



Slow journalism in Ibero-America and Spain: Ethics, trust, and challenges in the age of digital transformation

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Citation: Palomino-Flores, P., Fuller, C., Gifreu-Castells, A., & Gallardo-Echenique, E. (2025). Slow journalism in Ibero-America and Spain: Ethics, trust, and challenges in the age of digital transformation. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 15(4), e202538. <https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcm/17542>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 27 Jun 2025

Accepted: 19 Nov 2025

ABSTRACT

In an era of rapid digital transformation, the media landscape is undergoing profound changes. This research explores how slow journalism is being positioned as a possible response to challenges such as misinformation and the increasing automation of news content. It analyzes the role of journalists in embracing this approach, which emphasizes in-depth reporting and authentic storytelling, as a means of offering depth and reflection amid the pressures of accelerated digital news production. Through qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with 40 media professionals and experts from Ibero-America and Spain, the study also examines how slow journalism is incorporated into digital strategies to restore media credibility and foster deeper audience trust as a counterbalance to speed-driven news cycles. The findings suggest that slow journalism is perceived as a deliberate response to the erosion of journalistic standards, offering depth, verification, and narrative quality as distinguishing features. Journalists recognized both its benefits and limitations: while it can counter misinformation and encourage critical analysis, its implementation is constrained by economic pressures and audience demand for immediacy. Rather than positioning it as a universal or prescriptive solution, the study situates slow journalism within broader strategies to strengthen credibility, uphold ethical standards, and sustain the democratic role of journalism in digitally accelerated environments shaped by cultural, economic, and technological complexities.

Keywords: slow journalism, digital transformation, credibility, misinformation, media trust

INTRODUCTION

The media and journalism sectors have swiftly adopted technological advancements, particularly in the realm of digital tools and automation, which has conferred multiple benefits, notably in terms of augmenting the productivity of journalists and bolstering the competitiveness of media organizations (Trang et al., 2024). The rapid adoption of technologies in journalism has opened up both opportunities and challenges for the industry (Trang et al., 2024). Digital technologies have transformed journalism by boosting efficiency but also raising new challenges for editorial quality and integrity (Duan, 2023; Sheikh et al., 2023). Although artificial intelligence (AI) systems possess the capability to rapidly process substantial amounts of data, they frequently prioritize efficiency at the expense of precision and comprehensiveness (Santos, 2023). Consequently, the

swift proliferation of news generated by automated systems may facilitate the propagation of misinformation and “fake news,” thereby exacerbating the complexities of the media landscape. Thus, the unintended consequences of these technologies in journalism are outcomes not deliberately designed but detrimental to news reliability. They include algorithmic opacity, misinformation, and weakened editorial oversight, which erode media credibility and ultimately undermine public trust (Sheikh et al., 2023; Siitonen et al., 2024).

Slow journalism, which prioritizes thorough research, in-depth reporting, and narrative storytelling, offers a strategic response to the challenges of today’s fast-paced media environment (Albizu-Rivas, 2024). This approach focuses on well-researched content that encourages critical thinking and deeper public engagement (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023; Mendes & Marinho, 2024). According to Albalad-Aiguabella (2018), slow journalism is comparable to simmering a story over a low flame: it requires time and patience, allowing journalists to craft deeper, more reflective narratives that stand in contrast to the superficiality often found in the rush of daily news. This commitment to quality journalism remains relevant across various media platforms, ensuring content meets high standards for the audience (Peñafiel-Saiz et al., 2022).

Gurrutxaga et al. (2021), Le Masurier (2016), and Peñafiel-Saiz et al. (2022) have explored the developing paradigm of slow journalism and its significance in promoting enhanced public engagement while upholding the principles of journalistic integrity and quality. Most of these studies have been conducted in the Global North, focusing primarily on media landscapes in Europe and North America. Nonetheless, the integration of slow journalism within a digital-first context encounters numerous obstacles, particularly in areas where economic constraints favor the production of rapid, high-traffic content over comprehensive analysis (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020). In Europe, the heightened emphasis on digital transformation coupled with the fierce competition for prompt audience engagement have been factors contributing to a perceived deterioration in journalistic quality (Gómez-Mompart et al., 2015). The acceleration of news cycles has undermined investigative journalism, raising concerns about declining information quality (Gómez-Mompart et al., 2015). However, the erosion of trust is a multifaceted issue, shaped not only by immediacy but also by structural, economic, and technological pressures (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020; Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023; Dodds et al., 2023). Moreover, audience research indicates that younger users frequently privilege immediacy and brevity over depth (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019).

The constant demand for speed, the pursuit of clicks, and the rise of misinformation have forced journalism to reconsider its messaging, workflows, and practices (Dodds et al., 2023). In response to this erosion of informational quality, several initiatives in Ibero-America have embraced slow journalism, emphasizing context and narrative depth to humanize stories and maintain the integrity of journalistic standards (Zabalondo et al., 2021). In Ibero-America, many news organizations’ economic limitations and constrained resources pose significant barriers to fully investing in slow journalism, which typically requires more time and resources for thorough reporting (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022). Consequently, many media outlets opt for quicker, less resource-intensive content to stay competitive and financially sustainable in a rapidly evolving media landscape (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020). This study is justified by growing concerns over the decline in journalistic quality in the context of digital automation and misinformation. As AI technologies prioritize speed over accuracy, they often lead to the spread of fake news and superficial reporting (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023). Economic pressures, particularly in regions like Ibero-America, significantly hinder the ability of media outlets to invest in quality, in-depth reporting. The increasing demands for fast-paced, revenue-driven content have blurred the boundaries of traditional journalism, leading to challenges in sustaining investigative journalism (Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023). Slow journalism, emphasizing meticulous research and deliberate storytelling, presents a promising response to the current challenges facing the media landscape. By prioritizing depth over speed, it may contribute to rebuilding credibility and fostering a deeper connection with certain audiences, thereby supporting the integrity of journalism as part of broader strategies to strengthen trust (Mendes & Marinho, 2024; Young & Hermida, 2024).

This study introduces a novel perspective by examining how slow journalism is integrated into digital strategies in Ibero-America and Spain, addressing challenges posed by technological changes in media production. While most studies on slow journalism have focused on the Global North, this research provides new insights into its application in regions like Spain and Ibero-America, which share common challenges but differ in their cultural, economic, and technological contexts. This raises an important question: How are digital media in Ibero-America and Europe integrating elements of slow journalism into their digital

transformation strategies to enhance credibility and public trust, particularly in an environment shaped by digital acceleration?

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA ERA

Slow journalism addresses the swift and often superficial pace of digital news by emphasizing quality, thoroughness, and analytical rigor (Le Masurier, 2016). In response to the increased emphasis on rapid dissemination and high-volume content characteristics of digital platforms, slow journalism provides a counterbalance through its commitment to comprehensive reporting, narrative storytelling, and meticulous fact-verification (Le Masurier, 2016). This approach promotes critical thinking, public engagement, and trust through well-researched, thoughtful content (Rosique-Cedillo & Barranquero-Carretero, 2015). Furthermore, slow journalism emerges as a deliberate reaction to the prevalence of immediacy and the absence of contextual depth in rapid news cycles, with the potential to support broader efforts aimed at rebuilding trust and credibility in journalistic practices. Through the prioritization of meticulous narrative development, contextual evaluation, and openness, slow journalism serves as a considered antidote to the shallowness prevalent in contemporary digital media (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023). This phenomenon also emerges organically from wider societal trends, including opposition to automation, a revitalized emphasis on localism, and an increasing desire for authenticity in narrative (Drok & Hermans, 2016). These dual perspectives underscore its adaptability, whether as a conscious reform strategy or as a natural response to cultural shifts in how audiences consume and value news.

This approach emphasizes careful, in-depth reporting and thoughtful storytelling as a countermeasure to the superficiality that often characterizes modern news dissemination (Kramp & Loosen, 2018). Despite its potential benefits, slow journalism faces significant economic challenges in a digital media landscape dominated by high-traffic content and ad-driven revenue models (Ball, 2016; Dowling, 2016). The financial sustainability of slow journalism is often questioned due to its resource-intensive nature, requiring substantial investment in time, research, and talent. However, innovative business models that support slow journalism by leveraging digital tools and AI technologies to enhance efficiency and reduce costs are emerging (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020). For example, AI can automate specific data collection and analysis processes, allowing journalists to focus more on in-depth reporting and storytelling (Siitonen et al., 2024). Additionally, audience-driven revenue models, such as subscriptions and crowdfunding, provide viable alternatives to traditional advertising, offering a more stable financial foundation for slow journalism initiatives (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023).

In the digital age, where misinformation and fake news are rampant, slow journalism offers a strategic approach to counteract these issues by prioritizing accuracy, depth, and narrative integrity (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023; Mendes & Marinho, 2024) although research shows that immediacy remains a dominant value for many audiences (Newman et al., 2025). Slow journalism's commitment to thorough fact-checking and comprehensive reporting helps mitigate the spread of misinformation by providing audiences with reliable and well-contextualized information (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Santos, 2023). By fostering a more deliberate and reflective approach to news consumption, slow journalism encourages audiences to engage critically with the information they receive, thereby reducing the impact of misleading or false content (Markelius et al., 2024). This emphasis on narrative depth and factual accuracy enhances the credibility of news organizations and plays a crucial role in preserving the integrity of public discourse in the digital era.

Adopting and adapting slow journalism practices vary across cultural and regional contexts, influenced by socio-political factors, audience expectations, and resource availability. In Ibero-America and Europe, slow journalism is increasingly explored as a complementary alternative to fast-paced digital news, although its implementation is conditioned by economic, cultural, and audience preferences, which frequently privilege immediacy (Peñafiel-Saiz et al., 2022). While slow journalism is gaining traction in both regions, its prospects depend on navigating economic constraints, fostering audience engagement, and leveraging digital tools like AI to enhance storytelling without compromising journalistic integrity (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Santos, 2023). By examining these diverse approaches, this study highlights best practices for promoting sustainable, high-quality journalism in the digital era.

METHODS

This study adopts a phenomenological approach that focuses on exploring and interpreting lived experiences to uncover the underlying meanings of how phenomena appear in consciousness. It applies this perspective to analyze how journalism professionals integrate slow journalism into the evolving digital media landscape across Ibero-America and Spain. Phenomenology provides a lens for understanding the lived experiences of participants (Sloan & Bowe, 2014), illuminating how they negotiate the tensions between immediacy—often demanded by digital platforms—and the depth, reflection, and contextualization associated with slow journalism.

The study targets explicitly Ibero-America and Spain for various methodological reasons. Spain has emerged as a significant point of reference within the European context for the implementation of slow journalism practices (Rosique-Cedillo & Barranquero-Carretero, 2015; Zabalondo et al., 2021). Numerous media organizations in Spain have incorporated slow journalism into their reporting frameworks, offering an opportunity to analyze how this phenomenon has evolved in a European context and providing a comparative reference point for Ibero-America (Gurrutxaga et al., 2021; Le Masurier, 2016). Examining the case provides an opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis of a European context where slow journalism has gained notable prominence. Moreover, the cultural and media environment in Spain offers a favorable context for the development and sustainability of slow journalism, underpinned by a strong tradition of narrative depth and investigative journalism (García-Avilés et al., 2018; Ventura-Salom et al., 2024). The incorporation of Spain contributed significantly to the study, considering its extensive heritage in both investigative and narrative journalism (Rosique-Cedillo & Barranquero-Carretero, 2015). Data was collected through in-depth interviews based on 12 open-ended questions, organized into four thematic blocks:

- (1) perceptions of immediacy and depth,
- (2) credibility and trust,
- (3) technological integration, and
- (4) sustainability of journalistic practices.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select key informants knowledgeable about slow journalism (Gill, 2020; Suri, 2011). The final sample comprised 40 journalism professionals with more than a decade of experience in the field, representing Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Spain (see [Appendix A](#)). Using a snowball sampling strategy, participants were first recruited through a preliminary group of journalists who referred colleagues with relevant expertise, thereby expanding the range of perspectives in the study (Suri, 2011). Their expertise encompasses a wide range of journalistic practices, from investigative reporting to digital storytelling, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

Interviews were conducted individually via Zoom, Skype, and telephone, accommodating the geographical diversity of participants and offering a flexible, personalized approach. Each interview lasted between 20 and 72 minutes (see [Appendix A](#)), ensuring adequate time for detailed discussions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with verbatim, with data securely stored to maintain confidentiality. Transcripts were reviewed line by line to identify recurring themes and patterns, which were then grouped into broader categories (see [Appendix B](#)). The one-on-one interviews offered deep insights into the challenges and opportunities of integrating digital innovations within existing media structures. This approach is consistent with the idea that purposive sampling provides access to participants with the most relevant expertise (Gill, 2020) and that thematic analysis is a robust method for identifying and interpreting recurring patterns across qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach:

- (1) familiarization with the data,
- (2) systematic coding of key ideas and expressions,
- (3) grouping of codes into potential themes,
- (4) reviewing and refining themes,

- (5) defining and labelling themes and subcategories, and
- (6) producing the final thematic structure supported by participant quotes.

For example, concepts such as “trust” and “credibility” were treated as distinct themes to capture their specific nuances. The categories derived from the analysis were consistent with the dimensions outlined in the interview guide, ensuring coherence between data collection and interpretation. By reaching thematic saturation—when no new themes emerged—the study reinforced the reliability and validity of its conclusions (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Ethical considerations were at the heart of this research. Before participating, each participant was carefully briefed on the study’s objectives, ensuring they understood the purpose and scope of the research. Informed consent was obtained, and throughout the study, confidentiality was a top priority—every piece of data, from recordings to transcripts, was securely stored. The research followed ethical guidelines, respecting participants’ unique stories and views (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gill, 2020).

RESULTS

From Immediacy to Depth: The Role of Slow Journalism in Contemporary News

In a context characterized by the prevalence of digital immediacy and an overwhelming influx of information, journalism confronts the significant challenge of adequately addressing the informational requirements of a global, heterogeneous, and progressively fragmented audience. In light of this context, slow journalism presents itself as a purposeful alternative that provides depth in the face of superficiality, fosters reflection amidst urgency, and cultivates trust where skepticism prevails.

Utilizing insights from seasoned journalists throughout Ibero-America and Spain, this research delineates the fundamental components that journalism must strengthen in order to address modern challenges: depth, veracity, critical analysis, and ethical responsibility. The integration of immediacy with methodological rigor has evolved into an essential ethical requirement rather than merely a stylistic preference. A Brazilian journalist (P22) articulated this necessity concisely:

“I’m deeply interested in the journalist who is able to see the human being where no one else does—someone who can look at the world from the margins. The kind of journalism that matters to me is the one that manages to narrate the human experience.”

Slow journalism emphasizes the exploration of the multiple dimensions of a narrative rather than merely presenting the superficial aspects represented by headlines. The digital age poses a multifaceted landscape for slow journalism, characterized by a rapid pace of change that has generated substantial challenges, particularly in terms of securing financial support and fostering audience engagement. Participants identify a notable challenge emphasized by journalists: the difficulty in obtaining financial backing for long-form journalism within a media environment that is predominantly characterized by the expectation of complimentary content. As a journalist from Spain (P1) explained:

“We have forfeited the capability to revisit the locations we examine. Financial constraints compel journalists to move away from comprehensive investigative reporting. The emphasis on immediacy compromises the quality of our work, resulting in the potential neglect of significant narratives that require additional examination. Sustained interaction with a narrative cultivates a more profound comprehension.”

Participants highlighted the proposition that high-quality journalism requires adequate time for reflection and a broader conception of success, emphasizing the importance of the depth and significance of the narratives rather than solely focusing on expediency. A Colombian journalist (P30) emphasized the importance of not hastening the pursuit of quality journalism, stating:

“I find a topic much more interesting to explore journalistically once journalists stop talking about it. That’s when many things start to happen. It is essential that we adopt a deliberate approach to journalism, as it allows us to challenge dominant narratives and reveal deeper truths.”

Similarly, an Argentine reporter (P6) remarked:

"Time is valuable asset—it allows stories to unfold with greater complexity and meaning. Some media outlets arrive 24 hours later, but do so with more depth, offering context and guiding the reader more effectively. Slow journalism breaks the inverted pyramid and explains everything in an innovative way."

The authors additionally argue that an emphasis on immediacy often detracts from the complexities of the topic at hand; conversely, a more intentional approach to journalism fosters a citizenry that is more critically engaged. An Ecuadorian journalist (P14) expressed:

"The core principle of investigative journalism must uphold its fundamental principles. Among them are investigation, listening, precision and seriousness. (...) We need to persist with quality journalism. Is not to accelerate the process, but to cultivate relationships with pertinent issues and individuals, ensuring that each narrative serves a more significant purpose."

This shared understanding underscores the necessity of reestablishing time as a valuable resource in the realm of contemporary quality journalism. Participants emphasized that thorough investigation and meticulous verification are crucial not only for ensuring accuracy but also for reinstating public trust, particularly in light of fragmented news. As articulated by a Venezuelan journalist (P13),

"Journalism must decelerate in order to maintain its significance. There is so much noise that it's not always the one who publishes first who wins, but the one who publishes best".

This view was echoed by others, such as (P4) and (P8), who emphasized that quality journalism needs interpretation and depth, not just facts. Digital platforms' speed-driven logic hinders thoughtful reporting, as noted by (P33), (P36), and (P38). Slowing down, they said, is a deliberate resistance to superficiality, not nostalgia. As an author (P37) noted,

"Quality journalism is, by necessity, slow journalism,"

as crafting nuanced narratives requires time for reader engagement. In an environment characterized by significant noise, it is not merely the initial publication that prevails, but rather the one that offers the most comprehensive and coherent explanation.

Thus, slow journalism represents more than a genre or trend; it constitutes a strategic and ethical response to the transformations of the media environment, reaffirming journalism's civic mission by prioritizing complexity, context, and human connection.

Trust and Credibility in the Age of Misinformation

A central finding of this study is the widespread recognition among journalists that automation-driven news cycles tend to prioritize speed over accuracy, creating a fertile ground for the rapid dissemination of misinformation. Participants emphasized that the digital acceleration of content production, often fueled by engagement-driven algorithms, has eroded traditional journalistic standards of verification and contextualization. It has tangible consequences for public trust. As one Salvadoran journalist (P26) noted,

"Speed has become the most valued currency, but at the cost of depth and accuracy. Its undeniable that there is a race to report news as quickly as possible, which usually results in the most superficial version. When publishing a story in the moment its unfolding context, contrast and other necessary elements tend to fade away".

Many interviews agreed that slow journalism's deliberate commitment to thorough fact-checking, in-depth investigation, and contextual storytelling offers a necessary corrective to these trends. P34 reflected:

"Slow emphasizes the human dimension and provides useful context like depth narratives for readers to make informed decisions. It is not just about telling the audience what happened first, but about helping them understand why it matters and how it fits into the bigger picture".

Similarly, a Chilean journalist (P39) pointed out:

"Superficial content thrives on speed, but truth demands time. I've never done a long report or even a book without feeling rushed".

Several participants emphasized that slow journalism should not be perceived as a mere nostalgic revisitation of historical practices; rather, it represents a critical adaptation necessary to uphold the civic role of journalism within a context that is inundated with misinformation and noise. By prioritizing accuracy over immediacy, slow journalism is compromised by the swift and fragmented characteristics of digital news dissemination. A Cuban journalist (P16) provided a concise encapsulation of this tension:

"Contemporary news cycles prioritize expediency over accuracy. The idea that voices are not merely sources, but people, is important. One doesn't just collect statements; one outlines characters and scenes. That adds depth to events and requires slower, more deliberate work. Genuine trust is built over time through intentional effort, not measured by digital interactions."

The focus on rebuilding trust emerged as a consistent theme throughout the interviews. In this context, slow journalism is being deliberately incorporated into newsroom practices across various media ecosystems, especially within independent and digitally native organizations, as a strategy to rebuild public trust. An Argentine journalist (P31) succinctly articulated this strategy by stating:

"The conflict is not with technology, but rather with the trivialization of journalism."

Slow journalism serves as our most effective instrument for fostering depth, context, and, ultimately, the preservation of democracy itself. Thus, the participants collectively portrayed slow journalism not merely as a stylistic choice, but as an ethical imperative for contemporary journalism. By focusing on verification, critical analysis, and deeper storytelling slow journalism emerges as an essential antidote to misinformation crisis.

Challenges of Sustainability and Innovation in the Digital Environment

The rapid digitalization of the media landscape has created a paradoxical environment where opportunities for innovation coexist with profound challenges to journalistic integrity and depth. A recurrent concern among participants was the tension between the need for speed and the erosion of reflective reporting. As a Paraguayan correspondent (P40) noted:

"The digital era has made news faster, but we lose reflection. The immediacy of digital platforms forces us to compress what we report, which limits our capacity to go deeper."

This sentiment was echoed by a Honduran digital media editor (P23) who stated:

"In the digital age, speed takes precedence, leaving little space for investigative work. This limits how deeply we can report stories."

Also, financial instability compounds these challenges. A Chilean investigative journalist (P39) reflected:

"Digitalization has caused precarious working conditions for journalists. Many of us work under self-managed, unstable environments with no job security."

An editor from El Salvador, added:

"Journalism is being forced to fit into new digital formats like TikTok. We must simplify content to match the medium, compromising its depth."

Despite these obstacles, digitalization has opened new opportunities for independent journalism. A Cuban journalist (P16) emphasized:

"The digital age presents a significant opportunity for the advancement of long-form journalism. It liberates us from the limitations of printed material, facilitating greater interaction and engagement

with the audience. Nevertheless, we are also constrained by the expectation for immediacy, as digital metrics serve as a driving force that compels us to prioritize rapid consumption over substantive engagement."

Nevertheless, the rise of misinformation is a significant threat. A Dominican journalist (P29) warned:

"Misinformation is a key challenge. Anyone can present information without journalist rigor, undermining professional credibility."

This was reinforced by a Bolivian journalist (P18):

"We are adapting to platforms that value engagement over quality. Journalism remains about telling stories, but now we must adapt to platforms that value speed and engagement over quality."

These perspectives illustrate the ongoing struggle within the industry to combat misinformation while maintaining credibility and depth in a landscape that increasingly values speed over substance. Lastly, the digital era's systemic transformation has shifted the very foundations of journalism. A Spanish journalist and editor (P19), described this shift as a "Copernican transformation:"

"Nothing will ever be the same again. This transformation is not just technological but systemic. It has fundamentally altered the news production and consumption landscape, largely driven by the pervasive influence of smartphones and other digital devices. I see it as a 'Copernican shift' in journalism, where everything we once knew has been upended."

He emphasizes that while this shift opens up unprecedented opportunities for journalists to explore new formats—such as podcasts, documentaries, and multimedia projects—it also introduces significant challenges. Journalists must balance using new tools with upholding journalism core principles: thoroughness, accuracy and truth. The balance is vital for maintaining journalistic integrity in an age focused on speed over substance. An Argentinian journalist (P9) noted that prioritizing immediacy can lead to poor results:

"The only urgency is a truck heading towards you; everything else can wait".

P11 said that journalism should prioritize thought over speed. In the same level, P10 and P13 emphasized that quality journalism takes time. As P13 put it:

"A story is meaningful if it moves the reader and is rigorously verified."

This delicate equilibrium is crucial for preserving journalistic integrity in an era that increasingly prioritizes speed and engagement over depth and substance.

Participants agree that although digital transformation facilitates broader access and audience reach, it demands that journalism consciously resist the commodification of speed over substance.

Cultural and Regional Nuances in the Adoption of Slow Journalism

The adoption of slow journalism is deeply shaped by the socio-political and economic contexts. In Ibero-America, structural challenges such as political instability, economic precariousness, and fragile media ecosystems have historically prioritized immediacy and quantity over depth. As a Venezuelan journalist (P12) observed,

"Financial pressures make it hard to fund long-form journalism; audiences expect free content, leaving little room for deep investigation."

Nevertheless, slow journalism has emerged as a form of resistance in these contexts. A Colombian journalist (P30) emphasized:

"Slow journalism lets us challenge dominant narratives, diving into the real truths behind events," highlighting its role in reclaiming narrative depth amid platform-driven superficiality.

In Spain, the integration of slow journalism has been more visible, supported by a consolidated tradition of investigative and narrative storytelling. Initiatives such as *Revista 5W* and *Libros del K.O.* reflect a persistent audience demand for thoughtful, long-form content. A Spanish journalist (P1) noted:

“We have cultivated a strong editorial culture that supports narrative and investigative depth, even amidst the digital acceleration.”

This was echoed by a Central American journalist (P26) and a Spanish correspondent (P28), who highlighted the existence of media environments that foster this approach. Likewise, a South American editor (P27) and a Caribbean reporter (P24) emphasized that Spain offers structural and cultural conditions that allow stories to unfold with time, making it a space where reflective journalism can thrive.

Thus, slow journalism is not merely a professional technique but a cultural stance aimed at reaffirming journalism’s civic responsibility in different regional realities.

Ethics, Innovation, and Sustainability in the Digital Era

The rapid development of digital technologies offers potential benefits as well as considerable challenges for journalism. Participants recognized the capacity of these tools to enhance the efficiency of data collection, pattern recognition, and verification procedures. A Peruvian journalist (P5) observed that smart technologies can augment traditional journalism by managing data-intensive responsibilities, thereby enabling journalists to concentrate on narrative construction and analytical tasks. In agreement, a Uruguayan journalist (P25) emphasized that such tools may improve operational efficiency while still preserving the indispensable human discernment required for profound analysis and interpretation.

Nevertheless, participants also expressed significant apprehension about the unintended repercussions of technological acceleration in newsrooms. They highlighted that automation and algorithmic optimization often privilege expediency and engagement metrics at the expense of investigative thoroughness and critical depth. As an Argentine journalist (P32) remarked,

“Using new technology fosters a culture of expedited production, compromising the critical analysis and depth that characterize high-quality journalism.”

Similarly, a Peruvian web editor (P34) cautioned:

“The allure of rapid content generation is substantial yet perilous.”

It is crucial for journalism to maintain its essential role in providing context, rather than capitulating to algorithmic imperatives.

This phenomenon risks intensifying fragmented and decontextualized information flows, where content is primarily designed to meet engagement targets rather than to advance the public interest. Participants feared that diminishing narrative depth and the decline of human-centered approaches could exacerbate the erosion of public trust, already fragile in an era shaped by misinformation and accelerated media dynamics.

In this context, slow journalism emerges not only as a practice but as an ethical stance. It reaffirms the irreplaceable value of human judgment, critical deliberation, and narrative richness—dimensions that technological tools cannot replicate. By privileging careful research, critical storytelling, and contextual interpretation, slow journalism positions itself as a safeguard against the homogenization and superficiality fostered by digital acceleration.

The findings suggest that the integration of new technologies into journalistic practices must be accompanied by a renewed commitment to the foundational values of journalism. While automation can assist in specific tasks, the core dimensions of journalism—critical thinking, ethical reflection, and the construction of meaningful narratives—must remain fundamentally human-led.

Slow journalism also presents a persuasive framework for fostering a more ethical and sustainable future for the profession. Confronted with business models that prioritize click-driven metrics and immediate financial returns, journalists are exploring alternative strategies such as audience-supported platforms, crowdfunding initiatives, and membership programs. A journalist from Honduras (P23) remarked:

"The true essence of journalism emerges only after the initial crises have subsided—engaging in thorough investigations and establishing connections among various elements."

In a comparable vein, a Cuban journalist (P17) observed that

"Slow journalism establishes a sustainable framework by cultivating loyalty, trust, and enhanced engagement—elements that fast news is unable to emulate."

Participants underscored the importance of shifting from disjointed updates to cohesive and meaningful narratives as one pathway to rebuilding public trust, while acknowledging that credibility is shaped by technological, cultural, and economic factors. As a Salvadoran journalist (P35) put it,

"Numerous readers continue to seek narratives that extend beyond mere headlines—articles that provide context and depth."

Thus, the incorporation of slow journalism into digital strategies should not be perceived as a nostalgic regression to past practices, but as an innovative adaptation aligned with broader societal expectations for dependable and thoughtful information. In this sense, slow journalism can be regarded as a crucial supporter of journalism's democratic functions, complementing other approaches necessary to confront the wider crisis of trust in an era of rapid digital communication.

This perspective also resonates with insights from interviews. A Peruvian writer and journalist (P10), who argued that in the digital era

"Journalism must shift from immediacy to a service-oriented model that selects information."

According to him, the slow narrative approach brings journalism closer to human consciousness, enhancing its democratic and civic function. Journalists from Spain (P20), Chile (P15) and Paraguay (P28) emphasized the value of human-centered storytelling to resist the noise. An Argentine journalist (P8) compared this approach to a "slow cooked dish," while a Mexican reporter (P4) highlighted how long form investigations grow over time, becoming lasting references.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Slow Journalism as a Deliberate Response to Media Acceleration

This research endeavors to examine the incorporation of slow journalism principles within the digital strategies of media outlets in Ibero-America and Spain, with the objective of enhancing credibility and contributing to the rebuilding of public trust. The results indicate that slow journalism serves not only as a response to the challenges associated with technological acceleration, but also as a proactive approach aimed at re-establishing connections with audiences through in-depth analysis, reflective practices, emotional ties, and high-quality storytelling (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023; Mendes & Marinho, 2024).

Journalism is undergoing a profound transformation, largely driven by digitalization, automation and technological innovation (Duan, 2023; Sheikh et al., 2023). Although these technological advances offer opportunities to improve efficiency in news production, they also present critical challenges to journalistic integrity and quality. The increasing emphasis on immediacy and volume, characteristic of the current media landscape (Dodds et al., 2023), responds to audience expectations for timely updates (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019; Newman et al., 2025). However, its predominance has sometimes come at the expense of rigorous reporting, thereby contributing to the spread of misinformation and, among other factors, to the erosion of public trust (Santos, 2023; Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020; Mesquita & de-Lima-Santos, 2023). In this context, slow journalism has emerged as a deliberate response, reclaiming the values of research, critical analysis, and narrative depth, and potentially contributing—together with other journalistic practices and structural reforms—to rebuilding public trust (Le Masurier, 2016; Rosique-Cedillo & Barranquero-Carretero, 2015). It is also an informative practice that constitutes a hybrid and transdisciplinary method of knowledge production—one that combines emotional, temporal, and interpretive dimensions beyond raw data. Rather than resisting technological change, many media outlets are finding ways to strategically integrate slow journalism practices

to complement the speed-driven digital ecosystem without compromising journalism standards (Ball, 2016; Drok & Hermans, 2016).

Addressing the Misinformation Crisis Through Depth and Verification

One of the clearest findings is the acknowledgment that news cycles influenced by automation often emphasize expediency at the expense of precision (Siitonen et al., 2024), which facilitates the rapid spread of misinformation across platforms (Markelius et al., 2024). The interviews highlighted that while immediacy remains highly valued by audiences (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019; Newman et al., 2025), slow journalism's commitment to fact-checking and contextual storytelling can provide complementary value by reinforcing verification and depth (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Santos, 2023). Consequently, its adoption within various media ecosystems reflects an effort to re-establish audience trust, underscoring that credibility depends not on speed alone, but on accountable and well-contextualized reporting (Peñafiel-Saiz et al., 2022).

Rethinking Sustainably and Public Engagement in Journalism

While slow journalism offers a strong ethical framework (Le Masurier, 2016; Mendes & Marinho, 2024), its implementation faces notable challenges, particularly regarding financial sustainability and audience engagement. The media environment has become increasingly driven by business models based on clicks, views and immediate returns (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020; Gómez-Mompart et al., 2015). Producing in-depth, investigative pieces requires time and resources that often conflict with the demands of rapid news cycles. However, slow journalism proposes a vision of sustainability that goes beyond the economic sphere and frames reporting as a rigorous and meaningful activity, valuable in itself and built to endure.

Despite these constraints, alternative models such frameworks, including audience-supported platforms, subscription models, and crowdfunding, are beginning to emerge as feasible avenues for the sustainability of initiatives (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020; Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023). These advancements indicate that ethical journalism and sustainability are not inherently incompatible, thereby establishing a framework for preserving journalistic integrity within the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Furthermore, the influence of slow journalism in restructuring the interplay among temporal dynamics, narrative construction, and journalistic merit has been identified as a significant focal point of discussion. In contrast to the prevailing industrial paradigm of rapidity characterizing much of contemporary media (Gómez-Mompart et al., 2015; Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022). Slow journalism posits that slowness can serve as a valuable resource for journalists, enabling more nuanced interpretations, enhancing storytelling depth, and fostering stronger audience engagement (Mendes & Marinho, 2024). Nonetheless, research also shows that many audiences continue to prioritize immediacy and accessibility in news consumption, which challenges the broader adoption of slower formats (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019; Newman et al., 2025).

The Cultural Dimensions

Significantly, the cultural particularities of the Ibero-American and Spanish contexts demonstrate that slow journalism is not a universally applicable approach; rather, it is a practice influenced by regional values, contextual realities, and the demands of democratic governance. In Latin America, the interplay of economic pressures, political instability, and a history of fragile media frameworks has frequently led to an emphasis on the quantity of news produced at the expense of journalistic quality (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020; Mesquita & De-Lima-Santos, 2023). Nonetheless, slow journalism has surfaced as a mode of resistance, presenting a deliberate approach to humanizing information and addressing the superficiality fostered by platform-driven news environments (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2022). In Spain, the well-established tradition of both investigative and narrative journalism (Rosique-Cedillo & Barranquero-Carretero, 2015) has enabled a more conspicuous incorporation of slow journalism into digital frameworks. Programs such as the 5W initiative illustrate a continual demand for comprehensive and introspective narrative construction (Peñafiel-Saiz et al., 2022). This trend underscores that the attraction of slow journalism is not merely a reactionary phenomenon; rather, it addresses more extensive societal demands for reliable and substantial narratives within a context characterized by an overabundance of information. Consequently, slow journalism functions not only as a professional reaction to technological influences but also serves as a comprehensive cultural and ethical position dedicated to maintaining the civic responsibilities and democratic roles of journalism.

New Values and the Role of Slow Journalism in the Digital Era

The relationship between technology and slow journalism is complex. While digital tools can improve efficiency in areas such as data collection and verification, they risk privileging speed and metrics over depth (Duan, 2023; Siitonen et al., 2024), producing fragmented coverage and a loss of context (Markelius et al., 2024). In this setting, slow journalism offers an alternative that emphasizes precision, narrative depth, and ethical discernment that technological processes alone cannot provide (Mendes & Marinho, 2024; Young & Hermida, 2024). Respondents also noted that technological tools may improve efficiency, freeing time for interpretation, analysis, and narrative construction—tasks inherently tied to human judgment.

At the same time, concerns persist that the growing reliance on expediency and engagement metrics undermines complexity and nuance, thereby weakening journalism's capacity to promote informed public understanding (Ball, 2016; Markelius et al., 2024). In response, slow journalism foregrounds accuracy, comprehensive investigation, and narrative richness (Manias-Muñoz et al., 2023; Mendes & Marinho, 2024), underscoring that the civic responsibilities of journalism require human discernment and ethical reflection rather than full dependence on automated processes.

The incorporation of slow journalism into digital strategies may thus contribute to ongoing debates on more ethical and sustainable models of media (Drok & Hermans, 2016). Rather than a nostalgic revival of traditional practices, it can be understood as an adaptive innovation that aligns with societal demands for trustworthy and reflective information (Mendes & Marinho, 2024). However, evidence also shows that immediacy continues to be highly valued by audiences, particularly younger ones, which limits the prospects of slow journalism as a universal solution (Karlsson & Clerwall, 2019; Young & Hermida, 2024).

The findings of this study indicate that although slow journalism faces significant challenges—especially regarding financial sustainability and competition with commercially driven, fast-paced media—it also presents opportunities for innovation through alternative business models (Agirre-Maiora et al., 2020) and the strategic integration of digital technologies (Santos, 2023).

Future Research

This study identifies two significant limitations that should be addressed in subsequent research. Initially, the sample is confined to a moderately sized subset of interviews conducted with journalists from Ibero-America and Spain. Although these regions provide significant insights, they do not comprehensively reflect the variety of practices and viewpoints present in other geographical or cultural contexts. Future studies should therefore include comparative analyses with non-Spanish-speaking regions to foster a more global understanding and to dialogue with similar research conducted elsewhere. Secondly, the analysis prioritizes the perspectives of media professionals, while giving little attention to audience expectations and behaviors, particularly regarding their preference for immediacy versus depth. Further investigations could also expand to comparative, cross regional studies and include audience-centered approaches to better understand how trust is constructed in diverse contexts. Additionally, examining the relationship between business models, technological innovation, and credibility within different media ecosystems may provide further insights into the structural conditions shaping slow journalism.

In this broader perspective, slow journalism should not be regarded as a stand-alone remedy, but as one possible approach among others that can contribute to rebuilding trust and sustaining the democratic role of journalism in accelerated media environments.

Author contributions: **PP-F:** project administration, conceptualization, investigation, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft; **CF:** conceptualization, investigation; **AG-C:** writing – original draft; **EG-E:** methodology, writing – review & editing. All authors approved the final version of the article.

Funding: This article was supported by the Office of Research of the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (Project Code: A-167-2025), as part of the XIII Research Incentive Contest.

Ethics declaration: All interviewees were fully informed, provided authorization to participate, and were anonymized. As the research involves minimal risk and does not include the collection of sensitive personal data, the study meets the criteria for exemption from formal ethics approval under institutional and international guidelines.

Declaration of interest: The authors declared no competing interest.

Data availability: Data generated or analyzed during this study are available from the authors on request.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. People interviewed

No	Geographic context	Orientation	Years of Experience	Interview Duration
P1	Spain	Digital	20+	25 min
P2	Mexico	Traditional	19+	45 min
P3	Colombia/the USA	Digital	16	35 min
P4	Mexico	Digital	21	40 min
P5	Peru/Colombia	Digital	21	45 min
P6	Argentina/Mexico	Traditional/digital	21	49 min
P7	Peru	Traditional/digital	17	30 min
P8	Spain	Traditional	29	38 min
P9	Argentina	Digital	17	32 min
P10	Peru	Traditional	27	55 min
P11	Spain	Digital (project editor) and traditional (book author)	33	49 min
P12	Venezuela	Digital (collaborates with media) and traditional (edit books)	20	
P13	Venezuela	Digital (media editor)	10	72 min
P14	Ecuador	Digital (media editor) and traditional (book author)	26	36 min
P15	Chile	Digital (media founder)	17	32 min
P16	Cuba	Digital (media founder) and traditional (book author)	10	20 min
P17	Cuba	Digital (collaborates with media)	11	45 min
P18	Bolivia	Digital (media founder) and traditional (book author)	25	38 min
P19	Spain	Digital (media co-founder)	18	30 min
P20	Spain	Digital (international correspondent) and traditional (book author)	28	40 min
P21	Argentina/based in Paraguay	Digital (media reporter)	10	44 min
P22	Brazil	Digital (media director) and traditional (book author)	35	35 min
P23	Honduras	Digital (media founder)	22	48 min
P24	Puerto Rico	Digital (collaborates with media) and traditional (book author)	19	60 min
P25	Uruguay/Argentina	Digital (media co-founder)	17	45 min
P26	Spain/based in El Salvador	Digital (collaborates with media) and traditional (book author)	26	35 min
P27	Ecuador	Digital (collaborates with media and edits projects) and traditional	17	39 min
P28	Paraguay	Traditional (works for a national circulation outlet)	15	23 min
P29	Dominican Republic	Digital (collaborates with media)	12	30 min
P30	Colombia	Digital (media director) and traditional (book author)	17	26 min
P31	Argentina	Digital (leads online project) and traditional (book author)	18	26 min
P32	Argentina/based in Peru	Digital (media editor)	15	27 min
P33	Costa Rica	Digital (media editor)	6	20 min
P34	Peru/Panama	Digital (media editor)	10	25 min
P35	El Salvador	Digital (collaborates with media)	22	42 min
P36	Spain	Traditional (editor and book author)	24	44 min
P37	Colombia	Digital (collaborates with media) and traditional (book author)	20	28 min
P38	Argentina	Digital (media editor)	26	43 min
P39	Chile	Digital (collaborates with media) and traditional (book author)	30	28 min
P40	Argentina-Spain/Paraguay	Digital (correspondent)	16	43 min

APPENDIX B

Table B1. Themes, categories, and subcategories of slow journalism

Key themes	Category	Subcategory
Foundations	▪ Context	▪ Contextualization ▪ Complex narratives
	▪ Narrative time	▪ Depth vs. superficiality ▪ Reflection vs. immediacy
Ethical responsibility	▪ Truthfulness	▪ Verification
	▪ Active listening	▪ Empathy ▪ Human focus
	▪ Civic role	▪ Commitment ▪ Ethical rigor
Trust	▪ Human experience	▪ Audience trust ▪ Skepticism
Credibility	▪ Challenges ▪ Algorithm-driven erosion ▪ Speed pressure ▪ Misinformation	▪ Slow journalism as remedy
Sustainability	▪ Job precarity ▪ Limited funding ▪ Monetizing long-form content	
Innovation	▪ Digital adaptation	▪ New storytelling formats ▪ Audience engagement
	▪ Technology & AI	▪ Technical support ▪ Automation risks ▪ Human judgment
	▪ Socio-political context	▪ Economic pressures ▪ Media ecosystem fragility
		▪ Narrative traditions ▪ Resistance
Ibero-America vs. Spain	▪ Regional practices	▪ Rejection of superficiality ▪ Counter-narratives ▪ Defends democratic values
Cultural and political resistance	▪ Slow journalism as resistance	

