COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

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The use of hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating on the websites of Spanish political parties

Abstract

This work presents the results of a research aiming to analyze the presence of the four cardinal points of the cyberspace (hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating) in the Spanish political parties' websites. These parameters determine the effectiveness of the communication in a web space, and until what extent political formations use them to connect with their audiences in the digital environment. To achieve this goal, an analysis of the content of the websites of the political groups with parliamentary representation has been carried out.
The results confirm the absence of tools and resources related to these characteristics in the web spaces under study. The use of hypertext, beyond its simpler structure, and the use of multimedia elements is scarce. The possibilities of interaction between different users and political parties are minimal.
The information published and the level of updating of the contents is insufficient. The conclusions allow us to affirm that there is a lack of exploitation of the possibilities offered by the web to promote communication and interaction with users by different political groups.

Keywords
Political communication, digital communication, political parties, websites, Internet.

1. Introduction

Currently, there are more than 3.8 billion internet users in the world, which translates to a penetration rate of 51%. In other words, one in two people worldwide has access to the Internet. In the last few years the digital ecosystem has experienced a revolution with the arrival of social networks, and the democratization of information that came with them. Any individual with basic office skills can now produce and spread content online on a global scale.

These changes have affected the relationship between organizations and the public deeply, as online networking tools have allowed for more direct and participatory communication. A new type of user has appeared: the permanent digital communicator (Fundación Telefónica, 2012) who uses the internet extensively and who is not content with simply consuming content, but must also produce and spread it.

This emergent context has stimulated the use of new resources on various websites, amongst which tools to enrich information sharing stand out. In this way, multimedia, hypertextuality, updates and interactivity between different users are all features that organizations should consider when developing efficient communication strategies.

The explosion of social networking online and the widespread democratization of information have affected political parties, as citizens now demand a more participatory democracy: they want to intervene in political decision-making in a more active and direct way. In this sense, the *World Wide Web* offers plenty of possibilities and resources for use as communication channels with, and amongst, the public.

Communication channels between internet users and political organizations become more diverse every day, thanks to advances experienced over the last few years. Due to technological alignment and the decrease of the digital gap, websites now offer functionalities and applications with the potential to enrich citizens' access to information. Textual information may be accompanied by visual elements, such as video or static imagery. Websites are updated more frequently, and news is transmitted live. Users not only interact with publications on the website, but also become the producers of content related to the organization.

This paper analyzes the usage level of resources related to hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and the updating of Spanish political parties' homepages.

The results depict the current state of the political websites studied, and intends to be useful to them by illuminating the best path to follow when it comes to digital communication with the public in coming years.

2. Theoretical framework and context

Hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity, and updating are outlined in this paper as the main features of the digital environment.

2.1. *Interactivity and participation of users on websites*

Navarro (2009, p. 42) states that, in its beginnings, interactivity was presented as the feature of the internet with the highest potential and the greatest value due to the communication it allows between sender and receiver. This author points out that "in the first instance, interactivity appeared through the use of discussion forums and polls. Today, the pinnacle is when the means of communication allows users to reorganize and rank journalistic messages." Moreover, he introduces the concept of interactive receivers and he classifies them as: "a) The reader of the newspaper himself; b) The reader who receives it too late; c) The user that looks for a new means of communication able to satisfy the demand for those elements that make up the digital and communicative convergence."

Díaz Noci (2008, p. 68) describes interactivity as the feature that enables multidirectional communication.

> It is interactivity that makes one go from the paradigm of mass communication (unique sender, also unique receiver, although made up of different individuals, ideal construct conditioned by technology) to the paradigm of multilateral communication, in which the plurality of agents is subject to multiple variations and enables, if I may be allowed the metaphor, a kaleidoscopic and polyphonic presentation.

Among the criteria established by Kapoun (1998, p. 522) for the evaluation of websites, the accuracy of web documents is mentioned. In reference to this criterion, the author poses the following questions: Who wrote the page? Can the reader contact the writer? The content must include elements that foster interactivity between users and the author.

Interactivity affects the role of the user in that way. Santiago and Navaridas (2012, p. 24) explain that the web 2.0 permits an important function of open communication. These authors express that websites supported by a community of users "make new tools for text,

image, video, [and] sound accessible for any internet user... interconnected in multiple ways, multipurpose, or are administered from the same account, with the result that it is a lot easier to be a consumer and web-content generator at the same time."

As a consequence, both political parties and users benefit from interactivity in the digital environment. Fages Ramió (2008, pp. 21-22) defines politics 2.0 from two points of view. He explains that, on the one hand, politics 2.0 is the use of 2.0 tools by political parties to enhance their capacity to open up, to communicate with citizens and to listen to their opinions. On the other hand, politics 2.0 is for citizens and their ability to get organized on networks through the use of 2.0 tools to create interest groups that eventually influence politicians' and public authorities' decisions.

In the emergence of these new tools and characteristic resources that have been referred to as web 2.0 or social web, Yuste (2012, pp. 78-79) is conscious of the evolution of interaction pathways. He argues that these formulas of new media allow users' participation, along with the loyalty of the audience, who are more exacting every day and demand to be involved more often in the communicative process. Among the main tools used to enable this, Yuste mentions the ability of users to publish comments and opinions on the news, the availability of blogs, the existence of digital interviews or video chats, and the integration of social networks.

However, participation implies the need for mechanisms of control that ensure the plurality and coherence in dialogue, and that enable conversations. Ruiz *et al.* (2010, p. 38) highlight the potential of what they define as conversation 2.0, which is only a potentiality at the moment "because reality would make us define it as non-conversation or, at least, as a conversation that is barely compatible with what is expected from it in a democratic society [...] because it is a fragmented dialogue." Participation should be managed to correct this, and it should be considered that some participants repeat the same content. Opoku and Williams (2010, p. 265) point out that "the speed in which a party responds to questions and the speed at which content loads online, are important factors for a good political party website. Political parties should work to improve the technology behind their online presence."

In relation to this detail, García and Garrido (2002, p. 10) explain that political websites should provide a contact email address that allows users to communicate with the webpage administrator directly. On top of this, other elements must be added such as registration forms, opinion forms and feedback forms, all in an effort to be in constant communication with the audience.

In their proposed protocol of evaluation for informative resources, Ayuso and Martínez (2005, pp. 39-41) group together three key processes: micronavegation (which examines the organization and structure of a publication), macronavegation (to explore how the resource fits with the global context of the *World Wide Web*) and usability.

The section on micronavegation in this work includes the parameters of authorship or source, under which communication is also included. That is, the possibility of sending messages about content to the resource administrator. This gives users the possibility of interaction with publications on the website via comments.

Hassan Montero (2006, pp. 243-244) takes on a multidimensional pattern as a model for his investigation, made up of the following variables: user experience, design factors and behavior. Hygienic factors influence the rational behavior of users during interaction. Motivational factors influence affective behavior. In this way, the interactivity permitted to the user promotes their satisfaction and prevents feelings of frustration from emerging when accessing the website.

This author identifies hygienic factors of accessibility, the possibility that the website can be accessible and used by the greatest possible number of people; the website's *functionality*, that it is working correctly, and; *findability*, the measurement of users' ability to find information being searched for in a reasonable amount of time. At the same time, Montero

classifies utility as a motivational factor. Utility is a measurement of the usefulness of a website for users, along with the website's aesthetic quality and credibility. Finally, she points out that usability has a double dimension, both objective and subjective, characterized at once as a hygienic and motivating factor, which has the function of linking and relating to all of the other factors.

2.2. *Hypertext and multimedia elements*

Due to the enormous quantity of data existing in the digital environment, Ripani (2013, pp. 42-43) contends that the hypertextual structure of digital culture "allows us to navigate quickly and intuitively through diverse multimedia content, which is presented as chaotic and which offers an infinite number of possible paths. These hypertextual paths in real time are full of resources that allow for reading and writing at the same time." She concludes that the modes of digital representation of the *World Wide Web* enable individuals to wander around in a reality that is presented as chaotic, where they can construct multiple paths; to structure texts online: hypertexts; distinct elements through hyperlinks; to integrate elements of video, audio, images and text (multimedia) and to create a device of collective reading-writing through the web 2.0. Among the multimedia content, López Carreño (2007, p. 185) highlights that this type of web portal should offer, as part of its content, information about the directive board, such as a complete agenda, norms, offices, opening times, communication channels, etc. She adds that, simultaneously, it is important to choose the appropriate type of information, be it textual or visual, for a more precise interpretation. All of this information or documentation given to the citizen must be contextualized, as it is of some added value for the website and it eases the process of getting to know the board and members of the organization. It is a mistake to assume that potential users are experts. It should not be taken for granted that they understand the activities and procedures carried out by the organization.

An investigation by Calvo Revilla (2002) also refers to the non-linear or non-sequential characteristics of hypertexts. Readers, in a free and autonomous manner, set their path in diverse trajectories. Thus, there can be as many reading centers as possible readers, without any hierarchy being established. Many reading paths are available based on users' interests, with movable information. This fact makes readers more active, with a higher capacity for analysis and relationship-building while they plan their own search strategy. The borders of hypertext are blurry, as they are a node in a huge network of texts. Hypertext is indeed not free from sequentiality, as setting a link is proposing a new path to take.

Along these lines, Martínez and González (2010, p. 7) emphasize the importance of selecting the order in which text is to be read due to its non-linearity. They make a comparison between this parameter and memory as "it can skip, access information in the order that the internet user chooses, which has to do not only with reading, but with processes of searching and information storage in memory."

Lucio (2012, pp. 68-69) adds that, regardless of the organizational nature of the website, "it is convenient to use links to enrich the text by linking it to news sources, providing background information, or direct access to other documents or multimedia files." He also states that links have the capacity to identify professional profiles, contextualize information, validate and contrast sources, act as a dialectical weapon, contact, broadcast and recommend, update, all with transparency, quality and an increase of visitors by improved web positioning.

To use hypertext correctly, Mancini (2012, p. 270) discusses the importance of linking within news articles on a website: it is not worth publishing news if no hyperlinks are added. Adding links is as important for the piece of news as the headline. Internal links must be used to complement paragraphs and offer some background without making the text longer; no more than two or three lines of text should be hyperlinked, and links must be precise and highlight only the text that refers to the content of the linked page. Links to articles in a

website or blog have to be prioritized, and it is important to verify that links are not broken and do indeed lead to the desired website. After checking the article, it is important to link competitors if necessary, and remember that links serve to better place the content in search engines.

Palomo (2005, p. 200) also sets a classification and argues that there is a wide range of levels of interactivity in online communication. These levels of interactive communication start from the most basic, hypertext, up to the possibility of readers themselves publishing collaborations. In addition, users can intervene in the selection of content for this medium or its presentation. This last level may be understood as communicative interactivity.

An investigation by Liu and Arnett (2000, p. 27) focuses on the parameters of quality of information, learning ability, entertainment, system quality, usability and quality of service. To measure the parameter of learning ability, authors consider the interactive function between clients and the organization, the direct interaction between clients, the well-organized hyperlinks, the help function and the personalized search engine. To the parameter of entertainment they add the feeling of participation and, in relation to service quality, they add response speed and empathy. Most of these factors are related to interactivity, but also to hypertextuality.

2.3. *Content update*

When it comes to updating content, Navarro (2009, p. 36) argues that "the most developed means of communication reorganize their information as soon as there is a piece of news that has more relevance. The least developed ones have only been able to include a 'latest news' section among their pages." She adds that major global events have had better coverage in respect to this element of the digital environment, via effective use of internet resources.

Palomo (2005, p. 205) adds that "a decrease in costs and the complexity of the productive stage has allowed journalists to participate from beginning to end in setting up the cybermedium without any mediators, with more immediate modifications." New technological advances have led to a decrease in costs and, as a consequence, in complexity of updates.

Ayuso and Martínez (2005, pp. 41–42) also include the periodical updating of information in their proposal of a protocol for source evaluation and informative resources, within the parameter of content in the micronavegation section. They include speed and the download rate of different sections of that resource within the parameter of ergonomics in that same section.

Yen *et al.* (2007, pp. 162-163) published a paper on effective website design in which they take two parameters into account from an analytical point of view: content and design. When analyzing content, they investigate legibility, relevance, format, presentation and updating. When analyzing design, they study the size and format of the page, browsing, speed and safety. The first parameter in this investigation is the process of updating.

According to this study, search time and number of clicks to access the target web page should be as low as possible. Slow speed makes a user feel like abandoning the process. Download speed should be no longer than 10 seconds, and the screen size should be defined explicitly.

However, the study by Lim *et al.* (2008, pp. 161–162) suggests that punctuality and accuracy are highly correlated with the content. This means that the appropriate use of these two elements can depend on the nature and the extent of the content. They add that "the precision of the content, punctuality and format issues are dependent on the content of interest."

López García (2003, p. 222) points out the need for updates in communication, together with participation, in order to reach the public:

> Traditional strategies of the last few years certainly need to be updated. All media across
> the land seeks to occupy a leading position in their natural market –or at least, to be well

accepted. But this is no longer enough. Nowadays, along with local communication policies, they will have to design plans that guarantee their participation based on equality in the global sphere, as that is the only way in which the diversity that characterizes the global map will reach the collective imagination.

The feature of updating is tied to the idea of continuity and immediacy. Armentia *et al.* (2007, p. 334) state that publications should be updated, but this needs to be instant. Regarding this characteristic, they signal that "immediacy is the discrepancy between the time gap that the press, and sometimes the television, need to broadcast their content and the net, where digital content is published immediately." However, do political parties update their websites as regularly as they should? Do they satisfy the informative needs of their users with the current frequency with which they renew their content? This investigation tries to provide an answer to diverse questions related to the good usage of the cardinal points of cyberspace.

3. Objectives

This investigation intends to analyze the degree to which the cardinal points of cyberspace are used well on Spanish political parties' websites, for the enhancement and contextualization of information and interaction with citizens.

General objective:
- Analyze the extent of effective use of hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating on Spanish political parties' websites.

Specific objectives:
- Determine if there are applications and elements that contribute to maintaining a well-informed citizenry though hypertextuality, multimedia and updating in official websites of the parties represented in the Congress of Deputies.
- Observe if user participation through interactivity is being fostered on political parties' websites.

4. Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this investigation cover the presence of the four cardinal points of cyberspace on Spanish political parties' websites. Having stated that, we start from the following assumptions:

H1. Spanish political parties' websites offer links to multimedia resources to supplement the published information.

H2. Spanish political parties' websites make full use of hypertext, beyond the simplest hypertextual structure.

H3. Spanish political parties' websites promote interactivity between users and content, allowing for an approach more closely aligned with direct democracy.

H4. Spanish political parties' websites make full use of updating, and renew their content very frequently.

5. Methodology

In this investigation, a content analysis of an explanatory or verifying and horizontal type has been carried out. The sample used encompasses web pages of those political parties and organizations that have obtained representation in the Congress of Deputies after Spain's General Elections of 2015. The websites of all political parties that have obtained a seat in the elections in the period being studied have been taken into account.

Table 1: Political organizations that obtained representation in the Congress of Deputies in Spain's 2015 General Elections.

Organization	Deputies	URL
Partido Popular	123	<http://www.pp.es>
Partido Socialista Obrero Español	90	<http://www.psoe.es>
Podemos	42	<http://podemos.info>
Ciudadanos	40	<https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org>
En Comú Podem	12	<http://encomupodem.cat>
Compromís-Podemos-És el Moment	9	<http://eselmoment.com/cas>
Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya-Catalunya Sí	9	<http://www.esquerra.cat>
Democràcia i Llibertat. Convergència. Demòcrates. Reagrupament	8	<http://www.democraciaillibertat.cat>
En Marea	6	<http://enmarea.gal>
Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco	6	<www.eaj-pnv.eus>
Unidad Popular: Izquierda Unida, Unidad Popular en Común	2	<unidadpopular.es>
Euskal Herria Bildu	2	<www.ehbildu.eus>
Coalición Canaria-Partido Nacionalista Canario	1	<www.coalicioncanaria.org>

Source: Own production.

The time frame of analysis is set between January 25th, 2016, and February 7th, 2016: a period with sufficient information to analyze the degree to which hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating of news articles on these websites have been well used. In this period, 231 pieces of information were analyzed.

Regarding hypertextuality, the following variables have been analyzed: presence of links to internal or external search engines, download links for information or programs, links to a website map, availability of a link to the party agenda, number of links per piece of information (external or internal), and type of URL of the websites of the political parties being studied.

In relation to multimedia, the presence of multimedia applications on websites (video, audio, text, and image) was analyzed. For this analysis, it was noted if more than one of these resources was utilized in the same piece of information. In this multimedia analysis it was also worth considering the presence of other fixed elements (digital live TV, video library, photographic archive, audio tracks) and the existence of a section and resources for journalists (press articles, audio tracks, photographic archive, video library, calendar of events/informative forecasts, documentation, and so on).

In order to analyze interactivity, the following variables were considered: contact accessibility from the cover page, other forms of contact (website forms, e-mail, address, telephone number, fax), possibility of accessing a suggestions mailbox about the website; the existence of a guest book, presence of debate forums, chats, a network of blogs of members of the party, existence of surveys, possibility of commenting texts, existence of digital encounters, possibility of joining from the website and presence of 2.0 platforms in the parties' websites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, etc.).

During the analysis of these updates, we tried to cover content renewal, keeping in mind the days in which no new content was produced and the possibility of getting live announcements or newsletters.

Finally, a score has been assigned to the effective use of internet features via content published on these websites. This score goes from 0 to 5, 5 being using effectively more often.

The sum of the points gained by each indicator determines the degree to which the cyberspace cardinal points are being well used by the spaces which constitute the focus of the study. These are classified into 5 categories:

- Level 1 websites: the four indicators account between 0 and 4
- Level 2 websites: the four indicators account between 5 and 8
- Level 3 websites: the four indicators account between 9 and 12
- Level 4 websites: the four indicators account between 13 and 16
- Level 5 websites: the four indicators account between 17 and 20

When analyzing the use of the four cyberspace cardinal points in news published on websites, the following criteria was followed:

- To evaluate multimedia use, we took into account the sum of the scores of the information published in relation to a certain cardinal point, divided by the amount of information published within the period of this study on the corresponding website.

The score of published information was decided according to the following criteria: information without picture, video or audio receives 0 points; information with 1 picture, without video or audio receives 1 point; information with more than 1 picture, without video or audio receives 2 points; information with video or audio receives 3 points; information with video or audio and 1 picture receives 4 points; information with video and audio and more than 1 picture receives 5 points.

- Update: scoring equal to the average amount of daily information published during the studied period (top mark of 5 points).

- Interactivity: scoring equal to the quantity of icons of 2.0 platforms that allows for sharing the content of a given website (top mark of 4 points), adding the possibility of commenting on the piece of news (1 point).

- Hypertextuality: the sum of points from published articles in relation to this cardinal point, divided by the number of published articles during the studied period in the corresponding website.

The hypertextuality of each published article was scored according to the following criteria: information without hypertext in the body of the article receives 0 points, information with hypertext in the body of the article receives 5 points.

6. Results from the analysis of the content on Spanish political parties' websites

A comparison between results obtained from analyzing political parties' websites content is shown. In this section, the most relevant aspects are described concerning hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating.

6.1. *Hypertextuality*

Regarding the analysis of hypertextuality, details are shown based on results obtained from fixed hypertextual elements as well as variably hypertextual elements from these websites.

6.1.1. Fixed hypertextual elements

The analysis of fixed hypertextual elements on Spanish political parties' website content is shown below.

Table 2: Fixed hypertextual elements.

	Links to downloading information or program	Link to website map to homepage	Link to the party's program	Links to internal search engines	Links to external search engine
PP	X	X	X	X	
PSOE	X	X	X	X	
Podemos	X	X	X	X	
Ciudadanos	X	X	X		
En Comú Podem	X		X		
És el Moment	X		X		
Esquerra	X	X	X	X	
DL		X	X		
En Marea	X	X	X	X	
PNV	X		X	X	
UP	X	X	X		
EH Bildu	X	X	X	X	
CC	X		X	X	

Source: Own production.

Every website analyzed has links to the party program. However, Democràcia i Llibertat's website (hereafter, DL) is the only one that does not allow downloading information or an electoral program.

En Comú Podem, És el Moment, Partido Nacionalista Vasco's (PNV) homepage and Coalición Canaria's (CC) do not offer links to a website map, while we can observe this feature in the rest of the analyzed websites.
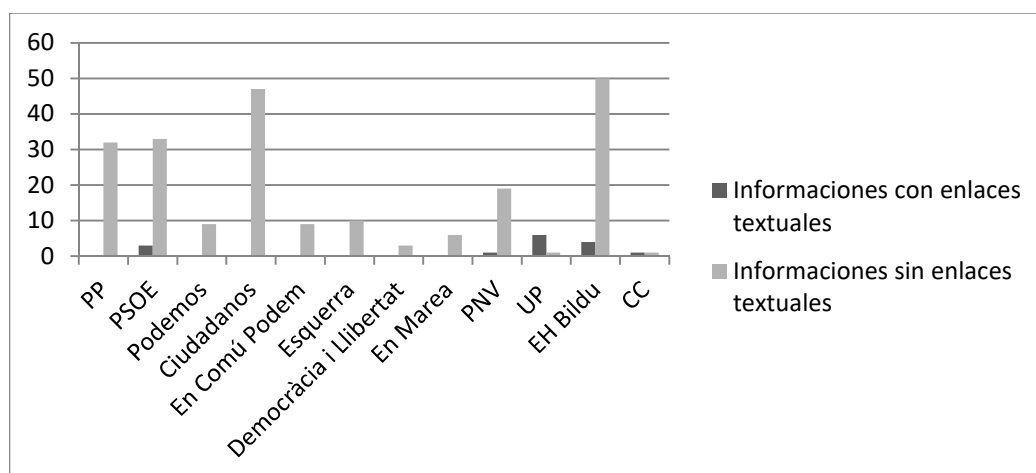
No website offers links to external search engines. Some of them do offer links to internal search engines: Partido Popular (PP) website, Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), Podemos, Esquerra. En Marea, PNV, Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu) and CC. In the case of Ciudadanos, En Comú Podem, És el Moment, DL and Unidad Popular (UP), these search engines cannot be found.

The websites of PP, PSOE, Esquerra and EH Bildu allow for advanced searches. In the case of PP, search results can be classified into news, documents, videos or pictures. On PSOE's website, results are classified into news, documents, events or multimedia according to date of publication. In the case of Esquerra, advanced search results are classified into news, interviews, opinion, Esquerra Nacional, local news and press. These results can be filtered into characters, sectorial topics and current affairs. On EH Bildu's website, a search can be made based on exact phrase, any word, every word, chronological order and according to categories, contacts, news feeds or attached files. The websites of PNV, CC and Podemos, on the other hand, only allow simple searches.

In addition, the URLs of every analyzed website are intuitive, and this allows for the association of these addresses with the parties' names.

6.1.2. Variable hypertextual elements

Next, we will specify the variable hypertextual elements found during content analysis. We will start by describing the presence of textual links in the studied websites.

Figure 1: Text links.

Source: Own production.

Most of the information that appears on the political parties' homepages analyzed in this period do not offer textual links to provide context or that complement the content offered in the news feed.

The webpage that better uses this resource is UP's, in which 57.14% of its posts have hypertextual internal links in the body of the article, and 28.87% of the news articles have external links. In this way, only one part of the information provided does not present a hypertextual link.

CC, EH Bildu, PSOE and PNV's websites also present these type of links, but to a lesser degree. CC have them in 50% of the information they provide, with PSOE in 8.3%; EH Bildu in 7.41% and PNV in 5%.

PP, Podemos, Ciudadanos, En Comú Podem, Esquerra, DL and En Marea do not offer information with hypertextual links.

6.2. *Multimedia*

Similar to hypertextuality, displayed below are the most relevant data in relation to fixed and variable multimedia elements found in PP, PSOE, Podemos, Ciudadanos, En Comú Podem, Esquerra, DL, En Marea, PNV, UP, EH Bildu and CC's websites.

6.2.1. Fixed multimedia elements

Table 3: Fixed multimedia elements.

	Video Gallery	Photographic Archive	Audio Tracks	List of Contacts	Files
PP	X	X		X	X
PSOE	X	X	X	X	X
Podemos	X	X			X
Ciudadanos	X			X	X
En Comú Podem				X	X
És el Moment				X	X
Esquerra	X			X	X
DL		X		X	X
En Marea				X	X
PNV	X	X	X	X	X
UP				X	X
EH Bildu					X
CC	X			X	X

Source: Own production.

As for fixed multimedia elements, PSOE and PNV's websites are the most comprehensive. They have video galleries, photographic archives, audio tracks, a calendar of events and data about the party.

PP's website features all of these resources, except for audio tracks. The same can be said for Podemos' website, yet they also do not have a calendar of events. Ciudadanos, Esquerra and CC also feature these elements, with the exception of audio tracks and the photographic archive, while in the case of DL there is an absence of audio tracks and video gallery.

Comú Podem, És el Moment, En Marea and UP's websites do not include video galleries, photographic archives or audio tracks. EH Bildu's website is the least comprehensive in terms of fixed multimedia elements, not presenting any of these features or a list of contacts.
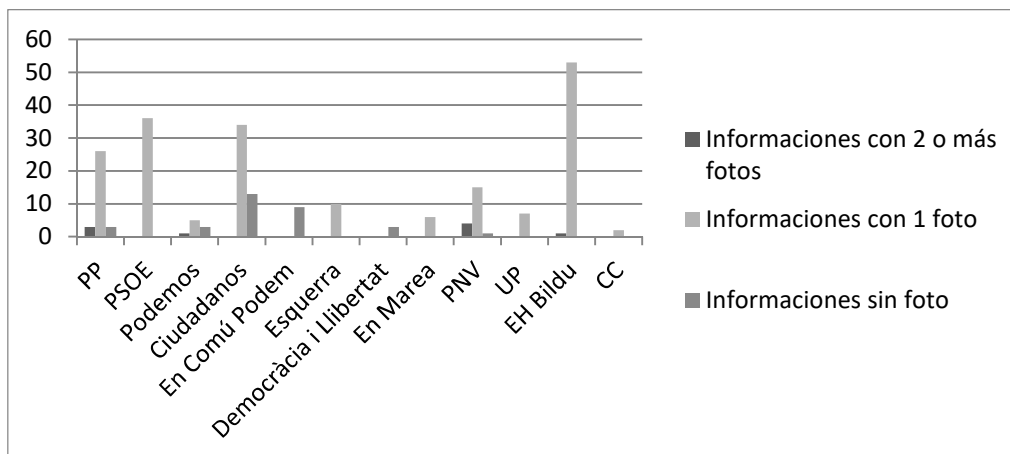
Table 4: Typography.

	Font	Serif/Sans serif
PP	Arial	Sans serif
PSOE	Open Sans Semibold	Sans serif
Podemos	Open Sans	Sans serif
Ciudadanos	Lato Medium Regular	Sans serif
En Comú Podem	Roboto	Sans serif
És el Moment	Source Sans Pro	Sans serif
Esquerra	Verdana	Sans serif
DL	Open Sans	Sans serif
En Marea	Stag-Book	Sans serif
PNV	Open Sans	Sans serif
UP	Open Sans Condensed Light	Sans serif
EH Bildu	Chevin Std Medium	Sans serif
CC	Open Sans	Sans serif

Source: Own production.

In terms of the typography used in published articles on websites of Spanish political parties, all of them utilize sans serif font. The most used font is Open Sans, used in published news on the websites of Podemos, DL, PNV and CC, together with PSOE (Open Sans Semibold) and UP (Open Sans Condensed Light).

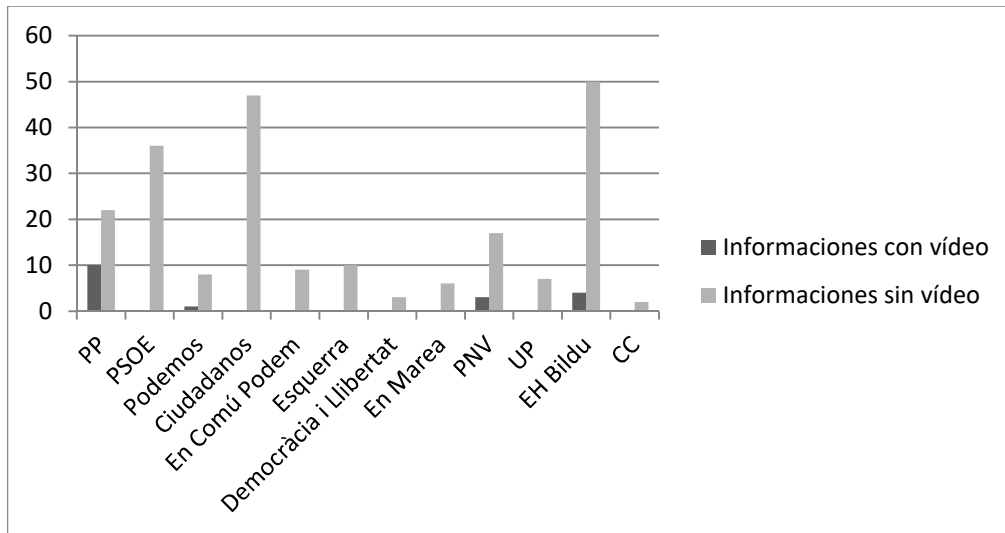## 6.2.2. Variable multimedia elements

Figure 2: Photographs.

Source: Own production.

The articles published on Ciudadanos, Esquerra, En Marea, PNV, UP, EH Bildu and CC's websites generally include one or more pictures along with the text. Only PP, Podemos, PNV and EH Bildu's websites have articles with two or more pictures. PNV's website is the one that best uses these elements, with four articles (20% of articles) with two or more pictures, 15 (75% of articles) with one picture and one article without a picture. The articles from DL and En Comú Podem have no pictures.
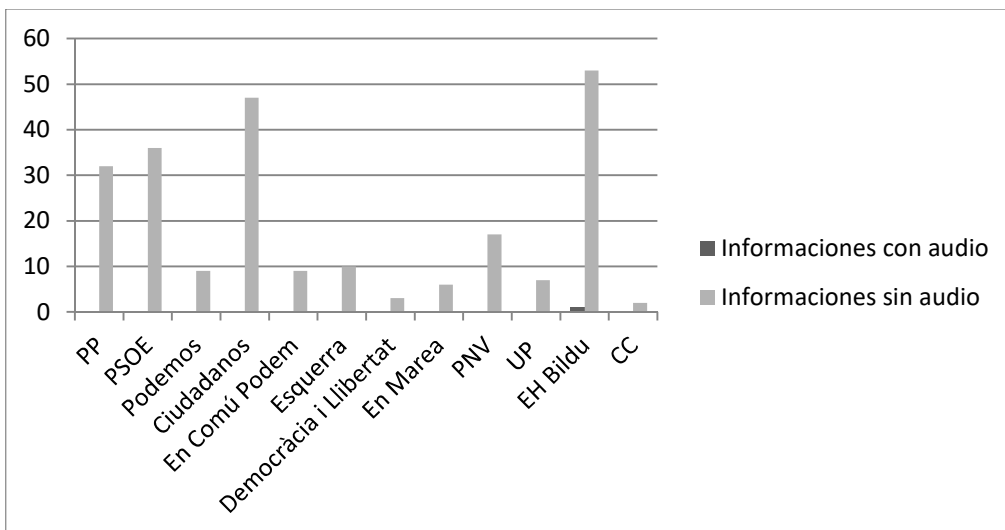
Figure 3: Videos.

Source: Own production.

PP's website uses videos effectively to a high degree. Motion pictures were used together with the text in 10 out of 22 published articles during the studied period. PSOE, Ciudadanos, En Comú Podem, Esquerra, DL, En Marea, UP and CC's websites did not present this element in any of their articles. Podemos, PNV and EH Bildu incorporated video into their articles on some occasions: in 11%, 15% and 7.41% of cases, respectively.

Figure 4: Audio files.

Source: Own production.

Use of audio could only be found on the EH Bildu web page. This element was present only in one of the 54 articles published on the website during the studied period.

6.3. *Interactivity*

The data gathered in the analysis of interactivity presented some fixed elements, such as forms of contact or access to 2.0 platforms from web pages, and other elements of variable interactivity, characteristic of each published article.

6.3.1. Fixed interactivity elements

The following chart presents information about some elements of fixed interactivity taken from the analyzed political parties' web pages.

Table 5: Contact and ways of contacting.

	Contact option on the main page	Web form	Email	Postal address	Phone	Fax
PP	X	X	X	X	X	
PSOE	X	X	X	X	X	
Podemos	X		X	X		
Ciudadanos	X	X	X	X	X	
En Comú Podem	X	X	X		X	
És el Moment						
Esquerra	X	X	X	X	X	X
DL	X	X	X	X	X	
En Marea	X	X	X		X	
PNV	X	X		X	X	X
UP			X			
EH Bildu	X		X			
CC	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Own production.

All of the analyzed websites feature a link that allows users to contact the organization from the homepage, with the exception of UP and És el Moment.

The Esquerra and CC websites are the ones that offer the most variety in forms of contact: web forms, email, postal address, telephone number, and fax. PP, PSOE, Ciudadanos, and DL also offer these forms of contact, with the exception of fax number. The PNV website lacks an email address as a form of contact, and the En Comú Podem website does not offer a postal address.

The Podemos, EH Bildu and UP websites make available the fewest forms of contact. The Podemos website only offers an email, and a postal address, while EH Bildu and UP only offer an email address. És el Moment does not offer any form of contact.

Most of the 2.0 platforms that the Spanish political parties offer on their sites provide access to their profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. Podemos stands out, as they make available their Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, LinkedIn, Upclose, and Spotify accounts, along with a blog network. PSOE has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, and a blog network, and PNV is present on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+ and a blog network.

The En Comú Podem website, on the other hand, does not offer any medium through which it is possible to share their content.

6.3.2. Elements of variable interactivity

The following chart offers information on other elements of variable interactivity that can be found on the Spanish political parties' websites.

Table 6: Other interactivity elements.

	Discussion forums	Chat rooms	Option to become a member	Online meetings	Comments	Polls
PP	X		X		X	
PSOE	X		X			X
Podemos	X		X			
Ciudadanos	X		X			
En Comú Podem						
És el Moment						
Esquerra			X			
DL						
En Marea					X	
PNV			X			
UP						
EH Bildu					X	
CC			X			X

Source: Own production.

The En Comú Podem, És el Moment, DL and UP websites do not offer any discussion forums, chat rooms, possibility of membership, online meetings, surveys, or ways to write comments on their posts.

Only the PP, PSOE, Podemos, and Ciudadanos websites feature discussion forums. These web pages, together with the ones that belong to Esquerra, PNV and CC, offer information about joining these parties, and provide ways to apply for membership.

PP and En Marea are the only parties that allow users to leave comments on their websites, while PSOE and CC are the only ones that carry out surveys. None of these websites offer chat rooms or online meetings.

6.3. *Update*

As for how the analyzed webpages are updated, it is worth noting that PP and Podemos offer last minute news in the top section of their home pages.

Image 1: Homepage of Partido Popular.

Source: www.pp.es.

These announcements could be found on the PP website on January 26th ("COMUNICADO: EL Comité de Derechos and Garantías del PP suspende de militancia a los afiliados detenidos en Valencia"), January 27th ("EN DIRECTO: Javier Maroto preside la Junta Directiva del PP de Badajoz. A partir de las 18:45 en PP.es"), and February 4th ("Manifiesto: Día Mundial de la Lucha contra el Cáncer").

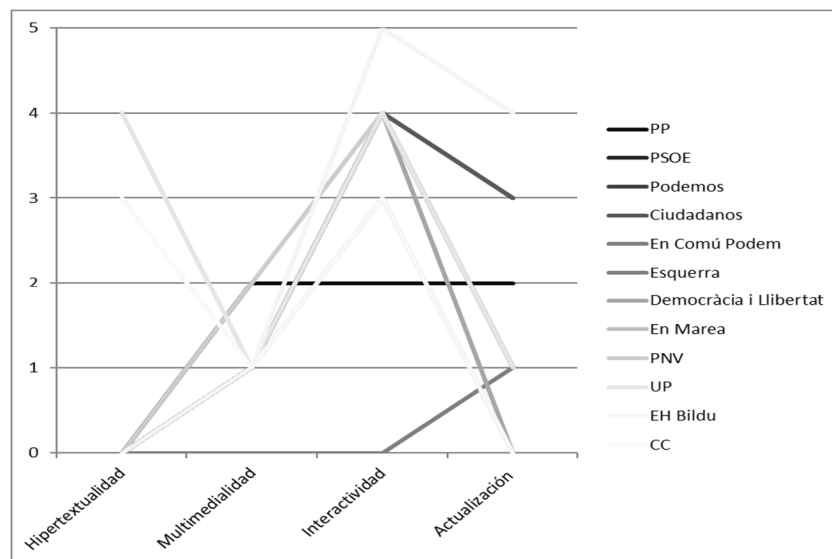**Image 2**: Homepage of Podemos.

Source: www.podemos.info.

In the case of the Podemos website, these announcements were published on February 1st ("Directo –18:30h: Rueda de prensa de Pablo Iglesias desde el Congreso"), and February 5th ("Directo – 14h: Rueda de prensa de Pablo Iglesias tras su encuentro con Pedro Sánchez").

The PNV home page provides access to YouTube Live to stream a variety of content.

The websites that are updated most often are those of EH Bildu (53 posts), Ciudadanos (47 posts), PSOE (36 posts), and PP (32 posts). PNV (17), Esquerra (10), Podemos (9), En Comú Podem (9) and UP (7) also update their websites with relative regularity. DL (3), CC (2) and És el Moment (0), on the other hand, rarely post anything on their web pages.

6.4. *Use of hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity, and updating of published articles*

Figure 5: Evaluation of efficient communication parameters.

Source: Own production.

The websites that have reached the highest score in effective use of interactivity in their posts are the ones that belong to EH Bildu (5), PSOE (4), Podemos (4), Ciudadanos (4), Esquerra (4), DL (4), PNV (4) and UP (4). This feature is also used to a lesser degree by CC (3), En Marea (3), PP (2). En Comú Podem (0) does not make use of this feature.

Hypertextuality is barely used in the posts published on the political parties' sites. With the exception of UP (4) and CC (3), all of the websites got a score of 0 in this aspect.

Regarding multimedia, it is also underused by the websites. Scoring the highest in relation to this characteristic are PP (2) and PNV (2). Most of the sites scored a 1: PSOE, Podemos, Ciudadanos, Esquerra, DL, En Marea, UP, CC and EH Bildu. En Comú Podem (0) does not make use of multimedia at all.

The updating resource is used effectively to a certain extent by EH Bildu (4), PSOE (3) and Ciudadanos' websites (3). PP (2) follows. A lesser degree of usage can be observed in Podemos, En Comú Podem, Esquerra, PNV and UP's websites, which score 1 point for this item. DL, En Marea and CC score 0.

Regarding how much these characteristics are effectively used, two websites at level 3 can be observed: EH Bildu and UP. Then, there are eight at level 2: PP, PSOE, Podemos, Ciudadanos, Esquerra, DL, PNV and CC; and two at level 1: En Comú Podem and En Marea.

Table 7: Total score obtained after evaluation of communicative efficacy parameters.

Political Party/Political Groups/Electoral Roll	Total Score Obtained	Website Level
EH Bildu	10	3
UP	10	3
PSOE	8	2
Ciudadanos	8	2
PP	6	2
Podemos	6	2
Esquerra	6	2
PNV	7	2
CC	7	2
DL	5	2
En Marea	4	1
En Comú Podem	1	1

Source: Own production.

7. Conclusions

Hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating are used to different extents on Spanish political parties' websites.

Hypothesis 1, "Spanish political parties' websites offer links to multimedia resources to supplement the published information" is refuted. This hypothesis is only fulfilled on the websites of PP, PSOE, Ciudadanos, Esquerra, En Marea, PNV, UP, EH Bildu and CC regarding use of pictures. It is only fulfilled in the case of PP regarding motion pictures.

Hypothesis 2, "Spanish political parties' websites take use hypertext effectively, beyond the simplest hypertextual structure" is refuted. This hypothesis is only fulfilled on Unidad Popular and Coalición Canaria's websites.

Hypothesis 3, "Spanish political parties' websites promote interactivity between users and content, allowing for an approach aligned more closely with direct democracy" is refuted. This hypothesis is only fulfilled in the cases of PP, PSOE, Podemos, Ciudadanos, Esquerra, PNV, CC and En Marea, to different degrees.

Hypothesis 4, "Spanish political parties' websites use updating effectively, and renew their content very frequently" is refuted, as this is only true for EH Bildu, Ciudadanos, PSOE, PP and PNV.

The results obtained confirm the absence of tools and resources related to these characteristics on Spanish political parties' websites. The use of hypertext beyond its simplest structure and the use of multimedia elements are scarce. The possibility of interaction between users and political parties is minimal. Published articles and the level of updating of content that these political organizations achieve are insufficient.

This study, centered on the analysis of Spanish political parties' homepages, shows that the use of available elements related to hypertextuality, multimedia, interactivity and updating has been low.

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