

Data to see. Statistics to listen to. Video and audio to innovate digital and social communication of Italian National Institute of Statistics

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Abstract

Video and audio content represent the heart of any social and digital communication and today are the most engaging and immersive tool for bringing different audiences closer to the complexity of statistical information. Audio is one of the most traditional and popular forms of sharing content and video simplifies understanding and allows content to be "humanised" by presenting any topic in an accessible, fast and direct way.

In a hybrid and convergent media ecosystem, the social media strategy for statistical communication is also increasingly moving towards video and audio content that is useful for narrating complex statistical content and for involving more and more non-expert audiences.

The article proposed here intends to tell the various innovative formats of audio and video datatelling that the Italian National Institute of Statistics has been implementing for some months.

In the first part, the focus is on the actions implemented on video content on Instagram and LinkedIn, on an ever greater strengthening of the institutional YouTube channel and on an audio experiment on Twitter. In particular, the actions relating to direct streaming on the YouTube channel are presented, as well as case studies such as the videos of #LaSettimanainIstat and the audio spaces of #TwitterSpaces on Twitter created with the aim of narrating statistics and bringing the complexity of data closer to multiple audiences. An overview of the analytics is also offered to demonstrate how much greater engagement and interactions are produced by this content.

In the second part, we intend to reason about the role of podcasts in the promotion of statistical culture, starting from the experience of the Istat podcast channel and the "Dati alla mano" product.

The decision to make podcasts was dictated by an awareness of the widespread popularity of podcasts in recent years, accelerated by the pandemic period: the enjoyment of podcasts has now become a stable behavior, particularly among the younger generation, according to surveys conducted by independent agencies on behalf of major producers of audio content. The fortunes of "storytelling to listen to" is also evidenced by Istat data on the production of audiobooks, which more than doubled in 2021 compared to 2020, and the increase in the percentage of publishers producing podcasts. In the field of promoting statistical culture, the podcast offers the possibility of a narrative capable of stimulating personal reflection, with a longer time frame than that of the web or other social products, and in which the use of voice can create an environment of user confidence.

In conclusion, it seems clear how audio and video can be strategic tools through which to build authenticity of public communication and trust in data.