

THE PRINT MEDIA SURVEYS IN SPAIN

José Andrés Gabardo, AIMC (Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación)

EGM is the benchmark survey for media audience in Spain and is turning 41 years old these days. It has been the historical reference point for measuring Newspapers, Magazine, Radio, Television, Cinema and Internet media audiences. When TV audimeters appeared, it stopped being the reference for TV, but has remained the establishment survey for television audimeter panels, and more recently for Internet.

It is also the cross media study for the advertising market, which uses it to design campaign media planning strategies.

The study was conceived in 1968 as a regular study, with three multimedia waves per year, based on personal interviews.

In addition to audience data, the study provides single source data on household appliances/equipment, (individual and household) product consumption, lifestyles, etc.

Despite its 41 years, EGM is quite current, partly thanks to relevant modifications introduced over the years.

The purpose of this presentation is to tell you about the most recent update, which in many aspects represents a complete revolution.

Changes began in 2000. Until then, the study entailed 40,000 yearly multimedia interviews. Towards the middle of 2000, and after serious debates within the association, the decision was to boost the sample to include telephone interviews that would exclusively gather radio audience data. These additional 24,000 interviews increased radio interviews by 60%. It attempted to respond to the increase of radio programming offerings of previous years, and sought to improve the study's precision, especially to estimate local data and small supports.

The chosen formula entailed improving the radio survey with interviews of mixed origin: radio data from multimedia interviews along with single-media interviews that exclusively provide radio audience data. The study was named EGM Radio XXI, and was designed to account for the complexity of Radio media in Spain in the new century.

This new study allowed for more precise radio audience data. However, set apart from the classical EGM study, it represented a loss of the multimedia EGM spirit for the market, which enabled working in a multimedia environment and with far more interview data.

The decision, then, was that official audience data would come from the broader study, but that one could work with radio audience data from the multimedia one, exclusively for multimedia needs or limited to the Radio market, but making use of those variables that were only present in the multimedia study.

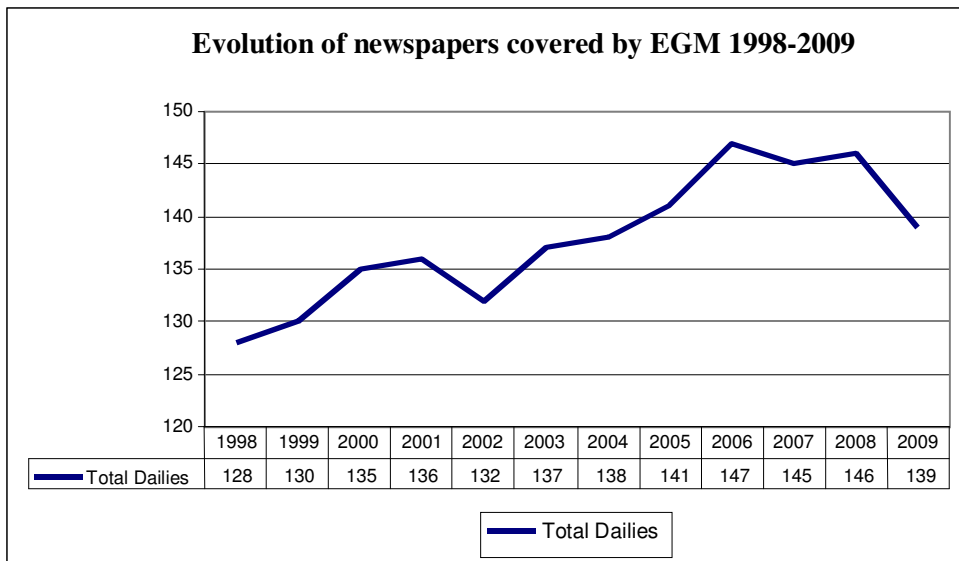
This system introduced a potential risk: the coexistence of two different radio audience data under the same roof, that of AIMC.

Before the change, a commitment was made to always use EGM Radio XXI findings as the official radio audience data, and only use the EGM multimedia's radio section for media-products or multimedia planning purposes.

Despite serious doubts surrounding compliance with this commitment, it was honored during the 7 years it was in force, in a fully satisfactory manner by the radio media (it was not used to stand out as number one in the ranking). This was not the case among media agency planners, who were often accused by Radio reps of exclusively using EGM multimedia data in their radio plans rather than data from the EGM Radio XXI survey, arguing that it was hard to handle two different files, one just for Radio and another for the remaining media.

Meanwhile, the early years of the new century revealed growth in Spanish media offerings and in particular that of Newspaper media.

Free newspapers that appeared in 1999 grew rapidly, in geographical coverage and in readership. By 2006, there were 4 national media of the kind. The large paid dailies rushed to have their very own regional editions, while new media belonging to local groups emerged and attempted to establish regional coverage. Traditionally, the Newspaper media stood out in terms of the importance of local supports, with the measurement difficulties this entails.

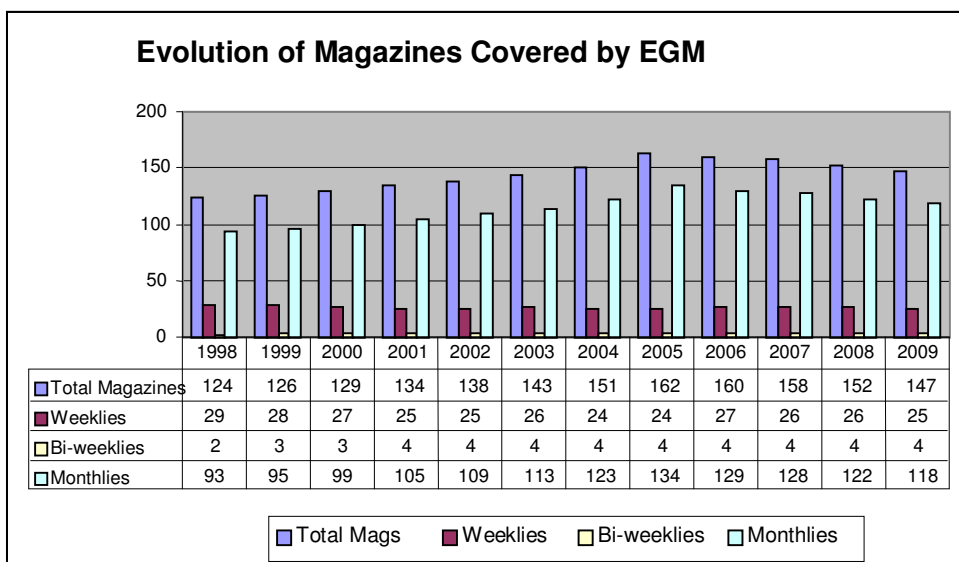


To a large extent, the growth in this offer has resulted in greater fragmentation of audiences.

Given these circumstances, and following the success of boosting the Radio sample, in 2005 the Newspaper media requested a similar boost. In 2005, methodological and questionnaire tests took place leading to a boost of 32,000 telephone interviews in 2006, which increased the Newspaper study size by 80%.

The same agreement concerning Radio data use was adopted, but complaints concerning the exclusive use of the EGM multimedia spread, giving the existence of not only two but actually three different files.

The Magazine media were also affected by the appearance of new titles, sometimes with highly original propositions (Car Tuning magazines, Music, etc.), or new more or less novel versions of great publishing success.



As with the Newspapers, the Magazine media considered a sampling boost starting in 2008, in this case via personal interviews given the need to show magazine logos.



Faced with a diversity of single-media sources, a concern arose within the association regarding their coexistence with multimedia versions for the same media. The solution proposed for this multiplicity of data via fusing files would allow us to return to a pre-2000 situation, when there was a single entire multimedia source.

Following thorough in-house debate, the idea of fusing the files with the following set of mandatory premises was proposed:

- Audience data for each support must fully coincide with the data that comes from each official source (multimedia study for media with no boost and the different single-media for those media that have sample boosts).
- The procedure must be traceable. The simplest procedure must be replicable by anyone with a minor knowledge of mathematics.
- Lastly, it would be convenient that the procedure did not take too long to come up with presentable data.

Finally, the decision was to opt for a mathematically simple and elegant fusion model, with a system of donors/recipients, that only assigns among individuals within a same stratum (this avoids assigning audiences for impossible supports among different strata).

Defining the strata is fundamental to guarantee the correct working of this fusion.

The strata used are:

Province, Habitat (less than 50,000 inhabitants and more than 50,000 inhabitants, and provincial capitals), Sex for Multimedia and Magazines, and Day of the week (Monday-Friday and Saturday-Sunday) for Radio, Newspapers and Television.

Province (50 types) X Size of habitat (2 types).

To improve the assignment for each media and guarantee the quality of the system, different strata were added to each media:

- Radio: Day of the week (two groupings: Monday to Friday, and Saturday and Sunday). Radio programming in Spain is quite homogeneous during workdays (Monday to Friday), and also during weekends, whereby we think it appropriate to maintain these separately.
- Newspapers: Day of the week (three breaks: Monday to Friday together, Saturday and Sunday separately). Sunday is the day of largest newspaper sales for nearly all media supports, Saturday represent lowest sales, and workdays are more homogeneous, whereby we think it appropriate to implement these 3 breaks.
- Magazines: Sex.
- Television: Day of the week (three breaks: Monday to Friday together, Saturday and Sunday separately).
- Remaining media (only included in the multimedia study): Sex.

For each media and within each stratum one must calculate the distance between the different individuals in order to find the closest one, bearing in mind the following variables:

- Province.
- Municipality of residence.
- Size of habitat.
- Social class.
- Household size, 14 years or more.
- Sex.
- Age.
- Date of interview.
- Role within the family: Housewife.
- Role within the family: Main breadwinner.
- Knowledge of local language.
- Use of local language.
- Presence of children 0 to 1 year old in the household.
- Presence of children in the household (0 to 13 years old).
- Nationality of respondent.

In the fusion process two types of individuals are identified: the donors who belong to the file that is considered the “gold standard”, and the recipients who are the individuals of the corresponding base file lacking some information.

Within each stratum, each individual in the stratum belonging to recipients is assigned information from the closest individual among donors who is in a position to donate, always within the equivalent stratum.

This disposition to donate or receive depends on the donor’s and recipient’s factor when balancing them. Each donor can only provide information to a recipient based on the “value” of his/her expansion factor, just as each recipient can only accept information whose value is at the very most equal to his/her factor of expansion.

When two individuals are related, a donor and a recipient, being the closest to each other within their stratum, the recipient is assigned donor information in an amount that is the smallest of both factors (that of the donor and the recipient).

If both factors are equal, the donor information is assigned to the recipient and the process of fusing these individuals is considered complete.

If in this process there is a surplus in the donor, his/her factor is reduced in the assigned amount, which remains available to assign to another recipient, and the work for this recipient is considered done.

The last possible case happens when the donor’s factor does not cover the full factor of the recipient. In this case, the recipient’s record is duplicated and one of these records is assigned the factor. The donor’s information missing in the recipient and in the other record, and the assigned factor, is the difference between the initial recipient’s factor and the donor.

This process continues as long as there is still information to pass on to recipients.

For data adjustment to take place in the fusion process, all strata in which assignments will take place should be compatible as a universe. For this to happen, the strata must be balanced, whereby in balancing, indispensable cross tabs should have been taken into account.

The adjustment of data for a wave without fusion and a wave following fusion is nearly the same in terms of totals and targets, which are formed by the sum of the basic strata for the fusion. When these sums do not verify, there may be slight differences.

For example, television audience data for men in a region fully coincide after fusion with the original data, but there may be a difference if one only considers men under 25 years old, even if one is looking at total Spain data.

Tests were conducted throughout 2007 for the system to become fully operational by 2008.

Currently, the new EGM model has been in place for nearly two years, and one can say that the system perfectly responds to initial requirements and has allowed us to “virtually” return to a multimedia environment.

