

IPSO FACTO

A PODCAST TO FIGHT DISINFORMATION

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IPSO FACTO

TABLE OF CONTENT

A. INTRODUCTION	5
1. OBJECTIVES	6
2. BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW	7
B. UNDERSTANDING MEDIA.....	10
1. SOCIAL MEDIA’S RELEVANCE IN CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS..	11
C. DISINFORMATION	13
1. MOTIVATIONS BEHIND DISINFORMATION	15
2. IMPACTS OF DISINFORMATION IN CONFLICTS	16
D. MAPPING RESPONSES	17
1. MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY	18
2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG).....	20
3. CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISINFORMATION	21
4. MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR	22
5. EUROPEAN DIGITAL MEDIA OBSERVATORY (EDMO)	23
E. THE PODCAST	24
F. CONTEXTUALIZATION	26
1. PESTLE	26
POLITICAL.....	26
ECONOMIC	27
SOCIAL	28
TECHNOLOGICAL.....	30
LEGAL	31
ECOLOGICAL	31
2. PORTER’S FIVE COMPETITIVE FORCES ANALYSIS.....	32
1. Suppliers	32
2. Customers	33
3. Existing Competitors	33
4. Substitutes	33
5. The threat of new entry	34
G. DEVELOPMENT	35
1. SWOT	35
2. TOWS	37

3. The 4Ps.....	39
4. GANTT.....	41
5. ACTION PLAN.....	43
H. CONCLUSION.....	44
I. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46
J. ANNEXES.....	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Wardle and Derakhshan classification of information disorders

Figure 2. Comparative table on disinformation techniques

Figure 3. Applied SWOT

Figure 4. Applied TOWS

Figure 5. Gantt chart

A. INTRODUCTION

With globalization and the technological revolution, new digital platforms have been established which have unleashed innovative journalistic practices that enable new forms of communication. Thus, the news media landscape has changed dramatically over the past decades. Through digital sources, there has been a remarkable increase in the spread of journalism, social media, and public engagement. As of 2020, more than two-thirds of individuals in Spain were either reading or downloading online news, newspapers, or magazines¹. Compared to the previous year this constituted an increase of three percent².

In general, young people are most likely to get their news through online sources, relying on mobile devices for their communications. According to the Pew Research center, in advanced and emerging economies, younger people are much more digitally connected than older generations. Individuals under 35 are more likely to own smartphones, use the internet, and use social media than those ages 50 and older. Younger age groups are also much more likely to use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Spotify than older ones³.

Nonetheless, the digital world is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has shaped our reality, allowing people to gain knowledge, communicate, and save time in unprecedented ways. But, on the other hand, it has deteriorated the quality of information, media news, and education.

The evolution of disinformation goes hand-by-hand with the digitalization of information. New digital forms have created room for new forms of communication with a global reach. Driven by foreign actors, citizen journalism, and the proliferation of talk radio and cable news, many information systems have become more polarized and controversial, and there has been a significant decline in public trust in traditional journalism⁴. There is a global question about the quality of the information available to the general public and the impact of media. By the

¹ Statista Research Department, “Europe: People Reading News Online 2020.”

² Idem.

³ Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. “Younger Generations Adopting Smartphones More Quickly in Emerging Economies.”

⁴ West, Darrell M. “How to Combat Fake News and Disinformation.” Brookings, December 18, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-to-combat-fake-news-and-disinformation/>.

same token, misinformation has become a global phenomenon, triggered by individuals that take advantage of social and digital platforms to disseminate fake news. In Freedom House's most recent report on global press freedoms, researchers found that 'media freedom has been deteriorating around the world over the past decade. Even in some of the most influential democracies in the world, populist leaders have overseen concerted attempts to throttle the independence of the media sector.'⁵

By the same token, disinformation has always been used as a weapon in conflicts to polarize society and increase 'fear of the other' in an already divided society⁶; consequently, it has several impacts on conflicts. It enhances tribalism, generates ambiguity and uncertainty in society, and can contribute to appeal for violence against a minority group.

1. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project is to develop a detail-oriented plan to create a podcast about conflicts that will serve to fight disinformation. This work will be divided into two parts.

In the first part, which is the theoretical framework, the objective is to do a deep analysis of the evolution of media and social media, the impact that it has on international affairs and conflicts, as well as to understand disinformation and the existing tools to fight it.

In the second part, the objective is to develop a marketing strategy for the creation, production, and distribution of the podcast IPSO FACTO whose goal is to provide non-bias and quality information on armed conflicts.

⁵"Media Freedom." Freedom House. Accessed March 6, 2022. <https://freedomhouse.org/issues/media-freedom>.

⁶ Rohman, A., & Ang, P. H. "Communication, Culture, and Governance in Asia| Truth, Not Fear: Countering False Information in a Conflict."

2. BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Media:

Professors Carpenter and Drezner argue that the communications technology revolution has "redefined the relationship between producers and receivers of online information" in the context of the global information age, with individuals' ability to "create, transfer, and access information globally"⁷ with technologies that are often decentralized and commercialized⁸. According to James Der Derian, the new media is defined as a digital network in which consumers can interact and influence the process of content making⁹. Moreover, the sociologist Manuel Castells argues that networks have become pervasive, with an increasing conflict between global dominant media corporations ranging against resistance by transnational social movements.

2. Disinformation:

The European Union (EU) defines Disinformation as the 'verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public and may cause public harm'¹⁰.

Wardle and Derakhshan classify information disorders into three categories – dis-information, misinformation, and mal-information. These types of information differentiate between false messages, those that are true, as well as if they have been distributed to harm or not. Being the intention to harm or profit is the pivotal distinction between disinformation and other false or erroneous content.¹¹

In his book 'Digital Disinformation', Tim Hwang describes three main disinformation motivations:¹² First, is the political motivation, which can range from presenting a narrative

⁷ Simmons, B. A. "International studies in the global information age." 589-599.

⁸ Carpenter, Charli, and Daniel W. Drezner. "International Relations 2.0: The Implications of New Media for an Old Profession."

⁹ Der Derian, J. *Virtuous war: Mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment-network*.

¹⁰"Tackling Online Disinformation." Shaping Europe's digital future.

¹¹ Wardle and Derakhshan, "Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making".

¹² Tim Hwang "Digital Disinformation: A Primer."

that portrays certain political agendas in a more favourable geopolitical light. The second is financial motivation, which is closely tied to growing economic models that profit from the "click-bait model," which involves attracting people through popular content. And the third is reputational motivation, which is concerned with the impact of social media on citizens' social life and the dependence on friends, family, or group endorsement¹³.

To fight disinformation, there are existing tools, actors, and typologies of decisions on a Global and European scale. Some of these responses target disruptive techniques deployed, while others target the disinformation operations, and yet others try to improve citizens' education to be more resilient to disinformation. Some of these are Media and Information Literacy, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Code of Practice on Disinformation (CoP), Media Pluralism Monitor, and European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO).

3. DISINFORMATION IN CONFLICTS

According to Amnesty International, an Armed Conflict is "a situation where there is resort to armed force between two or more States, regardless of the reason or the intensity of the conflict¹⁴."

The increasing trend of the spread of disinformation has contributed to an increasing violation of International Human Law (IHL). This trend has exposed individuals and vulnerable groups to various risks in conflict situations¹⁵. The use of propaganda, mis- or disinformation, during armed conflicts is not always illegal under IHL. However, certain forms of mis- or disinformation can violate specific IHL rules. Moreover, it can contribute to physical harm – for example, when hate speech appeals for violence against a minority group. It can as well enhance tribalism between the parties in the conflict creating 'echo chambers' or 'small worlds'.

4. PODCAST

According to the Pew Research center, in advanced and emerging economies, younger people are much more digitally connected than older generations. Individuals under 35 are more likely to own smartphones, use the internet, and use social media than those ages 50 and older.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Amnesty International. "Armed Conflict."

¹⁵ Idem

Younger age groups are also much more likely to use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Spotify than older ones.¹⁶

Podcast, is a relatively recent phenomenon with the first RSS audio feeds appearing in July 2003 and by mid-2005, there were approximately 10,000 different podcasts available on a wide range of topics.¹⁷ In 2005, the New Oxford American Dictionary selected “podcasting” as the word of the year, and it appeared in the dictionary in 2006.¹⁸

According to Statista, there has been exponential growth in the last 10 years, when more than 10,000 podcasts have been created in 2021. The truth is that Podcast listening is gaining popularity worldwide, but especially in Europe and the United States.

Due to the growing popularity of Podcasting, nowadays we can find many Podcast that talks about geopolitics and conflicts. Some of which are: the economist podcast, Global News Podcast hosted by the BBC, Spotify’s Podcast, and The Diplomat, among others.

¹⁶ Pew Research Center. “Younger Generations Adopting Smartphones More Quickly in Emerging Economies.”

¹⁷ Hew, Khe Foon. “Use of Audio Podcast in K-12 and Higher Education: A Review of Research Topics and Methodologies.”

¹⁸ Bierma, Nathan, and Special to the Tribune. “‘Podcast’ Is Lexicon’s Word of the Year.”

B. UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

Through the centuries, the media has had a pivotal influence on society. Indeed, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle introduced the term ‘the fourth state’ referring to the reach, advocacy strength, and ability that the press had to shape and influence political matters¹⁹.

Today, the media continues to play an important role in politics; nonetheless, as a result of the technological revolution and globalization, new digital platforms have emerged. These have enabled innovative journalistic methods and new kinds of communication, shifting the landscape of news media. Certainly, because of digital sources, journalism, social media, and public participation have all seen significant increases²⁰.

As of April 2022, there were five billion internet users worldwide, accounting for 63 percent of the world's population. Out of this number, 4.65 billion people accessed social media²¹. Each year, digital information becomes a more accepted aspect of life for people who have access to online resources. More than 98 percent of the world's stored information is now digitized, and Web 2.0 applications and user-generated content (UGC) compete with traditional media in terms of information collection²². Since 2009, news consumption on social media has surged by more than 50%, accounting for at least 9% of all visits to news websites and growing²³.

The existence of digitized information grows more entrenched each year as the amount of activity on social media increases. As a result of the combination of older and contemporary media logic, we are witnessing the emergence of a hybrid media ecology that is dominating the communication and sharing industry²⁴. In this shift in the media ecology, the mediatization of

¹⁹ *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* “Media in Conflict: Inciting Violence in Kosovo.”

²⁰ Statista Research Department, “Europe: People Reading News Online 2020.”

²¹ Statista, “Internet Users in the World 2022.”

²² GHANNAM, JEFFREY. 2011. “Social Media in the Arab World Electronic Resource: Leading up to the Uprising of 2011.”

²³ WEEKS, BRIAN E., AND R. LANCE HOLBERT. 2013. “Predicting Dissemination of News Content in Social Media: A Focus on Reception, Friending, and Partisanship.”

²⁴ Susan T Jackson, “A Turning IR Landscape in a Shifting Media Ecology: The State of IR Literature on New Media, *International Studies Review*”.

society through social media methods has become the core component. According to James Der Derian, the new media is defined as a digital network in which consumers can interact and influence the process of content making²⁵.

Indeed, professors Carpenter and Drezner argue that the communications technology revolution has "redefined the relationship between producers and receivers of online information" in the context of the global information age, with individuals' ability to "create, transfer, and access information globally²⁶" with technologies that are often decentralized and commercialized²⁷.

This altering media ecology forces us to consider not only what news and information people receive and how they receive it, but also whether conflicts are mediatized, dependent on, or affected by the media²⁸. Thus, the impact of new media on how we communicate gives us room to examine its impact in conflict situations.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA'S RELEVANCE IN CONFLICTS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Since its origins, the internet has attracted euphoric discourses, resulting in a "grand narrative" about its potentialities and impacts on late-modern societies. The new media, as Barrey Wellman put it, was a "bright light shining above everyday concern, (...) a technological marvel, thought to be bringing a new Enlightenment to transform the world"²⁹.

In the early 2000s, the symbiosis between the creation of new technologies that facilitated connectivity and content creation such as smartphones, Wi-Fi, and 3G, together with the development of Web 2.0, such as social networks, blogs, and wikis, resulted in a shift toward discourses that were more focused on collaboration and social interaction³⁰, as well as new formulations of power based on citizen's collective action³¹. This new wave of online optimism

²⁵ Der Derian, J. *Virtuous war: Mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment-network*.

²⁶ Simmons, B. A. "International studies in the global information age." 589-599.

²⁷ Carpenter, Charli, and Daniel W. Drezner. "International Relations 2.0: The Implications of New Media for an Old Profession."

²⁸ Azari, J. R. "How the news media helped to nominate Trump."

²⁹ Wellman, B. *Studying the Internet through the ages*.

³⁰ Schäfer, M. T. *Bastard culture! How user participation transforms cultural production*

³¹ Castells, M. *Communication power*.

was denominated as the ‘participatory dimension’, which enhanced user-generated-content and user-user interaction as a way of self-expression³².

After this, the internet has acted as a central agent in citizens’ worldwide mobilization. One of the first examples of this euphoria based on the ‘participatory dimension’ of the new media environment was the USA presidential elections of 2008 when Internet-based technologies such as social networks were rapidly cited as key players in Obama's triumph³³. Similarly, the various processes of political change that occurred in North Africa and the Middle East between 2010 and 2012, popularly known as the ‘Arab Spring,’ highlighted blogs and social networks as key factors in mobilizing citizens against their governments, prompting journalists and researchers to refer to the ‘Twitter’ or ‘Social media revolutions’³⁴.

News media serve to educate the public about foreign affairs. Indeed, the news media's impact on public perceptions and decisions on different foreign policy issues appears to be significant³⁵. According to a Gallup Inc survey, the majority of Americans get their information about international affairs from websites such as “Yahoo News, Huffington Post, Drudge Report, [and] websites of newspapers and TV networks...”.³⁶

When talking about conflicts³⁷, specialists in mass communication believe that during times of war, people become more dependent on media and the internet, resulting in greater media effects on the audience. Indeed. Conflict journalism experts claim that the media takes a more or less propagandist and nationalistic stance depending on the situation. And it is influenced by a variety of reasons such as national interest, professional and commercial limitations, and public opinion, all of which contribute to the propagation of mis- or disinformation³⁸.

³² Curran, J., Fenton, N., & Freedman, D. “*Misunderstanding the internet.*”

³³ *Idem*

³⁴ Eltantawy, N., & Wiest, J. B. Social media in the Egyptian revolution: Reconsidering resource mobilization theory.

³⁵ Schaver, Andrew, Leonardo Dantas, Amarpreet Kaur, Robert Kraemer, and Tristan Jahn. “Media Reporting on International Affairs.”

³⁶ Gallup, Inc. “U.S. Adults' Knowledge about the World.”

³⁸ Vlamidir Bratić, “Media Effects during Violent Conflict: Evaluating Media Contributions to Peace Building,”

C. DISINFORMATION

Since the turn of the century, mass media and the internet have delivered unprecedented amounts of information to individuals all over the world. However, digital platforms have replaced the mediation of professional journalists and editorial decisions with engagement-optimizing algorithms that prioritize clickbait content³⁹. Consequently, much of this information has been false, trivial, and decontextualized⁴⁰.

The EU defines Disinformation as the ‘verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public and may cause public harm’⁴¹.

The spread of disinformation has expanded considerably in recent years around the world. The digital world is, indeed, a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it has allowed for a diversity of viewpoints, democratized information access, and functioned as a strong tool for activism. On the other side, the internet has generated new technological vulnerabilities, such as a decline in information quality, media news, education, and disinformation defamation⁴².

MIT Media Lab research found that ‘false news spread farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth’ and falsehoods were ‘70 % more likely to be retweeted than the truth (...) and false news reached 1,500 people about six times faster than the truth’⁴³.

Wardle and Derakhshan classify information disorders into three categories – dis-information, misinformation, and mal-information – as shown in Figure One. These types of information differentiate between false messages, those that are true, as well as if they have been distributed

³⁹ Karen Kornbluh and Ellen P. Goodman, Safeguarding Digital Democracy. “Digital Innovation and Democracy Initiative Roadmap, The German Marshall Fund of the United States”

⁴⁰ Colomina, C., Margalef, H. S., & Youngs, R. “The impact of disinformation on democratic processes and human rights in the world.”

⁴¹“Tackling Online Disinformation.” Shaping Europe’s digital future.

⁴² Colomina, C., Margalef, H. S., & Youngs, R. “The impact of disinformation on democratic processes and human rights in the world.”

⁴³ MIT Sloan, “Study: False News Spreads Faster than the Truth.”

to harm or not. Being the intention to harm or profit is the pivotal distinction between disinformation and other false or erroneous content⁴⁴.

	DEFINITION	KEY TAKEAWAYS	EXAMPLE
MIS-INFORMATION	False information that is unintentionally spread by individuals who believe the information is true or who have not taken the time to verify it.	False Connection Misleading Content	A terror attack on the Champs Elysees on April 20, 2017, sparked widespread misinformation on social media, with rumours and unverified information circulating. People who shared such information did not want to hurt others.
DIS-INFORMATION	A form of propaganda involving the dissemination of false information with the deliberate intent to deceive or mislead .	False Context Imposter Content Manipulated Content Fabricated Content	During the COVID-19 health crisis, widespread disinformation regarding hoaxes, pseudoscience, and conspiracy theories instilled suspicion in citizens and public institutions.
MAL-INFORMATION	When genuine information is shared to cause harm.	Leaks Harassment Hate Speech	The purposeful disclosure of a politician's private emails, as occurred during the 2017 French presidential elections.

Figure 1.

Source: Author

All the information is taken from Wardle and Derakhshan Report⁴⁵. The definition from misinformation is taken from Oxford Reference⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Wardle and Derakhshan, “Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making”.

⁴⁵ Idem

⁴⁶ Oxford Reference. “Disinformation.”

1. MOTIVATIONS BEHIND DISINFORMATION

Experts in the communication industry have identified a variety of motivations behind disinformation, which include economic factors, reputation aspirations, or political and ideological agendas.

In some cases, the goal of disinformation is not always to persuade; but rather to divide society, weaken shared trust, and sow confusion among citizens. In other circumstances, disinformation can be a very effective strategy in the hands of hostile actors as it's based on low-cost, low-risk, high-reward tactics that are not bound by ethical or legal considerations and offer very potent persuasion strategies⁴⁷.

In his book 'Digital Disinformation', Tim Hwang describes three main motivations:

First, is the political motivation, which can range from presenting a narrative that portrays certain political agendas in a more favourable geopolitical light (for example, the association of immigration with criminality). The second is financial motivation, which is closely tied to growing economic models that profit from the "click-bait model," which involves attracting people through popular content. Indeed, Financial reward is one of the pivotal motivations as, according to Global Disinformation Index, 'a quarter billion dollars (US\$235 million) is paid annually to the database of 20,000 disinformation sites by ad tech companies placing adverts for many well-known brands'⁴⁸. And the third is reputational motivation, which is concerned with the impact of social media on citizens' social life and the dependence on friends, family, or group endorsement⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Tim Hwang "Digital Disinformation: A Primer."

⁴⁸ "The Global Disinformation Index." GDI

⁴⁹ Tim Hwang "Digital Disinformation: A Primer."

2. IMPACTS OF DISINFORMATION IN CONFLICTS

According to Amnesty International, an Armed Conflict is a “A situation where there is resort to armed force between two or more States, regardless of the reason or the intensity of the conflict⁵⁰.”

Fake news, defined as ‘false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke’⁵¹, topped the list of concerns for internet users in 2020, according to the World Risk Poll⁵². Indeed, misleading information has always been used as a weapon in conflicts to polarize society and increase ‘fear of the other’ in an already divided society⁵³. There are multiple consequences of disinformation in conflicts, some of which are listed below.

First, disinformation can contribute directly or indirectly to civilians, having humanitarian consequences. They can contribute to physical harm – for example, when hate speech appeals for violence against a minority group. As well as psychological and social harm through online/offline harassment, defamation, and intimidation, which can lead to isolation or displacement. Moreover, disinformation can be used to justify and encourage acts of violence against third parties– e.g., the Rwandan genocide⁵⁴.

The second consequence is the multiple impacts that it has on human rights. The increasing trend of the spread of disinformation has contributed to an increasing violation of International Human Law (IHL). This trend has exposed individuals and vulnerable groups to various risks in conflict situations⁵⁵. The use of propaganda, mis-or disinformation, during armed conflicts

⁵⁰ Amnesty International. “Armed Conflict.”

⁵¹ “Fake News.” Significado de FAKE NEWS en el Diccionario Cambridge inglés.

⁵² “Fake News Is the Number One Worry for Internet Users Worldwide.” The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll

⁵³ Rohman, A., & Ang, P. H. “Communication, Culture, and Governance in Asia| Truth, Not Fear: Countering False Information in a Conflict.”

⁵⁴ “Liar's War: Protecting Civilians from Disinformation during Armed Conflict.” International Review of the Red Cross

⁵⁵ Idem

is not always illegal under IHL. However, certain forms of mis- or disinformation can violate specific IHL rules. For instance, IHL prohibits “acts or threats of violence, the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population”. This means that the disinformation that threatens violence is prohibited if it can be demonstrated that the major goal of such operations is to promote terror among civilians⁵⁶.

Disinformation affects not only the political sphere but also the social and cultural aspects of life. The third consequence is the tribalism that disinformation creates between the parties in the conflict. Indeed, tribalism is a significant effect because it exacerbates already precarious relationships, generates ambiguity and uncertainty in society, and promotes hatred for the other⁵⁷. The deep civil fragmentation that characterizes conflict setting amplifies the impact of disinformation by forming ‘eco chambers’ or ‘small worlds’, which are relationships between individuals who share information that is aligned with their beliefs and who take information that comes from similar others for granted without leaving room for doubt. As a result, it increases confirmation bias and accelerates the unthinking dissemination of false information⁵⁸.

D. MAPPING RESPONSES

In this section, we will cover the whole range of disinformation responses. To do so, we will examine the different actors involved on a European and global scale, as well as the typology of decisions and the acts done. In the following lines, we will be able to identify some responses that target disruptive techniques deployed, while others target the disinformation operations, and yet others try to improve citizens’ education to be more resilient to disinformation.

⁵⁶ Idem

⁵⁷ Rohman, A., & Ang, P. H. “Communication, Culture, and Governance in Asia| Truth, Not Fear: Countering False Information in a Conflict.”

⁵⁸ “Liar's War: Protecting Civilians from Disinformation during Armed Conflict.” International Review of the Red Cross

1. MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Media and information literacy (MIL) is an expanded conceptualization of literacy that includes the ability to access and analyse media messages⁵⁹ as well as skills and competences to create, reflect and take action, using the power of information and communication to minimize risks on disinformation in the new information and digital world⁶⁰.

Media literacy education moves beyond the traditional communication landscape to an advanced process to use media literacy competences⁶¹. It is intended to promote awareness of media influence, to enable people to critically engage with information, as well as to create an active stance towards both consuming and creating media⁶².

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) is the world's largest advocate for media and information literacy. The organization encourages world citizens to learn media and information literacy and focuses on enhance the capacities of educators, policymakers, youth organizations, information, and media professionals, assisting Member States to formulate national media and information literacy policies and strategies⁶³.

UNESCO and partners launched the new resource Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think critically, Click Wisely which presents a curriculum with a comprehensive competency framework of media and information literacy and offers educators pedagogical suggestions to navigate today's communication ecosystem⁶⁴.

The Media and information literacy curriculum offers a different set of techniques to combat dis- and misinformation⁶⁵. To begin with, it fosters intercultural dialogue by enabling practices of human communication, empathy and social interaction. Second, to promote critical thinking

⁵⁹ Renee Hobbs. "Empowerment and protection: Complementary strategies for digital and media literacy in the United States"

⁶⁰ UNESCO "About Media and Information Literacy."

⁶¹ Idem

⁶² Hobbs, R. "*Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom.*"

⁶³ UNESCO "About Media and Information Literacy."

⁶⁴ UNESCO "Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely!"

⁶⁵ Idem

by educating on how the media industry works and how media messages are built, to be able to recognize different types of media content and evaluating content of truthfulness, reliability and value; as well as to think critically about the motivation of content producers on content selection and use. Third, to foster creativity by developing tools that make it easier to create, build, and generate media content. Fourth, to educate on media skills to enable citizens to search, find and navigate and use media content wisely to reduce the risks of disinformation. And fifth, to promote active participation and civic engagement in the economic, social, creative, and cultural aspects of society using media in ways that advance democratic participation and in achieving sustainable development goals⁶⁶.

The Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners: Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think critically, Click Wisely organizes international events to educate on media and information literacy. In example, on April 2021, they organised a three-day international event co-organized with the Republic of Serbia that included a two high-level television-style discussions as well as four international webinars presenting various case studies from MIL experts and practitioners such as the Director General of UNESCO Ms Audrey Azoulay, the Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, Ms Stefania Giannini, or the UNESCO Chair in Democracy, Global Citizenship and Transformative Education (DCMÉT), Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) (Canada) Paul R. Carr, among others⁶⁷.

Media and information literacy has a great deal of positive effects on citizens as well as on society. People with media and information literacy are better able to evaluate information and use digital tools. People gain the skills to think critically about the content they receive and share with others, the providers they use, and their role in speaking for human rights and sustainable development through media and information literacy. It can also promote dialogue and respect for others' perspectives and cultures, enable citizens to comprehend and act on content in order to achieve personal agency and autonomous development, assist people in actively participating in the achievement of sustainable development goals and democratic processes, and support lifelong learning⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ UNESCO, and Baktria Press UNESCO. "Media and Information Literacy."

⁶⁷ UNESCO "Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely!"

⁶⁸ UNESCO, and Baktria Press UNESCO. "Media and Information Literacy."

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership⁶⁹.

All of the SDGs are linked to promote media and information literacy among citizens. Citizens with a better knowledge of how to access information and fundamental freedoms can help ensure they commitments are secure, resilient and sustainable; and this can help to achieve all 17 SDG. Nonetheless, there are some SDG that are more connected with the fight against disinformation.

First, SDG number 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, which calls to promote inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Specially target 16.10, which aims to ensure public access to information and fundamental freedoms⁷⁰.

Second, SDG number 4 “Quality Education”, which calls to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all⁷¹. Specially target 4.a, which aims to provide a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all. As well as target number 4.4 which aims to increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills by 2030⁷².

A primary objective of media information literacy is to be able to use content for the betterment of society and to support global SGDs. In the same line, MIL can be a useful tool for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as it increases content awareness, engagement, and

⁶⁹ “The 17 Goals | Sustainable Development.” United Nations.

⁷⁰ “Goal 16 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs.” United Nations.

⁷¹ “Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs.” United Nations.

⁷² “Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs.” United Nations.

comprehension of the social environment. And allows citizens to have a better knowledge of how access to information and fundamental freedoms.



Target

4.4

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship



Target

4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Source: Sustainable Development Goals

3. CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISINFORMATION

The Code of Practice on Disinformation (CoP) is an agreement initiated by the European Commission, involving different internet platforms, prominent social networks, marketers, and the advertising sector to address the spread of disinformation and set a self-regulatory standard to prevent it⁷³. It aims at achieving the objectives set out by the Commission’s Communication presented in April 2018 and strengthened in May 2021 by setting a wide range of commitments, from transparency in political advertising to the closure of fake accounts. Some of the online platforms that signatories are Facebook, Google, Twitter as well as TikTok⁷⁴.

CoP is a collection of guidelines for combating online disinformation. Its principles are transparency in advertising, diversity of fresh sources, dealing with fraudulent accounts and

⁷³ “Press Corner.” European Commission - European Commission.

⁷⁴ “Code of Practice on Disinformation.” Shaping Europe's digital future.

bots, and including fact-checkers researchers, and governmental authorities⁷⁵. Signatories that represent them voluntarily agree to follow the Code's principles and pursue policies to achieve them, which consist of an annual self-assessment that indicates the comprehensive efforts by the signatories to implement their commitments over the course of 12 months⁷⁶.

The Commission published its guidance on strengthening the Code of Practice on Disinformation in May 2021, in which according to the Guidance: “disinformation should be less monetised, measures against manipulative techniques should be strengthened, and users should have access to tools to understand and flag disinformation and safely navigate the online environment. The code should also expand fact-checking coverage across all Member States and languages, as well as dramatically improve research access to platform data⁷⁷”.

4. MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR

The Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) is a EU-funded programme aimed at identifying potential threats to media pluralism. MPM has been updated and amended to reflect how digital advancements are affecting media pluralism across Europe. The MPM evaluates the threats to media pluralism using a set of 25 key indicators organized into four categories: basic protection, market plurality, political independence, and social inclusiveness⁷⁸. The indicators address economic, legal and socio-political questions. Public service, commercial and community media are all covered by the monitor. Assessment is carried out in an independent and transparent way and consulting with media experts of each country. The different policies and regulatory approaches can be applied to different types of media such as broadcasting, print, digital media, or digital platforms⁷⁹.

⁷⁵ Idem

⁷⁷ “Press Corner.” European Commission - European Commission.

⁷⁸ “Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era.” Shaping Europe's digital future.

⁷⁹ Idem.

5. EUROPEAN DIGITAL MEDIA OBSERVATORY (EDMO)

The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) is a project in the form of a collaboration platform that aids the independent community against misinformation. EDMO brings together fact-checkers, media literacy experts, and academic researches and encourages them to form active partnerships with media organizations, media literacy professionals, and policymakers to analyse and understand disinformation⁸⁰.

EDMO contributes to a deeper understanding of disinformation relevant actors, vectors, tools methods, and impact on society and dynamics by deploying a platform to support the work of the collaborators with expertise in the field of disinformation⁸¹.

EDMO is lead by the European University Institute in Florence (Italy), which relies on the expertise of its School of Transnational Governance and Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom. And it has partnerships that provide technical support such as Datalab at Aarhus, the Athens Technology Center, and is also coordinating the Social Observatory for Disinformation and Social Media Analysis (SOMA).

EDMO's operations are divided into five categories.

First, identifying fact-checking organizations around Europe and assisting them by encouraging combined and cross-border activities as well as dedicated training modules.

Second, mapping, supporting, and coordinating misinformation research initiatives at the European level, including the construction and regular updating of a global collection of peer-reviewed scientific literature on the subject.

Third, creating a public portal that provides information and materials to media practitioners, instructors, and people in order to raise awareness, create resilience to internet disinformation, and promote media literacy efforts.

Fourth, the creation of a mechanism to ensure that academic academics attempting to better understand disinformation have secure and private access to platform data.

⁸⁰ EDMO “Edmo at a Glance”.

⁸¹ Idem

Finally, assistance to governmental authorities in the monitoring of policies implemented by internet platforms to limit the spread and the impact of disinformation⁸².

E. THE PODCAST

As we have mentioned before, on a global and European scale, there are currently various tools for combatting disinformation and misinformation. For example, UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Competencies, the EU's Codes of Practice on Disinformation, as well as the Media Pluralism Monitor, and the European Digital Media Observatory. All of these tools follow different tools which include fact-checking, evaluating and effectively using content, promoting dialogue and respect for others' perspectives and cultures, enabling citizens to understand and act on content to achieve personal agency and autonomous development, and promoting multi-perspectival, contextualized, and people-centered journalism.

The goal of this project is to create a podcast that contributes to combatting misinformation or disinformation by following the guiding principles outlined by the UN and the EU, which can be seen in Figure 2.

In each chapter, the podcast will promote verifiable information, improve social trust, and combat hate speech. It will be created to inform and educate people. It will also encourage citizens to engage in dialogue and respect for others' perspectives and cultures, as well as enable citizens to comprehend and act on content to achieve personal agency and autonomy, assist people in actively participating in the achievement of sustainable development goals and democratic processes, and support lifelong learning.

⁸² EDMO "Edmo at a Glance".

GLOBAL SCALE	EUROPEAN SCALE		
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY	CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISINFORMATION	MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR	EUROPEAN DIGITAL MEDIA OBSERVATORY (EDMO)
Fosters intercultural dialogue	Transparency in advertising	Basic protection	Academic analysis of disinformation campaigns
Promotes critical thinking	Diversity of fresh sources	Market plurality	Training and outreach
Fosters creativity	Dealing with fraudulent accounts	Political independence	Independent fact-checking activities
Educates on media skills	Fact-checking	Social inclusiveness	Academic research activities on disinformation
Promotes active participatin and civic engagement	Padagogical tools to understand and flag disinformation		Limit the spread and the impact of disinformation in online platforms

IPSO FACTO	Fosters intercultural dialogue, promotes critical thinking, Fosters creativity, Promotes active participation and civic engagement, Diversity of fresh sources, Fact-checking, Political Independence, and Social inclusiveness.
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* This is a comparative table that analyses the different disruptive techniques deployed, organizations, and different typology of decision and acts to fight disinformation in a Global and European scale. It is necessary to understand that the nature of each organization and technique is different; thus, they should not be compared.

Figure One

Source: Author

F. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Contextualization is a procedure that entails research on the environment within the project we will operate. We conducted the analysis based on the analytical tools PESTEL, SWOT, and TOWS to develop a strategic plan for future decision-making.

1. PESTLE

INTRODUCTION

A PESTEL analysis is carried out for an understanding of the market we will operate. This assessment tool reviews political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental conditions. In this project, the most relevant factors to consider will be technological, social, and political.

POLITICAL

Digital media can change politics

In the political spectrum, it is important to analyze the weight of social media and how, in a democratic society, media can shape politics and can serve to promote (or not) political change.

Communication and information via social media comprise two-way or one-to-one messages in which citizens cope with the political environment in a manner with no precedents in human history⁸³. The sociologist Manuel Castells argues that networks have become pervasive, with an increasing conflict between global dominant media corporations ranging against resistance by transnational social movements. Moreover, Castells argues that media systems are shaped by nation-states and the various economic systems⁸⁴. Although politics and the media are currently in a ‘hybrid’ transition from old to new, we are witnessing an increase of counter-publics, which is the public that challenges the status quo via media, and a high influence of media in politics. The truth is that some studies have begun to examine how the political

⁸³ Schroeder, Ralph. “Media Systems, Digital Media and Politics.”

⁸⁴ Schroeder, Ralph. “Media Systems, Digital Media and Politics.”

agenda-setting changes with the shift from old to new media. In this case, agenda-setting provides means of understanding the topics that are mainstream in the media. Nonetheless, only certain topics become prominent enough to translate into political change.

Today, social media has both increased and weakened the press's traditional role in political agenda-setting. It has positively influenced the application of new policies due to social movements, such as gender equality, euthanasia, or the death penalty, as well as to raise awareness of international conflicts and, consequently, brought peace talks. On the other hand, it has also had negative influence such as in manipulating elections or in increasing polarization, among others⁸⁵.

ECONOMIC

Covid and digitalization

The coronavirus crisis has had and is having a deep impact, not just on our health and community, but also on the world economy. This crisis has brought the digitalization of multiple aspects of society such as the economy. Digital technology has transformed the economy over the past decade, especially in the areas of e-commerce and digital finance. It has, in many ways, changed the way we operate by increasing economic efficiency, reducing operating costs, controlling financial risks, and facilitating importation and exportation of materials and information. During the coronavirus outbreaks, digital technology was a critical economic stabilizer, by moving most of the economic activities online and creating a dependence on technology and digital services⁸⁶.

By the same token, the new wave of digitalization has also impacted the human social abilities which have been monetarized. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, or TikTok, have increased in popularity due to Covid and hence their monetary value has increased. Meta, the company founded by Mark Zuckerberg and owner of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, in 2020 made a revenue of \$84.17 B an increase over the years 2019

⁸⁵ Diana Owen Georgetown University, Diana Owen, and Georgetown University. “The New Media's Role in Politics.”

⁸⁶ “Asian Development Bank Institute - Adb.org.”

revenue that was of \$69.65 B.⁸⁷ In turn, podcasting it's expected to have a revenue of \$1.33 billion in the US; and, due its popularity, it is expected to grow 31.1 percent year over year.

SOCIAL

Evolution of news media

New digital platforms have emerged as a result of globalization and the technology revolution, enabling innovative journalistic methods and new forms of communication. Thus, the news media landscape has changed dramatically over the past decades⁸⁸. Through digital sources, there has been a remarkable increase in the spread of journalism, social media, and public engagement. As of 2020, more than two-thirds of individuals in Spain were either reading or downloading online news, newspapers, or magazines.⁸⁹ Compared to the previous year this constituted an increase of three percent.

In general, young people are most likely to get their news through online sources, relying on mobile devices for their communications. According to the Pew Research center, in advanced and emerging economies, younger people are much more digitally connected than older generations. Individuals under 35 are more likely to own smartphones, use the internet, and use social media than those ages 50 and older. Younger age groups are also much more likely to use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Spotify than older ones.⁹⁰

In the same line, one of the most popular internet activities is social media. The biggest platforms worldwide are Facebook (with 2.74 Billion active users), YouTube (with 2.28 Billion active users), followed by WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, and TikTok.⁹¹ These platforms share some key characteristics which include instant connectivity between individuals, entertainment, and simplicity. Another key aspect to analyze is the role that the consumer play.

⁸⁷ "Meta (Facebook) (FB) - Revenue." CompaniesMarketCap.com - companies ranked by market capitalization.

⁸⁸ "A Changing Media Landscape." Instinctif Partners.

⁸⁹ Statista Research Department, and Feb 9. "Europe: People Reading News Online 2020."

⁹⁰ Silver, Laura. "Younger Generations Adopting Smartphones More Quickly in Emerging Economies." Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Center.

⁹¹ Karl. "The 15 Biggest Social Media Sites and Apps [2022]."

Users, once they log in to the media site, become content creators. They can publish posts, blogs as well as write posts on Facebook, expressing their thoughts on an issue.

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism has demonstrated important trends in news consumption in their Digital News Report 2021. It has shown major gains in reliance upon online news. Due Covid, there has been a significant increases in payment for online news in a small number of richer Western countries, but the overall percentage of people paying for online news remains low. Across 20 countries where publishers have been pushing for more online payment, 17% have paid for any online news in the last year – up two percentage points. Moreover, the research shows how access to news is becoming more polycentric. Across all markets, just a quarter (25%) prefer to start their news journeys with a website or app. Those aged 18–24 (known as Generation Z) have an even poorer connection with websites and applications, preferring to get news from social media, aggregators, or mobile alerts nearly twice as much.⁹² In the same hand Spotify continues to gain ground over Apple and Google podcasts in a number of countries and YouTube also is benefiting from the popularity of video-based and hybrid podcasts.⁹³

Sociological change due COVID

Internet technology has evolved to meet the needs of information-age warfare. In this new technological era, internet users don't just consume online material but can create content⁹⁴. Nowadays, as a consequence of the openness of the internet and the capitalist-oriented society, individuals can decide and read what is important, on-demand. Not only can users select what news they want to see, but they can also use the medium to create news based on their opinions.⁹⁵

TrendWaching, one of the world's major consumer trend firms since 2002, publishes an annual report detailing business opportunities and emerging consumer trends that will influence people's consumer habits. As for 2022, the most relevant to take into consideration for our project are the following ones: Globally Grounded, Social Express, Link 'n Learn, Thrills &

⁹² Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. “Overview and Key Findings of the 2021 Digital News Report.”

⁹³ Moreno, Johan. “As Spotify Becomes the Top Dog in Podcast Directories, Google Lags Behind.”

⁹⁴ Castells, Manuel. “The Impact of the Internet on Society: A Global Perspective.”

⁹⁵ Prier, Jarred. “Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare.”

Skills, and Immersive Info. These trends mainly tackle the new rise of digital converts, the hunger for new experiences and connections, and the emerging novelty when learning and enjoying⁹⁶. Each of them affects the project's branding strategy to a greater or lesser extent, especially “Social Express”, “Link ‘n Learn”, and “Thrills & Skills”. These set the stage for the emergence of new content consumption.

TECHNOLOGICAL

In turn with the technological revolution, audio information evolved to meet the needs of information-age warfare. In the early 90s the cultural history of internet radio began with the emergence of streaming audio, podcasting, and precursors to podcasting like audio blogging.⁹⁷ Podcast, is a relatively recent phenomenon with the first RSS audio feeds appearing in July 2003 and by mid-2005, there were approximately 10,000 different podcasts available on a wide range of topics.⁹⁸ In 2005, the New Oxford American Dictionary selected “podcasting” as the word of the year, and it appeared in the dictionary in 2006.⁹⁹

According to Statista, there has been exponential growth since the last 10 years, where more than 10,000 podcasts have been created in 2021. The truth is that Podcast listening is gaining popularity worldwide, but especially in Europe and the United States. Looking at the countries in Europe, podcast listening is significantly more popular in Spain than among other countries, where two out of five people turns into Podcast at least monthly.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, Podcasts have the tendency of being ephemeral. According to PodcastIndex, most Podcasters only record less than five episodes. This tendency has a name: Podfade, which refers

⁹⁶ BV, TrendWatching. “22 Consumer Trends & Opportunities for 2022.”

⁹⁷ BOTTOMLEY, ANDREW J. “Podcast Archaeology: Researching Proto-Podcasts and Early Born-Digital Audio Formats.”

⁹⁸ Hew, Khe Foon. “Use of Audio Podcast in K-12 and Higher Education: A Review of Research Topics and Methodologies.”

⁹⁹ Bierma, Nathan, and Special to the Tribune. “‘Podcast’ Is Lexicon's Word of the Year.”

¹⁰⁰ Statista “Infographic: Where Europeans Are Plugging into Podcasts.”

to the situation in which many independent podcasters come and go after only a few years or even just a few episodes.¹⁰¹

LEGAL

In terms of legality, the Podcast must agree to the terms and conditions of the platforms on which is distributed. Any usage of external content must adhere to the copyright law set forth by the podcast aggregator in question. In this case, it will be Anchor.fm, which follows the legislation imposed by the United States in the "The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998" (1998)¹⁰². Moreover, subscribing to or purchasing tracks through digital libraries or Creative Commons, whose license flexibility varies from creator to creator, are two alternatives for using third-party material.

ECOLOGICAL

The environmental repercussions of streaming are not yet on the public's worldwide agenda. At first glance, the industries' shift from physical to digital appears to be an environmentally beneficial and sustainable move. However, a joint study by the Universities of Glasgow and Oslo titled "The Cost of Music" (2019) found that, while the migration to digital platforms reduced the use of plastics, the storage and processing of thousands of gigabytes translates to large amounts of energy that have a direct impact on the environment¹⁰³.

When assessing the project's medium and long-term objectives, this is a critical factor to consider. Understand the brand's involvement in addressing this problem, as well as how to impact users' usage and behaviours in this area.

¹⁰¹ BOTTOMLEY, ANDREW J. "Podcast Archaeology: Researching Proto-Podcasts and Early Born-Digital Audio Formats."

¹⁰² "The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998."

¹⁰³ "University News." University of Glasgow.

2. PORTER'S FIVE COMPETITIVE FORCES ANALYSIS

To carry out a comprehensive study of the project's competitive landscape and be able to formulate its strategy, we will use the model designed by the American professor Michael E. Porter.

Five Forces Analysis is a strategic framework intended to give a characteristic diagram instead of a nitty-gritty business analysis strategy. It helps survey the qualities of a market position in light of five fundamental forces. It contemplates the threats of substitution, new entrants, and suppliers¹⁰⁴.

1. Suppliers

Depending on the level of complexity involved in the production, the podcast can require a simple or a highly specialized development process. In any case, having an Internet connection is the starting point. A study published by Statista shows that the main telecommunication companies in Spain are Telefonica, Orange, and Vodafone¹⁰⁵. The bargaining power with these companies is usually low.

Another essential element is the hosting service. Whether it's through a web page or an audio platform, the audio file will be stored on a server. The supply for this service is diverse.

For recording and editing, the range of options extends from free versions to \$200 purchases, including monthly subscriptions of around \$25. Among the most famous programs are Logic Pro, Adobe Audition, ProTools, Ableton, and Audacity, among others.

Finally, we should consider the streaming platforms that are in charge of the reproduction and the distribution of the final product. In this case, they are necessary as they maintain an active presence within the landscape of user consumption. When it comes to Podcasting, several of these companies function as the only necessary provider for the creation of the product, as is the case of Spotify, which accumulates and monopolizes the entire process. Given this

¹⁰⁴ Porter, Michael E. "From Competitive Advantage to Corporate Strategy."

¹⁰⁵ Statista. "Tema: Operadores De Telecomunicaciones En España."

situation, we find it necessary to reflect on this relationship of dependence and the little room for negotiation.

2. Customers

The flexibility of social media is increasing the user's freedom to choose the product and the already large bargaining power of customers. Social networks provide users with different tools to create content and consume it in demand. Consequently, social platforms have accentuated the bargaining power that consumers have.

3. Existing Competitors

The competition is increasing day by day as podcasts continue to grow in popularity and consequently, marketers allocate a greater amount of the media budget to the audio platform¹⁰⁶. At the end of 2019, Spotify reported a total of 500,000 podcasts available on its platform available in over 75 countries¹⁰⁷.

IAB Pricewaterhouse Coopers estimated podcast ad spend was \$800 million in 2020, and will more than double to \$1.7 billion by 2024, an annual growth of nearly 20%¹⁰⁸. Consequently, there is a growth in rivalry with different strategies and unfair competition accompanied by a lack of product differentiation.

4. Substitutes

According to the latest Infinite Dial survey from Edison One and Triton Digital, in 2020, 37% of Americans (age 12+) listen to at least one podcast each month, up from 32% in 2019¹⁰⁹. Each month, an estimated 100 million individuals listened to a podcast in 2020 and it's expected to reach 125 million in 2022¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁶ Forbes. "As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow."

¹⁰⁷ "2019 Wrapped for Podcasters: Your Year on Spotify – News – Spotify for Podcasters."

¹⁰⁸ Forbes. "As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow."

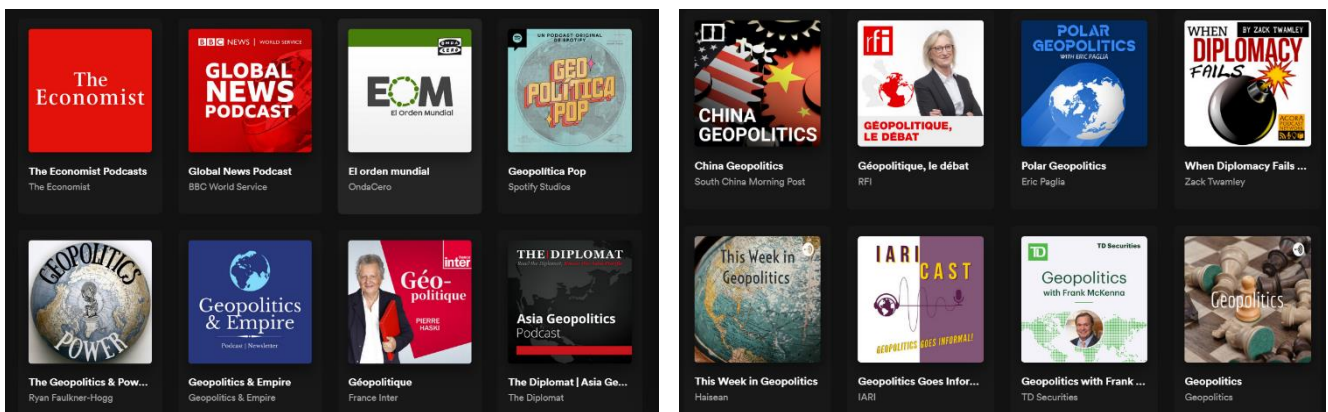
¹⁰⁹ Edison Research. "The Infinite Dial 2020."

¹¹⁰ Forbes. "As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow."

Due to the growing popularity of Podcasting and consequently the increasing competitors of the markets that use podcasting as an advertisement method, we face the risk that due to the privileged resources of the competitors and their reputations (such as the economist podcast, Global News Podcast hosted by the BBC, Spotify’s Podcast, The Diplomat, etc) would allow them to size better opportunities and offer a product with more initial budget and more experts that work on the topic, and more benefits, which translates into a competitive disadvantage.

Due to the nature of the product offered, there’s no risk of obsolescence.

List of available Podcast about Geopolitics on Spotify



Source: Spotify

5. The threat of new entry

Another factor that we must take into consideration is the competitive disadvantage against the competitors. In which we should contemplate that new entrants can provide more specific and in-depth knowledge that can result in more attractiveness to some consumers, as well as better technology, a favorable reputation, and more experience.

Conclusion of Porter’s Five Forces Analysis

Acknowledging the existing competitive schemes merged in the Podcasting industry, we can determine an extant threat of substitution, which can be accelerated by the digitization tendencies.

The competition is increasing day by day as podcasts continue to grow in popularity and consequently marketers allocate a greater amount of the media budget to the audio platform¹¹¹. Thus, there is a growth in rivalry with different strategies and unfair competition.

¹¹¹ Forbes. “As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow.”

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The entry barriers are lower than in other industries in terms of time, cost, and regulation. Thus, the position can be easily affected by people’s ability to enter the sector.

G. DEVELOPMENT

1. SWOT

The SWOT analysis is a useful technique to determine the four strategic pillars in the establishment of a business. This matrix is composed of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Together, they bring an accurate overview of the viability of the business, enabled by the development of the TOWS matrix, which is used both to understand the correlation among these four and to create strategies.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Availability: Easy access to the service.</p> <p>Language: English will be the language used, which, according to Statista, is the most spoken language worldwide in 2022¹¹².</p> <p>Adequate financial resources: minimum initial investment needed to be able to start performing</p>	<p>The industry is competitive.</p> <p>Content development time.</p> <p>Lack of experience in leading a firm, but not in leading a team.</p> <p>Competitive disadvantage brought by two factors</p>

¹¹² Statista “*Most spoken languages in the world.*”

<p>Advantage in costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A small development team reduces the scope of costs in many ways. b) We don't offer a tangible product but a service, which significantly cuts the costs, the value chain, and the dependence in partners, suppliers, and others. c) Unique infrastructure needed is a microphone and a computer. <p>Target: Clear market target group aged between 15-55, which, according to Forbest, half of the podcast listeners in the U.S. are aged 12 to 34 while listeners 35+ make up the other half¹¹³.</p> <p>Flexibility: Organizational flexibility is provided by the fact that the directive and the consulting team are the same.</p> <p>Clear definition of the paramount pillars of the potential service.</p> <p>Costumers' segment: we address ourselves to a large range of industries. It is not exclusive to a particular sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) we don't have already built reputation as some of its competitors. b) We don't have the support of big partners and well-known companies. <p>Low start-up capital: in the beginning, the way to receive financing will come from the 3 F's (Family, Friends, and Fools). Therefore, our start-up capital will be low.</p> <p>Reduced staff, which can lead to initial work overload.</p> <p>Language: the content of our Podcast is only in English, which excludes non-English speakers.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Exponential increase in information consumption through mobile devices, social networks, and applications. According to ourworldindata, social media sites are used by more than two-thirds of all internet users¹¹⁴.</p> <p>Crisis of the traditional media in which trust is being lost. According to 2020 Gallup survey, the percentage of Americans with no trust in the mass media hit a record high in 2020: only nine percent of respondents</p>	<p>The creation of other Podcasting sites that might evolve into competitors.</p> <p>The changing nature of International Relations: conflicts and the international reality will be constantly changing.</p> <p>Necessity: It is not a service of primary need</p>

¹¹³ Forbes Kaufer, Kurt. "Council Post: Who Listens to Podcasts (and How Can You Reach Them)?"

¹¹⁴ Ortiz-Ospina, E. "The rise of Social Media. Our World in Data."

said they trust the mass media “a great deal” and a full 60 percent said they have little to “no trust at all” in it¹¹⁵.

Market opportunity: The Podcast format is growing in popularity with more and more listeners and marketers allocating a greater amount of the media budget to the audio platform¹¹⁶

The rise of the technology sector in start-ups in Spain. The entrepreneurship ecosystem, especially for innovation and disruptive business models, is experiencing its best moment to date in Spain. The public support for digitalization and the upcoming new framework of tax and labour incentives for emerging technology-based companies will further boost our ecosystem¹¹⁷.

Availability: Due to the nature of the service offered, which is in demand-oriented, customers will be able to consume the service at any time and in any place.

Market barrier: lower than in other industries.
Add complimentary services: as we grow, we can enlarge the wide variety of services that we offer. For instance, a partnership with a geopolitical or a communication consultancy firm.

Market barriers: since they are lower than in other industries, it is easier to have larger competition.

The competition: equipped with employees from all over the world and specialists in regions and conflicts.

The competition: some of these Podcasts are financed by Spotify, BBC, Facebook, and popular TV channels, among others.

The competition: other podcasts on geopolitics are offering different services that can be more attractive.

Policies: as the popularity of Podcasts grows, it is more likely that more policies will be implemented to regulate the industry.

2. TOWS

The goal of this section is to determine which aspects have the most impact on the project and what scenarios should be followed to create a strong and long-term development. The TOWS matrix frames the Offensive strategies: Strategies that use strengths to maximize opportunities; The Reorientation Strategies: Strategies that minimize weaknesses by taking

¹¹⁵ CBC/Radio Canada. *How U.S. media lost the Trust of the public*

¹¹⁶ Forbes. “As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow.”

¹¹⁷ *Startups in Spain*. ICEX-Invest in Spain.

advantage of opportunities; Defensive strategies: Strategies that use strengths to minimize threats; and Survival strategies: Strategy that minimizes weaknesses and avoids threats.

	<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
TOWS MATRIX	<p>S1: Availability- Easy access to the service.</p> <p>S2: Language- English will be the language used.</p> <p>S3: Advantage in costs – low initial start-up capital</p> <p>S4: Target- Clear market target group</p> <p>S5: Flexibility- Organizational flexibility</p> <p>S6: Clear definition of the paramount pillars of the potential service.</p> <p>S7: Costumers' segment- we address ourselves to a large range of industries.</p>	<p>W1: Low start-up capital.</p> <p>W2: The industry is competitive.</p> <p>W3: Content development time.</p> <p>W4: Lack of experience</p> <p>W5: Competitive disadvantage</p> <p>W6: Level of Raising Capital- which will come from the 3 F's (Family, Friends, and Fools).</p> <p>W7: Reduced staff</p> <p>W8: Language- only in English.</p>
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	S-O (OFFENSIVE STRATEGIES)	W-O (REORIENTATION STRATEGIES)
<p>O1: Exponential increase in information consumption through social media</p> <p>O2: Crisis of the traditional media</p> <p>O3: Market opportunity: The Podcast format is growing in popularity</p> <p>O4: The rise of the technology sector in start-ups in Spain.</p> <p>O5: Availability: costumers will be able to consume the service in demand.</p> <p>O6: Market barrier- lower than in other industries.</p> <p>O7: Add complimentary services: possibility to enlarge the offered service.</p>	<p>Fulfill the market gaps by focusing on a very concrete target group (S4, S5, S6, O1, O3).</p> <p>Profit the crisis of traditional media and the increase of information consumption through social media, and more specifically through podcasting to create a unique service including these aspects. (S1, S4, S5, O1, O2, O3, O4, O6)</p>	<p>Take advantage of the low market barrier of the sector to face a low start-up capital. (W1, O6).</p> <p>Profit of the rise of the technology sector in start-ups in Spain and the public support for digitalization and the upcoming new framework of tax and labour incentives to face a high competitive industry and benefit from the events arranged by the Spanish government to analyse the lacks, vulnerabilities, and negative aspects of start-ups' to gradually create out leadership strategy and thus face the weakness of a reduced staff. (W3, W4, W7, O4)</p>
<u>THREATS</u>	S-T (DEFENSIVE STRATEGY)	W-T (SURVIVAL STRATEGY)
<p>T1: The creation of other Podcasting sites that might evolve into competitors.</p> <p>T2: The changing nature of International Relations</p> <p>T3: Necessity- not a service of primary need.</p> <p>T4: Low market barriers- it is easier to have larger competition.</p> <p>T5: The competition- employees from all over the world and specialist.</p> <p>T6: The competition- financed by sites with reputation.</p> <p>T7: The competition- can offer different services that can be more attractive.</p> <p>T8: Policies- more policies can be implemented.</p>	<p>Take advantage of your paramount strengths such as the low initial start-up capital, the availability of the product offered, the organizational flexibility and the clear definition of the pillars of the service to take risks and face some of the threats such as the competitive disadvantage. (S1, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8).</p>	<p>Offer the service as an experience. Size the opportunity and take risks to gain experience and to determine own strategy's lacks and aspects to improve, create certain customer portfolio, to move from the start-up stage to the growth stage with reputation and experience. (W1-8 and T1-8).</p>

3. The 4Ps

In 1950 Harvard University professors Neil Borden and Jerome McCarthy popularized the idea of the marketing mix strategy and narrowed it down to the strategy of the ‘4Ps’¹¹⁸. This strategy stands for an analysis of the – product, price, promotion, and place- of a newborn business. And it is, all along with a corporate action plan, it’s the basis to take off with the marketing plan.

1. Product

The product is service-oriented and emerges due to the necessity to fight mis- or disinformation in conflict situations and to improve the educational portfolio concerning current events.

The product offered consists of a Podcast channel that streams weekly episodes on geopolitics; but, more specifically, on international conflicts¹¹⁹. For example, one episode will be about the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, and it will be tackled with non-bias information that follows the guiding principles that we have elaborated (following the European and Universal parameters) to fight disinformation. (Annex One)

Our primary objective is to offer a unique consuming position by offering a remarkable service to a target group (15-55) that will provide a more accurate and reliable explanation of international conflicts. Our service will be published on podcast hosting sites, which will make it easier for consumers to listen to different chapters with total flexibility.

1.1.Type of product

There will be two types of episodes, depending on topic and format:

- Regular episode: the host will explain a particular conflict sharing relevant information about authors, notes, and other references for a deeper understanding of the issue at stake.

¹¹⁸ Pathak, Ritesh. “The 4ps of Marketing: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.” Analytics Steps.

¹¹⁹ Russo, D. *Podcast*. “Price, promotion and place - the 4ps of podcast marketing.”

- Episode with guests: to enrich the debate and have different points of view of the conflict at stake, there will be the virtual or physical presence of specialists, which will, at the same time, contribute to the fight against disinformation.

1.2. Program Host

- Carla Navarro I Triola: Degree in International Relations, specialized in the MENA region and International Economics.

2. Price

To approach this element of the marketing plan, we must divide the pricing strategy into two pillars.

On the one hand, our business will enter the market with a lack of liquidity, with a low investment that will mainly come from the 3F's (Friends, Family, and Fools). Nonetheless, the industry's market barrier is lower than in other industries, making it easier for us to start in the first stage of the business cycle.

The pricing strategy is mainly focused on capturing value through the sale of advertising space within the program. On average, for each week in 2020, Magellan AI identified 160 brands that had begun to advertise on podcasts including, Amazon, Google, and Disney. Moreover, in 2020 podcast advertising in the financial category grew year-over-year by 72% and insurance was +83%¹²⁰.

3. Promotion

All of the first year's communication efforts will be focused on positioning IPSO FACTO as a brand and the host as a specialized figure in the field of International Relations and conflicts. However, in parallel, a promotion strategy for each episode's release will be developed, focusing on the importance of each theme in a unique way.

Because this is a new program with unknown hosts, a media distribution strategy will be critical to spreading awareness and achieving coverage. At the same time, the host will be responsible for maintaining relationships with guests, and influencers, and managing the host's public appearances in media related to the brand.

¹²⁰ Forbes. "As podcasts continue to grow in popularity, ad dollars follow."

4. Place

Our service will be offered through online delivery. And it will be able to be consumed at any place at any time. The P of place is a key initial assessed in the entry-to-market, as it is imperative to think about how people will find our product and how we will be able to increase our online presence. It is essential to take into consideration the top hosting sites for the podcast. According to a Statista's 2020 study, the top platforms and apps for listening to podcasts are Spotify (25% of listeners) and Apple Podcasts (20%)¹²¹.

4. GANTT

This Gantt chart will be conducted following the five stages of a Small Business Lifecycle which include: Seed and Development (analyze and assess); Startup (action to launch it), Growth and Establishment (generating a consistent source of income and regularly taking on new customers); Expansion (broadening your horizons); Maturity and possible exit¹²².

¹²¹ Götting, M. C. (2022, February 8). *Top apps for listening to podcasts in the U.S. 2020*. Statista.

¹²² Statista. Petch, Neil. "The Five Stages of Your Business Lifecycle: Which Phase Are You in?" Entrepreneur.

Stage	Task to be developed	Already Done	M 1	M 2	M 3	M 4	M 5	M 6	M 7	M 8	M 9	M 10	M 11	M 12	
First Stage (Development)	Write business plan														
	Write marketing plan														
	Create logo														
	Create marketing materials														
	Create product description														
	Create Spotify account														
	Create Instagram account														
	Viability and Sustainability														
	Risk Analysis														
	Establish initial customer portfolio														
	Market analysis														
	Create customer survey														
	Deploy marketing campaign														
	Evaluate strategic plan's performance														

Second Stage (Start-Up)	Launch first chapter																	
	Launch Second chapter																	
	Launch Third Chapter																	
	Launch Fourth Chapter																	
	Conduct and organize interviews with experts																	
Third Stage (Growth and Establishment)	Evaluation of the first year (Mission, vision, goals, action plan accomplishments)																	

5. ACTION PLAN

We're creating an action plan in the form of a check list to determine the tasks that must be accomplished in order to attain the intended result. It's an important aspect of the strategic planning process and will aid in project management improvement.

The first step of the action plan will be to **identify the topic** that we want to talk about. For example, after extensive research is done, we conclude that we want to talk about the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. The second phase would be to **research the chosen conflict** taking into consideration the parameters established by the European Commission to make sure that the information is not biased; at the same time, we will research politicians, scholars, or civilians that have deep knowledge about the topic to present them as guests. The third step will be to **plan for the script** of the episode. The next step will be to **record the episode**, and the last phase will be to **release the episode and carry out a promotion of it**.

H. CONCLUSION

Conclusion in relation to the initial objectives

With respect to the objective initially established on the theoretical framework “*the objective is to do a deep analysis of the evolution of media and social media, the impact that it has on international affairs and conflicts, as well as to understand disinformation and the existing tools to fight it*”, we believe that has been successfully reached.

The objective has been accomplished through the accurate research of the industry of social media and the multidimensional aspects that it has on society. Similarly, we believe that we have succeeded in abstracting all the above-mentioned contents and translating them into the appropriate tools and knowledge required to overcome the project's orbital obstacles. Further developed in our theoretical analysis, we were able to understand the mainstream aspects of disinformation, and the difference between misinformation, as well as delve deeper into the initiatives that the European Commission and the UN have developed to combat disinformation. The aforesaid data was used to compile a theoretical table comparing the different tools and strategies for combating disinformation, to establish guiding principles that our podcast IPSO FACTO will follow (Annex One).

When it comes to the second objective “*to develop a marketing strategy for the creation, production, and distribution of the podcast IPSO FACTO whose goal is to provide non-bias and quality information on armed conflicts*”, we can as well say that the objective has been successfully achieved and that we have been able to develop a solid marketing strategy for the product. To achieve this objective, we have conducted a PESTEL, in which we found out that together with social media, the podcasting industry is facing exponential growth, and that, only in 2021, more than 10,000 podcasts were created¹²³. This conclusion has pleased us because it illustrates that we correctly defined our objectives, given that we were unaware of the trend's rapid growth at the start of the project. In our marketing plan, we have also done Porter's Five Forces analysis, in which we understood that the entry barriers of the industry were very low, which; on the one hand, benefited us due to the lack of initial investment, but on the other hand, harms us due to the rising threat of substitution. Moreover, to complete our marketing plan, we

¹²³ Statista “Infographic: Where Europeans Are Plugging into Podcasts.”

did a SWOT analysis, in which we could determine the strengths and weaknesses of our product, as well as create strategies to face the internal and external threats of the market.

Final Conclusions

As a result of globalization and the technological revolution, new digital platforms have evolved, allowing for novel journalistic practices and new forms of communication. As a result, the news media environment has altered dramatically in recent decades. This new digital paradigm broke with the pre-established dynamics and created a new way of communication in which audiences became more involved in the communication process, resulting in the creation of innovative formats that gradually challenged the hegemony of traditional communication. In this context, podcasting emerged creating a new method to interact through social media.

IPSO FACTO is a podcast that has been created to face the need to tackle armed conflicts with non-bias and valid information. To do so, in each chapter, the podcast will promote verifiable information, improve social trust, and combat hate speech following the UN and the European Commission guiding principles that we have chosen (Annex One). It will also encourage citizens to engage in dialogue and respect for others' perspectives and cultures, as well as enable citizens to comprehend and act on content to achieve personal agency and autonomy, assist people in actively participating in the achievement of sustainable development goals and democratic processes, and support lifelong learning¹²⁴.

Although it is too early to forecast the future of our project, we intend to keep working on it and, if possible, establish a stable platform that citizens can use to learn about a certain issue and obtain valuable information.

¹²⁴ UNESCO, and Baktria Press UNESCO. “Media and Information Literacy.”

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J. ANNEXES

a. ANNEX ONE

GLOBAL SCALE	EUROPEAN SCALE		
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY	CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISINFORMATION	MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR	EUROPEAN DIGITAL MEDIA OBSERVATORY (EDMO)
Fosters intercultural dialogue	Transparency in advertising	Basic protection	Academic analysis of disinformation campaigns
Promotes critical thinking	Diversity of fresh sources	Market plurality	Training and outreach
Fosters creativity	Dealing with fraudulent accounts	Political independence	Independent fact-checking activities
Educates on media skills	Fact-checking	Social inclusiveness	Academic research activities on disinformation
Promotes active participation and civic engagement	Didactical tools to understand and flag disinformation		Limit the spread and the impact of disinformation in online platforms

IPSO FACTO	Fosters intercultural dialogue, promotes critical thinking, Fosters creativity, Promotes active participation and civic engagement, Diversity of fresh sources, Fact-checking, Political Independence, and Social inclusiveness.
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* This is a comparative table that analyses the different disruptive techniques deployed, organizations, and different typology of decision and acts to fight disinformation in a Global and European scale. It is necessary to understand that the nature of each organization and technique is different; thus, they should not be compared.

b. ANNEX TWO

INTERVIEW

Interview to Stella, a content creator that hosts a Podcast about climate change, health, and sustainable business.

For more information click [here](#).

When and why did you decide that you wanted to become a content creator. More specifically, why did you choose to do a Podcast?

I wanted to become a content creator two years ago. I was sitting at a lake, and I had the urge to create something. She wanted to create a platform to speak out about all of the issues that really concern her and she needed to let out and share her knowledge, inspirations, and injustices that she saw with other people and help make this world more aware and conscious, especially on social media. The podcast was another platform that evolve after she started her Instagram account because she wanted to dip into issues with the help of experts in certain fields.

I saw on your webpage that you have different social media platforms. What do you think Podcast offers you and your audience that the others don't?

Right now, I predominantly have my Instagram account and my Podcast. The podcast gives you a very unique platform to speak your mind. It's a place where you can say anything that you want to put out into the world with the help of other voices in certain fields with other people who have something to say about different topics you can create valuable talks that have really educational values. It can be inspirational to listen to a podcast and there is so much knowledge you can draw from that. To just listen to people having conversations and exploring topic deeper and debating. It is interactive because you can hear the people who are speaking, their voices, which can make it more reliable and exciting for you and it feels closer and it's more personal than writing just a type out text. It can change a person's mind on a certain topic in a very positive way. You have so many possibilities and so much freedom. This platform serves a certain purpose from the moment you click in an episode. And you can do it anywhere and get educated about a topic that you have always to know while you are doing other things.

Also, I have that in social media the platforms that are interactive there is a lot of misinformation censoring and that doesn't happen on podcasts.

How would you rate your experience doing Podcasts / how was been your experience so far.

My experience with podcasts has been great so far, very positive. I have learned and get to meet so many incredible people. It also boosted my confidence in speaking, I have learned to get rid of certain filling words or phrases during my podcast and to speak more securely. And also to do research about the questions that I would ask a guest also made me do more research and dip deeper into certain topics. Definitely a very positive experience.

In your trailer, you mention that you use non-bias information. What mechanisms or tools do you use to do so?

With this I mean that I don't spread misinformation. For that, I talk to different people with different point of views, afterwards, if there is something that came up in the podcast sometimes, I put little disclaimers in it or I cut a piece out that I'm not sure about or that I think they might convey a wrong message. Non-bias for me is exploring a certain topic from different angles as to try to give the broader picture and to widen horizons and not create echo chambers where you only affirm your opinion.

Do you think that hosting guests and specialists on specific topics enriches your Podcast?

Yes, I definitely think so because there's only so little one person can know and specially the topics that I talk about which are climate crisis and climate change, it is too broad just for one person to talk about it and explore. There are so many ecosystems and so many humanitarian aspects to consider from the fashion industry to the agricultural industry. So that's too much for one person to explore, so experts can help you to light it from different angles, and there's so many experts who really do know stuff and I only could do research about it.

What Podcasts are your inspiration? Is there a lot of competition in the industry?

There are so many. For example, the overview effect and other climate podcasts. And yes, although I don't see it as competition, there are a lot of podcasts right there. But I think that specially in climate change related topics the more the better, because each one will spread messages and will have different guests. But each one is different and each one has the unique way of doing things.

Finally, what recommendations would you give me?

My first recommendation is not overthinking it. Don't think about how it is going to look like or what technology will you use, just have a solid base, like for example an Instagram account where you make posts about you talk about. And have confidence in yourself and the knowledge that you have, as speak as if you were speaking to you grandmother. And by just being confident in your own abilities you are going to attract people that is interesting in your content. And as anything there is a learning curve, and it is important to trust the process and be content with it.

