

# **Exploring a New Radio Audience: A Study of Early Adopters of Latino Podcast Media**

*Paper By Alex Avila, Masters Student, Journalism Research And Theory, University of Texas at Austin, College of Communication [avila@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:avila@mail.utexas.edu) March 22, 2007.*

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper began as an audience exploration into early adopters of “podcasting” technology through the journalistic radio program Latino USA, distributed by National Public Radio. An explosion in use of this new media has changed the way radio networks distribute programming, yet little research in communications has been done about the audience. This research paper suggests that heavy use podcast audiences are abandoning CDs, listening to less traditional radio, and watching less television. Problematic areas in researching digital media audiences are identified. The paper suggests the creation of an Arbitron-esque “online diary” for more accurate digital audience measurement and research.

## **INTRODUCTION**

On September 9, 2005, listeners to the public radio program Latino USA heard the following seven-second announcement for the first time: “For the podcast of Latino USA, go to [latinousa.org](http://latinousa.org), or look for us on iTunes.” This short announcement by program host Maria Hinojosa encouraged listeners to download a digital sound file of the program for their personal use. In reality, digital sound files of Latino USA programs had been available for Internet download since

March 1999, but this was not publicly known. Digital downloading of the program was originally meant to be an alternative distribution source for public radio stations that missed the satellite feed of the show, not as a means of direct distribution to the public. But the increasing popularity of podcasting, the digital downloading of sound and video files for personal use on a computer or portable player, made this conversion inevitable. Because the technology involved was simple, the decision to launch a podcast was easy for the program producers.

Latino USA is syndicated to about 200 radio stations nationwide. National Public Radio distributes the program for a fee to more than 130 member stations and classifies it as an “acquired program,” but Latino USA is produced as an independent journalistic endeavor at NPR member-station KUT in Texas. (The bulk of the remaining stations are mainly rural operations affiliated with the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.) The producers have editorial independence but are also self-reliant for their marketing and programming decisions. Like many national radio programs, Latino USA was caught up in the podcasting phenomenon that emerged in late 2004 and exploded throughout 2005 and beyond.

In the first four weeks after the launch of Latino USA’s podcast, approximately 1,000 subscribers signed up for the free Internet downloads. Excitement over what was termed a “successful” podcast launch, however, soon gave way to confusion on the part of the programs producers (which includes this researcher). They began asking basic questions: Who were these podcast listeners? Where across the country or world were they located? Why do they use

the podcast option and how do they use it? Does their podcast use affect their traditional radio listening habits at all? These basic questions regarding a newly created digital media audience are not limited to the world of podcasts. Similar questions could be applied to blogosphere audiences, online streaming audiences, and other forms of digital media. The general lack of knowledge about what some communication scholars have termed new (or digital) media begged for research into these audiences.

While there are those who believe that the podcasting craze could be a passing fad, others believe podcasting may change the nature of radio broadcasting. In July 2006, Nielsen/NetRatings reported that 6.6 percent of the U.S. adult online population, or 9.2 million Web users, had recently downloaded an audio podcast, putting podcasting on par with those who publish blogs or engage in online dating (Nielsen, 2006). This makes podcasting an issue worthy of observation and study, particularly if it turns out to be a major innovation. In fact, in its “Annual Report on American Journalism” by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, the overview chapter includes this thought: “The transformation facing journalism is epochal, as momentous as the invention of television or the telegraph, perhaps on the order of the printing press itself. The effect is more than just audiences migrating to new delivery systems. Technology is redefining the role of the citizen — endowing the individual with more responsibility and command over how he or she consumes information — and that new role is only beginning to be understood (Project for Excellence, 2007).”

## DEFINITIONS

Due to the newness of the technology it may be helpful to define some terms related to podcasting and explain some of its technical nature.

*PODCAST:* A podcast is a converged medium that combines audio (or video), the Internet, and portable media devices. The term is linked to Apple Computers™ because of its association with the iPod™ media player, but, in fact, podcasts can be accessed and played by any variety of generic media devices and personal computers. The term refers to any audio content downloaded from the Internet either manually or automatically via software for personal use. The term is misleading because a podcast is neither broadcast nor actually requires an iPod. Other terms are “audioblogging” and “blogcasting” (Berry, 2005: 144).

*IPOD:* The iPod™ is a personal audio player introduced by Apple Computers™ in 2001 using digital audio technology known as mp3, a compressed, stereo-quality sound file that is easy to download from the Internet. A misconception lingers that an iPod is needed to engage in podcasting, when only a computer with Internet access will suffice.

*RSS:* Rich Site Summary, also known as Really Simple Syndication, is an XML program for sharing Internet content from a variety of websites. RSS allows online sharing and publishing of information onto websites automatically. It is the technology driving blogs, headlines and syndicated content onto news feed readers and bloglines, and audio blogs known as podcasts (Bhatt, 2005: 28).

*BLOG*: A blog or weblog is a website consisting of frequently updated entries. It's generally arranged in chronological order and can be viewed and shared with a large number of people in a short amount of time (Bhatt, 2005: 28).

## **HISTORY**

Apple Computers™ introduced the iPod™ in October 2001. The first unit was a 5-gigabyte portable device that could hold up to 1000 songs in digital mp3 audio format that retailed for \$399 (Apple, 2001). By the end of 2006, the fifth-generation, top-of-the-line iPod had 80-gigabytes of storage, held some 20,000 songs (or up to 100 hours of video) and retailed for \$249 (Apple, 2006a). Two years after Apple's initial launch iPod sales could be measured in the hundreds of thousands. More recently, Apple Computers reported that some 39 million iPods were sold worldwide in fiscal year 2006 alone, which ended in September (Apple, 2006b) and the iPod controlled about 75 percent of the portable mp3 player market (Apple, 2006c). As a product innovation, the iPod arguably rivals the Sony Walkman, which eventually sold some 100 million worldwide units per year, spawned an industry of imitators, and solidified analog audiocassette technology as the industry standard for nearly two decades (Ratazzi, 2004: 3).

When iPod sales hit the million-unit mark in 2004, the iPod spawned an unexpected development that came to be known as podcasting. The so-called "podfathers" are reported to be software pioneer Dave Winer and former MTV vee-jay Adam Curry. It was Winer who in 2004 adapted RSS technology, popular within the blogosphere, to handle audio files. Curry, an early adopter of the iPod,

taught himself Applescript (a simple program writing script from Apple Computers) and created a program to identify mp3 files on RSS feeds. His program would download the files automatically to his computer, prepare them to be played by the iTunes™ software installed on his Apple Computer, and transfer them to his iPod. Curry made his software available to open source programmers who improved it and led to the creation of websites like ipodder.com and jpodder.com, allowing the podcast explosion to take off (Crofts, 2005).

By June 2005, Apple Computers joined the wave of what they inadvertently created by adding podcasts directly into its iTunes software and website. As of November 2006, iTunes boasted some 65,000 free podcasts and 3.5 million songs available either for free or paid download along with 20,000 audio books, 5,000 music videos, and 250 television shows (Apple, 2006d).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature directly regarding podcasting is understandably limited by the newness of the concept and practice of the phenomenon. Most of the early books on podcasting focused on how to produce a podcast. Reliable information directly related to the podcast audience has been lacking.

One study that focuses on a related audience is a grant report for the National Association of Broadcasters written in June 2005 by Constance Ledoux Book and Don A Grady. The report is titled, "Consumer Adoption of New Radio Distribution Systems," and focuses largely on emerging satellite radio. Using Roger's diffusion of innovations theory, Book & Grady profiled innovators and

early adopters of satellite radio in focus groups and found they fit a demographic consistent with most early users of new technology as defined by Rogers. The great majority (91 percent) was male, largely young (51 percent between the ages of 18 and 35), white (90 percent), educated (53 percent held a college degree), and most are from households that made more than \$80,000 a year. Book & Grady found that old technology doesn't die off with the introduction of new technology suggesting little threat to traditional radio (Book&Grady, 2005). While the information in the NAB Report is revealing, satellite radio is viewed as in competition with podcasting for audiences within public radio spheres (Glaser, 2005) and it's not clear if adoption by the podcast audience breaks down along similar lines.

Early attempts to gather information about the podcast audience have been unscientific at best. The online magazine *www.TNCNewMedia.com* conducted an unscientific web poll about podcast users and reported the following: 79 percent are male; 84 percent have high speed Internet access; the average age is between 28-40; the average household annual income is \$81,100; 88 percent have a college degree; 88 percent are also homeowners; and 99 percent own a portable listening device such as an mp3 player or iPod (Bourquin, 2005). In an October 25, 2005 email to this researcher, TNC New Media founder and current CEO Tim Bourquin said he's, "not sure if this represents podcast listeners in general but perhaps it does." On the surface the numbers appear consistent with those often seen in diffusion theory examples of early adopters and innovators.

Similar information was found in a web survey by WTMD, a small radio station in Baltimore. Again, the researchers felt compelled to qualify the data. In a November 10, 2005 email, WTMD General Manager Stephen Yasko wrote: “This was not a statistically accurate survey by any means.” This survey found their audience doesn’t subscribe to many podcasts, and those who subscribe to five or more podcast programs don’t generally listen to them all (Yasko, 2005).

Several research groups have attempted to establish the podcast audience size. The Pew Internet & American Life Project puts the number at six million (Rainie, 2005) while eMarketer puts the number at three million (Didwania, 2006). Pew’s report is based on iTunes data and iPod marketing information but eMarketer has released no information on how it arrived at audience figures.

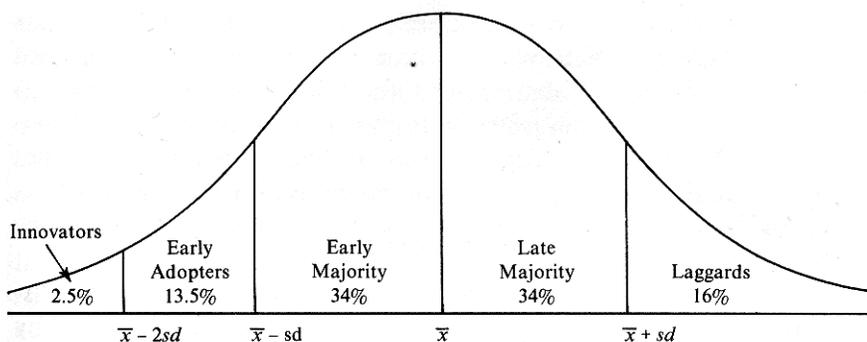
A recent *New York Times* survey tried to examine the audience for political blogs, a separate but similar audience (by their digital nature) to podcasts. The poll revealed that a majority of American adults (58 percent) had never visited a political blog. And the great majority of those who have visited a blog site did so only occasionally or rarely. The number of Americans who regularly visited political blog sites was about 4 percent of the adult population. The poll found that the typical regular visitor for political blogs was an under 30 college-graduate male who planned to vote in the 2008 election (Connelly, 2007). Definitive descriptions about podcasting audiences have yet to emerge.

## **THEORETICAL LINKS**

### *DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS*

Sociologist Everett M. Rogers first outlined his diffusion of innovations theory in 1962 and developed it in his third edition in 1983. Over time, Rogers' theory has withstood rigorous academic scrutiny. Rogers described diffusion as a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Rogers, 1983: 10). As innovations are diffused, the consumers (or adopters) of this innovation can be identified. Rogers categorized those who adopted the innovation into the following: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. When plotted over time, the innovation, and the described adopters, follow a predictable bell curve (seen in Graphic 1 below). Based on a 1940s case of an innovation (hybrid corn) adopted by Iowa farmers, Rogers defined his now well-known adopter categories (Rogers, 1962: 162). This graphic is often presented as an S-curve when comparing units sold over time.

Graphic 1: Innovativeness and Adopter Categories Based on Time of Adoption



SOURCE: Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (1983) p. 247.

Applying Rogers' model to the Apple iPod, the innovators came when the original product was launched in late October 2001. Initial sales were so low that individual iPod sales were not counted in the company's quarterly statements until Apple's fourth quarter 2003, when 336,000 individual iPod units were reportedly sold for the three-month period that ended in September (Apple, 2003). Since this is the earliest time that the company reported unit sales, we will call this date the end of the innovator phase of the iPod and the beginning of the early adopter phase. Sales of the iPod for the 2004 Christmas season topped 4.5 million (Apple, 2005), perhaps signaling the end of the early adopter phase and the beginning of the early majority phase. With 39 million individual iPod units sold in fiscal year 2006, not including another 21 million units sold during the 2006 Christmas season (Apple, 2007), only time will tell when the early majority phase ends and the late majority phase begins. The laggards phase remains in the far future.

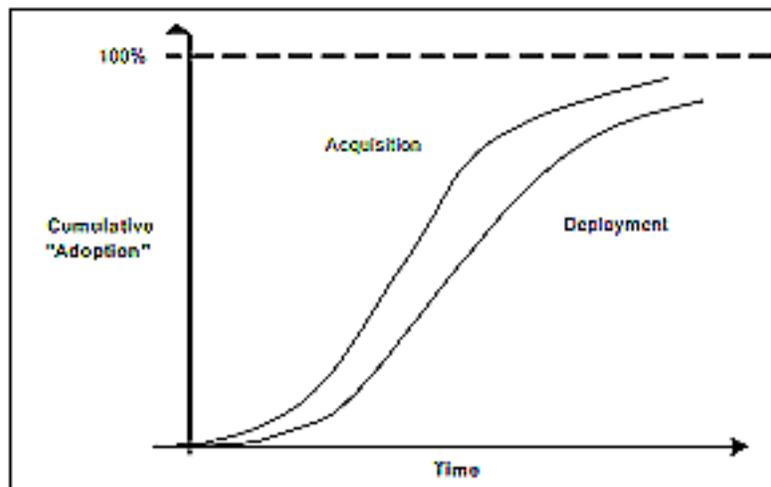
But the diffusion and adoption of the iPod, and by extension all portable mp3 players, is only half of the issue at hand. Recall that the iPod resulted in the unintended development of podcasting. And while it's almost impossible to properly use an iPod without a computer connection, it's totally possible to access a podcast without an iPod or other mp3 player. The evidence suggests that in 2004 less than a thousand Podcasts were available for free download; between three and five thousand were available in mid-2005; and at the beginning of 2007 (the date of this writing), upwards of 100,000 free Podcasts could be available online. So podcasting has its own diffusion trajectory separate from the iPod.

### ASSIMILATION GAP THEORY

Robert G. Fichman's and Chris F. Kemerer's assimilation gap argument contends that just because someone buys a product doesn't mean he or she uses it. Fichman & Kemerer were concerned about the differences between the acquisition and the actual deployment of innovations. Using the example of business software for medium to large companies, Fichman & Kemerer asserted that for some technologies, the use of cumulative acquisition (raw sales) can present an illusionary diffusion picture that can lead to incorrect assessments about the true diffusion nature of the innovation being observed (Fichman & Kemerer, 1999: 258).

Normally, the gap between product acquisition and its deployment are close and parallel, as seen in Graphic 2.

Graphic 2: Diffusion Curves for Alternative Definition of "Adopter."

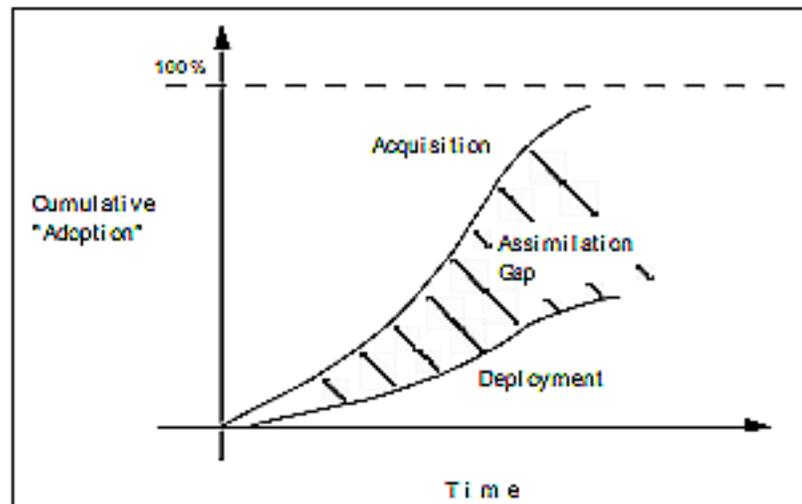


SOURCE: Fichman & Kemerer (1999) p. 257.

Focusing on the diffusion of software in 1987, John A. Norton and Frank M. Bass theorized that new technologies open markets not before seen and successive generations of the new technology allow early adopters to abandon older versions of the technology in favor of new ones. This compels new adopters to adopt the newer technology without regard to the older version and with short intervals between technological diffusions; the earlier technology may continue to diffuse, even as the substitution process is taking place (Norton & Bass, 1987: 1069).

But, according to Fichman & Kemerer, in cases where there is a widening gulf between acquisition and actual deployment, there is a widening assimilation gap as shown in Graphic 3 below.

Graphic 3: Growing Assimilation Gap Model



SOURCE: Fichman & Kemerer (1999) p. 258.

## MEDIA SUBSTITUTION

The concept of media substitution is not new although the opportunities in a digital media-saturated world seem to make it more relevant. M. E. McCombs first published media substitution as a concept using economic arguments in 1972. Media substitution works from the premise that as media competes for audience, winners and losers emerge (McCombs, 1972). Over the years, others have examined the concept that there are only 24 hours in a day and only seven days in a week. And if media consumption is rising in one area, it must logically be diminishing in another. In their work on new (Internet) media, Barbara K. Kaye and Thomas J. Johnson examined a more formal media substitution hypothesis. At the time of their research in 2002, Kaye & Johnson found Internet use had not yet significantly affected traditional media consumption overall but their data indicated that individual heavy Internet users were, indeed, spending less time with traditional broadcast media like television (Kaye & Johnson, 2003: 260).

### *USES & GRATIFICATIONS*

Social science approaches to consumer choices in media from the 1940s and 50s and again in the 1970s has led to what has been described as the uses and gratifications approach to media consumption. The concept is based on the notion that consumers choose a particular medium because it gratifies a need or want. With the rise of digital media, the uses and gratifications appears to be *en vogue* again as a social-psychological explanation for the adoption of new media by consumers. In 1972 Katz et. al. explained that the bulk of work in uses and gratifications included five elements: One, that the audience is active and their

choices regarding mass media consumption are goal-oriented; two, that the audience members media choices are motivated by needs gratification; three, that the media competes with other sources of needs gratification; four, that audience members can identify their motivations for choosing their media uses; and five, that audience members explore their media choices independently of other cultural and societal pressures (Katz, 1973: 511).

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

Inspired by the experience of Latino USA producers and the general lack of literature regarding the podcast audience, an exploratory study was designed to answer a series of research questions.

RQ1: Who is downloading the podcast? How does the podcast audience compare to the traditional radio audience of the program?

RQ2: Where geographically are podcast listeners located? Are they focused around major markets or spread out across the country?

RQ3: Why do they subscribe to an online podcast when a radio broadcast and online streaming is already available?

RQ4: Do audience members actually listen to the podcasts that they download?

### **METHOD**

To examine these questions a web-based survey was produced. Listeners who downloaded the Latino USA podcast from late November 2005 to early

January 2006 were recruited to participate in the survey by going to the Latino USA website and clicking on a link. A 12-second “call out” at the beginning and end of the podcast invited listeners to access the online web-survey. According to internal NPR sources, there were 9,190 downloads of the Latino USA podcast in December 2005 (Akamai, 2006) for an average of 1,835 per weekly episode. In total, 143 people successfully completed the survey. Among those who took the survey, 25 indicated they had never downloaded a podcast, suggesting they found the survey link while browsing the Latino USA website. This left a valid sample of 118 self-selected respondents, representing 6.43 percent of the average weekly podcast downloads for the month of December. Unfortunately this does not appear to be a large enough response rate to extrapolate reliable, large-scale conclusions about the greater podcast audience. (An analysis of audience size will be explored more in depth in the discussion section of this research paper.) However, due to a dearth of information of this new technology, the research was conducted nonetheless.

The survey asked podcast listeners 43 questions about their use of podcasts, other media consumption, and demographic information. Because of the exploratory nature of the survey, many of the questions were open-ended. The online PHP Surveyor of a university in the southwest was used for the survey. In what engineers called “a bug,” some of the demographic information regarding gender failed to be recorded, despite being a required question. Some of that information was recovered when, as part of the last question of the survey, responders were invited to leave an email address for potential follow-up study.

Some 80 working email addresses for responders who did not record the gender information were contacted, and 42 responded. Only half of all responders could be identified by gender. (With a 2-to-1 ratio favoring males over females.)

The responses of the open-ended questions was coded and collapsed into popular responses or themes for analysis. In order to answer RQ1, regular demographic information was asked and compared to the national radio audience for Latino USA as described by Arbitron. A recent audience snapshot for Latino USA revealed the syndicated program was carried on 132 NPR stations nationwide with a total audience of 320,000 listeners. Although only 12 percent of the radio listening audience is Hispanic and 11 percent Black (Arbitron, 2005), these numbers are high for a National Public Radio audience, which is overwhelmingly (83 percent) white (NPR, 2006). Also, 42 percent of the Latino USA radio audience is aged 55 or higher and 21 percent aged 45 to 54 (Arbitron, 2005). Latino USA is also distributed on CD by mail to 52 stations that are members of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. No audience information is available from these mainly rural stations.

Survey takers were asked to enter their five-digit zip code for demographic purposes. This was an attempt to answer RQ2, which asked where podcast listeners lived. Roughly 7 percent of respondents indicated they lived outside of the U.S.

An open-ended question in the survey asked responders what is the “main reason” they subscribe to podcasts. This was an attempt to answer RQ3, which focuses on the reason why respondents used the podcast rather than listening to

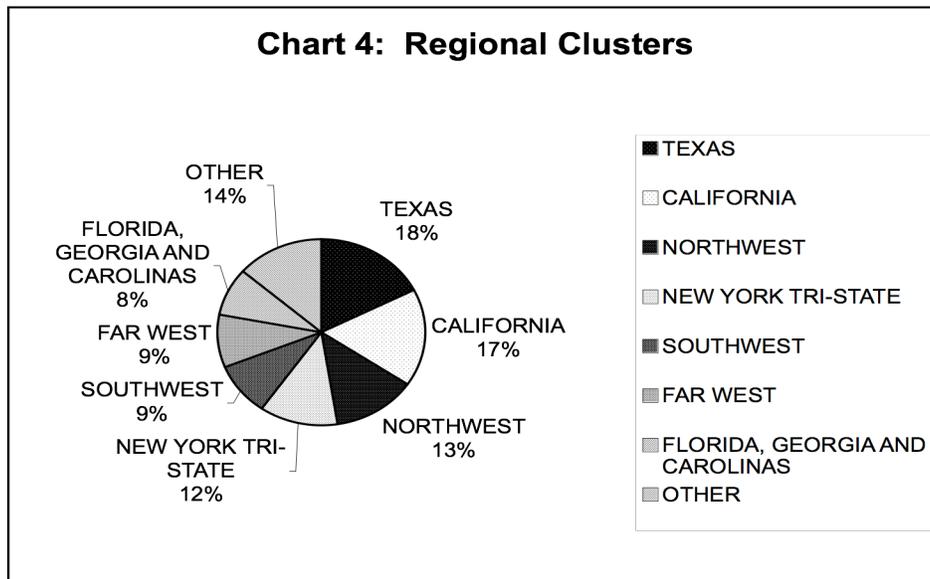
the radio broadcast or online streaming. The responses were later coded into consistent themes: Convenience, Information, Interest, Quality, and Other. These themes were not pre-selected but emerged naturally from the open-ended responses.

Several questions dealt with the question of how involved the audience is in podcasting (RQ4). First, an open-ended question asked how many different podcast programs responders received through subscription. Because a podcast subscription automatically sends new episodes electronically, the Latino USA podcast survey asked what percent of the podcast episodes do individuals actually take the time to listen. The answers were coded using the following value labels: 0-19 percent; 20-39 percent; 40-59 percent; 60-79 percent; and 80-100 percent. Another question asked if listeners were more interested in the entire Latino USA program or simply one or two segments within the half hour program.

## **RESULTS**

In terms of RQ1, 56 percent of those who took the survey self-identified as Latino/Hispanic/Caribbean or of South American heritage; 34 percent identified themselves as white; and only 4 percent Black. This contrasts to 12 percent Hispanics listening to the radio broadcast (Arbitron, 2005). In total 76 percent of those polled had a bachelor's degree or higher; 36 percent made more than \$75,000 a year, and another 36 percent made between \$35,000 up to \$75,000. When separated into age groups, 57 percent were aged between 25 and 44, 30 percent were over the age of 45, and 13 percent were under age 24.

To determine where the podcast audience was located (RQ2) there were 131 responses and 131 different zip codes from across the country. As seen in Chart 4 below, the data revealed the majority lived in the West and Southwest, with pockets in population centers in the New York, Chicago, and Florida/Georgia regions. The location of the audience was similar to that of the traditional radio audience.



Out of 131 Valid Responses.

RQ3 tries to determine why people choose to download the podcast rather than simply listen to the radio broadcast or stream online. Out of 115 valid, open-ended responses, almost three-fifths, 57 percent, indicated some sort of “convenience”-related reason as their first response. The other responses were “Staying Informed” with 12 percent; “Interest” at 11 percent; “Quality” of the podcast at 10 percent; and “Other” at 10 percent.

RQ4 seeks to know how involved the podcast audience is with podcasting. To the open question of how many podcasts do they subscribe to, valid responses ranged from a low of zero to a high of 61. The mean was 10.76 podcast programs. Out of 117 valid responses, 68 percent said they listen to between 80 and 100 percent of all the podcast episodes to which they subscribe. When specifically mentioning Latino USA, 88 percent of the responders reported they are more interested in the entire program rather than simply one or two segments.

## **DISCUSSION**

The low audience response rate questions not only the validity of these results but to a larger extent questions the true nature of the podcast audience. At present, podcast audience is measured by tracking downloads. But in truth, someone who downloads a podcast is merely a *potential* audience member.

### **THE PODCAST ASSIMILATION GAP**

To date, there is little evidence that would lead researchers to conclude that there is an assimilation gap of significance related to the *iPod* and mp3 player digital revolution. Sales have continued unabated, early adopters are buying newer, more improved versions of the innovation as they are released, and new adopters are buying the new products without regard to the older versions. Such a description, in fact, is an almost textbook description of the diffusion theory model of adoption and substitution advocated by Norton & Bass.

The potential assimilation gap for the *podcast* innovation may prove interesting if the audience is properly studied and proven to truly exist *en masse*. Bearing in mind that a podcast can be downloaded automatically by a computer using RSS technology, there could very well be a gap between podcast downloads and actual listening. And there is anecdotal evidence that it is occurring. A recent Pew Internet & American Life Project study asked if Internet users had ever downloaded a podcast. But the act of podcast downloading is clearly not a daily event for most (Madden, 2006). Questions remain whether podcast downloads are listened on the computer, on an iPod, or not at all. Currently, the data suggests that the assimilation gap for iPods (player sales) seems in line with Graphic 2 (p. 11), but the Assimilation Gap for podcasting (program listening) could be more like Graphic 3 (p. 12).

Overall, the low rate of response to our online survey suggests an assimilation gap theoretical approach. Although the weekly average during the tested time was 1,835 podcast downloads, there could have been an extremely low rate of those who actually heard the download thereby explaining the extremely low rate of return on the podcast survey. In which case, this research measures only those heavy podcast listeners.

#### MEDIA SUBSTITUTION

But among those hardcore listeners this research suggests that media substitution is occurring within both the iPod community and heavy podcast users. iPod owners reported listening less to broadcast radio (36 percent), buying fewer

or listening less to CDs (62 percent), and watching less television (36 percent) since purchasing their mp3 player as seen in Table 5 below. (The data suggests about one-fifth of heavy Latino USA podcast listeners only use a computer.)

**TABLE 5: Media Usage Since Buying MP3 Players Among (Heavy) Podcast Listeners of NPR's Latino USA.**

MEDIUM	MORE	LESS	SAME	UNSURE
RADIO	16	<b>36</b>	45	3
CD	7	<b>62</b>	24	7
AUDIO BOOKS	<b>28</b>	10	14	48
AUD. STREAM	30	32	30	8
TELEVISION	3	<b>36</b>	48	13
NEWSPAPER	13	17	<b>66</b>	5
(Cases)	(87)			

(Presented in Valid Percentages.)

The research shows that, among the heaviest podcast listeners with mp3 players, iPod sales are affecting traditional media and CD sales and that podcasting is affecting both broadcast radio listening and CD sales as well. Media substitution occurring at present should have relatively small overall effects, but CD technology, which replaced analog audiocassette technology as the industry standard in the 1990s, has given up its industry standard status over to digital media. Clearly, further research on media substitution surrounding podcasting and mp3 player usage is desperately needed to get a clear picture of the current and future impact these innovations will eventually have on society.

## CONCLUSIONS

The small sample size of this survey, the low rate of return, the fact that it is not random, and the narrow focus on a singular ethnic program all combine to limit the opportunity for generalizations to be made to podcasting audiences at large, or even Latino podcast audiences specifically. Given these limitations, it's problematic to assume that 56 percent of the Latino USA podcast audience is Latino. More likely, the data reflects that Latinos were more willing to take the podcast poll. Still, this survey provides insight into the world of podcasting and pushes our collective knowledge of this audience forward, although more (and better) research is needed.

*RQ1: Who is downloading the podcast? How does the podcast audience compare to the traditional radio audience of the program?* The audience comparisons are stark contrasts. By public radio standards, Latino USA's minority audience of 23% makes it one of the highest rated NPR programs with such an audience diversity, yet those combined groups make up 60 percent of the same programs podcast audience. Not surprisingly, the podcast audience is younger than the radio audience. The data shows that 70 percent of the podcast audience is under the age of 45. By contrast, 63 percent of the radio audience is age 45 and above (Arbitron, 2005). So the research suggests that the Latino USA podcast audience is made up of younger, more ethnic public radio listeners.

*RQ2: Where geographically are podcast listeners located? Are they focused around major markets or spread out across the country?* Clearly the majority of heavy podcast listeners live from Texas to California. Clusters in other

parts of the country can also be identified. This does not significantly differ from trends seen in the radio broadcast.

*RQ3: Why do they subscribe to an online podcast when a radio broadcast and online streaming is already available?* It is not surprising that 57 percent of the podcast audience wrote in some form of “convenience”-related answer to the open-ended question as the main reason for subscribing to a podcast. On-demand radio programming is one of the appeals of podcasting.

*RQ4: Do audience members actually listen to the podcasts that they download?* The research refutes the unscientific web poll of WTMD in Baltimore that found that the podcast audience doesn’t subscribe to many podcast programs and those who do, especially the “heavy users,” fast-forward through the programs and don’t listen to them in their entirety. The data from the Latino USA surveys shows the audience subscribes to a high number of podcasts and they generally listen to the entire program. The data in this case suggests the emergence of a new radio audience. But this begs the questions, to what extent is their consumption of other media being affected? Here is where public radio producers and broadcast advertisers need to focus further research.

Our small sample documents media substitution is happening specifically in terms of less broadcast media – both radio and television – and significantly less CD listening as a result of the podcasting fad. But there are indications that podcasting is not a passing fad. What has fueled the podcasting market continues to be the success of the Apple iPod. Much like Xerox at one time made its brand synonymous with photocopying, iPod is making its brand name synonymous with

mp3 players. It was perhaps a marketing stroke of genius for the iPod when “podcast” was the “2005 Word of the Year” by the New Oxford Dictionary in December (PRNewswire, 2005). Along with iTunes, the web-based portal that makes both free and paid downloads available for iPods and computers, the distribution system has clearly been established. And according to the Advertising Research Foundation, 27 percent of 12-17 year-olds also own iPods or some other form of mp3 player (ARF, 2006). The Pew Internet & American Life Project in April 2005 reported that 29% of iPod/mp3 owners have downloaded a podcast (Rainie, 2005). Most people purchase iPods to hear music and eliminate the need to carry music CDs. But to what extent iPod users have become loyal podcast audience members is not at all clear. Also, it remains unknown how many computer owners without iPods or mp3 players subscribe to podcasts. And the recent introduction announcement of the iPhone is a clear statement that Apple intends to maintain its dominance in the mp3 player market even as cell phones add mp3 capabilities to their technology. These are all areas requiring further study.

In its Annual Report on the State of News Media, the Project for Excellent in Journalism noted that the use of iPods, portable podcasting, satellite signals, digital HD radio, Internet streaming, and even phones as music-listening devices all grew and there were further signs that these new technologies were beginning to have an impact on traditional radio, from audience behavior and economics to transforming the ownership and strategy of the industry and altering the projections for the future. For the moment, the audience size of traditional

terrestrial radio is stable, but it's beginning to ebb (Project for Excellence, 2007). The true digital media audience size is not really known but probably remains small. Yet the future implications themselves are anything but small.

As a result of the information found in this research, future surveys with more focused questions and fewer open-ended responses can now be designed and potential trends better examined. A shorter, quicker survey of the Latino USA podcast audience will take place in Summer 2007 to follow up on suggested areas of study. Its brevity should be more focused on the research areas and allow for a better response rate. In the final analysis, however, to better understand the true size and nature of the podcast audience overall, a better system of national podcast (and blog, and streaming) audience measure is needed. Instead of computer downloads, some type of net diary system, similar to Arbitron's audio diary system for radio audience measurement, needs to be developed and implemented.

#### REFERENCES:

- ARF Factspot 1.2, (2006) "New Radio or Passing iFad?" [www.arfsite.org](http://www.arfsite.org).
- Akamai (2006), "IBM Surfaid Analytics and NPR," *Internal NPR document (Confidential memo dated 1/2006)*.
- Apple Computer, 2001, "Apple Presents iPod," (23 October, 2001), <downloaded 11/15/2006> available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2001/oct/23ipod.html>.
- Apple Computer, 2003, "Apple Reports Fourth Quarter Results: Revenues Increase by 19 percent," 10/15/2003, <downloaded 11/15/2006> available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2003/oct/15results.html>.
- Apple Computer, 2005, "Apple Computer, Inc.: Q105 Unaudited Summary

Data,” <downloaded 11/15/2006> available at [http://images.apple.com/pr/pdf/q105data\\_sum.pdf](http://images.apple.com/pr/pdf/q105data_sum.pdf).

Apple Computer, 2006a, <downloaded 11/17/2006> <http://www.apple.com/ipod/ipod.html>.

Apple Computer, 2006b, “Apple Reports Preliminary Fourth Quarter Results,” <downloaded 11/17/2006> available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/oct/18results.html>.

Apple Computer, 2006c, “Apple Reports Third Quarter Results,” <downloaded 11/17/2006> available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/jul/19results.html>.

Apple Computer, 2006d, “Apple Announce iTunes Latino on the iTunes Store, (11/1/2006) <downloaded 11/17/2006> and available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/nov/01ituneslatino.html>.

Apple Computer, 2007, “Apple Reports First Quarter Results: Revenue Exceeds \$7 Billion; Record Profit of \$1 Billion,” (1/17/2007) <downloaded 2/28/2007> available at <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2007/01/17results.html>.

Arbitron (Spring 2005), “Arbitron Nationwide/ACT 1, Spring 2005,” *NPR Snapshot*, p.25.

Berry, Richard, (2005) “Will the iPod Kill the Radio Star? Profiling Podcasting as Radio,” *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, (2005) vol 12(2), pps. 143-162.

Bhatt, Jay, (2005) “Blogging as a Tool: Innovative Approaches to Information Access,” *Library Hi Tech News*, No. 9, 2005, pp. 28-32.

Book, Constance Ledoux & Grady, Don A., (June 2005) “Consumer Adoption of New Radio Distribution Systems,” *NAB Grant Report*, pp. 1-46.

Bourquin, Tim (October 2005) “RE: Podcasting,” private email to [avila@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:avila@mail.utexas.edu) dated October 25, 2005.

Crofts, Sheri; (2005) Dilley, Jon; Fox, Mark A.; Retsema, Andrew; & Williams, Bob; “Podcasting: A New Technology in Search of Viable Business Models,” *Article developed from a project completed for the MBA’s capstone Business Policy course at Indiana University South Bend taught by Mark Fox, Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship at Indiana University South Bend.* <downloaded 11/5/2006> available at: [http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue10\\_9/crofts/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_9/crofts/index.html).

Connelly, Marjorie (2007) "Blog Poll," *New York Times*, March 12, 2007, <downloaded 3/14/2007> available at <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/03/12/blog-poll/?ex=1174449600&en=9b873053970761c7&ei=5070&emc=eta1>.

Didwania, Sakshi, (2006) "Podcast Audience Survey," *eMarketer*, <downloaded 10/14/2006> (<http://www.imediaconnection.com/news/8452.asp>) 3/1/2006.

Fichman, Robert G., & Kemerer, Chris F., (1999) "The Illusionary Diffusion of Innovation: An Examination of Assimilation Gaps," *Information Systems Research*, 1999, Vol. 10, Issue 3, pp. 255-275.

Glaser, Marc (2005), "Will NPR's podcasts birth a new business model for public radio?" *Online Journalism Review*, November 29, 2005, <downloaded 11/14/2005> (<http://www.ojr.org/ojr/stories/051129glaser/>).

Katz, Elihu, (1973) Blumler, Jay G., & Gurevitch, Michael, "Uses and Gratifications Research," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Winter 1973-74) pp. 509 – 523.

Kaye, Barbara K. and Johnson, Thomas J. (2003), "From here to obscurity?: Media substitution theory and traditional media in an on-line world," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, Volume 54, Issue 3, 2003. pps. 260-273.

Madden, Mary, "Reports: Internet Penetration and Impact," Pew Internet & American Life Project, 4/26/2006 <downloaded 11/5/2006> available at [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Internet\\_Impact.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_Impact.pdf).

McCombs, M.E. (1972). Mass media in the marketplace, *Journalism Monographs*, 24, 1–102.

Nielson/NetRatings (2006) "Podcasting Gains an Important Foothold Among U.S. Adult Online Population," July, 12, 2006 <downloaded 2/28/2007> available at [http://www.nielson-netratings.com/pr/pr\\_060712.pdf](http://www.nielson-netratings.com/pr/pr_060712.pdf).

Norton, John A. & Bass, Frank M., (1987) "A Diffusion Theory Model of Adoption and Substitution for Successive Generations of High-Technological Products," *Management Science*, Vol 33 No 9, (September 1987) pps. 1069-1086.

NPR (2006) "Program Snapshots," Spring 2006, October 26, 2006.

PRNewswire (2005), "'Podcast' is The Word of the Year," New York, 12/5/2005.

Project for Excellence in Journalism, "State of the News Media: An Annual Report on American Journalism," 3/12/2007, available at <http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.com/2007/index.asp> <downloaded 3/15/2007> cited portions can be found in the "Overview" chapter and the intro portion of the "Radio" chapter.

Rainie, Lee & Madden, Mary (2005) "Podcasting Catches On," Memo, Pew Internet & American Life Project, ([http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/154/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/154/report_display.asp)) 4/3/2005. Pps. 1-5.

Ratazzi, E. Paul, "MiniDisc: Successful Innovation or Just Cool Technology?: An Analysis of Sony's Decade-Long Quest for Success," Paper Submitted to Prof. Daniel Berg in partial fulfillment of the requirements of DSES 6470, "Global Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation" Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY, 12/15/2004, <downloaded 11/21/2006> available at <http://www.rpi.edu/~rataze/DSES6470.pdf>.

Rogers, E. (1983) *Diffusion of Innovations*, 3rd Ed., (Free Press, New York).

Yasko, Stephen, (November 2005) "WTMD's Podcast Survey," general email from [cme@publicinteractive.com](mailto:cme@publicinteractive.com) dated November 10, 2005.