

Reality TV as an experimental laboratory for new forms to integrate advertising within generalist DTT channels in Spain

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Abstract

Our study examines the interactions between the forms of advert insertions methods favoured by the latest European standards and by programming flows. This article focuses on the infotainment genre, which displays both a wide variety of forms of advertising and very high rates of advertising saturation, and where the main innovations are occurring in the development of advertising messages. An analysis was conducted over the course of one week of the 2012-2013 season, focusing on the public channels La1, La2 and TV3, and the private channels Antena 3, Telecinco, Cuatro and laSexta. The research technique used was content analysis. The study reveals, among other things, that the weight of innovation falls on the private channels, and that they prioritise those forms of insertion that do not interrupt the flow of the program.

Keywords

Television, advertising, scheduling, infotainment, genres.

Resum

El nostre estudi examina la interacció entre les formes d'inserció de publicitat afavorides per les últimes normatives europees i el flux de programació. Aquest article se centra en els gèneres de l'Info-show, on es donen tant una gran diversitat de formes de publicitat com unes taxes molt altes de saturació publicitària, i on es produeixen les principals innovacions en el desenvolupament de missatges publicitaris. Es va realitzar l'anàlisi d'una setmana de la temporada 2012-2013 dels canals públics La1, La2 i TV3, i dels canals privats Antena 3, Telecinco, Cuatro i laSexta. La tècnica de recerca utilitzada va ser l'anàlisi de contingut. L'estudi revela, entre altres coses, que el pes de la innovació recau sobre els canals privats i que prevalen les formes d'inserció que no interrompen el flux del programa.

Paraules clau

Televisió, publicitat, programació, info-show, gèneres.

1. Introduction

Advert insertion methods in the media have been evolving and adapting to the needs of the audience, technological innovations and the policies of each TV channel. Despite the current communication ecosystem being characterised by digital multicasts, the fact is that today television remains one of the media with the most advertising content (Wilbur 2008) and indisputably the most popular medium for the consumption of entertainment and information, making it the priority channel for most advertisers (Velusamy et al. 2008).

In the context of general and free-to-air television, the major programming phenomenon since the mid-1990s has undoubtedly been the spectacular increase in the range of reality TV shows, included according to the classification of

EUROMONITOR¹ in the infotainment sub-genre (Prado and Delgado 2010). Despite having different purposes, both public and private channels have increased their infotainment ranges, diversifying the genres on offer and investing in constant innovation in a sub-genre that is not only profitable in terms of production costs, but also attracts respectable viewing figures.

Present in all timeslots, but with a special emphasis on primetime, infotainment programmes have become a star attraction of televisual programming (Prado and Delgado 2010) and, with this premise, this investigation analyses the relationship between advertising content and infotainment, dealing with the various forms of advert insertion. Many of them have been incorporated very recently, facilitated in part by the new Audiovisual Communication Services Directive (2010/13/UE) of the 10th March 2010, which abolishes the

Television without Frontiers Directive (DTVSF) and establishes the standards that currently regulate TV advertising in the EU.

This new standard has favoured the expansion of advertising, which is no longer limited to the breaks between programmes, but is now being inserted in various ways which do not necessarily entail the interruption of the programme. This phenomenon, however, has not been extensively dealt with by scientific investigations, and it shall be the focus of our framework. Furthermore, we shall be focusing on Spain, because, amongst other reasons, previous studies show that Spain is the country with the highest advertising saturation indexes in Europe (García-Muñoz et al. 2014).

The main objectives of this investigation are based around establishing the advertising saturation indices during transmission of infotainment programmes, analysing the various advert insertion methods, checking the various publicity genres that are used the most and analysing the reactions between advert insertion methods, publicity genres and the infotainment genres.

2. Advertising and infotainment

2.1 TV advertising – the most effective publicity

Advertising is an indispensable prerequisite to help manufacturers to sell their products. In the current, highly competitive media ecosystem, television continues to be the fastest and most widespread method of publicity, despite its complexity and cost (Shap, Beal and Collins 2009). All of the scientific studies surrounding TV advertising that have been written in recent years concur, and emphasise, that this medium is the dominant player on a worldwide level for advertising expenditure in the third millennium (Ramalingam et al. 2006; Lee, Carpenter and Meyers 2007; Saha, Pal and Pal 2007; Danaher, Dagger and Smith 2011; Vahid Dastjerdi, Davoudi-Mobarakeh and Zare 2012; amongst others). As Shap, Beal and Collins argue: “TV, as a whole, remains the ultimate ‘mass medium’ capable of reaching vast numbers of viewers” (2009, 214). Even in times such as these, battered by the grave global economic crisis, a study by ZenithOptimedia (2009, cited in Danaher, Dagger and Smith 2011) states that when advertisers have to reduce their budgets, the last medium to have its funding cut is television, because companies remain convinced of the efficiency of this medium as a vehicle for publicity.

As such, there are many studies showing the superiority of television advertising in terms of effectiveness, when compared to publicity broadcasts via other methods. Ramalingam et al. sum up the three advantages of advertising via television as follows: “First, it has a great influence on consumers’ taste and perception. Second, it can reach a large audience in a cost-efficient manner. Third, its sound and moving images create a strong impact” (2006, 159). For their part, Lee, Carpenter and Meyers (2007) emphasise the persistence and omnipresence of television when compared to other types of media; and how

that omnipresence in particular plays a fundamental role in shaping the attitudes of television viewers, and consequently, the attitudes of consumers. The study by Vahid Dastjerdi, Davoudi-Mobarakeh and Zare (2012) determines that the efficiency of TV adverts when compared to the written press can be attributed to the former being more persuasive.

As a matter of fact, some studies warn of the need to adapt to the new digital TV advertising environment in order to maintain this effectiveness. Carrillo (2005) states that advertising messages must metamorphose in order to adapt to the interactive possibilities of digital television, pointing out that the challenge facing advertising content is to try not to focus on the “traditional spots”, as these will lose prominence on public television in the near future. It seems clear that advertising content must evolve to find new forms of communication that will grab the attention of television viewers in a highly competitive climate. Accordingly, Arana (2011) points out that there have already been transformations with regard to the costs and characteristics of contemporary television advertising.

Another aspect to take into consideration is that the price of TV advertising is directly related to programme ratings. According to the study carried out by Danaher, Dagger and Smith (2011), the genre of a given programme becomes a key element in determining the viewing figures it can attract. Accordingly, infotainment programmes have become a very appealing genre for advertisers.

2.2 The power of infotainment

In the current post-television era, reality TV shows have become a key part of television programming (Steemers 2004; Nabi 2007; McMurria 2008; Prado and Delgado 2010; Curnutt 2011; amongst others) due to its capacity to attract and retain vast audiences (Waisbord 2004; Hill 2007; amongst others). This demonstrates that, after more than a decade of the reality TV “boom”, this genre is still flourishing (Beck, Hellmueller and Aeschbacher 2012). An example of the strength of this type of programme is the fact that in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain, *Big Brother* has so far run for 17-18 series since its first broadcast in 1999-2000; not to mention the 32 series of *Survivor* that CBS has broadcast since 2000. These ‘reality games’ continue to attract millions of TV viewers, despite their viewing figures having dropped over the years. This phenomenon is not limited to a few specific countries; rather, it has spread worldwide.

One of the most notable aspects of infotainment is the capacity of such programmes to evolve to bring together massive audiences. As stated by Beck, Hellmueller and Aeschbacher: “The overview of the genre further shows that modern reality TV formats are usually hybrids of existing genres. (...) In order to maintain high viewer interest, new combinations and variations are permanently developed: mixing genres is seen as a strategy to reach audiences as large as possible” (2012, 22). The work of these authors makes it clear that the main goal of reality TV is to get its audiences involved, so as to attract advertisers (Beck,

Hellmueller and Aeschbacher 2012, 22). As a matter of fact, a clear example that shows the interest that advertisers have in this type of programme is the fact that since it began in 2002, the talent show *American Idol* has become the most expensive programme on American television, with its last eight seasons having had the highest prices for 30-second advertising slots in the United States (Steinberg 2011).²

Although reality TV is just one of the forms in which the infotainment macro-genre manifests itself on contemporary television, it has always been the main content of the infotainment that has captured the interest of the scientific community, becoming a complex and dynamic field of investigation, due to the enormous scientific diversification it has undergone since the 1990s.³

2.3 Study related to advertising and infotainment

Although televised advertising and infotainment, as objects of study, have long been extensively investigated both in Spain and worldwide, works combining both elements are rare. As such, any specific study of the relationship between the various forms of advert insertion and the programmes in this sub-genre is only just beginning, despite the fact that notable advances have taken place in this regards, essentially limited to English-language scientific literature.

So far, the main analytical perspectives that have been developed focus primarily on content analysis and studies of the consumption of advertising messages broadcast on these television programmes, labelled by the reviewed literature under the terms 'Factual Entertainment' and 'Reality TV'.

In the framework of content analysis, the most relevant work to make a link between advert insertion and infotainment programmes is that undertaken by Derry (2004), who examines the advertising techniques used by more than 40 reality shows broadcast between 2000 and 2003 on American television. For Derry, reality TV programmes have become 'advertainment' spaces, to the point of becoming profitable publicity vehicles in the digital era. In the author's own words:

"Reality TV provides a clear example of commercial culture in which mediation is primarily designed to sell (...). Individuals, experiences, and even the medium itself are repeatedly marketed in a genre whose absorption of direct and indirect forms of selling is currently spearheading a conflation of advertising and entertainment. The result is what the industry refers to as "advertainment", programming designed to sell as it entertains. As "brand content" the shows themselves act as a marketing vehicles in addition to attracting audiences for spot advertisers" (Derry 2004, 1).

Due to the flexibility of the various formats that reality television slots demonstrate, Derry argues that these are the ideal place to experience new alternatives to classic advertising breaks, and multifaceted forms of advertising which are easily avoidable by viewers. Accordingly, there are many scientific works which, when seeking to analyse the phenomena of 'ad-skipping' and

'ad avoidance' (Speck and Elliot 1997; Chowdhury, Finn and Olsen 2007), have suggested that some of the traditional forms of advertising communication are no longer optimal or relevant in the new digital media ecosystem. According to Schweidel and Kent (2010), the "reality" genres show more ad-skipping than other TV genres. Derry's investigation is focused mainly on the analysis of product placement, sponsorship and co-production demonstrated by the programmes selected for the study.

Another aspect that Derry analyses in his investigation is the role that the Internet plays in infotainment. The author points out that another element of interest for advertisers is "the Web as another promotional vehicle (...) to allow synergetic advertainment to span different media" (2004, 8-9). Accordingly, reality TV shows would appear to be an excellent platform for advertisers faced with the current change from single-medium consumption to the consumption of multiple, simultaneous media, meaning that media multitasking by the spectator is channelled via these TV slots, also affecting the advert content that is incorporated. In the cyberspace infotainment environment, advertisers are seeing a route to connect their adverts with the right consumers (Fitzgerald 2003).

The study of product placement in infotainment programmes has attracted the interest of various authors, being one of the most commonly discussed points with regard to the convergence of advert insertion and this macro-genre (Russel 2002; Kaplan 2004; Hudson and Hudson 2006; La Ferle and Edwards 2006; amongst others). In line with the points made by Derry, Kaplan (2004) highlights the ideal nature of reality TV programmes for the insertion of product placements, especially during reality TV contest shows. These allow for improved fusion of marketing and narrative cohesion; the greatest exponent of the exploitation of such integration is the American contest show *Survivor*.⁴ Accordingly, for Kaplan, "the trick to effective product placement on a reality series is to make it seem like the brand just belongs there. That is often easier said than done" (2004, 22). The works of Russell (2002) and Hudson and Hudson (2006) agree on that level; they consider that infotainment shows are well-suited to the product placement advertising technique, as it is possible to integrate a product into the context of a programme in a natural manner.

Another work analysing the publicity messages in this macro-genre is that of Dahlger and College (2001), who carried out an analysis of the content of the adverts broadcast during morning talk shows in the United States with the goal of identifying the key features of the advertising broadcast during the programmes. Albinia (2012) points out that these programmes are very attractive to advertisers due to the loyalty of the viewers.

The investigations that have been carried out within the framework of audience reception studies, with regard to the object of our study, are few and only incipient. Kent and Scheweidel (2011) analyse the audience behaviour during selected types of programmes, including infotainment shows, with the goal of observing how viewing figures fall or rise during

the most expensive advertising timeslots. The works of Edwards (2006) and Patino, Kalcheva and Smith (2011) are centred around the behaviour of adolescents and pre-adolescents with regard to the adverts broadcast during reality TV shows. In the case of Edwards, his study is based exclusively on product placements. For their part, Patino, Kalcheva and Smith conduct a survey of more than 1,098 American subjects aged between 8 and 18 to study the level of connectivity of young television viewers with reality TV programmes to improve the effectiveness of programming decisions, media buying, product placement and the social networking strategies of the programmers and the advertisers.

In summary, the form (that is, the insertion technique) and the type of content that are adopted by advertising messages in reality TV programmes eclipse investigations that seek to link advert insertions with those programmes that fall under the infotainment macro-genre, whilst reception studies are based around the efficiency of the aforementioned publicity messages. Nonetheless, it should be underlined that the existing scientific literature to date demonstrates that this is still unexplored territory. However, some more generalised studies, centred around TV advertising and the new forms of advert insertion (Chowdhury, Finn and Olsen 2007; Steininger and Woelke 2008) have alerted the scientific and business communities to the necessity of implementing studies in this direction.

Accordingly, our work purports to contribute to the generation of empirical knowledge surrounding the study of the new forms of advert insertion that have been developed under the banner of reality TV shows in Spain with the implementation of digital terrestrial television and the new national and European regulatory standards.

3. Methodology

The findings presented in this article are the result of the investigative project "Reality TV: New advertising strategies in European general Digital Terrestrial Television" (CSO2012-39232), financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and carried out by a team from the consolidated investigation group GRISS [*Grup de Recerca en Imatge, So i Síntesi / Image, Sound and Synthesis Investigation Group, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*] (ref. 2009SGR1013). The data refer to the TV programming and advertising messages included in the same, excluding product placement and branded content. In order to obtain these data, we have used the methodological instrument of content analysis, which has been carried out by various codifiers via appropriate evaluation of both the reliability of the multi-coding and the suitability of the categories.

The channels we have taken as our sample are a selection of the Spanish general-purpose channels with the widest audiences, which all existed prior to the introduction of digital terrestrial television: La1, La2, TV3, Antena 3 TV, Telecinco, Cuatro and laSexta.

As has already become the norm for investigating television programming, the dates correspond to a week of programming (in this case, the week of the 14th through the 20th January 2013), of the 2012-2013 season, taking into consideration all the timeslots: morning (7.00-13:30), mid-day (13:30-15:30), dinnertime (15:30-18:00), evening (18:00-20:30), prime time (20:30-22:30) and night (22:30-01:00).

For the classification of television content, we have used a typology developed and previously used by EUROMONITOR, where the genre identification of the program is based on three variables: the macro-genre, genre and micro-genre. A detailed description of this classification system can be found in Prado and Delgado (2010). The typology used for the identification of advertising genres and modalities of insertion corresponds to the categories developed and validated in the CSO2009-12822 and CSO2013 R+D+I projects, which were financed by the Spanish state. The genres contemplated are: accreditation, self-promotion, interactive, endorsement, sponsorship, asynchronous sponsorship, product placement, advertorials, overprinting, spots, telepromotion and teleshopping (Prado (IP) 2009; Delgado et al. 2014; García-Muñoz, Plana and Ferrer 2014). Product placement is excluded from analysis in this article, because a thorough study of this in relation to the selected sample would require a second monograph, to analyse the presence of this advertising genre exclusively and in depth.

We also define different modes of insertion: block, isolated commercials, multiscreen commercials, multiscreen programmes, overprinting, morphing, openings, embedding, credit sequences and virtual embedding (Prado (IP) 2009; Delgado et al. 2014; García-Muñoz, Plana and Ferrer 2014). Furthermore, according to their mode of insertion into the programming flow, we have differentiated between interstitial advertising which forms part of the flow of the transmission, interrupting the delivery of programming content (whether between programmes, or parts of the same), and concealed publicity, which means that which is imposed in synchronisation with the flow of the programme, without interrupting it.

The contents analysed were recorded in the GRISS laboratory with a technological device capable of capturing and storing the original signal with all its features, including its metadata. The resulting programme bank is accessible by the group's researchers through a proprietary network, so that it may be analysed and classified. For data entry, a "TV programming monitor" application has been implemented that allows for the entry of data concerning all the analysis variables relating to programmes and advertising with a high degree of automation, promoting efficiency and minimising errors on the part of the encoders. We then designed and implemented a Business Intelligence System to exploit the information contained in the application "TV programming monitor", using the Oracle Business Intelligence tool.

4. Results

4.1 Infotainment in Spanish TV schedules

The range of programmes on Spanish general-purpose television is based primarily on factual, fiction and infotainment (representing 86.6% of total programming time) broadcasts, with the other macro-genres having a minority presence. This policy of programming, with an extreme focus on these three macro-genres, occurs equally in public and private channels, although the strategy decisions are quite different. While public channels commit very prominently to broadcasting factual programmes, in the case of the private channels the range of the three main macro-genres is much more similar. In the case of infotainment, this is clearly the television content of choice for private channels (see Table 1).

In the case of genre distribution, Spanish operators mainly offer docu-soaps, talk shows and reality shows, with these three accumulating between them 84% of the time allotted to the infotainment range. With regard to the genres that have the greatest presence, we should highlight satirical current-events programmes and 'reality games' (see Table 2), whose on-screen presence is very uneven throughout the season, due mainly to the broadcast routine that characterise this genre and entail high-output broadcast periods, followed by "rest" periods between two distinct reality games.

Genre differences between the infotainment range of public channels and that of private channels are obvious. In the case of public channels, these focus their basic range on documentary and interview programmes. Documentaries with plotlines linking their chapters (docu-soaps) and interviews are formats that were not scheduled on the private channels during the period studied. However, it is indisputable that private channels offer a more diverse infotainment range, which attests that the range of this macro-genre, on private television in Spain, is not only much larger in quantitative terms than on public television, but also much richer.

4.2 Infotainment advertising saturation

The rate of advertising saturation during broadcasts of infotainment programmes in Spain is very high, exceeding the time intended for the broadcasting of advertisements at the time of the program. This circumstance is partly explained by the fact that all forms of advert insertion are counted, whether they interrupt the program flow (interstitial advertising) or occur during the broadcast (concealed advertising).

Ownership of a given channel is a key factor here. Much of this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that our sample contains two RTVE channels (TVE1 and La2) that do not broadcast advertising. As such, the advertising saturation rates on the private channels (especially Antena 3, Telecinco and Cuatro) are much higher than those of the public channels (see Table 3).

When analysing advertising saturation for the infotainment genre, the court show genre is where the advertising saturation

Table 1. Description of programming structure

Programming structure	Total	Public channels	Private channels
Factual	47.9%	65.9%	34.5%
Fiction	25.2%	21.9%	27.6%
Infotainment	13.5%	0.9%	23.0%
Contests	4.2%	3.1%	5.1%
Shows	2.7%	1.3%	3.8%
Sports	2.0%	1.5%	2.4%
Children	1.8%	-	3.1%
Others	1.3%	2.3%	0.5%
Education	0.8%	1.9%	-
Religion	0.4%	1.0%	-
Youth	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%

Source: Authors using Euromonitor data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 2. Infotainment breakdown by genre

Gèneres de l'Info-show	Total	Canals públics	Canals privats
Docu-series	37.1%	67.1%	36.2%
Talk shows	32.5%	-	33.4%
Reality shows	14.4%	-	14.8%
Current-events satire	6.4%	-	6.6%
Reality games	6.2%	-	6.4%
Court show	2.6%	-	2.6%
Docu-soaps	0.5%	18.3%	-
Interviews	0.4%	14.6%	-

Source: Authors using Euromonitor data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 3. Infotainment advertising distribution

Advertising vs. programme content	Total	Public channels	Private channels
Programme content time	48.6%	95.8%	47.2%
Advertising time	51.4%	4.2%	52.8%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 4. Infotainment advertising distribution by channel

Advertising vs. programme content	Public channels			Private channels			
	La1	La2	TV3	Antena 3	laSexta	Telecinco	Cuatro
Programme content time	99.5%	99.0%	79.6%	38.1%	76.1%	33.5%	38.5%
Advertising time	0.5%	1.0%	20.4%	61.9%	23.9%	66.5%	61.5%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 5. Infotainment advertising distribution by channel by genre

Infotainment genre	Programme time	Advertising time
Documentaries	62,89%	37,11%
Talk shows	37,46%	62,54%
Reality shows	30,75%	69,25%
Current-events satire	64,67%	35,33%
Reality games	53,68%	46,32%
Court shows	15,14%	84,86%
Docu-soaps	79,6%	20,4%
Interviews	99,0%	1,0%

Source: Authors using Euromonitor data from project CSO2012-39232.

is higher, with a rate of nearly 85% of broadcasting time (see Table 4). With values of around 60% of broadcasting time, reality shows and talk shows also have very high rates of advertising saturation. Unsurprisingly, from this data it can be seen that the infotainment genres broadcast by the public channels (docu-soaps and interviews) have the highest advertising saturation.

4.3 Concealed vs interstitial publicity

The study reveals that one of the major phenomena of new forms of advertising insertion in infotainment programmes is concealed advertising, i.e. advertising which occurs without interrupting the programme (see Table 6). Accordingly, we can observe that concealed advertising almost exactly duplicates the figures for interstitial advertising and in addition, we should emphasize the importance of concealed advertising for private channels, as it accounts for 65% of the advertising broadcast during infotainment programming.

Although forms of inserting advertising messages into programming content are still being explored, the results essentially point to two methods of insertion: overprinting and multi-screen. In the first case, this is the form that self-promotion essentially takes, and it involves the promotion of the image of the channel or of other proprietary television content. On the other hand, TV spots can be broadcast without interrupting the programme via the multi-screen method (see Table 7).

The joint broadcast of program content and advertising content (trademark, self-promotional or both at once) make for

Table 6. Interstitial advertising and concealed advertising

Advertising vs. programme content	Total	Public channels	Private channels
Advertising time	51.4%	4.2%	52.8%
Interstitial	35%	92%	35%
Concealed	65%	8%	65%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 7. Distribution of concealed advertising, by advert genre

Insertion method	Advertising genre	Time
Multi-screen	Self-promotion	3.8%
	Overprinting	0.7%
	TV spot	95.5%
Overprinting	Self-promotion	98.7%
	Endorsement	1.3%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 8. Distribution of interstitial advertising, by insertion method

Insertion method	Time
Isolated advert	2.6%
Block	96.3%
Openings	0.2%
Morphing	0.3%
Credit sequences	0.4%
Others	0.2%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

very cluttered screens and ultimately constitute a very intrusive experience for the viewer, as can be observed in the following examples:

If we take into consideration only those adverts that occur between programmes, the most common form of insertion during infotainment broadcasts is the classic commercial break. Amongst the less commonly used forms of interstitial advert insertion, we can highlight another classic form of insertion in the schedules of general-purpose TV stations, such as the isolated advert (see Table 8).

Image 1. Advert shown without interruption during the programme *Sálvame* (Save Me) (Telecinco)

Method of insertion: Overprinting.



Source: Screen capture, 2012-13 season.

Image 2. Advert shown without interruption during the programme *El Hormiguero* (The Anthill) (Antena 3)

Method of insertion: Multi-screen.



Source: Screen capture, 2012-13 season.

4.4 Advertising genres and its methods of insertion into infotainment

With regard to the distribution of publicity genres by channel during infotainment broadcasts, the results obtained reveal a majority presence of self-promotion across all the channels analysed, with this accounting for 100% of airtime in the case of the RTVE corporation, on account of its carrying no commercial advertising, as explained previously (see Table 9).

Remaining in the sphere of public ownership, the independent Catalan channel TV3 is characterised by a preference for TV spots over self-promotion, a fact which makes it an oddity in the landscape of Spanish TV.

As for private channels, self-promotion seems to be the publicity method *par excellence* during reality TV broadcasts, albeit with less dynamism in the case of laSexta. TV spots fall far behind. Any other genres are present as minorities only, although it is worth noting the presence of sponsorship on laSexta, and teleshopping on Cuatro.

Regarding the breakdown of advertising by insertion method, there is a clear correlation, as we have already seen, between

insertion methods and advertising genres. As such, TV3 would be the most traditional channel, with a high presence of blocks (see Table 10). In the case of private channels, with the exception of laSexta, there is a clear correspondence between the prominence of overprinting (which is an optimal self-promotion method) and, to a lesser extent, the block, as a classic form of advert insertion. On laSexta, for this same reason, we see a higher incidence of ad breaks (blocks), which is in line with the fact that it also had the highest percentage of advertising spots out of all the genres present in infotainment.

The correlation between publicity genres and advertising message insertion methods may be intuited from the previous isolated results, and it is only confirmed when we examine these two variables in relation to each other (see Table 11). The isolated advert is used for various advertising genres, especially endorsement (56.4%), whereby a product or brand is alluded to in an isolated manner during the course of a programme. In the same way, the isolated advert is also an ideal method for telepromotion. As for advert blocks, the genre *par excellence* is the conventional TV spot (70.3%) and,

Table 9. Breakdown of advertising genres in infotainment

Publicity genre	Total	Public channels			Private channels			
		La1	La2	TV3	Antena 3	Telecinco	laSexta	Cuatro
Self-promotion	71.1%	100%	100%	21.1%	76.9%	71.6%	53.9%	79.8%
Sponsorship	0.4%	-	-	14.8%	0.5%	0.2%	1%	0.3%
Asynchronous sponsorship	0.01%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%
TV spots	24.7%	-	-	64.1%	21.3%	25%	41.1%	13.5%
Endorsement	1.5%	-	-	-	0.6%	2.4%	0.1%	-
Overprinting	0.0%	-	-	-	0.1%	0.03%	-	-
Telepromotion	0.6%	-	-	-	0.5%	0.2%	3.8%	0.1%
Teleshopping	1.5%	-	-	-	-	0.5%	-	6.4%
Accreditation	0.1%	-	-	-	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	-

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 10. Breakdown of advert insertion methods in infotainment

Insertion method	Total	Public channels			Private channels			
		La1	La2	TV3	Antena 3	Telecinco	laSexta	Cuatro
Isolated adverts	0.9%	-	-	7.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.6%	-
Blocks	33.0%	-	-	92.7%	13.0%	30.4%	65.4%	25.0%
Morphing	0.07%	-	-	-	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.18%
Multi-screen	0.7%	-	-	-	10.7%	-	0.2%	-
Overprinting	65.3%	100%	100%	-	75.0%	68.5%	32.8%	74.7%
Credit sequences	0.01%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%
Openings	0.02%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.02%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

Table 11. Breakdown of advert insertion methods, by advert genre

Advert genre	Insertion methods							
	Isolated advert	Block	Opening sequences	Morphing	Multi-screen	Overprinting	Credit sequences	Unassigned
Self-promotion	7.1%	19%	23.8%	29.8%	3.8%	98.8%	-	4.5%
Sponsorship	5.2%	0.9%	7.5%	-	-	-	-	-
TV spots	-	70.3%	-	39.5%	95.5%	-	-	22.5%
Accreditation	9%	-	-	-	-	-	7.8%	-
Endorsement	56.4%	0.7%	-	-	-	1.2%	-	-
Overprinting	1.5%	-	-	-	0.7%	-	-	-
Telepromotion	20.8%	1.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teleshopping	-	4.4%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Signposting	3.0%	3.5%	68.7%	30.7%	-	-	92.2%	73.0%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

although it falls some way behind, self-promotion (18.9%) is in second place. In the case of the opening sequence method, this is more significantly relevant and as is obvious with signposting, which essentially refers to indicating which channel is being publicised by the broadcast content that follows (or is between two opening sequences), although it is also used for other, such as self-promotion (23.8%). Morphing employs increasingly sophisticated ways to partially transform the channel logo to that of the product being advertised, and is shared across the TV spot (39.5%), signposting (30.7%) and self-promotion (29.8%) genres. Multi-screens are associated with TV spots (95.5%), as they mainly involve the unequal division of the screen between the programme content (which continues uninterrupted) and the

advert. Overprinting is almost entirely linked to self-promotion (98.7%), just as credit sequences are to signposting (92.2%).

4.5 The self-promotion phenomenon

Self-promotion has proven to be one of the dominant publicity genres for broadcasting advertising content during transmission of infotainment programmes in Spain. For this reason, we have investigated the various types of self-promotion found in the sample, according to the products advertised. To this end, we have started by using the classifications proposed by the Promax⁹ Spanish Self-Promotion Festival (2011) where self-promotions differ according to their creativity, production quality and results. The typology resulting from this system of

Table 12. Breakdown of self-promotion by product promoted

Type of self-promotion	Frequency	Percentage
Infotainment programme promos	445	4.6%
Brand / corporate image promos	62	5.8%
Sports promos	65	6.1%
Drama / serial promos	493	46.1%
Total	1,070	100.0%

Source: Authors with data from project CSO2012-39232.

classification can be summarised by the following categories: brand promos, sports, themes, events, films, series, reality or informative documentaries (Pérez 2014).

In general, self-promotions made during infotainment broadcasts are promoted more or less equally with other programs belonging to the same macro-genre and drama serials (see Table 12). Sports programmes are promoted to a much lesser extent, or in simpler cases it is just the proprietary brand or corporate image of the channel or station that is advertised.

5. Conclusions

The principal objective of this investigation was to perform an in-depth study of how broadcasters and advertisers insert advertising into infotainment programmes on Spanish general-purpose channels. The results have exposed various insights into television advertising with regard to reality TV. Indeed, the results show a scenario where we have two public channels with no commercial advertising, a regional channel employing more conservative advertising practices during infotainment broadcasts, and some private channels that not only feature the most infotainment, but also base their strategies on improved innovation in the advertising insertion field during broadcasts.

One of the main conclusions is with reference to advertising saturation. Accordingly, we can observe a relationship between airtime devoted to programming and airtime devoted to publicity, where publicity exceeds content. This extreme, which seems incredible, is due to the phenomenon of concealed publicity, meaning a type of advert insertion which allows the advert and the programme to be on-screen at the same time. Ultimately, advert broadcasting time has increased, even exceeding the broadcast times of programmes with no advertising, thanks to the fact that it can be done in this synchronous form. This undoubtedly proves itself to be one of the greatest phenomena emerging from the new advert insertion methods used on general-purpose television. Broadcasters and advertisers, in their quest to retain audiences during advertising broadcasts, are opting for various methods which, ultimately, fall more or less within the bounds of current legislation.

The forms adopted by this concealed advertising are, for the most part, overprinting and multi-screens. The first of these is used mainly for self-promotion, and in the case of the second, the advertisers 'gate-crash' the programmes and insert the advertisement without hindering the display of the programme

content. These advert insertion practises, which, it could be said, are more intrusive, have caused the self-promotion advertising genre to take on great prominence in broadcasts of infotainment programmes on Spanish TV, overtaking standard TV spot adverts.

Private channels tend to use similar publicity strategies to each other, due to the majority use of self-promotion, closely followed by TV spots. In an increasingly competitive climate, promotion of proprietary programmes of channel brand images is becoming absolutely vital. This has been clearly understood by Spanish broadcasters, who transmit large quantities of self-referential messages. Furthermore, self-promotion mainly takes the form of overprinting, meaning that the phenomenon of concealed advertising, together with large doses of self-promotion, is feeding back on itself, ultimately resulting in a highly intrusive consumer experience, but what has still not been properly assessed is how exactly it affects reception.

State public channels definitely share a tendency to use self-promotion, while independent public channels bank on a wider range of genres, albeit concentrating highly on traditional methods such as TV spots inserted into classic blocks.

Ultimately, the study reveals that experimentation with different forms of advert insertion in Spanish infotainment programmes is taking place and, although in some cases the incidence of these forms is not very high, the fact that even a minimal percentage exists demonstrates an increased diversity of televisual advertising formats. The inherent nature of reality TV programmes, especially those belonging to the more dynamic genres such as reality games or the various types of documentary frameworks, offers broadcasters and advertisers an optimal scenario to try out new forms of advertising insertion.

Notes

1. *EUROMONITOR* is a permanent European television observatory created by a group of European researchers (Paolo Baldi, Ian Connel, Claus Dieter Rath and Emili Prado) with the support of the VQPT department at RAI and active since 1989. Up until 1995, its base of operations was in Ginebra, and then as of that date, it moved to the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, where it operates under the direction of Emili Prado, the Professor of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising. The headquarters team also includes, as national report coordinators, professors Matilde Delgado, Núria García-Muñoz, Gemma Larrègola and Belén Monclús.

2. Although after eleven series the ratings of this reality TV contest are starting to decline, and it currently shares the distinction of being the most expensive programme with the sports programme *Sunday Football*, it continues to be an advertising giant for North American advertisers (Steinberg 2011).
3. For a detailed review of the most relevant searches with regard to the Factual Entertainment and Reality TV in the last decade, see Beck, and Hellmueller Aeschbacher (2012).
4. It should be pointed out that Kaplan also refers to other reality TV shows such as *Extreme Makeover: Home edition*, *Big Brother* or *Fear Factor*.
5. Promax (2011): <http://promaxbda.org>

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