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**TWO DECADES OF UNIVERSITY RADIO IN SPAIN (2000-2020)  
THE REINVENTION OF THE MEDIA AS AN EDUCATIONAL  
PROJECT IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT**

**DOS DÉCADAS DE RADIO UNIVERSITARIA EN ESPAÑA (2000-  
2020) LA REINVENCIÓN DEL MEDIO COMO PROYECTO  
EDUCATIVO EN UN ENTORNO DIGITAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

University radio has undergone an important expansion and development process in Spain in the first two decades of the 21st century. This impulse is due to the progressive opening of communication faculties and degrees in Spanish universities, but also technological change and the possibilities that the Internet and the new proposals it offers. In this paper, we analyze the path traveled by Spanish university radio stations in the last twenty years through four fundamental aspects: the stations themselves, their creation, disappearance or consolidation, the type of management and degree of participation in them by the students, the programming they offer and the use of social networks. This analysis will allow us to determine how the use of

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radio in university education is consolidated as a fundamental aspect in the training of future journalists capable of handling not only technical resources but also with journalistic criteria and responsibility.

**KEYWORDS:** Radio - online - Internet - infinite dial - education – learning

## **RESUMEN**

La radio universitaria ha experimentado en las dos primeras décadas del siglo XXI un importante proceso de expansión y desarrollo en España. Este impulso se debe a la progresiva apertura de facultades y grados de comunicación en las universidades españolas, pero también el cambio tecnológico y las posibilidades que Internet y las nuevas propuestas que ofrece. En este trabajo analizamos el camino recorrido por las radios universitarias españolas en los últimos veinte años a través de cuatro aspectos fundamentales: las propias emisoras, su creación, desaparición o consolidación, el tipo de gestión y grado de participación en ellas de los alumnos, la programación que ofrecen y el uso de las redes sociales. Este análisis nos permitirá determinar cómo el uso de la radio en la educación universitaria se consolida como aspecto fundamental en la formación de futuros periodistas capaces de manejar no solo los recursos técnicos sino de hacerlo con criterio periodístico y responsabilidad.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Radio – *online* – Internet – dial infinito – educación – aprendizaje

## **DUAS DÉCADAS DE RÁDIO UNIVERSITÁRIA NA ESPANHA (2000-2020) A REINVENÇÃO DO MEIO DE COMUNICAÇÃO COMO PROJETO EDUCATIVO EM UM ENTORNO DIGITAL**

### **RESUMO**

A rádio universitária tem experimentado nas duas primeiras décadas do século XXI um importante processo de expansão e desenvolvimento na Espanha. Este impulso se deve a progressiva abertura de universidades e graduações de comunicação nas universidades espanholas, mas também a mudança tecnológica e as possibilidades que a internet e as novas propostas oferecem. Neste trabalho analisamos o caminho percorrido pelas rádios universitárias espanholas nos últimos vinte anos através de quatro aspectos fundamentais: as próprias emisoras, sua criação, desaparecimento ou consolidação, o tipo de gestão e o grau de participação nelas dos alunos, a programação que oferecem e o uso das redes sociais. Esta análise permitirá determinar como o uso da rádio na educação universitária se consolida como aspecto fundamental na formação de futuros jornalistas capazes de lidar não somente com os recursos técnicos mas também fazer isso com critério jornalístico e responsabilidade.

**PALAVRAS CHAVE:** Rádio – *online* – Internet – dial infinito – educação – aprendizado.

Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Foundation Act of the Association of University Radios of Spain (ARU by its acronym in Spanish) was signed at the Faculty of Information Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid. The purpose of this association, which was born from the agreement of 22 university radio stations, was to exchange experiences, contribute to the development of education and develop new working methods, support research on audiovisual media, and contribute to the training of human resources in university radio stations. As a result of this agreement, ten years later, there are numerous academic publications about university radio stations, congresses, and meetings, and an interesting field of work that has been growing and incorporating, from exchanges of experiences to European projects. It has also grown in members and incorporations of new university stations that in recent years have been created in different Spanish universities where degrees in Journalism or Communication have been implemented.

The development of ARU is nothing but a tangible example of how the ecosystem of university radio stations has experienced, over the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an extraordinary development thanks to two fundamental factors: the emergence of new public and private faculties and degrees of journalism and communication, and the technological development and the production and broadcast facilities that it brings. Once the debate on the nature of Internet broadcasts has been overcome, making radio today is easier and cheaper than ever. Radio continues to have infinite possibilities of expression and creation and an undoubted appeal for the youngest, while at the same time it constitutes a teaching resource of great value for teachers.

In this paper, we propose to analyze how Spanish university radio has changed in the last 20 years. How new stations were born, have grown, consolidated, or disappeared, what type of programming they offer, how they broadcast, and how they have incorporated social networks into their routines. This analysis will allow us to determine how the use of radio in university education is consolidated as a fundamental aspect in the training of future journalists capable of handling, not only technical resources but also doing so with journalistic criteria and responsibility.

## **2. RADIO AS A RESOURCE FOR EDU-COMMUNICATION**

Although the term 'edu-communication' is polysemic, some authors have identified it as media education or acquisition of communication skills by students and teachers (Chiappe Laverde and Arias Vallejo, 2016; Rodríguez García, 2016). The term is directly related to web 2.0, which has made it possible to strengthen the capacities of students and teachers to share, produce, and disseminate messages to promote social change and a new educational paradigm, taking advantage of the low production costs brought about by ICT (Durán Becerra and Tejedor Calvo, 2017). In this sense, several authors

have alluded to the potential of radio as an educational medium, both for its language and communicative characteristics and for its low production cost and easy distribution of its content through the Internet and other digital platforms. This has been shown by, among others, Martínez Piñero (2010), Martín-Pena, Cuellar-Parejo, and Vivas (2018), Martín-García, Marta-Lazo, and González-Aldea (2018). Martínez Piñero (2010) comments that the emergence of the Internet and the possibility of transmitting through ICT simply and inexpensively, has caused important changes in the proliferation of radio activities in schools. The author refers to the XTEC Radio experience, carried out in Catalonia, the results of which showed that school radio is also an excellent motivation for students. As it is broadcast over the Internet, its field of relationship par excellence, it facilitates the work of teachers with the communication skills of their students. This researcher agrees with others who believe that radio is the medium with the greatest educational strength, the one that can best be introduced into the classroom, and the one with the greatest capacity for curricular integration: above all because it is the most accessible and inexpensive technological medium, it offers a collaborative way of working and endows the student with a capacity for self-learning (Martín-Pena, Cuellar-Parejo, and Vivas, 2018).

During the last decade, browsing through the Internet, the use of social media, listening to the radio, and access to television and digital journalism, have become widespread activities among citizens. The direct consequence of this activity has been the great impact that this type of communication media has on the population and the intermediary role between the individual and reality. Aguaded and Martín-Pena (2013) say that today no one doubts the important educational role that audiovisual media in general, and radio in particular, have acquired as a source of teaching and learning for the population. These authors sustain that the radio medium, as a platform to entertain, inform, and educate, constitutes a suitable source to educate and train the listening skills and oral expression of listeners, besides fostering their critical attitude.

Martín Pena, Cuellar Parejo, and Vivas (2018) have claimed the edu-communicative vocation of radio and the need for this communication media to collaborate in the development of the teaching-learning process, in such a way that it allows the student to enjoy a more engaging, and probably more effective, type of sensory experience than that offered by classical linear teaching through bibliographic documents. In this sense, these researchers say that radio is the medium with the greatest educational force and the one with the greatest capacity for curricular integration, especially if its accessibility and the possibilities of collaborative work and self-learning that it offers are taken into account. This scenario and this way of understanding the media/education binomial is what has led to the concept of 'edu-communication' being coined from the scientific community, as a symbiosis between school, educational centers, and formal education or non-regulated training. This is shown, for example, by the marriage between scientific dissemination and radio, both in the school context and in the university environment.

Ponce (2017) says that university radios can be tools for edu-communication, understanding by this a discipline that encompasses the study of two areas of knowledge that have traditionally been well-differentiated, Education and

Communication. The emergence of educational radios first and of university radio stations later, at the service of the university community and of society in general, has meant that these stations performed that role that other conventional media were not playing. From this perspective, Ponce echoes the theses of Marta-Lazo and Segura in the sense that:

"The radio medium has played an important educational function throughout its history, from its beginnings as a propaganda weapon, through its community purposes, and reaching its pedagogical uses in the field of formal education, from the first academic levels to university higher education. (Marta-Lazo and Segura, 2011: 354)".

On the other hand, from the perspective of the relational factor, Martín-García, Marta-Lazo, and González-Aldea (2018: 53) point out that "the use of a university radio is extensible to all the students of a campus, whichever career they belong to. By approaching it, they can better understand the media, know how it works, and learn skills that will serve them in their academic life, and even in their interpersonal relationships".

## **2.1. Educational radio in Spain**

Radio as an educational resource appeared in Spain in the 1940s, much later than in Latin America, the United States, or Central Europe. Radio Barcelona, a pioneer in radio broadcasts, will be the first to include purely educational content produced in collaboration with the Barcelona Municipal Pedagogical Institute in its programming. This first initiative, which answers to the needs of a country devastated after the Civil War and closed off Europe, where another war is being waged, will be joined by other proposals from Radio Nacional de España, Radio Popular, Cadena Azul de Radiodifusión, or La Voz de Madrid. (Marta-Lazo & Segura Anaya. 2014).

Twenty years later, the Franco regime, aware of the possibilities of a resource already widely implanted in society, created the Bachillerato Radiofónico in 1962, which is broadcast on Antena 3 and Radio Reválida. Months later and by decree-law 1181/1963 of May 6<sup>th</sup>, the National Center for Middle Education through Radio and Television is born, which will depend on the Ministry of Education under the supervision, in terms of content, of the Ministry of Information and Tourism. This National Center for Middle Education through Radio and Television will be renamed on several occasions so that in 1968 it was known as the National Institute of Middle Distance Education and in 1975 it became the well-known INBAD, where students from all over Spain study at long-distance the degrees of BUP and COU.

This model of education through the radio was completed in 1979 with the CENEBAD, intended for basic education, EGB, and a few years before, in 1972, with the creation, by decree-law, of the UNED, the National University of Distance Education, which from the beginning explores and takes advantage of the means of diffusion and the scope offered by the public media, RNE, and TVE.

It was not until 1987 when the first university radio station, Radio La Laguna in Tenerife, appeared, already in full democracy and because of the impulse of the students and not of the university. It will be the students of the Colegio Mayor San Fernando, who started what is considered the first university initiative in the field of radio. Almost ten years later, in the 1996-1997 academic year, the one in Salamanca was born, which will not have stable programming until 2001. Between 1995 and 2000, the university radio stations of León, A Coruña, Navarra, Complutense, and Autónoma de Madrid will also be created, and all of them coincide in two problems, the lack of a license that allows them to legally broadcast and the economic cost of maintaining a minimal infrastructure.

Martín-Pena (2013, 2014) differentiates between three stages of development of university radio stations in Spain:

**Phase 1 (appearance and beginning of the first eight experiences)**, which chronologically reaches the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and shows a late and slow development, although it includes the birth of some of the historic Spanish university radio stations, such as Radio Complutense, Radio Universidad de Salamanca, or 98.3 Radio.

**Phase 2 (consolidation and expansion of the phenomenon)**, in the first ten years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when around fifteen new radio stations were opened, thanks to the opening of new communication faculties but also to the development of the Internet, new communication technologies, and networking.

**Phase 3 (reconsideration and union of the phenomenon)**, which takes place in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and coincides with the birth of the Association of University Radios of Spain (ARU), the first successful initiative of a large-scale union of Spanish university radios stations. At the same time, new public and private universities continue to be created in different Spanish provinces and with them, new university radio projects are born, now exclusively on the Internet.

It will, therefore, be around 2010 when the first great take-off of university radio begins to be experienced in Spain when the confluence of circumstances between the opening of new universities and communication faculties and the development of the Internet and new technical supports, create the perfect atmosphere for this great hatching to take place. Thus, at the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the map of university stations in Spain expanded to 25, which represent a third of the 70 public and private universities in our country. (Marta-Lazo and Segura-Anaya, 2014). From then until 2020, the framework determined by our research, the number of radio projects in Spanish universities will continue to grow until reaching the 35 that are currently in operation.

University radio stations carry out multiple tasks that in one way or another affect different areas of the university. In the first place, it is a way to publicize the activity of the institution among the members themselves, the community in which it is established, and the general public. On the other hand (Marta Lazo & Segura-Anaya, 2014), "it is a way of attending to how university students interpret social reality and the current world and offer this dimension to citizens. Furthermore, it can become a laboratory for experimentation of formats and genres by students of degrees related

to Communication, such as Journalism, the Audiovisual field, or Advertising and Public Relations. Likewise, we must not forget the facet of translation of the sources of knowledge through the radio, through the broadcasting of programs of a more educational nature. And, finally, the specific spaces in which the audience is approached to an affair or event that is held within the University”.

### **3. TEN YEARS OF A NEW DIGITAL UNIVERSITY RADIO IN SPAIN (2010-2020)**

Aguaded Gómez and Contreras Pulido (2011: 6), emphasize that “one of the fundamental characteristics and objectives of university radio stations should be to bring the higher institution –historically considered as a space reserved for the intellectual elite– closer to society, making it known, explaining, and if you like, 'humanizing' its activities. But this should not be an obstacle for these contents to alternate with others dedicated to the dissemination of many other issues”.

To this objective, a second fundamental one is added, taking advantage of all the didactic potential that radio has as a learning laboratory and practice field for students studying Communication degrees. “For a Communication student, knowing the rules of the game is, in some cases, decisive; not only because contacts, relationships, and sources are expanded to unsuspected extremes, but also because personal and professional reputation is increased or decreased” (Noguera, Martínez, and Grandío, 2011: 11).

Universities knew how to see and take advantage of all the potential that radio had behind it and many of the Faculties and Degrees of journalism and communication created throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been incorporating the possibility that their students find a formula of practical and collaborative learning on the radio. At present, and as shown in table 1, we can find up to 35 university radio stations linked to as many public and private universities in Spain.

How are these radios? What do they broadcast? How have they been changing and evolving? In a study carried out between October 2011 and January 2012, it was found that, of the 25 stations that existed at that time, 38.5% broadcast exclusively on the Internet and 50% shared their broadcast both on FM and on the Internet. The podcast already appeared as the most frequent type of broadcast, due to its simplicity in production and the scarce financial resources necessary for its recording and broadcast. The main type of grill was the mosaic structure, with short-lived spaces of the 'windows' type and fragmentary and thematic contents that energized the rhythm of the broadcast. The programs, produced in podcast format, were mostly thematic and with a fixed and predetermined periodicity. The offer was completed with special coverage in specific and outstanding moments of the university life and curricular content practices of the students. (Marta Lazo and Segura Anaya, 2012: 122-123).

As can be seen in table 1, since then, fifteen new radios have been added to the list of those that already existed, and at present, up to 35 university radio stations in Spain are active.

**Table 1:** Radio stations active since 2011 and newly created

	UNIVERSIDAD	NOMBRE EMISORA	ACTIVIDAD
	<b>EMISORAS ACTIVAS EN 2011</b>		<b>2020</b>
1	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Radio Complutense/ Info Radio UCM	ACTIVA
2	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	UAM Radio	SIN ACTIVIDAD
3	Universidad Camilo José Cela.	Onda Villanueva	SIN ACTIVIDAD
4	Universidad Cardenal Herrera	Radio CEU	SIN ACTIVIDAD
5	Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia	iRadio	ACTIVA
6	Universidad de Alcalá de Henares	RUAH. Radio Universitaria de Alcalá	ACTIVA
7	Universidad Politécnica de Alicante	Radio Politécnica	SIN ACTIVIDAD
8	Universidad de Almería	Radio Universidad - UAL	ACTIVA
9	Universidad de Barcelona	eubradio	ACTIVA
10	Universidad de Extremadura	Onda Campus	ACTIVA
11	Universidad de Huelva	Uniradio	ACTIVA
12	Universidad de Jaen	UNI Radio	ACTIVA
13	Universidad de La Laguna (Tenerife)	Radio Campus ULL	ACTIVA
14	Universidad de León	radiouniversitaria.com	ACTIVA
15	Universidad de Navarra	98.3 Radio	ACTIVA
16	Universidad de Salamanca	Radio Universidad	ACTIVA
17	Universidad de Valencia	UV Radio	ACTIVA
18	Universidad de Vigo. Campus Orense	Radio RKO	SIN ACTIVIDAD
19	Universidad de Zaragoza	unizar.es radio	ACTIVA
20	Universidad Europea de Madrid	UEM News	ACTIVA
21	Universidad Jaime I	Vox UJI Radio	ACTIVA
22	Universidad Miguel Hernández	MH Radio	ACTIVA
23	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia	Radio UNED	ACTIVA
24	Universidad Politécnica de Valencia	Radio FI	ACTIVA
25	Universidad Pompeu Fabra	UPF.Ràdio	ACTIVA
	<b>EMISORAS DE NUEVA CREACION</b>		<b>2020</b>
26	Universidad de Loyola Andalucía	Radio Loyola	ACTIVA
27	Universidad Nebrija	Media Lab	ACTIVA
28	Universidad de Burgos	UBU Radio	ACTIVA
29	Universidad Pablo de Olavide	Radio Olavide	ACTIVA
30	Universidad de Vic	Uvic Radio	ACTIVA
31	Universidad de Sevilla	Radius	ACTIVA
32	Universidad Europea del Atlántico	UR	ACTIVA
33	Universidad de Valladolid	Radio UVA	ACTIVA
34	Universidad de Alicante	Radio UA	ACTIVA
35	Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona	UAB Campus Media	ACTIVA
37	Universidad CEU San Pablo	Radio LAB	ACTIVA
38	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos	Radio URJC	ACTIVA
39	Universidad de Cantabria	Radio UC	ACTIVA
40	Universidad Oberta de Catalunya	UOC	ACTIVA

**Source:** Self-made



#### **4. TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS FOR THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM OF THE LEGAL LIMBO**

The time in which access to a legal FM frequency by universities was the main headache, has been left behind because of the technical possibilities that the Internet offers and the change in the way of consuming content of a large part of the population in general, and the youngest in particular. In the era of the 'infinite dial' (Marta Lazo and Segura Anaya, 2011), university broadcasters take advantage of the potential offered by 'cyber radio', the option of producing and distributing content without the need to obtain licenses and the end of space-time limitations that for so many years have conditioned, and even defined, the media itself.

López-Sánchez (2018, 136) analyzes in-depth the problem of 'legal uncertainty' of university radio stations and the conditions that this implies in their operation and understands that "university radio stations represent a different model of doing radio, due to their own characteristics: the specific context of action, the agents who participate in it, the specialized topics that are programmed, the profile of listeners to whom they are addressed, and the transfer of knowledge to society that these channels allow through the dissemination of science and the discoveries and findings that are produced in the Universities themselves, as cradles of knowledge and scientific experimentation".

And it is that Law 7/2010, General Law of Audiovisual Communication of March 31<sup>st</sup>, contemplates the models and peculiarities of commercial radios and community radios, but not of university ones. In its article 32.1, it establishes that "Private entities that are legally considered non-profit entities may provide non-profit community audiovisual communication services to meet the specific social, cultural, and communication needs of communities and social groups, as well as to promote citizen participation and the structuring of the associative fabric. In any case, said contents will be broadcast openly and without any type of commercial audiovisual communication". University radio stations are obviously non-commercial, and their public or private ownership depends on the very nature of the University in which they are created. López-Vidales (2015) et al., understand that it is a model that coexists and shares space in the radioelectric spectrum and the network with private and public commercial channels, either generalist or specialized (thematic), as well as with community or cultural radio stations.

The General Law of Audiovisual Communication leaves, however, a loophole for the autonomous communities to legislate and so far, three, Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia, have recognized university radio stations in the autonomous development of the audiovisual standard.

Thus, Catalonia specifically establishes that "audiovisual communication services developed by universities that meet the general criteria established by this article are assimilated to the condition of services provided without profit motive". (art. 70.2 of Law 22/2005 of December 29<sup>th</sup>). Decree 4/2017 of January of the Valencian Community recognizes that "public universities may agree to provide audiovisual

communication services. The provision of this service implies that they, regardless of the management mode, assume responsibility for the definition of the programs and contents broadcast in the fulfillment of the public service function". Lastly, Andalusia, in the Andalusian Audiovisual Law 10/2018 of October 9<sup>th</sup>, dedicates article 54 to the audiovisual service in universities and non-university educational centers and establishes that "it may attribute, upon request of its governing body, the provision of the public audiovisual communication service for the open broadcast of educational and cultural dissemination thematic channels to Andalusian public universities, as well as to non-university public teaching centers".

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and after a long fight with the institutions to legalize its broadcasting frequency, the radio of the University of Navarra, one of the historical stations and with important implantation as local radio in Pamplona, closed its broadcast on FM and it became a radio broadcast exclusively on the Internet. The difficulty of obtaining a frequency in the saturated Spanish radioelectric spectrum and the high costs of maintaining the signal, make the new stations firmly bet on digital broadcasting. However, at present, several regional stations have FM broadcast frequencies and some even have as many as the campuses the University has. This is for example the case of Radio UMH, from the Miguel Hernández de Elche University, which, as indicated on its website, broadcasts in tests in Elche (99.5FM), Sant Joan d'Alacant (99.5FM), Orihuela (101.30FM), and Altea (105.40). Radio Universitaria, at the University of León, has two broadcast frequencies, in León (106.6FM) and Ponferrada (105FM).

Radio CEU Cardenal Herrera broadcasts in Valencia on 107.4FM, in the same city, the Radio of the Polytechnic University of Valencia can be heard on 102.5FM. Uniradio, the radio of the University of Huelva can be heard on 103.6FM, and with the same name, that of the University of Jaén on 103.9FM. MH Radio, the radio station of the Miguel Hernández University of Castellón has a stable broadcast on 107.8FM.

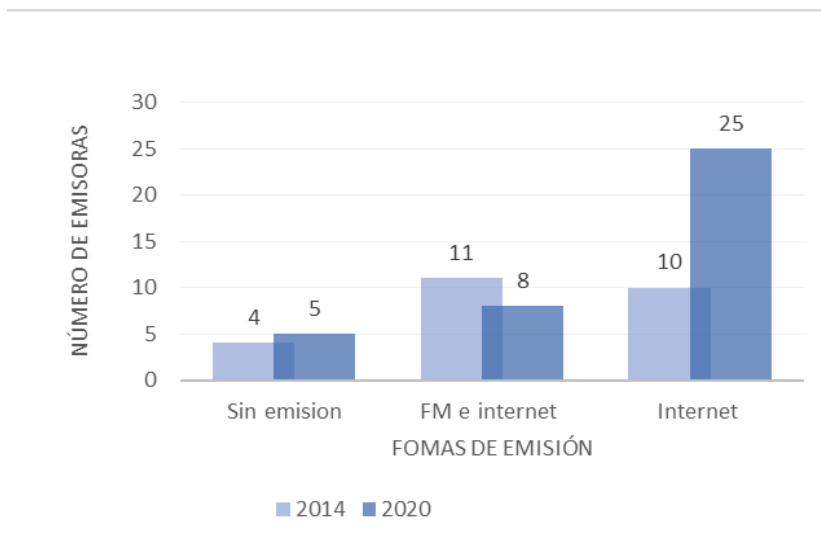
The FM broadcast implies the need to maintain an active grill, an important capacity for organization and execution on the part of those responsible for the station, and a real commitment on the part of the students. University radios have their own minimum staff, usually, a responsible person who acts as director and, only on some occasions, a sound technician. In most cases, these profiles also share the task with teaching or other types of tasks such as administration and services personnel at the University. Stably maintaining the broadcast becomes even more complicated if we consider the issue of the budget and the practical impossibility of dealing with the payment of rights for the broadcast of musical content, a common practice to complete a program, and given that currently, the collective management entities do not have specific rates that contemplate the social and educational function of university radios. López-Sánchez (2018: 169) highlights in his conclusions the difficulty of putting into practice the necessary negotiation between management entities and university radio stations despite the existence and efforts of ARU, the Association of Spanish University Radios, and the degree of uncertainty that this situation generates.

The migration of university radios to the Internet ends the problems described in the previous paragraphs and offers not only the legal coverage but also the economic and operational flexibility that the FM denies to the radio. Broadcasting on the Internet is infinitely cheaper, more flexible, and simple than doing it conventionally. Ortiz Sobrino (2011, 47) affirms that "if streaming or on-demand radio changed the way of understanding the distribution of sound content not long ago, podcasting represents the first real innovation in terms of the transformation of radio in its relationship with the Internet, mobile phones, or social networks". On the other hand, and when we talk about university radios as a test and learning bench, the podcast format allows something fundamental, which Ponce-López (2016) highlights and is to guarantee that what is broadcast has a minimum of quality.

Furthermore, the podcast format allows you to store content produced through free online programs and resources, reach a global and universal audience, and at the same time, reach very specific niches with a tight content offering. It is not surprising, therefore, that "the podcast offer on the Internet has grown exponentially both in the quantity and diversity of content, opening a wide range of genres, categories, and topics. Its consumption has been spurred by the occupation of niches of audiences interested in specialized topics, and by the take-off of Mp3 and Mp4 reading mobile devices, or general ones such as mobiles and smartphones" (Gertrudix Barrio and García García, 2011: 266).

## **5. BUILDING A NEW MODEL. NEW WAYS OF LISTENING FOR A NEW PROGRAMMING**

In *University Radio in the Internet Age* (Marta-Lazo & Segura-Anaya. 2014), a total of 25 university stations are reviewed. Of these, 16% were inactive at that time, 40% broadcast exclusively on the Internet, and 44% combined broadcasting on the Internet and FM. Six years later, the number of active stations has grown significantly, and they are firmly betting on the Internet and there is an abandonment of the FM broadcast. López-Sánchez (2018, 136) refers to the 'legal uncertainty' in which university radio stations have lived for years, which has led stations that broadcast FM in an 'alegal' way to stop doing so, "either for having received any notice from the competent administration in the concession of frequencies or else for wanting to avoid this situation outside the law in which they find themselves".

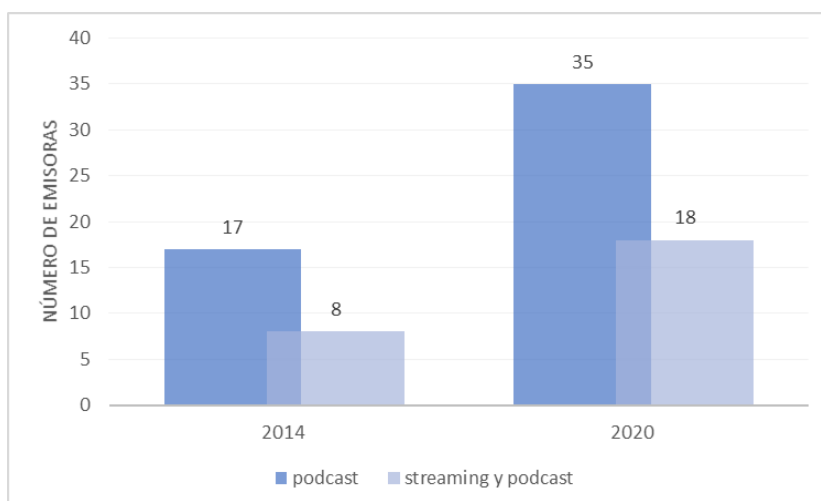


**Graph 1:** *Forms of emission (2014-2020)*

**Source:** Self-made

At this point, we must note the special case of RADIO UNED, which is counted among the stations that broadcast on FM and the Internet, despite not having its own assigned frequency. The broadcasts are made through the RNE, Radio 5, and Radio 3 channels.

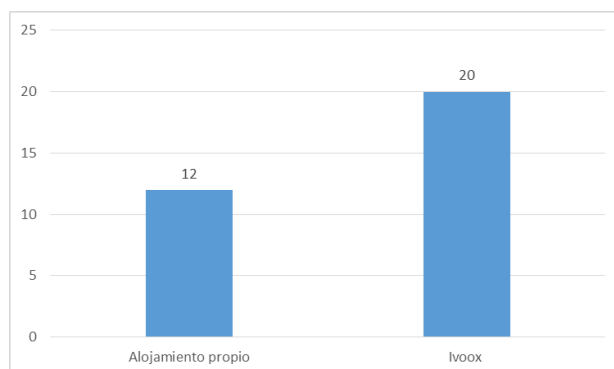
Regarding the broadcasting options on the Internet, in streaming or exclusively in a podcast, in 2014, 68% of the stations offered both possibilities simultaneously, while 32% limited their offer to radio on-demand in podcast format. Six years later, of the 35 active stations, 18 combine live broadcasting via streaming, as can be seen in Graph II.



**Graph 2:** *Forms of emission (2014-2020)*

**Source:** Self-made

University stations that are born with greater and less financial and media endowments, explore the free support options that the Internet offers and, thus, we find stations that host podcasts on their own servers and others that use platforms such as Ivoox for their storage and distribution. The number of stations that choose Ivoox is twice as many as those that choose to host the sound files on their own platforms and, although the number is very high in the case of the most recent stations, other older ones have followed the same path. Ivoox, besides support, offers the possibility of broader universal access among the users of the platform.



**Graph 3: Podcast hosting**  
**Source:** Self-made

Concerning the content, there are no notable changes regarding the majority model in force in 2014, which explored mainly three routes, the practices carried out by the students, their collaboration in programs pre-designed by the media management, and the assignment of broadcast hours in which students, teachers, and other university and service personnel can develop their personal projects. Already in 2012, Vázquez points out that there are stations with different purposes, ranging from those that are a support for student practices to those that serve as a forum for the expression of the university community, going through those that are stations of more institutional nature and less open, to stations that function as experimental laboratories of new forms and content. Many even open the door to the collaboration of associations, NGOs, and social groups, which find in university radio stations a loudspeaker for expression or denunciation that commercial radio does not offer them. And it is these ends that determine the heterogeneous profile of the contents.

Lastly, and regarding presence on social networks, Facebook and Twitter are still the social networks most used by university radio stations and only a small part has a presence on YouTube or Instagram, although they are the social networks with the highest number of followers between 15 and 25 years old. In this sense, it is noteworthy that, while all the university radio projects that we reviewed in 2014 have their own social network profiles on Twitter, Facebook, or both, some of the new university radio stations do not have their own social network profiles, but instead use the social network profiles of their University to disseminate their activity and content.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Technological development has led to a 'Golden Age' of university radio in Spain, which takes advantage of free or low-cost digital resources to develop radio projects linked to the Faculties and Degrees of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication.

The problem of the 'legal limbo' in which many of these stations that launched their content through FM frequencies without legalizing operated, has been resolved in two ways: the development of regulations in some autonomous communities, in which university radios continue to broadcast on FM with already legalized frequencies, or the closure of conventional broadcasting and migration to the Internet. In the case of the new stations born in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they do so directly on the Internet. All of them offer content in podcast format, many hosted on platforms such as Ivoox, and 50% also have a live broadcast via streaming.

Protected by the Association of Spanish University Radios, ARU, which carries out an important work of coordination, research, and promotion of joint projects, one of the challenges for the future is to continue advancing in a legal framework that protects the activity of radio stations in all the Communities Autonomous and the search for an agreement with the management entities that allows incorporating to broadcasts music with copyrights.

Radio continues to be attractive to teachers and students and finds on the Internet a new shelter and testing and experimentation ground that undoubtedly augurs new horizons in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

However, and from the perspective of edu-communication, Ortiz Sobrino (2018) argues that it is necessary to turn them into radio production centers where the language and formats of the programs are experimented with. Ortiz Sobrino proposes the convenience of working collaboratively with stations from other countries to enrich their content and gain visibility. In short, join forces so that university radio becomes an instrument for education, both from the perspective of regulated training and from non-formal education. Without forgetting, of course, the edu-communicative potential that the radio medium has to contribute to the constitution of a critical citizenry with the ability to analyze the essential keys of society.

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