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The communications market and journalism students. Structure of the demand for journalism job profiles

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Abstract

Introduction. This article presents the results of one of the first phases of a wider research study carried out by the MediaCom research group of the Complutense University of Madrid, as part of a Teaching innovation and quality improvement project (PIMCD, nº 176) focused on examining Spanish media companies' demand for professional journalists, based on the job market typology, and the conditions of employment. **Method.** The study applied the Tuning method during the initial design and offers a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data on undergraduate journalism students' internship contracts provided by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre of the Complutense University of Madrid. **Results and conclusions.** The results allow us to conclude, for example, that writing is the most valued journalistic ability and that the sector that demands the largest number of journalism students is the public and private institutions sector, followed by the daily written press.

Keywords

Professional profile in Journalism; media management; journalists' work placement; journalism internships.

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Translation by **CA Martínez Arcos**, Ph.D. (Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas)

1. Introduction

What professional profiles do information companies require? How can we help journalism students to position themselves better in this complex labour context? These are two of the main research questions in the main lines of work of the *Research and Learning of Media and Communications Management* group of the Complutense University of Madrid (aka MediaCom UCM) [1]. This article presents part of the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data provided by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre of the Complutense University of Madrid.

In this first phase, the study is based on verifiable official data regarding the dynamics of participation of journalism students doing work experience internships in information companies that have decided, as part of their corporate philosophy, to recruit interns through the organisms implemented by the various universities. In this case, the Complutense University of Madrid uses its Employment Information and Guidance Centre. The study is in line with the studies carried out by the MediaCom UCM in relation to the job profiles demanded by companies and the future employability of students of any of the communication specialties.

(<http://www.ccinf.es/mediacom/index.php/es/investigacion/lineas-de-investigacion>).

Based on these official data we can draw conclusions that can serve to design more appropriate strategies to improve the work placement of students in companies, and to identify initiatives that can increase their employability and, even, entrepreneurship.

Another objective is to provide data on the training needs of students and on how to reconcile it with the qualities and skills required by the job market. In other words, the objective is to determine how we can improve the training of students with more and/or better internships, with the creation of collaborative work environments in the classroom and with the development of skills needed to manage equipment used in the profession of journalism, such as TV equipment, studios and labs.

This last issue is a particularly important challenge for some higher education institutions, like the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid, to which the aforementioned research group belongs, since it regularly works with large numbers of students (just under a hundred). However, since the opening of the new degree programmes, all departments highlight the importance of practical training, by giving it priority in the different courses and promoting the participation of students in the internships offered by information companies, despite it not being a curricular activity, as it occurs in most private universities.

Despite the bad image that some sectors sometimes want to give to public higher education institutions, there are objective data, like those provided by *Barómetro Universidad-Sociedad 2014*, that show that there are many good reasons for enrolment in any of these institutions. On this occasion, in the Complutense University of Madrid, during the 2013-2014 academic year, some of these reasons have been its academic excellence (32.8%) and its offer of academic degrees (28.5%). Information science students constituted 9.2% of the total sample (Ortiz, Peinado & Zapata, 2014).

How can we combine companies' demands with what students offer during their internship? It is essential to design model of active acquisition of skills and capabilities for professional performance, as well as to improve coordination and guidance mechanisms and quality control systems. Since it is very likely that communication students, particularly those in bachelor's degrees in journalism, will begin their career through the internships offered by their university, it is important for researchers and professors to also contemplate the possibility of establishing mechanisms that prevent abusive internships, the substitution of real job positions and the use of students for unpaid labour disguised as an agreement with an educational centre.

The objectives of this phase of the research are detailed in the methods section, but can be summarised here by way of introduction.

- Quantify the companies that offer internships in journalism through the Employment Information and Guidance Centre of Complutense University of Madrid.
- Classify the types of internships in offer.
- Develop a remuneration table.
- Develop a map of the internships offered by companies.
- Identify the job profiles currently demanded from students.
- Identify new professional profiles.

2. State of the art review

The literature review for this article begins with the evident overcrowding in journalism degrees, which has not changed in the history of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid. Perhaps the ratio has improved slightly, but the problems in terms of financial resources and lack of personnel have prevailed since two decades ago (Humanes & Roses, 2014), and have been worsened in the last five years by the economic crisis (Palacio -APM-, 2013). On the other hand, it can be affirmed that the accreditation and quality evaluation systems implemented in schools and degree programmes have highlighted the work of teachers and institutions concerned with increasing the value of university education and have encouraged the part-time incorporation of professionals as teachers, which provides highly prestigious experience.

The Spanish university system is composed of 83 universities: 49 of them public, 32 private and 2 public and international (UNIA and UIMP) (<http://www.universidad.es>). The review of the information offered by each of these universities about their degree programmes and services, indicates that all of the public universities have a guidance and information centre. Of the 32 private universities, 20 have this type of centre recognised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and

Sports; while 9 have articulated a similar service and 3 have offices with other denominations or slightly different functions. Thus, IE Universidad has a *Career Management Centre* (CMC) that, according to information provided by students, provides support to improve their employability and provides contacts with employers. The International University of La Rioja (UNIR) offers as part of its student services the *Proyecto UNIR Emprande* (“Entrepreneurship UNIR Project”), which supports entrepreneurs and spin-offs run by students. For its part, the International University of Catalonia also offers the “coaching and advice” service to students.

The functions of the Employment Information and Guidance Centre in private universities and that of the aforementioned similar orientation centres are different from the functions performed by these centres in public institutions.

Ideally, private universities include internship in bachelor’s degree studies as curricular activities, and as part of their appeal to attract prospect students and demonstrate quality and competitiveness. Regardless of what they achieve, with this design the Employment Information and Guidance Centre and similar centres perform more the role of job placement adviser once students have finished their studies than other complementary functions.

On the other hand, the public university includes internships as curricular activities only in the case of postgraduate studies, never in graduate studies, mainly due to the aforementioned overcrowding issues. That is why the Employment Information and Guidance Centre become the site of reference for students when they want to do their internship. As we will see in this article, it can also be argued that the number of internships in offer is fairly balanced with the demand.

This work is not about the work training that takes place in classrooms and the problems to articulate it, although this is a very important aspect in the training of students and, therefore, in the areas that will be tested professionally in the workplace. The reason for this is that, at this time, the research project of the MediaCom UCM aims to transfer results to stimulate the job market of journalists and communicators by providing information about employers, not to review the state of teaching in our specialties, although internships contents have been developed in most taught courses.

The focus on this occasion is exclusively on the companies and institutions that have declared, through the signing of collaboration agreements with Complutense University of Madrid and, more specifically, with the School of Information Sciences, their willingness to participate in the training of journalism students through the offering of non-curricular internship in their workplace, assuming joint responsibility with the University. By describing the jobs in offer, we can identify the advantages and disadvantages of students to deal with daily work and also to define the best way to support students with training, understanding that the training of communication professionals in a conscious and healthy society always begins at the university, but also that it is the inescapable responsibility of companies and institutions where these professionals develop their careers and training throughout their life.

Internships are considered a strategic activity in the context of the growing importance of the employability factors recognised as fundamental in the learning of professional performance (Marhuenda Fluixá, Bernard García & Navas Saurin, 2010). At first sight it seems that the provision of internships by public universities during postgraduate studies should wait because, as suggested

above, this could induce students to make bad choices when selecting master's degrees if what they seek is a totally professional approach. In fact, only four of the nine official master's degree programmes offered by the School of Information Sciences offer internships or mediation to get internships in leading companies in the communications sector, since the focus of the other five is completely academic and scientific. In the case of the 15 degrees dependent on the Centre, the situation is different: only three of the 15 in offer plan their internships internally, while in the rest this is done in collaboration with different leading companies.

In Spain, it was the universities themselves who years ago initiated relations with companies to contribute to the incorporation of students to the labour market (López-García, 2010; Montoro-Sánchez, Mora-Valentín & Ortiz-of-Urbina-Criado, 2012; Vadillo, Marta & Cabrera, 2010; Vadillo & Pérez, 2011). However, it seems that not enough limits have been set to the roles that students must fulfil during their internship in the business environment and, as it always occurs in professions of vocational nature, the market has been perverting this figure and has created substitutes that do not benefit the quality of professional jobs or students. In fact, 22% of college students work without any contract, and this percentage increased eight points in comparison to 2013 (GAD3 Consultores, 2014) when regulated internships enable the incorporation of students with very low costs for companies (Ortiz, Peinado & Zapata: 2014) and vocation is no good-enough justification, at least for the data observed for this article.

In recent years, the MediaCom UCM research group has carried out studies to learn more about journalism students from the Community of Madrid (Ortiz Sobrino, Rodríguez Barba & Pérez Serrano, 2011), about their motivations and even their perceptions of the new degrees in the EHEA (Peinado & Fernández Sande, 2011; and Ortiz Sobrino, 2012). These studies clearly show new possibilities for the development of what is assumed as the vocation of students, which has little to do with the type of companies where they carry out their internship, sometimes without any remuneration. New media pave the way, but have not defined their position when establishing relations with the university in this regard and open possibilities of entrepreneurship and self-employment (Paniagua Rojano, Gómez Aguilar & González Cortés, 2014; Casero Ripollés & Cullel-March 2013).

Finally, it is necessary to talk about the labour environment of the journalistic profession, although the information collected during 2012 and 2013 is somewhat extraordinary because during this time there were layoffs that affected a large number of workers.

According to the National Public Employment Service of Spain (SEPE), in September 2013 there were 10,560 unemployed journalists, 1% more than in 2012, which is a small increase, fortunately, given that since the beginning of the crisis, the registered unemployment of journalists has increased by 132%. Of the unemployed journalists, 6,661 (63%) are women and 3,899 (37%) are men. By autonomous communities, Andalusia, Catalonia and Madrid contain 56% of the unemployed journalists.

Up until the publication of this article, the Press Association of Madrid had not released its new results on the state of the journalistic profession, but it is worth making reference to some figures included in its 2013 report. In terms of increase in unemployment of journalists between 2008 and 2013, Asturias is at the top with an 389% increase, followed by Castile-La Mancha with 354%, La

Rioja (331%), Murcia (284%), Ceuta and Melilla (275%), Aragon (223%), Extremadura (186%), Castile and León (179%), Valencia and Galicia (173% each), Andalusia (164%), Navarre (147%), Canary Islands (143%), Balearic Islands (106%), Catalonia (102%), Madrid (96%), Basque Country (90%) and Cantabria (84%). In addition, in 2012, 2,909 new journalists and 2,107 new audiovisual communicators obtained their license. In other words, there are 5,016 new professionals who on many occasions compete in the same labour market (APM, 2013).

As the above data suggest, the Community of Madrid and, particularly, the School of Information Sciences, for being the largest university centre that offers this type of studies, are excellent areas to develop research lines as those that justify this work.

3. Methods and boundaries

In relation to the epistemological basis of this research, it should be noted that, as in any other field, there are several studies that have been carried out on some of the issues analysed in this article. In this regard, an essential basis for the development of this study is the academic and research activity of the *Research and Learning of Media and Communications Management* group (MediaCom UCM), which, from the outset and through several projects (finance by the Transfer of Research Results Office, OTRI), has kept in mind that the goal of communication schools is to train graduates (Peinado, 2011) and qualified media users, beyond the simple technical vision; and the idea that a solid analytical approach about the economic-informative structures underpinning the communications market will result in significant synergies between the university and its surroundings and, above all, in the development of professionals in this sector.

Spector (1982) has pointed out that “anyone who studies the results of the research of others, should know the principles of their design in order to be able to make reasonable judgements based on such research”. To meet this request, we will examine some particular and essential aspects of this design.

Since the point is to find out what communications companies require to facilitate journalism students’ entry to the complex job market and design the optimal profile that combines the interests and competencies of both, students and employers, this research is based on data provided by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre of the Complutense University of Madrid. In particular, the data on the internship contracts signed by students of the School of Information Sciences between 10 January 2012 and 22 December 2013. These periods correspond to the internships that started from 10 January 2012 to 1 October 2013 and ended from 27 July 2012 to 14 July 2014, which roughly covers the last two academic years: 2012/2013 and 2013/2014.

The choice of these contracts and periods to establish our universe of study lies in the reliability of the document provided by the Complutense University of Madrid and in the fact that these periods are the most recent. Our research is part of the Teaching innovation and quality improvement project (PIMCD) titled “What journalism students need to enter the job market. Analysis of the demands of the communications labour market” (reference number: 176), directed by Professor Fernando Peinado. This project is interdepartmental but is directed by the MediaCom UCM group and the Journalism Department IV (Media management) of the Complutense University of Madrid.

Table 1: Basic data

Geographical scope	Madrid	
Centre	School of Information Sciences	
	Complutense University of Madrid (UCM)	
Data collection method	Type	Internship contracts
	Source	COIE. Internships and employment (UCM)
Sample size	1,396 contracts	
	1,386 valid contracts	
Fieldwork dates	May-July 2014	
Companies	442	
Destinations	87	
Professional roles	2,219	
Errors	+- 1.5 people	

Source: authors' own creation

As shown in the previous table, the field work was conducted from May to July 2014 and was based on 1,386 valid internship contracts corresponding to the same number of students, representing 34.65% of the average number of students with the possibility to do internships (i.e., enrolled at that time in the third and fourth years) and enrolled in the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid during those two academic years (2012/2013 and 2013/2014). Here it is important to note that the most common student profile doing internships in the School of Information Sciences (mode=M) is a 21-year-old woman.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Sex	Male	39.10%
	Female	60.90%
Age	20 years	15.04%
	21 years	42.86%
	22 years	16.54%
	23 years	10.53%
	24 years or older	13.53%
	Did not answer	1.50%

Source: authors' own creation

The project on which this article is based had the following objectives:

- O1. Quantify and establish the offer of companies that, through the Employment Information and Guidance Centre, offer internships to information sciences students.
- O2. Establish the typology of internships in order to know what companies demand and the jobs students can find after they graduate.
- O3. Develop a table of average salaries based on the analysed parameters to obtain a reliable indicator of the payments the market offers to graduates.
- O4. Observe the coverage of the business demand to draw a map of the companies' demand of journalism students and future professionals from the Complutense University of Madrid.
- O5. Identify what basic skills are being requested by media companies to the future graduates.
- O6. Identify, analyse and present the new professional profiles that media companies are demanding.

Based on these objectives we formulated the following set of hypotheses:

H1. On the “labour market and companies”:

The media companies that offer more internships are those whose business line is linked to the written press.

H2. On the “locations”:

The area of influence of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid corresponds to the most common destinations for internships.

H3. On the “characteristics of the demand”:

The common characteristics of internships correspond with the following parameters: about three months in duration, developed during the summer and with low pay.

In order to corroborate -or not- our “conjectural statements” (Kerlinger & Lee, 2002) the design of the project was based on a particular method: the Tuning method, which “serves to develop comparable and compatible professional profiles and learning results; facilitates employment, by promoting transparency in educational structures (comparable and easy-to-read degrees, and develops a common language understood by all stakeholders (higher education sector and businessmen)” (CCT, 2005). In addition, we selected the hypothetical-deductive method to present the results based on its clarity and intellectual rigour, with an observable and outstanding weight of the quantitative method.

As mentioned, data was obtained from the internship contracts managed by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre of Complutense University of Madrid. With these data we produced a multivariate database divided into five blocks: “record number”, “contract and parties involved”, “academic requirements”, “characteristics of the position” and “professional profiles on demand”.

To make coding easy and classifiable, we developed a thesaurus, which, at the same time, coincided with one of the “target” groups included in the Tuning method, i.e. companies (the other two groups are students and teachers). The summary of this thesaurus is presented in the following table, which compares the taxonomies which we developed based on the theoretical and conceptual approach of the media company, and the encodings of the National Classifications of Economic Activities of Spain (NACE) and the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). In this way, classifications are clarified and the synergies and knowledge transfer between the University and the market are easy.

Table 3: Typology of media companies (national and international classification)

Classification in this research			National and international classification	
All	Sector	Type of media company	CNAE 2009. (Royal Decree 475/2007, of 13 April, which approves the National Classification of Economic Activities 2009)	Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). Partly replaced by the more modern NAICS (<i>North American Industry Classification System</i>)
Traditional media (news and journalism)	1	Press	58.1	22
		Newspapers	58.13	2212
		Magazines	58.14	2213
	2	Radio	60.10	4832
	3	Television	60.20	4833
	4	News agencies	63.91	7351
Communication and advertising sector	5	Communication agencies	70.21	4899
	6	Advertising agencies	73.11	7311
	7	Companies in the advertising sector	73	7319
	8	Public and private institutions		
		(Local) public administration	84	9121
	Associational activities	94	99	

Source: authors' own creation

The analytic proposal has two limits: a temporal or chronological one, since we focused on two academic years, and a methodological one, since the study was based on in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs/employers and surveys to students. In this way, we closed the analytical circle and the results would offer, in addition to trends, extrapolated conclusions. Still, the most outstanding feature of this research is perhaps that, thanks to important volume of data it uses, the trends are almost representative.

4. Analysis and results

As mentioned, this article presents partial results of a wider research study that aims to outline the job market and the conditions of employment offered to journalism students from the Complutense University of Madrid to do their internship. The analysis of the obtained results is structured according to the following items, which are considered key to reach the objective:

- Job market
 - Business sector.
 - Company.
- Geographical distribution in the job market of students in internships.
- Terms and conditions of employment.
 - Duration and workload.
 - Remuneration.
 - Functions.

4.1. Job market

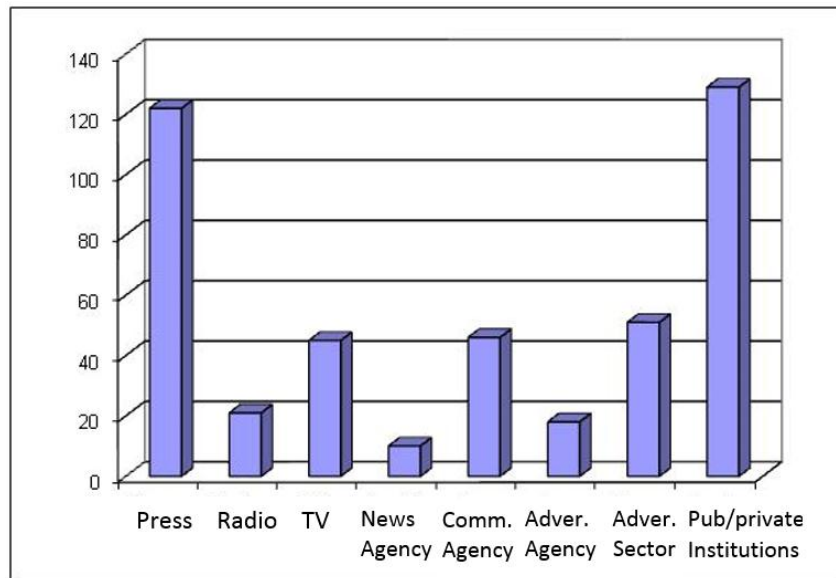
After studying the journalism students' internship records held by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre, we identified 442 business descriptors [2] as bidders of internship contracts. In order to examine the professional area that affects students in the course of their training, the data obtained are articulated according to two subsections: business sectors and companies. According to the quantitative analysis carried out in the field study, the descriptive narrative presents sectors and companies according to the rate of students they receive, which is qualitatively justified.

4.1.a. Business sectors

The results suggest that the sectors more likely to receive young journalists in training are public or private institutions and the press.

Followed, but far behind, by companies in the advertising sector, communication agencies and television companies, and, finally, by radio, advertising agencies and information agencies, which are, in decreasing order, the sectors that offer less training places to journalism students.

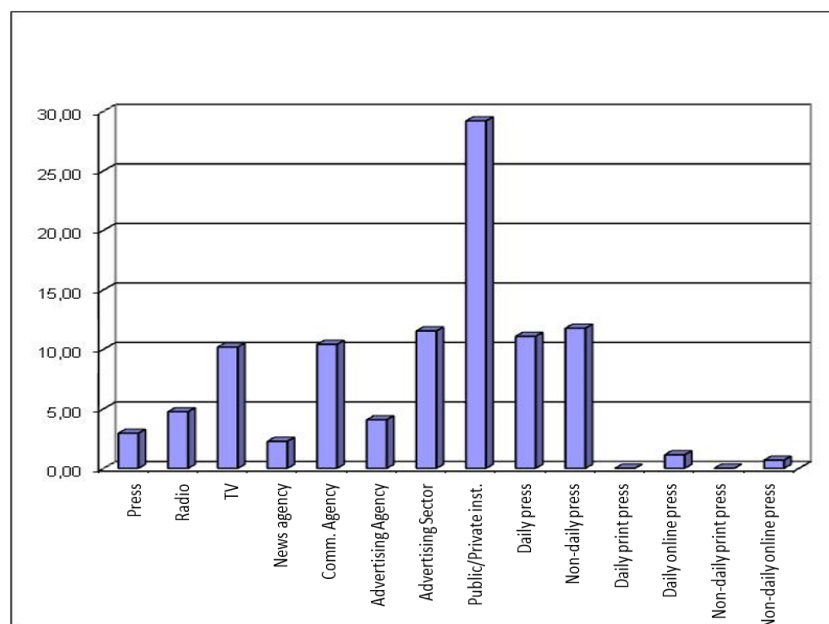
Figure 1: Sectors demanding the largest numbers of students



Source: authors' own creation

If we divide the press into daily print press, daily online press, non-daily print press and non-daily online press, the results become less clear. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of specification in the analysed records, which many cases where it is unclear whether the intern dedicates his/her working hours to work with the print or online platform of the media company.

Figure 2: Types of media companies demanding the largest numbers of students (sample: 442 companies)



Source: authors' own creation

It remains remarkable that the sector that tops the list of reception of interns, the public or private institutions sector, is not linked with the traditional media, but with corporate communications, an activity historically accepted with tweezers by some people in the area of journalism and that opens a gap for the journalistic projection.

The press is the sector with the second highest internship offer rate. In this case, it seemed easy to think that the revolution provoked by the emergence of the Internet as distribution channel would mean a boost for new information and communication projects which, despite the difficulties to compete with already consolidated brands, would be the hope of new employment opportunities. However, the obtained data do not confirm this hypothesis as clearly as one would like, since the online divisions are not specified in most cases in the records held by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre.

In addition, radio and news agencies occupy the last positions in the recruitment of interns, below television. The concentration of these media in less receiving brands justifies the fact that, however, Cadena SER and Efe Agency are two of the companies who receive the largest numbers of graduates in journalism.

Particularities aside, among the traditional media (press, radio, television and news agencies) the disparity in the number of internship contracts is very noticeable. Similarly, the internship offer among companies non related to the more traditional media sector is also heterogeneous, which means there is no clear trend from the perspective of sectors.

4.1.b. Companies with the highest internship rates

Naming the companies that receive the largest number of interns is one of the objectives of this study. In this case, the results do not correspond with those linked to the business sectors, i.e., the data do not shed conclusive results that allow us to reach conclusions about the whole sample of companies, but only about individual cases.

Group Unidad Editorial is the main provider of internship contracts with a percentage difference of more than five points over its follower, Intereconomía Corporación. Unlike other companies that are identified in the descriptive records of the Employment Information and Guidance Centre, and which we have strictly taken into consideration, Unidad Editorial is a conglomerate that owns different media brands and types but such a broad media group is used as descriptor, which justifies the high number of contracts under the same name.

Cadena SER, Agencia Efe and Europa Press are the following companies on the list of student recruitment. As mentioned in the previous section, radio and news agencies are two of the sectors with the lowest reception of interns. However, they occupy the top of the list in the individual analysis of companies. It can be argued that the reason for this is can be the concentration of radio companies and news agencies that offer internships, whereas, for example, in the case of public or private institutions and even the print press the dispersion of recipient entities excludes them from the list of companies that demand the most interns and yet positions them at the top of the ranking of sectors.

The following media deserve a special mention in this classification: Incondicionales Sports, a new digital and sports group that along with Antena 3 Multimedia are the only two examples of receiving companies that are exclusively digital by definition.

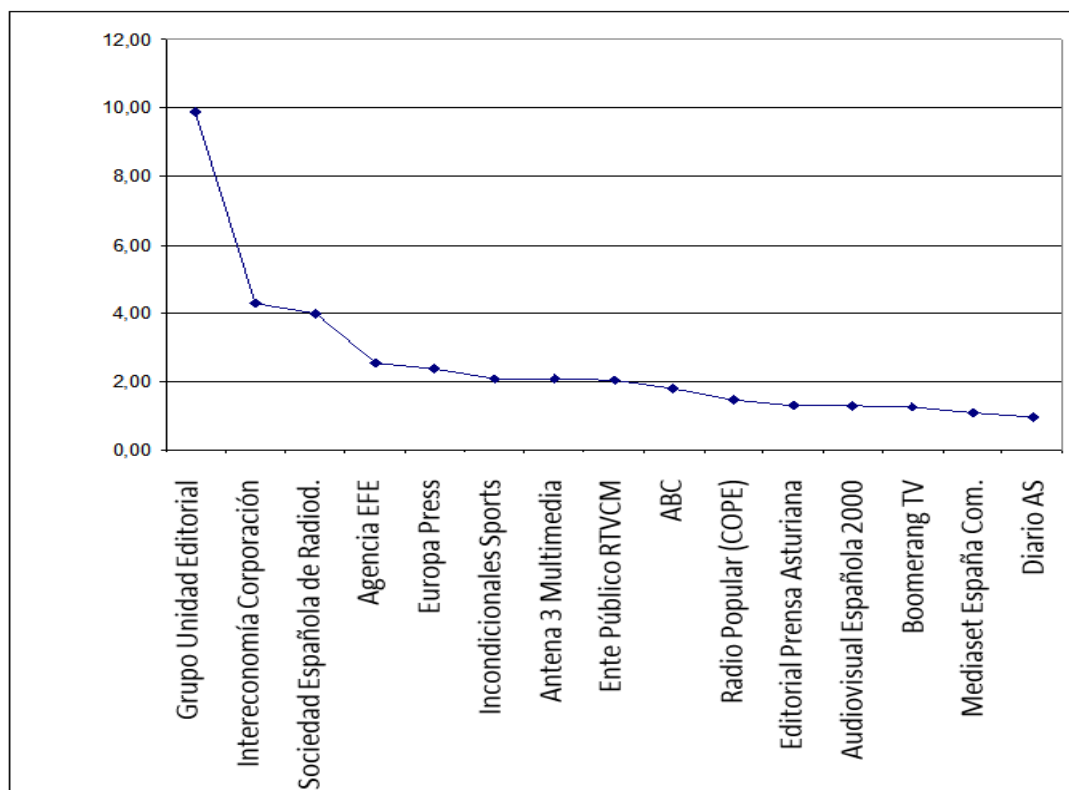
Similarly, there are only two cases of regional media in the list of the fifteen recruitment groups that are leaders in the national scene: Ente Público Radio TV Castilla La Mancha (RTVCM) and Editorial Prensa Asturiana. These results do not coincide with those reflected in the territorial distribution of internships. It can be inferred that both in La Mancha and in the Asturian community there is a high concentration of internship contracts that favours the previously mentioned media.

Media such as Abc, Popular Radio and La Razón follow this relationship. With a multi-channel application essentially directed to the daily press and mainstream radio, they reduce their range of hiring possibilities in comparison to media groups such as Unidad Editorial.

Boomerang TV and Mediaset España Comunicación are at the bottom of this ranking, just above Diario As, edited by Grupo Prisa.

Even taking into account the lack of similarity between the results, we can infer that general-interest brands, especially the press, and the sports media are still rising as the main providers of internship contracts, which suggests that, potentially, they are also the main providers of employment.

Figure 3: 15 Companies with highest internship rates (% of students)



Source: authors' own creation

4.2. Geographical distribution of internships in the job market

The students of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid do their internships in 87 regional destinations, including all the autonomous communities and even in media located abroad [3]. This is the main conclusion of the results with regards to the geographical demand.

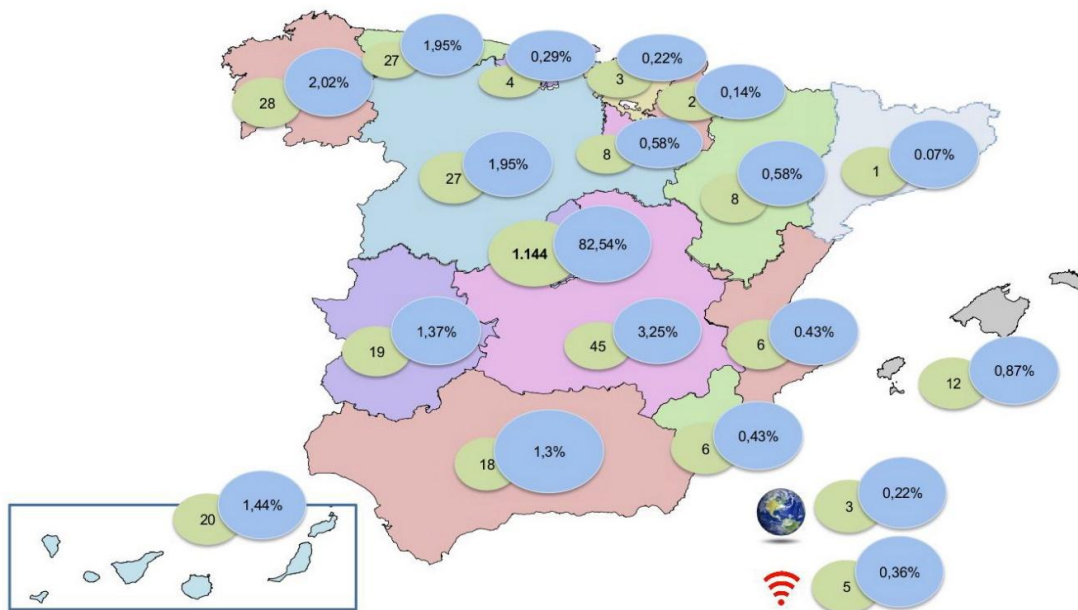
However, and logically, the percentages vary. The Autonomous Community of Madrid concentrates the largest number of internship contracts (82.54% of the analysed cases) for obvious reasons: the proximity between the university centre and the work place, on the one hand, and the centralisation of the national media in the country's capital, on the other.

Far behind is Castile-La Mancha, with 3.25% of all the internship contracts, followed by Galicia, with 2.02%. Further behind are Andalucía, Asturias, Castile and León, Extremadura and Canary Islands ranging from 1.1% to 2% of the internship contracts.

With recruitment rates that fluctuate between 0.51% and 1% are Aragon, Balearic Islands and La Rioja. And, finally, Cantabria, Catalonia, Valencia, Murcia, Navarra and the Basque Country, none of them exceeding 0.5% of the total sample. These percentages also apply to students doing internships in international and online media.

The possibility of extending this variable to all the universities that offer a degree in Journalism in Spain, would provide representative data of the acceptance of professional according to their university centre.

Figure 4: National distribution of interns



Source: authors' own creation

4.3. Conditions of employment

The following chart presents an examination of the most representative conditions of employment in each of the fifteen media companies with the highest rate of interns. The analysis of the data focuses on three variables that will give us clues to create an approximation to the job profile of our students.

Table 4: Characteristics of the internship contracts of the most important companies (according to the total percentage of contracts they sign)

Rank	Code	Company's name	Percentage of contracts	Average duration in days	Days per week	Hours a day	Average salary (Euros)	Function	Functions on highest demand
1.	214	Grupo Unidad Editorial, S.A.	9.8	125.91	5.00	5.80	356.29	Single	Writing in daily print press
2.	236	Intereconomía Corporación, S.A.	4.26	122.10	4.83	4.96	274.58	Multi	Writing and presenting on TV
3.	41	Sociedad Española de Radiodifusión, S.L. (Cadena Ser)	3.97	75.06	5.00	6.56	168.82	Single	Writing and presenting on Radio
4.	17	Agencia Efe, S.A.	2.53	127.40	5.00	5.06	474.86	Single	Writing in news agencies (also online)
5.	166	Europa Press	2.38	123.64	4.61	5.67	193.33	Single	Writing in news agencies (also online)
6.	231	Incondicionales Sports, S.L.	2.09	118.28	4.86	4.07	8.62	Single	Writing in non-daily online press
7.	24	Antena 3 Multimedia, S.L.U	2.09	91.17	4.60	5.73	258.50	Multi	Writing and presenting on TV
8.	151	Ente Público Radio Televisión Castilla La Mancha (RTVCM)	2.02	93.39	4.75	6.36	41.07	Multi	Writing and presenting on TV
9.	5	Abc, S.L.	1.80	86.96	5.00	6.76	252.00	Multi	Writing in daily online press
10.	81	Radio Popular, S.A. (COPE)	1.44	63.15	5.00	6.85	174.85	Single	Writing and presenting on Radio
11.	25	Editorial Prensa Asturiana, S.A.U.	1.30	88.78	5.00	6.00	270.00	Single	Writing in daily print press
12.	134	Audiovisual Española 2000, S.A. (La Razón)	1.30	111.60	5.00	5.00	340.89	Multi	Writing in daily print press
13.	36	Boomerang TV, S.A.	1.23	110.63	5.00	4.31	0.00	Single	Writing and presenting on TV
14.	275	Mediaset España Comunicación S.A.	1.08	89.07	5.00	5.67	308.00	Multi	Writing and presenting on TV
15.	96	Diario As, S.L.	0.94	70.08	5.00	5.00	339.43	Single	Writing in daily print press

Source: authors' own creation

4.3.a. Duration and workload

The duration of the internships among the media with the highest recruiting rate ranges between two and four months, mostly covered in the summer period. Agencia Efe, Europa Press, Grupo Unidad Editorial and Intereconomía Corporación offer the most complete conditions of internship, exceeding the average of four months 'contract'. On the opposite side and with the minimum number of working days is Radio Popular (COPE), with an average of 63 days of contract.

As shown in the previous figure, the internships involve a workload that fluctuates between four and seven hours a day during five days a week, with few exceptions, and with averages are slightly below the five hours a day.

4.3.b. Remuneration

Greater differences across companies exist with regards to the remuneration for internships. Boomerang TV is the only example of what is known as “totally unpaid” internship offer, closely followed by *Incondicionales Sports* and Ente Público Radio Television Castile-La Mancha, whose average salary for interns is €8.62 and €41.07 respectively, which is a hardly quantifiable, symbolic and irregular salary.

Cadena Ser, Europa Press and Radio Popular offer remuneration that fluctuates between €100 and €200 per month. With a salary exceeding €300 are Grupo Unidad Editorial, La Razón, Mediaset España, Diario AS and, finally, Agencia Efe which, well above other media brands, values the work of interns at an average of €474.86.

Once again, the map media describing the duration and remuneration of the internships is totally uneven and prevents us from drawing sectoral or overall conclusions. There is not even a point of consistency between duration, workload and remuneration, so we can argue that the free interpretation of each medium determines the standard of its offer.

4.3.c. Functions

The activities performed by interns is the key to know what the market expects from future graduates in journalism and to design a professional profile according to the business criteria. The choice between specialisation and versatility is reflected in the response to the item analysis “a single or several functions” which, in this case, is resolved in the following way: six of the fifteen companies with the highest rate of internship contracts recognises the exercise of more than one role in the exercise of the professional work of young journalists, while the other nine companies identify a single function per worker. These data suggest that job specialisation still dominates over the “all-terrain” professional profile.

With regards to the types of functions required from interns there is unanimity: writing. So the task most traditionally linked to journalism still reigns in the job offer with a clear advantage over other activities such as design, production, documentation and community management.

5. Conclusions

The crisis in the newspaper industry, *vox populi*, is one of the main concerns of the professional sector before, during and after university. However, it seems that it is traditional media who are not at their best moment and the journalist is expanding borders towards sectors less affected by the economic downturn, mainly towards corporate communication. Meanwhile, these media linked to the most classic form of journalism exhibit uneven trends with the clear superiority of the press over television and more notably over radio and news agencies.

Table 5: Summary of characteristics of internships in traditional media (averages and modes)

Type of company	Days	Season	Days of the week	Hours a day	Gross remuneration in euros per month	Sector	Function
Traditional media (news & journalism). Daily press	107.7	Summer	4.9	5.3	223.3	Traditional media (news & journalism). Daily print press	Writing

Source: authors' own creation

After describing the obtained data, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis raised with respect to the labour market is not confirmed: communication companies that offer more internships are related to public or private institutions, followed closely by the companies whose corporate development is linked to the daily press. As confirmed during the data analysis, the institutional level has been less affected by the crisis which has been particularly harsh with the communication sector.

The second hypothesis was confirmed: the geographical distribution of the internships carried out by journalism students extends across the national landscape, but with a positive concentration in Madrid, which is understandable given that it is the area of influence of the School of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid.

Finally, the third and last hypothesis also was validated: the working conditions of journalists in training last about three months, and usually take during the summer holiday. In addition, they are poorly remunerated with a salary slightly above €200-month on average, even though the data on salaries are very uneven.

According to previous studies, the reality is that internships in companies in the field of communication constitute an added value to the indisputable academic training, which promotes the acquisition of skills beyond the university environment. On the other hand, the opportunity to enter the labour market allows students to get a better understanding of it, which together with different academic and institutional reports, constitute the key to improve the educational coverage, in such a way that students and teachers can optimise their skills.

As mentioned in previous sections, the results obtained from this research have methodological and temporal limitations, whose optimisation would involve, on the one hand, extending the sample of analysis and, on the other, complementing the quantitative data with qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, which would give greater consistency and representativeness to the results. Still with a long way to go, the conclusions presented here offer an approximation to the job market and working conditions that affect the journalism students of the Complutense University of Madrid and that can be used to improve the teaching quality of our institution.

* This article is part of a research study carried out by the [Research and Learning of Media and Communications Management](#) group of the Complutense University of Madrid – MediaCom UCM– (<http://www.ccinf.es/mediacom>): the Teaching innovation and quality improvement project (PIMCD) titled “[What journalism students need to enter the job market](#).” Analysis of the demands of the communications labour market” (reference number: 176), financed by the Complutense University of Madrid.

Dates:

-Start of the research: May 2014

-End of research: November 2014

6. Notes

1. Website: <http://www.ccinf.es/mediacom>.

2. The descriptors used by the Employment Information and Guidance Centre were strictly respected.

3. The figure titled “National distribution of interns” shows in green the number of journalism students from the Complutense University of Madrid doing their internships in each autonomous community and in blue the percentage these numbers represent out of the total sample of students.

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