

## Educational Radio, Digital Wagers During The Post-Pandemic

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### Abstract

Communication processes have been transformed by the growing access to the internet. Social networks and new ways of narrating have revolutionized access to information and content creation. From this perspective, several studies have agreed that this democratization of information does not reflect levels of education and levels of coverage. In the same way, there is a gap between the reality experienced by youth and their exposure to the media. This research explores and describes potentialities that favor radio as a school educational setting. The research opted for an exploratory qualitative methodology through surveys and ethnographic work. We worked with 250 high school students with a high academic performance from public institutions in Medellín. The results were oriented to aspects such as A) reasons for using different platforms. B) student preferences in the consumption of the radio in the post-pandemic and C) uses of the radio as an application for learning. The study shows the preferences of the students and the activities they carry out in digital media. The

foregoing is of great relevance since it indicates the viability of designing a digital tool that helps high school students to make radio programs, in order to strengthen knowledge, doing, and the apprehension of values and critical judgment.

**Keywords** Youths, radio, education, convergence, virtual Radio, Digital environment, digital radio.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The digital environment, incorporation of new technologies as part of the daily lives of the youth, the natural representation of the codes of conduct in social platforms, and the growing influence of media on the perspective of the youth with respect to their realities and aspirations, generate an appropriate scenario to analyze what can be those proposals and approaches that from the State could be presented to the young public as carriers of resources to create a scenario, which complies with the feedback of ideas, visions, projects, and perspectives regarding education and its possible involvement and acceptance of proposals generated from the State scenario.

Nationally, Colombia has been a country highly influenced on political, social, and cultural aspects as a result of a marked accentuation of the technological progress and quite specifically in the setting of ICTs. Likewise, the economic sector and the production models find a referent on the progress of the information and communication technologies. This new dynamic of the relations established within society has allowed a sort of metamorphosis in the social environment and in the development of the communities. This is how a new form of interaction within the setting of the internal and external policies of the Colombian State has permitted a permanent flow and exchange of cultural currents, which favor the creation of settings for participation from different sectors of society.

Colombian education is not foreign to the way ICTs permeate the daily and educational dynamics of the youth. Hence, the new state guidelines and the departmental and local agendas suggest that technological tools should be increased at the school level, so they themselves can create or produce those educational and cultural contents that can help them with their activities of teaching, learning or dissemination of knowledge.

Digital contents become a production of two-way information: by the State to report on new policies, proposals, and projects involving a given sector of society, in this case youth; and it is a feedback channel so that from the very state entities we may know the student community's conception of the country; thus, complying with the nature of the digital platforms, where transmitter and receptor become users who contribute to the same communication network, thereby, generating a community with specific interests, responding to the principle of tribal relations, characteristic of virtual platforms.

Traditional media are, then, linked to the multimedia language permitted by the Internet and radio complies with this premise, given its adaptability with digital platforms. This is why, with this study of exploratory nature, we seek to learn if students who are users of ICTs would use this medium as an application for learning, availing of the devices provided by the national policy.

Radio has always been involved with the communication of public policies as a means of dissemination that fulfills a closer link with the listener. However, the change of its nature, with the arrival of new technologies, is precisely in the active participation of the user, who is no longer a passive receptor of the message, and goes on to create a favorable scenario for participating and generating their own contents and even expressing their own opinions.

Upon this scenario, the public sector must ponder regarding its role and responsibility, as expressed by J. Ignacio Criado and Francisco Rojas Martín (2013) in the text *Digital Social Networks in Management and Public policies. Advances and Challenges for an Open Government*:

“Within this new scenario, people and institutions have their own opinions and, so, they convey it as such through the networks, the communication instrument with the highest growth in recent years. With social networks, the Administration has, therefore, a multidirectional communication channel with citizens – with inclusive companies and entities

– without intermediaries that allows it to receive instant feedback on its actions and proposals (...) This effective presence by the Administration in networks will serve to know what citizens demand and what they think of their administrations. It will be crucial to be able to react on time upon certain situations, even for those more basic one-way communication functions (messages about emergencies, information about a given good or service, proposals to act in a given way, etc.)... and it is that a good part of the professional, cultural, social, financial, or educational activities by citizens takes place on the Internet and through social networks. Will the Administration forego the opportunity to ensure that citizens continue to enjoy their fundamental rights in these areas?" (2013)

The educational environment cannot be foreign to this phenomenon and opportunity. It is how radio, traditionally a medium of high acceptance among the young community, made it possible for teachers to teach how to think, create and perform tasks together, so that individuals become dynamic, participatory and their response is immediate.

It must be highlighted that radio, over time, has allowed to break with the serious inconvenience that occurs in many of the country's regions where telecommunications coverage is scarce due to distance. Radio is the technology that for years has served as stimulus to the population's development in cities and rural zones, regarding education and the treatment of human behavior; likewise, radio – by being a social practice and simple, has been easily accepted by all types of audiences. The meaning of radio, in spite of the world's transformation, manages to remain by being the medium that manages to maintain that oral communication that is often lost by current technologies, for Cebrián 2001:

“The radio of the future, no matter how many technical innovations it introduces, will continue to be based on oral communication with the audience, on the magic of the word, of the music of the sounds from the environment, from silence. It is human contact through sounds to drive away loneliness, to accompany, to inform, to entertain, and, in sum, to continue keeping human beings linked to the original and richest element throughout its history, such as tradition through oral communication” P. 32<sup>1</sup>.

The ICTs bear great importance in education for learning, where educational centers use information and communication technologies for a common good, and the State and educational centers see in them excellent tools to obtain the necessary knowledge for the integral development of children and youth.

Evolution in radio language at this time lies precisely on the active participation by the users, who often integrate the nature of radio language to their own virtual settings, thus, complementing the dynamics of the contents generated from an official part, with those contributed by the public, which becomes a disseminator of the message from its own information networks.

Incorporation of radio centers on the act of speaking, which is its maximum expression, therefore, it gives way to the analysis of the teaching and learning processes of new technologies, both in educational institutions as in the homes, establishing a viable and accurate communication channel, and opening a communication channel between the school and the family.

The following excerpt provides notions of a nation's need to implement ICT as input to knowledge:

“Although in their origins, public policies related with ICTs were associated with productivity and competitiveness, today these have been modified toward broader purposes, like reducing the digital gap and foster the promotion of social inclusion, deploying the maximum potential of ICTs to disseminate knowledge” (Schalk, 2010).

Years back, radio became aware that it is not possible to have a cultural absence in mass media because these belong, in one way or another, to the people; hence, they must be media embraced by schools, colleges, universities, nations, towns, among others, to introduce strategies that promote education.

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<sup>1</sup> Cebrián, M. (2001). *La radio en la convergencia multimedia*. España: Gedisa.

The solution to social problems, like illiteracy or lack of knowledge in certain areas, is not to ban the use of technological tools in communication; on the contrary, it involves identifying mechanisms that help people to see the world more rationally, instilling a universal language, quality learning, and personal development; then, it could be said that radio is the medium that manages to solve this social problem, given that it is in charge of generating that conversation with the audience, achieving with it a communication exchange among equals.

Education and radio are two concepts that for years have worked mutually to attack voids in understanding in populations lacking resources or unusable or unworkable tools. That is, radio, as traditional medium of ICTs, is an input to manage and optimize information to carry out a communication development that contributes directly with the educational factor, which will be further enhanced upon integrating the digital dynamics of the youth users – public of students – to the content proposals for high dissemination; this context requires full understanding of the dynamics, routines, and behaviors of the new users to, thus, achieve the existence of evident actions, on their part, and manage to provide greater scope to the information shared, which is known as having the message go viral.

The UNESCO refers to the fusion of radio and the Internet, as the great opportunity and development of new ways of reaching younger and more massive audiences, as shown in the following excerpt:

“In the last ten years, indicates the UNESCO, have emerged throughout the world juvenile radio projects in various forms. From Bolivia to Bangladesh, from New York to New Delhi, or from Kinshasa to Kuala Lumpur radio stations are seeing the benefits of including the young in the airwaves. When placing them in the driver’s seat, opportunities are created for dialogue and to increase their young audience. Radio, highlights the UNESCO, can play an important role in helping youth to represent themselves and speak of themes important to them.

Radio reaches over 95% of the global population, which has exceeded 7-billion people. Those under 30 years of age represent more than half of this number. In light of these figures, radio broadcasters should give in to the evidence and start airing more programs by and for the youth”, states the UNESCO report”<sup>2</sup> (2013, 13 February).

Regarding the scenario proposed by radio and social networks, the following factors are highlighted:

- **Radio is profitable and easy to learn:** it permits producing, transmitting, and distributing programs without being costly. According to UNESCO data (2013): “...it requires minimal technical experience and youth acquire quickly the conceptual skills to make a broadcast”<sup>3</sup>. Youth often have the possibility of attending radio emissions, although they are not the owners of said radio.
- **Radio skills are skills for life.** When making the youth participate in radio, much more is achieved than training a new generation of radio broadcasters. Experience in radio reports and transmission is translated into a usable skill with a broad range of daily life situations. Learning to research, conducting interviews and programs increases the confidence of the youth and develops their skills in communication and critical thought.
- **Radio offers a personal and shared experience.** Radio is capable of following listeners from one place to another, which permits private moments and reflexive, personal, and collective listening.<sup>4</sup>

These benefits of radio serve as a medium for the youth to comprehend and assimilate new communication processes and routines, thus, integrating them to projects proposed by government.

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<sup>2</sup> CDPERIODISMO. (2013, 13 February). *La radio llega a más personas que Internet and la televisión.*

<http://www.clasesdeperiodismo.com/2013/02/13/unesco-la-radio-llega-a-mas-personas-que-internet-y-la-television/>

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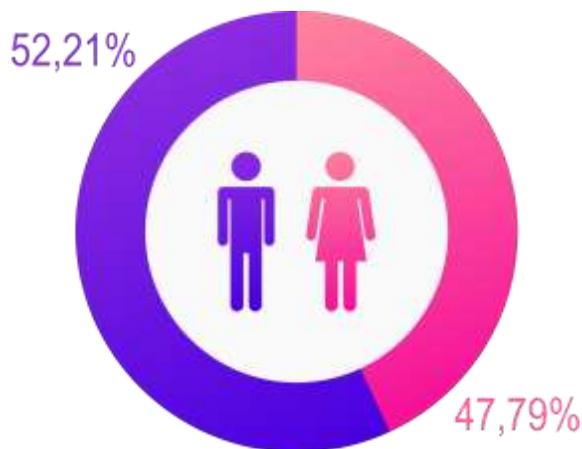
<sup>4</sup> CDPERIODISMO. (2013, 13 February). *La radio llega a más personas que Internet y la televisión.*

<http://www.clasesdeperiodismo.com/2013/02/13/unesco-la-radio-llega-a-mas-personas-que-internet-y-la-television/>

## METHODOLOGY

To learn the context in which radio language can be involved, a survey was conducted in October with public high school students from the department of Antioquia; 250 surveys were carried out, with which the study sought to have a sampling to infer on the use of technologies, access to the Internet, how the relationship between technologies and education is perceived, and infer if these variables influence on the radio listeners and the characteristics these have. The statistical analysis was performed in Excel and crosstabs in SPSS statistical software.<sup>5</sup>

**Graphic 1.** Description of the sample



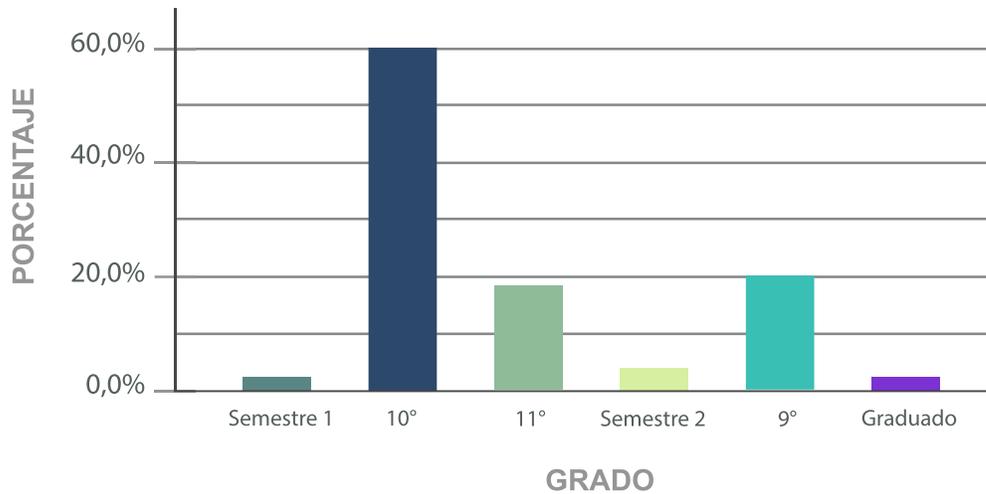
**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

Of those surveyed (Graphic 1) 52.21% were men and 47.79% women between 17 and 21 years of age; with a balanced gender sample.

The survey started with some questions that sought to have some variables for information rather than analysis. Each young person surveyed was asked for the municipality of residence, to specify the township, school where they studied. In some cases, they were individuals who had already graduated, who were asked about the university or institute, in case they were receiving higher education. These variables were not kept in mind in this study of exploratory nature: very disperse data that would not yield great results.

**Graphic 2.** Grade currently studying.

<sup>5</sup> SPSS: Acronym for *Statistical Package for Social Sciences*. Used when working large databases.

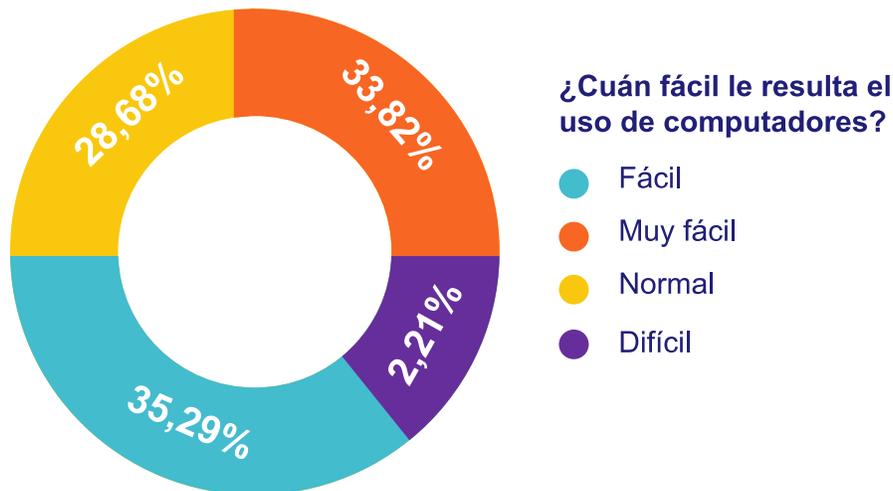


**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

The Grade variable (Graphic 2) sought to obtain data regarding on whether they were in school, what level they were in or if they were in the university, what semester were they studying. What was obtained was that of those surveyed, 60% are in the tenth grade, 20% are in ninth grade, 19% are in the eleventh grade; the remaining 11% were students in the first university semesters or youth who had graduated and who were not in higher education.

The study inquired on the ease they currently had in using computers (Graphic 3): 35% consider their use easy; 33% consider it very easy; 28% consider using computers as normal; and only 2.21% consider it difficult. With this variable, it was concluded that 97.8% finds it easy to use computers.

**Graphic 3.** Variables ease in using computers



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

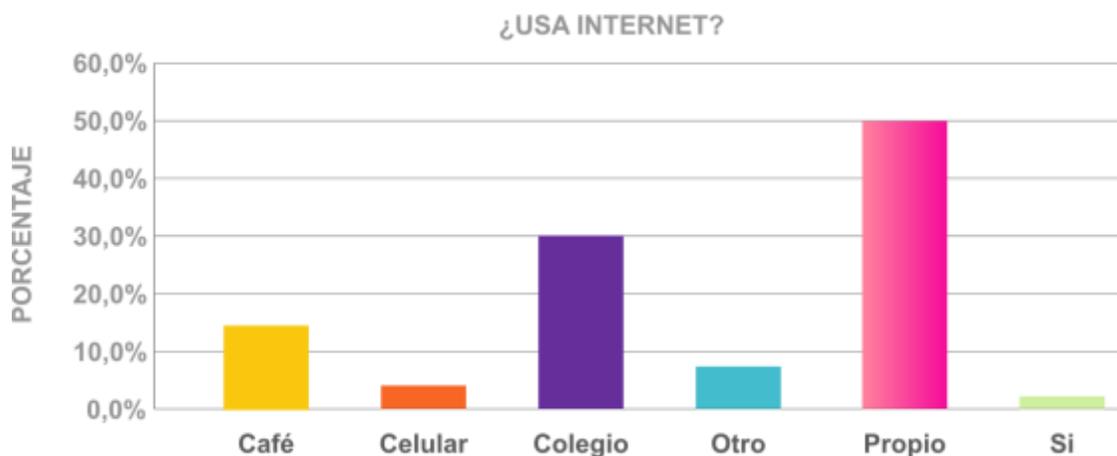
From this first part of the survey, the familiarity of the youth was determined with the basic technological resource, which is the computer; likewise, the relationship that exists between age and adaptability to such in their academic environments.

## RESULTS

Knowing the routines and dynamics of the youth with digital platforms, how they relate with such, the purposes and uses they make of these in their daily lives becomes a determinant factor for this part of the survey: evidences which are the trends of Internet use; in addition to this, the ease with which they assimilate it and if they have the appropriate means. Due to this, our study posed several questions focused on these themes.

One of the main ideas was to measure if those surveyed use the Internet (Graphic 4), hence, they were asked where they more frequently access the Internet: over 50% stated having their own Internet, which is understood as Internet service in their homes; 30% accesses the Internet at their schools; 11% use an Internet cafe; and 9% accesses through their mobile phone of through other unspecified means.

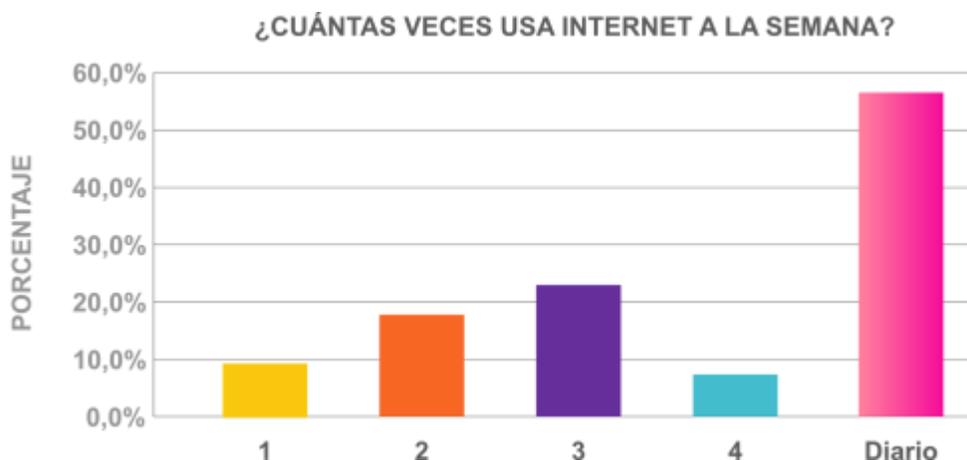
**Graphic 4.** Internet use



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

The participants were asked how many times per week they accessed the Internet (Graphic 5) and 58% reported doing so daily; 20% three times per week; 13% accesses the Internet twice per week; and 9% accesses once per week.

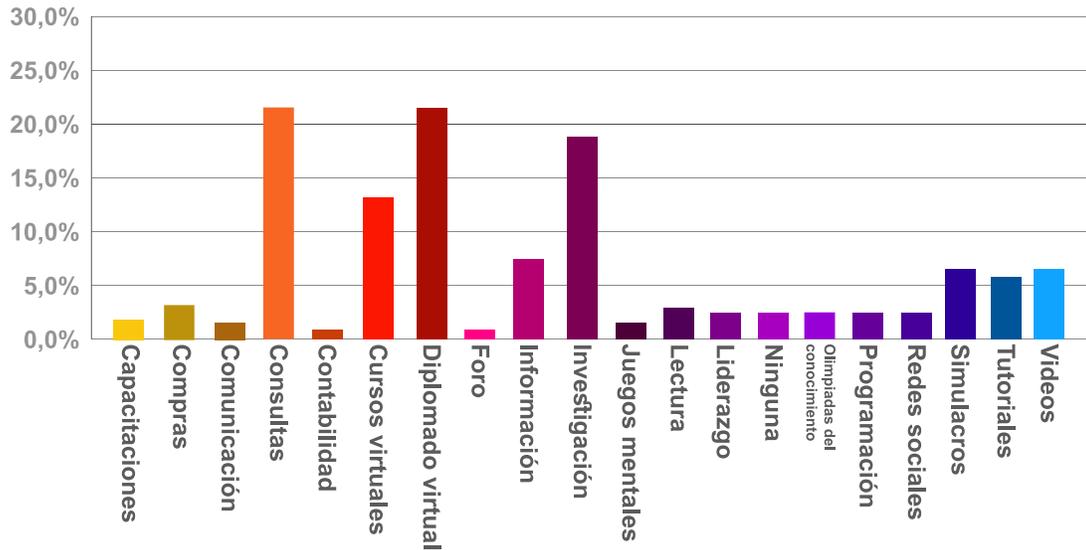
**Graphic 5.** Weekly frequency of Internet use



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

Two open questions were made in which those surveyed provided specific answers and could answer several issues; the first question, what activities that contribute to your education do you conduct on the Internet? (Graphic 6). The most common is that they carry out consultations, virtual courses, diploma courses, or research. It was also found that they access social networks, tutorials, readings, mind games, forums, purchases, or to watch videos.

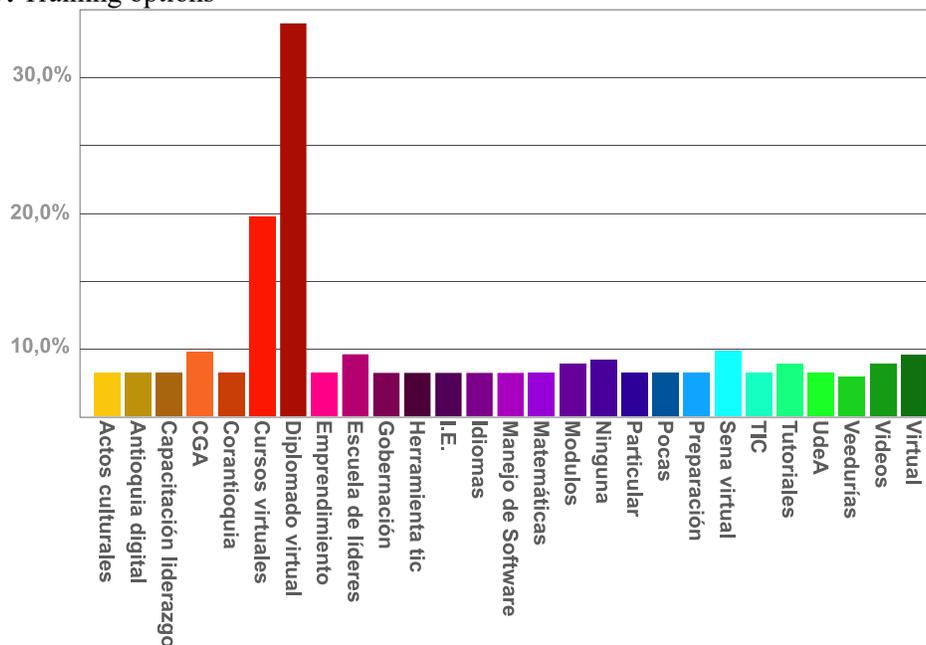
**Graphic 6:** Activities that contribute to their education through the Internet.



**Source:** Elaborated by the authors.

The second question made in open manner was the training options they had (Graphic 7). Most indicated they had the option of taking diploma courses or virtual courses. It was also found that they had training options in the General Comptroller’s office of Antioquia, in the Oversight entities, the Governor’s office and in general training by virtual means.

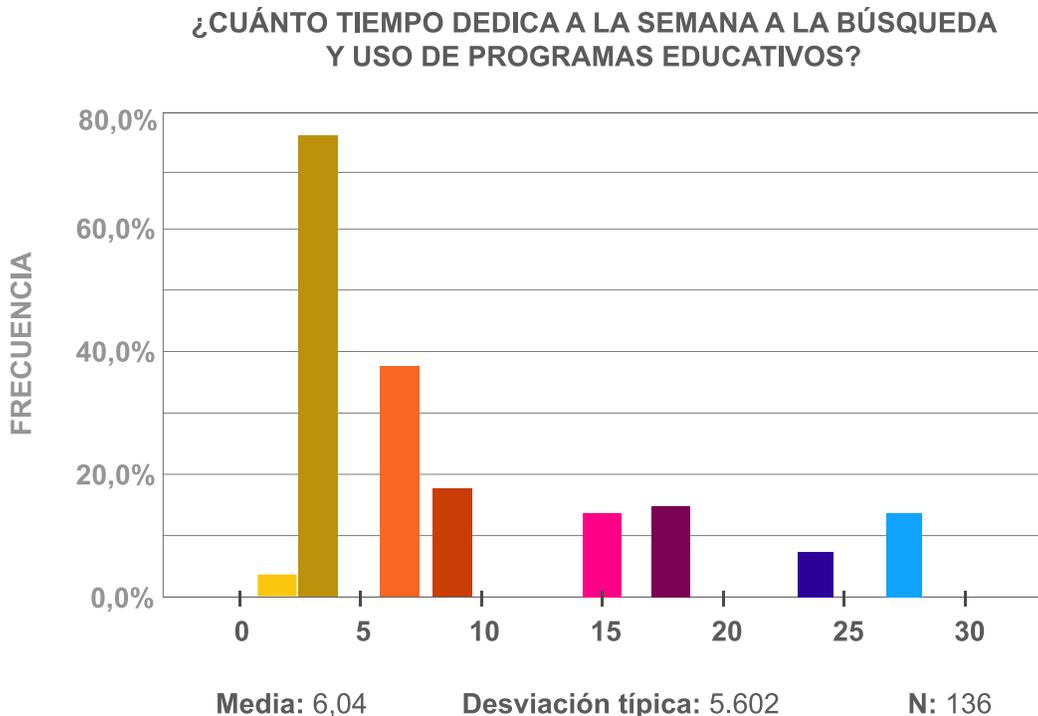
**Graphic 7.** Training options



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

For the variable of dedication per week to searches and use of educational programs (Graphic 8), there is an average of 6.04 hours per week with a deviation of 5 hours; the deviation is high given that nearly 80 participants dedicate between 0 and 5 hours to searches and using educational programs; and the rest are between 5 and 30 hours, hence, great variability among the responses.

**Graphic 8.** Time dedicated per week to searching for educational programs.



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

Table 1 crossed information between the question, do you believe in the efficiency of technological tools for learning and do you believe that virtual education is as efficient as face-to-face education? The result is that the individuals who do not believe in the efficiency of technology for education also do not believe that virtual education virtual is as efficient as face-to-face education. The participants who believe in the efficiency of technologies in learning consider that face-to-face education is much more efficient. In general, regardless of the importance given to technological tools, it is considered that education is much more efficient in person.

**Table 1.** Efficiency of tools

EFICIENCIA DE HERRAMIENTAS TECNOLÓGICAS, EDUCACIÓN VIRTUAL Y PRESENCIAL				
RECuento		¿Cree que la educación virtual es tan eficiente como la presencial?		
		NO	SI	TOTAL
¿Cree en la eficiencia de herramientas tecnológicas para el aprendizaje	NO	3	0	3
	SI	84	49	133
	TOTAL	87	49	136

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Moreover, Table 2 crossed information on computer use and satisfaction of training options, and yielding as a result that 90% of those surveyed have a computer and would like to use it for projects that enhance their knowledge, and are satisfied with the training options to which they have access, which is logical according to the analysis of prior variables: a large percentage has access to computers and most have training options through virtual media.

Table 2. Computer use.

USO DEL COMPUTADOR PARA PROYECTOS - SATISFACCIÓN EN LAS OPCIONES DE CAPACITACIÓN				
RECuento		¿Se siente satisfecho con las opciones de capacitación a las que tiene acceso?		
		NO	SI	TOTAL
¿Cuenta con computador y le gustaría usarlo para proyectos que enriquecen su conocimiento?	NO	4	16	20
	SI	19	97	116
	TOTAL	23	113	136

Source: elaborated by the authors.

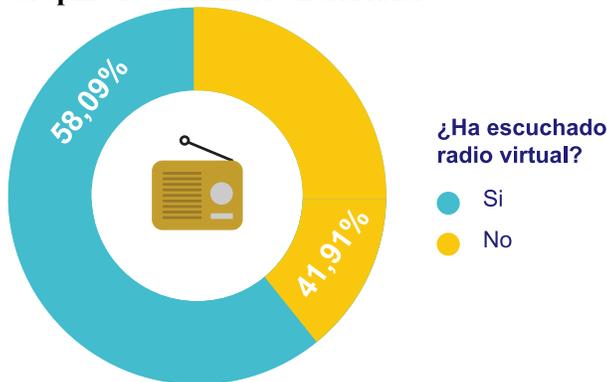
Of the 136 (Graphic 9) surveyed, 86% listens to the radio, 14% does not; 58% listens to the radio through virtual media, 41% does not.

Graphic 9. Listens to the radio



Source: elaborated by the authors.

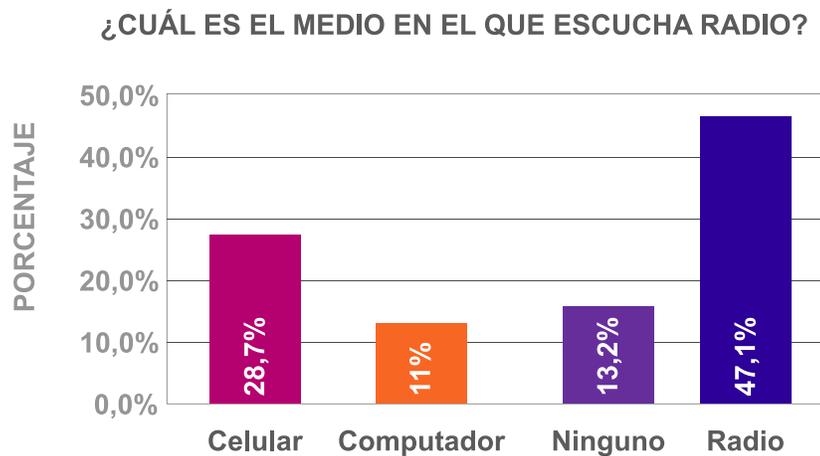
**Graphic 10.** Listens to virtual radio



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

The sample was asked about which medium they use to listen to the radio (Graphic 11); 47% listen to direct broadcast from radios; 28% from their mobile phone; 11% in the computer; and 13.2% do not listen to radio. Of the respondents, 76% indicate that they would be interested in learning to do a radio program, 14% is not interested.

**Graphic 11.** Medium used to listen to radio.



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

**Graphic 12.** Would like to do radio



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

Table 3 crossed the variable access to the Internet and has listened to virtual radio. The results indicate that the majority has access to the Internet and over 50% has listened to virtual radio. Of course, people who do not have easy access to the Internet have not listened to virtual radio either. Of the 113 people who do have access to the Internet, 70 have listened to virtual radio. It is concluded that having access to the Internet is primordial to having access to virtual radio, but, likewise, more promotional means are needed for people to use this more.

**Table 3.** Internet access

TIENE ACCESO A INTERNET - A ESCUCHADO RADIO VIRTUAL				
RECuento		¿Ha escuchado radio virtual?		
		NO	SI	TOTAL
¿Cuenta con acceso a internet?	NO	14	9	23
	SI	43	70	113
	TOTAL	57	79	136

**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

Most of those surveyed are of the opinion that virtual broadcasters are a good information medium and state that they would like to learn to do radio (Table 4). Of those whose opinion is that broadcasters are not a good information medium, most indicate that they would like to do radio, which may be understood as the importance given to broadcasters as information media and how the people would like to improve the information provided by these media.

**Table 4.** Learning and virtuality for information.

LE GUSTARÍA APRENDER A HACER RADIO / CREE QUE LAS EMISORAS VIRTUALES SON UN BUEN MEDIO INFORMATIVO Y EDUCATIVO PARA LOS JÓVENES					
RECuento		¿Cree que las emisoras virtuales son un buen medio informativo y educativo para los jóvenes?			
		NO	SI	ALGUNAS VECES	TOTAL
¿Le gustaría aprender hacer radio?	NO	5	12	1	18
	SI	11	95	12	118
	TOTAL	16	107	13	136

**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

This contingency table (Table 5) crossed the variable, what virtual medium do you consider best and the and the belief in the efficiency of technological tools for learning; the majority believes in the efficiency of technological tools for learning and considers that the most important media are forums and social networks.

**Table 5.** Efficiency of virtual media and tools.

CREE EN LA EFICIENCIA DE HERRAMIENTAS TECNOLÓGICAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE / CUÁL MEDIO VIRTUAL CONSIDERA MEJOR						
RECuento		¿Cuál medio virtual considera mejor?				
		BLOG	FOROS	RADIO	REDES SOCIALES	TOTAL
¿Cree en la eficiencia de herramientas tecnológicas para el aprendizaje?	NO	1	2	0	0	3
	SI	26	40	9	58	133
	TOTAL	27	42	9	58	136

Source: elaborated by the authors.

The study crossed the variables - sex and if they had listened to virtual radio (Table 6) – finding that over 50% of those who had listened to virtual radio are men and over 50% of those who had not listened to virtual radio are women.

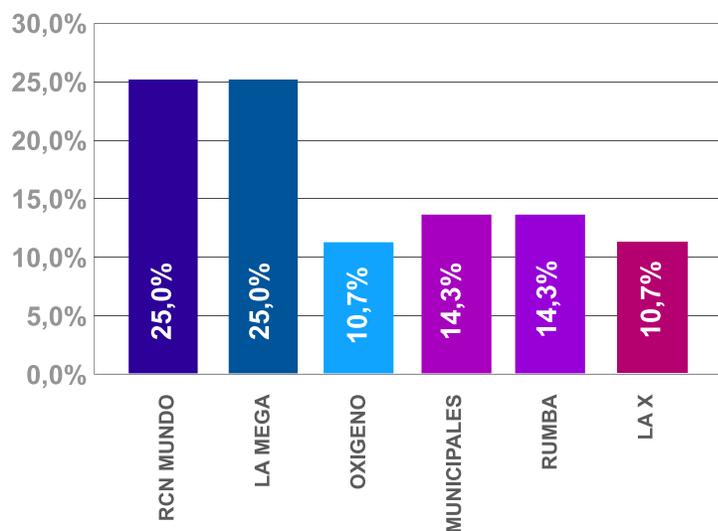
Table 6. Sex / virtual radio.

SEXO - A ESCUCHADO RADIO VIRTUAL				
RECuento		¿Ha escuchado radio virtual?		
		NO	SI	TOTAL
Sexo	F	31	34	65
	M	26	45	71
	TOTAL	57	79	136

Source: elaborated by the authors.

The broadcasters of greatest audience are RCN Mundo, La Mega, and the municipal broadcasters.

Graphic 13. What broadcaster do you listen to?  
¿QUÉ EMISORA ESCUCHA?



**Source:** elaborated by the authors.

## **DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS**

Themes, like accessibility to the Internet, gender, age range, recognition of the platform as part of communication development, adaptability, and appropriation of mobile devices and assimilation of the radio format as possibility of generation in the production of contents by young users, are some of the factors highlighted in the results.

As stated by José María Legorburu Hortelano in his thesis on the usefulness and efficacy of radio communication in the educational process, “a certain capacity is recognized for radio for permanent or continuing education, especially professional collectives. The one that interests us the most is the one that ensures that broadcasting has an evident capacity in the formation of people, both at their earliest age, and when we can already consider them mature or adults”.

Overall, the figures yielded are the following:

- 83% of the young people have Internet access
- 97% consider it easy for computer use
- Most use an Internet service at home
- 86% report listening to broadcasters
- Most use radios or mobile phones to listen to broadcasters
- 80% have access to training through virtual media
- Over 90% believe in the efficiency of technological tools for learning
- 58% have listened to broadcasters via virtual media
- Most consider that virtual broadcasters are a good information medium
- Virtual broadcasters are listened to mostly by men
- The most popular broadcasters are: RCN Mundo, La Mega, Rumba, La X, Oxígeno, and the municipal broadcasters.

Easy access to the Internet became the determinant factor on how the youth conceive the Internet. By having easier access to it, virtual media and the tools integrated into it open a series of options to train, create and offer content to the digital environment, thus, becoming a learning medium.

Virtual media represent a strong potential of communication and greater projection of messages, thanks to social platforms with which the target audiences are involved: social networks, forums, blogs and interaction tools. It is this part where radio gets involved as conducive format to achieve impact with a more accurate message, even integrating mobile devices with their different applications that optimize their operation.

Informative genres merge with the academic and entertainment, factor in accordance with the multiformat and the multiple ways of approaching the Internet. Hence, interest was expressed in participating actively in the contents that the radio format offers.

**Bioethical Criteria** This article adheres to universal principles such as decency, truthfulness, and honesty, fundamental characteristics of professionals in the human and social sciences, and complies with the criteria specific to the disciplinary field.

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