

recorded from external sources such as Google.com.pe (Peru), Google.com.mx (Mexico) and Google.com.gt (Guatemala).

All this information, provided by Facebook Insights, indicates the age of 96.7% of the users registered on our page. The remaining 3.3% corresponds to users who did not provide their date of birth when registering with this social network.

4.3. Trend of visits to the NGO Fan page

The study period began on 10 November. On that day we already started from a figure of 597 impressions (the number of times any content associated with our page was viewed), since some students visited the page before the appointed day. In a single day (10-11 November) the number of impressions increased by 70% to a total of 974. Over the following days the rate of increase declined, although it remained positive, with percentages ranging from 20% to 3%.

On 6 December we reached the maximum figure in terms of number of impressions per month, at 2,167. From 20 November to 6 December the increase amounted to 1,593 impressions: from 597 at the start to 2,167. That day was a turning point, and from then until 13 December the progression was downward, by percentages of between 3% and 21%, from 2,167 to 762 new impressions.

In general terms there was also an increase in the Fan page's potential audience, that is, the number of our fans' contacts who could see it. The total number of potential users reached 13,107 on 13 December.

As for the number of users who viewed any content associated with our Fan page (total unique users on each of 28 days), 199 users were recorded on 10 November, 196 on 11 November, and from then on the figure always exceeded 300 users. The maximum was reached on 6 December, with 622 users, and from that point it began to fall: 602 on 7 December, 585 on 8 December, and the decline continued until 13 December, with 350. This is what Facebook defines as the Total Reach of our publications, both on our own page and in the Latest News section and other profiles separate from that of our

organisation. The figure includes fans of our page as well as non-fans. The latter access our page and its contents via the dissemination of our activity among their network of friends.

These figures offer us an indication of the level of reach or virality in the social network. Facebook Insights also provides a figure which it has defined as Viral Reach, the object of which is to count in terms of unique users the number of people who have seen our page or any of its posts from the activity of their network of friends and not directly on the *Movimiento por la Paz* Fan page. This activity includes messages informing users about Fan pages to which they have subscribed, messages published on our Wall, comments on one of our posts, information on what users share from our page with other friends, and responses to events and mentions or tags of our page.

We can observe the same trend as for the number of users, with a curve in the records that confirms a high degree of dependence of the Total Reach parameter compared with Viral Reach. In this propagation exercise a significant factor is the value known as Page Stories, which enables us to analyse the number of stories to which our page has given rise. In this category the figures are more modest, reaching a total of 29 stories on 9 December 2011. The publication of stories related to a page is the factor which produces an exponential increase in the virality of the page and the information it contains.

4.4. Expansion and virality of the messages

Starting from the 56 student participants, we observed how the activity of our page extended across the network, reaching over 600 users in a range of age brackets and countries. There was also a parallel increase in the figure for potential impact on new users, which reached a total of 13,107.

This dynamic process may produce additional impressions received in stories about our page published by a user (friend). These stories include connecting to our page, publishing on the Wall, clicking on the “Like” button, commenting on or sharing

something published on our page, mentioning the page and even tagging a photograph to our organisation. The maximum number of viral impressions is 2,164.

The following graph shows the number of people who saw something published on the *Movimiento por la Paz* page through the activity of one of their friends.

Figure 3. Graph showing the progression in the number of people who saw a story about this page published by a friend. Source: Facebook Insights.



[Organic? Paid? Viral? Total?

14 Nov 21 Nov 28 Nov 5 Dec 12 Dec]

Each point in the line of progression corresponds to a period of a week, so the point of maximum activity corresponds to the week from 10/11/11 to 16/11/11, with 365 people who viewed some story from their friends related to *Movimiento por la Paz*. That week

coincides with the phase of greatest effort in spreading our page among the target audience. Thus we can confirm that viral communication has played a crucial role in disseminating our content.

4.5. Quantitative analysis: comments and evaluation of the pieces

Let us now examine the number and content of the comments made on each of the publications:

Graphic 1 (Connotative):

The first graphic option achieved 35 comments and 18 clicks on the “Like” button (related to the publication). This publication was the one that received the most comments from users and aroused the greatest interest, judging not only from the number of comments but also the opinions expressed in them.

For example, many agreed in expressing the view that “its design and message are strong, simple and very clear”, that “the idea is original and appealing” and that “it makes clever use of rhetorical and emotional elements”. It was undoubtedly the more highly commended of the two graphics. The creative concept was favourably assessed, although some drawbacks were pointed out in aspects of the design, such as the smoke, for example, which is confusing and looks as though it is coming from a cigarette rather than a factory.



Graphic 2 (Denotative):



The second graphic option, on the other hand, received 32 comments and only 4 clicks on the “Like” button. Although it was recognised as having positive features in terms of the concept it was trying to convey, this graphic was awarded a large number of negative

assessments. Among other things, these highlighted the fact that it is “saturated with information and visual elements”, creating confusion, and they drew attention to “the use of effects (fading, etc) which make the image difficult to read”. They also pointed out that “it uses an unsuitable type of lettering: you can’t read it properly”.

These drawbacks directly affect people’s ability to grasp the message. Moreover, users highlighted the “lack of connection between the apparent object of this campaign (curbing pollution) and the general aim declared by the NGO (promoting peace)”. To all this must be added the “lack of originality” in the visual approach; according to several students, it is a very hackneyed idea in the tradition of communication and advertising on climate change and pollution.

Video 1 (Connotative):

As for the videos, the first option received 27 comments and 16 clicks on the “Like” option. According to the users, this option is perceived as the more successful and the one with the greater emotional force. “An interesting and technically well-executed concept”,



as one pointed out. “A direct and effective message”, remarked another. The idea of movement and the appeal to the audience’s feelings were perceived by the subjects in the sample as “elements that can enhance the ability of the advertisement to convey the values of the organisation”. In short, “it is creative and interesting because it relates concepts which stimulate audience involvement”.

Most members of the sample assessed this version favourably, both for its content and treatment and for its technical quality, a feature which is not essential in viral communication but which certainly contributes to its persuasive power.

Video 2 (Denotative):



The second option, the longer of the two, received a total of 26 comments and 5 clicks on the “Like” button. This spot aroused less excitement among users, though not to a very substantial degree. Moreover, although the concepts it conveys were praised — it reflects several aspects of poverty — the “somewhat didactic treatment” seems to have diminished the credibility of the message. Its tone was perceived as “monotonous and slow”, and users also emphasised its “lack of emotional appeal”. The images in the video “do not effectively illustrate the ideas it is trying to put across: the parallelism is too paternalistic”. Here “the excess of information leaves no room for feeling”. Finally, the students suggested that the message should be summarised and emotional music should be used to enhance its potential appeal.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The experiment carried out on the supposed Fan page of *Movimiento por la Paz* has enabled us to draw the following conclusions on social advertising on social networks:

- *Wide reach*: with 600 unique users from various parts of the world, the figures reflect a widespread dissemination of advertising messages on the network: 1,859 viewings, 155 comments and over 400 impressions for each of the four pieces. Activity was even recorded beyond our borders, in the United States, Mexico, Portugal, Guatemala, Peru and Paraguay. The number of foreign users is not representative, but it is worth emphasising that they were reached without any attempt to advertise. Moreover, Facebook Insight is capable of calculating the potential number of users that a particular page could reach, on the basis of contacts. In this case, in the month of the research study a total of 13,107 potential users was achieved.
- *Effective virality*: this kind of communication played a crucial part in disseminating all the contents. The Viral Reach indicator showed that the

number of viral impressions was 2,164, with clicks on the “Like” button and comments being the tools most frequently used to make the messages viral. Moreover, 365 people saw the NGO’s profile through one of their friends. The Page Stories figure reveals the number of stories generated by this page, including connections to publish on the Wall or share the publication. A total of 29 stories were recorded, potentially capable of enhancing the page’s virality and increasing the number of impressions.

- *Active participation:* Most of the subjects in the sample not only viewed the messages but also interacted with them. Between 20 and 70 active users were found per day, and the trend was one of steady increase. This is important, because in addition to its potential for connectivity, the social network offers the ability to participate in a collective message: the initial advertising message plus the sum of comments, “Likes”, and postings by subjects on their own pages. This participation by users makes them more likely to remember the message and also enhances their degree of commitment to it, a decisive factor in social advertising.

In addition, this experience has enabled us to determine which of the two advertising profiles (denotative or connotative) was more effective in communications by NGOs. In our study the members of the sample clearly displayed their preference for a connotative/persuasive profile (graphic 1, video 1), based on polysemous, emotional messages with a higher degree of rhetoricisation. By contrast, the denotative/informative profile (graphic 2, video 2), characterised by didactic messages overloaded with information, generated very little involvement in the sample as a whole. It is clear that young people, predisposed by the Internet towards indirect messages, interactive play and complicity, perceive at once that those denotative advertising messages merely transfer to the virtual world advertisements conceived for a different medium: the one-directional communication typical of newspapers, magazines and television. In advertising on social networks, what the subjects in the sample most valued was simplicity, rhetoric, interactivity and emotional involvement. It is this type of communication that best facilitates the virality of messages in collaborative environments such as social networks.

6. Support

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¹ Dr Alfonso Méndiz is Lecturer in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the University of Málaga and Director of the SEJ 396 Research Group "Nuevas Formas Publicitarias y Nueva Economía" ("New Forms of Advertising and the New Economy"). Dr Juan Salvador Victoria is Lecturer in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the University of Málaga and Director of the annual Conference on Interactive Communication COMINTERACTIVA. Dr Isidoro Arroyo is Lecturer in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at King Juan Carlos University in Madrid and Principal Researcher of the R&D&i Project "Desarrollo de un Modelo de Eficacia de la Comunicación Persuasiva del Tercer Sector en las Redes Sociales" ("Development of a Model of Effectiveness of Persuasive Communication for the Third Sector on Social Networks")