Article

Evolving Social Media Strategies in Local Journalism: Experiences from Argentine Patagonia

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Abstract: Studies on journalistic work and production on social media typically focus on large media outlets in developed countries. In this article, we shift the lens to a peripheral area of a peripheral country: Argentine Patagonia. Our objective was to analyse journalistic production on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter in the eight most-followed local and regional news media outlets. We analysed the narratives, the extent to which they apply transmedia journalism, and how they have evolved compared to studies from 2021. We also conducted structured interviews with social media managers to gain insight into their professional practices. We conclude that, 15 years since the creation of the first profiles, promoting website content remains the primary goal of North Patagonian media networks. Since 2021, there have been more frequent updates but less native production, especially on Facebook and Twitter. Despite the shortage of staff and precarious working conditions, some news media outlets have been able to innovate on Instagram, introducing a variety of multimedia formats, a more conversational tone, diverse update rhythms, adapted content, and even specific content that is organised into sections. Information production for the platforms has been integrated into journalistic routines even when public interaction with the audience remains very limited.

Keywords: social media; social media managers; transmedia journalism; work practices; digital journalism; new narratives; Argentina; Patagonia

1. Introduction

Studies on journalistic work and innovation in the news production process usually focus on major media outlets in developed countries, leaving aside what happens in local and regional media in peripheral zones (Vázquez-Herrero et al. 2019; Boczkowski 2022). In this article, we studied journalistic practices and productions in a peripheral region of a peripheral country, in this case, Argentine Patagonia. The purpose was to understand how news media outlets in the provinces of Río Negro and Neuquén, located in the north of the region, use and manage social media.

In Argentina, media outlets began incorporating social media as news publishing platforms between 2008 and 2009. Similarly, in northern Patagonia, the first Facebook and Twitter profiles were launched during those years. We can therefore say that it has been roughly 15 years since the beginning of the era of multiplatform journalism. In November 2011, a study found that out of 102 news websites surveyed in the Patagonian region, 52.9% had a hyperlink to a Facebook profile on their homepage, and 46% were linked to their own Twitter account (Rost et al. 2013). Instagram accounts were later launched by the media in the region, mainly between 2016 and 2018.

Initially, the main strategy in various countries was to use social media to shovel content and redirect traffic to the website (Jerónimo and Duarte 2010; Noguera-Vivo 2010; Messner et al. 2011; Holcomb et al. 2011). Over time, more innovative media outlets began experimenting with genres and visual formats, for example, on Twitter (García-Avilés and Arias-Robles 2016) and Instagram (Rojas-Torrijos and Panal-Prior 2017), along with

designing new informative formats (Zomeño and Blay-Arráez 2017). In Ibero-America, studies revealed how Facebook and Twitter were becoming consolidated as information platforms in the news media of different countries in the region (García-de-Torres et al. 2011; Said-Hung et al. 2013). Although a good portion of the studies focused on Spain and Portugal (Matassi and Boczkowski 2020), there are investigations that verified the low engagement of newspapers on Twitter in Colombia (Hernández-Rodríguez 2016), identified types of thematic profiles that they use on Facebook in Brazil (Goulart-Massuchin et al. 2019), and highlighted the potential of live streaming social media in Chile (Apablaza-Campos et al. 2020).

In Argentina, studies on how the news media use and manage social networks are scarce and isolated. They verified that the largest newspapers on Facebook were introducing paratextual resources in the text accompanying each message (brackets, hashtags, and mentions) and paralinguistic resources (emoticons and emojis), which shape the discourses circulating through these channels (Raimondo-Anselmino et al. 2017, 2019). Studies revealed that news media outlets have begun to differentiate their agendas, with more political content on the web and more entertainment on social media (Panza-Guardatti et al. 2019). In some instances, media outlets resorted to sensationalist treatment to generate greater impact (Brown et al. 2018).

Work routines in newsrooms have also been changing, adding more specific practices involving social media management to the polyvalent nature of the work (Cifuentes-Arias and Sixto-García 2022). Moreover, these changes are occurring in a context of increasing staff reductions, disqualification, and precarious employment conditions (Örnebring 2018; Blanco-Herrero et al. 2020). In local and regional media in Argentina, journalistic practice is characterised by multitasking, multiple job-holding, labour flexibility, and deprofessionalisation (Bernardi 2019; Schleifer and Mazzoni 2022). News production is carried out with limited staff, leading to an internal search within organisations for profiles that can meet the demands of social networks. As a result, small teams are formed to narrate stories across different platforms, transmedialise content, and interact with audiences (Massa et al. 2020; Alonso 2024).

There are unclear boundaries when it comes to which tasks are assigned to a social media manager or community manager, and their responsibilities are prone to blend with those of other profiles that interact with the audience (González-Alba 2021; Martín-García et al. 2022; Focás 2023). In addition to this, these aforementioned profiles are being incorporated into organisations as a result of changes in technology (Deuze and Witschge 2018). In the cases analysed here, we consider that the definition of social media manager identifies their activities clearly. Thus, whoever is responsible for these tasks must have certain skills, such as the ability to connect with audiences and agility in producing content, knowing how to adapt it to digital informational formats and being familiar with transmedia narrative possibilities. However, they must also generate and stimulate the relationship with their community (Cifuentes-Arias and Sixto-García 2022).

Transmedia journalism provided an appropriate conceptual framework for understanding and analysing the complexity involved in producing and distributing news across various supports and platforms, with audience participation. Based on the concept of transmedia narratives (Jenkins 2003, 2006; Scolari 2009), we understand transmedia journalism as a way of narrating news using different media, supports, and platforms, where each message has autonomy and expands the informational universe, and users actively contribute to the construction of the story. We then ask ourselves how much the news media in the northern part of Argentine Patagonia use different platforms to expand the informational universe and the degree to which they promote audience participation.

Taking all of this into account, we can now establish that the main purpose of this work was to study how news media outlets in northern Patagonia use and manage social media. We compared the current results with those analysed in 2021 to gain a broader perspective. The research questions related to content were as follows: (RQ1) How have the number of followers and update frequency evolved on Instagram, Facebook, and X/Twitter profiles of

each media outlet compared to 2021? (RQ2) What types of posts are northern Patagonian news media outlets using most frequently today? (RQ3) What objectives do they pursue with their publications, and which update mode predominates (shovelling, adaptation, or expansion)? (RQ4) To what extent do they promote user interaction? Regarding social media management, we asked the following: (RQ5) How are the teams that manage social networks composed? (RQ6) What practices do they employ on different platforms?

2. Methods

In order to study the journalistic use and management of social networks in the northern region of Argentine Patagonia, we chose eight local and regional news media outlets, which cover an extensive geography of almost 300 thousand square kilometres and a population of 1461,582 inhabitants (Censo Nacional de Población 2022). In the selection process, we considered the following criteria when selecting outlets: (1) they had to be the ones with the largest number of followers on Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter; (2) they had to be brands that originate from different types of media (radio, television, printed newspaper, and native digital media), in accordance with the recommendation of Salaverría (2015); and (3) there had to be one from each province of the studied area (Neuquén and Río Negro) (Table 1).

Table 1. Analysed news media outlets from Argentine Patagonia.

Brand	Website	Original Media Type	City and Province
LU5 (AM600)	https://lu5am.com/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Private Radio	Neuquén, Neuquén
LU19 (AM690)	https://lu19.com.ar/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Public Radio	Cipolletti, Río Negro
Canal 10	https://diario10.com.ar/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Public Television	General Roca, Río Negro
Canal 7 Neuquén	www.c7neuquen.com.ar/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Private Television	Neuquén, Neuquén
Diario Río Negro	www.rionegro.com.ar/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Private Newspaper	General Roca, Río Negro
Diario LM Neuquén	www.lmneuquen.com/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Private Newspaper	Neuquén, Neuquén
Mejor Informado	www.mejorinformado.com/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Digital Native Media	Neuquén, Neuquén
ANRoca	www.anroca.com.ar/ (accessed on 29 August 2024)	Digital Native Media	General Roca, Río Negro

The sample is heterogeneous in terms of the company size and newsroom structure, and except for *Canal 7*, they are outside the framework of large news media groups in Argentina (Becerra and Mastrini 2024). We characterise local news media as those that "interpret reality from the complicity of cultural values shared by a small community" (López García 2008, p. 26).

All the media studied have free access to the web, except for the *Río Negro* newspaper, which has implemented a porous paywall since August 2020. *Canal 10* and radio *LU19* are both part of the public company Radio y Television Río Negro SE, and they have been sharing content since 2024.

Editorial Río Negro is a century-old company with a printed and digital newspaper; and due to its age, amount of readers, and advertising revenue, it is the most influential news outlet in northern Patagonia and one of the leading references in the interior of Argentina. The newspaper *LM Neuquén* and radio *LU5* are owned by the same business group, the Schroeder family, who also own other media outlets, including a radio station and a local

digital newspaper. They have also made investments in wine production and complex clinics in the region. *Canal 7* belongs to one of the main media groups in Argentina called Alpha Media (radio Rivadavia, radio Splendid, Fm Rock & Pop, and Metro), and it is the most viewed channel in the province of Neuquén. *Mejor Informado* belongs to the company Prima Multimedios, which also owns the AM550 radio, the 24/7 TV channel, and other digital news media. *ANRoca* is part of the 360 Medios group, which includes other local news media such as El Cordillerano, NoticiasNet, Cipo360, and 7 en Punto.

In order to analyse production on social networks, we decided to carry out a content analysis (Sánchez-Aranda 2005) of the official Instagram, Facebook, and X/Twitter accounts. We studied these networks because they are the only ones in which all the media outlets showed some activity in April 2024 and that social media managers emphasised the most in the interviews. We then examined the extent to which media outlets in North Patagonia apply transmedia logic to their informative productions on these three specific social platforms. In other words, we studied to what extent these news media take advantage of the narrative and interactive possibilities of each platform.

The aspects we considered are the number of followers and average daily posts in 2024 and 2021; the most used type of post; publication mode; goal; interactivity; and multimediality. The number of followers was recorded on the 22 April 2024 and compared to the same day in 2021. The average daily posts were taken between the 25 March and the 21 April 2024, and they were then compared to the same period in 2021 and processed using a free version of a tool called FanPage Karma.

Regarding the most used post, we considered the following formats according to different authors (Trillo-Domínguez and Alberich-Pascual 2020; Zomeño and Blay-Arráez 2017; García-Avilés and Arias-Robles 2016): website-based headline, adapted headline, photo news, video news, audiograms, live streams, promotion of own programmes, news carousel, data slides, news teasers, video summaries, viral clips, live coverage, and reports.

We differentiated three strategies in the publication mode: (1) shovelling, which is when the same web content is replicated in another platform; (2) adaptation, which is when the same content is transferred and then adapted to another platform considering its specific characteristics (e.g., using hashtags, emojis, mentions, or animated GIFs) but without adding new information inputs; and (3) expansion, which is when each message adds informative, explanatory or opinionated inputs that enrich and expand the original story.

Considering these strategies, we tried to identify the primary goal of each brand on their social media platforms: promotion, information, or community creation. Promotion involves using social media to drive traffic to existing content on other platforms; information involves adding specific content for each social network; and community creation involves trying to connect with audiences through familiar language, calls to action, and different interactivity strategies (Mendez et al. 2020; González-Molina and Ortells-Badenes 2012).

In terms of interactivity, we examined whether or not the media applies strategies to connect with its audiences. These include communicating directly and asking questions to their readers, using conversational language, and making calls to action. We do not analyse reader responses or reactions. Regarding multimediality (Salaverría 2014), we verified the use of different multimedia formats on social media platforms, as highlighted in our analysis of the most common post types.

To analyse the mode, goal, interactivity, and multimediality, we studied all messages published on the three social media platforms between the 15 and 21 April of 2024—a typical week, without holidays or exceptional events (Hernández-Sampieri et al. 2003). Choosing a week allowed us to establish comparisons with another similar study conducted by the same research team on the same days in 2021. In the week of 2024, the eight media outlets published 379 messages on Instagram, 2837 on Facebook, and 509 on X/Twitter. Then, we considered it necessary to include Instagram stories due to their narrative and interactive particularities; therefore, we added 372 messages, published between the 14th and 20th of May. In total, there were 4097 messages, all of which were coded by the lead author of this article, which avoided reliability issues.

Additionally, we considered two indicators provided by the FanPage Karma tool (version april 2024): the performance score and the interaction rate of each account for the analysed month. The performance score is based on each account's growth and engagement compared to over a million profiles in the tool's database. If a profile is among the top 10% for both growth and engagement, it receives a Page Performance Index (PPI) of 100%. The interaction rate includes the total number of interactions for each post, including likes, comments, shares, and retweets.

In order to understand the journalistic practices in managing social media accounts in these media outlets, we conducted structured interviews that were sent to their social media managers. Contact was made via WhatsApp and email and the questions were answered through text or audio format. All questionnaires were sent and answered between the 1 and 15 May 2024 by the social media managers of *Río Negro, LM Neuquén, LU19, Canal 7*, and *Canal 10*. During the contact process, it was determined that the native online media *ANRoca* does not have a community manager. Through a consultation with the media's journalists, it was found that each author uploads their news to the website and social networks. In the case of *Mejor Informado*, we were unable to obtain answers about the existence of social media managers, and the community manager of *LU5 Radio Neuquén* did not respond to the questionnaire. All interviews were systematised and analysed by one of the article's authors.

The interviews had two fundamental objectives:

- To get to know the way in which the social media management teams are constituted at each brand and the interviewees' professional experience.
- To determine the practices they develop in social networks, based on four variables: (1) the production of content for each social media platform; (2) the differences in content treatment across networks; (3) the objectives pursued by the social media managers (informing, building a community, driving traffic to the website); and (4) the modes of interaction established with the audience.

3. Results

The main social media platforms used by the analysed news media outlets in northern Patagonia are Instagram, Facebook, and X/Twitter, which are the focus of our study. All eight media outlets had accounts and registered activity on these three social media platforms during April 2024. However, they also used other social media platforms. Six of the outlets maintain YouTube channels, which are frequently updated and feature diverse content sections. In the cases of *Canal 10*, *Río Negro*, and *LM Neuquén*, their YouTube channels have between 26,000 and 81,000 subscribers. *Canal 7* has a recent channel with only 879 subscribers, created on the 17 April 2024, after the collapse of its website, which had contained videos since the company's creation in 1965.

Additionally, two of these media had updates on their TikTok accounts: *Río Negro* and *Canal 10*. *Río Negro* newspaper's TikTok account is particularly noteworthy, having amassed 1787 videos and 127,200 followers in just under two years as of 22 April 2024. Finally, *Río Negro* is the only one that also has a WhatsApp distribution channel, with more than 700 followers. *Canal 10* has also expanded to the Twitch platform.

3.1. Analysis of Instagram Accounts

Instagram is the social network that has the greatest vitality among all the media accounts from North Patagonia. Over the past three years, they have all significantly grown their Instagram followings. *Río Negro* newspaper saw a 212% increase in followers compared to 2021, surpassing LM Neuquén as the leader. *Canal 10* experienced a 162% growth, while *LM Neuquén* increased by 108% (Figure 1).
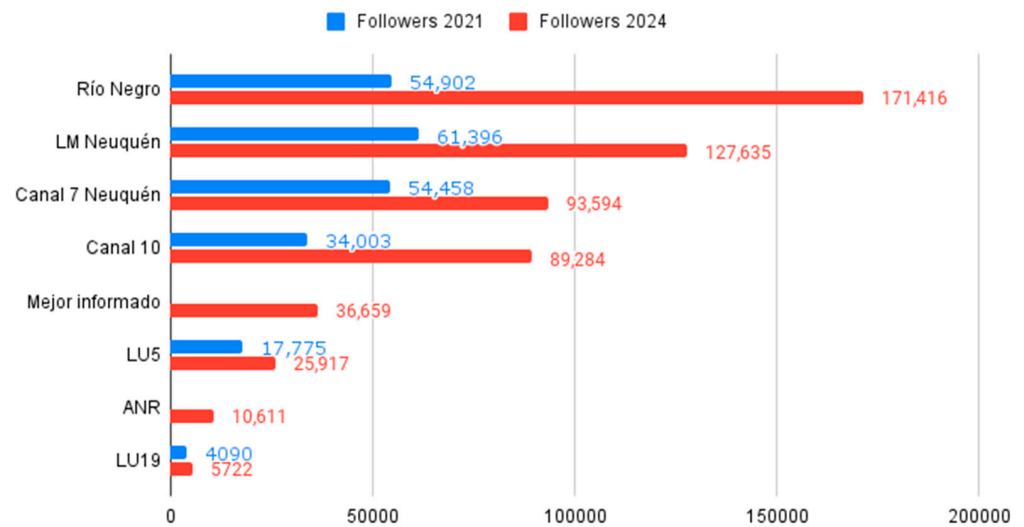
Figure 1. Followers of Patagonian news media on Instagram.

Both the *Río Negro* and *LM Neuquén* newspapers have also achieved the maximum performance value on Instagram, reaching 100% in a single month according to FanPage Karma. *Canal 10* attained a 70% performance score, and *Mejor Informado* reached 63%. Moreover, the media outlets' Instagram posts have generated the highest interaction rates compared to their other social media channels. *Río Negro*'s interaction rate reached 0.68%, while *LM Neuquén* achieved 0.59%.

Instagram's update frequency keeps up with the web's pace. The news media that publish the most are those that have the greatest structure in their newsrooms. However, the same does not happen in stories, where different strategies are recorded in similar media, as we will see. Compared to 2021, *Río Negro* has increased the number of posts six times while *LU5* increased four times. The rest stayed the same or, like *Channel 7*, decreased (Table 2).

Table 2. Uses of Instagram by Patagonian news media.

Brand	Instagram Launch Date	Posts Per Day 2024 (2021) *	Most Used Post	Mode	Goal	Stories	Interactivity	Multimediality
LU5	July 2016	3.3 (0.7)	Photo News	Adaptation	Promotion	Irregular	No	Video news, audiograms
LU19	November 2017	3.3 (2.8)	Photo News	Adaptation and expansion	Information	Very few stories	No	Live streams, audio news
Canal 10	June 2017	10 (10.1)	Video News	Expansion	Information and community	Weather forecast, TV, and YouTube promotion	Conversational language, calls to action, on-camera reporters	Video summaries, news teasers, video news
Canal 7	August 2018	0.07 (3.4)	Just one post					
Diario Río Negro	August 2012	14 (2.4)	Video News	Expansion	Information and promotion (community occasionally)	News carousel videos and live streams	Conversational language in several posts	Live coverage, viral clips, video news, reports, data slides
Diario LM Neuquén	August 2016	11 (11.3)	Photo News	Adaptation and expansion	Information and promotion	Many stories, news carousel	On-camera rReporters, open questions	Sections, video news, reports
Mejor Informado	May 2019	7.7 (No data)	Photo News	Adaptation	Promotion	Many stories, news carousel	Calls to action	Viral clips, data slides, audiograms
ANRoca	January 2018	0.2 (No data)	No post in the week			A few photo news		

* Daily average of posts in the feed from 25 March to 21 April 2024 and, in parentheses, the same period in 2021.

The predominant format used by media outlets in the region is photo news, which provides the greatest volume of content. This format features an image with a superimposed headline (and subheadline) and a distinctive design. In Instagram stories, they also often include a link. The second most common format is video news.

The primary updating mode is the adaptation of content that is already published on the web, with the incorporation of emojis and hashtags. However, there are also instances of content expansion, where information that is not shown on other platforms (such as live coverage, video news, viral clips, and data slides) is added.

The main goal behind these social media posts appears to be the promotion of website content, as well as driving traffic, especially through the use of Instagram stories, which allow the use of hyperlinks. However, the user can also access certain exclusive information on this social media such as live streams, data slides, news teasers, photo galleries, and advertisements, which are sometimes replicated across other networks. Building a sense of community is more challenging, but the attempt is evident in the familiar tone used by *Canal 10* to address its audiences, their morning greetings, and the presence of on-camera reporters. *LM Neuquén* also features its journalists on camera and poses questions to users. *Río Negro* typically employs a friendly language, while *Mejor Informado* includes calls to action in several of its posts.

It is interesting to see how news media utilise Instagram stories, which serve as a digital equivalent to a newspaper cover on social networks. These carousels present the main news of the day, with extension links that lead to the website or to a specific post on the Instagram feed. They serve as the primary promotional tool, allowing users to activate hyperlinks. The weather forecast is a recurring morning story for media outlets with greater activity and regularity. Additionally, the two newspapers begin each day with the cover of their printed newspaper.

Regarding the story update pace, there are dissimilar strategies. *Mejor Informado* and *LM Neuquén* present about twenty daily photo news items with links that replicate posts on the wall, aiming to encourage users to click and visit the website. They even have more stories than posts in their feed. In contrast, Río *Negro, Canal 10* and *LU5* follow a more moderate pace. *Canal 7* and *LU19* do not post stories.

Both in the stories and on the wall, the dominant format is photo news. *Río Negro* features more videos and live streams, while *Canal 10* and *LM Neuquén* stand out for their diverse video offerings, often featuring presenting journalists. Viral clips from television, streaming channels, or common users are a repeated input. Data slides are also widely used for textual quotes, weather forecasts, and service information. During the analysed week, only *Río Negro* broadcasts live on Instagram, although other media outlets streamed live content on other platforms such as YouTube or the web.

3.2. Analysis of Facebook Accounts

While Facebook remains the social media platform with the largest number of followers among the media outlets in northern Patagonia, it has also experienced the least growth over the past three years. In fact, both *Canal 7* and *LU5* have fewer followers than they did in 2021, a trend not observed on any other network in these media. In the remaining outlets, the Facebook pages have stayed largely stagnant. The most followed fan page is that of *Río Negro*, with over 432,000 followers, far exceeding *Canal 7* and nearly doubling its main competitor, *LM Neuquén* (Figure 2).
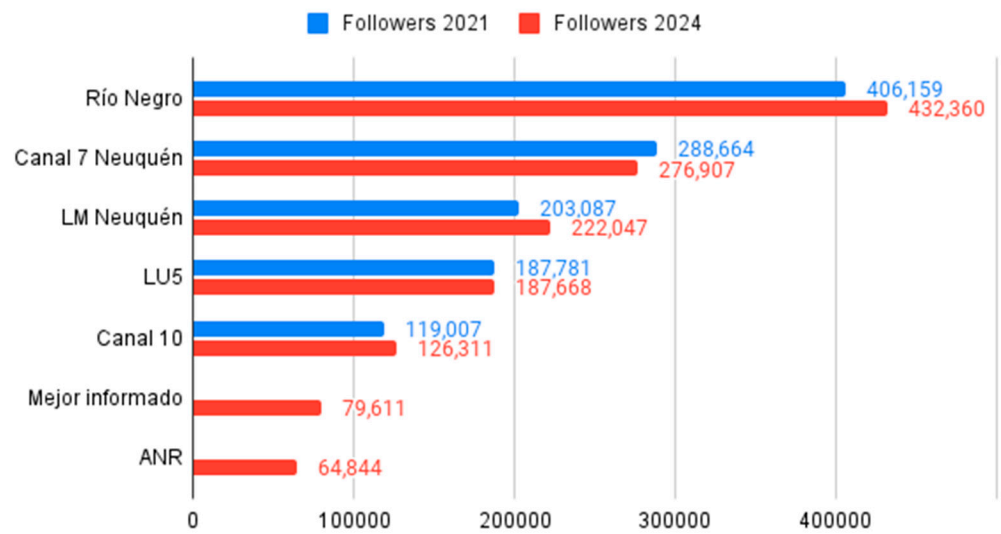
Figure 2. Followers of Patagonian news media on Facebook.

Even so, there is no other social network where there are as many messages published as on Facebook (many of them are posted automatically). On average, 51 posts are made daily on their wall, compared to 9 on X/Twitter and 7 on Instagram.

There is a lot of disparity in the update rate on Facebook, even between media with a similar structure. While *Río Negro* publishes 150 daily messages on the wall, *LM Neuquén* makes 92 updates. The two native online media also publish frequently. In contrast, television and radio media do not present more than a dozen posts per day (Table 3).

Table 3. Uses of Facebook by Patagonian news media.

Brand	Facebook Launch Date	Posts Per Day 2024 (2021) *	Most Used Post	Mode	Goal	Interactivity	Multimediality
LU5	June 2010	7.9 (1.5)	Adapted headline	Adaptation and expansion	Primarily promotion with some informational content	No, only connects with users in giveaways	Video news, audio news
LU19	May 2014	12.9 (20.6)	Adapted headline	Adaptation	Primarily promotion with some informational content	No	Video news
Canal 10	April 2014	5.6 (12.3)	Photo News	Expansion	Information and Promotion; a little of community	Greet, ask questions, connect with users	Data slides, video news, photo news
Canal 7	June 2012	3.2 (No data)	Website-based headline	Shovelling	Promotion	No	Only photos from the web
Diario Río Negro	August 2012	150 (77.5)	Website-based headline	Shovelling predominates	Primarily promotion with some informational content	Connect with readers in some posts	Live streams, viral clips, live coverage, covers, photos
Diario LM Neuquén	April 2010	92.4 (109.2)	Adapted headline	Adaptation and expansion	Promotion and information	Connect with readers in some posts	Live coverage, live streams, video news, covers, photos
Mejor Informado	October 2013	72.1 (No data)	Adapted headline	Adaptation and expansion	Promotion and information	Call to action in photo news	Live streams, video news, audio news, photos
ANRoca	August 2009	41.8 (No data)	Website-based headline	Shovelling	Promotion	No	Only photos from the web

* Daily average of posts in the Facebook wall from 25 March to 21 April 2024 and, in parentheses, the same period in 2021.

Regarding 2021, different strategies are envisioned. *Río Negro* doubled the messages, most of them shovelled from the web, and *LU5* quintupled them. But *LM Neuquén, LU19,* and *Canal 10* noticeably reduced their update frequency. Notably, *Canal 10* is the only media outlet that publishes more on Instagram than on Facebook.

The primary objective is to promote the media's web content through social media platforms. This is achieved by adapting headlines to social networks using emojis, hashtags, and mentions, or by directly republishing content without modification. The second most important objective is to provide unique content for social networks, such as photo news, video news, or data slides. These posts typically do not include links to the web and are designed to expand on the news being shared. Interaction and community building are not primary objectives, except in some specific publications.

The use of native writing, including hashtags, emojis, and mentions, is a common practice among the leading audiovisual media outlets in Patagonia. This is likely due to the fact that these outlets do not have a prominent website, so social media platforms serve as their primary online presence. Conversely, in other news media, a significant number of messages simply copy and paste the text and photos from the web.

In terms of interactivity, we did not find any media outlets that engage in public communication with their online communities on Facebook. However, some do attempt to connect with their audiences in other ways, such as through greetings, a more conversational writing style, and questions that encourage participation. *Canal 10*, for instance, achieves the best interaction rate (0.15%) with its publications, according to FanPage Karma. Other news media seek to connect with their online audiences more sporadically, as observed with the two newspapers and two radio stations in the sample. Conversely, there are also media that maintain a more distant and impersonal language, without directly addressing their readers.

3.3. Analysis of X/Twitter Accounts

The newspapers' Twitter accounts have the largest community, similar to those on Instagram. The number of fans has increased between 9 and 20% in three years in six of the media outlets analysed (we do not have records from ANRoca and Mejor Informed in 2021). They all achieved rising numbers, although they are far from the rise they had on Instagram during this period (Figure 3).
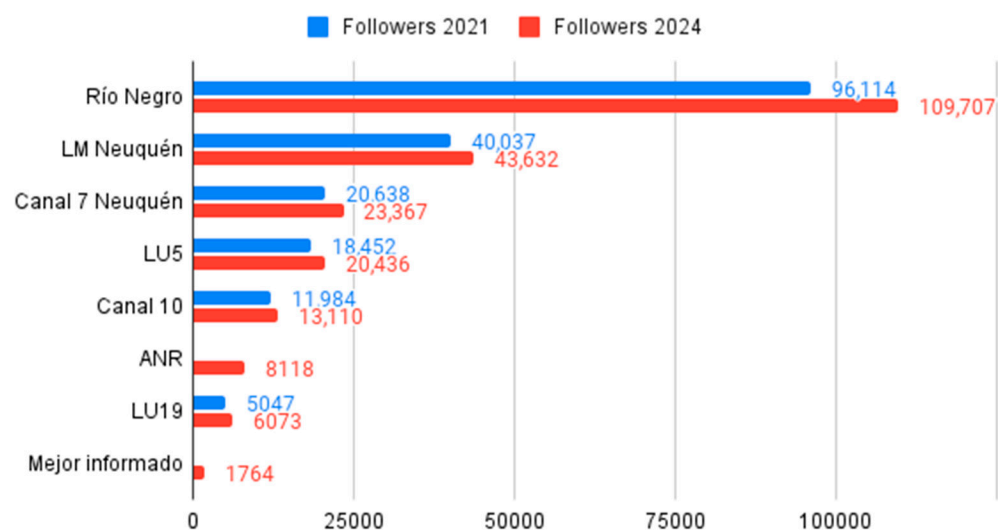

Figure 3. Followers of Patagonian news media on X/Twitter.

During the studied week, four media outlets (*Río Negro, LM Neuquén, Mejor Informado,* and *ANRoca*) maintained a consistent posting rhythm, averaging around 70 tweets. In

comparison to 2021, some media outlets have significantly reduced their update rate on X/Twitter, such as *Canal 10*, while others have increased it substantially, like *LU19* (although many of these messages were duplicates) (Table 4).

Table 4. Uses of X/Twitter by Patagonian news media.

Brand	X Launch Date	Posts Per Day 2024 (2021) *	Most Used Post	Mode	Goal	Interactivity	Multimediality
LU5	June 2012	7.4 (5.9)	Adapted headline	Adaptation	Promotion	No, only connect with users in giveaways	Only images
LU19	June 2014	16 (3)	Adapted headline	Shovelling	Promotion	No	Only images
Canal 10	July 2011	3.3 (26.6)	Live broadcast promotion	Expansion	Information, promotion, and community	Say hello, ask questions	Video summaries, video news, photo news
Canal 7	Sept 2011	0.07 (3.4)	Website-based headline	Shovelling	Promotion	No	Only images
Diario Río Negro	May 2010	114 (76.8)	Website-based headline	Shovelling and expansion	Promotion and information	Ask questions in photo news and videos	Viral clips, photo news, photo galleries
Diario LM Neuquén	April 2010	84 (79.8)	Adapted headline	Adaptation and a little expansion	Promotion and information	Only in a few tweets	Only two video news, live streams
Mejor Informado	April 2009	68 (No data	Adapted headline	Minimal adaptation	Promotion	No	Only one video and two photo news
ANRoca	August 2009	7.7 (No data)	Adapted and website-based headline	Minimal adaptation and shovelling	Promotion	No	Only images

* Daily average of posts in the X/Twitter feed from 25 March to 21 April 2024 and, in parentheses, the same period in 2021.

The most common post types used by North Patagonian news media are website-based headlines and adapted headlines, with the primary goal of driving traffic to their websites. The adaptations are very basic—some include hashtags, while others simply repeat the same emoji across multiple posts. One notable exception is *Canal 10*, which takes a different approach. They utilise real-time videos and photos from their studio to encourage audiences to follow them live on YouTube or tune in to their television broadcast. Additionally, *Canal 10* offers video news summaries and data slides specifically tailored for social media. Among the media outlets analysed, *Río Negro* stands out for posting the most news videos. There were no threads or text coverage in real time during the period, although it is a characteristic that distinguishes this social network.

The primary objective of the North Patagonian news media on Twitter is to promote their websites. Based on this objective, the main mode of publication is adaptation, sometimes minimal, and the shovelling of content from the web. The profiles are presented as very distant, with a lot of informative content but with little space for interaction. In fact, this social network is the one with the lowest interaction rate in the sample month, according to FanPage Karma, which is verified in very few retweets and comments. Again, the only media outlet that greets users and seeks to connect on this network is *Canal 10*.

Multimedia production on Twitter is limited. *Canal 10* is the most diverse in its content, publishing video summaries, video news, data slides, high-quality photographs, and promotional videos for its programmes, similar to its Instagram content.

3.4. The Work of Social Media Managers

To gain insight into how news media in North Patagonia manage social networks, we consulted with five social media managers, comprising three men and two women. With an average age of 36 years and an experience of no more than three years, these professionals were either graduates or advanced students in journalism. They worked individually or as part of a recently formed team, providing a diverse range of perspectives on social media management in the region (Table 5).

Table 5. Social media managers surveyed.

Social Media Manager	Brand	Age	Educational Training	Length of Service
SMM 1	*LU19*	40	Journalism	2 years
SMM 2	*Canal 10*	49	Journalism	5 months
SMM 3	*Canal 7*	25	Autodidact	1 year
SMM 4	*Río Negro*	28	Journalism	3 years
SMM 5	*LM Neuquén*	40	Journalism	3 years

The *LM Neuquén* newspaper has a dedicated work group of six people who produce their own content. Meanwhile, the *Río Negro* newspaper team is divided into two distinct groups—one responsible for content management and the other focused on video production. The regional TV channels, on the other hand, tend to have fewer staff. *Canal 7*, for instance, has only one person responsible for administering their social media networks, while *Canal 10* has a team of two full-time professionals and two occasional collaborators. At radio station *LU19*, the individual tasked with managing the social media platforms must also allocate time to journalistic work, resulting in only partial attention being given to the networks.

In all the cases, they refer to a differentiated production for each of the social media used. "Facebook and Twitter tend to focus more on distributing links to content produced for the websites, while Instagram and YouTube Shorts require their own unique productions. In these cases, the audiovisual team and the social media team work together to co-produce videos that comply with the publication parameters of each platform" (SMM 5).

The social media manager at *Canal 10* emphasises that their content strategy is now focused more on YouTube, although Instagram is the social media with the most content. "We frequently publish digital reports, only for this social media: stories, photo news, video news, audio news, we carry out digital coverage of scheduled events. We focus on more social, human interest stories, and viral content. We prioritise the image, impressive videos, recipes from a chef" (SMM 2). In contrast, the manager notes that Facebook is used more for service news and their public management agenda, while Twitter focuses on their political agenda and prioritises text over images.

In all cases, they agree that the main goal of their work is to build a community, interact with audiences, foster brand identification, and drive traffic to their website. In the case of *Canal 10,* because it is a public channel, there is also an interest in providing a service to the community. "We cannot move away from the concept of social service, territorial integration, regional presence and identity. Likewise, we understand that without a strong and solid community it is very difficult to gain visibility for our content, which is why we emphasise quality, variety and the use of specific language for each audience (SMM 2)".

Despite expressing a desire to engage with their audiences, this objective is not always met. One of the primary reasons cited for this is the shortage of personnel in the formation of work teams. However, those responsible for managing the networks indicate that they do respond to private messages that arrive, as these often contain valuable information that can be used to develop informative content or correct errors pointed out by users. "We pay attention, above all, to direct messages There we find content that can later be released into news in our sites or networks" (SMM 5).

Regarding the way to carry out the social media policy and make proposals to generate content creatively, they consider that they have a lot of freedom within the margins of the editorial line of each medium. The person in charge of the *LM Neuquén* networks explains it this way: "we develop a strategy and try to ensure that all members have creative spaces and content proposals. Our motto is: 'If one of us is interested in a topic, it's likely that our community will be interested too". "We seek to bring our different visions together and align them with our brands" (SMM 5).

Another commonality among the interviewees is that Instagram is the platform where they excel at showcasing content and leveraging their unique narrative voice, as we verified in the content analysis. "Using the right language for each social media platform is a significant challenge, especially considering the need for immediacy in a news outlet with a strong focus on news, combined with limited staff. However, we aim to craft compelling, engaging stories that drive interaction and create attention-grabbing headlines in any way possible" (SMM 2).

The daily routines of social media managers involve various tasks related to the administration and publication of content on different digital platforms. They begin by reviewing the latest news, interacting on social media, and coordinating with the editorial teams to plan the day's content. Then, they proceed to publish news, videos, photos, and other materials on different digital platforms, social networks, and websites. They also monitor post performance and analyse metrics and interactions. Additionally, they must be prepared to manage breaking news and crisis situations.

The morning activity begins with a pre-production stage in which urgent topics or information alerts are identified. "I start the day by reviewing the channel's latest news and social media interactions since they were last checked" (SMM 3). "I design a daily schedule for each network. First thing in the morning I generate the first content, it can be service news" (SMM 2).

For those who work in media that have printed editions, the first task is to publish their covers and service information, such as alerts about labour union demands or street demonstrations or roadblocks. Then, in some cases, the team meets and the available content is reviewed to organise what and how often it will be published on each network. In some cases, there is also rotation in the tasks to be carried out: "we have our own methodology. At 10 we take a break and change. For example, until that time I am on Instagram and then I am on Facebook and Twitter" (SMM 4).

The end of the day also involves planning for the next shift. "I leave the schedule of activities planned for the late shift, recording program promotions, giveaways, uploading clips from regional programs, news teasers, and more" (SMM 2). There is constant communication between network management teams and the journalists, who make suggestions or coordinate the content they are interested in publishing. However, the task is difficult when everything depends on one person. "The lack of personnel to cover the news in the best way during the afternoons, nights and weekends is evident" (SMM 1).

4. Discussion

After analysing the use of Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, we were able to verify that the North Patagonian news media gather an important community of users on their social media accounts, in relation to the population of the region (RQ1). Now, 15 years after the creation of the first profiles, they continue to gain new followers, which indicates a growing platformisation in the access to regional news, in line with other cross-country studies (Nielsen and Fletcher 2023).

However, there are notable differences in the pace of growth depending on which social media it is. Facebook remains the largest community, with over 1.4 million fans across the eight media outlets studied. Nevertheless, it has grown the least in percentage terms compared to 2021, with an average increase of just 5.06% among six of the media surveyed. This trend suggests that Facebook's influence on journalism may be waning, as has been observed in other studies (Newman et al. 2024).

Instagram stands out as second social network with the second largest fan base: 560,838 followers across the eight media outlets. Notably, it has experienced the most significant growth (107% compared to 2021) and consistently registers the best performance and interaction rates with its publications. This platform is also where the most innovation occurs in the narratives presented by the North Patagonian media. And it is the one that community managers value most in interviews. It is not the largest social media but it is the most vibrant. Meanwhile, X/Twitter, the platform that network managers highlight as

the one that builds the agenda, has 226 thousand followers in the eight media and has a growth of almost 13% compared to three years ago.

The profiles with the most followers on all three social networks belong to traditional brands with a history of at least 30 years as journalistic references in the region. These include the two printed newspapers, the two television channels, and one of the AM radio stations. None of the native digital media outlets, which have fewer resources and serve a more local agenda, have managed to surpass them yet.

In general, the pace of updates on social media has accelerated compared to the activity levels recorded in 2021, which had already seen significant increases since 2018, particularly for the larger media outlets (Rost et al. 2021). This indicates that the North Patagonian social media accounts are being updated more and more frequently. While platforms increasingly filter news (Newman et al. 2024), the media seek to compensate for this drop in traffic by providing a greater volume of content on the networks. Over the past three years, the number of posts increased by 30.18% on Instagram, 21.5% on Facebook, and 16.52% on X/Twitter. The platform with the highest volume of activity is Facebook, with an average of 48 daily posts across the eight media outlets studied. On X/Twitter, there were approximately 38 tweets per day, while on Instagram, there were six feed posts and nearly seven stories added daily.

The types of posts that the media in northern Patagonia use the most today are different depending on the networks (RQ2). Two formats predominate on Facebook and Twitter, the website-based headline and the adapted headline, which indicate a basic search for driving traffic to the website, whereas on Instagram, photo news prevails, followed by video news. However, we can also see a growing diversity of multimedia formats, organised in sections and with different update rhythms.

Consequently, the predominant goal in updating social media (RQ3) is to promote content published on the web, with the aim of driving user traffic to the site. Some audiovisual media also seek to encourage users to tune in to live radio or television broadcasts, or access live streams on YouTube. On Instagram, the promotion of web content is the primary objective of a significant portion of the stories, as they are the only space that allow for the activation of a direct external hyperlink. But this is less common on the Instagram feed, where there is a greater volume of unique information and some attempts to build a community. It is on Instagram where the North Patagonian media deploy journalism that is closer to transmediality, as the updates are not as subordinate to reproducing web content. The more native the production, the more transmedia journalism is evident.

Retrospectively, regional media have moved towards greater adaptation of content for social media—in line with what was recorded in Buenos Aires media (Raimondo-Anselmino et al. 2017)—and even provide specific messages designed for these platforms. In the early years, it was a mere automatic shovelling of content from the web (Rost et al. 2013). In 2018, some media incorporated the figure of a community manager in their newsrooms and, slowly, they included original messages, with "a more human voice" on Twitter and Facebook. In 2021, although content shovelling still predominated, we found a greater amount of native production, leveraging each platform's unique narrative and experimenting with multimedia formats (Rost et al. 2021). In the 2024 sample, this narrative creativity seems to have slowed down, with more frequent updates but less native production, especially on Facebook and Twitter. This trend can be attributed, at least in part, to the lack of specific personnel and the overload of tasks faced by social media managers, exacerbated by the worsening economic crisis in Argentina and the media industry (Becerra and Mastrini 2024; Sipreba/Fatpren 2024).

If we compare the three social networks analysed, Instagram is the platform where North Patagonian media outlets innovate the most. In fact, journalists in charge of managing these accounts agree that Instagram is where the language of the Internet is best utilised, as it prevents the automatic shovelling of content from the web and requires specific production. This platform offers more creative freedom and a variety of narrative

options (live, stories, reels, wall), and is a native mobile social network in full growth, based on visuals. The creative potential of Instagram has been noted in various case studies (Rojas-Torrijos and Panal-Prior 2017; Arreguez-Manoso and Merlo 2019; Carrasco-Polaino et al. 2021; Herrera-Hortúa 2021) and by editors of social networks from other media (Mendez et al. 2020). The stories on Instagram offer a parallel level of navigation, similar to flipping through a newspaper, which begins with the cover, forecast, and then goes through photo news, data slides, and short videos. On Instagram, a more friendly language is used to engage readers, and contact is sought more through questions and calls to action. There is greater multimedia diversity with the use of different narrative formats.

While the social media managers interviewed unanimously state that their role is focused on building a community, this interaction between the media and their audience is very rarely publicly revealed (RQ4). Privately, journalists report that they do respond to specific queries from their readers and receive information that can be used for journalistic production. Publicly, there is no conversation.

However, some media outlets do make efforts to become closer to their community through the language used and calls to action. In this regard, we can differentiate three distinct approaches: (1) Media outlets that actively seek to connect with their audience. They use friendly language, involve their readers, greet them each morning, speak in the first-person plural, and make calls to action. (2) Media outlets that only sporadically attempt to connect with their audience. They greet the readers in the morning with the cover or the first headlines of the day, but then they maintain a more distant tone in a torrent of messages. (3) Media outlets that never seek to connect. They maintain a cold, impersonal language, do not interact, and never publicly respond to comments or requests.

We found that the individuals responsible for managing these platforms are journalists, working either alone or as part of a team (RQ5). Some have complemented their self-taught training with additional education related to digital media, or through their own experiences in previous jobs. The majority began to work with other roles within the organisation such as editors, journalists, and news presenters, in addition to managing social networks. In all media, the appointment for these tasks is recent or has little seniority and even, in some cases, the implemented work plan is on a trial period. In this sense, we observe that regional news media outlets maintain concentrated management (González-Molina and Ortells-Badenes 2012; Torres-Sáez de Ibarra and Torrecillas-Lacave 2019), that is, there is a defined role that takes care of that specific task.

Work practices share certain similarities among the studied newsrooms (RQ6). They all publish their own content, including live streams, live coverage, clippings, and viral videos, on various social media platforms from early in the morning. The tasks are divided between publishing the site's content on social platforms and planning, organising, and managing the work plan. In most cases, there is also coordination with both the journalistic and audiovisual teams to select and produce the most important information to distribute on networks. Some authors argue that these tasks should be carried out by different profiles (Sixto-García 2018; Cifuentes-Arias and Sixto-García 2022), but this has not been verified among the media analysed here.

Despite each medium's unique characteristics, the difficulties that affect the performance of journalistic work on social media are the shortage of personnel, precarious working conditions, and versatility of tasks, as other authors have also noted (González-Molina and Ortells-Badenes 2012; Martín-García et al. 2022; Alonso 2024). In one of the cases analysed, the difficulty in developing a work plan appropriate to the needs of the company was even noted. The differences in size and productive capacity of newsrooms impact the forms and types of content that they produce (Zunino and Grilli Fox 2020), even more so than the media of origin. Thus, newspapers and public TV offer greater production and informative diversity on social networks, while digital native media reproduce much of their web content. Radio stations have maintained a more erratic course.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, our analysis confirms that the social media profiles of North Patagonian media have a large and vibrant community. Comparing the 2021 records allowed us to put current data into perspective. While Facebook remains the most widely used platform, it has experienced less growth in recent years. In contrast, Instagram has seen a significant increase in followers, doubling its numbers in just three years, and it is also valued for its creative potential. Twitter, meanwhile, has shown more moderate growth. The region's traditional news media (newspapers, TV, and radio) continue to dominate in the number of followers across all platforms.

Our findings indicate that the journalists managing the networks have generally been recently appointed, with a seniority of no more than three years. Work routines involve the early publication of varied content and coordination with journalistic and audiovisual teams. Although the primary objective is to promote web content, Instagram stands out for its innovative approach and greater interaction with users.

Despite an increase in posting frequency over the past three years, native content production has not increased proportionally. This suggests that while the media are updating their content more frequently, they are not necessarily producing more unique content for each platform.

The analysis reveals that, 15 years since the creation of the first profiles and despite the shortage of personnel and precarious working conditions, North Patagonian media have achieved a higher level of maturity in journalistic production on social networks. Evidence of this includes the various sections users can find in a profile (with specific design and hashtags), the diversity of formats used (in texts, audios, and videos), the use of conversational language and textual grammar specific to the networks in many posts, the different updating rhythms that coexist in the same account (long-term, daily, recent, and live content), and greater multimedia elaboration generated by convergent and more equipped newsrooms. The updating of content on social media has been integrated into journalistic routines, although public interaction with the audience remains very limited.

What marks differences in content production is not so much the media of origin but rather the size of each company and the newsrooms' structures. Thus, media with less organisational capacity and editorial structure, such as native digital newspapers, have not achieved a degree of innovation comparable to the national level and other regions (SembraMedia et al. 2024).

This work does not seek to be representative or applicable to broader contexts, but rather to analyse the journalistic use and social media management of local media in a peripheral region in understudied areas. This study has some limitations. The use of the YouTube platform was left out of the analysis, which, although not used by all the media outlets in the sample, is relevant for some of them. On the other hand, we were not able to obtain responses from all the social media managers in the sample. This research could be complemented with observations of the work of social media managers in newsrooms in order to contrast their statements with the verification and analysis of their practices in situ. Furthermore, the evolution of the profile and role of the social media manager could be analysed, taking into account the specific competencies that each medium assigns to them.

Future works could involve closely following the treatment of new platforms such as TikTok, Twitch, and WhatsApp channels; these platforms are experiencing rapid growth (Newman et al. 2024) and have an incipient presence in northern Patagonian news media. It would also be of interest to study the use and management of social media in even more peripheral areas of northern Patagonia, such as hyperlocal media in the south of Río Negro and the north of the province of Neuquén.

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