THE USE OF PODCASTS IN SPANISH CYBERMEDIA SPECIALISED IN HEALTH

EL USO DEL PÓDCAST EN LOS CIBERMEDIOS ESPAÑOLES ESPECIALIZADOS EN SALUD

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The study analyzes how Spanish cybermedia specialized in health use the podcast format, understood as the combination of the terms iPod and broadcasting, within their productive structure as a formula to access segments of the population that are not prone to receive their contents. **Methodology:** Six specialized cybermedia considered to be of reference within the Spanish health sector (Diario Médico, Redacción Médica, Gaceta Médica, Con Salud, Diario Sanitario and Espacio Sanitario) were selected and the various podcasts that each of these media generates and supports on their respective web pages were examined. **Results:** Con Salud, with three podcasts, and Redacción Médica, with seven podcasts, are the two cybermedia that use this technology. In the case of the other four, the use of this format has not been systematically recorded. **Discussion:** The examples of podcasts analysed show the potential to support all kinds of journalistic genres: in-depth interviews, features, news and editorial comment. They also incorporate a variety of podcasting platforms to support their distribution, including Google Podcasts, iVoox, SoundCloud and Spotify. **Conclusions:** A significant part of the Spanish cybermedia specialised in the health sector shows a growing interest in podcasts, a fact that, from a chronological point of view, will occur between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, and which can be seen as part of the current boom of this format in all types of production sectors.

Keywords:

Podcast; cybermedia; journalism; health; specialised journalism.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Se analiza de qué manera los cibermesdios españoles especializados en salud emplean el formato pódcast, entendido como la combinación de los términos iPod y broadcasting, dentro de su estructura productiva como fórmula para acceder a segmentos de población poco proclives a recibir sus contenidos. **Metodología:** Se han seleccionado seis cibermedios especializados considerados de referencia dentro del sector español de la salud (Diario Médico, Redacción Médica, Gaceta Médica, Con Salud, Diario Sanitario y Espacio Sanitario) y se han examinado los diversos pódcast que cada uno de estos medios genera y soporta en sus respectivas páginas web. **Resultados:** Con Salud, con tres pódcast, y Redacción Médica, con siete pódcast, son los dos cibermedios que apuestan por esta tecnología. En el caso de los cuatro restantes, no se ha detectado el empleo de este formato de modo sistemático. **Discusión:** Los ejemplos de pódcast analizados dejan entrever la posibilidad de soportar toda clase de géneros periodísticos: entrevistas en profundidad, reportajes, noticias y comentarios editorializantes. Asimismo, incorporan diversas plataformas de podcasting para apoyar su distribución, incluyendo Google Podcasts, iVoox, SoundCloud y Spotify. **Conclusiones:** Una parte apreciable de los cibermedios españoles especializados en el sector de la sanidad prestan un creciente interés hacia los pódcast, un hecho que desde el punto de vista cronológico surge entre finales de 2021 y comienzos de 2022 y que cabe enmarcar en la etapa de eclosión en la que actualmente se ve envuelta este formato en toda clase de sectores productivos.

Palabras clave:

Pódcast; cibermedios; periodismo; salud; periodismo especializado.

1. INTRODUCTION

Podcasting technology, conceived as a combination of the terms iPod and broadcasting (Hammersley, 2004), began in the first decade of the 21st century, although American broadcasters specializing in pop music had developed similar experiences in the 1990s through the use of RSS content syndication services in order to access segments of the population not inclined to listen to their programming through the usual procedures.

In its beginnings, the podcast was identified as a communicative tool that allows the production of radio contents and their subsequent broadcasting by means of subscription through the Internet. Since 2005, this novel approach has facilitated the incorporation of audio files that are not only distributed among communities of Internet users, but also allow users to express their opinions on such content and share them with others (Sellas, 2009).

Beyond the individual casuistry, some common features are detected within podcasting: its priority characteristic of sound archiving (Berry, 2016), the growing variety of journalistic formats and thematic content (Román and Moreno, 2022), its reliance on a digital signal and the availability of easy-to-use tools for its realization (Markman, 2012), the periodic presentation (Hangcock and McMurtry, 2018) and the particular way of distribution (Dubber, 2013).

Its diachronic evolution goes through four stages: experiment, consolidation, multimedia and emergence (Parra and Onieva, 2020). The first of them runs from the late 20th century to 2005 and is even prior to the conceptualization of the term, emerging in parallel with the digitization of the signal that supported the contents and is based on

innovations such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) technology conceived by Netscape (Sterne, 2006) or the audio file compression format Moving Picture Experts Group-MPEG layer 3 (MP3) developed at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in Germany (Gutiérrez and Rodríguez, 2010).

The moment of consolidation occurs between 2006 and 2009 and involves the arrival of the new generation of smartphones, based on UMTS technology that surpasses and replaces the previous GSM and GPRS environments, as well as the growing awareness of radio information companies about their expressive possibilities (González, 2010; Ortiz, 2012) and the significant capacity of audiences to generate content subsequently distributed through various platforms (Moreno, 2017).

The multimedia phase took place between 2010 and 2013. Among other aspects, it entails its incorporation into the portals of all types of organizations and the accompaniment of the usual sound files with elements such as texts, photographs, infographics and hyperlinks that complete its meaning for the target audiences (Dowling and Miller, 2019).

The period of hatching begins from 2014 and this is where as of today we find ourselves. There has been a formidable increase in the number of podcasts produced and listened to (Leoz and Pedrero, 2022) and in the volume of business generated by this format (Locker, 2018), which has led to the arrival and consolidation of numerous platforms of local and transnational scope to simplify its management, including examples such as Apple Podcasts, iVoox, SoundCloud, Spotify or Spreaker (Sullivan, 2019). Such circumstance is also reflected in the increasing attention paid to it from the scientific literature in a wide range of possibilities among which its impact on the information industry stands out (Pérez Alaejos et al., 2018; Lotfian and Busso, 2019; Legorburu et al., 2021).

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research is to analyze how the main Spanish cybermedia specialized in health are betting on podcasting technology as a strategic tool to consolidate their relationship with their regular users and at the same time access new population segments, generally identified with younger user groups, with whom they have so far had difficulties to interrelate, in line with the work carried out in other fields of specialization by authors such as Bull (2010), Piñeiro (2015), Spinelli and Dann (2019) and Moreno and Román (2020), among others.

Additionally, the aim is to: examine to what extent this journalistic sector benefits from added values inherent to this format, among which are the economy of production and distribution costs, creative freedom and simplicity in access by audiences through the use of all types of physical supports; determine the main formal and content attributes perceived in this kind of podcast; and outline a possible future scenario of this innovation in the short and medium term following the work proposed by Rodríguez (2017) and Sellas (2018) based on specific cases.t al., 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

Once the review of the national and international scientific literature had been carried out, we proceeded to select six specialized cybermedia considered to be of reference within the Spanish health sector (they are listed in alphabetical order without any type of consideration being able to be extracted from this order): *Con Salud* (https://www.consalud.es/), *Diario Médico* (https://www.diariomedico.com/), *Diario*

Sanitario (https://diariosanitario.com/), *Espacio Sanitario* (https://www.espaciosanitario.com/), *Gaceta Médica* (https://gacetamedica.com/) y *Redacción Médica* (https://www.redaccionmedica.com/).

In each of the cases, the various podcasts that these cybermedia generate and support on their respective web pages have been examined. These podcasts had to meet the criteria of still being operational at the closing date of this research and have at least five episodes broadcast to make their examination scientifically relevant.

A quantitative study sheet was then prepared. For its formulation and determination we have taken into account the work of authors who focus their examination on facets such as the analysis of its impact on specific population groups (Pedrero et al., 2019), the incidence they have on the productive structure of information companies (Bottomley, 2015), their adaptation to the demands of the younger generations of digital audio content consumers (Chan-Olmsted and Wang, 2022), the evolution over time (Alonso et al., 2022) or everything that has to do with the theory of uses and gratifications (Perks et al., 2019).

The file includes seven main aspects: name of the podcast, thematic item, location URL, additional platforms on which it is available with their corresponding location URL, date of creation, frequency and duration ranges (minimum and maximum). The attributes taken into account do not include quantitative data on the number of visits or downloads generated in each case due to the lack of systems for measuring results that provide sufficiently verified and contrasted global data (Laor, 2022).

The quantitative file is combined with the qualitative analysis of the podcasts that are generated within the productive structure of the previously selected cybermedia. For this purpose, the thematic axes are determined in each case, the particularities of the human resources that produce them are specified, the most commonly used journalistic genres are emphasized, those facets referring to the use of sound resources in addition to locution that entail the formulation of a certain narrative style and rhythm are pointed out, and their content structure is related.

The content analysis technique has been used, based both on the general principles established by Berelson (1952) and on its specific application to the field of communication as explained by Bardin (1986), which currently continues to generate a considerable scientific bibliography in the journalistic environment (Segado, 2020; Cervi et al., 2021; Maares and Hanusch, 2022; Goyanes and Piñeiro, 2024).

4. RESULTS

The results that are part of the present investigation were completed as of February 23, 2023.

4.1. *Con Salud*

This digital native was created in January 2013. It is part of the Mediforum Group, created in December 1999, which currently focuses on three main areas of action: media, with the digital newspapers *Con Salud*, *EC Salud* and *Estetic*, the weekly *SaluDigital* and the paper yearbook A*nuario EmpresasConSalud;* management of social networks, including monitoring and control solutions; and advisory services focused on aspects such as spokesperson training or external communication.

As of November 9, 2021, the cyber-medium is betting for the first time on this format through a section headed by the title *ConSalud Pódcasts*, conceived as "a new project born from the demand of our own readers and followers" in the words of Juan Blanco, CEO of the corporation (Velasco, 2021). This initiative is part of the corporation's multimedia strategy and was preceded in 2019 by the creation of a channel dedicated to audiovisual content (*ConSalud TV*).

At present, its offer is composed of three podcasts with their own name: *Entrevistas con Salud*, *Historias poco frecuentes* and *La Huella de la Piel*. All of them are also available through the SoundCloud platform (Table 1).

Table 1. *Con Salud* Podcast.

Nombre	Ítem temático	URL	Plataformas adicionales	Fecha de creación	Periodicidad promedio	Rangos de duración
Entrevistas con Salud	Salud y política sanitaria	https://www.consalud.es/la-entrevista	SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/consalud_es/sets/entrevistas-consalud-podcast	Marzo de 2022	Indeterminada	3 minutos y 42 segundos a 18 minutos y 30 segundos
Historias poco frecuentes	Enfermedades raras	https://www.consalud.es/podcasts	SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/consalud_es/sets/historias-poco-frecuentes	Septiembre de 2022	Indeterminada	3 minutos y 21 segundos a 19 minutos y 5 segundos
La Huella de la Piel	Salud y estética de la piel	https://www.consalud.es/estetic/huella-piel	SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/consalud_es/sets/la-huella-de-la-piel	Octubre de 2022	Semanal	10 minutos y 20 segundos a 40 minutos y 28 segundos

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Entrevistas con Salud focuses exclusively on the journalistic genre of interviews with all kinds of professionals involved in the sector, both in their capacity as health professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists...) and as managers or representatives of political parties specialized in this field. The programs are introduced, voiced and presented by different members of the editorial staff of the cybermedia: Blanca Mas, David Aragonés, Juanjo Carrillo, Paco Cordero or María Velasco (whom shall be alluded to in more detail in the analysis of the podcast *La Huella de la Piel*), among others. In all the episodes analyzed, a musical burst is used to begin and conclude the program.

Historias poco frecuentes examines diseases classified as rare in the terms expressed by the World Health Organization (22q11 syndrome, leukodystrophy, Chediak-Higashi syndrome, Günther's porphyria, Angelman syndrome...). It is based on a combination of reports, interviews and commentaries that integrate the narration of the host of each episode with the opinions of specialists and the testimonies of those affected by the ailments addressed as well as those of their relatives, sometimes separated by short musical bursts. It is presented by Paola de Francisco, a journalist on the staff of the *Con Salud* and *SaluDigital* group's cyber-media. The beginning and end of each episode is voiced by Fran Estefan, also a member of the editorial staff of the cybermedia.

La Huella de la Piel is produced through the group's own Estetic portal and is directed and presented by the journalist María Velasco, a specialist in the health sector who has worked

in different media throughout her professional career and currently holds the position of general manager of the Mediforum Group. It focuses on skin care considered in its dual medical and aesthetic facet. The podcast is structured around an in-depth interview with dermatologists and beauty and esthetics professionals, always conducted with an informative tone. It incorporates an initial melody that is kept as background music during the interviews and concludes each of the episodes.

Vivir con Salud and *El deporte en la vida* podcasts, launched in December 2022 and January 2023 respectively, are not taken into account for this research, as they do not meet the criterion of having at least five episodes already broadcast, as established in the methodology. The former is dedicated to the dissemination and advice on health and wellness self-care, while the latter is focused on the analysis of the impact of sport in different health-related areas. Neither have authors considered the audio pieces of a very dissimilar nature and duration and not grouped under a specific heading but under the generic denomination of *Con Salud* Podcasts that from time to time are generated by the cybermedia.

4.2. *Diario Médico*

It is the longest-running cybermedia in the sector since its print edition was launched in May 1992 (initially as a daily newspaper and since 2012 as a weekly) and has been present in the online environment since 1998 (Bellón, 2018). The cybermedia is integrated within the *Unidad Editorial* (Unedisa) group, owner of titles such as *El Mundo*, *Expansión*, *Marca* or *Telva*, among others, and which in the healthcare field has publications such as *Correo Farmacéutico* and *CuídatePlus*.

Diario Médico does not include any type of podcast in its current production structure. This fact contrasts with its commitment to the audiovisual environment, through the *Diario Médico-Correo Farmacéutico* channel on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/@diariomedico/videos), which has more than 3,200 subscribers and generates content on a weekly basis, as well as the attention that the different media of the same publishing group pay to this format, with the cases of *Marca* (https://www.marca.com/podcast.html) and *El Mundo* (https://www.elmundo.es/podcasts.html) as particularly outstanding examples.

4.3. *Diario Sanitario*

It was launched on February 15, 2016 as an exclusively digital media. Unlike the rest of the editorial examples (with the exception of *Espacio Sanitario*) that make up the sample of this research, it does not belong to any multi-headline group but its owners are individuals (the journalist Dolores Carcelén and the publicist Roberto Escribano) grouped around the legal form of a community of goods that lacks its own legal personality. Furthermore, its headquarters are located in Albacete, and not in Madrid as in the other cases considered, and its contents are not exclusively aimed at professionals in the sector but also at a non-specialized audience.

As in the case of *Diario Médico*, this digital native does not incorporate podcasts in the set of contents it generates daily, nor does it use any podcasting platform to disseminate them. It should not be confused with the offer produced by the program of the same name led by Yanibel Abreu and Yehisson Peñalo, which is accessible through Apple Podcasts.

(https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/diario-sanitario/id1521274360) and through Spotify (https://open.spotify.com/show/54I6E9FD1bTa2y9wBmA5Yd).

4.4. *Espacio Sanitario*

Edited by the limited company *Página y Estilo*, this cyber-media is the heir of *Acta Sanitaria*, created in January 2006. The change of name, which also included a new logo and a renewed corporate identity, took effect on January 1, 2023 and responds to "the search for new communication formats, such as podcasts and video, to organically reach healthcare professionals", according to its director Esperanza Nicolás (Jiménez, 2022).

As a result of this circumstance, the journalist Paloma Ros joined the staff and since January 2023 she has been in charge of the production of the different episodes generated through podcasting technology. The first podcast is called Radiología and is aimed at analyzing current affairs in the sector, and is accessible both from the web page of the cyberjournal (https://www.espaciosanitario.com/radiologia/) and through the platforms iVoox (https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-radiologia_sq_f11796106_1.html) and Spotify (https://open.spotify.com/show/6Z8XnjwjOl9aG3ztRuVEfW). However, it is impossible to analyze them in detail, as only two programs have been generated up to the time of closing this research (with a duration of 45 minutes and 49 seconds and 8 minutes and 11 seconds and focused on COVID-19 and the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Spanish Society of Primary Care Physicians, respectively).

4.5. *Gaceta Médica*

Emerging in 2002 as a printed weekly accessible online (Santos, 2009), it became a truly multimedia newspaper in October 2011 following a significant reorganization of its production structure that included a strategic collaboration agreement with *Intereconomía TV*, which allowed it to launch the programs *Estar bien*, *Salud hoy* and *Toma medicina*, in addition to the reinforcement of its photo galleries and the further updating of its content. It is part of the We Care U corporation, with an active presence in the health sector through four lines of business: media, with the publications *El Global* and *Economía de la Salud*, in addition to *Gaceta Médica* itself; external communication consultancy services and social network management; production of audiovisual content through *NetSalud TV*; and organization of all kinds of events.

To date, *Gaceta Médica* has not opted for the podcast format in the generation of its content, although it does have audiovisual elements that are offered through the YouTube channel of the television production company NetSalud TV (https://www.youtube.com/@NetSaludTV/videos), with more than 2,700 subscribers. It is significant to underline that the latter company did have a presence on a podcasting platform such as iVoox through its programs *Entrevistas Net Salud* (https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-entrevistas-netsalud_sq_f1273024_1.html), *Miscelánea* (https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-miscelanea_sq_f1278022_1.html) and *En buenas manos* (https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-en-buenas-manos_sq_f1272718_1.html), which ceased broadcasting in July 2016, December 2016 and March 2017, respectively.

4.6. *Redacción Médica*

This digital native was created in 2004. It is part of *Sanitaria 2000*, a company specializing in the publication of different headers specializing in different areas of health, including Hospital Pharmacy, Health Engineering, Psychiatry and Mental Health, as well as Medical Editorial. The corporation also incorporates a line of business focused on the organization of all kinds of events related to this sector.

Of all the cybermedia that are part of this research, it is the one that most intensely bets on the podcast format in its productive structure, due to the concatenation of three circumstances: it is the one that has a greater quantity and a greater thematic variety structured around a large section under that generic denomination; each podcast incorporates a multimedia entry that combines the audio file with texts, photographs and hyperlinks; it uses three podcasting platforms for the additional dissemination of this kind of content: Google Podcasts, iVoox and Spotity.

This strategic commitment began on February 4, 2022, with a team dedicated to this task coordinated by journalist Elena González, with the support of María Aragonés, who is also the editor of the cyber-media. It currently hosts seven podcasts: *Consideraciones Escépticas, Desde mi Atalaya, El Dial de la Sanidad, Gerencia de Salud, Jefatura de Servicio, La Anamnesis* and *Líderes Sanitarias.* Likewise, all of them are accessible through Google Podcasts, iVoox and Spotity although, unlike in other cases, there is no separation by headers, a circumstance that is reflected in Table 2 where, in order not to repeat the same hyperlink values over and over again, all links are inserted only in *Consideraciones Escépticas.*

Table 2. *Redacción Médica Podcast.*

Nombre	Ítem temático	URL	Plataformas adicionales	Fecha de creación	Periodicidad promedio	Rangos de duración
Consideraciones Escépticas	Análisis del sector basado en la opinión	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/esceptica	Google Podcasts: https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaXZvb3guY29tL3BvZGNhc3QtcG9kY2FzdC1yZWRhY2Npb24tbWVkaWNhX3NxX2YxMTUwNzU3OF8xLmlzdHlveHzEu eG1s iVoox: https://www.ivoox.com/podcast-podcast-redaccion-medica_sq_f11507578_1.html Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/show/7wffgE02 0rnzEg75 0Tc3Rn	Mayo de 2022	Mensual	21 minutos y 3 segundos a 27 minutos y 12 segundos
Desde mi Atalaya	Análisis del sector basado en la opinión	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/atalaya	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Abril de 2022	Bimensual	11 minutos y 54 segundos a 24 minutos y 27 segundos
El Dial de la Sanidad	Día a día de los profesionales del sector	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/dial	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Febrero de 2022	Bimensual	19 minutos y 27 segundos a 39 minutos y 37 segundos
Gerencia de Salud	Entrevistas a directivos del sector	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/gerenciasalud	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Noviembre de 2022	Bimensual	21 minutos y 23 segundos a 42 minutos y 12 segundos
Jefatura de Servicio	Entrevistas a responsables sanitarios de hospitales	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/jefaturas	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Junio de 2022	Trimensual	23 minutos y 37 segundos a 45 minutos y 21
La Anamnesis	Actualidad del sector	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/anamnesis	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Febrero de 2022	Entre bimensual y trimensual	9 minutos y 38 segundos a 34 minutos y 47 segundos
Líderes sanitarias	Mujeres de referencia en la sanidad	https://www.redaccionmedica.com/tags/lideres	Google Podcasts, iVoox y Spotify	Marzo de 2022	Trimensual	13 minutos y 12 segundos a 40 minutos y 41 segundos

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

As of February 2022, *El Dial de la Sanidad* and *La Anamnesis* make up the largest percentage of content generated by the digital native through podcasting technology in the genre of reporting (sometimes combined with news). Presented by Elena González and María Aragonés, in the case of *La Anamnesis* (a term of Greek origin defined by the

Diccionario de la RAE as "Information provided by the patient and by other witnesses to compile their medical history") includes the participation of editors Olalla Batres and Jesús Mediavilla. The two programs have their own theme tune, which is used as an introduction and closing element as well as a musical background during the presenters' speeches and the contributions made by the interviewees to complete the topics covered. In both cases, the approach in each episode is monothematic in nature: the main difference is that *El Dial de la Sanidad* addresses global issues while *La Anamnesis* focuses on issues more closely related to the current affairs of the sector.

The commitment to opinion podcasts is based on the examples of *Consideraciones Escépticas* and *Desde mi Atalaya*, which incorporate an almost identical structure (although with a different opening and closing tune in each case): after a previous introduction by Elena González, each episode is structured around an analysis commentary by Dr. Julián Ezquerra (former secretary general of the Association of Doctors and Graduates of Madrid) and Dr. Rodrigo Gutiérrez (current president of the Spanish Society of Health Care Users). The main difference lies in the treatment of each topic addressed: more direct and linked to current affairs in the case of the former (now retired) than in the case of the latter (still active), who on occasions proposes the analysis based on external references (a novel, a philosophical quotation or a film).

Gerencia de Salud, *Jefatura de Servicio* and *Líderes Sanitarias* are examples of podcasts based on the journalistic genre of the in-depth interview, which occupies the entirety of each episode considered. Always conducted by Elena González and María Aragonés and each with its own opening and closing tune, the first two episodes deal with the work of different hospital managers in Spain in the healthcare and management fields, respectively, which allows for a comprehensive approach to management. The third focuses on examining the career of a female professional considered a reference within the sector, generally due to her merits in medicine or pharmacy, although sometimes also due to her political projection, as is the case with Ana Pastor, Dolors Montserrat or Mónica García.

Other podcasts generated by Redacción Médica not considered in this analysis because they do not meet the methodological criterion of a minimum of five episodes generated at the time of closing the research are: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pneumology, Oncology and Psychiatry. However, this circumstance points to a thematic specialization using this type of technology.

5. DISCUSSION

The formulation and subsequent expansion of podcasting technology is framed within the environment of the semantic web or Web 2.0, conceived in the dual sense of an innovative way that transforms interfaces in the visualization of content (DiNucci, 1999) and of a great agora in which Internet users share all kinds of knowledge and experiences (O'Reilly, 2005) and the conversion of the consumer into a prosumer is encouraged (Bird, 2011).

This combination of circumstances is laying the foundations for the emergence and expansion of phenomena such as audiovisual channels, music and photography portals, hybrid web applications, content syndication services, wiki virtual communities and podcasts, among others (Briggs, 2007).

Spanish cybermedia specialized in the field of health are beginning to realize the communicative possibilities of this format with their audiences in general and, in particular, with certain population groups that are currently difficult to reach. These groups are identified with the younger professional segments, under 40 years of age, mostly belonging to Generation Y or Millennial Generation.

This strategic approach arises when podcasting technology is in the midst of a period of explosion that involves three main consequences: the outstanding increase in the number and variety of podcasts that are produced by all types of organizations, including information companies; the increase in the volume of business generated; and the definitive consolidation of numerous platforms of local and transnational scope that optimize the distribution of this type of content among the Internet community.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that an appreciable part of the Spanish cybermedia specialized in the healthcare sector are showing a growing and significant interest in the podcasting phenomenon, a fact that from a strictly chronological point of view arises between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 and that can be framed in the stage of hatching in which this format is currently involved in all kinds of productive sectors and within the information industry in particular, as highlighted in different reports of international and national scope.

From a strategic point of view, this bet is part of the search for new population segments, mainly identified with the younger age groups interested in these contents either because of their professional activity or simply because of their inclination towards them, to which so far these cybermedia have had difficulty in accessing. Two additional reasons of a tactical nature must be added to this fact: the narrative freedom of this format, far from the thematic and time/space limitations inherent to other journalistic formulas, which is confirmed in the research by highlighting the differences between attributes such as the ranges of duration, periodicity and predominant journalistic genres; and the low economic impact that their generation and subsequent dissemination, both on their websites and through external platforms, have on their production cost structure.

Of the cybermedia in the sample, *Redacción Médica* is the one that devotes most effort to the production of podcasts, followed by *Con Salud.* It is no coincidence that in both cases these are digital natives that are integrated into business groups whose activity goes beyond the editorial field and includes aspects related to consultancy and advice in communication in general and in the field of web 2.0 or semantic web manual in particular. Even in the case of another digital native such as *Espacio Sanitario*, its first podcast has just been launched, although given its small number of episodes at the time of closing this research, a detailed analysis has not been carried out. This contrasts with the lack of interest shown to date by a classic journalistic group such as Unedisa, owner of *Diario Médico*, in this format.

In the short and medium term, it will be necessary to follow with particular attention new initiatives that arise in the specialized press in the health sector, both in the cybermedia that already use this technology and in those that have not yet done so, based on their own web pages as well as on collaboration agreements reached with podcasting platforms.

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