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New Media, New Practices? A Study of the First Spanish Podcast Community and Its Pioneers

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Abstract: About to celebrate its first two decades of life, podcasting is one of the fastest-growing mediums in recent years. This medium, promoted from the amateur sphere as a result of the arrival of Web 2.0, has become an increasingly professional practice thanks to the work of major production companies and platforms such as Spotify. In this context of increasing professionalization, this paper aims to investigate the origins of podcasting in Spain in order to analyze the decisive role that the first community of Spanish amateur podcasters played in its development. An ethnographic research study, focused on the first seven years of the medium in this country (2004–2010), was carried out. The study was based on interviews with the pioneers, a review of source documents, and participant observation. The difficulties and the main milestones related to the medium's origin are analyzed. Likewise, the parallels between the beginning of this practice and the role assumed by radio amateurs at the beginning of radio in Spain a century ago are discussed. This parallel trajectory linking the origin of both media (radio and podcast) can be useful to envision a perspective on the possible developments of podcasting in the coming years.

Keywords: podcast; radio; independent media; transmedia



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1. Introduction

Podcasting is one of the media that has grown the most in the last five years. In 2021, 78% of US Americans aged 12 and older claimed to be familiar with the medium, and 41% had listened to at least one podcast in the previous month (an increase of 20 points and nearly twice as many as in 2016) (Edison Research 2021). In the Spanish scenario in 2020, 41% of Internet users listened to podcasts (two points more than the previous year), a percentage that rose to 51% among those under 45 years old and 55% among millennials (Moreno 2020). According to this same study, Spain is the second European country with the highest percentage of listeners, just behind Ireland and ahead of countries such as Sweden and Norway.

These figures have been accompanied by an increasing focus on research, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. Many of the studies have focused on the educational field, especially in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Brazil (Celaya et al. 2020), and from different perspectives, such as medical training (Bednarczyk et al. 2014; Grock et al. 2017; Chin et al. 2017), the use of podcasts in higher education (Hew 2009; Abdoli-Sejzi et al. 2015; Merhi 2015; Ausín et al. 2016; Blomgren 2018; Dobinson and Bogachenko 2018; Ifedayo et al. 2021), language learning (Laaser et al. 2010; Dos Reis and Gomes 2014; Fouz-González 2018; Gómez-Barrios and Palma-Velásquez 2020; Kornieva and Vashchylo 2019), podcasts as a tool for assessment during confinement by COVID-19 (Halabi 2021), as well as from more general approaches related to the design of podcasts with educational applications (García-Peinazo 2018; Drew 2017). Other authors have based their research on the social empowerment provided by podcasts in workshops for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Cortés-Fuentes and Correyero-Ruiz 2017), the use of this medium to inform about science (Dantas-Queiroz et al. 2018), the role of

collaborative podcasting as a qualitative research method (Day et al. 2017), or as a resource for multicultural education (Doerr-Stevens and Buckley-Marudas 2019).

Apart from work on the educational applications of the medium, studies on podcasting focus on its specific and differentiating characteristics in comparison to radio (Sullivan 2018; Berry 2018; Llinares 2018; López-Villafranca 2019; Spinelli and Dann 2019), its innovative possibilities for interaction between listeners and creators (Swiatek 2018; García-Marín and Aparici 2020), its narrative affordances (Scriven 2022), and case studies on *Serial*, considered the most successful podcast ever (Dredge 2014; Hancock and McMurtry 2018; Hardey and James 2022).

More recently, research on this medium has targeted the tensions between independent podcasters and platforms (Berg 2022) as well as the relationships between radio and podcasts in the local information sphere within the U.S. context (Crider 2022). In this last aspect, it is worth noting the scarce presence of local radio stations that produce podcasts in the United States, where two out of three stations do not have any podcasts and only less than 20% produce more than one.

In the Spanish context, one of the first research studies related to podcasting was carried out by Toni Sellas, who devoted his doctoral thesis to the analysis of this new medium in order to place it within the field of Communication Studies. Sellas (2008) affirms that podcasting implied a profound change in the way audio communication was carried out, as it offered new possibilities for traditional radio, and brought together a group of independent producers known for their freedom, spontaneity and informality without being influenced by the routines of radio production and programming. Consequently, they were able to help renew the style and language in the field of audio communication. One of the greatest strengths of Sellas' research was its focus on the nascent community of independent podcasters who, according to the author, were established through the sheer will of a group of blog creators who were trying to supplement their projects with systems capable of automating the delivery of sound content.

This first approach to podcasting as an object of study was continued by other Spanish authors. From a more commercial point of view, Gallego (2010) focused on the relationship between radio companies and podcasting, analysing the impact of the latter on the business model of conventional radio stations and how these stations took advantage of the multiple opportunities offered by podcasting. Aguayo-López (2015) also examined the business applications of this medium, which this author defined as a potentially lucrative way of operating and generating profits, as well as an advertising tool with the potential to strengthen the link between a company and its customers. From a completely different perspective, Blanco-Hernández et al. (2013) studied the evolution of podcast awareness and consumption in Spain and Latin America between 2008 and 2011, concluding that the number of users creating podcasts increased significantly during this period, though podcast consumption did not grow as much as expected.

Despite the fact that the audio narrative of podcasting is ideal for communicating personal experiences, studies on the medium as a means of self-expression and for fostering like-minded communities have been scarce. Podcasting has a therapeutic, tribal aspect that is capable of spawning communities, while at the same time offering remarkable intimacy (Espinosa de los Monteros 2020). By listening in detail to the experiences of others, listeners connect with people and their stories, whom they perceive as close, familiar, and deeply human. This medium is therefore useful for the development of personal narratives with exceptionally high potential for engagement. In 2015, journalist and media analyst Lene Bech Sillesen led a research project to examine the possible impact of intimate stories on the reader's ability to empathise with the characters. They reviewed 60 psychological and neuroscientific studies showing that the human brain responds with greater empathy as we deepen our knowledge about others so that personal stories have the power to influence minds and inspire people to take action (Sillesen et al. 2015). The study concludes that individuals identify with the intimate experiences told by others. Specifically, the flexible structure, intimate style, and vulnerability of podcasts helped listeners address the

messiness of grief in the context of COVID-19 (Peterson 2022). Enhanced through the use of voice as a distinctive characteristic of humanity in podcasting, these intimate and personal stories provide a platform where individuals can learn about themselves by listening to others as they confront their own emotional challenges.

Podcasting was introduced in March 2004 in the United States as a result of the work of Adam Curry and Dave Winer, who managed to build a technology that allowed for subscriptions to digital content using an audio format, something that had already been possible in blogs before that date (García-Marín 2019). As with all media, the emergence of podcasting required the availability of technology necessary for its development. Notably digital by nature, podcasting can only be understood by considering the development of IT systems essential to support the processes of production and distribution of the content it provides. Manovich (2001) asserts that the new digital media represent the convergence of two historically separate technologies: computing and the media. According to this author, every period in human history characterised by the emergence of numerous technological advances has led to the arrival of new models, forms, and means of communication. The emergence of media such as podcasting, which is linked to the digital development of the last twenty years, confirms this idea.

Now that nearly two decades have passed since its inception, the creation and initial steps of this medium provide the specific framework for this study, whose aim is to describe and analyse the initial stages of podcasting in Spain, from its inception in 2004 to the consolidation of the community of enthusiasts in 2010 with the establishment of the first national association, Asociación Podcast. Specifically, this research has a twofold objective:

1. To define the experimental work and motivations of the pioneers of podcasting in Spain as a new form of expression of personal narratives using an audio format.
2. To gain in-depth knowledge regarding the fundamental principles of the first Spanish community of podcasters and listeners.

The information obtained will serve to compare the origins of podcasting in Spain with the beginnings of radio in the same country, in order to discover possible parallels between the birth of both media. In accordance with the question in the title of this paper, the aim of this study is to determine whether the birth of new media has led to new practices or whether, on the contrary, two distinct mediums such as radio and podcasting (whose origins are separated by a century) had similar developments in their early years, at least in the Spanish context.

In the following section, the materials and methods used in the fieldwork will be described in detail.

2. Methods

To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative and interpretative ethnographic study was designed so as to gather information from the early years of the podcast community (podcastphere) in Spain. Ethnography is based on the description of situations, events, people, interactions, and behaviours that are observable (Corbetta 2007). It focuses on the direct narration by protagonists of events, their opinions, judgements, and reflections based on the discourse they themselves create. This narrative can be obtained from first-hand conversations or through the analysis of secondary sources produced by the protagonists. This is why our research methodology was conducted on the basis of the triangulation of three instruments: (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) a review of secondary documentary sources, and (3) participant observation.

2.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

In the first phase of the research, a total of 15 in-depth qualitative and semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participants in these interviews were (1) pioneers of podcasting in Spain, (2) the founding members of the first association specifically dedicated to the medium in this country, as well as (3) relevant members of the independent podcastphere in its first two decades (Table 1). Far from focusing on a particular aspect,

these interviews took the form of life stories, which is a technique that makes inquiries into the facts, events, or situations that people have experienced in their life. They comprise a narrative research method in which the events and experiences of people are narrated by means of a storyline (Corbetta 2007; Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza 2018). According to Silva et al. (2021), Smith et al. (2009), and Ochoa (2022), different steps were followed in this phase. The analysis model began with the transcription of the interviews and the importation of the data into a specific software (Atlas.ti 9, created by Scientific Software Development, Berlin, Germany). Subsequently, a systematic reading and coding of the texts, identification of emerging themes, and the author's final analysis were carried out. A synthesis of the results obtained from the interviews is presented in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of this paper.

Table 1. Participants in the in-depth interviews.

Interviewee	Description
José Antonio Gelado	First Spanish podcaster
Daniel Aragay	Podcasting pioneer in Spain
Sebas Oliva	Founder and first president of Asociación Podcast (2010)
Agustín Palmeiro	President of Asociación Podcast in 2017 and 2018
Raúl de la Puente	Vice-president of the Asociación de Escuchas de Podcasting (Asespod)
Eduardo Nordmann	Producer of several comedy podcasts about philosophy
Dumakae	Podcaster specialising in television, who has won several national awards
Tamara León	Producer of current affairs shows related to political and social issues
Blanca Santamaría	Podcaster on the talk show <i>Porqué Podcast</i> , and winner of several national awards
Francisco Portillo	Producer of the award-winning comedy podcast <i>Condenados</i>
Emilio Cano	Founder of the <i>Emilcar FM</i> network and winner of the Best Male Podcaster Award in Spain in several editions
Goyo Salduero	Founder and director of the podcast <i>Histocast</i>
Juan Ortiz	Podcaster on the show entitled <i>La morsa era yo</i>
Esteban Pérez	Host of the podcast entitled <i>Zafarrancho Podcast</i>
Carmen Moreno	Host of the show <i>Carmenia in Dallas</i>

2.2. Review of Secondary Documentary Sources

The media, podcasts, statutes of associations and specialised websites that provide information on the origins and early years of the medium in Spain were reviewed. Specifically, consultations were carried out in relation to the following sources:

- The statutes and official podcast of Asociación Podcast.
- The statutes of Asociación de Escuchas de Podcasting (Asespod); Asociación Aragonesa de Podcasting; Asociación Alicantina de Podcasting (Alipod); and Asociación Malagueña de Podcasting.
- The website of Radio Podcastellano, a digital radio station with no terrestrial presence created in November 2009 and is now defunct, which played a central role in the podcasting scene as a medium which, from outside podcasting, helped to promote this activity through a clear phenomenon of remediation, or in other words, the integration of one medium into another.
- The websites of Jornadas Nacionales de Podcasting (hereafter JPod), the annual national meetings of podcasting enthusiasts, were held between 2009 and 2016 (Murcia 2009; Barcelona 2010; Alicante 2011; Sevilla 2012; Madrid 2013; Barcelona 2014; Zaragoza 2015; Malaga 2016).
- Section 3.2 presents the most significant results obtained from the review of secondary sources.

2.3. Participant Observation

The author is an active member of the podcast scene since 2013, not only as a podcaster but also as an organiser of JPod 2013 in Madrid. Immersion in the Spanish podcasting scene

by the researcher has given him a privileged position from which to gain in-depth knowledge of the reality of this community, the most significant aspects of which were gathered in a field diary that included information on the following aspects: (1) a description of the promotion and development of the medium carried out by members of the community; and (2) issues related to the culture of the medium, such as the type of content created, the protocols of production and dissemination of content, the collaboration among members of the community (relations between podcasters, and between podcasters and listeners), as well as the patterns of consumption and interaction of users who listen to the programmes. Specifically, to investigate the content of the shows and the listener interaction, the winning podcasts of the 2017 national podcasting awards were selected. These are the podcasts that were part of the sample and their respective categories:

- Culture: La morsa era yo Arquitectura
- Personal story: Guiller y yo
- Film and TV: Ohhh TV! Podcast
- Sport: Desde boxes
- Business: Perspectiva
- Miscellaneous: Ya conoces las noticias
- Comedy: Con todos mis respetos
- Multithematic: Porqué Podcast
- Newcomer: Bitácora de ciberseguridad
- Society: Crónica en negro
- Technology: Esto con Jobs no pasaba

The field diary, which gathers relevant aspects about the narrative and user participation in these podcasts, can be found at: <<https://figshare.com/s/616d86d14ad21c77f99a>>. Section 3.3 will present the results extracted using these observational methods.

As standard procedure in ethnographic work, the period of data gathering was prolonged over an ample time frame of nine years (2013–2021). The three research techniques were articulated by complementation, a strategy where the information obtained from each technique utilized has the same degree of importance in achieving the objectives, as they approach the reality under study from different angles and perspectives (Callejo and Viedma 2005).

The following sections are devoted to presenting the results of the research, which take on a narrative format in which the first steps of podcasting in Spain are described and analysed by introducing excerpts from the interviews carried out.

3. Results

3.1. The First Podcast Community in Spain

On the 18 of October 2004, journalist José Antonio Gelado initiated podcasting in Spain. The first Spanish podcast was *Comunicando*, a show dedicated to technology and digital culture, which was divided into several sections. When the initial episode of the first podcast in the Spanish language was published, there were only a dozen podcasts in the world (almost all in English, one in German and another one in Italian), with a homogeneous theme: podcasting itself, as well as issues generally related to technology.

Through the experiences of José Antonio Gelado, the presence of podcasting in Spain paved the way for other amateur producers. At the beginning of 2005, Catalan radio host Daniel Aragay began his activity in the field of podcasting after a previous phase as a radio station freelancer, where he hosted a segment on European music. After there was a change of host in the show where he worked, which led to a considerable decrease in his on-air activity, he decided to launch a digital radio project on the Internet, which he quickly had to abandon due to the lack of economic viability, since it required the monthly payment of a fee to obtain the broadcasting rights for the music with which he worked. Aragay's goal was the following: "To find something that would allow me not to broadcast live, yet something that resembled broadcast radio. So, by searching on Google, I came across podcasts through a blog that talked about José Antonio Gelado" (Aragay, semi-structured

interview). At that point, Aragay contacted Gelado to use his content syndication feed, adapting it to his podcast. “My first feed was one from Gelado, which I modified line by line with a text editor so I could adapt it to my show” (Aragay, semi-structured interview).

The first podcasters saw in this new medium several linguistic and expressive possibilities that did not appear in written formats, hence its appeal: “The medium is totally different from the written one. I can say things that possibly I don’t know how to write” (Sebas Oliva, semi-structured interview). However, Aragay considered that the podcast was not a medium in its own right but rather an evolution of radio in the same way that television evolved from radio in its first experimental phases in Spain in the 1940s (Guerrero 2010). Aragay’s first podcast consisted of radio remediations, as it only included the recordings of the segment that this collaborator produced at the radio station where he worked. This was the first Spanish radio show to be hosted online as a podcast, which is now a widespread practice among major national and international broadcasters. However, in 2005, the radio world remained completely unaware of the nascent medium that was being born.

“At the beginning of 2005, podcasting was something completely unknown to radio stations—they didn’t even know what it was. From then on, I was motivated to out speak more, and subsequently my first native podcasts (without any connection to radio) were created: *El rincón de Laura* and *Dime tú*”. (Aragay, semi-structured interview)

Podcasting pioneers were not financially motivated to do this work. Their intention was not to make a living from podcasting. Their aim was the production of personal narratives with diverse, specific, and often non-mainstream topics outside the agenda that can be found in conventional media, which is closer to the pursuit of mass success. The introduction of niche content not yet present in the media arena, and the approach to issues from a perspective not covered by the mainstream media, were the main reasons for initiating this activity. “There was no one on radio who could talk to me about early music in the way I liked, and as I didn’t have anyone who dealt with this subject in podcasts, I decided to produce this show” (Emilio Cano, creator of the Baroque music podcast *Ars Música*, semi-structured interview).

The pioneers of this medium had to be able to handle a wide range of technological tools and possess advanced digital skills in order to carry out their work: “I am not only the host, but I also edit the podcast and publish it on social networks” (Goyo Salduero, semi-structured interview). The profile of the first podcasters was closely related to the digital world and Web 2.0, which meant that they were media creators with high-level IT skills not within the reach of ordinary citizens.

“Unfortunately, that’s the way it was, because you had to do everything yourself. You had to find your own way at the technical level in order to learn everything, but since there weren’t many resources to work with, you had to do everything yourself, especially RSS. Many people asked me for help, and I told them to copy my code and change the necessary parts so they could adapt it to their podcast. With regard to the first generation of podcasters, we had things in common: we all had a blog, and we already had come to grips with the technology needed to get it up and running”. (Gelado, semi-structured interview)

Regarding the process of experimentation and evolution that Gelado had to face for the introduction and diffusion of podcasting in Spain, the trial-and-error strategy was essential for learning how to handle the technological aspects of the medium, as well as to manage the collaboration of the initial community that continued to grow, wherein many users who were experts in computing warned of errors in the first audio files of his podcast so they could be corrected immediately. This need for ongoing cooperation between podcasters, as well as between creators and listeners, was the driving force behind the first community of podcasters. The producers of the first phase agree that the emergence of an important community of affinity, characterised by a culture of participation and collaboration, was

fundamental. In this phase, listener participation was established through voice recordings, a practice that is now uncommon because the use of social networks has displaced it as the main form of participation. “The audio was the only real proof that there was someone on the other side” (Gelado, semi-structured interview). In the same vein, Aragay states:

“Before, listeners participated more and in a more direct way through audio. What better way to contact a podcaster than through an audio file?”. (Aragay, semi-structured interview)

Usually, the tasks required for podcast production were not learned before the arrival of the producers in the podcastphere. “In this community, everything can be easily learned” (Emilio Cano, semi-structured interview). Podcasters did not require vast prior knowledge to create their podcasts because the community itself provided such skills:

“In terms of technology, you don’t need to know anything, but you do need to like or be attracted to the medium enough that you don’t mind learning. In the end, you end up learning a lot of different things”. (Juan Ortiz, semi-structured interview)

“You don’t need any special skills. I didn’t know anything about the medium. I participated in a podcast and asked “what do you do it with?” And I started producing mine”. (Goyo Salduero, semi-structured interview)

“The third podcast I listened to consisted of a special chapter in which the podcaster explained how to make a podcast. Listening to that podcast, I thought: why not?”. (Esteban Pérez, semi-structured interview)

In this regard, many of the first podcasts in Spain had a section dedicated to explaining aspects related to the creation of shows (metapodcasting) and, in addition, they always provided the listener with several ways of contacting them in order to make it easy to resolve doubts about the medium:

“All of us had one thing in common: we incorporated a section in our podcast, or we made monographic chapters, where we talked about how to make a podcast. The reason we did this was to tell the user that it is not difficult at all, and that if you have something to say, you can do it. Or if you want to respond to what we say, you can make your own podcast”. (Gelado, semi-structured interview)

This open-source nature can be seen not only at the content level but in the technical aspects of the medium as well, such as providing the RSS codes necessary for syndication so that each podcaster, especially those less skilled in computing languages, could adapt them to their projects according to their needs.

In this community, we can see how the work previously carried out by senior participants is reused and utilized by other members of the group. This open, collaborative nature of the community continues to be present in today’s amateur and independent podcasts:

“I’m not a technical expert, and the only thing I have to do is post a tweet or contact someone, and they always take the time to help me. I still think this open community carries on because the spirit of the medium itself is not going to change”. (Sebas Oliva, first president and founder of Asociación Podcast, semi-structured interview)

“I’ve had doubts, but usually they have been solved by friends podcasters who knew more than me. Sometimes I’ve asked a question on Twitter and I quickly got the answer”. (Carmen Moreno, semi-structured interview)

This open-source spirit was one of the essential aspects that helped shape the community of podcasters and users through the creation of online tools and platforms aimed at promoting the projects that were starting to be uploaded. Some of the first tools that helped create the Spanish podcasting scene were a mailing list shared by podcast enthusiasts, and above all, the podcast-es.org wiki, which was dedicated to explaining how to create podcasts and also functioned as a directory that included the available shows:

“We had the podcast-es.org page, and I remember that it was made in Joomla. There was a Yahoo Group, of which I still have the emails, where we received enquiries, questions and recommendations from the podcasters who were there at the time. That is what the community was –the mailing list that we distributed among all of us. The website was more informative, but we asked for help through the mailing list”. (Aragay, semi-structured interview)

In the early days, podcast directories (especially iPodder.org and podcaster.net) played a fundamental role in the promotion of podcasting, along with the mailing list mentioned above, which also provided advice, recommendations, and the resolution of questions about the medium. Of greater importance, however, was the cross-collaboration between producers. In those years, it was quite common to record promos that served as advertisements for every podcast that the producers sent to each other in order for them to appear in their shows, which was a preliminary step for the proliferation of the crossover alliances that now abound on the amateur scene.

Despite this enthusiastic collaboration among the members of the community, the beginnings of podcasting in Spain were not without difficulties, mainly due to the lack of technical knowledge of this activity and the scarcity of materials on the medium in the Spanish language. Both factors made it difficult to produce shows with high-quality sound. Moreover, computer errors were also frequent, sometimes making it impossible to distribute the content.

3.2. JPod and Asociación Podcast

These difficulties led to the first efforts to found a national association that would bring together enthusiasts, defend their interests, and serve as a promotional platform for the new medium. The path that led to the creation of Asociación Podcast in 2010 began in 2006 with the celebration of the first national podcasting conference (JPod) in Malaga, two years after the medium was created. In 2007, the experience was repeated in Barcelona; and in 2008, the city in charge of organising the event was Malaga, once again. In these first three editions, only a few participants (all of them podcasters) attended the event. Murcia hosted the conference in 2009, with an attendance of around 50 visitors, and “among them was the first participant to attend the meeting who was not a podcast producer, as the person was exclusively a listener” (Emilio Cano, organiser of JPod 2009, semi-structured interview). The talks offered at the event addressed the origins of podcasting, the medium’s promotion strategies, the platforms available for accessing content, legal aspects related to this practice, advanced podcast production, and a roundtable on the state of the art.

These first annual conferences dedicated to the medium set the standard model that has accompanied JPod since the 2010 event, held from 29 to 31 October in Barcelona with a gathering of nearly 200 participants. Even though there are nuances each year, the lineup of these conferences is based on three types of activities:

- Training workshops: With an essentially practical approach, these activities focus on the technical and communicative aspects of the medium. Via forming small groups (they usually have limited places and require prior registration), they are usually carried out by experts in issues related to computing, digital audio, voice-over, communication, marketing, social networks, and business.
- Talks and roundtables: These are more theoretical in nature and focus on the current situation of the medium. They include content similar to that of the workshops, but from a more academic point of view, very close to the plenary sessions or conferences for professional scientific congresses.
- Live shows: Parallel to the implementation of conferences and workshops, JPod events offer the possibility of attending live podcasts by being previously chosen by the organisation, or through open voting by the members of the community. These shows are usually recorded and made available to listeners, though not at the same time, both on the conference organisation’s channels and on the channel of the podcasts themselves.

The consolidation of JPod between 2006 and 2009 was fundamental for the creation of the first national association (Asociación Podcast), which was founded in January of 2010 by a group of enthusiasts of the medium who were gathered at the Jpod conference held in Murcia the previous year and wanted these meetings to continue. To do so, they needed to set up an organisation that would resolve the bureaucratic difficulties involved in the assignment or renting of spaces for subsequent conferences. In other words, they needed an association in order to “provide legal support for the implementation of the 2010 JPod that was to take place in Barcelona” (Oliva, semi-structured interview). This group took the helm from several podcasters who had made various attempts in previous years to set up an association that would represent the voice of creators and listeners, as explains Agustín Palmeiro, president of Asociación Podcast between 2016 and 2018:

“Before this group was formed, two other attempts were made. One was carried out by the law group of Andy Ramos and Gelado. They tried to establish an association that was never been finalised. Afterward, an attempt was made by Rafa Osuna (another podcasting pioneer in Spain). The current association was created in the third attempt by Sebas Oliva, the results of which have allowed the organization to become what it is today”. (Palmeiro, semi-structured interview)

The work of these forerunners resulted in the founding of Asociación Podcast in 2010, which was the first group that brought together fans of the medium in Spain. This association “gave the community a more playful and social character” (Aragay, semi-structured interview), and allowed the newly created medium to enter a new phase of development and expansion after the initial impetus provided by its pioneers.

3.3. Podcasting and Transmedia Storytelling: Transpodcast

From the point of view of content design, one of the early features of the podcast was its transmedia aspect. The need to disseminate the new medium led the first creators to use different platforms and media languages to complement the sound productions. This trend was decisive in shaping the current podcasting narrative, which goes beyond the exclusive use of audio by building multilingual media and cultural products, giving rise to transpodcast (transmedia podcasting) (García-Marín and Aparici 2018). Similar to the concept of transradio (Martínez-Costa 2015), the term transpodcast refers to media projects that have a podcast as their core medium, which extend and disperse their narrative, in addition to expanding their communicative environment to other platforms, media, and languages beyond the sound format, thereby offering a clearly transmedia dimension. These media operate both online and offline, and they have a wide gamut that ranges from the omnipresent websites or blogs to the less common mobile applications or email subscription newsletters. In this sense, the outstanding podcast *Serial* takes advantage of this multiplatform design, which enables listeners to participate in the narrative, so it can be argued that “storytelling to a digitally networked audience relies on both old and new aesthetic narrative forms” (Hardey and James 2022, p. 74).

From its inception, the following models of narrative expansion have been consolidated within the transpodcast concept:

- Multi-format: Built around a central podcast that is the heart of the project, different podcasts are created with the same subject matter, but with a different format and duration.
- Multi-theme network: These networks are made up of several podcasts with highly diverse, differentiated content presented by different podcasters. They are set up as autonomous projects integrated into a single website, although each of their podcasts requires an independent subscription.
- Extension through visual language: This model extends the sound narrative of the podcast with the creation of audio-visual materials, such as webseries or self-produced illustrations that accompany each new episode of the podcast and act as covers for the episodes.

- Multi-platform: Very close to the professional approach, podcasts in this model extend their stories to other platforms that make up a media group, with a presence in different areas of the Web (e.g., YouTube channels, social networks, newsletters), and in the physical world as well (books, live shows, etc.).
- Derivative or spin-off podcasts: These are based on the production of shows that arise from previous podcasts with some common element, whether it be the subject matter or the anchorpersons.
- Bilingual extension model: It consists of recording a programme with several versions in different languages and with different content, both of which are included in the same project and produced by the same team of podcasters. Both spaces are released as different shows (with autonomous subscriptions) within the podcast's repositories and services.

4. Discussion and Conclusions: Radio–Podcast Similarities

This study provides valuable testimony to the first years of the development of podcasting in Spain through the life stories of its pioneers, the analysis of the documents derived from their work, and the first-hand observations of the author, who has been immersed in the community being analysed since 2013.

The experimental work of the pioneers through trial-and-error strategies was essential in the beginning, as this approach had an impact on the acquisition of a wide range of skills needed to carry out this type of work ([García-Marín 2020](#)). Such skills could be learned within the podcastphere itself, which was organised as an online socialisation community that was not limited exclusively to discussion, but that mobilised knowledge about the medium. Therefore, it was set up as an open-source and collaborative learning community based on principles of collective intelligence ([Jenkins 2008](#)). At the same time, podcasting generated affinity spaces ([Gee and Hayes 2012](#)) from its inception, which were created by followers of the medium who showed a strong sense of belonging to the community. Such spaces are related to communities of practice ([Wenger 2002](#)), but they are characterised by greater specialisation that revolves around an amateur activity such as podcasting.

On the other hand, the findings of this study call into question the completely novel character of new media and are in line with the theories of remediation proposed by [Bolter and Grusin \(1998\)](#). These authors assert that no new media constitute a totally separate species from previous ones but that they are reconfigurations of models and practices already present in old media. Taking this idea into consideration, the question posed in the title of the paper can be answered.

In this sense, this research highlights the parallels between the origins of the podcast and its non-digital counterpart, which is radio. Such an analysis was possible due to the fact that, fortunately, the work of amateur radio pioneers has been widely documented, unlike what happened with other media such as cinema ([Bello-Cuevas 2012](#)), at least in the Spanish context. As in the case of podcasting, Spanish radio broadcasting also began as a non-professional activity a century ago thanks to the work of radio amateurs who were influenced by early achievements in the United States. In the case of both media, amateur experimentation allowed their technical and communicative potential to become widely known. With regard to podcasting, the transmedia applications exploited by non-professional producers have been adopted by the professional world of podcasting ([García-Marín 2016](#)). Similarly, with regard to radio, the exploration of shortwave by radio amateurs in the second decade of the 20th century made it possible to discover the advantages of its use for professional purposes in radio broadcasting ([Fraile-Algeciras and Ruiz-Ramos n.d.](#)) As with podcasting, radio was initially considered to be a purely technical hobby, before becoming the inception of a powerful medium ([Afuera-Heredero 2017](#)).

Moreover, in the early days of radio, we have found an expansion of narratives in media languages other than sound. To this end, the role of journals that specialised in the radio medium was fundamental. This was the case with the magazine *Ondas*, which was linked to the radio station *Unión Radio*. Its pages frequently included photographs

of the station's main programmes, as in the case of the poet Pablo Neruda's speech on 15 September 1934 (Simón-Palmer 2017). This magazine also published a large amount of complementary material related to home programmes, which we might consider to be a clear precedent of the current transmedia narrative applied to podcasting.

As in podcasting, early amateur radio broadcasting was heavily focused on creating its own content and developing the technical resources needed for its production. Radio amateurs who assembled their own equipment were called "true amateurs", as opposed to those who purchased ready-made equipment (called "salon amateurs"), according to a classification of radio amateurs published in the Tele-Radio journal in 1924 (Ruiz-Ramos 2012).

Likewise, the promotion of podcasting through the medium itself (metapodcasting) emulates a practice that was very common in the beginnings of radio, when radio broadcasters would spend part of their time talking about this activity (Afuera 2021). Moreover, radio as well as podcasting have found other platforms for their promotion: magazines in the case of radio; and wikis, mailing lists, and web directories in the case of podcasting.

We find another similarity with regard to the importance of the conversational feature and interaction between enthusiasts, which in the case of radio led to the first talk shows, known as "ruedas fónicas", held since 1929, with the participation of radio amateurs from different stations throughout Spain. This connection among wireless telephone enthusiasts led to a highly dynamic movement toward the creation of associations. Due to the proliferation of local and regional radio clubs from 1917 onward, a national federation of radio amateurs (Federación Nacional de Radioaficionados) was founded in June of 1924. As in the case of the podcast, this association assisted in resolving bureaucratic difficulties present in the early stages of the medium (Afuera 2021).

Finally, the pioneers of radio in Spain also organised radio conferences, held for the first time as part of the 1929 Exposición Internacional de Barcelona. Inaugurated on 15 November of that same year with the name Jornadas de Onda Corta, the event was considered to be the I Congreso Español de Radioaficionados and, similar to JPod a century later, it included technical seminars regarding the sector, live broadcasts, and the general meeting of the national amateur radio association (Fraile-Algeciras and Ruiz-Ramos n.d.). Likewise, in the early years of the Jpod, much of the debate focused on defining the identity of the medium. This was the case in the early years of community radio in Spain, which occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At its 1983 meeting held in Madrid, the Coordinadora Estatal de Radios Libres published the so-called Villaverde Manifesto, which included the first attempt to define Spanish community radio, pointing to its non-professional aspect as the main feature of the movement, as well as its self-managed operations, autonomy, participatory nature, the struggle against the information monopoly, and its counter-informative work (Pérez Martínez 2009). All of these characteristics identify the independent Spanish podcasting as well.

To sum up, it seems clear that podcasting followed similar patterns in its early years to those developed by radio, a medium that was born a century earlier. For this reason, it can be concluded that new media, in essence, do not modify the social practices of old media, but they use the languages, patterns and protocols present in previous media through processes of remediation. This is why no current media—and possibly no future media—function in the absence of other media. Consequently, the truly novel aspects of the so-called new media are the ways in which old media are refashioned to respond to new challenges.

These similar trajectories, which link the beginnings of both media, can be useful in envisaging possible developments in podcasting in Spain based on the historical analysis of the evolution of radio. After its first two decades, radio began a period of increased professionalism, the establishment of a robust business model, and the introduction of its own industry language, which are precisely the challenges that Spanish podcasting must address in the coming decades.

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