

Is TikTok Re-shaping News Formats? Comparative Study of Three Public Television Broadcasters: BBC News, FranceInfo and RTVE Noticias

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Abstract

Journalism is involved in a transformation that affects the platformization components that interact with the news: visualizations, likes, comments, and hashtags; (2) news genres published as journalistic pieces without reference to the television format; (3) the dominant issues and the localization of news; (4) the changes into the headline functionality, and (5) the degree of permanence of traditional journalistic roles. Results point that the changes from conventional television to short-video platforms are still in a hybrid process in which the innovation of formats coexists with the use fragments of newscasts.

Keywords: public service media; journalism; social media; short-video; content analysis

1. Introduction

Over the history of technological innovation, journalism broadcasting has experienced transformations that have deeply affected the newsmaking routines, the systems of news diffusion, and their audiences. The first transformations took place in the 1920s with the creation of British Broadcasting Company, Ltd. on October 18, 1922; five years later, in 1927, it became a public entity, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). With John Reith as general manager, the BBC started its first regular bulletin on November 14, broadcast from the Marconi House in London and presented by Arthur Burrows (BBC 2023). During the sixties, technological innovations further transformed journalism and its audiences with the consolidation of television as the hegemonic media. The development of new formats such as the newscast was solidified with the creation of CBS Evening News. Directed and presented by Walter Cronkite (Texas Archival Resources Online 2023), it was the first newscast with a duration of 30 minutes. Since the nineties, the development of digital platforms has started a new period of deep transformations in journalism. The *platformization* of news by the development of news formats in digital media and social media is driving radical changes in media structures, systems, and business (Couldry, 2015; Srnicek, 2017; Nielsen and Ganter, 2022; Poell et al., 2019; Poell, 2022; Nieborg, Poell

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Dijk,2022; Nielsen and Fletcher,2023). Although these changes favor for open access to news and information, allowing younger audiences to access novel and active ways of news consumption (Meijer and Kormelink, 2020), large differences are found across countries considering their historic consolidation of traditional news market, with lower levels of polarization where traditional media industries are stronger (Nielsen and Fletcher, 2023). In any case, social media have become sources of information, especially –but not only– for young people (Newman et al., 2023; Pew Research Center 2022).

Social media based on short-video formats, such as Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and TikTok, are currently developing, but it is still unclear whether they will become alternative sources of news diffusion and consumption. Since 2019, these platforms have burst into the journalistic scene, motivated by the constantly growing number of users, primarily younger people under 30 years old (Pew Research Center 2021). In 2022, these platforms had the highest number of downloads from the App Store (ranked as follows: TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram) and Google Play (in order: Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp). According to Forbes (2023), the top apps ranking is led by TikTok (672 million downloads), Instagram (548 million), and WhatsApp (424 million).

This paper focuses on TikTok as a platform for the dissemination of news in short-video format. In 2022, the presence of TikTok in Europe reached a peak with 100 million active users: 17 million in Great Britain, 14.9 million in France, 9.8 million in Italy, and 8.8 million in Spain. According to Stokel-Walker (2023), TikTok has established a significant presence in European countries:

TikTok has around 150 million users in Europe, many of whom are committed to the short-form video platform, spending around 90 minutes or more on the app every day, according to the company's data. It's hugely popular, with a younger, more dedicated user base than competitors in the social space.

Over the past five years, research on news distribution on TikTok has experienced remarkable growth due to the platform's global expansion and its increasing influence on changing consumption habits among its younger audience. Initially, TikTok stood out as an entertainment platform. However, it was the effectiveness of its algorithm in creating short but captivating and emotional videos on current events (such as the Black Lives Matter movement following George Floyd's murder on May 26, 2017, or the COVID-19 global pandemic between spring 2020 and summer 2022) that turned TikTok into an informative reference for millions of young individuals. The platform has managed to emulate Twitter in tracking and consolidating social movements like #MeToo, which gained international momentum after Alyssa Milano's tweet on October 15, 2017¹. TikTok has quickly surpassed Twitter's international influence through its addictive method of disseminating news and current images (Newmann, 2022).

TikTok has been studied as an informative format since 2017, with user interaction being the dimension that aroused the most interest in journalism and media research. Scholars have focused on understanding to what extent this platform and the short-video format are shaping user behavior and, taking the opposite perspective, to what extent user interests and interactions condition the development of different content and formats. The immediate evolution of journalism has been studied in light of the dynamic relationship between the platform and users, considering that both the behavior of news consumers and the development of journalistic formats have been affected by the emergence of platforms like TikTok (Meijer and Kormelink, 2020). This changing process is extraordinarily complex because it involves the adaptation of media outlets to these changes, the creation of new platform-native information communicators based on the short-video format, and the diversification of ways in which audiences engage with the news. Some news consumers are well-versed in the technical advantages that allow for interaction through comments, shares, likes, hashtags, and sharing, while others are captivated by

1. https://twitter.com/Alyssa_Milano/status/919659438700670976?lang=ca

the endless scrolling (Sang et al., 2020; Cheng and Li, 2023). The majority of studies in this area have observed user behaviors and examined the factors that influence them, such as *mimesis* (imitation and replication) fostered by the logic and design of the platform (Zuli and Zuli, 2022). Other studies have focused on users' skill with the platform functionalities, the strategies developed by content creators to encourage youth participation through impressions and engagement (Cheng and Li, 2023), how online audiences interact with news on digital platforms in different ways (Sang et al., 2020), the time spent on various platforms (Kormelink and Meijer, 2020), and users' interests and activities on social media (Kormelink and Meijer, 2018).

The focus of the current paper is another important dimension of social media as a source of information, namely the logic of social networks and their ability to influence journalistic professional practices and the news consumption preferences of their online audience (Negreira-Rey et al., 2022a). As stated by Negreira-Rey et al. (2022b), TikTok's influence on news media has progressively increased. Journalism has adapted to the platform's logic, which is based on three elements: incidental news consumption, virality, and technology's intermediation in accessing information. Furthermore, the study of the media logic of the platform has generated interest in analyzing TikTok's short-format videos compared to conventional television formats (Wang, 2020; Chobanyan and Nikolskaya, 2021; Newman, 2022).

2. 24-hour TV News Broadcasters on TikTok

One of the main challenges posed by the increasing audience preferences for social media as a channel for news access on the internet is the role and social function of public radio and television services (Puppis and Ali 2023). The expansion of social media affects public services, which find themselves in a precarious position amid growing difficulties in maintaining social engagement and commitment, citizen participation, independence, diversity, excellence, and innovation (Cañedo, Rodríguez-Castro and López-Cepeda, 2022; Cañedo and Rodríguez-Castro, 2024). Indeed, public service media adhere to the principles of social representativeness and diversity in national communication markets under the auspices of parliaments and government, but the upward trajectory of the global networked media system does not favor state participation or function within a national framework (Glózer, 2021; Van Dijck et al., 2015; Schweizer and Puppis, 2018; Steiner et al., 2019).

One of the key aspects of the uncertainty regarding how public broadcasters are confronting the challenges posed by social media is the loss of their key value as informative sources for citizens, who are increasingly turning to new media and digital platforms. A fundamental question arises: How can public television benefit from the ability of social media to attract new young users without compromising public service values? (Van Dijck et al., 2015). This adaptation of the role of public service media to provide access to news broadcasters channels on the internet can be observed in detail in the latest Digital News Report published in 2023 (Newman et al., 2023), which reflects an uncertain, doubtful, and indefinite stance in the analyzed countries. The challenge is to maintain a public service orientation designed for national radio and television markets that have been overtaken by a global networked media system. Urgent resolutions are needed for several questions that have been raised about the boundaries between the public and the commercial, content control, and shifts in media politics and power structures (Moe, 2013). However, research on the presence of public systems on social media to reach new users is currently scarce.

This paper analyzes the presence of European public television services on TikTok with a content analysis of the posts published in March 2023 by three European 24-hour public television news accounts: BBC News, RTVE Noticias, and Franceinfo. These are the three national public service broadcasters that have developed the most purposeful adaptation of their newscasts into social media. Considering all the European public service media systems, only the British, the Spanish, and the French public

televisions have an active presence in TikTok. For instance, the Grupo de Media de Serviço Público from Portugal started the RTPPT TikTok account two years ago (but with no official starting date) and, with 114K followers, is focused on entertainment and creative contents, but not exclusively oriented to information and news contents and not linked to the RTP3 thematic news channel. Similarly, the Italian RAI has developed RAIPLAY for TikTok (418K followers), allowing the audiences to a streaming access to conventional television channels, but the RAI News 24 has not developed an own and specific account. In contrast, the three public service broadcasters with 24h television channels under study have adopted an informative model based on their respective conventional journalistic formats, including television news programs and other audiovisual journalistic genres like interviews, reports, chronicles, agency news images, and in-house productions. To a much lesser extent, they produce news and reports exclusively for their TikTok audience, and this article describes how the three television channels adapt their television formats to short-video social media. News formats and journalistic genres on television must adapt to five essential components of the media logic of TikTok.

- Short-video format: Short videos transform the media logic of television into infinite scrolling, albeit with post-publication dates indicated. The combination of unlimited vertical short videos with user interaction creates a new informative format that replaces conventional formats, such as newscasts or magazines.

- Playlists: The schedules of news programs spanning 24 hours are replaced by playlists. Account managers create playlists with a specific structure for the dissemination of news and journalistic content, attracting new young audiences. If public service media edit news, reports, chronicles, interviews, and statements into TikTok formats, conventional television formats are effectively ‘invisible’.

- Interaction: Audience members can interact with informational posts through views, likes, comments, and hashtags.

- Hashtags: Journalistic content creators tag, collect, organize, and redirect news content through hashtags, facilitating user interaction.

- Length: With an optimal duration of 15 to 60 seconds per post (occasionally up to 3 minutes), the short-video format is an expression of discursive synthesis.

These five factors give TikTok’s journalistic content a specific format that professionals must adapt to. In the case of the three channels examined in this paper, the degree of transformation and adaptation of television news to short-video is consistent due to the strict structure imposed by the app, leading to a paradigmatic disruption between broadcasting and platformization of different logic. Considering this, the research questions (RQ) are as follows:

RQ1: Which elements of TikTok’s platform logic interact with informative posts?

RQ2: What formats typical of newscasts are involved in news content on TikTok?

RQ3: What are the issues and locations covered by the three public broadcasters’ TikTok accounts?

RQ4: What informative resources are involved in news content on TikTok?

RQ5: What journalistic roles are performed in TikTok informative posts?

3. Materials and Methods.

3.1. Sample.

To study how European 24-hour public service broadcasters are adapting to TikTok, three channels from three major European countries were selected to represent different models of public media systems. The first is RTVE Noticias, which launched its TikTok account on June 21, 2021. At the time of sampling (March 2023), the account had 521,600 followers and 8,400,000 likes. Among public television services in Spain, it is the TikTok account with the most followers. Notably, Spain is the European country with the fewest 24-hour news television channels. The second channel chosen was FranceInfo, which started its TikTok account on October, 2019. At the time of sampling, it had 524,000 followers and 10,300,000 likes. FranceInfo competes with four previously established 24-hour news channels: LCI, CNews, BFM TV, and France 24. As a public service media, its primary objective is not to achieve the highest ratings but to provide a quality service based on live news coverage and collaboration with experts to interpret current events. The last TikTok account analyzed is that of BBC News, which was launched on March 25, 2022. In March 2023, it had 1,500,000 followers and achieved 24,100,000 likes. BBC undertook an ambitious journalistic project for TikTok by adapting news content and formats from broadcasting to reach young audiences, both British and international (predominantly European), without compromising the public values inherent to this institution.

This study is framed within the monitoring of TikTok as a platform for the dissemination of news contents in short-video format by a standardized content analysis protocol, representing a first and exploratory stage on this ongoing research. Although the results presented, corresponding to the observation of March 2023 (the month under study in further research) are not statistically representative, they can be considered significant as they provide outputs for the description of the adaptation of public service media broadcasters to platform logics by observing the news formats and the performance of journalistic roles.

3.2. Coding protocol and variables.

To address the five research questions, a standardized content analysis was conducted. The sample included all the posts published in March 2023 by the three accounts under study, which comprised 121 posts by RTVE Noticias, 46 posts by FranceInfo, and 232 by BBC. Therefore, the corpus analyzed was composed of 399 posts.

The coding protocol applied comprised nine aggregation of variables and 93 categories:

- Identification: three variables to encode the three TikTok accounts under study.
- Genres and informational formats on TikTok: including (i) a variable to indicate the journalistic television genres present, using eight categories; (ii) a variable to encode the specific TikTok news formats into five categories: excerpts from television news programs or informative programming, professional journalistic pieces with original sound, non-journalistic images assigned for the publication on the channel's account, a post created exclusively for TikTok, and no comment (agency images).
 - Presence of journalists on video: encoded into eight categories that allow us to describe how the journalist is present on the post, including whether it is an in-person appearance, voiceover, or statement with accompanying images of current event images and no journalist mediation.
 - Elements interacting with the posts: views, likes, comments, shares, and hashtags.

- Headlines and explanatory texts: to describe changes to the headline through the modalities fostered by TikTok, including whether the headline is placed within the video or at the bottom, whether there are links and hashtags, and whether explanatory texts are introduced within the short video (113 categories).

- Variables for locating the current events with 3 categories.
- Variables for describing the current events, with 41 categories that allow a comprehensive recognition of the news topics and the post content.
- Variables on sound and graphic effects in edited posts, encoded by five categories.
- Variables to identify the journalistic professional roles, with seven categories: disseminator, interventionist, watchdog, loyal-facilitator, infoentertainment, civic model, and service.

The sample corpus underwent analysis by two trained coders, with reliability testing between coders using Krippendorff's alpha coefficient applied to 10% of the total sample of 39 units, giving a reliable average result of $\alpha = 0.890$.

4. Results

4.1. Which elements of TikTok's platform logic interact with informative posts?

The adaptation of informative content to the discursive logic of short-video platforms is one of the most significant challenges for public service media when joining social networks. Although the interaction between the format of the platform and the informative content of the posts is forced, it allows journalists to take advantage of social media narratives to reach new audiences. The elements of social media logic that interact with informative content are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Elements interacting with informative posts (average).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
Hashtags	7.0	4.0	5.0
Comments	75.2	31.5	689.9
Shares	37.9	24.6	637.3
Likes	1455.5	999.4	13444
Views	38703.2	16668.9	230201.7

Hashtags: One of the archetypical elements of social media logic, hashtags have the greatest impact on the informative content posted on TikTok. This is primarily because they allow content editors to link specific keywords to the images, providing additional sources of interaction with audiences. Furthermore, social media algorithms link news content with specific issues using hashtags and users can easily find other journalistic content about related issues by following certain hashtags.

The strategy behind the selection of journalistic hashtags is highly relevant, as it facilitates user interaction with posts according to their interests. Simultaneously, it serves as a mechanism for reaching new users who access content from other sources or social media platforms. Unlike the click-to-scroll action, the click-on-hashtag interaction should be distinguished for its intentionality, which is defined as an instantaneous form of search.

The number of hashtags accompanying journalistic posts should be limited to ensure their effectiveness for user interaction. The average number of keywords is highest in the RTVE Noticias account,

with 7 hashtags per post; it is 5 for BBC News and 4 for FranceInfo. In all three broadcaster accounts under study, the average number of hashtags remains consistent across edited posts, demonstrating a sustained strategy.

Comments and Shares: While hashtags enable user interaction through intentional clicks on keywords, comments and shares can be understood as individual interactions with the rest of the networked community. Sharing allows the user to forward a post to other users, whether on another platform or via email, while comments allow real-time intervention through individual or institutional assessments. This type of interaction is targeted by the journalistic medium, which seeks to attract new audiences through the dissemination of messages that can go viral (whether through likes or sharing) and to expand their impact through ratings in the form of comments from the audience and the community.

With hashtags and Likes, these two elements constitute the most significant innovation for news dissemination in social media, as they put users in direct connection with the journalistic content creator and empower them to be active participants in the journalistic process.

In the privacy settings of the three accounts under analysis, the ‘everyone’ option has been activated, allowing any user to comment on the video. Other configuration options, such as ‘only followers’, ‘followers you follow’, and ‘nobody’ (commenting option deactivated), were not active. Both comments and sharing are widely utilized by TikTok users in their news consumption, with BBC News leading in average comments per informative post at 689.9 and an average shared videos index of 637.3. This suggests a high level of user engagement with the platform’s resources. Similarly, in RTVE Noticias and FranceInfo, the active behavior of their audiences is observed in both commenting (75.2 average comments per post on RTVE Noticias and 37.9 on FranceInfo) and sharing (37.9 average shares per post on the Spanish television channel and 24.6 on the French channel).

Likes and Views: One of TikTok’s most significant capabilities is the dissemination (even to the point of virality) and visibility of news content. The number of views per post is very high, with an average of 230201.7 on BBC News, 38703.2 on RTVE Noticias, and 16668.9 on FranceInfo. Through Likes, the users interact by clicking, and these videos are then saved in a specific “Like” folder on the user’s profile, which can be public or private. This interaction relies on the high number of views that television channels achieve on their TikTok accounts. On the BBC News TikTok account, the five videos that surpass 100,000 Likes have an average of 252,345 Likes, while those with less than 100,000 have an average of 6,109. Similarly, on FranceInfo, there is an average of 4,953 Likes on videos that achieve between 7,000 and 3,000 Likes, and 433 on videos with an index below 3,000. In RTVE Noticias, videos that receive a number of Likes between 30,000 and 10,000 have an average of 20,300; and those with an index below 10,000 have an average of 992.

There are no regular patterns or similar current affairs themes among the most liked posts. Posts with the highest Likes cover a notable diversity of topics. For example, in BBC News, the five informative posts with Likes ranging from 800,000 to 100,000 belong to very diverse theme categories:

- 801,140 Likes and 8,200,000 views: The Parliament of Uganda approves the bill against homosexuality, with 387 votes in favor out of a total of 389.
- 242,700 Likes and 3,200,000 views: A British high school teacher installs surveillance cameras in bathrooms to prevent students from vaping.
- 204,100 Likes and 1,600,000 views: The International Association of Athletics Federations (World Athletics) bans transgender women from competing to ‘protect the female category.’
- 147,600 Likes and 3,300,000 views: The prosecution accuses a woman of involuntary manslaughter in a traffic accident in which a young cyclist died.
- 138,800 Likes and 2,000,000 views: A former British reality show personality imprisoned for sharing a sexual video with their partner on OnlyFans.

Considering that these theme categories would not be those with the greatest relevance in the BBC's conventional news programs, TikTok users would be paying attention to specific issues with less salience given by the broadcaster.

4.2. *What formats typical of newscasts are involved in news content on TikTok?*

The content of informative posts on TikTok in the three accounts under study (see Table 2) consists of fragments of journalistic content broadcasted on the related 24-hour news channels. Videos with a specific design created exclusively for TikTok and targeted at young audiences are very rare in RTVE Noticias (0.8%) and FranceInfo (2.2%), and such videos are not observed on BBC News, demonstrating a limited commitment to this type of post by the three accounts. The journalistic formats observed are primarily characterized by journalistic pieces that have been previously broadcasted on the respective television channels, but the source is not identified. They are independent videos broadcast by television news programs, with the presence of journalists on screen or with voiceover. These independent journalistic pieces constitute the majority of posts, with 74.% on RTVE Noticias, 65.2% on FranceInfo, and 62% on BBC News. However, fragments of television newscasts in a studio setting make up a minority of posts, with a presence of less than 10% in the three TikTok accounts observed. Nevertheless, current affairs images in the No Comment format have a high presence in edited posts, accounting for 30.43% on FranceInfo, 22% on BBC News, and 15.7% on RTVE Noticias. Lastly, videos with non-journalistic images edited with voiceover and a headline identifying the source are published, although they make up a small minority—0.8% in the Spanish account and 2.18% in the French account.

Table 2. Journalistic formats in informative posts (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
Fragment of newscast	8.3	2.2	10.0
Journalistic piece	74.4	65.2	62.0
Non-journalistic image	0.8	0.0	6.0
TikTok format	0.8	2.2	0.0
No Comment	15.7	30.4	22.0

The analysis of the posted journalistic content (see Table 3) indicates which journalistic genres constitute the informational narrative on TikTok. The conventional journalistic genres on television are present without narrative innovation, and it is possible to identify the informative (news, report, interview) and interpretative and opinion genres (chronicle and editorial). Two additional modalities were identified. First are the posts with statements from current protagonists edited as independent journalistic pieces with headlines. Additionally, there are posts consisting of sequences of images without voiceover but with headlines identifying the issue and, occasionally, including the informational source.

Table 3. Journalistic TV genres on the newscasts in informative posts (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
Informative Genres	66.9	69.6	67.4
• News	56.2	28.3	33.1
• Report	10.7	39.1	30.0
• Interview	0.0	2.2	4.3
Chronicle	24.8	19.6	14.6
Declarations	7.4	8.7	16.3
Editorial	0.8	30.4	1.7

Informative genres are dominant, accounting for 66.9% of RTVE Noticias, 69.6% of FranceInfo, and 67.4% of BBC News. News is the dominant informative genre in RTVE Noticias (56.2%), while report is the most prominent genre in FranceInfo (39.1%). In BBC News, news (33.1%) and reports (30.0%) exhibit a similar presence. Videos shot on-location at the site of the current event stand out, with a high presence in RTVE Noticias due to the war reports in Ukraine. Chronicles on FranceInfo and BBC News usually cover local affairs or health issues (19.6% and 14.6%, respectively). In the BBC News account, declarations are common (16.3%); they are typically related to judicial or police issues and are posted without journalistic editing.

4.3. What are the issues and locations covered by the three public broadcasters' TikTok accounts?

Two conclusions are reached regarding the issues addressed by the three TikTok accounts under study. Firstly, a great variety of topics is covered. Secondly, the thematic hierarchy does not correspond to the usual dominant issues on television, such as national politics, international politics, sports, and economics. Although these traditional topics are part of the agenda, the three analyzed accounts are significantly focused on interests closer to citizens than to institutions. However, analyzed issues are not the same across the three accounts. Forty-one categories were applied, allowing for exhaustive description of these topics (Table 4).

Table 4. Issues covered (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
International politics	10.7	0.0	3.0
War in Ukraine	36.9	6.5	4.3
• Chronicles	21.3	2.2	1.3
• Politics	15.6	4.3	3.0
• National politics	4.9	19.6	7.3
• Parliament	2.5	10.9	3.0
• Politics	1.6	0.0	0.4
• Government	0.8	8.7	3.9
Accidents, natural disasters	8.2	8.7	7.7
Environment	6.6	4.3	6.6
Gender	5.5	0.0	0.0
Crime	4.3	19.5	24.0
• Delinquency	1.6	4.3	14.6
• Public order	2.7	15.2	0.9
• Judicial news	0.0	0.0	8.6
Cinema	3.3	8.7	2.6
Curiosities	3.3	2.2	4.3
Sci-Tech	2.5	0.0	0.9
Health	2.5	8.0	6.9
News related to broadcaster	1.7	0.0	2.6
Sports	1.7	0.0	0.0
Social media	0.8	8.0	7.3
Economy	0.8	3.7	4.3
Racism	0.8	0.0	1.7
Educative system	0.8	4.3	2.6
Popular music	0.8	0.0	2.7
Royal house	0.8	0.0	2.7
LGTBI	0.0	0.0	1.7
Other (meteo, religion, celebrities, fashion...)	3.3	0.0	3.0

In RTVE Noticias, the topic with the greatest presence is the war in Ukraine (21.3%), to which is added international politics linked to the war in Ukraine (15.6%). Other topics are present to a lesser extent, including information on international politics (10.7%), national politics (4.9%), and the environment (6.6%). In the French public broadcaster TikTok account, the most usual issues covered are very different, being national politics (19.6%) such as the crisis of the retirement legislation in France, and current events on crime (19.5%), including news regarding the criticism of police brutality exercised by the BRAV-M section (motorized brigade) in the Paris demonstrations against the new retirement law. For the British broadcaster, the most usual issues include crime and police news (24.0%); a great variety of topics are covered to a lesser extent, including natural disasters and accidents (7.7%), social media (7.3%), national politics (7.3%), and health (6.9%).

In addition, Table 9 shows the location of the event covered, which reflects the international dimension of the topics addressed by the three broadcasters. In the Spanish RTVE Noticias account, 69.1% of posts cover international news, as a result of the relevance given by this broadcaster to the War in Ukraine (36.9%) and the significant presence of international news (10.7%). Relatively fewer international events are covered by FranceInfo (34.8%) and BBC News (40.8%). National locations are the majority in the French account, largely stemming from the legislative and public order crisis due to the voting process for the new retirement legislation and the popular demonstrations against this policy.

In BBC News the information posts are more balanced, although national information does make up the majority (56.2%). The category of informative posts with no spatial reference refers to news on the internet, science and technology, progress in the treatments of diseases, and gender and LGTBI rights.

Table 5. Location of the informative posts (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
National	25.2	60.9	56.2
International	69.1	34.8	40.8
No defined location	5.7	4.3	3.0

4.4. What informative resources are involved in news content on TikTok?

One of the main innovations of TikTok in the publication of informative posts is the use of journalistic headline resources and sound and graphic design effects tailored to the narrative logic of the short-video format. The accounts of the three public broadcasters under study apply these features differently to create headlines for informative posts. The primary innovation lies in the introduction of hashtags as a journalistic resource and the incorporation of brief explanatory texts within the videos. These new resources for titling information serve similar purposes as in conventional media, being in both cases concise and brief phrases summarizing or presenting the topics of the news, chronicles, or reports. Nevertheless, two procedures for headlines can be distinguished. Firstly, headlines are sometimes composed within the post. There are three distinct procedures: informative headlines within the video, headlines at the bottom of the video, or a combination of both discursive resources, such as a brief headline within the video and another at the bottom of the video, incorporating hashtags as active and dynamic elements of the headline. Secondly, headlines can be complemented either by brief permanent texts or by a series of texts throughout the video's duration. Explanatory texts are prominently featured as discursive resources that enhance the audiences' attention and understanding. The narrative resources, the composed headline, and the explanatory text facilitate the consumption of short videos, increase the attention of the users to the information topics, and allow for greater effectiveness in understanding the ephemeral information disseminated on TikTok.

In the posts made by RTVE Noticias, 90.9% of the videos included headlines at the top and bottom of the video, with hashtags as an active element of the headline. In the BBC News account, headlines have a structure similar to the Spanish public broadcaster in 88.4% of the cases, but the headlines are typically at the bottom of the video. They link to hashtags in 9.4% of the cases. Headlines exclusively within the video are only observed in 1.7% of cases, and only one informative post under study did not include any kind of journalistic titling, although hashtags were included. In the case of FranceInfo, headlines differ significantly from the Spanish and British television accounts, as a variety of journalistic titling procedures were observed: headlines including hashtags placed at the bottom of the videos were dominant (37.0%), although there was also a significant presence of brief headlines in the top of the video (28.3%) and posts without headlines (28.3%). Cases with headlines and hashtags only at the bottom of the video were the minority (6.4%)

The informative videos on the analyzed accounts effectively complement the journalistic headlines by introducing brief explanatory texts. In contrast to the function of headlines to identify the issues of the news, these short texts have other different and complementary functions, such as presenting the subject of the news, providing context or additional information with documentary value that helps viewers to understand the news or report, and, in cases of service or civic journalism, giving informa-

tion from institutions or social assistance services. The discursive strategies in the explanatory texts made by the Spanish and British public broadcasters' TikTok accounts are consistent with the uses of headlines, while in the French posts, a completely different strategy is observed again. The great majority (85.1%) of the informative posts of RTVE Noticias include some kind of inside or right-side explanatory text, while other resources are implemented to a much lesser extent: text within the video (8.3%), explanatory text at the external bottom of the video (5.0%), and videos without explanatory text (1.6%). In BBC News, the explanatory text is located at the bottom-right side of the video in almost all cases (90.9%), while the use of text within the video has minimal presence (9.1%). As previously mentioned, FranceInfo makes use of a wider variety of textual resources: explanatory texts at the bottom right edge of the video (32.6%), text only at the bottom or the right side (10.9%), exclusively within the informative video (21.6%), and without the presence of explanatory texts (34.9%).

Additionally, headlines and brief explanatory texts can be complemented with graphic design, editing of the video, and adding sound effects. In most of the informative videos, however, the sound is original, since they are typically fragments of TV programs (see Table 6). In comparative terms, the use of sound effects and graphic design as informative resources is only remarkable in BBC News (17.2%), with little presence in FranceInfo (8.7%) and residual in RTVE Noticias (3.3%). Similarly, informative posts with musical backgrounds are a minority in RTVE Noticias (11.6%) and FranceInfo (13.1%), with no cases observed in posts by BBC News.

Table 6. Sounds and graphic effects on the informative posts (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
Original sound	85.1	78.3	82.8
Musical background	11.6	13.1	0.0
Sound effects and graphic design	3.3	8.7	17.2

4.5. What journalistic roles are performed in TikTok informative posts?

Over the past fifty years, the study of professional roles in journalism has developed into one of the most innovative theoretical frameworks within the field of Journalism Studies. Its objective has been to explain the various functions that journalism must fulfill in society (Mellado et al. 2017; Mellado 2015), both in conventional (Mellado 2015; Humanes and Roses 2018; Roses and Humanes 2019) and novel forms of journalism (Humanes et al. 2023; Katzenberger et al. 2023). Seven professional roles were observed in the analysis of informative posts on TikTok (Humanes and Roses, 2018; Roses and Humanes, 2019; Humanes et al., 2023):

- *Disseminator*: Journalists adopt a neutral position or professional distancing from current events.
- *Interventionist*: Journalists take a partisan stance, favoring certain social groups or presenting the information from a specific ideological perspective.
- *Watchdog*: Journalists develop a control function over political and economic powers, engaging in investigative journalism, questioning power, and maintaining a critical attitude.
- *Loyal-facilitator*: Journalists acquire a collaborative and supportive position with those in power, contributing to the maintenance of social stability or acting as guarantors of a country's national prestige.
- *Service*: Journalists play a promotional and informative role, providing a wide range of information useful for their audience in their daily lives or offering helpful and practical information to address basic individual, group, and social needs.

- *Infotainment*: Journalists produce information as a form of entertainment by storytelling, sensationalizing news content, and focusing on individual and human dimensions.

- *Civic*: Journalists guide information towards encouraging citizen participation in public life, politics, culture, social organizations or defending their rights.

According to Mellado (2015), these seven journalistic professional roles enable the analysis of the presence of journalists' voices in the news, the relationship between journalism and power, and the way the audience is addressed. In the three TikTok accounts of the public broadcasters under study, the presence and functions of professional roles are observed (see Table 7), as the short-video posted are mostly fragments of news, chronicles, reports, interviews, and current images of newscasts or television programs.

Table 7. Journalistic professional roles in the informative posts (%).

	RTVE Noticias	FranceInfo	BBC
Disseminator	28.1	69.6	75.6
Interventionist	11.6	4.3	7.7
Watchdog	19.8	2.2	2.6
Loyal-facilitator	24.0	0.0	1.3
Service	1.6	21.7	9.0
Civic	14.9	2.2	3.8
Infotainment	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7 shows that three public broadcasters' services exhibit different patterns in the presence of the seven journalistic roles in their TikTok informative posts. While the three accounts are mainly oriented to the disseminator journalistic role, significant differences can be observed between the Spanish public broadcaster account (28.1%) and the French (69.6%) and British (75.6%) accounts; BBC News and FranceInfo tend to adopt a neutral approach in disseminating news content. However, significant differences are also found between BBC News and FranceInfo, as the latest shows a relevant presence of the service role, emphasizing the dissemination of informative content with practical relevance for daily life. RTVE Noticias demonstrates a diverse emphasis across roles, with a notable presence of the loyal-facilitator (24.0%), watchdog (19.8%), civic (14.9%), and interventionist (11.6%) roles. This more balanced presence of professional roles can be interpreted as resulting from the preeminence of international information in the Spanish public broadcaster, giving a critical editorial line in the chronicles of the war in Ukraine, environmental issues, and gender-related news. Lastly, the infotainment role is absent from all three TikTok accounts, which is consistent with the public service orientation of the three broadcasters under study.

5. Conclusions

Over the recent past years, research on the multiple challenges faced by public service media has developed by focusing on three main areas of their operational strategies in the new digital ecosystem: the (re)definition of media business while maintaining the public service value; the attraction of young audiences; and the platformization processes and the incorporation of new digital logics (Cañedo and Segovia, 2022). Considering these challenges, this paper has an exploratory and descriptive scope, by

observing and identifying the current trends in the evolution of news formats in public service television broadcasters as a consequence of their adaptation to digital platforms such as TikTok (the case under study on this paper).

Therefore, this piece of research aims to complement the current debate on the reshaping of public service media (Donders, 2021; Fuchs and Unterberger, 2021; Martin, 2021) and to contribute to the research line on how public service media are being restructured within the internet and the platformization logics (Donders, 2019; Tuñez-López, Campos-Freire and Rodríguez-Castro, 2021; Goyanes, Costa-Sánchez and Demeter, 2021). The novelty of this paper lies in describing, over a period of thirty-one days, the extent to which three public service media broadcasters adopt TikTok logics to disseminate news content by re-shaping the traditional television formats.

Additionally, the journalistic roles performances are also observed, representing a first step in the analysis of journalistic roles in TikTok from the public service media perspective. Thus, this paper provides complementary data to further understand journalistic professional roles in other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram (Mellado, 2022) and digital news media (Humanes, Alcolea-Díaz, López-del-Ramo and Mellado, 2023).

The data collected in this study demonstrates the current uncertain transitional phase between the journalistic television format created in the 1950s and 1960s and the new short-video formats prevalent on social media that enable media corporations to attract new, primarily young, audiences. Most of the broadcasters have not yet fully expanded their services to content adapted to the short-video social media logic of TikTok. However, this transition will continue to spread in the 24-hour news channel sector, especially in the United States with NBC News (4.7M followers on TikTok), CNN News (3.1M), USA Today (1.9M), and Washington Post (1.7M); in Europe with Sky News (5.3M), and the French television brands BFMTV (1.1M) and France 24 (35.2K); and finally, with Al Jazeera Arabic (2.6M) and Al Jazeera English (1.4M). As this process of adapting television news to social media platform logic continues, it is particularly relevant to observe how European public media services are incorporating the TikTok short-video format, with BBC News (1.5M), FranceInfo (524K), and RTVE Noticias (521K) taken to be paradigmatic cases for examination in this paper.

The goal of broadcasting news on platforms seems clear: to connect with an audience that shows little interest in consuming news and journalistic content in traditional media and conventional television brands. This study provides empirical data that allows us to describe the situation of the migration process from conventional television formats to short-video platforms. In this current stage, it is a hybrid process in which the innovation of journalistic formats coexists with the adaptation of informative content through fragments of the content of television news programs. Certain innovation is observed, as the traditional linear structure of newscasts, which has dominated the news discourse on television for the past seven decades, is “invisible” to the hypermedia platformization by playlists and downscrolling. Other formats of journalistic information on television, such as documentary programs, discussions, debates on current issues, or current affairs interviews, face a similar situation.

This adaptation in formats, catering to a new audience with little interest in consuming news on conventional television, is observed through empirical evidence in three structural factors that define the platform’s logic. First (RQ1), the introduction of specific elements interacting with news content in the informative posts: views, likes, comments, and hashtags (RQ1). Second, a significant change in the functionality of the ‘headline’ through the creation of ‘multiple headlines’ with complementary functionalities that facilitate the understanding of the informative post through short texts located inside the video, in the side section, or at the bottom, and links through hashtags (RQ4). Third, the dissemination of issues and topics covered by TikTok accounts modifies the conventional journalistic agenda on television, such as national politics, international politics, sports, and economics, aiming at an audience with

little interest in conventional television news (RQ3). However, the transition from television formats to platforms is not complete because the content posted is mostly journalistic pieces of traditional informative formats (RQ2).

Summing up, the strategy developed by the analyzed 24-hour public television broadcasters for their integration into the TikTok platform would be: firstly, a deep capacity for innovation in informative formats through TikTok's narrative logic, introducing a new 'visual reading' of posts through multiple headlines and encouraging the user interaction; and secondly, a persistence of journalistic genres and pieces, although freed from the formats of conventional television programming. This hybrid strategy allows the platformization of journalistic information on TikTok public service accounts, by developing new ways for the dissemination of journalistic content created for television, now reaching a young audience that does not access conventional media. This process of hybridizing conventional journalistic pieces with the new short-video format seems more designed to achieve the maximum efficiency in material and professional resources, reaching thousands or millions of users every day than to make deep innovations, but effective enough in this transition.

Lastly, the analysis includes the observation of journalistic professional roles performed in informative posts on TikTok (RQ5). The results point out that the dissemination of news and informative content through the short video format allows for performing the conventional functions that journalism must fulfill in modern society. However, the analysis of the seven archetypical journalistic roles gives different results for each of the three cases under study. In BBC News and FranceInfo a widespread dominance of the disseminator role is observed; therefore, both public broadcasters place more emphasis on the informative content than on the journalist itself, by neutral approaches to the current events, although more oriented to the service role in the French case. In contrast, a different strategy is observed in RTVE Noticias. The Spanish broadcaster showcases a varied focus across journalistic roles, predominantly by the disseminator, the loyal facilitator, and the watchdog. In short, two clearly differentiated strategies in journalistic role performance are observed: a prevalence of the disseminator role that allows the public service to disseminate news and journalistic content of public interest without the intervention of professionals in the (BBC News and FranceInfo), and a significant dispersion of roles in which five of the seven roles are present, resulting from a notable presence of both informative and opinion journalistic genres.

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