Invisible audio: an analysis of the podcasts of Portuguese newspapers

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Abstract

Since the dawn of the internet, sound in journalistic content has assumed a secondary, ancillary role. Under-use of sound within the context of cyber-journalism has been recognised by academics and professionals. It appears that Portuguese newspapers have only recently realised the full potential of sound, as they have begun to produce exclusive sound content, distributed via podcasts. This study focuses on three Portuguese generalist newspapers (*Público*, *Expresso* and *Observador*), which are the only newspapers where updated podcasts were found. The text will analyse the sound products available in the respective websites of these three newspapers, and in their Soundcloud and iTunes accounts. It aims to classify the audio contained in the podcasts of these publications, in order to understand how a newspaper develops sound products in a digital environment and whether they contain distinctive elements that may reveal a distinct identity. Given the possibilities of using audio and podcasts, one of the conclusions of this study is that after an initial period of rather timid investment in audio content, and following various advances and setbacks over the last decade, Portuguese newspapers have finally begun to make a firm commitment to sound production, albeit on an exploratory basis and in a form that is very similar to radio.

Keywords

Audio; journalism; newspapers; podcast; radio

Resumo

Desde os primórdios da internet que o som nos conteúdos jornalísticos ocupa um lugar secundário ou acessório. O subaproveitamento do som no *ciberjornalismo* tem sido reconhecido por académicos e profissionais, e só mais recentemente os jornais portugueses parecem ter-se apercebido das potencialidades do som e começado a produzir conteúdos sonoros exclusivos que distribuem em *podcast*. Este estudo incide em três jornais portugueses de informação geral (*Público*, *Expresso* e *Observador*), os únicos em que foram encontrados *podcasts* atualizados. Nesse sentido, serão analisados os produtos sonoros disponibilizados nos respetivos *sites* dos três jornais, nas suas contas no Soundcloud e no iTunes. O objetivo é caracterizar o áudio em *podcast* destas publicações para perceber como um jornal em ambiente digital desenvolve produtos sonoros e se contém elementos distintivos que possam revelar uma identidade própria. Perante as possibilidades do aproveitamento do áudio e do *podcast* uma das conclusões deste estudo é a de que depois de um momento de tímido investimento nos conteúdos áudio, de avanços e recuos na última década, os jornais começaram finalmente, a apostar no som embora ainda de forma exploratória e muito próxima do produto radiofónico.

Palavras-chave

Áudio; jornais; jornalismo; *podcast*; rádio

The media and podcasts

Since the dawn of cyber-journalism, sound has been relegated to a secondary plane. It is completely absent from many types of cyber-media, and in others appears as a text repeating mechanism. In other outlets, it is a complement inserted into multimedia works. Under-use of the full potential of the internet, and specifically of audio, reveals progressive disinterest in a medium that actually has numerous multimedia applications (Zamith, 2008), but has remain unaltered over the last 10 years (Zamith, 2017). This is complemented by poor perception of the role of sound resources in journalistic content by those who produce such content, including both companies and journalists. The importance of sound in journalism is primarily emphasised by authors who study radio, sound and radio language.

Journalists are currently required to gain a different perception of how to tell stories and "edit" their reports in the digital environment. A multi-disciplinary training is now required, because the journalist must become an interactive multimedia operator, capable of working with various techniques, and able to write texts intended to be read, heard and seen (Garrand, 2006). Newspapers no longer merely reproduce texts on their websites. Instead they enrich journalistic articles with other languages, and thereby help build new journalistic narratives. Visual resources, such as video, are clearly the elements most commonly used and invoked by media executives, when they highlight new innovations or identify what they consider to be the key aspects of their sites. Audio content is rarely mentioned. Sound has not yet assumed a role that enables it to assert itself in online journalistic content. This situation has persisted over time and is rooted in the evolution of web media that was initially primarily dominated by the written word, while there were technical constraints that limited the use of audio. It only became possible to integrate audio and streaming into websites in 1995, due to the introduction of Real Audio Player and the digitalisation of sound into mp3 files. Even so, technical limitations have proven to be an obstacle to the use of sound in media sites, including those of radio broadcasters.

The first audio-blog, which Gallego (2010) considers to be the precursor of the podcast, was created in 2001. There was then a boom from 2004 onwards when an article was published in *The Guardian* about the success of downloading audio files from the internet. "What should this phenomenon be called?" asked the journalist: "Audio-blogging? Podcasting? Guerilla Media?" (Ben Hammersley, 2004). The term that was later suggested was podcast – audio content created in an mp3 format that users can subscribe to and download at home, and then listen to it on various devices (Berry, 2006). Podcasts can be produced by traditional publishers – such as radio stations, publishers, journalists and educational institutions (schools, vocational training centres) and may also be created by independent radio producers, artists and amateur radio stations (Bonini, 2015).

Richard Berry does not view the podcast as a new distribution platform. Instead he suggests that it is a new medium, because it is not merely the result of the combination of audio, the internet and portable devices. He says that it is a disruptive technology that has already obliged radio broadcasters to reconsider their perception of audiences, consumption, production, and distribution (Berry, 2006, p. 357). In other words, it is not

just another technology made available to radio broadcasters – it is a medium that is still developing its own identity, which is not necessarily dependent or connected to the radio, although this continues to be its point of reference. Richard Berry writes: "Podcasting resembles radio" (but) "it sounds different from radio". Evaluating the podcast through application of the parameters of radio may condition the perception about what the podcast is, and what distinguishes it from radio (Berry, 2016). The two are intimately connected, they share the same technologies, techniques and contents, and coexist, but they pursue divergent paths, which sometimes intersect. Berry concludes that "the podcast may (but does not have to) sound different from the radio". He identifies several defining characteristics of radio, primarily related to temporality, that are absent from podcasting, such as regular periodicity, broadcasting / publication at pre-determined times, fixed duration, direct, and continuous flow – even if they have other similarities, essentially in terms of content and sound aesthetics.

In the media, radio stations were the first entities to offer podcasts of their programmes broadcast over the airwaves, and the newspapers followed suit. This is a way to expand stories, and newspapers can quickly generate audio content because it is cheap and simple. It is a new expanding field and a new way of exploring historical brands with major credibility (Gallego, 2010). This strategy is also facilitated by the current media ownership panorama, which is dominated by the concentration of media, wherein large groups own radio stations, newspapers, television channels and internet portals. Strategies to foster group synergies or implement cross-media editorial teams are also contributing to convergence of content. Correyero Ruiz and Baladrón Pazos (2007, p. 167) conclude that the podcast is a "catalyst for future media convergence". The two authors analysed podcasts in the Spanish media and identified the four most common types of use of sound: profiling of the front page news, of the day's highlights or exclusive stories; dissemination of sound documents, such as interviews and reports; creation of new content that is distinct from that available on the parent outlet; and using podcasts as a tool to encourage reader participation (Correyero Ruiz & Baladrón Pazos, 2007, pp. 159-161).

The Daily Telegraph, in the UK, was the first newspaper to launch a daily podcast, in 2005 (Bonini, 2015). In March 2006, the UK newspaper, *The Guardian* launched 23 specialist podcast channels on current affairs. Ignacio Gallego, in his book, *Podcasting. Nuevos modelos de distribución para los contenidos sonoros* (2010), dedicated part of a chapter to this, and transcribed the perceptions of the head of Audio & Podcast, Matt Wells, on the associated added value: greater proximity and interaction with readers, affirmation of the newspaper's brand image and a new source of advertising revenue, since the channels were sponsored.

But during the first decade of the 21st century, newspapers finally disinvested in this product, due to the manifest absence of any financial return and lack of significant downloads. However, this panorama changed in 2012, due to the "second era of podcasting", as Bonini terms it, driven by crowdfunding, widespread use of smartphones and the creativity of a new generation of podcast producers. Podcasting became more popular and more attractive to the traditional media market (Bonini, 2015, p. 25), especially due

to economic reasons: "mainly money" was the key phrase in the renewal of podcasting. At the end of ten-year period, the author argues, podcasting shifted from an amateur *do-it-yourself* phenomenon to a commercial communication medium (Bonini, 2015, p.27). Whilst acknowledging that this remains a niche market, the international trend is booming, and an increasing number of publications are capitalising on this trend by producing and distributing podcasts (Digital News Fact Sheet, 2017; Podcasting: Fact Sheet, 2016).

The Portuguese case

Looking at the history of Portuguese cyber-media, we note that several titles have pioneered the inclusion of sound in their content, by launching new "programmes" available for download from their sites, that can be listened to later – podcasts.

Portuguese media first became involved with the internet in the 1990s. This was a timid beginning, with a discreet presence, dominated by the *shovelware* model, in which newspapers, radio stations and television channels used their websites to reproduce content produced for traditional media (Bastos, 2015). This was the implementation stage (1995-1998), according to Hélder Bastos (2015), followed by the expansion, or boom stages (1999-2000) with a focus on digital media and the appearance of exclusively online publications and, finally, a contraction stage (2001-2015), with divestment from the sector, aggravated by the 2009 economic crisis that led to the closure of several online media outlets, although there have been some new investments made, that counter this trend. According to Bastos, "developments in the field of cyber-journalism proved to be slow and punctuated by various frustrations" (Bastos, 2006, 105). The author says that "difficulty in finding successful business models led most investors to lose interest in cyber-journalism". But the "scenario" changed slightly in the second half of 2006 with the appearance of several innovative projects (Bastos, 2015, p. 63), along with timid investments in multimedia (Zamith, 2008), particularly in podcasting. The radio broadcaster TSF was the first entity to launch programmes in a podcast format, and other media subsequently followed this strategy, in particular newspapers.

In 2006, *Expresso* was the first Portuguese newspaper to present audio formats on its site, including innovative features, such as a unique and exclusive music programme: Íntima Fracção (Intimate Fraction) presented by Francisco Amaral, a journalist with a long career in Portuguese radio, who had moved to the weekly newspaper's website.

The cyber-journal *Observador* was created in May 2014, and was presented as a "digital native". Its first podcast, lasting 22 seconds, was published on February 13, 2015 – World Radio Day, provided via Soundcloud. David Dinis, the newspaper's executive director at the time, announced that a further two programmes would have podcast distribution. In fact, this was the only podcast ever to be distributed by the *Observador*.

This category does not solely include sound content, there are also video programmes classified and publicised as podcasts, distributed by iTunes or RSS and received by users in their audio version only. In essence, they are not podcasts, but they are also not videocasts, because although they were originally videos they can only be received in audio format.

The *Público* newspaper developed several audio experiences and included sound in some journalistic articles, in particular in the *P3* section, or in some special bulletins, such as the recent case of the national soccer championship, which articulated images with the sounds of the goals being scored.

Podcasts were included on a regular basis in 2017 as part of the commemorations of the 22nd anniversary of *Público* online, including presentation of a new site with a clear commitment to podcasting.

Methodology

This study aim to characterize audio podcasts by Portuguese generalist newspapers. It also aims to understand how a newspaper operating in a digital environment develops audio podcast formats for its site, including distribution on Soundcloud and iTunes, and whether they contain distinctive elements that may convey their own distinct identity. Audio from news items, reports or multimedia works from other sections or editorials were excluded from this analysis.

The selected sample relies on the only three generalist publications available online that present audio programmes in their sites in the form of podcasts: *Expresso, Público* and *Observador*.

For this reason, the *Observador's* video programmes distributed as podcasts via iTunes were also included in the analysis. Although they are not audio programmes or exclusively based on sound content, they reach the cyber-journal's audience in this manner and are subsequently searched for. The sample also includes programmes that are no longer current, but are still available on the site, in the area reserved for podcasts. Thus, the study analysed all the podcasts accessible on all three sites, on Soundcloud or iTunes until October 31, 2017 – constituting a total of 19 products in this format.

The weekly newspaper *Expresso* was founded in 1973. It is a leading Portuguese newspaper, with a print run of about 91,000 copies[1] and on Netscope[2] it has 9.4 million visits. *Expresso* has five podcasts. The *Público* newspaper, in turn, is a leading journal created in 1990, has a print-run of about 34.000 copies[3] and on Netscope has 11 million visits[4]. *Público* has eight podcasts. The *Observador*, a leading digital native, born in 2014, has no paper edition (although it announced that it would issue a print publication of one of its sections by the end of 2017). It does not currently belong to Netscope. When it announced its departure from that ranking, in March 2016, it had 7.9 million views ("Saímos do Netscope. E mostramos os nossos números, 2016"). The *Observador* has six podcasts.

The number of podcasts per programme selected for this analysis varies, due to their characteristics, number of publications or longevity. Even so, to give some coherence

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[1] Data from APCT for July-August 2017.

[2] Netscope Ranking from September 2017.

[3] Data from APCT for July-August 2017.

[4] Netscope Ranking from September 2017.

to the representativeness of each podcast, six podcasts per year of each programme were selected, with the exception of *P24* because it is a newscast and its characteristics are described in greater detail later. From *P24*, eight news reports were selected per month, and in the last month of the analysis, because there was a change in the periodicity of the content, two daily editions were analysed.

All podcasts are available to the audiences of the three newspapers, in both the free and paid versions. The only exception is *P24* because it is a unique example in this sample and the panorama of podcasts in the Portuguese media, since the news feed is personalized, i.e. the news is "a set of audio news, selected on the basis of the interests of each person" (P24: Público lança noticiário personalizado em áudio, 2017), although it also includes choices made by the publisher. So, due to the characteristics of *P24*, its study is naturally limited to a specific news feed: that which the researcher received on a daily basis, without being able to access any news that may eventually be included within *P24* and accessed by other users. As a result, the sample relies only on *P24* audio news from a single feed, i.e. that of the researcher who tried to diversify as much as possible the editorials and interests, in order to obtain a wide range of news subjects.

In order to classify the podcasts of the three newspapers, an analytic grid was drawn up that includes formal aspects, content, structure and radio aesthetics. In terms of formal aspects, the description presented by each programme, periodicity, location on the homepage and the website, and the distribution channel, were all recorded. The other categories were based on the classification of radio genres by Herreros (1992) and Martínez-Costa y Unzueta (2005) and the classification of new internet genres by Herreros (2008) and Prata (2009); the elements of aesthetics and radiophonic language (Balsebre, 1994), radiophonic structure and writing (Prado, 1985).

In terms of content, we can distinguish between Entertainment (by area: music, fiction, etc.), Information (by editorial section: politics, international, health, culture, humour, etc.); Education (for teaching purposes), Sponsored or Advertising, and Propaganda. Humour was included in the Information category for two reasons: firstly because it is intrinsically linked to current affairs and secondly because both the sites and iTunes classify these items as News. Also in terms of the content, structure and radio aesthetics, the way that each podcast was presented was recorded.

The podcasts of the Portuguese newspapers *Expresso, Público* and *Observador*

A survey of the websites of the Portuguese generalist information daily and weekly newspapers, magazines and cyber-newspapers reveals that the vast majority do not have audio content produced for the online edition. Exclusive audio formats presented as podcasts, and simultaneously available in Soundcloud and iTunes, were only found in three publications. In newspapers, the audio appears in two different forms: in programmes distributed via a podcast or integrated in journalistic reports and multimedia works, whose function is close to that which in radio slang is called a RM, i.e. excerpts of statements or interviews: the sound or voices of the protagonists of the news stories.

No category for audio or sound content was found, and the Multimedia category usually only includes visual resources (video, photo gallery, computer graphics). It should also be noted that not all the items in this list of podcasts are active or updated, e.g. *Expresso* and *Observador,* which offers programmes whose most recent editions were published several months ago, or even years ago. Only *Público*'s podcasts have current editions.

In *Expresso*'s site, the menus include a separate podcasts section, although the content on the main page does not highlight recently published items. There is a podcast page with the logo of each programme, that refers to the page of each programme, and which includes a brief description of the programmes. The Multimedia area has Audio / Podcast on the right hand column.

Expresso offers five journalistic podcasts:

1. *Comissão política* (Political committee) – weekly. Presented as the "podcast of *Expresso*'s political section" in which journalists from the newsroom analyse current affairs "and whatever comes into their heads". The first available programme dates from September 2017, and includes some "extra" episodes, with current specific themes.

2. *A beleza das pequenas coisas* (The beauty of small things) – weekly. "Conversations from around the country" in which "people from all walks of life tell larger-than-life stories. Or stories that show how simple life can be". The interviewees are not always public figures, and the programme uses sounds, previous interviews, *vox pop*, testimonials and the interviewee's preferred music. The first available programme dates from November 2015. There are no publications in August.

3. *PBX* – weekly. A conversation about the current cultural scene, produced in partnership with Radar radio, sometimes with interviewees. The first available programme dates from November 2015, and has no updated editions on the three distribution channels since July 2017.

4. *Conselho de diretores* (Board of directors) – weekly. The podcast of a programme of economic and social policy analysis, broadcast by *Rádio Renascença*, produced in partnership with *Expresso*. The first programme dates from November 2015 and the last from October 2016.

5. *F5* – fortnightly. Presented as a programme with "stories filled with people, told by *Expresso*'s reporters who did not want to, or could not, forget them", i.e. reporters are invited to return to issues that left a mark on them, also including interviews with the protagonists of the initial news report. *F5* only has three published programmes, the first dating from March 2017.

On the *Público*'s website there is no reference to the podcasts section in the menu. The first reference appears in the middle of the homepage, featuring the most recent podcast, with a highlighted link to the podcasts page. Each programme has its own separate page, with its own logo, a brief description of each edition and access to the last 10 podcast, and links to Soundcloud and iTunes. The Multimedia area does not include audio recordings.

Público has eight podcasts, seven of a journalistic nature and one humour-based:

1. *Poder público* (Political power) – weekly. Presents itself as "the other side of politics with different protagonists, stories that deserve to be told and decisions that change people's lives". The programme does not have a rigid structure, and includes debate, interviews and reporting. The first programme was published in March 2017, but not all of the podcasts are accessible across all three distribution channels. It should be noted that eight programmes are dedicated exclusively to local elections.

2. *Reservado ao público* (Reserved to the public) – weekly. Presented as "stories and protagonists from behind the scenes of the *Público* newspaper". This is a news programme that portrays the newspaper and its day-to-day life, editorial options, and the stories behind the news reports. The first podcast was published in March 2017, but the following podcasts are only accessible from May 2017.

3. *Inimigo público* (Public enemy) – weekly. Identified with a single phrase: "if it didn't happen, it could have". It has the same name as one of the newspaper's printed supplements, usually with a single voice, although it may contain some short interviews. It is a humour programme about current affairs. The programme began in April 2017.

4. *Jogo limpo* (Fair play) – weekly. Described as "commentary and analysis of the movements that have marked the development of the Portuguese Premier League". Started in August 2017.

5. *Do género* (On gender) – weekly, a report with "conversations about equality in day-to-day life". The most recent podcast from the *Público* newspaper, it began in October 2017.

6. *Com tempo e alma* (With time and soul) – biweekly. A debate in which "a journalist and experts invited by the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation talk about relevant issues facing society". The first available programme dates from May 2017.

7. *Planisférico* – fortnightly. Two of *Público*'s journalists talk and tell "stories from peripheral soccer championships", which may include some short sound recordings to motivate the conversation and sometimes has a link to the newspaper's column with the same name. The first programme was posted in April 2017.

8. *P24* – news that can be heard in isolation or in a continuous stream, presented as if they were a newscast – "the 10 top news items from the day in under 10 minutes". *P24* began in April 2017, with a daily edition from Monday to Friday, at 6:00 p.m. Since October it also has a podcast that is posted at the end of the morning.

The *Observador* has no audios, but videos that are called podcasts. These programmes are not included in the highlights of the homepage, but are included in the top dropdown menu, which when clicked opens a page entitled Podcast in which the names of the programmes appear, accompanied by a brief description.

The *Observador* has six video programmes with podcast distribution, five with journalistic content, and the other with entertainment content:

1. *Conversas à quinta* (Conversations on Thursdays) – weekly. Presented as a "moderate weekly talk show, with a fixed panel of commentators". The first available programme dates from December 2014.

2. *B.I.C.A.* – no regular periodicity. A space where the *Observador*'s journalists discuss "all the issues in the time that it takes to have a coffee". The first programme dates from April 2017.

3. *Caça ao voto* (Vote hunting) – daily. "A comment box" for local elections. A format similar to that which existed during the 2016 presidential elections. It began in September 2017 and had 11 episodes.

4. *Comentários* (Comments) – weekly. An "analysis of the news of the day by the *Observador*'s journalists and commentators" of national and international news. The first available programme dates from March 2017. Although it is assumed to be weekly, it does not have a regular or fixed periodicity, it is published when there is a strong topical theme.

5. *Entrevista* (Interview) – of irregular periodicity. A talk show with "personalities of importance at the time that they need to be listened to". The first available programme dates from December 2014.

6. *Ao vivo* (Live) – monthly. An entertainment programme, which, as its name indicates, records "all the musical moments that occurred live in the *Observador*". The first *Ao vivo* was broadcast in November 2014.

Description of the podcasts of Portuguese newspapers

Throughout the period under review, sound products have rarely been highlighted in the homepage of the three newspaper sites (a prominent location is defined as the first screen when the site is opened). *Expresso* and *Observador* have a section in the main menu. As for *Público*, a space on the homepage for the audio programmes was created on the last occasion that the site was revamped, although in a secondary location, in the middle or bottom of the page. Previously the reader had to search for podcasts in the site's search engine without there being any indication that they existed.

Although podcasts do not have a prominent place on the homepage, two of the three newspapers dedicate separate pages to them, with the logo of each programme. The *Observador* has a unique page for each podcast. On the podcasts page, the *Expresso* and *Público* usually present a photograph or illustration for each programme as well as a brief summary of the content, identification of the interviewees and / or authors. In the podcasts page, in the case of the *Observador*, or the page of each programme in the case of the *Expresso* and the *Público*, there are between five and 10 of the most recent podcasts.

In the written presentation, we can conclude that most of the programmes have a regular weekly periodicity and that the podcasts are posted on a fixed day of the week. But in practice this schedule is not always complied with, as will be discussed later. *Público* has podcasts scheduled for every working day, with greater concentration on Thursday and Friday. *Expresso* has two podcasts with irregular frequency, and an intermittent flow (*Conselho de diretores* and *F5*), i.e. they are not always published on the same day of the week, the time interval between programmes is not always the same and there are no recent programmes.

As a general rule, the *Observador*'s programmes do not have a set period or fixed date to be published. For example, *Comentários* (Comments) has both daily and weekly publications. The only podcast with regular publication, on a fixed day of the week, is *Conversas à quinta* (Conversations on Thursday).

Unlike radio broadcasts, the average time of each podcast varies from one edition to the next. The fact that the periodicity and duration of these programmes are variable makes podcasts very different from radio programmes that are subject to a fixed, stable duration and integrated into the continuous stream of the overall programming schedule. In the sample and selected time period, there are programmes that last 7 or 10 minutes such as the *Observador*'s *Comentários* or *Público*'s *Jogo limpo*, while others last for an hour, as in the case of interviews and debates, which are similar to radio broadcasts.

When we analyse the contents of the podcasts, we find that the vast majority (8), are news information and from the Politics editorial staff (Graph 1).

This is not surprising since newspapers, unlike radios, do not have an entertainment area because they are purely journalistic products. Politics is one of the main editorial teams of the sites of the leading newspapers (Lima & Reis, 2013) and, as such, it is consistent that their podcasts mirror their editorial options. It should be noted that some of the Political programmes cover current national and international issues and, in their overwhelming majority, provide analysis, commentary or debate, in which the

protagonists are often journalists from the newspaper itself, who frequently appear in the panels of opinion programmes of radio and television programmes. In other words, this is a way of monetizing members of the in-house staff who have gained some visibility in other media. Moreover, the format chosen for these programmes is highly similar to audiovisual programmes. The latter consideration also applies to the sports editorial team.
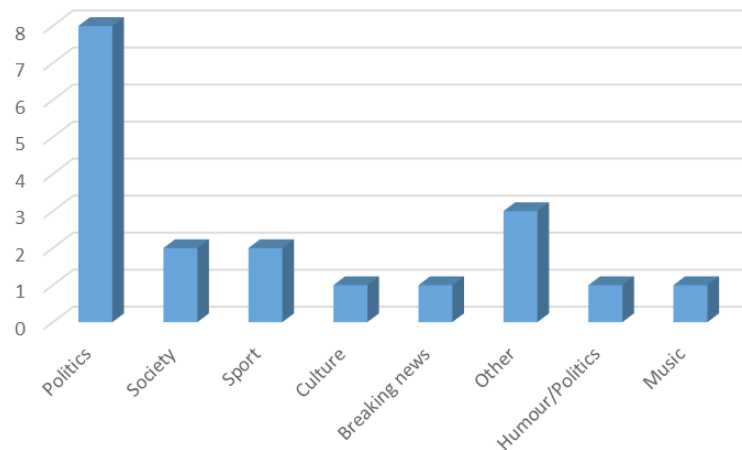
Graph 1: Content type of Information (by editorial team) and Entertainment (by area)

In the Sports category there are two programmes, and the same number in the Society category, and one programme in the Culture category. In the Breaking News category, *P24* was considered, because it is a newscast.

In the "Other" category there are three programmes: *Reservado ao público* from the *Público* newspaper, and *F5* and *A beleza das pequenas coisas* from *Expresso*. The first two are identical programmes in terms of their chosen themes, in as much that they speak about the newspaper itself, although with different approaches. They are not forms of self-promotion, although they only give the in-house view on the chosen topics.

In the Entertainment category, examples of Information and Entertainment were found, the latter with only a residual presence: two out of 19 podcasts.

As a reference point for radio journalistic genres, it should be noted that the great majority of podcasts are opinion-based and we did not find examples of the new genres identified by Prata (2009), primarily focused on interactivity, and those identified by Herreros (2008), primarily connected to sound. In two of the three cyber-journals analysed, no interactive tools were identified that allow the cyber-listener to register or send a feedback. Only the *Público* provides the email address of the programme's author and has a comments box. In no case did we encounter the examples identified by Herreros of interactive tools that enable any form of sound recording by the cyber-listener. All the programmes allow the podcasts to be shared on social networks.

Of the journalistic genres *Ao vivo,* from the *Observador* was excluded, because it is entertainment, as was *Inimigo público*, from the *Público* because it does not fit into a journalistic genre. In terms of genres, examples were also found of news information (4), opinion (11) and dialogue (2) (Graph 2).
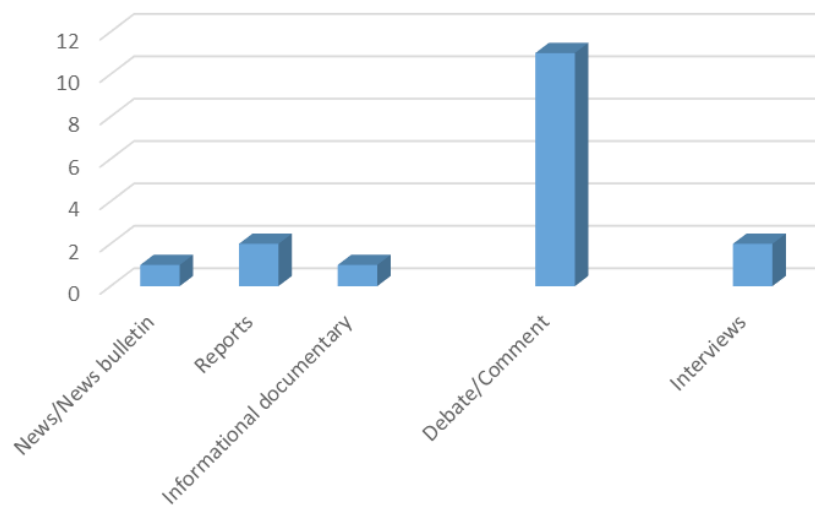
Graph 2: Podcasts by journalistic genre

Graph 2 reveals the preponderance of the dual category Debate / Commentary, with 11 programmes. We chose to combine these two genres due to the realisation that most podcasts assume a hybrid nature: they are based on debates or conversations between commentators. The only programme that falls exclusively within the Comments category is *Comentários,* from the *Observador,* because it is effectively a pure comment programme, involving one person.

The Opinion genres are in a clear majority, but it should be noted that even programmes categorised as Debate / Comment include other resources, such as small interviews, or reports or recorded statements. The commentators are from the newspaper itself or invited guests and some guest specialists, who provide a more factual perspective or analysis of the topic under discussion. As already mentioned, there is a prominent use of the newspaper's directors, editors and journalists, as is already achieved by this segment in audiovisual media. They are expensive and well-known voices that the newspapers foster in their own podcasts. The newspapers also use these figures to assert themselves, not only as information vehicles, but as opinion makers. This option is in line with the characterizes of the Mediterranean media system, or polarized pluralistic media system, to which Portugal pertains, where there is recurrent recourse to commentary by specialists, occupying a prominent place in the media landscape (Hallin & Mancini, 2010).

Amongst the news information genres, the *Expresso's F5* stands out, since it has the characteristics of the Informational Documentary (Herreros, 1992). *F5* addresses a past fact, contextualizes it, reminds listeners about it and then recreates it using contemporary and current testimonies. It is a historical reconstruction, even if related to a recent event, which primarily corresponds to the characteristics of the Informational Documentary (Herreros, 1992). In the first of the three programmes, the author identifies the guiding spirit: "welcome to the podcast, *F5*: stories filled with people, told by the people who

experienced them and by the reporters who covered them and didn't want to, or could not, forget them". This genre is not very frequent in radio broadcasting, but finds fertile ground in newspapers, due to the historical memories kept by newspapers in their archives, but that have not yet been explored in this manner. *F5* is not restricted to sound. The page of each episode includes text and images that may be considered a multimedia work, in which the podcast is one constituent element that can be listened to by itself, without being undermined by the absence of text or images. The audio is valid in its own right, has an identity of its own, which is independent of the cyber-journalistic context in which it is inserted. This is perhaps one of the most promising examples within the podcast panorama of Portuguese newspapers, although it is still possible to establish a parallel with radio programmes. In relation to the other genres, they were classified as Interviews (2), Reports (2), and News / News Bulletins (1).

Podcasting also has radio as a reference, and when it comes to the journalistic dimension this is inevitable, even if the podcast is considered to be distinct from radio. This issue has already been addressed in the past, and is pertinent when analysing the structure of the podcast as a sound product, in terms of its language, sound aesthetics and even the structure and writing used in the narrative.

The sound aesthetics used in radio broadcasting is also found in the audio podcasts of newspapers and is used in the same manner. Almost all the podcasts have a sound indicator at the beginning and end of the programme that is identical to the format and function used in the opening and closing credits of radio programmes. Moreover, they use an identical aesthetic: in the beginning there is a musical track, above which the presenter presents the programme, authors and guests, the theme or topics and, which reappears at the end as the presenter bids farewell. The exception is the *Observador*, which is natural if we take into account the nature of programmes – which are produced to be seen and heard, i.e. videos, some with graphics or subtitles. The listener misses part of the information that would otherwise guide the listening process. The clearest example is *B.I.C.A.* which begins in the middle of a conversation and ends in the same manner, without offering any audio identification of the actors. The idea is to capture a moment from a conversation that has already begun and still extends beyond the recording, but provides insufficient guidance information to the cyber-listener who only has access to the audio version, without any written support from the site, or from the video.

Besides time-related questions, the main differences between radio and these podcast programmes reside in the structure of the text, language and writing. The radio language identified by Balsebre is absent from the vast majority of podcasts, which is also explained by the predominance of opinion-based genres. The podcasts of news reports, for example, use all the elements enunciated by Balsebre (1994) in a contained manner: word, music, effects or noises, silence.

The main differences between podcasts and radio reside in the structure and writing of the narratives. In general, we can identify an inverted pyramid in terms of the hierarchy of information, but the spiral technique, typically used in texts for radio is completely absent. This is either a deliberate choice, or it is based on the conviction that we

can re-listen to what we have just heard, by "rewinding the tape", which is not always possible in radio broadcast in a continuous stream. Writing that is intended to be spoken, and listened to, is one of the basic rules of radio, but this has no direct parallel in most texts that are listened to in newspaper podcasts, where we often encounter long phrases, elaborate phrasal constructions, interspersed sentences which correspond to several ideas in a single sentence, complex vocabulary, and difficult words. All this makes it difficult to read the texts and, consequently, for the listener to understand the message, at the risk that the listener may become lost when trying to understand the meaning of the sentence or the content. Even assuming that newspaper podcasts are not radio programmes, i.e. written to be listened to, they must always obey the specific characteristics of something, which is intended to be listened to, and this factor is not always taken into account. This is "more audible" especially in the case of *P24*, because it corresponds to news whose self-promotion emphasizes the fact that it is news to be listened to.

Moreover, *P24* constitutes an unparalleled situation in Portuguese media, even in terms of radio. We should mention the history behind its launch and its antecedents, since it is an innovative format in the panorama of Portuguese cyber-journalism.

In March 2017, the *Público* newspaper announced the launch of a personalized audio newscast. The audio news is "selected in function of the interests of each person" to which some editorial choices are added. "*Público*'s goal was to create a system that would not enclose users within that which is often called their bubbles of interest". An audio news service was thereby created. This is not an unprecedented service. In the early 2000s, *Público* had already launched an identical project with *Radio Nova*, from Porto, for the telecommunications operator *Optimus* (both entities were owned by the Sonae group) offering an audio news programme available to *Optimus*' customers and which was accessed via a specific telephone number created for this purpose.

P24 had its first edition on April 26, 2017. The duration of the newscast is around 9 to 10 minutes. The written presentation distinguishes between the editing and voiceover functions are distinguished. The editor does not have the same function as a radio news editor, who is present from the beginning to the end, and makes the link between the news item. In the case of *P24*, each news item may have a different voice. Each news item has an average duration between 20 and 50 seconds, which corresponds to the average duration of a "dry" news item in the field of radio, i.e. without sounds.

In terms of content, *P24* is inserted in the Information category, in the information/journalistic genres and could simultaneously be placed in the News and News Bulletin categories. However, it does not comply with the radio concept of a News Bulletin, because each item is an isolated news report, subject to a variable user-to-user alignment.

The news item does not obey either the structure (a short opening phrase, inverted pyramid and spiral technique) or the traditional rules of writing for radio broadcasts (oriented to the fact that the news will be spoken and listened to). Sometimes there is news, accompanied by sounds, which in the jargon of radio writing is called RM, usually the voices of the protagonists. What brings *P24*'s podcasts closer to the news genre, in terms

of its sound aesthetics is that it has a cut-off device, i.e. a sound indicator, at the beginning, between the various news items, and at the end. *P24* may not be considered to be news, if we use radio as a reference, but it corresponds to the concept that the reader / listener has, and expects, from this type of content. For this reason it was decided to baptize the product as a *Noticiário* (news bulletin).

P24 stands in line with what João Paulo Meneses, in 2008, anticipated for the world of radio in 2018, which he called "'millimetric' unbundling of the offer: there may be a podcast for each news bulletin, but above all a separate podcast for each news item, through the addition of tags (Meneses, 2012). It turned out that Meneses' vision applied less to radio and more to newspapers.

It is also important to note that the news on iTunes and Soundcloud have an advertising *spot*, isolated by sound cut-offs, before the first news item, which is not the case in the website, or mobile application. This is the only podcast, from the *Público* and other Portuguese newspapers, which has associated advertising, which clearly reveals a failure to take advantage of the potential of the podcast as a source of revenue.

Final considerations

This study aimed to characterize the audio contained in the podcasts of the websites of Portuguese generalist newspapers or magazines. The goal is to understand how a newspaper in a digital environment develops sound products and whether they contain distinctive elements that may reveal a separate distinct identity. The first conclusion is that the Portuguese cyber-journals have not yet made a firm commitment to sound products and podcasts. Of 10 publications, only three have podcasts, and of these one publication uses podcasting solely in an instrumental manner.

The second conclusion is that the audio podcasts have a discreet presence in the homepages of the newspapers, which indicates the secondary importance of sound in the universe of the contents of the Portuguese cyber-journals. Although significant progress has been made over recent years, sound products are still not as highly valued as other multimedia resources, such as video or photography. In other words, audio is a product that is dually invisible: you cannot hear it, or see it, on the newspapers' websites.

There are other conclusions that should be borne in mind, in reference to radio. Temporality and periodicity are the two main characteristics that distinguish newspapers' podcasts from radio programmes, because they do not have a fixed duration or a fixed periodicity. Newspapers are not subject to the rigour of a programming schedule, whereas a radio station is governed by fixed broadcasting periods in which programmes have an inflexible duration and broadcasting time, which is also reflected in the duration and date and time of the publication of radio podcasts. There is no pre-determined continuous flow or real-time broadcasting and consumption, as there is with the radio.

In the Portuguese example, two of the four functions identified by Correyero Ruiz and Baladrón Pazos (2007) are partially verified, whereas two are still to be completed. In general, the podcasts of the three newspapers highlight daily news item, but they are

not used to convey the highlights or exclusive stories from the newspapers, that are usually disseminated via the newsletters and social networks of each publication. Podcasts are effectively a means of disseminating interviews, debates and comments that the newspaper itself produces. And they are new products, distinct from the parent media outlet, which implies the use of distinct human and technical resources from those previously used. Of the functions identified by Correyero Ruiz and Baladrón Pazos (2007), the last of these is not found in the Portuguese case, which places the podcast as a tool to stimulate readers' participation. The possibility of creating a bigger and different approach with readers is not based on interaction because there is a generalised absence of interactive tools, or participation.

It is possible to add a new function to those listed herein resulting from the genres that are most used by newspapers, based on Opinions. Newspapers use podcasts as a strategy for valuing and affirming the newspaper as an opinion-maker. In this manner, they consolidate a tendency noted over recent years in which senior journalists, directors and editors appear on the panels of commentators and analysts of radio and television programmes.

The relationship between podcasts and newspapers contributes to the adaptation to a new reality. Newspapers are no longer constrained within their old traditional niche. They are open to other languages and experience, with the advantage of not being "straitjacketed" by the rules governing the content of radio broadcasting. It can be said that this is an advantage, which has not yet been fully explored. Newspapers' podcasts are produced in a way that is similar to radio programmes, in that they have a concept and structure, which is identical to entertainment or information programmes of radio stations. In fact, no new or innovative examples were found that would allow us to affirm that the current podcasts of the Portuguese newspapers are different from those produced by radio stations, i.e. based on programmes taken from their broadcasts. Moreover, it can even be said that the podcasts of the Portuguese newspapers are made using the identical model of radio programmes, which is inclusively due to the fact that some of the authors, but not all, have some experience in the radio medium. The programmes have an identical structure, have a radiophonic notion of aesthetics and the use of sound codes in the narrative, and easily fit into radio genres. In general, listening to them is essentially the same as listening to a radio programme. This is true even if we note some differences, which do exist, namely in terms of language and the rules of writing for radio journalism. Even so, this does not mean that the message does not reach its goal, since in the case of online content, it almost always has a written support, a lead article, with a summary of the sound content.

For newspapers, podcasting represents a commitment to diversify their resources and content and thereby attract new audiences. In this case, newspapers can follow the trend recorded within radio broadcasting over recent years, in terms of the seduction and consolidation of small niches with very specific interests which, at the same time, can attract new advertising markets. The path can therefore be to build customer loyalty in terms of subscription to sound content via podcasts.

Although podcasting is a possibility that until now has been under-exploited by newspapers, it nonetheless contributes to the diversity and consequent enrichment of their content and can bring new types of audiences and advertising. However, podcasting is not yet viewed as a revenue generator. In general, podcasts do not have any associated advertising. This is clear example of overlooking a potential source of revenue, that can be a way of financing audio products that require specialised human and technical resources.

Given the possibilities of using audio and podcasting, the conclusion that emerges from this study is that after a moment of timid investment in audio content, with several advances and retreats, Portuguese newspapers have finally begun to focus on sound, following the tendency of European newspapers. Although there is a clear influence of radio on the sound products of the podcasts of Portuguese newspapers, this segment is still in a stage of experimentation and exploration, both in terms of formats and content.

In view of the Portuguese situation, Bonini's theory only applies in part, at the level of formats and contents, but not at the level of the business model and the profitability of sound products. Portugal thus has one foot in the second phase of podcasting. In the future we will see whether sound content in the podcasts of cyber-journals will lead to an identity that is separate and distinct from radio broadcasting.

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