

## Netflix TV fiction series showrunners' interaction and communication strategies on Twitter<sup>1</sup>

*Estrategias de interacción y comunicación de showrunners de series de ficción televisiva de Netflix en Twitter*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v2021.7772>

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This paper studies the techniques used by showrunners to communicate with their audience on the social network Twitter. Following a literature review of the television landscape resulting from streaming services and social media, the techniques, content, and audiovisual-textual elements present in the Twitter activity of the showrunners of original Netflix TV series are quantitatively and qualitatively examined. In spite of the heterogeneous activity, the findings indicate repeated use of the TV series' hashtag, informative/promotional tweets, and external links.

**KEYWORDS:** TV series, showrunner, audience, Netflix, Twitter.

*Este artículo estudia cómo los showrunners se comunican con su audiencia en la red social Twitter. Tras una revisión literaria sobre el panorama televisivo derivado de la implantación de servicios de streaming y redes sociales, se analizan cuantitativa y cualitativamente las técnicas, el contenido y los elementos audiovisuales y textuales que utilizan en Twitter los showrunners de series originales de Netflix. A pesar de la heterogeneidad de su gestión, los resultados reflejan un uso reiterado del hashtag de la serie de televisión, de los tuits informativos/promocionales y de los enlaces externos.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Series de televisión, showrunner, audiencia, Netflix, Twitter.

### How to cite:

Higueras-Ruiz, M. J. & Alberich-Pascual, J. (2021). Netflix TV fiction series showrunners' interaction and communication strategies on Twitter. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, e7772. <https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v2021.7772>

<sup>1</sup> This article has been written during the pre-doctoral contract: "Formación de Profesorado Universitario" (FPU 15/00737) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain. Project National Plan "Transmedialización y crowdsourcing en las narrativas de ficción y no ficción audiovisuales, periodísticas, dramáticas y literarias", (2018-2020) (Ref. CSO2017-85965-P) Domingo Sánchez-Mesa Martínez and Jordi Alberich-Pascual (2018-2020).

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Submitted: 02/04/20. Accepted: 27/10/20. Published: 17/03/21.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent changes to the business model in the television industry have led to the revolution of this media, closely related to Internet growth in the past decade (Rincón, 2011), as well as the implementation of streaming or VOD (Video on Demand) platforms and social networks (Lotz, 2016; Van-Esler, 2016).

In today's television industry it is also worth noting the popularity acquired by the showrunner figure: the executive producer who leads the production process of the television series, supervises all phases and holds maximum responsibility for executive and creative aspects (Higuera-Ruiz et al., 2018). The relevance of the showrunner figured in this study stems from their work in the promotion processes of fiction series, where their role is to promote a personal brand that is recognizable to the audience, contributing to the assignment of authorship of the work (Mittell, 2015), thus bestowing these professionals and their projects with critical and cultural prestige (Cascajosa-Virino, 2016). This is why the names of certain showrunners appear on advertising slogans, as a promotional tactic within the marketing strategies developed by the Hollywood television industry (Newman & Levine, 2012).

For their part, streaming services affect both the transformation of the process of creation, production and distribution of fiction series (Cascajosa-Virino, 2018), and television consumption forms and habits (Guerrero et al., 2017; Lacalle-Zalduendo & Gómez-Morales, 2017). Content is distributed over the Internet with no fixed linear programming schedule, and audiences can view content whenever and on whichever device they prefer, by paying a fee (Ojer & Capapé, 2013).

In this complicated context, it is apparent that the platform Netflix has gained importance, as a result of leadership in its home market, the United States, and in its international expansion (Izquierdo-Castillo, 2015, p. 819), and more specifically the *Netflix Original* seal:<sup>4</sup> original

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<sup>4</sup> Not all projects that bear this seal are produced or co-produced by Netflix (Wayne, 2018). This work includes those that do present this characteristic and that are released for the first time in full seasons on the platform.

content produced or co-produced by the platform itself. Not only do these projects build up a brand image, but they also foster subscription, as they remain in the library exclusively and indefinitely, and they respond to the interests and likes of the audience, given that they are created as a result of the audience behavior data gathered on the platform (Cornelio-Marí, 2020; Fernández-Manzano et al., 2016).

As opposed to the traditional diachronic business model, Netflix's original content entails the synchronous creation, production and release of all episodes of a season. The showrunner is hired to produce a full television project without a prior pilot episode: a method known as *straight-to-series* (Carrillo-Bernal, 2018). The release of the full season eliminates the serialized screening and weekly waits associated with traditional television broadcasting, in favor of audience loyalty and stability in advertising or subscription income (Izquierdo-Castillo, 2015, p. 822). It also enables viewers to watch several episodes in one sitting, a practice known as *binge-watching* (Matrix, 2014).

Due to the growing hybridization of the Internet and television within the context of today's participatory culture, communities of followers of fiction series also empower and give prominence to such series on social networks (Pearson, 2010; Scolari & Establés, 2017). Viewers acquire a renewed and emerging active role, as part of a new type of audience, who are involved in the collective following and supervision of television projects, requiring agents within the streaming industry to use new attraction and stimulation techniques and strategies on social networks (Phalen, 2018; Wayne, 2018).

## TWITTER AND THE CONTEMPORARY FICTION TELEVISION INDUSTRY

According to the annual study on global Internet use, *Global Digital 2019 Report*, there are 4.388 billion Internet users, an increase of 9.1% compared to the previous year (Kemp, 2019). This report also states that there are 3.484 billion active social media users worldwide, growing by 9% from January, 2018 to January, 2019. Of these users, 98% visited a social network or messaging service, and 83% actively participated in one or more social networks, the following having the greatest volume

in terms of millions of monthly active accounts: Facebook (2 271), YouTube (1 900), WhatsApp (1 500), Instagram (1 000), Twitter (326), LinkedIn (303) and Snapchat (287).

Based on these data, the television industry has fostered the full inclusion of social networks in marketing campaigns for television series, both to capture and maintain the loyalty of the public, and to manage and protect the product brand (McNutt, 2018; Simons, 2014). In this regard, Segado et al. (2015) express: “Scientific literature shows how social networks have not only changed television consumption patterns but they have also affected the way in which television channels promote their content through these new tools” (p. 232).

The social network platform Twitter is of particular importance due to its connection with the television industry, and the attention received by audience and social television studies (Deller, 2011). Social activity surrounding an audiovisual product increases its popularity, having a positive effect on consumption (Halpern et al., 2016) and on possibilities of renewal (Phalen, 2018). Twitter’s capacity to promote audiovisual projects and to attract and maintain viewers by reinforcing their involvement is of particular interest to VOD platforms. In the network society, “for a streaming original, being *watched* is less significant than being *talked about* in a way that motivates people to add or maintain a subscription for the service” (Navar-Gill, 2017, p. 425).

The interest of network managers, producers and programs in the comments, replies and mentions on Twitter related to the world of television (Gallego, 2013) leads them to apply engagement strategies, such as posting different tweets, incorporating external links and the use of audiovisual elements (Quintas-Froufe & González-Neira, 2014). In the case of Netflix Spain, the characteristics of the tweets with the greatest level of engagement are the creation of original content, the use of specific language and the use of humor and suspense (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018).

Twitter is particularly useful in the case of fiction series because it helps to maintain and increase the desire to continue talking about them between episodes and seasons. Television networks and distribution platforms create profiles on which they promote initiatives to engage the audience (Latorre-Martínez et al., 2018), as well as specific accounts

for each television series associated to members of their writers' room (Navar-Gill, 2017). Such profiles are usually managed by professionals, known as *community managers* (Castro-Mariño, 2016), who use the corresponding hashtag to promote the television project.

The relevance and possibilities of using Twitter while the program is on the air should also be noted (Guo, 2019). In this case, the main functions are communication with other viewers and evaluation of the content and the actors (Buschow et al., 2014). According to Halpern et al. (2016), while audiences prefer to check on Facebook for information about the programs that they watch, Twitter is their preferred option to find out the opinions of other users.

The products shown on television and the information published on social media complement each other (García-Avilés, 2012). Viewer comments provide quick and direct feedback, enabling showrunners to make the appropriate changes to the project (Harrington et al., 2013; James, 2017), and retweets are highly relevant to the dissemination and credibility of television content (Lin & Peña, 2013).

The personal profiles of showrunners are often accessible on Twitter (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Thanks to their presence, recognition and popularity on this social network, they are sometimes crucial to the public image of the fiction series, even becoming considered as celebrities (Phalen, 2018). As a result, these professionals use their accounts as a forum to build an author brand, using the design of their profile on the social network and applying certain techniques to show content and elements to followers in the messages they publish, thus strategically developing their connections with the audience of the projects that they produce (Higuera-Ruiz et al., 2019; Navar-Gill, 2018).

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study is to determine the strategies used by showrunners of American fiction series produced by Netflix in their interaction and communication with viewers on Twitter. To that end, we have quantitatively and qualitatively examined which: 1) techniques; 2) type of content; and 3) audiovisual and textual elements are included

in the tweets and retweets posted by showrunners to connect with their audience, both in relation to the account of the fiction series and to the Netflix platform.

The study sample is formed by the official profiles –with the verified account badge– of showrunners of American live-action fiction television series on Twitter, which have been produced or co-produced by the Netflix streaming platform, are part of its library and include the label “A Netflix Original Series”. The final sample was limited, for the purpose of current relevance, to showrunners of series whose first or subsequent seasons were released between June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Given that audience engagement and interaction on social networks is particularly relevant during the promotional period prior to the broadcast of the television project (Gallego, 2013), field work and the specific monitoring time necessary to quantify the tweets and retweets of each profile, as well as their examination, was limited to the four weeks prior to the release of the full season of the series on the platform.

The American market was selected due to the greater recognition of the showrunner figure in this industry, pioneer in the adoption of new platforms (Ojer & Capapé, 2013); the variants introduced in the production of fiction series, as a result of the popularity and specific characteristics of the Netflix service and its original content (Jenner, 2014); and the important connection between American television and Twitter (Segado et al., 2015).

Finally, taking into account the prior contributions by Lin and Peña (2013), Buschow et al. (2014), Quintas-Froufe and González-Neira (2014, 2016), Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018), and Navar-Gill (2017), the results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Twitter profiles and tweets monitored are presented in a series of tables, prepared independently in relation to the objectives and revision elements proposed.

After applying the established selection criteria: 1. Name of the Netflix fiction series; 2. Season premiere; 3. Release date; 4. Showrunner/s; and 5. Official Twitter account, the study sample of showrunner profiles on Twitter is composed of 25 verified accounts,

although we examined 26 results due to the release of two seasons of the same series during the defined period.<sup>5</sup>

Firstly, a descriptive approximation was carried out with regards to the numeric and visual data of the profiles analyzed. Next, answers were sought to the three research questions, through the manual counting and textual analysis of the tweets posted:

- Q1. Which techniques are used in the tweets and retweets posted by the showrunners included in the sample in relation to the fiction series and to the Netflix platform? Tweets including the hashtag, mentions or retweets to the official account of the television series produced by each showrunner were counted, as well as those to the official Netflix account in the United States.
- Q2. What type of content is used in the tweets posted by the showrunners included in the sample? The published messages were analyzed and classified according to six content categories, selected in accordance with the theoretical review: information/promotion, participation, appeal/help, questions, appreciation, and other subjects.
- Q3. Which audiovisual and textual elements are used in the tweets posted by the showrunners included in the sample? The inclusion of hashtags, emoticons, photographs, videos, gifs and links used in the tweets was taken into account.

The results obtained respond to the questions related to the theoretical basis presented above. They also make it possible to determine the possibilities on Twitter for creators of fiction series to build a brand image that contributes to the assignment of authorship, and to their critical and cultural recognition by audiences.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

For the description of the profiles included in the sample, we observed both the numerical data: 1. Date of creation of the profile; 2. Number

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<sup>5</sup> Table Annex 1: Presentation of the criteria and selection of the sample of showrunner profiles on Twitter. <https://bit.ly/2OGQGoa>

of tweets (TW); 3. Number of followed (FD); 4. Number of followers (FO); and 5. Number of Likes (LK); as well as the descriptive data on the means used to connect with the fiction series: 1. Images of the series in the profile photograph (PRO); 2. Images of the series in the header photograph (HDR); 3. References to the position of the showrunner in the biography (BIO).

After observing the profiles, it can be noted that activity varies significantly, as shown by the number of followers –from 2.19 million to 2 436– and tweets posted –from 40 900 to 14–. There are also differences in the relationship between the account interface with the television series. In 68% of the cases reference is made to the series in the biography and, to a lesser extent (36%), it appears in the header photograph. By contrast, the majority of the showrunners (88%) show no connection to the fiction television series through their profile photograph.

It can be noted that in no case does the date of creation of the account coincide with the promotion period prior to the release of the audiovisual project, but rather between two to eleven years before this date, contributing to the personal nature of the account.

#### TECHNIQUES USED IN THE TWEETS AND RETWEETS POSTED BY THE SHOWRUNNERS

The tweets (TW) and retweets (RT) posted during the established time period were quantified and classified according to the techniques employed: with regards to the television product (1. Percentage of tweets using the official hashtag of the television series (HSG); 2. Percentage of tweets mentioning the official account of the television series (MEN); 3. Percentage of retweets originating from the official account of the television series (RT); and with regards to the Netflix platform in the United States; (4. Percentage of tweets using the official hashtag of the United States Netflix platform (HSG); 5. Percentage of tweets mentioning the official account of Netflix United States (MEN); 6. Percentage of retweets originating from the official account of Netflix United States (RT).



TABLE 1  
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE OF SHOWRUNNER PROFILES ON TWITTER (JUNE 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019)

| Showrunner              | Twitter          | Date of creation | Numerical data |       |        |        |     | Descriptive data |     |  |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|------------------|-----|--|
|                         |                  |                  | TW             | FD    | FO     | LK     | PRO | HDR              | BIO |  |
| Cheo Hodari Coker       | @cheo_coker      | 04/2016          | 3 555          | 3197  | 20.3 k | 2 580  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Patrick Somerville      | @patrickerville  | 08/2010          | 4 303          | 938   | 3 145  | 1 129  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Mike Flanagan           | @flanaganfilm    | 01/2011          | 3 491          | 458   | 40.6 k | 3 076  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa  | @WriterRAS       | 07/2015          | 1 003          | 63    | 213 k  | 2 492  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Joel Hodgson            | @JoelGHodgson    | 08/2013          | 3 439          | 1 225 | 67.8 k | 7 599  | X   | ✓                | ✓   |  |
| Brad Peyton             | @bradpeyton      | 07/2012          | 673            | 25    | 3 840  | 50     | X   | X                | X   |  |
| Jeff Franklin           | @fullhouseguy    | 05/2011          | 511            | 22    | 26.1 k | 34     | X   | ✓                | ✓   |  |
| Brad Wright             | @bradtravelers   | 04/2016          | 1 529          | 471   | 10.2 k | 6 349  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Leslye Headland         | @LeslyeHeadland  | 08/2013          | 3 740          | 948   | 9480   | 10.4 k | X   | X                | X   |  |
| Gloria Calderón Kellelt | @everythingloria | 08/2008          | 10.8 k         | 812   | 44 k   | 46.6 k | ✓   | ✓                | ✓   |  |
| Steve Blackman          | @SteveBlackmanTV | 08/2010          | 857            | 321   | 5 796  | 33     | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| Mitchell Hurwitz        | @MitchHurwitz    | 08/2010          | 352            | 577   | 91.9 k | 33     | X   | X                | X   |  |
| Brit Marling            | @britmarling     | 03/2009          | 652            | 187   | 106 k  | 80     | X   | X                | X   |  |
| Lauren Lungerich        | @laurenei        | 03/2009          | 2 114          | 102   | 7 322  | 3 375  | X   | ✓                | ✓   |  |
| Jarrad Paul             | @JarradPaul      | 06/2009          | 909            | 436   | 24.2 k | 548    | X   | X                | X   |  |
| Ryan O'Connell          | @ryanoconn       | 08/2010          | 506            | 525   | 42.8 k | 4 681  | X   | X                | ✓   |  |
| David H. Steinberg      | @DavidHSteinberg | 01/2012          | 5 855          | 532   | 4 201  | 5 052  | X   | ✓                | ✓   |  |

| Showrunner                 | Twitter        | Date of creation | Numerical data |        |        |        | Descriptive data |     |     |  |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|-----|-----|--|
|                            |                |                  | TW             | FD     | FO     | LK     | PRO              | HDR | BIO |  |
| Rightor Doyle <sup>a</sup> | @RightorDoyle  | 01/2014          | 14             | 208    | 2 436  | 2 709  | ✗                | ✗   | ✗   |  |
| Liz Feldman                | @thelizfeldman | 01/2009          | 6 170          | 809    | 28.3 k | 51.6 k | ✓                | ✓   | ✓   |  |
| Ildy Modrovich             | @ldymojo       | 12/2014          | 1 936          | 175    | 47.1 k | 16.5 k | ✓                | ✓   | ✓   |  |
| Joe Henderson              | @Henderson_Joe | 11/2008          | 11.9 k         | 1 135  | 32.9 k | 13 k   | ✗                | ✓   | ✓   |  |
| Ava DuVernay               | @ava           | 06/2008          | 40.9 k         | 12.8 k | 2.19 M | 153 k  | ✗                | ✓   | ✓   |  |
| Lauren Morelli             | @lomorelli     | 01/2011          | 1 944          | 357    | 38.7 k | 1 750  | ✗                | ✗   | ✗   |  |
| Neal Baer                  | @NealBaer      | 04/2009          | 5 252          | 191    | 12.1 k | 2 914  | ✗                | ✗   | ✓   |  |
| Kevin Hench                | @KevinHench    | 12/2011          | 800            | 472    | 6 114  | 1 916  | ✗                | ✗   | ✗   |  |

<sup>a</sup> The account belonging to Rightor Doyle was active at the time of conducting the study, but his profile cannot currently be viewed on Twitter.

Source: The authors.

The results show varied activity in the posting of tweets and retweets, and in the connection between the account of the television series and the Netflix platform in the United States. Despite the fact that 50% of the profiles reach the sum of 28 tweets and retweets in total, an average of one tweet or retweet per day, there are showrunners whose use of the social network is limited.

Over half of the accounts (61.53%) include the hashtag of the television series on at least one occasion, but only two profiles use it in more than half of their tweets –@Ildymojo (81.21%) and @SteveBlackmanTV (63.15%)–.

These figures are even lower in the case of mentions made to the account of the television series: 50% of the profiles mention it at least once, but none do so in half of their tweets. Retweets are also used at least once by 50% of the showrunners, but to a significantly limited extent.

The data suggest very little interaction with the account of Netflix United States: at least on one occasion 23.07% of the profiles use the hashtag, 45.30% mention the account and 3.84% share its content.

#### TYPES OF CONTENT INCLUDED IN THE TWEETS POSTED BY THE SHOWRUNNERS

The tweets posted during the time period were classified according to the following content categories, which are not mutually exclusive: 1. Information/promotion; 2. Participation; 3. Appeal/help; 4. Questions; 5. Appreciation; and 6. Other subjects.

The results show that the showrunners post tweets with very similar types of content. On over half of the profiles (57.69%), at least half of the tweets fall within the category of information/promotion related to the television series: links to the trailer, countdown to the release date, photographs of the production process and reviews and news from other media. The model of tweet posted the day prior to the project's premiere is particularly noteworthy:

TABLE 2  
TECHNIQUES USED IN THE TWEETS AND RETWEETS POSTED BY THE SHOWRUNNERS IN TWITTER IN RELATION  
TO THE FICTION SERIES AND TO THE US NETFLIX PLATFORM

| Twitter          | Time                | Total |    |      | TV Series |      |      | Netflix US |      |     |
|------------------|---------------------|-------|----|------|-----------|------|------|------------|------|-----|
|                  |                     | TW    | RT | HSG  | HSG       | MEN  | RT   | HSG        | MEN  | RT  |
| @cheo_coker      | 25/05/18 - 22/06/18 | 50    | 68 | -    | -         | -    | 2.9  | -          | -    | -   |
| @pattickerville  | 24/08/18 - 21/09/18 | 5     | 4  | -    | -         | -    | -    | -          | -    | -   |
| @flanaganfilm    | 14/09/18 - 12/10/18 | 41    | 8  | -    | -         | 4.8  | 12.5 | -          | 2.4  | -   |
| @WriterRAS       | 28/09/18 - 26/10/18 | 76    | 1  | 27.6 | 2.6       | -    | -    | 21.0       | 1.3  | -   |
| @JoelGHodgson    | 25/10/18 - 22/11/18 | 11    | 1  | 9.0  | -         | -    | -    | -          | 9.0  | -   |
| @bradpeyton      | 26/10/18 - 23/11/18 | 18    | -  | 11.1 | -         | -    | -    | -          | 16.6 | -   |
| @fullhouseguy    | 16/11/18 - 14/12/18 | 2     | -  | -    | -         | -    | -    | -          | -    | -   |
| @bradtravellers  | 16/11/18 - 14/12/18 | 14    | 20 | 42.8 | 21.4      | -    | -    | -          | 42.8 | -   |
| @LeslyeHeadland  | 04/01/19 - 01/02/19 | 32    | 20 | -    | 3.1       | 15.0 | -    | -          | 6.2  | -   |
| @everythingloria | 11/01/19 - 08/02/19 | 174   | 37 | 0.5  | 16.0      | 10.8 | -    | -          | 1.1  | 2.7 |
| @SteveBlackmanTV | 18/01/19 - 15/02/19 | 19    | 4  | 63.1 | 15.7      | 25.0 | 42.1 | 36.8       | -    | -   |
| @MitchHurwitz    | 15/02/19 - 15/03/19 | 1     | 1  | -    | -         | -    | -    | -          | -    | -   |
| @britmarling     | 22/02/19 - 22/03/19 | 6     | 1  | 16.6 | 33.3      | 100  | -    | -          | -    | -   |
| @laurenei        | 01/03/19 - 29/03/19 | 3     | 5  | 33.3 | 33.3      | 40.0 | -    | -          | -    | -   |
| @WriterRAS       | 08/03/19 - 05/04/19 | 35    | -  | 45.7 | -         | -    | -    | 2.8        | -    | -   |
| @JarradPaul      | 15/03/19 - 12/04/19 | 6     | 4  | 16.6 | 16.6      | 75.0 | 16.6 | -          | -    | -   |

|                  |                     |     |     |      |      |      |      |     |      |   |
|------------------|---------------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|---|
| @ryanocorn       | 15/03/19 - 12/04/19 | 18  | 24  | -    | -    | -    | -    | -   | -    | - |
| @DavidHSteinberg | 18/03/19 - 15/04/19 | 62  | 94  | 45.1 | -    | -    | -    | -   | 6.4  | - |
| @RightorDoyle    | 27/03/19 - 24/04/19 | 4   | 4   | 25.0 | -    | 50.0 | -    | -   | -    | - |
| @thelizfeldman   | 05/04/19 - 03/05/19 | 7   | 14  | -    | 14.2 | 14.2 | -    | -   | 14.2 | - |
| @Ildymojo        | 10/04/19 - 08/05/19 | 64  | -   | 81.2 | 1.5  | -    | -    | -   | -    | - |
| @Henderson_Joe   | 10/04/19 - 08/05/19 | 67  | 129 | 20.8 | -    | 7.4  | -    | -   | -    | - |
| @ava             | 03/05/19 - 31/05/19 | 176 | 261 | 29.5 | 1.1  | -    | 0.5  | 2.8 | -    | - |
| @lomorelli       | 10/05/19 - 07/06/19 | 7   | 4   | -    | -    | 25.0 | -    | -   | -    | - |
| @NealBaer        | 10/05/19 - 07/06/19 | 12  | 21  | 41.6 | 25.0 | 33.3 | 66.6 | -   | -    | - |
| @KevinHench      | 24/05/19 - 21/06/19 | 3   | -   | -    | -    | -    | -    | -   | -    | - |

Source: The authors.

TABLE 3  
 TYPES OF CONTENT INCLUDED IN THE TWEETS POSTED BY  
 THE SHOWRUNNERS IN TWITTER

| Twitter          | Content Categories |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                  | 1                  | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    |
| @cheo_coker      | 54.0               | -    | -    | -    | 2.0  | 46.0 |
| @patrickerville  | -                  | -    | -    | -    | -    | 100  |
| @flanaganfilm    | 82.9               | 2.4  | -    | -    | -    | 17.0 |
| @WriterRAS       | 30.2               | 1.3  | -    | -    | -    | 68.4 |
| @JoelGHodgson    | 63.6               | 27.2 | -    | -    | 18.1 | 18.1 |
| @bradpeyton      | 33.3               | -    | -    | -    | 5.5  | 55.5 |
| @fullhouseguy    | 50.0               | -    | -    | -    | -    | 50.0 |
| @bradtravelers   | 50.0               | -    | 14.2 | 7.1  | 14.2 | 28.5 |
| @LeslyeHeadland  | 3.1                | 3.1  | 6.2  | 6.1  | 3.1  | 78.1 |
| @everythingloria | 18.3               | 4.5  | 1.1  | 4.5  | 8.6  | 67.2 |
| @SteveBlackmanTV | 73.6               | 10.5 | -    | -    | 10.5 | 21.0 |
| @MitchHurwitz    | -                  | -    | -    | -    | -    | 100  |
| @britmarling     | 66.6               | -    | -    | -    | -    | 33.3 |
| @laurenei        | 66.6               | -    | -    | -    | -    | 33.3 |
| @WriterRAS       | 40.0               | 2.8  | -    | 11.4 | -    | 54.2 |
| @JarradPaul      | 66.6               | -    | -    | -    | -    | 33.3 |
| @ryanoconn       | 33.3               | 16.6 | -    | 5.5  | 5.5  | 61.1 |
| @DavidHSteinberg | 58.0               | 4.8  | 1.6  | -    | 12.9 | 35.4 |
| @RightorDoyle    | 50.0               | -    | -    | -    | 50.0 | -    |
| @thelizfeldman   | 57.1               | -    | -    | -    | 28.5 | 42.8 |
| @Ildymojo        | 67.1               | 1.56 | 3.1  | 7.8  | 10.9 | 17.1 |
| @Henderson_Joe   | 22.3               | 2.9  | -    | 1.4  | 1.4  | 76.1 |
| @ava             | 32.9               | -    | 0.5  | 1.1  | 10.2 | 57.3 |
| @lomorelli       | 28.5               | -    | -    | -    | 14.2 | 57.1 |
| @NealBaer        | 66.6               | 41.6 | -    | 8.3  | -    | 25.0 |
| @KevinHench      | 66.6               | -    | -    | -    | -    | 33.3 |

Source: The authors.

One more pic to celebrate the #CAOS drop that's happening tonight at midnight on #Netflix. Kiernan and Chance, on the VERY first day of filming! It was the spider scene!! Now they're all grown up, but back then, they look liked babies! Love them so much! #Sabrina (Aguirre-Sacasa, 2018).

It is also worth noting the importance of tweets related to other subjects: 46.15% of the accounts publish such content in at least 50% of their tweets. Such tweets include support for other audiovisual projects, news on sports or politics and social, ideological or cultural opinions that, in certain cases, have a connection to the television series:

America was never great. There was always someone at the bottom. Someone being oppressed, enslaved, interned, caged, deported. How did those people survive? Family bonds. Both genetic family + community as family. That's what #QUEENSUGAR is about. Our family is back June 12 (DuVernay, 2019).

Tweets of appreciation are used at least once by 57.69% of the profiles. These messages are addressed both to the public and to all the professionals involved in producing the series:

A year ago, we were cancelled. Today, #LuciferSeason4 is on Netflix!! These episodes are for you, Lucifans. Thanks for fighting so damn hard so that we could make them. #Lucifer (Henderson, 2019).

We found very little data with regards to categories of content related to the audience, such as participation, appeal/help and questions, which did not exceed 50% of tweets on any of the accounts. Nevertheless, we did find important examples of messages calling for participation in events and promotional activities:

Next up 5808 Sunset Blvd. free @OneDayAtATime food truck!! Come out & let us feed you & give you high fives!!" (Calderón Kellett, 2019).

Tweets calling for the help of viewers to disseminate the television series:

#Travelers drops this Friday Dec 14th! So, if you like season 3, tell the world! Good reviews and ratings on IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes can help us a lot. (And if you don't like it, well, please keep that to yourself;) @TRVLRSeries @netflix @EricMcCormack @Carrie\_Mudd (Wright, 2018).

Tweets including questions to stimulate the audience:

Are you seeing doublesdoubles? Then you must be watching Ep. 119 of #Sabrinanetflix. Will the prophecy be fulfilled?? #CAOS (Aguirre-Sacasa, 2019).

#### AUDIOVISUAL AND TEXTUAL ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE TWEETS POSTED BY THE SHOWRUNNERS

We quantified the number of tweets posted during the time period using the following audiovisual and textual elements, which are not mutually exclusive: 1. Hashtags; 2. Emoticons; 3. Photographs; 4. Videos; 5. Gifs; and 6. Links.

The data obtained suggest a significant preference for the use of external links: 30.76% of the accounts include them in all of the tweets posted, and 92.30% in at least half of them. The links connect the tweets to the websites of audiovisual communication media, or to the social networks of the showrunners themselves.

The use of different hashtags can be observed, particularly that of the television series or different versions thereof, depending on the season promoted. In total, 26.92% of the accounts use hashtags in at least half of their tweets, and 73.07% use them on at least one occasion.

A limited use of emoticons can be found: they are used at least once by 46.15% of the profiles, and they are usually related to the story in the fiction series. Some of the showrunners also publish photographs: promotional posters of the project and images of the production process and related events. They are used in at least one tweet by 46.15% of the accounts.



TABLE 4  
 AUDIOVISUAL AND TEXTUAL ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN  
 THE TWEETS POSTED BY THE SHOWRUNNERS IN TWITTER

| Twitter          | Audiovisual and textual elements |      |      |     |     |      |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|------|
|                  | 1                                | 2    | 3    | 4   | 5   | 6    |
| @cheo_coker      | 2.0                              | -    | -    | -   | -   | 68.0 |
| @patrickerville  | -                                | -    | 20.0 | -   | -   | 80.0 |
| @flanaganfilm    | -                                | -    | 2.4  | -   | -   | 92.6 |
| @WriterRAS       | 88.1                             | 93.4 | 78.9 | 3.9 | -   | 3.9  |
| @JoelGHodgson    | 9.0                              | -    | 36.3 | -   | -   | 54.5 |
| @bradpeyton      | 61.1                             | 33.3 | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @fullhouseguy    | -                                | -    | -    | -   | 100 | 100  |
| @bradtravelers   | 7.1                              | -    | -    | -   | -   | 42.8 |
| @LeslyeHeadland  | 3.1                              | 18.7 | 12.5 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 37.5 |
| @everythingloria | 7.4                              | 22.9 | 11.4 | -   | -   | 36.2 |
| @SteveBlackmanTV | 15.7                             | -    | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @MitchHurwitz    | -                                | -    | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @britmarling     | 16.6                             | 16.6 | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @laurenei        | 33.3                             | -    | -    | -   | -   | 33.3 |
| @WriterRAS       | 100                              | 85.7 | 88.5 | 5.7 | -   | 2.8  |
| @JarradPaul      | 16.6                             | -    | 16.6 | -   | -   | 50.0 |
| @ryanoconn       | -                                | -    | -    | -   | -   | 61.1 |
| @DavidHSteinberg | 50.0                             | 3.2  | 12.9 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 53.2 |
| @RightorDoyle    | 50.0                             | 50.0 | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @thelizfeldman   | 14.2                             | -    | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @Ildymojo        | 87.5                             | 45.3 | 28.1 | -   | -   | 67.1 |
| @Henderson_Joe   | 31.3                             | 7.4  | 10.4 | -   | -   | 67.1 |
| @ava             | 38.0                             | 19.8 | 17.0 | 3.4 | 3.9 | 69.8 |
| @lomorelli       | -                                | 42.8 | -    | -   | -   | 85.7 |
| @NealBaer        | 75.0                             | -    | -    | -   | -   | 100  |
| @KevinHench      | -                                | -    | -    | -   | -   | 66.6 |

Source: The authors.

By contrast, the use of videos and gifs is limited: only 19.23% of the showrunners included in the sample and 15.38%, respectively, use these elements on at least one occasion.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, it can be observed that the very limited Twitter use of certain showrunners within the sample prevents us from generalizing the communicative and promotional potential of this tool as established in the theoretical review (Segado et al., 2015). Despite the fact that our selection is representative of the Twitter use of showrunners of original Netflix series, it has proven to be too limited to make broader statements on the matter.

The data obtained were heterogeneous, ranging from accounts with very little information to others that were significantly more active, taking advantage of the benefits arising from developments in the television industry to interact with the audience, promote the fiction series and create and strengthen their author brand image beyond their commercial aspirations. Twitter provides a series of strategies to help the audience to identify with the showrunner figure. Through their profile interface, these professionals can represent their connection to the fiction series, especially in their biography, enabling followers to understand the leadership of the showrunner in the television production, thus reinforcing their authorship of the work.

In the results related to the techniques, content and elements used, based on the lack of a visible pattern in the tweets posted, the personal nature of some content and the limited activity of certain profiles, it can be deduced that they are not managed by a community manager, contributing to the consideration of the social network as a tool to build the personal image of showrunners.

Despite the aforementioned differences in strategies and activities, based on the data obtained it can be concluded that showrunners have a preference for the use of hashtags, especially that of the television series; informative and promotional tweets, particularly in the week prior to the project's premiere; and the inclusion of external links to expand on the information contained in the message.

These results are similar to the engagement strategy used on Twitter by the profile of Netflix Spain (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018), and by the profiles of the Spanish television programs *Código Empeñe*, *La Voz* and *Top Chef* (Quintas-Froufe & González-Neira, 2014). The data collected from both studies coincide in the benefits of varied tweets and the use of audiovisual elements, which can also be observed in this investigation.

However, in the conclusions drawn by Navar-Gill (2017) on the activity of the Twitter accounts of the writers' rooms of *Jane the Virgin*, *Faking It* and *Orange Is the New Black*, greater interaction with the audience was observed compared to the results of our analysis. The reason for the difference found in the aforementioned work, in which the author notes that the use of the account of the series' writers' room is more important than that of the showrunner's personal profile, is so as not to undermine the authority of this figure in relations between the media and the audience (Navar-Gill, 2017, p. 418).

Furthermore, with regards to building a personal brand through the activity of showrunners on Twitter, it can be noted that this brand is in line with the image of the actual network or platform, and with the television project. In this case, it can be observed that the tweets are more closely connected to the account of the fiction series than to that of Netflix United States, showing a limited use of the hashtag or corresponding mention. Nevertheless, the content of the tweets analyzed allows us to observe the showrunner's connection with the marketing and brand image strategies that are characteristic of this platform, given that these professionals share the events and promotional material published by Netflix through their profiles.

Finally, it can be noted that there is a possibility to compare the data obtained with the viewing figures of television series, to assess the existence of a direct connection between the behavior of showrunners on Twitter and consumption of the television product. In this case, this proposal would be limited due to the lack of explicit information on the audience of all the showrunner's projects on Netflix. However, there is a possibility to further expand on this study in the future by applying the model to a different sample of showrunner profiles, to compare and complement the results obtained.

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