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Artículos de investigación científica y tecnológica

RESEARCH AT UNIVERSITIES IN BOGOTA ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF FUTURE DIGITAL CONTENT CREATORS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FACEBOOK AD FORMATS

Investigación en universidades de bogotá sobre el
conocimiento y destreza de los futuros creadores de contenido
digital para la construcción de formatos de anuncio en
facebook

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is, firstly, to identify the ad formats allowed by the Facebook social network to generate interaction with audiences; subsequently, to evaluate the knowledge and skill of students in their final semesters of Advertising, Social Communication and Graphic Design programs in Bogota, to develop such message Facebook ad formats. Finally, results obtained helped detect opportunities that allow content creators to acquire communication skills for social networks. To fulfill this objective, a research exercise was conducted as an exploratory diagnosis, following a qualitative and quantitative data collection methodology, where the participants had to propose a series of content on Facebook for a real brand. Among the results, the need arose to delve into topics such as knowledge of formats and identification of tools for the construction of multimedia messages on Facebook, aimed at allowing content creators to improve their message transmission capabilities on the target social network. This research intends to contribute to the field of technological innovation from an academic perspective, deeming it necessary to provide future content creators with tools that allow them to be competitive professionals in the advertising-digital area.

Digital content; Facebook; advertisements; digital advertising.

<https://doi.org/10.15765/pnrm.v14i27.1529>

Keywords: Digital content, Facebook, advertisements, digital advertising.

Resumen: Esta investigación tiene como propósito en primera instancia, identificar cuáles son los formatos de anuncio permitidos por la plataforma social Facebook para generar interacción con las audiencias, posteriormente, evaluar el conocimiento y la destreza que tienen los estudiantes de últimos semestres en las carreras de Publicidad, Comunicación Social y Diseño Gráfico en Bogotá, para desarrollar dichos formatos de anuncio de mensajes en Facebook. Finalmente, gracias a los resultados obtenidos, evidenciar oportunidades que permita a los creadores de contenidos, adquirir habilidades de comunicación para plataformas sociales.

Para el cumplimiento de este objetivo, se desarrolló un ejercicio de investigación a modo de diagnóstico exploratorio, bajo una metodología de recolección de datos cualitativa y cuantitativa, donde los participantes debían proponer una serie de contenidos en Facebook para una marca real. Dentro de los resultados se evidenció la necesidad de profundizar en temáticas como el conocimiento de los formatos e identificación de

herramientas para la construcción de mensajes multimedia en Facebook que le permita a los creadores de contenidos, mejorar sus capacidades de transmisión de mensajes en la plataforma social de estudio. Esta investigación busca aportar al campo de la innovación tecnológica desde la perspectiva académica, donde se hace necesario dotar a los futuros creadores de contenidos, de herramientas que les permita ser profesionales competitivos en el área publicitaria-digital.

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has constantly evolved since its inception as a public network over twenty years ago. Currently, it is attached to the advertising universe (Garrigo, 2006); said universe contains social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube, which are defined as virtual spaces in which groups of people come together based on common criteria or topics. Nowadays, social media has a leading role in the development of messages and brand positioning (Eduardo Norman-Acevedo, 2019). The Internet, along with social networks, engages with real or potential consumers at the right time, to the extent that interactive advertising has the highest economic profitability compared with traditional media (Muela, 2008). Likewise, authors Sanchez, Schmidt, Zuntini and Obiol (2017, p. 72) cite Narayanan (2012), who asserts: “given the prosperous trend of Facebook usage, many organizations have become main users to their online marketing strategies”.

The technology company HootSuite Media, Inc., in alliance with the global marketing agency We are Social, revealed in their annual report of online users' behavior (known as DIGITAL IN 2018) that Facebook is the most used social network in the world, with a total of 2,17 billion users at the beginning of 2018 (Hootsuite, 2018, p.153). This figure has allowed brands to pinpoint a new space of communication with their audience, consumers or followers to convey all types of messages, including ads. Brands participate in Facebook through “fan pages”, people or fans follow these pages to permanently see the brands' posts on their feed (Adan, Arancibia, Lopez, Ramirez, Sospedra, & Valladares, 2016, p.72). Authors Mir, Fondevila and Gutierrez (2006, p.29) cite Payares (2012), who states: brands' participation in Facebook takes place through “brand fan pages”, which offer the opportunity to companies, organizations, brands or people to engage in professional communication with their audiences in Facebook. Authors Fernandez and Diaz (2015) cite the Interactive Advertising Bureau, IAB of Spain (2014), referencing the “Fifth Annual Study of Social Networks”, which reveals that by 2014, the penetration of social networks had managed in the Spanish population was of 80%, 41% of social networks' users follow brands, and Facebook is the most used social network (E. Norman-Acevedo, 2018; Eduardo Norman-Acevedo, 2018).

This context unveils a large research opportunity focused on the development of messages in Facebook to benefit the construction of the image and reputation of a brand, product, service, person or institution. Companies' interaction with their fans or followers in Facebook is not just conveyed through fan pages, it is also visible in the construction

of content with communicative pieces called “ad formats”, categorized as follows: video, photography, image, link, plain text, instant article, interactive 3D image, live, slide show, instant experiences, carrousel, GIF, interactive 3D post, 3D photo, live photo, events, offer ads, client acquisition ads, stories, surveys, 360° photo, 360° image and 360° video (Facebook Business, 2018). Identifying these categories is the initial point to define interactive communication based on social media, with the objective of fulfilling brands’ communicative goals with their target audience (Velandia Vargas et al., 2019).

This research is developed based on the identification of new tools (Facebook ad formats) created due to the evolution of online social networks. Afterwards, an inquiry into the skill of new content creators took place with a research process based on an exercise that evinced the performance of the studied population regarding new communication tools. Finally, results obtained are expected to promote and foster educational spaces to strengthen digital competences of students enrolled in the programs of Advertising, Social Communication and Graphic Design in the city of Bogota, in terms of knowledge and development of interactive content.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With the purpose of presenting a structured research scheme, the components of the main topic are categorized based on five fundamental points, which will be defined and will serve to extract the evaluation variables of the exercise evincing students or future creators’ current context regarding the development of interactive messages for Facebook.

a. Digital advertising and new digital advertising

Category	Name of the category
a.	Digital advertising and new digital advertising
b.	Social networks
c.	Facebook ad formats
d.	Interactivity
e.	Future content creators

Table 1.

Categories of the research topic

Source: compiled by the author, 2019.

Digital advertising is one of the digital marketing strategies, it can be defined as every type of communicative action that benefits brand awareness and its dissemination is associated with the development of free or paid online messages. Digital marketing’s tactics have distinct characteristics that are clearly differentiated from physical promotion: the working environment is totally different, but, above all, diversification possibilities, results’ analysis, speed and reaching the consumer are vastly superior to those used in other media (Moro & Rodes, 2014, p. 129). Victoria Carrillo and Ana Castillo (2005) affirm a new form of digital

advertising is emerging from a gradual metamorphosis of advertising (which has inconsistent formats and strategies) to a situation delivering greater richness plus formal and content value; likewise, the authors also assert that, up to now, digital advertising is more or less interactive, to the extent that it is able to “render services”, but new digital advertising, must combine the three characteristics of interactivity: active control, synchrony and multi-directionality (Carrillo & Castillo, 2005, p. 5). Actions in digital advertising may or may not have a positive or negative effect on audiences; therefore, brands –through its message transmission staff– work in the development of content that empathizes with the public, in the quest for connection, follow-up and positive feelings, in other words, driving engagement.

a.1. Engagement as a component of digital advertising in social media

Castello, del Pino and Tur-Viñes (2015, p.125) mention that brands currently need to tell stories that go beyond the attributes or competitive advantages of products and services: such is the starting point of strategies based on audiovisual narratives that intend to present the brand closely and transparently, in order to connect with the audience and generate engagement. This trait is also mentioned by authors Angel and Martinez (2014, p.279), who define engagement as the way to “emotionally connect” with recipients through creative content that encourages experiences and generate an implication by means of the values associated to the transmitter of the message. Likewise, authors Viñaras-Abad and Caerols-Mateo (2016, p. 171) explain that engagement refers to the capacity of companies or other organizations to generate a link with an audience via their online actions, creating a community that identifies with the brand. And Valerio, Herrera, Villanueva, Herrera and Rodriguez cite Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013), whom developed a conceptual framework in their research, suggest that digital engagement in a social network relies on several elements: 1) the type of content being posted, i.e., the message’s nature and content; 2) the publication format, which can be understood as the packaging of the message; and 3) the moment in which it is posted, referring to the chronological or psychological time in which it is disseminated.

b. Social networks

Online social networks have given advertising the chance to unlock new strategies and actions for communication and message positioning. To broaden the definition of social media in the digital sphere, the following stances clarify these revolutionary platforms’ *raison d’être*:

Social networks – Definition 1: a social network is an online service in which members can establish relationships based on friendship, affinity, common interests, commercial advantage or other reasons. A social network facilitates these interactions by letting members set up a public or private profile, decide who can contact them and share content with others (Barker, Barker, Bormann, & Neher, 2013, p.176).

Social networks – Definition 2: a social network is a multifunctional website that allows users with personal interest to connect with each other and share all sorts of information. These platforms operate based on virality and take advantage of the word of mouth effect, enabling companies to have useful information on their users (Blanco, 2015, p.49).

Social networks – Definition 3: in 1998, social networks were generically defined as a set of stakeholders and links that connect them. Stakeholders (people, organizations or any social entity) who connect based on friendship, kinship, and financial or information exchange. i.e., for social, daily or professional motives (Carballal, 2012, p.71). For De Salas (2010, p.82), social networks are the result of an advertising impact opportunity segmented in interests, hobbies, lifestyle and others. Facebook's popularity as an interaction platform has promoted the development of extensive communities revolving around brands or products, as cited in the book *Marketing with Facebook*, which reveals that by 2011, Coca-Cola's fan page had around 22 million followers (Zarrella & Zarrella, 2011, p.19). For Mir (2016, p.98), Facebook has recently emerged as a powerful advertising platform which, compared with other social networks, accounts for most of the activity in the social networks category (Barba Abad Magdalena; Alvarado Nando, Maritza; De La Rosa Daza, Deisy; Mora Ramirez, Angela Julieta, 2019; Daza-Orozco A.; Infante- Castillo E.G.; Norman-Acevedo, E.; Ramirez-Varela, F.; Arboleda-Muñoz, G.A.; Gil-Angel, G.A.; Villada-Castillo, H.S.; Portela-Guarin, H.; Garcia-Fernandez, J.R.; Estwvez-Ceballos, F.E., C.E.; Cascante-Gatgens, 2019).

b.1. Social networks as part of advertising and marketing

Social networks' marketing offers several advantages for companies, it allows "finding talent creating brand awareness, reaching new clients and steering brands' intelligence and market research" (Barker, Barker, Bormann, & Neher, 2013). Martinez and Sanchez (2011, p.475) emphasize the importance of connecting brands with Facebook, mentioning that advertisers use social networks' profiles to establish a tailored conversation between brand and client, acquiring more knowledge of audiences than ever, and facilitating the ideal concept of one-to-one customization of content and advertising.

c. Facebook ad formats

Facebook offers guidance for content creators, it underscores the use of its tools with instructions that provide clear definitions of the platform's technological instruments. *Facebook Business' Beginner's Guide* (2018) explains that it is possible to use diverse ad formats in this social network's platforms. The selection of each format depends on the target advertising objective and on the advertiser's knowledge, who is responsible for the final decision pertaining format selection. As mentioned before, Facebook has an array of formats that are suitable for developing messages, namely: video, photography, image, link, plain text, instant article, 3D interactive image, live, slide shows, instant experiences,

carrousels, GIFs, interactive 3D posts, 3D photo, live photo, events, offer ads, client acquisition ads, stories, surveys, 360° photography, 360° image and 360° video (Facebook Business, 2018).

d. Interactivity

Carrillo and Castillo (2005) consider that while users browse digital spaces, interactivity may not be understood as the simple act of clicking on part or on an entire communication piece; on the contrary, interactivity is best understood from the creation of content that can provide “services” to the user. Similarly, authors Romero and Fanjul (2010, p.129) affirm that interactivity allows acquiring consumers that access the Internet to be informed and entertained, setting up a connection and making users active participants of advertising content. The development of valuable content conveys a positive perception in the recipient in terms of brand, product and, as declared by Rowles (2014): even in the case of products that usually drive insufficient engagement, it can be encouraged with interactive content and good digital branding.

Interactivity is a bridge between media and users, it addresses their relationship and analyzes different positions regarding selection, intervention and participation of a media’s content (Aguirre & Odriozola, 2017, p. 60). 177. vos perfiles publicitarios Siendo este panorama oleta. razones pensando en las necesidades queForFor Mendiz (2010, p. 40), implementing an interactive scheme in the advertising process has created a shift in the communicational paradigm, said paradigm’s characteristics must be as follows: 1) bidirectional communication, 2) hybridization between advertising and information, and 3) fun experience.

It is noteworthy that interactivity offers an innovative and remarkable experience, while fulfilling a fundamental role in the construction of new followers; Arroyo, Calle, & Van Wyk (2018, p. 785) define that increases in fan page followers are tied to the development of interaction with the recipient based on noticeable and valuable content that leads to achieving digital objectives such as engagement, brand positioning or product and service awareness, among others.

d.1. Interactivity and virtual reality

Virtual reality content can be developed as complement to interactivity’s engagement; as contextualized by Botella, Garcia-Palacios, Baños and Quero (2007, p.18), who add that virtual reality supposes a qualitative change with respect to other technologies such as television or computer screen, since it enables total immersion in a simulation of reality where users can interact with the virtual world similarly as they interact with the real world.

e. Future content creators

During the development and maturation stage of digital marketing, advertising agencies have required restructuring measures that include new positions and departments, this outlook will prepare the field for new advertising profiles (Nuñez, Garcia, & Abuin, 2013, p.177). For Noguera, Martinez and Grandio (2011, p.16), authors of *Redes sociales para estudiantes de comunicacion* (Social Networks for Communication Students), the new disciplines developed based on communication and digital advertising call for professionals that understand the dynamics of online communication and advertising. Thus, the authors introduce four job profiles associated with digital advertising: 1. Content manager: information and documentation professional who defines the type of contents. 2. Interactive and relationship marketing coordinator: in charge of deciding which is the best interactive formula to get the message to the consumer. 3. Relationship marketing coordinator: may foretell client behavior and undertake strategies and promotions. 4. Community manager: in charge of building, expanding and managing communities surrounding a brand or cause. Current students enrolled in programs related to advertising have skills to manage digital tools due to frequent use, making them viable options to perform communicative tasks such as creation and administration of online content; Valerio (2015, p.52) agrees by stating that new generations of university students had a very early contact with the Internet. Therefore, this “digital natives” have been familiar and comfortable using technology long before their university training began.

Bogota has an extensive amount of professional higher education institutions that offer programs related to digital marketing, such as advertising, social communication and graphic design to future content creators, the aforementioned professions are highly linked to the market of digital communication.

MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the aim of identifying knowledge and skills of future content creators concerning the development of Facebook ad formats, an investigative study-diagnosis was conducted in 2018 with the participation of students interested in the professional field of advertising and digital marketing in Bogota. The following is a description of the materials and research methodology implemented.

This research is considered exploratory, it followed a mixed methodology of data collection (qualitative and quantitative), which was applied based on a non-probabilistic diagnosis development and sampling technique using two defined clusters defined by the researcher grouped by socioeconomic levels, as follows: (cluster 1, individuals in socioeconomic levels 1 and 2), (cluster 2, individuals in socioeconomic levels 3, 4 and 5).

(cluster 1, individuals in socioeconomic levels 1 and 2), (cluster 2, individuals in socioeconomic levels 3, 4 and 5).

- Description of the target population: male and female students in Bogota, enrolled in fifth through tenth semesters of the following programs: social communication, advertising and graphic design, who have an interest for digital marketing and advertising.

- Selection process of the population: a list was produced with all of the higher education institutions in Bogota offering one of the following programs: social communication, advertising and graphic design. Subsequently, a formal invitation was extended to participate in the exercise to evaluate the skill of students or future content creators concerning messages developed in Facebook's interactive ad formats. A total of seven universities participated in the exercise. Each participating institution was asked to have two groups with three to five students in the last semesters of the aforementioned programs, who expressed an interest in the professional field of digital advertising. Additionally, in order to participate, students had to be taking or had to have taken a subject with direct link to the construction of multimedia digital messages or products and new media.

- Sample: 70 students.

Research variables: an analysis resulted from the information collection instrument, two research variables were used, namely:

- 1) Knowledge of tools: participants' level of knowledge pertaining Facebook ad formats.

- 2) Skills to develop Facebook ad formats: capacity to develop interactive ad formats in said social network from a conceptual and structural perspective.

Research design, information collection instruments

- Diagnosis exercise: each group participating in the research fulfilled a communicative exercise, the task implied developing promotional content in Facebook for a real brand. The exercise set out to evince students' knowledge and skill about ad formats.

- Description of the brand used for the research exercise: Bolera Escape (a bowling alley), located in Bogota, it is a recreational and familial space with a setting that alludes to rock music. Areas in walls, tables and others have rock bands decorations.

Bolera Escape wishes to publicize its greatest asset among the public in Bogota: being the only rock bowling alley in the country, which is why (for this research) it is necessary to develop a series of actions to boost visits and space rentals of bowling fans who want to enjoy the experience of practicing the sport in a musical environment.

Bolera Escape's Facebook fan page was used as part of the exercise. A digital web platform was built for students to have context, as well as

photographs and videos of the space aimed at developing the required promotional ideas. The platform contained a textual and multimedia brief with enough information to spark creativity and solve the suggested problem based on the bowling alley's social media activity. Likewise, the platform had text forms for participants to describe their ideas to promote Bolera Escape in its Facebook fan page. Throughout the exercise, a systems room was set up in each university. Participant groups had access to a computer with Internet to access the web platform.

In an initial form, each group was asked to write a textual summary of the group's thoughts on the message and creative concept to address the facility's promotional objectives on social media. Then, the groups were asked to describe a grid with five multimedia contents (corresponding to five days of the week) that were based on the Facebook ad formats (that they were familiar with), the aim was to capture attention and interact with people following Bolera Escape's Facebook fan page. To describe the content, participants used five independent forms, each with the same requirements, as follows: 1. Description of the ad format intended to use in Facebook. 2. Structural and technical description of the ad, format, extension, development program and tools needed to build the content suggested by the group. 3. Description of the conceptual or communicative attributes. Once the requirements were met, participants needed to send (via the platform) answers for organization, statistical tabulation and analysis. Finally, participants were asked about their knowledge on ad formats that are suitable for Facebook.

RESULTS

In total, seventy individuals took part in the exercise, they were divided in fourteen groups (two groups per each university). The inquiry into each group's knowledge on Facebook ad formats, identified that out of the 22 types of formats, participants are familiar with, have heard of or interacted with a total of fifteen. Additionally, the exercise evinced that out of the fifteen formats known by students, thirteen were suggested in the activity.

Formats	Knowledge	Formats used
Video	X	X
Photography	X	X
Image	X	X
Link	X	
Plain text	X	X
Instant article		
Interactive 3D image		
Live	X	X
Slide show	X	
Instant experience		
Carrousel	X	X
GIF	X	X
3D post		
Live photo		
Events	X	X
Offer ads		
Client acquisition ads		
Stories	X	X
Surveys	X	X
360° photography	X	X
360° image	X	X
360° video	X	X
Total Formats: 22	Formats known or heard of: 15	Formats used in the exercise: 13

Table 2.

Results' summary of the exercise developed by students

Source: compiled by the author, 2019.

A total of seventy proposals were suggested by participants. Of those, only three failed to correspond to a Facebook ad format.

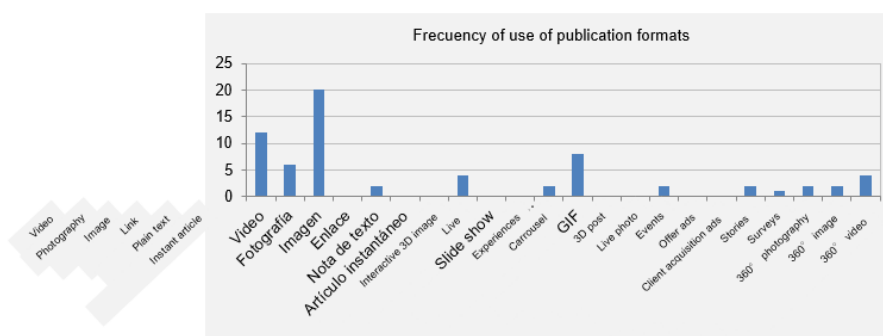


Table 3

Source: compiled by the author, 2019.

57.1% of the proposals focused on the three formats with the largest amount of mentions: image (with twenty mentions), followed by video (twelve mentions) and GIFs in third place (eight mentions). Participants cited their reasons for selecting the three top formats: these can be developed in software such as Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop,

Movie-Maker, iMovie and, to a lesser extent, Adobe Premiere, all of which are taught to them in their professional training.

It became clear that 31.8% of the participants are unaware of textual or multimedia formats that Facebook allows as alternative for content development; 40.9% of the Facebook ad formats were disregarded by participants because they did not know how to make them and post them.

Nine out of sixteen participant groups opted to repeat an ad format, arguing the fact that they were not familiar with other formats. Seven groups failed to deliver a proposal that described the name or development of their chosen format.

Out of all of the proposals received, 5.7% resorted to the 360° format as their choice to develop the content of the suggested exercise. 1.4% are familiar with the 360° video, additionally, they are knowledgeable in recording and editing but not in posting it. One of the groups can develop, edit and post 360° videos. The four proposals that considered the 360° video format, describe an immersion experience between spectators and the brand's physical space. Most groups were confused when discussing whether a 360° video is classified in the same category as 360° photography and 360° image.

Fifteen of the sixteen groups believed that the community manager is the person in charge of content construction for brands. One of the groups responded that said responsibility lies on the content manager.

87.1% of participants' proposals include the internal presentation of the bowling alley's physical space, but most are proposed using formats that prevent this action from occurring.

DISCUSSION

Constant advancement and transformation of digital platforms demands an updated mentality to develop content that transcends the plain objective of communicating, and results in interaction and generation of engagement. This characteristic contributes to the development of a brand's positive perception and can be achieved with knowledge of actions that take place in the tactical development of online advertising campaigns. Future content creators for Facebook need development and knowledge skills regarding all types of tools provided by ad spaces for message communication.

The Internet is a potential space to develop advertising communication, which is why it is critical to foster skills that allow professionals in advertising, communication and graphic design to ensue engagement with spectators or followers based on the correct use of new media and channels intended for message dissemination.

There is an evident lack of awareness of tools and skills needed by a content creator or the person responsible for communicative ads in new media, such as digital platforms, therefore, it is required to delve into *Digital Advertising and New Digital Advertising* written by Carrillo and Castillo (2005), in order to differentiate a low interaction content

multimedia ad from an ad that merges the three characteristics of interactivity (active control, synchrony and multi-directionality).

Only twelve of the seventy content descriptions fulfilled the context of interactivity suggested by Carrillo and Castillo (2005), which defines participative action beyond activating the multimedia ad with a click, implying a possibility of going deeper into academic spaces in terms of the definition of interactivity and how to develop multimedia content with the aim of driving followers' engagement.

Throughout the exercise, most participants solved the problem resorting to the most common formats which (due to their characteristics) fail to have a high level of interactivity; thus, decreasing the option of driving engagement between the brand and its followers, which, according to authors Viñaras-Abad and Caerols-Mateo (2016, p.171), translates in deficient emotional connection with the brand. These results underscore the opportunities to go deeper into the creation of professional education programs that enhance knowledge in multimedia content creation for the digital field, and that fulfill the objective of driving engagement between spectators and brands. The context of the most used formats among students, presented in the results stage, shows that these individuals can correctly use tools and knowledge taught by universities, which is why going deeper in the training of new multimedia information technologies will allow future content creators to expand their interactive communication skills, to accomplish the goal of message dissemination and recollection in brands' social platforms.

The effort to understand and produce advertising in web media must continue and must focus on new research that fulfills the objective of decreasing the unawareness of tools, strategies, tactics and methodologies, aimed at delivering an efficient and effective work to encourage social development and innovation.

The 360° video format can be a highly interactive product, however, knowledge about its creation, edition and posting is minimum; it is necessary to think about educational spaces that grant students with the capacity to identify, manage and post this type of multimedia ads, which are proven to result in interaction and engagement.

Students who are familiar with or that have interacted with 360° video are aware of the high level of interaction deriving from a person's immersion in this type of technology. Findings and in-depth proposals will be presented to the universities that were part of the exercise, fulfilling the agreement of the research and with the aim of introducing and encouraging the use of tools to post on the world's largest social network.

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