Radio and the Web: Communication Strategies of Spanish Radio Networks on the Web (2006-2008)

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Abstract

The internet has placed traditional radio in a new environment with regard to the production and management of different audio contents. The web has enabled the updating of programming strategies and the promotion and marketing of radio networks, so as to extend the sphere of communication between networks and listeners. This article shows the results of an analysis of the websites of the main national radio networks in Spain over the last three seasons (2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009) and draws on a research project about the communication strategies of Spanish radio networks on the internet.[1] The paper addresses the originality of web radio content and services and the communication strategies afforded by the internet. The conclusions reflect the ways in which Spanish radio networks have improved their programming, promotion and business strategies on the internet, thus increasing the range of contents and services of traditional programming made available on the web. The analysis also identifies the similarities and differences between the strategies adopted by 'talk radio' and different music radio formats on the internet. Such strategies have become the hallmark of radio products in the media market.

Introduction

Spanish radio is taking increasing interest in the Internet. All the national radio networks have renovated their websites over the last three seasons, with the main aim of encouraging interactivity with listeners.[2] Most of these stations are also investing in professional teams and production structures to create radio material to be broadcast via the web.

The interactive multimedia nature of the web offers an opportunity to broaden the communicative space between a radio station and its listeners. This *new form of radio* (Wall, 2004: 29; Priestman, 2004: 77) provides an original dimension to the relationship between the user and the radio brand' contents (Priestman, 2002: 228). At present, radio appeals to the audience across different options of distribution

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[1]   The conclusions of this research project were presented at the Communication Policies and Culture in Europe conference, European Communication Research and Education Association, 2nd European Communication Conference, Barcelona, 25-28 November, 2008 (Moreno, Martínez-Costa & Amoedo, 2008). The authors have realized other previous and partial researches about the strategies of Spanish music and talk radio on the web (Amoedo, Martínez-Costa & Moreno, 2008; and Martínez-Costa, Amoedo & Moreno, 2008).

[2]   Unión Radio, Spain's leading commercial radio group, has been gradually renewing the websites of its main programme brands. An improvement can thus be noted in the multimedia design of www.cadenaser.com from 4 September 2007 onwards, and in www.los40.com from 31 July 2008. On 29 April 2008, Radio Popular launched the new version of www.cope.es. On 20 May 2008, the public corporation RTVE presented its new site, www.rtve.es, which includes Radio 1, Radio Clásica, Radio 3, Ràdio 4, Radio 5 Todo Noticias and Radio Exterior de España at www.rtve.es/radio. On 1 September 2008, RTVE adopted a new corporate image, and Radio 1 changed its name to Radio Nacional. On 4 September 2008, Uniprex presented the new webpages of Onda Cero and Europa FM, available online from the end of August in Beta version. Radio Blanca improved the configuration of www.kissfm.es at the start of the 2008/2009 season, while Punto Radio had been renovating its website since early 2008.

and emission (Albarran & Pitts, 2001: 172). As a result, strategies for programming, promoting and marketing the radio product are being enriched by the advent of the digital medium, while the dialogue between radio companies and their audiences is being intensified.

The implantation of the digital technology re-intensifies the interest for the studies and the research in radio (Tacchi, 2000: 289). Specially at this moment, in that the future of the radio is now much less obvious and clear than it appeared 10 years ago (Ala-Fossi, Lax, O'Neill, Jauert & Shaw, 2008: 4).[3] Digital radio presents a challenge in terms of definition, given that often internet radio, podcast radio and other terms are employed loosely or even interchangeably (Coyle, 2006: 123).

The aim of the present study is to analyse the development of the communications strategies of websites belonging to the main talk and music radio networks to see whether they offer listeners an original range of contents, take advantage of the multimedia possibilities of the web, and provide diversity in their interactive techniques. This analysis was carried out from a practical point of view, moving in the direction of the authors' research interests and taking in the Internet communication strategies of both talk and music radio stations.

Our present study focuses on a comparative analysis of 6 weekly samples, 3 from talk stations and 3 from music stations. We followed the websites of SER, COPE, Onda Cero, Punto Radio and Radio Nacional – RNE's Radio 1 – between 22 and 28 January 2007, 26 and 30 November 2007, and 15 and 19 September 2008. We did the same for the leading music networks of the national radio – Cadena 40 Principales, Kiss FM, Cadena 100 and Europa FM – from 5 to 17 October 2006, 10 to 14 March 2007, and 15 to 19 September 2008. These dates correspond to three different programme seasons.

To carry out our fieldwork, we used a content analysis form that included the 4 elements in the study: a) traditional radio station issues given prominence on the home page; b) complementary areas belonging to that radio station, which acquire added value on the web as a result of their handling and their easy access; c) associated services which are presented exclusively on the web; and d) the main interactive techniques which foster listener participation. This analysis form was applied in the case of each of the chosen samples. The results are set out in two comparative tables which show the progress of the 9 radio networks mentioned in 2008/2009.

The conclusions of this study reflect to what extent the main national radio stations in Spain see the web as a medium that will help them to consolidate their position on the multimedia map. This tactic takes on particular importance since it is being applied at the same time as the traditional radio market, which is characterized by the following features: a new map of frequencies – once the Autonomous Communities

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[3] Radio in the future was expected to offer much more personalized and specialized content, also with multimedia elements, which would then be actively selected by the users for listening whenever they found it suitable (Ala-Fossi, Lax, O'Neill, Jauert & Shaw, 2008: 17).

complete the process of granting licenses to broadcasting companies under the National Technical Plan for FM launched in September 2006, the reinforcement of direct competition between the five talk radio networks, the increase in audience figures for music networks, and the adaptation of each radio group to the syndication of radio contents for the new media, particularly the Internet, onto which other digital media tend to converge.

The results of our analysis are set out below.

1. The range of contents is differentiated according to the programming model

The online contents of the talk and music radio are completely different. While the former reflect the issues favoured by the traditional medium, the latter tend to be sites with different contents and services of their own.

The talk radio networks have two clear online strategies: some opt to maintain a news focus, with news stories and special reports (www.cadenaser.com and www.cope.es); others currently use their site as a means of promoting their radio brand through use of magazines and figurehead presenters, offering a greatly simplified range of news headlines linked to the concrete contents of each programme (www.puntoradio.com and www.rtve.es/radio/). The case of Onda Cero illustrates how it is possible to move gradually from one strategy to another. While in 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, the mainstay of its online presence was the actual programmes, in the current season it has started to develop more online news contents, presented with a new design in which current affairs, sports and sound files feature alongside the programmes themselves.

The talk radio networks all regularly update their online news, as this is the backbone of this type of radio. In earlier seasons, www.cadenaser.com and www.cope.es already offered access to the latest news broadcast, and now www.ondacero.es is doing the same. These three sites are also substantially increasing their latest news sections, which are being renewed as news breaks in the course of the day. These stations devote a large proportion of their front pages to news, and the trend towards frequent updating is one way in which they stake a strong claim as news networks.

The contents of magazines and specialized radio programmes on talk radio networks has not changed substantially in comparison with previous years. They still offer basic information on the professionals involved, the most important sections, the people who take part, the issues of the day, and access to the

sound files.[4] The programmes which operate their pages directly and have a blog attached can be seen to be more active. This is the case with "Asuntos propios" on Radio Nacional, "La brújula" on Onda Cero, and "Hoy por hoy", "La Ventana" and "Hora 25" on Cadena SER.

On the other hand, the music stations' websites are still being created around the elements which make up the main formula of those networks, and, in some cases, specific programmes' contents. This includes the genres and styles which are typical of music channels, particularly the "top of the charts", the news, competitions, and some issues that arise in the morning shows and programmes. Generally, www.los40.com and www.cadena100.es emphasize music news and programmes; www.europafm.es stresses the programmes, and www.kissfm.es prefers themes of its own.

These programmes are only part of what the music networks offer on their websites, which evolved in 2008/2009, developing in the direction of musical news and information, entertainment, interactive participation and sales of products linked to the original radio brand, thereby opening up new lines of consumption. The networks analysed follow the strategy that was first adopted by Los40.com.

It is also evident that these networks are maintaining a strategy of institutional transparency in their respective websites, which had already been reinforced in 2007/2008. The development of programming, the description of the programmes and the careers of the presenters and journalists, access to press releases, photo galleries, the network's logo, the slogan of each season, the information about advertising rates, the location of the network of local and regional broadcasters, and the journalists' blogs, are all elements which help to consolidate the corporate image of the network in society and in the marketplace.

The multimedia nature of the Internet enables a radio station to enrich its traditional range of material. However, the pages analysed here are facing a challenge, as they try to boost both their thematic identity and their originality as a radio network. In 2008, the musical networks adopted more diverse communication and business strategies on the Internet, to avoid losing teenage and young adult listeners.[5]

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[4] It suits to consider that the information about the programming and the website also is a content valued by the user, besides the live listening (Moody, Greer & Linn, 2003: 261).

[5] Downloading music is the fifth most popular online activity in Spain and in Europe. The overall results are as follows: going online and looking for information (89% and 87%), e-mail (92% and 81%), social networks (47% and 42%), simultaneous messaging (65% and 37%), downloading music (58% and 31%), listening to the radio (36% y 31%), watching TV, films or videos (43% and 30%), ratings and reviews (20% and 27%), sharing opinions on blogs (37% and 26%) and downloading films, TV or videoclips (52% and 20%). EIAA (2007).

2. Low degree of diversification in radio products

In 2008/2009, the talk radio networks offered almost no new sound or radio products on the web. The only exceptions were the regular digital interviews on www.cadenaser.com, the hour of "La prórroga" of "A cielo abierto" and the programme "La tecnología y sus alrededores" on www.cope.es.

The pages analysed present an extension of the news given on the network, in both the number and length of stories, increase the variety with which news is presented, taking advantage of the multimedia possibilities of the Internet, and encourage the audience to vote, discuss, share, subscribe and gain access to news on other platforms, as we shall explain below.

Some pages also provide more detailed information on specialised issues. This is the case with www.cope.es, with its thematic sections on Technology, Humour, Bullfighting and Family, which have featured on the main page index since April 2008 alongside the traditional sections like the Front Page, Spain, World, Local, Economy, Society, Sport, Religion and Culture. This is a clear attempt to respond to more closely defined interest groups, at the same time as it reflects the network's discursive strategy. Similarly, www.puntoradio.com also incorporated a section on Technology in 2008. The analysis of news on specialised issues is completed by the presence of Special Reports made for the website.

The music radio networks analysed offer online material that differs from the basic formula used in the traditional medium. The focus is on issues connected with the music news linked to each formula, as well as leisure and cultural matters. The purpose is clearly to foster listener loyalty.

The network Los40.com epitomises these tactics, while the webpages of Kiss FM, Cadena 100 and Europa FM presented a clearer attempt at developing their own material for the Internet in 2008/2009, according to the interests of their target audiences.[6] None the less, the production of original radio material for this medium is still a challenge. It is common that the music archives, biographies sections, digital interviews, photo galleries and special reports rely on images, texts and sound, rather than on radio alone.

In 2008/2009, www.los.40.com thus offered 56 channels with different musical styles grouped into 10 main genres: Pop, Rock, Black Music, Dance Music, World Music, Ballads, Classics, Sentimental Music, Theme Music and Historical Music. The traditional formula of the top 40 is integrated as one option among many, out of everything that this website has to offer on the main themes of News, Music, Top 40, New

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[6]   Hamula & Wenmouth (2003: 268) remember that it is interesting to analyze how the age of the target which every format is directed influences the presence and organization of the content the web page. The most juvenile formats include more information and photographies related to the personality of the DJ and the most adult formats underline the contests.

Music, Concert Calendar, Videos, New Videos, TV Channels, and the 40 World, Participate and Community sections, as well as Radio.[7]

To a much more limited extent, the brands Kiss FM and Cadena 100 are also diversifying the thematic approaches of their webpages. They have developed in terms of text and image, and have no related sound contents. On www.kissfm.es, we find Kiss News, News Specials, Kiss Interviews, Kiss Artists, Kiss Personalities, Kiss Leisure, The Most Kiss, In Kiss, Did you know?, Raise the Curtain and Downloads, as well as News, Music and Competitions. On the other hand, www.cadena100.es offers the weekly radio programme "Technology and its surroundings". This network also keeps on its website some of the complementary material from its earlier radio formula:[8] Music News, Online News, Claqueta 100, Solidarity News and Other News.

Europa FM launched a similar initiative in 2008/2009. This network's website presents News, Events, Artists, Videos and Blogs, as well as Radio, Music and Music Charts.

As we have shown, multimedia language and diachronic access to the net give added value to the material offered through this medium. The user can surf according to subject and choose what to listen to from the contents offered by the radio station, and those available online. However, our analysis shows that there is room for improvement in these areas as far as these particular networks are concerned, even though the design and navigability of all the pages reviewed have been thoroughly revised. In the future, changes could move in the direction of visual identification and synergy of contents with other media in the same communications group, without forgetting radio itself among the multimedia options.

3. Multimedia language with radio

Spanish radio networks use the multimedia language of the Internet to endow their traditional programmes with new uses, and to develop specific contents for this medium. The sound archives and internal or external search engines complete the multimedia possibilities of the pages under scrutiny.

In 2008/2009, the use of video and moving images grew, as did the length and complexity of the texts, even though they still make scant use of hypertext. However, sound and radio production for the web have not been enriched. Most of the webpages analysed place a greater emphasis on video and photographs than on radio. The networks Los40.com and Cadena SER have had a more significant visual

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[7] This website coexists with www.los40.com/40principales, a page which, at the time of writing, has not been updated and has no specific products for the web.

[8] Cadena 100 targeted the Hot Adult Contemporary, with the slogan "Your Number Ones of Yesterday and Today", in September 2006.

presence in the web since 2006, and in the case of Los40, this has been growing since its renovation on 31 July 2008. COPE has had a multimedia platform since 29 April 2008. To a lesser extent, the webpages of Onda Cero, Europa FM and Kiss FM, have also been improving in visual appeal and animated effects since September 2008.

Cadena SER now applies a more elaborate multimedia approach to its online news. Most of the news have related video, images and sound files, in addition to text. The site of www.cope.es foregrounds photographs and text, but also includes the newsworthy declarations made by the Personalities of the Day. The other websites rely on text and photographs alone to provide their online news.

In 2008/2009, all talk radio networks have increased their online sound file services, although SER and COPE have a more complete sound edition of the different narrative levels of the programmes of the day, week or month. This includes the latest sound files produced on the network, and the ones with the highest audience figures, which stand out on the front pages. These are organised differently in each case: SER (Hear audio, The latest sounds, Most heard, What you have to hear, Listen and Sound Archive); COPE (Personalities of the day, Most heard, Latest sounds, and My sounds); Onda Cero (Audios, sound files from live programmes, and Most heard); Radio Nacional (A la carte: all, programmes, channels and issues); and Punto Radio (The best of radio, Audio Clips and See sections by subject).

Moreover, all these websites have internal search engines, organised by subject – what, where and when – as well as in terms of programmes and stations, in addition to direct access to Google or Yahoo. Onda Cero provides the football results by category and comparisons of shopping prices. Radio Nacional offers access to the search engine of www.rtve.es.

The 40 Principales network has the website with the most comprehensive music coverage, including sound files, video, text and documentation. Music and video on demand, song archives, video clips, photo galleries, and internal search engines are basic to the way this site functions. Personal viewing and listening are foregrounded in the section Most viewed/voted/sent/heard on the front page. On a secondary level, the user can select a list of songs, with Number One in a prominent position, as well as music news, biographies and files on singers, a concert calendar, and the main contents of well-known programmes like "Anda ya" and "Internight". The à la carte range of music on Los40.com currently incorporates 6 TV channels, as well as the 56 music channels mentioned above. It also offers the possibility of searching by musician, album, song, video, news and calendar, both on the site itself and via Google, which can be defined by what, where and when. This page includes a Webcam of the 40 Principales studio.

The other music radio networks evaluated have much more limited services for hearing and seeing music. www.europafm.es does not allow users to hear songs online, and only gives access to some music video clips and sections from the network's programmes. This webpage provides texts and graphic information

about news events and concerts. It also has an internal search engine for finding out about what is broadcast on the network and its commercial services, and direct access to Yahoo. On the other hand, www.cadena100.es has no sound, video or search system, only text and photographs. The webpage of Kiss FM also has no sound files, despite offering Most viewed today/ever/latest, and only provides texts, photos, video links from Kiss TV, and an internal search engine for the site.

The design strategy for online contents, direct broadcasting and à la carte listening facilities also includes tactics such as provision of services associated with the radio brand that are exclusive to the Internet. Unión Radio – with its brands SER and 40 Principales – has been using syndicated distribution from the radio station and the Internet to mobile phones since 2006. Radio Popular – with its brands COPE and Cadena 100 – started to do the same in 2007/2008. One of the main aims of this communication strategy is to create a community of listeners who identify with a radio brand.

4. Radio brand with added value

The talk radio networks include online guides to news and services, without forgetting commercial services. Unlike Punto Radio and Radio Nacional, the pages of SER, COPE and Onda Cero all have associated services, even though some differences are apparent in the type of services offered.

www.cadenaser.com and www.cope.es both improved their weather forecasts in 2007/2008. The identity of www.cadenaser.com is expressed in general current affairs and sports news. Cadena SER is now emphasising these three content areas more than in previous seasons, through its general news network www.cadenaser.com and its alerts "SER on your mobile". Users can consult the weather forecast[9] for the next three days in Spain, Europe and the world, as well as obtaining sports news from the link to the "Sport round". A noticeboard, a horoscope, offers by e-mail (discounts, events, barginas), a translation device, yellow pages, TV times and lotteries are also included. Most of these are syndicated from other websites belonging to the same business group. The new www.cope.es incorporates a street map, but omits the stock exchange listings, lotteries, scoreboard and football pools. Users of this page can ask for news alerts about national and international issues, and may choose to hear the latest news via mobile phone.

The other websites analysed have not progressed very far in the direction of offering these exclusive services. Nor is there a corresponding mobile phone service. The new Onda Cero website still has stock

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[9] Randle & Mordock (2002: 249) suggest that if radio stations wish to remain competitive in the web environment and built brand loyalty, they must often basic weather news and links to more in-depth weather information.

exchange information, a scoreboard and commercial syndication to www.genteviajera.es and the service networks of Antena 3 TV, which is the sole shareholder in the network.

The music radio networks are inclined towards selling music and leisure online in order to consolidate their groups of listeners. Los40.com and Universo 40/Zona 40/Club 40, which are associated with 40 Móvil by Orange[10], are the main reference points in this area, including Revista 40, Tarjeta 40 and H20 Selección40[11], among other products, and video games sponsored by Copa 40 and EA Sports. COPE is the only talk radio network which also has syndicated games – COPEjuegos.com.

In addition to commercial syndication, direct advertising has also improved, in the form of immediate online sales. Some networks enable people to look for products with the radio station's own brand, as is the case with Kiss FM and "The Kiss Shop", Europa FM and "Your internet shop", or Punto Radio and "The Punto Radio Shop". None the less, in 2007/2008 other webpages preferred direct advertising links, as in the cases of Los40.com, Cadena 100 and COPE, which also used advertising to promote the products linked to their own brands, such as the 40 Principales Card, Visa COPECard or Visa Cadena 100.

5. Furthering and diversifying interactive modes

Spanish online radio is moving towards an understanding of the medium as an interactive platform. The present study demonstrates that interactivity is the communication resource which was mainly developed between 2006 and 2008, with the aim of fostering loyalty among listeners interested in a particular brand or style of radio. Los40.com has clearly been showing this trend since 2006. The other websites analysed, particularly that of Cadena SER – have made progress in their messages and use of participative techniques, and in 2008/2009 the digital radio community is now attaining prominence. Listeners themselves decide how they are going to participate and how they will relate to the network or to other listeners, and in some cases, they are forming social networks.

On the one hand, user participation is being maintained through three main routes: 1) using or demanding contents and services; 2) contributing new material generated by listeners; and 3) setting up direct dialogue between the network and its audience, and between users themselves, for example, through blogs. On the other hand, networks are increasing the modes through which they participate in the net. All

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[10] 40 Móvil by Orange is a commercial strategy run by Unión Radio-40 Principales and the mobile phone company Orange, which offers discounts on particular phones and rates, as well as radio entertainment services. The user can obtain musical hits, vote for the songs on the channel's charts, and receive alerts giving news about favourite musicians, as well as subscribing to podcasts of the programmes "From 40 to 1" and "Anda ya", take part in competitions, see videoclips from the 40 TV channels, download logos, tunes and screen backgrounds, among other facilities.

[11] Cosmetics targeting the youth market with H20 Plus.

the websites promote the use of blogs (belonging to programmes or to presenters), podcasting[12], widgets to subscribe to or see contents, and direct access via Most heard/viewed/read. The chances to comment on, share or send material are thus being multiplied, and texts, photos, videos and sound files can be included. However, the presence of discussion boards and chats has been reduced somewhat, even though they are still visible. These, together with e-mail, surveys, SMS messages, MMS multimedia messages, and RSS headline services, complete the list of interactive tools used by the Spanish radio networks on the Internet.

In 2008, the networks SER and 40 Principales were still the trend-setters as far as interactivity in the net was concerned.

www.cadenaser.com has intensified this communication strategy since 2007/2008. This site presents most of its contents as calls for constant user participation, through blogs, podcasts, chats, discussion boards, sound and text messages from the listener, surveys and questions from the audience (which are growing in frequency and tend to be linked to particular programmes). By way of example, it will suffice to mention the interactive sections of Ser Periodista; La Comunidad (in which one can create and maintain a free personal blog linked to a programme); and The latest sounds/Most heard, with its options Hear, Podcast and Take it, which make it possible to insert a sound file in a blog, webpage or discussion.

The other talk radio networks have been offering a wide variety of blogs and podcasting services over the last two seasons; www.cope.es and www.rtve.es/rne/ are the sites with the largest number of blogs on their home page. COPE also emphasises personalised audio files; RSS format subscription to all the news headlines by section and category, and subscription to the COPE Newsletter; and access to contents via The Latest/Most viewed/heard/comment/sent. There has been a move towards greater interactivity, including polls, e-mail, SMSs and telephone numbers for recording messages which can then be heard on the programmes' pages. Radio Nacional also offers surveys and RSS subscriptions.

Onda Cero and Punto Radio have fewer blogs on their home pages. www.ondacero.es gives prominence The Latest/Most heard/read, e-mail and the telephone numbers and answering machine of programmes that are broadcast live. www.puntoradio.com invites listeners to take part by sending their opinion to the website, to the listeners' telephone, by hearing other users' opinions, or by suggesting subjects to talk about on the radio, taking part in competitions and surveys, or subscribing to RSSs, as well as contributing to discussion boards of programmes and Most comment/visited.

As far as music radio networks are concerned, Los40.com is still the website that serves as a model of how to build a brand community: Universo 40 uses blogs, meetings, discussions, chats and surveys to

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[12] Berry (2006: 144) explains that podcasting is not only a converged medium (bringing together audio, the web and portable media devices) but also a disruptive technology and one that has already forced some in the radio business to reconsider some established practices and preconceptions about audiences, consumption, production and distribution.

strengthen contact between the network, its listeners, and the leading figures in the music world. In 2008/2009, its home page emphasised the terms Participate, Community, Blogs and Identification (by Users and Groups). It stressed personal preferences regarding music, videos and Most viewed/voted/sent/heard. Furthermore, it encouraged listeners to send SMS, MMS and e-mail messages to the network and its presenters.

Europa FM was also moving towards a more interactive platform in 2008, which highlighted the Generación Europa community on the Internet. This network's new web foregrounds blogs, programme podcasts, online competitions, surveys about the network and the web, subscription to news or musical events via RSS, and e-mail.

The Kiss FM community was also consolidated in 2008/2009. This network invites users to send an e-mail to tuhaceskiss@kissfm.es saying what their favourite song is; it promotes online competitions; includes Most viewed today/Ever/Latest; and maintains the Kiss Surveys, the Kiss Club for users registered with the Blog, Discussion Board and What most people visited; and has a general e-mail for questions and suggestions.

However, the website of Cadena 100 still awaits the introduction of interactive options, since to date it only offers an e-mail address for people to write to the director.

Conclusion

The Internet offers opportunities to enrich the discursive strategies of radio, to develop more personalized contents, and to intensify and extend the communities of listeners who identify with the style and brand of each type of programming. The development of the interactive radio –*personal radio* (Albarran & Pitts, 2001: 172)– needs of innovation (Wall, 2004: 34) and strategies of narrowcasting (Priestman, 2004: 78) or niche programming (Hendy, 2000: 52). Web radio offers a major capacity of selection –listening on demand (Waghorn, 2005: 36)–, and raises listeners' communities more segmented (Priestman, 2002: 226). Also, the website is a tool key to promote the contents on air and to contribute an additional meaning to the distribution of the programming based on the interactivity (Pitts & Harms, 2003: 271).

This study has brought to light a marked improvement in the Internet communications strategies used by the talk radio networks – SER, COPE, Onda Cero, Punto Radio and Radio Nacional – and the music radio networks – 40 Principales, Europa FM, Kiss FM and Cadena 100 – between 2006 and 2008. Advances have been made particularly in the design, navigability and multimedia options of some webpages, outstanding among which are Los40.com and the websites of SER and COPE. Interactivity, in the sense of ongoing

dialogue with listeners, is the main resource used by the websites analysed, which are facing the challenge of designing new products, diversifying their content range in accord with general interests or specific preferences, promoting radio as a medium, and taking advantage of syndicated news and/or commercial services. At the same time, Spanish radio networks may be developing along the lines of listener-generated contents using a Web 2.0 platform.

All of this is taking place at the same time as new interactive modes of radio participation are offering excellent techniques for obtaining qualitative information about audiences in order to cater for their news, entertainment and musical preferences. In short, radio stations are learning to exploit the narrative and interactive resources of the Internet in order to strengthen radio as a medium.

Interactive participation of the user in the content helps to prolong the listening (Pitts & Harms, 2003: 280; Ren & Chan-Olmsted, 2004: 9). Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the broadcasters must talk with the listener and not with the technology (Evans, 2005: 43). The digital battle will consist of retaining more to the audience that in increasing it (Hendy, 2000: 54). In consequence, broadcasters should also utilize the interactive components of the web to build and cultive new relationships with listeners and clients. Stations will need to create their own communities of listeners, which will be defined by program, lifestyle and consumer interests (Evans & Smethers, 2001: 13). The notion of community for radio audiences could take on new significance that is no longer limited by geographics restrictions, but governed even more than traditional radio by special interest and lifestyles (Evans & Smethers, 2001: 25). The Internet offers radio stations a way of strengthening brand loyalty while given the opportunity to provide services that are not easily provided through broadcasting (Lind & Medoff, 1999).

This descriptive study was designed to analyse the general evolution of the communication strategies of websites belonging to the main talk and music radio networks in Spain from 2006/2007 to 2008/2009 programme seasons. Additional research is need to understand the reasons of the changes in the range of content and the interactive tools offered on Spanish radio station's websites. Also, what is the web radio audience's listening behaviour and what benefits and problems have broadcasters realized as a result of having a website. These presents an interesting question for further research.

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Annex 1: Website Resources of Spanish Talk Radio Networks SER, COPE, Onda Cero, Punto Radio y Radio Nacional.

(First and second browsing level) 2008/2009

Main element			cadenaser.com	cope.es	ondacero.es	puntoradio.com	rtve.es/radio
Traditional broadcasting service and complementary contents		Network simulcasting	•	•	•	•	•
		Local simulcasting	•	•	•	•	
		Programming schedule	•	•	•	•	•
	Programmes	Main programmes	•	•	•	•	•
		Other programmes	•	•	•	•	•
	News continuity	Headlines	•	•	•	•	
		Newscast			•		
		Last newscast	•	•	•	•	•
		News on home website	•	•	•	•	
	Sound service	Programmes	•	•	•	•	•
		Reports	•	•	•	•	•
		Sections and areas news	•	•	•	•	•
		Sounds of the day / Chronicles			•		•
		Sounds of the day / Reportages			•		•
		Sounds of the day / Voices	•	•			•
		Recently sounds / Chronicles			•	•	•
		Recently sounds / Reportages	•	•	•	•	•
		Recently sounds / Voices	•	•		•	•
		Remember Sounds / Programmes	•				•
		Remember Sounds / Reports	•				•
		Remember Sounds / Voices	•				•
		Songs					
	Internal search engines	By section	•	•	•	•	•
		Not section-linked					
	Specials	Daily/weekly news	•	•	•	•	•
		Current issues					
		Photo galleries	•	•	•	•	•
		Video news	•	•			•
		Webcam					
Web exclusive services	In-house production	Stock Exchange			•		
		Songs					
		Street maps		•			
		What's on					
		Buying and selling section					
		PDA downloads					
		Travel guide					
		Horoscope					
		Telephone information					
		Games		•			
		Logos					
		Sports scoreboard			•		
		Mobile melodies					
		MMS					
		E-mail subscriptions offer					
		TV programming					
		Lotteries					
		www resources					
		E-mail briefs		•			

		Ring tones					
		SMS	•				
		Weather	•	•			
		Translator					
		Tickets sales					
		Flights					
	Syndicated production	Stock Exchange					
		Songs					
		Street maps			•		
		What's on	•				
		Buying and selling section	•	•	•	•	
		PDA downloads	•				
		Travel guide			•		
		Horoscope	•				
		Telephone information	•		•		
		Games		•	•		
		Logos			•		
		Sports scoreboard	•				
		Mobile melodies			•		
		MMS	•				
		E-mail subscriptions offer	•		•		
		TV programming	•		•		
		Lotteries	•		•		
		www resources					
		E-mail briefs	•				
		Ring tones			•		
		SMS	•				
		Weather					
		Translator	•				
		Tickets sales					
		Flights					
Interactive services for users		Blogs	•	•	•	•	•
		Community, club	•	•			
		Network contact e-mail	•	•	•	•	•
		Programmes contact e-mail	•	•	•	•	•
		Chats for programmes	•				
		Chats with guests	•				
		Surveys / Polls	•	•	•	•	•
		Send your questions	•	•	•	•	•
		Forums	•		•		
		Send comments	•	•	•	•	•
		MMS	•				
		Podcasting	•	•	•	•	•
		SMS	•	•	•	•	•
		RSS news headlines services	•	•	•	•	•
		Most heard/ viewed/ read/ voted/ sent	•	•	•	•	

Annex 2: Website Resources of Spanish Music Radio Networks 40 Principales, Cadena 100, Kiss FM and Europa FM
(First and second browsing level) 2008/2009

Main element			los40.com	40principales.com	cadena100.es	kissfm.es	europafm.es
Traditional broadcasting service and complementary contents	Network simulcasting		•	•	•	•	•
	Local simulcasting		•	•	•	•	•
	Programming schedule			•	•	•	•
	Main programmes		•	•	•		•
	Formula	News	•	•	•	•	•
		Top 1	•	•			•
		Music Top List	•	•	•		•
		Competitions	•	•	•	•	•
	Voice continuity: DJs / presenters			•	•	•	•
	Sound archive service		•	•			•
	Documentation		•			•	•
	Internal search engines		•		•	•	•
	Specials		•	•		•	
	Photo galleries		•	•	•	•	•
	Videoclips		•				•
	Webcam		•	•			
Web exclusive services	In-house production	Stock Exchange					
		Songs	•				
		Street maps					
		What's on					
		Buying and selling section	•		•		
		PDA downloads					
		Travel guide					
		Horoscope					
		Telephone information					
		Games	•				
		Logos	•			•	
		Sports scoreboard					
		Mobile melodies	•				
		MMS					
		TV programming					
		Lotteries					
		www resources	•				
		E-mail briefs	•				
		Ring tones	•				
		SMS					
		Weather					
		Translator					
		Tickets sales					
		Flights					
	Syndicated production	Stock Exchange					
		Songs					
		Street maps					•
		What's on					
		Buying and selling section	•		•	•	•
		PDA downloads					
		Travel guide					•
		Horoscope					
		Telephone information					•
		Games	•				•
		Logos	•				•
		Sports scoreboard					
		Mobile melodies	•		•		•

Category	Item					
	MMS					
	E-mail subscriptions offer					•
	TV programming					•
	Lotteries				•	•
	www resources					
	E-mail briefs					
	Ring tones	•		•		
	SMS					
	Weather				•	
	Translator					
	Tickets sales					
	Flights					
Interactive services for users	Blogs	•	•	•	•	•
	Community, club	•	•	•	•	•
	Network contact e-mail	•	•	•	•	•
	Programmes contact e-mail	•	•			•
	Chats for programmes	•	•			•
	Chats with guests	•			•	
	Surveys / Polls	•		•	•	•
	Questions	•	•	•	•	•
	Forums	•			•	•
	Comments	•			•	•
	MMS	•				
	Podcasting					•
	SMS	•			•	•
	RSS news headlines services					•
	Most heard/ viewed/ read/ voted/ sent	•			•	
	Voting for charts	•			•	•

Note: The sound archive service refers both to radio products and non-radio sound products.