

Reconfiguration of the dynamics of the Colombian radio industry in the digital ecosystem

Reconfiguración de las dinámicas de la industria radiofónica colombiana en el ecosistema digital

Reconfiguração da dinâmica da indústria da rádio colombiana no ecossistema digital

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ABSTRACT

ICTs reconfigure the radio-audience relationship, a phenomenon in which the industry establishes routes of action and sets a field of work in the permanent construction of the social fabric. This work seeks to understand and determine the preparation of the media to meet the challenges of the digital environment of the audience, through a methodology that combines quantitative (monitoring of their actions on the air, social networks, web-r@dio) and qualitative tools (semi-structured interview, analysis of the messages and the composition of the web-r@dio). The results show an integrated antenna and screen strategy, in 360°, to capture the attention of the listener-user.

Keywords: web-r@adio; radio; audience; business model; productive routine.

RESUMEN

Las TIC reconfiguran la relación radio-audiencia, fenómeno en el que la industria establece rutas de acción y fija un campo de trabajo en la construcción permanente del entramado social. Este trabajo busca comprender y determinar la preparación que tiene el medio para afrontar los retos del entorno digital de las audiencias, mediante una metodología que combina herramientas cuantitativas (seguimiento de sus acciones en antena, redes sociales, web-r@dio) y cualitativas (entrevista semiestructurada, análisis de los mensajes y la composición de la web-r@dio). Los resultados evidencian una estrategia integrada de antena y pantalla, en 360°, para captar la atención del oyente-usuario.

Palabras clave: web-r@adio; radio; audiencia; modelo de negocio; rutina productiva.

RESUMO

As TIC reconfiguram a relação rádio-audiência, um fenômeno em que a indústria estabelece rotas de ação e estabelece um campo de trabalho na construção permanente do tecido social. Com uma metodologia que combina ferramentas quantitativas (monitoramento das ações no ar, redes sociais, web-r@dio) e qualitativa (entrevista semi-estruturada, análise das mensagens e composição da web-r@dio), este trabalho visa compreender e determinar a preparação do meio para enfrentar os desafios colocados pelo ambiente digital do público. Os resultados mostram uma estratégia de tela e antena integrada, em 360°, para capturar a atenção do usuário ouvinte.

Palavras-chave: web-r@adio; rádio; público; modelo de negócios; rotina produtiva.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital convergence, the appropriation and the use of transversal broadcast narratives to reach the audience through screen devices, as well as the information management, suppose a transformation of the communicative ecosystem of the radial industry that demands understanding and redefining the medium, the contents and the profession. It is a process of construction of social meaning, creation of imaginaries, production and circulation of content, supported by a convergent scheme of action that implies the integration of modes of textual, sound, visual and iconographic communication that lead to cross-radio.

In this context, the development and diffusion of radio content responds to new temporal-space consumption dynamics that, on the one hand, break the linearity and unidirectionality of radio-audience communication and, on the other, involve a reconfiguration of production routines and the business model. Although sound is still the core business of the Colombian radio industry, broadcasters and chains reinvent themselves to adapt to convergence and platforms, betting, however, on new formats and ways of capturing the audience's attention. These narrative resources and technical-communicative mediations re-conceptualize the performance patterns of the radio and its role in Colombian society. As the Colombian radio market responds to its own requirements, it is necessary to build a perspective that analyzes and values its reconfiguration process from the analog to the digital.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The process of migration and convergence of radio content to the network seeks to create a symbiotic association, generating a new model of action based on the confluence of expressive resources and interactive processes (Sosa, 2000). This evolution transforms conventional radio into a cybermedia; this, according to Cebrián (2009), implies the development –on the part of the producer-broadcaster of contents– of strategies adapted to the Internet platforms that integrate different expressive systems to reach users with whom it can dialogue and, even, exchange roles. From this perspective, the functioning of the medium in the digital ecosystem has changed the way of conceiving radio communication (González & Salgado, 2011): its epicenter is no longer concentrated exclusively on the antenna, but also in the creation of synergies that concur in a web platform that must respond to the new

consumption dynamics (Amoedo & Martínez-Costa, 2016) of an audience immersed in the digital ecosystem (Peñafiel, 2016; Cerezo, 2016; Meso, Larondo, Peña, & Rivero, 2014; Gutiérrez, Monclús, & Martí, 2014; López, 2005). This ecosystem is governed by screen devices (Fernández, 2014) and by a break in the linear time consumption scheme, and it also implies the creation of contents that will be distributed by the industry through their portals and digital platforms (Martínez-Costa, 2015). All these factors involve the conceptual and strategic evolution of the cyberradio to the web-r@dio, which becomes the nucleus of the communicative operations of the industry and the space from which content is distributed in streaming, on demand, as podcasts, and the dynamics of interaction with the audience are stimulated either through social networks or forums (Barrios & Gutiérrez, 2016b).

The radio seeks to consolidate itself as a leading medium, both in its conventional and digital formats, nationally and internationally, focusing its productive routines around information, music, entertainment and knowledge. Thus, it usually presents administrative strategies that respond to the needs, expectations and requirements of the station's stakeholders. This occurs in a context of convergence of scenarios that entails the restructuring of the information company (Campos-Freire, 2015; García-Alonso, 2014; Preciado & Monsalve, 2008; Batista, 2004) and finds its success capturing a great number of digital followers, a 24/7 work system (Piñero-Otero & Videla, 2013; Salaverría, 2010; Rivadeneyra, 2008) that produces content for a specific use and a specific distribution channel (Martínez-Costa, 2015).

The market dynamics propose a rethinking of the medium and its strategies, since “the production, circulation and appropriation of communicative products are based on the four pillars of the knowledge society: access and information for all, freedom of expression and linguistic diversity” (Barrios, 2016, p. 134). Thus, the web-r@dio, epicenter of the action, affects the professionals and their productive routines, the audiences and the processes of distribution and consumption of products (Barrios & Zambrano, 2015; Barrios, 2015; Arrojo, 2015; García-de-Torres, 2010).

The radio industry, immersed in a process of convergence (Soengas, 2013; Ortiz & López, 2011; Salaverría & García, 2008; Domingo et al., 2007; Pavlik, 2004), designs tactics to tackle youth disaffection (Barrios & Gutiérrez, 2016a; López & Gómez, 2014; Gutiérrez et al., 2014) and respond to new consumption

habits in a highly competitive context (Yuste, 2015; López & Martínez, 2014; Perona, Barbeito, & Fajula, 2014), in which –thanks to the smartphone– citizens develop a number of activities, such as accessing radio content through applications (Piñero-Otero & Videla, 2013). At this point, it is interesting to highlight the industry's emphasis on meeting the needs and expectations of users (Ribes, Monclús, Gutiérrez-García, & Martí, 2017; Bonini & Monclús, 2015; Huertas & Figueras, 2014; Ayala, 2014).

In the digital environment, the verticality of the radio communication scheme is diluted trying to achieve the horizontality encouraged by social networks. From this point of view, the conversation of the medium with the followers and between them is encouraged (Ramos del Cano, 2014; Scolari, 2013; Cebrián, 2009; Sosa, 2000). Thus, the radio industry understands that the audience has different abilities and is governed by spatial-temporal coordinates in which it seeks the news' context and its meanings and implications for society. The public today is iconographic and combines the consumption of different media, with a collective social and emotional intelligence (Barrios, 2016).

The productive routines of the radio have labels and codes that collect information; thus, the medium is empowered, expands its horizons and service changes (Bardoel, 2007). This subject has many points of view in the field of communication research in the Colombian context, where radio –despite being one of the media with more penetration– has been little studied throughout history by national academics. In such a moment of convergence and transition, it is important to focus on the transformation of the radio industry, as a consequence of the digitalization process, in the distribution and reception of contents produced from the conventional medium.

METHODOLOGY

The Colombian radio industry¹ and its actors begin to understand the needs of an audience that is immersed in the digital environment, eager users of new proposals and communication opportunities. The objective of this paper is to approach the Colombian radio and its dynamics to face the challenges posed by the digital environment of the audiences. To focus the development axis of the case study work (Martínez, 2006; Arzaluz, 2005; Yacuzzi, 2005, Stake, 1998), we raised two research questions, from which we articulated the analysis of the phenomenon:

RQ1. What is the impact of ICTs in the task and in the relationship with the audience of a medium such as radio?

RQ2. How does the on air-digital ecosystem interconnection occurs in the radio daily broadcast?

To select the sample, we used data from the 2016-3 Continuous Study of Radial Audiences (ECAR, by its Spanish acronym), conducted by the Centro Nacional de Consultoría (2016), which reveals:

1. The strong penetration of commercial radio (97%) compared to proposals of public interest (2%) and community radios (1%) and
2. The dominance of the general-interest market by two chains (Caracol–53%– and RCN–24%–) and the Blu Radio station (20%).

The exposed criteria imply obviating the alternatives of public and communitarian interest given their low incidence in the market and to focus the glance in general-interest radios, since the ideology and investment of the industry is concentrated in them (Barrios, 2016). In addition, according to ECAR 2016-3, the five radio stations with the largest number of listeners (table 1) are Caracol Radio and W Radio, from the Caracol network, RCN Radio and La FM from RCN network, and Blu Radio, a station that was born in 2012 and that in four years has positioned itself in second place in the audience ranking.

Once the stations were selected, and to answer the research questions, we designed a qualitative methodological instrument –semi-structured interview (Ardèvol, Bertrán, Callén, & Pérez, 2003) and content analysis of the stations (Colussi, 2013; Martí, 2011)– and a quantitative one –follow-up of the broadcaster's activity on social networks and web-r@dio (Barrios, 2013)–. The interviews were conducted with directors and agents of the radios (table 2), referents of these stations, to establish how each station address the technological phenomenon, the influence of social networks in the work of the radio, the challenges of the digital environment and to identify the values that surround that media-user communication.

In order to collect of the sound corpus of the stations, the object of study, we used once again ECAR 2016-3, which shows a significant concentration of listeners in

Radial Chain	Radio station	ECAR tuning result
Caracol	Caracol Radio	1,749,000
	W Radio	1,089,500
RCN	RCN Radio	648,100
	La FM	649,000
Blu Radio	Blu Radio	1,117,300

Table 1. Tuning of the main general-interest broadcasters of Colombia

Source: Own elaboration, based on the 2016 ECAR data (third stage).

N° of interviews	Position	Description
3	President	Highest administrative instance that determines the strategic objectives of the radio station.
5	Department director	Tactical manager that delineates the actions to be followed on the air and the digital ecosystem to capture the attention of users with the online and offline work team.
10	Program member	Agent in charge of the production and realization of the communicative sound product that airs and is uploaded by the digital team to the web.

Table 2. Radio actors interviewed and their function

Source: Own elaboration.

the prime-time slot (*Caracol Básica-6am Hoy por Hoy* 937,100, *La W-W Radio* 884,200, *RCN Básica-RCN Noticias* 381,800, *La FM-Noticiero de la FM* 314,400, and *Blu Radio-Mañanas Blu* 590,300). As a whole, the sample consists of 100 hours of audio (20 for each station), 8089 tweets, 1048 posts from the stations' profiles on social networks and 25 screenshots of the web-r@dio (1 daily for each station), under the methodology of constructed week (Barrios & Gutiérrez, 2016b) during the month of November 2016. The objective was to have a cross-referencing of variables (features of the radial medium in its performance in social networks, characteristics of the content that circulates in the network and strategies that are used in the interaction with users) to establish the medium behavior (Bernal, 2006).

RESULTS

THE RADIOPHONIC ACTORS' CONCEPTION OF THE NEW PANORAMA

The analysis of the interviews (illustration 1) shows the conception of a technological phenomenon in permanent resignification and reinvention to communicate and interact from the particularity of micro-networks established in the profiles of the communication platforms. From the discourse of the radio industry actors, it is evident that the content went into the background and that what really matters is the strategy of contact and participation in a scenario of relationship between the medium and the subjects, a phenomenon of socialization and recognition.

The radio actors (figure 1) show a latent concern to

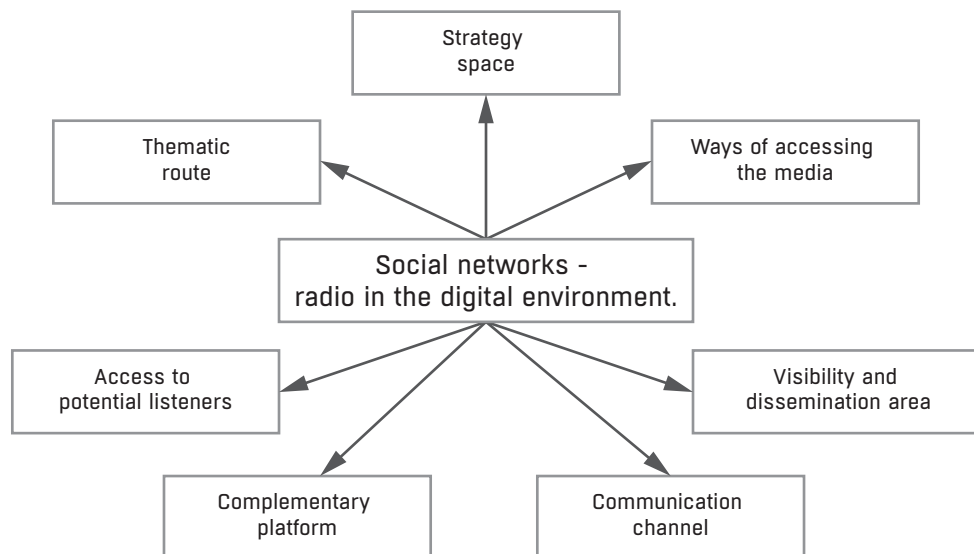


Illustration 1. Categorization of the radio actors' thoughts on the social networks-radio component in the digital environment

Source: Own elaboration.

gain the largest possible number of followers in the corporate accounts of their media. From social networks, they establish tactics to impact the users' consumption of communicative products in the digital environment. They aim for a convergent bifurcation of emission and distribution that positions the station brand in the market, adjusted to the diversity of scenarios that the user accesses from his PC and portable devices. They target an endogamous follower, who does not divert his attention and ends up reaffirming what he thinks and believes.

"Spoken radio must be very influential, independent, transgressive, an alternative, not the same as always (...). We are a station younger than our competition, and that's why we are more transgressors, we have a digital strategy that dynamizes the product on the air, the web, social networks and apps. You have to innovate and see the medium in another way, be very inclusive" (Radio Vice President – Blu Radio).

The radio industry travels through the hypermedia language, which seeks the ideal formula to combine the creation and production of content that can interest, inform and entertain a heterogeneous audience. A descriptive and colloquial language is structured, which leads to certain consumption actions by the broadcaster.

On air and in the digital ecosystem, there tends to be a conceptual unity in which radio communication and journalistic activity are conducted in conditions different from those allowed by the conventional medium.

"Now our work requires having a global thinking, but local action strategies (...). The globalization of the media gives us a vision of the world, but as content producers, it leads us to be very local in their development, in such a way that we connect with that listener and user of our communicative proposal" (Program director – RCN).

From the process of reinvention and reconfiguration of the business model (illustration 1), the Colombian radio industry offers new alternatives that allow the listener to support the change from analogue to digital with a cleaner sound, a coverage without interference and without territorial problems, as well as with a wider variety of channels and a new option to complement the content offered on-air. This transformation has its central axis in the access, generation, processing and transmission of information.

"Our task today is fundamentally that of a chef, who has to satisfy all the guests (...) with entertaining, light, musical, cultural, sporting, pleasant contents, and that is why work teams are made up of specialists. Adults

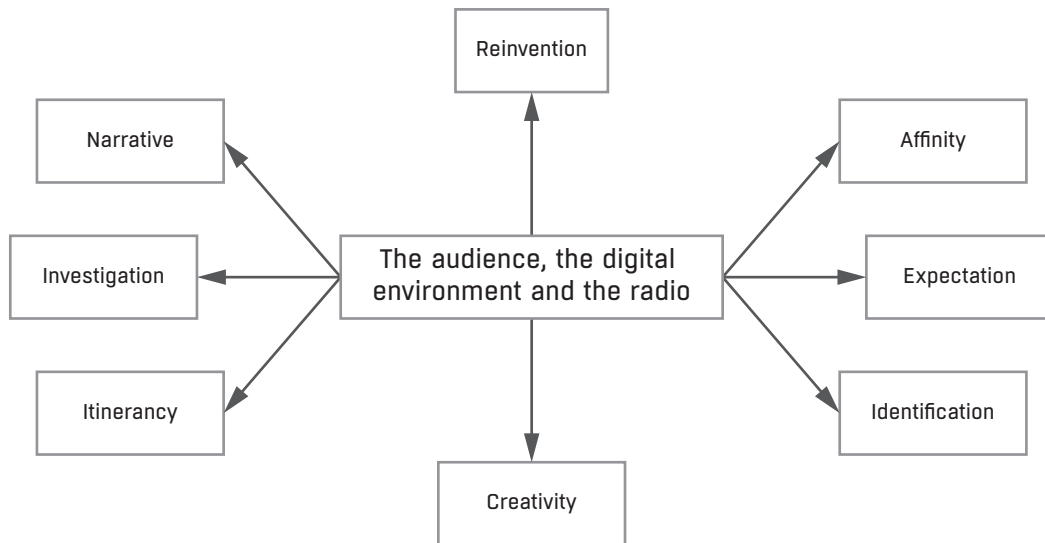


Illustration 2. Categorization of radio actors' thoughts on audience, digital environment and radio

Source: Own elaboration.

with experience and young people who respond to the needs of consumption in each of the scenarios in which our radio brand has presence" (Department director – Caracol Radio).

For the interviewed actors, although the media create their audience under certain characteristics and principles according to their business strategy (illustration 2), nowadays there is a complicity between the broadcaster and the receiver under a panorama in which both are protagonists of the content that circulates through the waves. Audiences, as producers of information, communication and content, guide the journalist in what is of common interest and that, in one way or another, becomes a trend not only in the media, but also in social networks. This circumstance affects traditional professional roles, since journalists have to assume the function of content managers and strategists to respond to the users' comments.

The communicative proposal of the radio industry presents a triangular strategy that revolves around three pillars: the communicative objectives of the medium, the needs of the market and the interaction of users in the digital ecosystem (illustration 2). It is a basic exercise that migrates features of traditional journalism to the construction of the digital product responding to some basic questions: What is the goal? What do the media want to produce, circulate and make consumable? What role does the media want

to play regarding the social networks through which contents are going to circulate? The media and mass media communication technologies are modifying the analysis methodologies and even their conceptual frameworks under two coordinates that define them: the expansion of the story through various mediums and the collaboration of the users in that expansive process. The construction of the actions dynamics of the medium continues concentrated in the antenna, although it is re-conceptualized to be incorporated into the digital ecosystem (table 3).

Web-r@dios determine certain relationship values between the medium and its users (illustration 3). These are mechanisms linked to the architecture of information and the unionization of content that involve information distribution tactics aligned with the sound proposal of the conventional radio station. Being present in the digital environment demands that media actors not only produce entirely new content, but also face the emergence of new professional roles, as well as an inevitable transformation of their business model. Likewise, local industries become providers of information and entertainment.

RADIO IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

The traditional media referred to in this study have reached an important number of friends and followers in social networks (table 4), thus following the on-air

Clasificación	Características
The media in the digital environment	Intermediation and interactivity
	Propagation of knowledge
	Digital identity
	Attracting new audiences
	Accessibility and use by users
Social networks and new technologies in the media environment	Constant connectivity through different platforms
	Constant competition between web portals and traditional media
	Content with journalism criteria and standards (social responsibility, source management, research, monitoring, contextualization and development)
	Give voice to the receiver
Radio within the framework of digital society	Reinvention and integration to the multimedia environment
	Independent and alternative proposals for a wider audience
	Feeding from social networks
	Monitoring the receivers
	Content construction
The media and their journalists present in the networks	Specify the goal of being present in social networks
	Synthesize
	Focus on the action
	Set goals so that more people can be reached
	Consolidate the brand
	Create a bidirectional communication channel between broadcaster and receiver

Table 3. Features that radio should incorporate in the digital field

Source: Own elaboration.

trend (ECAR 2016-3). These data show that the brand seeks to generate a digital presence and establish a meeting point with its audience.

The analysis of the accounts shows a continuous and balanced use throughout the day by the broadcaster, that is, there is no time slot with a greater flow of publications. However, this strategy is not always a guarantee of success (table 5), since the RTs and Favorites obtained differ in the hours of the day, a circumstance more linked to the user's activities in

social networks than to the profiles of the stations. However, there is an effort to become a trend in the network through hashtags, a strategy that aims to give visibility to the brand and credibility to the contents.

The constant publications of the broadcaster generate dynamic responses from users, demonstrating that the traditional general-interest radio industry continues to be an informative reference in the digital environment. In fact, young people are more inclined to listen to musical radios, but they resort to the online parent

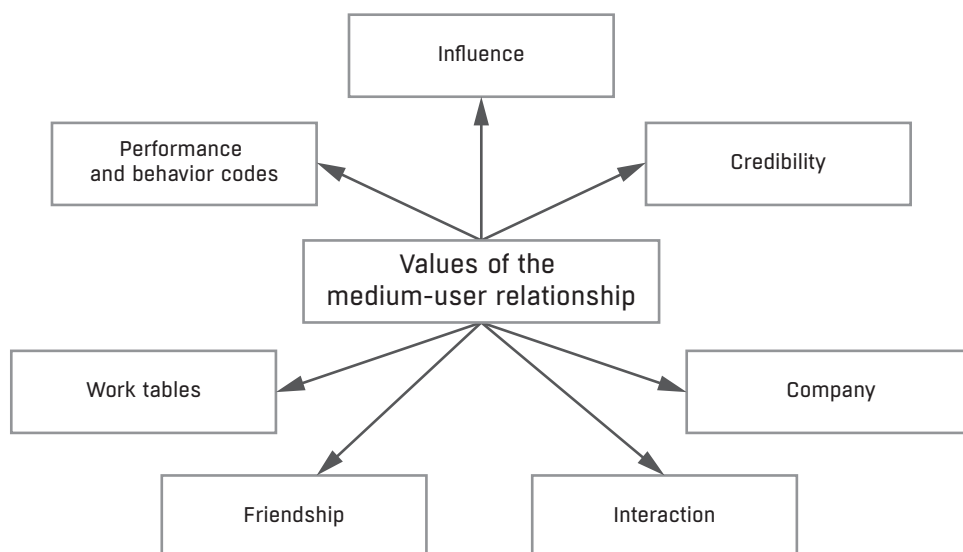


Illustration 3: Categorization of the radio actors' thoughts on the value component of the user-medium relationship

Source: Own elaboration.

	Followers on Twitter	Followers on Facebook
Caracol Radio	2,941,875	580,039
W Radio	2,969,949	213,759
RCN Radio	2,320,610	366,382
La FM	1,685,766	659,241
Blu Radio	1,842,155	832,949

Table 4. Followers of the stations on social networks (November 2016)

Source: Own elaboration.

stations of the radial networks to approach the social reality of the country.

Although the number of friends on Facebook is not significant, we can speak of a friendship and affinity relationship given the high number of comments made by users. Perhaps the reason is the interest in the current news and the Colombian news agenda proposed by the stations. In this digital space, a common strategy has been detected based on the establishment of hyper-linkage between the conventional medium, web-radio and social networks, leading users to navigate and explore the digital proposal of the station while they access the sound of the medium in real time or

pre-recorded through the Internet. We can also note the lack of interaction of the radio industry in the conversation that it initiates and of which it suddenly disappears, leaving the users without other interlocutors than themselves.

The digital strategy of the radio industry focuses its actions on demonstrating the multiplicity of scenarios from which the contents offered by the broadcasters, especially focused on the information agenda, are captured and distributed. However, it is surprising, on the one hand, that there is a low reference to the videos circulating on the social network and, on the other, the null recognition of what has been done by

	Caracol Radio	W Radio	RCN Básica	La FM	Blu Radio
Analyzed tweets	1,595	1,091	1,086	1,783	2,007
% tweets with hyperlinks	81%	99%	34%	86%	57%
% tweets with hashtags	59%	40%	61%	100%	91%
% of RT	69%	87%	74%	69%	61%
% of Favs	83%	91%	83%	78%	65%

Table 5. The stations on Twitter

Source: Own elaboration.

	Caracol Radio	W Radio	RCN Básica	La FM	Blu Radio
% increase in followers during this study	3%	7%	3%	9%	10%
Followers that interact constantly with the profile	86,501	14,708	10,688	50,885	171,389
% of users committed to the profile	15%	7%	3%	8%	21%
Number of posts analyzed	621	799	139	548	553
Number of Likes that the posts reach	60,074	9,525	2,941	29,616	132,854
Number of comments generated by the posts	10,240	3,972	905	4,489	21,256
Number of times that the posts are shared	18,453	2,329	358	4,892	35,315
% of posts with hyperlinks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% posts sharing videos	3%	1%	0%	7%	6%

Table 6. The stations on Facebook

Source: Own elaboration.

other users. At this point, it should be noted that the growth of followers detected in the study period is significantly low.

ON-AIR/DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM INTERCONNECTION

The general-interest radio, object of study, begins to show an overlap between the broadcast on the air (100 themes on average per broadcast) and its digital presence (web-r@dio, social networks). There is an attempt to bring the contents of the conventional medium to the network or, at least, to promote them to increase their consumption. However, the same does not occur with the network material towards the on-air emissions, whose incidence is lower.

It is clear that the industry is in the midst of a digital context in which the offline allies with digital platforms as amplifiers of their service. At this point, web pages and social networks play a role as a narrative instrument of the information disseminated by the conventional on-air system. The main reason for the references has to do with the news of the moment, the self-promotion of the medium and its digital presence, as well as the comments made by people from the national public life. It is surprising that the videos of their allied channels are not exploited, as well as the audios of the interviews conducted by the broadcasters (already in the web portals). Consequently, it is evident that the operators are just beginning their digital process, as the strategies in this field are not defined or consolidated.

The data analysis made it possible to detect that Blu Radio, a station that was born under the dynamics of the digital environment, is the one that generates a greater volume of circulation between the offline and the online, exploiting themes and establishing a game interaction with the audience in the development of its programs. Precisely the lack of dialogue with users in RCN Radio minimizes the effect of replication and impact of its publications, a circumstance that contrasts with La FM that does not share on-air the numerous digital content they produce on the web. Caracol Básica is at an intermediate point. It is striking that, although it is a broadcaster with global coverage, W Radio is the one with lesser presence in the digital environment, focusing on the contact through email.

In general, the Colombian radio industry strives to attract new audiences under a digital strategy of dissemination and management of its contents. This symbiosis of the offline and online, is centered on four fundamental axes: news (35%), commentaries (17%), self-promotion (30%) and trends (8%), with

the remaining 10% being interviews, photos, videos, audios, credits to a user and questions. These tactics reveal the intensity of the visualization of the content, the search for the consolidation of the brand in the digital environment, and the aim to become a conversation trend in social networks.

In today's society, the radio stations do not work in isolation, but form a unique communications system in a harmonic and synchronous way with their digital proposal, since they are addressing the same audience. In fact, the Colombian radio industry is adapting its contents to a communication model typical of the digital environment, so that the references made in the network start from the on-air content (40%), as well as in the opposite direction (60%).

The analysis of the sound material shows that 80% of the on-air references to the web are pre-recorded radio spots that, on the one hand, remind the users of the digital presence of the station on the network and, on the other, inform them of their profiles on social networks without leaving aside the invitation to search in the web-r@dio a particular topic. In general, the mentions from the web to the on-air station have to do with clarifications of some information, with interactions that the radio originates or with hashtags that impact the activity in social networks.

THE RADIO INDUSTRY OF WEB-R@DIOS

Throughout its history, the Colombian radio industry has faced various transition processes in which it has reinvented itself and accommodated to the situations of each era and, even, to the technological challenges imposed at each moment. Currently, it faces the incorporation of the medium into the digital ecosystem and the need to be present in mobile devices. In this sense, we can observe that the analyzed stations project a very similar architecture in their portals, although they present divergences in their articulation, orientation and action in front of the communicative proposal.

In the convergence scenario, the challenge for the Colombian radio industry is to experiment with other forms of information and communication. In this space, the way in which likings are personalized and alternatives diversified draws a way of conceiving the medium and developing its narrative. In fact, the radio no longer only depends on sound, but must also use elements and codes of the audiovisual language to express coherent and understandable meanings that give sense to the stories offered.

“What we have in the web is the development of a product, that is, Caracol S.A. is setting up a digital area that supports what happens in the radio booth, but that in turn teaches us how to move the spoken and musical format to the needs of a web audience” (Department director – Caracol Radio).

The communication strategy of the web portals of the Colombian radio industry is articulated by the national and international news agenda, the specific content contributed by each program and the podcasts highlighted during the day. This is combined with the streaming of the on-air signal, the blogs of the main actors of the station, the corporate profile of the station and the network to which it belongs (including the links to the other portals and web-media). The productive routines no longer only concentrate on the on-air product, but overlap with the convergence of digital products in the network.

“(…) in the different meetings in which I have been, in which the different conventional and digital areas of the group participate, there has been a clear instruction for greater integration and convergence of contents: active and real participation of those who are on the air with what is done and what happens in the different web media that constitute the conglomerate proposed by RCN” (Program director – RCN Radio).

The proposed architecture reinforces the appropriation of the dynamics of the digital ecosystem, while at the same time consolidating the recognition and credibility of the brand on the air. The objective is to build and consolidate a model that favors consumption in differential time, different from that used on-air, aiming at new audiences. However, this operation must also be accompanied by attractive content according to the characteristics and consumption habits of millennial users to prevent the disaffection already present in other markets.

“The radio has had to reinvent itself; in the creation of Blu Radio we had clarity that we should think not only on the air, on changing the portfolio of products and services, (...), but also we should do new things on the subject of radio, social networks and all the ICTs that attract the attention of the digital audience” (Radio Vice President – Blu Radio).

The digital ecosystem constitutes a new business unit for the radio industry under the particular interpretation of the management area of each network. In the light of the data, innovation seems to focus on establishing

the brand in the online environment and favoring the circulation of content in order to maintain and attract new audiences. However, on-air continues to be the platform that generates most, if not all, of the content, so the online strategies implemented at the moment complement this production area.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that the radio-user relationship is no longer tied solely to the sound product. The Colombian operators seek to encourage the creation of communities with particular interests and use social networks as means of communication and exhibitors of their offer. From the discourse of the directors of the Colombian radio industry it is possible to perceive that the stations are in a process of trial and error, in which they seek a differentiating element that captures the attention of an audience that has at its disposal a number of similar proposals with which to interact and meet their information and consumption needs. The process towards the web-r@adio concentrates its effort in the creation of new contents based on transversal radio narratives that respond to the logics of cross-radial diffusion. However, on-air is still omnipresent, in part because it continues to be the core of the business, since the monetization of online operations, with or without synergy with the offline, is extremely complex.

Web-r@adios are not independent of other forms of conventional communication; the interests of the audience are driven by social platforms and radio not only has the capacity to amplify them, but also to develop them, transmit them in different directions and reconvert them into a trend. Both in the digital environment and in the traditional medium, the communicative proposal is determined by the preferences of the audience and by the criterion and strategy of the mass media. In the study variables, we can see a tactic of self-promotion of the radio in the web to gain followers. The Colombian radio industry transfers its offline status to the digital ecosystem based on news content that accompanies images, memes and even music to attract the youngest. From this perspective, they seek to seduce them to carry out consumer actions on the web-r@adio and other digital platforms where the station has a presence.

The communicative model of Colombian radio with its users still does not fully assume the bidirectional and interactive concept of the digital ecosystem. In the new media landscape, broadcasters maintain a

strong control over the process and the result of the communication, given that they allow access to the material, propitiate and regulate participation by the audience, but always under the interests of the medium. For now, users are mostly limited to comments with other users, to share the most interesting publications, while the interaction with journalists and the proposal of topics still appear as less important activities.

This scenario calls for research, detecting the environment and the context to establish new theories and schemes of the discipline where the flow is no longer one-way, but multiple, given the presence of several broadcasters and receivers of communication products. The approach to the different radio markets allows observing the process towards the web-r@dio and assessing its implementation, since its development is closely connected with the industrial structure of the sector. In addition, in this reconfiguration it cannot be ignored that active audiences are those that force the radio to be attentive to multiple scenarios, where users are eager to interact and even participate.

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, the Colombian radio industry, still immersed in the traditional on-air system, faces an inevitable process of convergence, exploring the complex scenario formed by the medium actors, the platforms and the audience in a double aspect: listeners and users. Thus, different ways of reaching the audience are adopted: live and direct, delayed (on demand and podcast), through the exploration of links, the selection of sound fragments, among others. From the conventional broadcast, the contents are integrated and exploited in the web-r@dio and app-r@dio, cyberspaces from which the listener-user accesses and consumes timelessly or, according to its preferences, in simultaneity with the broadcast.

The web and the digital environment ask the radio to listen, talk and build what is known as *softpower*, that is, the power to make things happen based on leadership and the attraction of values, culture and behaviors. This is built through the same networks in which the image, reputation and popularity of the brand are forged. Undoubtedly, this is a change of paradigm that questions the verticality of traditional radio communication, but also calls for establishing immersive and convergent logics that combine the conception of the mass media with the search for specific niches, a circumstance favored by Internet consumption.

From this perspective, the Colombian industry, in general, advocates a deployment strategy in multiple scenarios to search and contact the user. To some extent, this behavior is logical, since it is still early to talk about a transformation of the business model, a metamorphosis that will pivot between the audience ranking as a sample of the volume of listeners and the sum of the users that each of the thematic niches agglutinate based on the consumption of its contents. While managers are busy with figures results, programmers seek to design strategies that reflect the move from conventional radio to web-r@dio. However, the data show the construction of two types of discourse, the on-air and that of social networks, which hardly converge. Only Blu Radio seems to distance itself from the guidelines adopted mostly by the industry, perhaps as a consequence of its youth.

In the current media-user relationship, power is increasingly diffused. Thus, the Colombian radio industry understands that networks are the space for interaction, but its strategic approach shows an interest in self-promotion and a non-recognition of the users' role in the digital environment. Although they talk of giving relevance to the message, in reality the most important thing is still its propagation. Thanks to it, the user can be involved and, in turn, share the contents with his contacts. Given this scenario, the Colombian radio has an arduous task ahead: rethinking its objectives in order to measure the effectiveness of its strategies with patterns that fix their attention not only on quantitative but also qualitative values, evidenced by the appearance of specialized niches. All these elements favor adjustments and changes according to the needs of that community of users that seeks to satisfy its needs in the era of web-r@dio.

In the reconfiguration process, each one looks for its place, in which they must know, but also remembered as an alternative of access and content consumption through multiple platforms. The above described implies, in addition to a convergence, the establishment of a cross-media distribution that considers a joint narrative supported by certain policies that defend some values, ideas and criteria with which the world is conceived and presented. The stage in which the aim was to adapt to the radio market as mass media is left behind; today, the focus is on finding that network of consumers with common interests and attracted by a communicative proposal that they consider truly interesting and that they can share with excitement and enthusiasm.

FOOTNOTES

1. Integrated media market, in numbers of the ICT Ministry, by 1578 radio stations: 667 commercial radios, 285 public interest radio stations and 626 community radios.

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