Editorial

We present Vol. 25, No. 1 (2026) of Revista de *Comunicación* in a challenging and demanding context, upholding the defense of scientific publications.

The legitimacy of the academic journal as such is being questioned, with the issue unfortunately remaining high on the agenda. In December 2025, Professor Russell Beale, from the School of Computer Science, University of Birmingham, published the essay "In Memoriam: The Academic Journal", criticizing the scientific publication system.

We have taken this provocative idea as a wake-up call to pay attention to developments in the area and the risks they entail. Below follow some ideas the author proposed to reflect on the transcendent meaning of science and the value of quality scientific journals.

The purpose of publishing has changed. Traditionally, publishing pursued the objective of disseminating rigorous scientific information that contributes to the advancement of science. But now the primacy of distinct metrics has taken over. Number of articles published, impact factor, the "h" or "i" indices, among others, are successive elements, the product of quality and relevant research. But under pressures emanating from a "publish-or-perish model", the emergence of the "minimum publishable unit" that fragments knowledge, and the commercial influence of large publishers, work is being put out just for the sake of it and regardless of any kind of contribution. As a result, research loses rigor, precision, and coherent vision; results lose credibility, and trust in the scientific community erodes.

Amid talk of the commodification of academia, science is pushed into the logic of market policies, even though science is oriented toward the search for truth and requires time and knowledge about how to conduct in-depth analysis. Science is not a mass-market product.

Generative AI is not an author. Its increasing usage in scientific research is generating unprecedented opportunities and challenges in the process of knowledge generation, but it will not replace scientists. Research remains a human endeavor (Zeta, 2025).

Scientific journals are still relevant. They will exist as long as they fulfill the societal mission which legitimizes them. Initially promoted by scientific societies, scientific journals are especially supported by universities, whose editors and expert reviewers guarantee that published research breaks new ground. Sharing information, findings, and perspectives is key.

In this dysfunctional and chaotic mixture, researchers must exercise their intellectual task dutifully – with diligence and responsibility, respectful of research canons – and acknowledge truth as a constitutive element in the knowledge they transfer. Dr. José María Desantes (1988) said that researchers with the capacity for scientific study have to contribute to the construction of the discipline and ensure that their intellectual activity benefits the community with a transcendent purpose.

In this light, the freedom and editorial independence of scientific journals are valuable and fundamental assets, as they sustain credibility and trust in the scientific community. And that requires the moral integrity, commitment, and responsibility of all actors, including authors, reviewers, and editors, who contribute to a journal's functioning. Fostering the advancement of science in an environment of quality and excellence is challenging.

Three of the published articles rightly confront the use of artificial intelligence tools for research purposes. Studying *ChatGPT, Deepseek and Perplexity AI, Scispace and GPT-5* and the objectives of their use involve sample selection, bibliographic review, translation, writing, discussion of models and statistical results, and editing of references. Researchers reviewed and validated the

data obtained, confirming that authors retain sole responsibility for analyses, interpretations, and conclusions. We encourage such transparency regarding artificial intelligence tools; it is ethical and fosters the traceability of research.

This volume contains 20 research articles and one review, which have been contributed by 50 professors from 29 universities in Colombia, Slovakia, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. We could also count on the generous collaboration of 90 external reviewers. Researchers have focused on topics such as journalism, audiovisual narratives, influencer marketing and engagement, political communication, disinformation in organizations, AI literacy among children, and the conceptualization of the digital mediatization of social protest.

In **journalism**, interest revolves around the economic sustainability of the media, the information ecosystem and the consumption of information on social networks, emerging positions in professional practice, collaborative journalism, and AI in entrepreneurial journalism.

The press in Latin America remains deep in economic crisis. Applying trend analysis techniques and temporal comparison, the article "La crisis económica de los *medios de comunicación en Colombia: el caso de los medios impresos",* analyzes this situation in the period from 2016 to 2024. It uses seven financial indicators: assets, income, net profits, gross margins, profitability of assets, return on equity, and return on sales. The crisis threatens the sustainability of regional media.

Regarding sustainability, news organizations must address new positions required for contemporary professional practice. Results presented in the article *"Los cargos emergentes en las salas de redacción colombianas: un acercamiento cualitativo desde los periodistas"*, indicate that modern and effective journalism in newsrooms demands the combination of editorial, technical, administrative, and commercial skills, as well as the strengthening of journalists' knowledge.

The article *"Análisis de la transferencia de conocimiento en el contexto del periodismo colaborativo transfronterizo europeo"*, examines the application of knowledge transfer through four lenses: strengthening the information industry, improving journalists' digital skills and newsroom innovation, promoting an organizational culture to facilitate the creation of common knowledge centers, and implementing novel business models.

In this environment, AI appears as an ally to journalism. In "Artificial intelligence as a strategic resource for journalism entrepreneurship: perceptions of the entrepreneurial mindset and decision-making", the roles that interviewees see as benefits of AI integration come into the spotlight. But the interviewees also foresee dangers related to a narrow business vision and deterioration of creativity, and mention education and critical thinking as key to mitigating the effects of AI dependence.

Journalism is part of a complex communication ecosystem. The article *"El ecosistema híbrido de la comunicación en desastres naturales: producción, alcance y tipología de emisores en Instagram durante la DANA de 2024 en España"*, reveals that communication on Instagram happens in a hybrid environment in which journalistic and non-journalistic users coexist and the media, influencers, vertical profiles, or meteorological services are relevant actors with the capacity to generate viral publications.

Social networks are becoming increasingly important sources of information. The article *"Edad y noticias digitales: análisis del interés y del uso informativo de las redes sociales en México"*, studies Mexican audiences' interest in news that are disseminated via Facebook, YouTube, X, TikTok, and Instagram. It shows that age is a structuring factor of interests and habits of information consumption via social media. Age configures differentiated relationship patterns with professional journalism and alternative information sources.

In the **audiovisual field,** research focuses on television, video games, podcasts, video podcasts, and learning.

Television is still highly relevant when it comes to events of international interest. The article *"Discurso, rito y emoción en la cobertura televisiva del "Habemus Papam": comparativa en las retransmisiones de BBC y RTVE de la elección de León XIV"*, concludes that the BBC adopts a narrative style that cultivates distance, emphasizing contextualization and using language accessible to multiple confessions. RTVE, on the other hand, highlights elements of shared belief, prioritizing emotional aspects and solemnity.

Video games have become relevant in the cultural industries both because of their economics and their narrative complexity. The article *"Transcendence for gamers. Religion and spirituality in video games narratives"*, reveals the predominance of spiritual but not religious (SBNR) approaches, which represent 47% of cases, compared to 40% involving organized religion.

Podcasting is consolidating itself as a strategic tool to reinforce the public service mission of radio, broaden the diversity of voices, and strengthen the territorial and cultural connection with audiences. From this perspective, the article *"Podcasting y servicio público: la función cultural de las radios autonómicas españolas en la era digital"*, examines 121 podcasts. It concludes that the conversational macro-genre predominates, with cultural, educational, and social themes being the highlights. The use of content in co-official languages is also relevant.

On the other hand, *"El poder de la conversación: análisis de los videopódcast de marca en España con más suscriptores en YouTube"*, confirms that the format of the conversational video podcast is here to stay, as episodes now may exceed one hour. This development favors the deepening of topics addressed and differentiates it from shorter digital formats.

Meanwhile, the article *"Aprendizajes personalizados a través de documentales digitales en las carreras universitarias de comunicación en Iberoamérica"* addresses personalized learning and digitization, specifically in the teaching of the documentary genre. Its main contribution is a qualitative diagnosis that validates how digitization democratizes audiovisual production and role specialization.

Political communication works in many contexts, and although it keeps growing in the digital environment, the press remains influential.

The use of TikTok by politicians continues to rise. "From Brussels to the "for you" page: Members of the European Parliament TikTok adoption and campaign use", finds that adoption is more strongly determined by age, country, and size of the European political group than by ideology. Most importantly, TikTok is facing intensified regulatory scrutiny by the European Commission regarding data privacy, content moderation, and electoral integrity.

The Russian-Ukrainian war started four years ago, and the positions of all actors involved are interesting. Political cartoons are valid reference points for the study of opinion journalism. In the article *"La traición de Trump: análisis de la posición del presidente de los Estados Unidos sobre la Guerra de Ucrania durante el primer semestre de 2025 en la viñeta periodística occidental"*, the representation of Donald Trump's position on the Russian-Ukrainian war is analyzed. The study considers the discursive construction linked to the US leader, based on a sample of 144 published political cartoons.

Election campaigns are openly contested in the digital environment. *"Entre el consenso y la polarización: un análisis de los mensajes pautados en Meta por los principales candidatos a la presidencia de Uruguay en 2024"* analyzes the messages of political candidates on Facebook and Instagram. It aims to characterize the political agenda each coalition built on Meta-owned platforms. Further, it investigates whether political polarization was pushed onto socio-digital platforms by elites and to what effect.

In the area of **advertising,** studies delve into the phenomenon of influencers, and that of Brand Love and the brand-consumer relationship.

Children are an extensive and intensive part of the world of influencers. The article *"Kidfluencers en YouTube: análisis del contenido publicitario y profesionalización"* examines the advertising content and commercial relations of Spanish kidfluencers to characterize their profile and degree of professionalization. The study concludes that growing professionalization increases kidfluencers' credibility and commercial value, while ethical and regulatory dilemmas linked to transparency, media literacy, and the protection of minors remain evident.

Influencers have diversified their impact frameworks. The article "Micro-influencers y marcas: gestión, rol estratégico y dinámicas de remuneración en el marketing de influencia" , highlights that micro-influencers seem better positioned than macro-influencers because they drive greater engagement, enjoy credibility, and better transmit brand values to consumers.

Tackling the brand-consumer relationship, the article *"Elementos clave en la creación de una Lovebrand: hacia un diseño de modelo conceptual",* focuses on the concept of *Lovebrands* and the phenomenon of Brand Love, understood as brands that build deep and emotional relationships with their target audience. According to the results, integrating background and outcome variables in the creation and development of a Lovebrand allows consumers to understand the brand and helps them decide to experience it.

Other articles address various topics. Contemporary social protest is analyzed from the theoretical perspective of communication. In *"La mediatización de la protesta social en el ecosistema mediático digital: una propuesta teórico-conceptual para su abordaje analítico"* it is proposed that analyses of social protest should include the construction of an epistemology of digital mediatization. This approach integrates technological, cultural, and political dimensions into the interpretative horizon. It will enable a better understanding of the complexity of political practice offline and online.

Media literacy is another study objective. The article "Supporting children's creative process in the context of developing their literacy in artificial intelligence" explores the impact AI tools have on elementary school children's artistic creation in workshops at a Slovak university. It observes children's interaction with AI, their perception of authorship of AI-generated texts, and ethical attitudes. According to the results analysis, children's texts were more original, while AI excelled in formal and linguistic accuracy.

Disinformation is a global risk that erodes the trust and reputation of organizations. The article *"Desinformación sobre empresas e instituciones y sus estrategias de respuesta: análisis longitudinal de verificaciones en España (2023-2025)"* confronts the persistence of disinformation. However, only 52.6% of verifications documented the existence of a response offered by an organization.

We hope that these articles will contribute to reflection among academics and specialists focused on communication studies around the world.

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