

Analyzing the cost-free culture in the consumption of digital journalistic information in Spain

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An investigation by the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) analyzes the low willingness of citizens to pay for the consumption of

journalistic information on the Internet and the industry's inability to monetize digital content.

Furthermore, the research shows that, in the last decade, the process of homogenizing the contents of the [information](#) industry has accelerated, resulting in poorly differentiated pieces which depend on the agencies. In this [context](#), the study reveals that a large part of society no longer perceives information as a product with added value. "This process is accentuated by the growing perception that a person may be well informed through intentional or accidental news consumption on [social media](#). Many citizens deny the value of digital information, and that's why they believe that they shouldn't pay for it", says one of the authors of this study, researcher Manuel Goyanes, professor at the UC3M Department of Communication.

In addition, it points out that the rise of the Internet has contributed substantially to the economic devaluation of news production. "Cost-free culture is a phenomenon that has emerged from the popularization of the Internet, which we define as a tendency of citizens to consider news as a public good that should be made available to society for free," says Goyanes.

This study analyzes the relationship between citizens and [digital information](#), in a context where news has lost its traditional value as a differentiated product: "If many newspapers find themselves in a difficult financial situation, it is precisely because they aren't investing in the human and technological resources required to offer an interesting product", says the researcher.

The research was published in *Journalism*.

More information: Manuel Goyanes et al, The culture of free: Construct explication and democratic ramifications for readers'

willingness to pay for public affairs news, *Journalism* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/1464884920913436](https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920913436)

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