percentage, those networks correspond to Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The most widely used social network is Whatsapp, followed, in some cases, by Facebook and in other cases, by Instagram and YouTube, depending on the youngster's profile. The three main uses of social networks are for entertainment, to be connected with family and friends, and last, to be informed about the current situations. The social networks where they usually publish more personal information are Whatsapp and Instagram, which match the social networks that are most widely used by the sample subjects. 30%–60% of the surveyed subjects choose Instagram as their favorite social network. 90%–100% of them considered that social networks are useful in their daily lives, and they also thought that a professional journalist must know how to use social networks in their daily routine to be able to better manage information. 50%–75% of the surveyed subjects, during the three moments, pointed out that they spend from 1 to 5 hours daily connected to the Internet, and a smaller percentage claimed that they spend more than 7 hours a day, which is most their time, connected to the Internet through the use of their mobile phones or cell phones.

Means of communication and information consumption: The means of communication through which they stated that they are mainly informed, according to the surveys are the social networks and digital media. The social networks become, considering answers from question number 18, their preferred means of communication when it comes to staying updated and being informed with the latest news. However, question numbers 19 and 20 highlight two key conclusions; Colombian university students still consider print media to be the means of communication with the greatest credibility when compared with others, and they also believe that social networks are more likely to spread fake information, hence becoming the least credible of all.

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