http://claraslist.com/portfolio/radio_ambulante.html

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# How we re-imagined the user experience of Radio Ambulante, an award-winning Spanish-language podcast

*By Clara Gonzalez Sueyro, UX Researcher and former Director of UX at Radio Ambulante.*

**The small team of storytellers and producers behind Radio Ambulante had accomplished much in the four years since they founded the podcast.**

Their deep, compelling episodes had been downloaded millions of times by listeners across the world. Their stories broke new ground — on corruption, human trafficking, and stories big and small from 20 countries across the Americas. In 2014, they received the prestigious Gabriel García Márquez Prize for Innovation in Journalism for their impressive work.

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## I met Radio Ambulante founders Daniel Alarcon and Carolina Guerrero in 2011 and immediately decided I wanted to join their team to help them understand and build their audience.

In 2015, I joined their team as Director of UX. I relied on my background in user research, anthropology, and user experience design to plan and execute a top-down redesign of the relationship between Radio Ambulante and its listeners.

**My approach: user-centered design**

I used surveys, in-depth interviews, and metrics to understand why existing and potential users were interested in Radio Ambulante, and how we could create better technology and strategy to make them regular listeners.

I found that our audience was split into many groups that shared a common goal: to hear about and experience the fascinating worlds, cultures, and the lives of otherwise unknown people from across Latin America.

**Addressing feedback: improving the product, and building new pathways for engagement**

To pull these audiences in, I worked together with a design team and Radio Ambulante's producers to redesign the podcast's website — the first touch point for many new listeners — and create new verticals for specific listener groups, including a podcast production course and a tool for teachers to find episodes for their students.

I also worked to improve the existing connections between listeners and the podcast by crafting a new social media strategy and building up the mailing list. These improvements were evaluated in real-time through ongoing user testing.

I wanted to give the Radio Ambulante team the same tools I used to continue connecting with their audience and thinking through problems by starting with user needs. The new metrics dashboard and a internal communication system will help them understand and discuss user needs on a weekly basis.

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## This book unpacks the steps I took to research, document, and redesign the user experience for Radio Ambulante listeners.

Documentation is an important part of any project. I created these chapters to reflect on and learn from my experience at Radio Ambulante, to aide in future user experience improvement efforts at the podcast, and to share my approach for other UX professionals to learn from and comment on.

In my experience, writing documentation is like driving a car. The driver chooses which car to drive, where to drive to, and who to bring along for the ride. As your chauffeur, I have chosen the topics to cover and how to cover them. If you have questions or see something not covered here you want me to comment on, send me an email.

---

# Contents:


- Why is this document being created in the first place?
  - **Who?** Who is the document for?
  - **What?** What is the purpose of the document?
  - **When?** When is the document needed?
  - **Where?** Where will the document be used in the UX design process?
  - **How?** How will the document be used?
- About Radio Ambulante
- The Design Team at Radio Ambulante
- Where we started
- Getting different jobs done
- The Approach
- What could we have done differently?
- Recommendations
- Appendix

# A guide to this document

- Purpose - What is the purpose of this document?
- Audience – For whom are we creating this document?
- Contents – What is included in the document?
- How to use it at Radio Ambulante, or elsewhere:
    - When is the document necessary?
    - Where will the document be used in the UX design process?
    - How will the document be used?

## Purpose

This document is a record of the UX research and design performed for Radio Ambulante in 2015. I created it for three reasons:

1. To help myself and the team reflect on and learn from our experiences
2. To aide future efforts to improve UX at Radio Ambulante
3. To share our approach with fellow UX and podcast-producing professionals to learn from our work

To make reading this document fruitful and enjoyable, we asked ourselves: What makes a great UX document? How will it be used?

Much of the work at Radio Ambulante was done with teams that were not familiar with UX processes. To make it easy for those who aren't experts to understand our work, we must:

- define roles and processes in advance
- document what we actually did (including the specific steps taken)
- identify the broken processes we aimed to fix

## Audience

This document should be useful to anyone doing research in the podcast world, as well as anyone interested in learning how user experience research can be performed alongside a small, less tech-savvy team.

## Contents

This section is about what we have decided to include and exclude. We organized the content in steps and projects within those steps of the design process.

## How to use it: When is the document needed?

This document should be used by the team once someone is hired to continue with the UX behind Radio Ambulante.

## How to use it: Where will the document be used in the UX design process?

The document should be used at the beginning of the design process to learn about what has already been done and how it was implemented.

## How to use it: How will the document be used?

For now it will be used as document that informs the overall process and the reasons behind each decision.

# About Radio Ambulante

Radio Ambulante is a groundbreaking Spanish language podcast that uses long form audio journalism to tell neglected and under-reported Latin American and Latino stories. The podcast showcase voices from everywhere Spanish is spoken, including the United States, and is built from a deep understanding of the diversity and complexity of the region.

In three seasons, Radio Ambulante has produced stories from 20 countries, covering human trafficking in Mexico, investigating shamanism in Colombia, looking at tragic repercussions of reality television in Peru, and more. In addition, Radio Ambulante has partnered with English language media outlets in the US, including the New York Times Magazine, This American Life, and Radiolab, to bring a more nuanced vision of Latin America to a US audience. In 2014, the project was awarded a Gabriel Garcia Marquez Award for Innovation in Journalism.

Radio Ambulante has a rapidly growing audience across North and South America. The team is continuously looking for ways to learn more about their audience and how to better serve them. This knowledge is key to delivering the best possible podcast listening experience via the web and mobie devices. By understanding their audience better, the Radio Ambulante team hopes to continue their rapid growth and attract and retain sponsors.

I have been in touch with founders Daniel Alarcon and Carolina Guerrero since 2011. When I met them, I decided immediately that I wanted to work with them and join their team. After the podcast and team had grown enough to offer the opportunity, I came onboard as their Director of UX in January 2015.

# Who: Meet the UX and design team

I undertook the user research and implementation of this project with fellow designer David Leonard. Here is some information about us and our backgrounds:

## Clara Gonzalez Sueyro, Director of UX

Clara is a design researcher with a degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina currently living in Oakland, CA. Recently Clara was a 2014 Code for America Fellow working with the Government of Puerto Rico on a platform for small business owners. In the past, she led a project to help foster care youth to better transition into adult life through peer-to-peer networking. She co-founded a startup and participated in Start-up Chile. She also launched her own non-profit to work in projects related to education and youth.

## David Leonard, Design Technologist

David is a designer and developer living in Oakland, CA. His creates user interfaces and architects websites that make the complex simple. David works as a Frontend Developer at Code for America, a non-profit that is helping governments better use technology and connect with their residents. He joined the organization in 2014 as Fellow. Previously, he's worked in media at major newspaper publishers and online news sites in the U.S.

## How we approached the project

David and I worked together to improve design and user experience for the Radio Ambulante listeners. We follow the Lean methodology:

- To understand each individual problem, we created simple prototypes with minimal features to test with users
- Once these features were deployed, we tested their effectiveness, measured the results and learned from our successes and failures

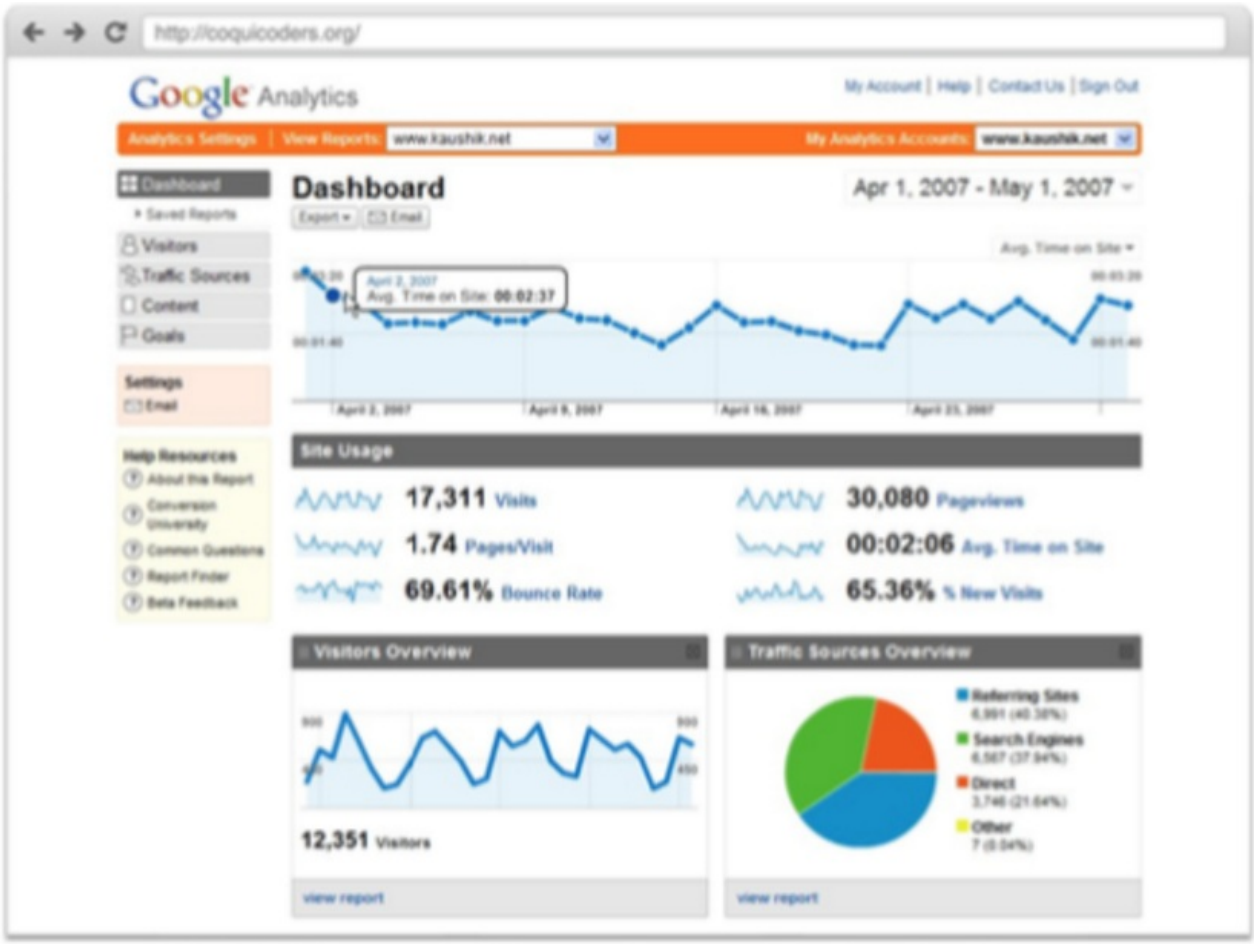
We also followed the principles of User-Centered Design by ensuring that we found the real needs and desires of our audience before attempting to solve any perceived problems.

# Where we started: What we knew, and what we wanted to change

## Where we started (analytics and data)

Before we started any projects, we dug into 2 years of web analytics data and surveyed our audience to understand about their needs. This helped us gain an understanding of the basic characteristics of Radio Ambulante listeners.

Some facts about Radio Ambulante collected were:

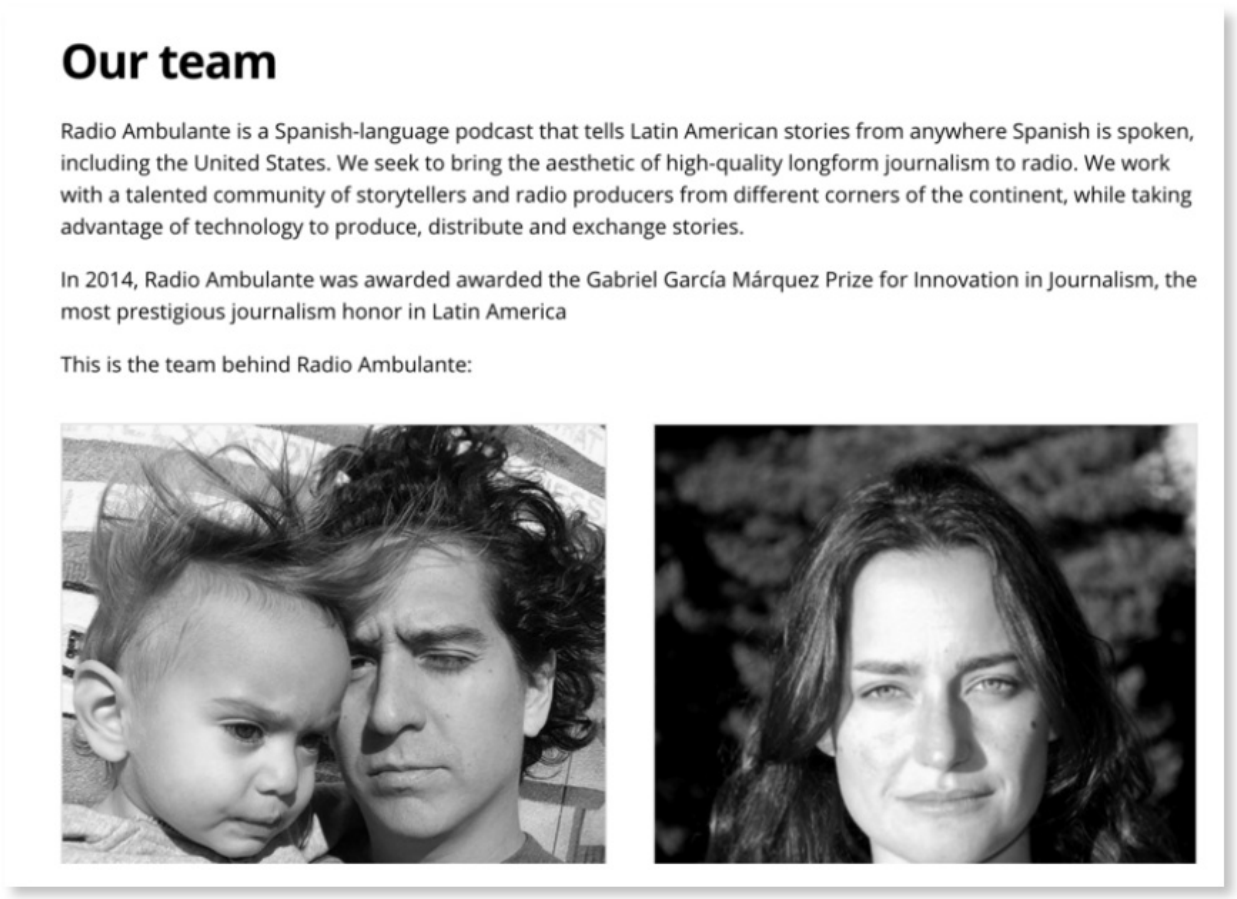



- The website bounce rate hovered around 60%
- The website took 11 seconds to load
- Average session time was 2 minutes
- Most people listened to one episode per session
- Many Spanish-speaking journalists were interested in learning about podcast production from Radio Ambulante
- Students were using the podcast to supplement language study

- Teachers were using the podcast in the classroom
- Our primary audience lived in the US

## How the Radio Ambulante team had approached audience engagement

When we started with the UX in 2015 the team was composed of talented producers and editors. Their main focus is to research, edit and produce or co-produce the stories for the podcast.



Our team

Radio Ambulante is a Spanish-language podcast that tells Latin American stories from anywhere Spanish is spoken, including the United States. We seek to bring the aesthetic of high-quality longform journalism to radio. We work with a talented community of storytellers and radio producers from different corners of the continent, while taking advantage of technology to produce, distribute and exchange stories.

In 2014, Radio Ambulante was awarded awarded the Gabriel García Márquez Prize for Innovation in Journalism, the most prestigious journalism honor in Latin America

This is the team behind Radio Ambulante:

We were hired by Radio Ambulante to **understand the existing audience and grow it.** Our work at Radio Ambulante was quite simple in principle:

- Our first objective was to identify and understand the important characteristics of our audience.
- Our second objective was to use this knowledge to improve the user experience of this audience.
- Our third objective was to improve the process and methods we use to reach out to new listeners.
- Our forth objective was to help improve the internal processes and make our team more successful. Working to shift its culture toward a more digital one was a core part of my

work.

GROW
AUDIENCE
UX
IMPROVE
INTERNAL
PROCESSES
UNDERSTAND
EXISTING
AUDIENCE

# Learning about the jobs-to-be-done

Jobs-to-be-done is a framework for thinking about innovation based on what a company's customers are trying to accomplish for themselves, rather than thinking about the features or benefits the company can offer. We didn't follow this approach by the book, but used it as a guiding principle in our research and implementation.

We started by defining our **users (i.e. listeners)** so we could understand **who** was trying to complete a job done by "hiring" the Radio Ambulante podcast.

We created three jobs stories to introduce the different jobs our listeners want to accomplish. The data used to build these stories came from surveys, analytics, and user interviews.

Each story contains:

1. ***A situation or context***
2. ***A motivation*** to get something done
3. ***Desired outcomes***

## Our Job stories

### 1)

- When I listen to Radio Ambulante episodes in the website
- I want to learn about best practices in producing long-form stories
- So I can become an expert in the field

---

### 2)

- When I listen to Radio Ambulante episodes in the podcast addict app
- I want to improve my Spanish skills
- So I can communicate better with my family and friends

---

### 3)

- When I listen to Radio Ambulante episodes in the website on desktop
- I want to use the episodes as resources in the teaching classes
- So I can better engage the students

## What unites these stories?

We have discovered that our audience falls into four groups in terms of demographics (might have the same unmet needs in terms of Job to be done)

**Bilingual, college educated Latinos/Latinas**

The **first segment** are Latinos living in the USA who are bilingual and college educated which make up about 30% of our audience.

**30%**
of our audience.
He listens to **be connected**
to Latin America

# PEDRO FRIAS

**EMPLOYEE AT MEDIA COMPANY**

Born in Chicago, 34 years old.

- Lives in Chicago
- Works for a small production company.
- Married with 1 kid.
- Has a Bachelor degree in Social Science
- He is a second generation latino who feels comfortable in both languages.
- Learn about podcast from a colleague.

## REFERENTS & INFLUENCES

RADIC
Listen Read

Radiolab is one podcast he listens regularly

This American Life is another podcast he listens to.

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

He listens to the podcast in the mobile while commuting.

He follow us in social media and through our newsletter.

## MOTIVATIONS

"I've learn about Radio Ambulante while listening to Radiolab. It keeps me connected to Latin America and my family roots"

**Caucasians interested in stories from Latin America**

Then there are Caucasian listeners who are interested in stories about Latinos and Latin America. They speak a bit of Spanish or are learning the language and Latino culture with the help of our podcast. To our surprise, this group constitutes around 25% of our audience, according our latest survey. *This means that about half of our listeners live in the USA.*

**25%**
of our audience.
She listens to
**learn Spanish**

# MARY PIERCE

**EMPLOYEE AND SPANISH STUDENT**

Born in Chicago, 29 years old.

- Lives in Chicago
- Learnt Spanish in college
- Single with no kids.
- College degree in Literature
- She listens to Radio Ambulante to learn about Latin America issues

## REFERENTS & INFLUENCES

RADIO Listen Read

She listens to Radiolab

This American Life was the first podcast he ever listened to

THE MOTH PODCAST

She loves the moth

She follows Snap Judgement

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

She listens to the podcast in the mobile app while working or when running.

She uses the Podcast Addict app because it lets him set the podcast playback speed

## MOTIVATIONS

"My Spanish has grown rusty since then and Radio Ambulante helps to keep my listening skills sharp, learn new vocabulary, and keep up with the Spanish-speaking world. I love the content of the stories"

**Latin Americans discovering podcasts**

The **third group** are Latin Americans who are just now discovering the Radio Ambulante type of storytelling. According to our latest survey 30% of our audience comes from Latin America.

This segment is composed by journalists and students of journalism. They are expecting to learn from Radio Ambulante how to produce radio stories. They are currently members of, or are aspiring to join the radio journalism industry. However they are missing the know-how and demand educational resources in Spanish in order to learn the art and craft of radio storytelling. By the end of 2015, we have gathered 1,680 subscribers to our Escuela de Radio Ambulante which aims to provide these resources.

**30%**
of our audience.
He listens to **learn**
how to produce
and enjoys high
quality journalism

# MANUEL GONZALEZ

JOURNALIST

Born in Mexico City, 32 years old.

Lives in Bogotá city.

Works for a graphic magazine.

Single with no kids.

Undergrad in Journalism

He is interested in learning about the world of podcasts and be part of this new movement.

Learn about podcast while producing a story with the support of Radio ambulante

## REFERENTS & INFLUENCES

BBC Mundo appears as one of the main references.

Clases de periodismo appears as a reference.

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

He listens to the podcast in the website while performing activities at home.

Internet

Podcast

Mobile

Social Media

Not tech savvy

App

Facebook
Twitter
Whatsupp

Software

Soundcloud
Audacity
Photoshop
Sketch

Devices

Desktop
Windows
Apple

## MOTIVATIONS

"I listen to Radio Ambulante because it is great journalism and I want to be inspired by them. Working with them means being part of a full scale project"

It is our assumption that these are three groups rarely gathered together as a unified audience by any other media outlet.

60% of our listeners are 25 to 45 years old and are employed.

25% of those are employed in the education industry. This introduces another segment of our audience:

**Teachers using our podcast in the classroom**

The **fourth group** are teachers using Radio Ambulante in the classroom. These teachers at the high school, college and graduate levels use the stories with multiple motivations including teaching vocabulary, listening to different accents, providing a vivid sense of current issues and embracing the cultural diversity among others.

%
of our audience.
She listens to **teach**
Spanish and
Latin America studies

# ALICE KRIDGE

**PROFESSOR AT COLLEGE**

Born in New York, 38 years old.

Lives in Idaho

Learnt Spanish in college

Married with 3 kids.

Undergrad degree in Philosophy and grad studies in Education

She loves listening to Radio Ambulante and being trasnsported to Latin America

Learn about Radio Ambulante through a google search: Spanish speaking podcast equivalent to TAL

## REFERENTS & INFLUENCES

She have heard about Radio Ambulante through a program in NPR

She made a google search about something similar as This American Life in Spanish

She follows Daniel Alarcon's work

She read about Radio Ambulante in the New York Times

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

She listens to the podcast in the website while preparing the classes to teach.

## MOTIVATIONS

"I teach politics and culture and these give a very vivid sense of the issues I teach my students. It also provide a view of other Latin American social realities experienced outside and within the U.S"

Another interesting finding from Google Analytics and in-depth interviews is that 60% listen to the episodes via their desktop computers while only 30% listen via mobile*. This speaks to the potential increase in usage and engagement once podcasts become mainstream which is facilitated by the adoption of mobile smartphones.

This fact is complemented by what our audience is doing while listening to the Radio Ambulante podcast. Working and cooking were the most common parallel activities our audience members reported.

**Their shared motivation: explore new worlds**

One primary **shared motivation** of our audience is to enter into fascinating worlds, cultures, and the lives of otherwise unknown Latin American people. We aspire to do this with high standards of respect and professionalism.

Our assumptions were challenged by our audience research. When they started this podcast, Daniel and Carolina thought their audience might be indifferent to the idea of listening to other Latino stories, but our research showed the opposite was true. The Radio Ambulante audience is not defined by national borders. Being a cosmopolitan Latino/Latina or Latin American in the US means you will most likely associate with people from all over Latin America. We decided we want our show to reflect this reality about Latinos living in the US. Second, we did not expect such a large number of primarily English-speaking Caucasians would become members of our audience. These discoveries created an exciting opportunity to connect with expected and unexpected audiences in new ways.

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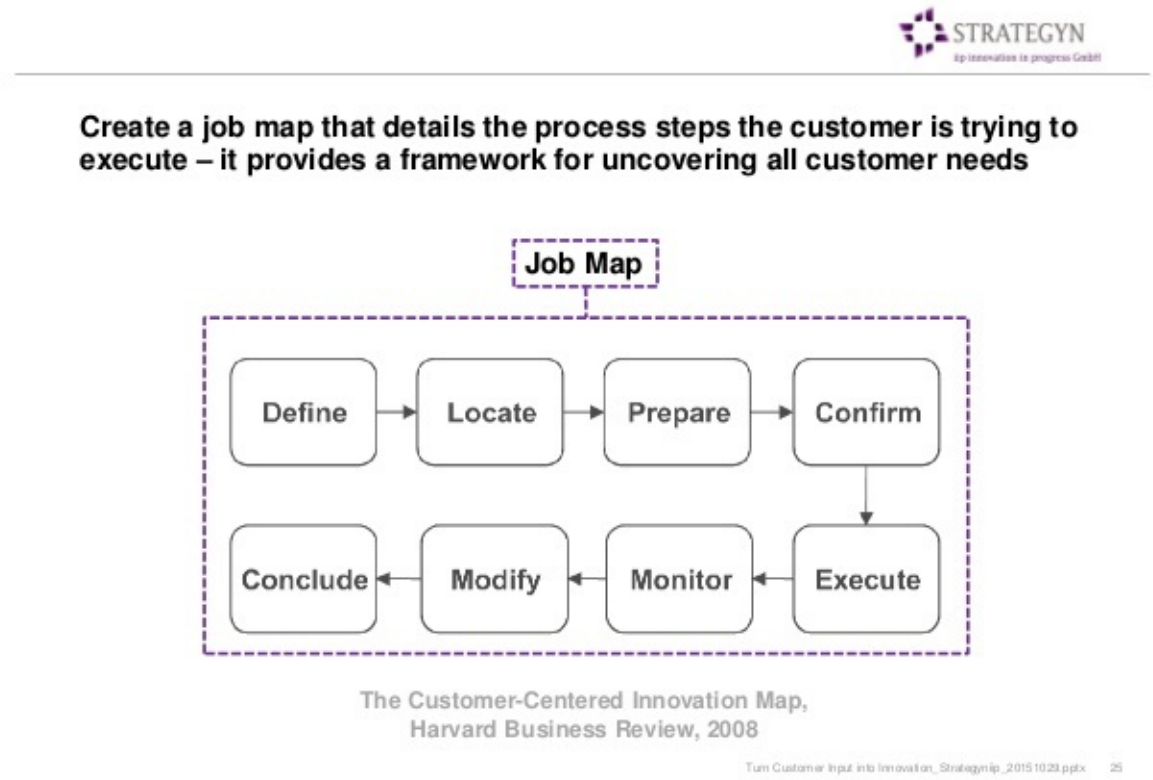
- *People accessing the podcast in the website represents a 10% of the total audience.*

# Approach

In this section, we will introduce each step in the design process and describe the projects within each step.

We followed this job mapping process to understand our audience, learn their motivations, and create short and long-term improvements to help them get their jobs done.




## The projects we'll cover

This is a list of some projects we have been working on during 2015.

# THE PROJECTS

## Survey analysis

February 2015

Analyze of survey with 802 responses designed by someone else.

## Escuela

March 2015

Define what content to include and how to create the best
tool for Independent Radio Producers

## Blog

April 2015

Develop a strategy for content creation and distribution of the blog.

## Website Redesign

April 2015

Redesign the website to make it responsive, faster and easy to use.

## Radio Producers

May 2015

In-depth interviews with independent Radio Producers from Latin America.

## Follow-up Survey

August 2015

Follow-up survey to clarify answers from 2014 survey.

## In the Classroom

September 2015

In-depth interviews with teachers using Radio Ambulante or interested in using Radio Ambulante in the classroom.

## Shop

September 2015

Creation of an online store for Radio Ambulante.

## Dashboard

October 2015

Development of a dashboard for internal use to help the team answer key questions around the audience.

## Discovery Tool

November 2015

Creation of a tool to help our audience, specifically teachers, search through old episodes.

Each project will be introduced with some descriptive information following this format. (In some cases, at the end of our description, we will mention a few key insights.)

# Project description

## Summary

This is a brief introduction of the project.

STEP 01

STEP 02

## Problem

What were you hired to do?

## Solution

What did you do? This covers your process.

STEP 03

STEP 04

## Outcome

What were the results? Did you build a new audience? Strengthen and grow an existing one?

## Method

Why did you choose that method?

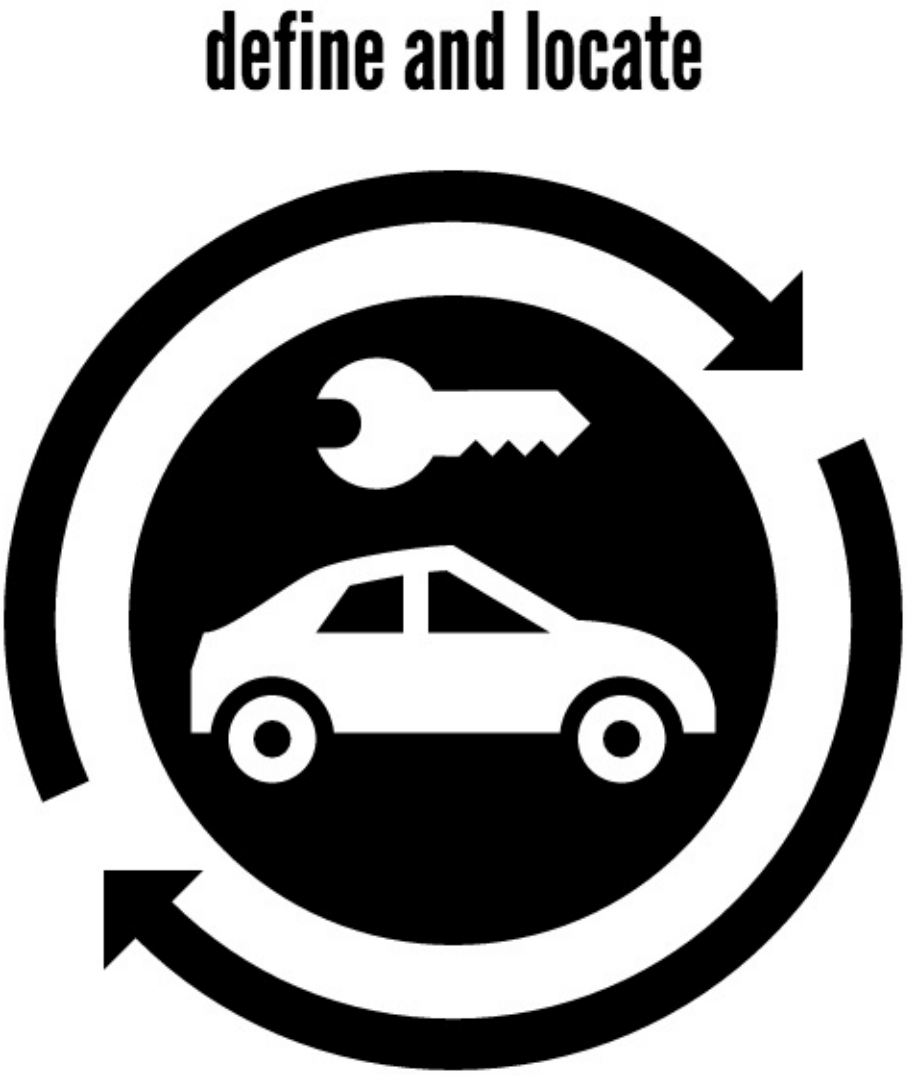
STEP 05

# Define the goals and plan resources: getting ready to start driving

This is the step where we collect available information to make key decisions along the way. We also applied the jobs-to-be-done framework to the Radio Ambulante production team. We knew they had tasks to accomplish to make a great podcast for their audience, and an important part of our project would be making their job easier.

We learn about the Radio Ambulante producer's main jobs and secondary jobs to be done and prioritized where we could help. This step is like taking driving lessons.

In the jobs to be done framework this steps will be represented by DEFINE and LOCATE.



# Survey Analysis (2014)

I was hired in 2014 to help analyze the results of a survey that was designed by another person. I was hesitant to accept the job because it's hard to analyze the results someone else's work if you lack context behind their decision making process, and second because I'm not an expert in quantitative analysis.

I accepted the job anyway, creating a path for me to start working with Radio Ambulante for a full year.

## Job to be done:

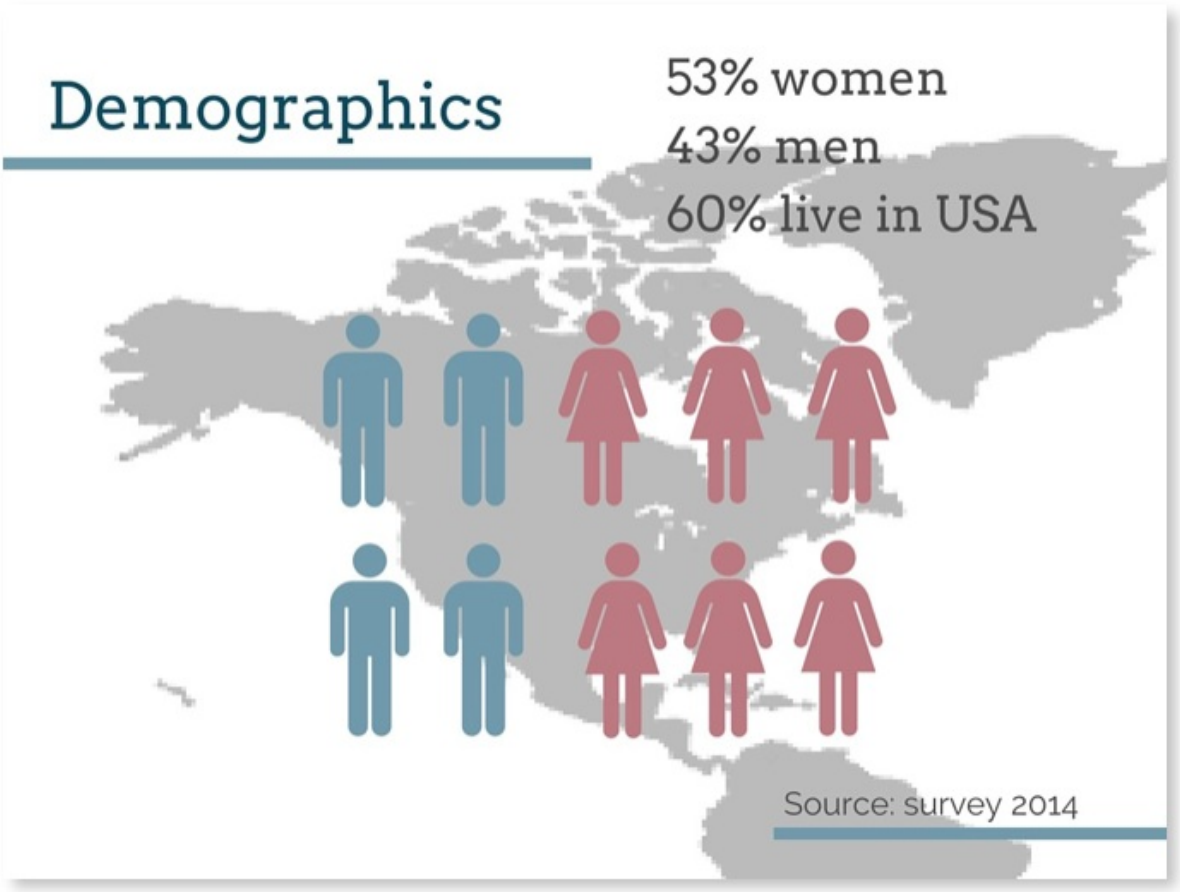
- **Minimize** the guessing of who our audience is
- **Maximize** understanding of the audience

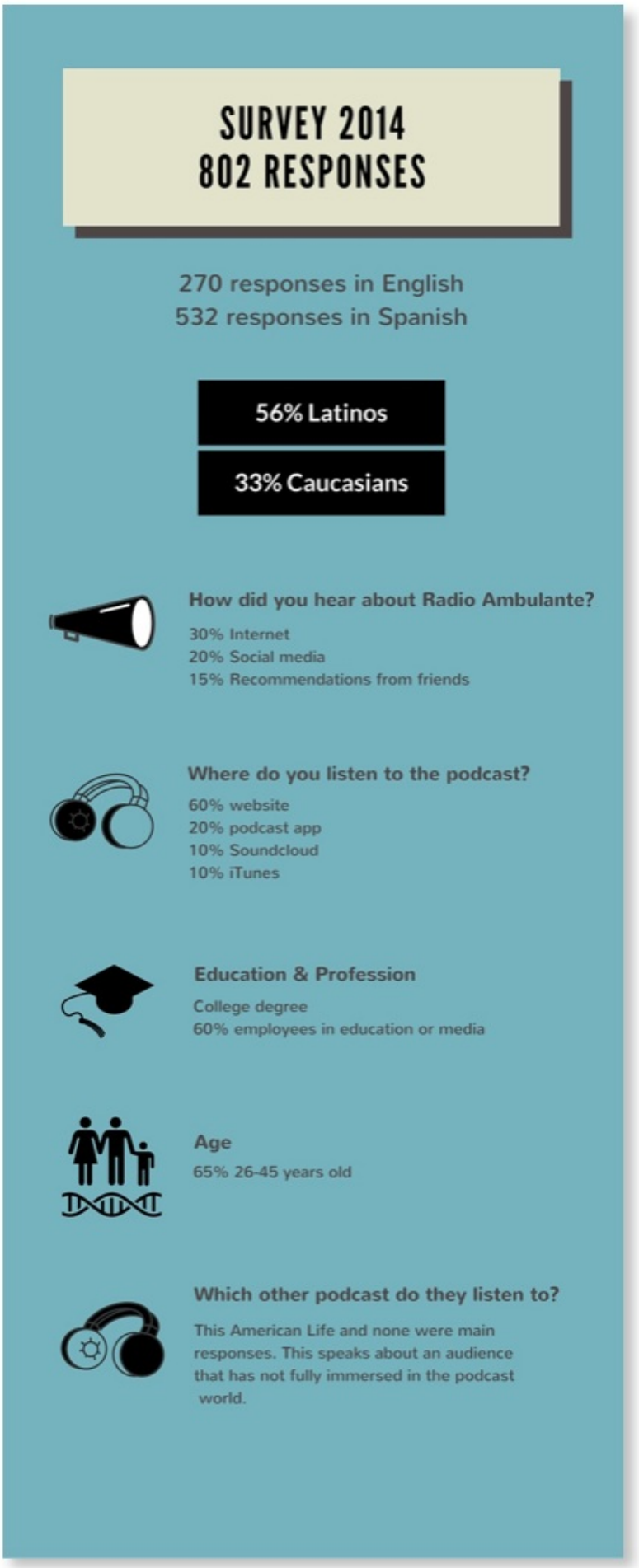
## Overview

1. **Summary**: This project consisted of analyzing a survey with 802 responses.
2. **Backstory**: This represented a challenge because I lacked context of who designed the survey and why was it designed that way.
3. **Problem**: The team wanted to know who their audience was, where their audience was located and why they listened to the podcast.
4. **Solution**: A survey was created to gather this information and I analyzed the results.
5. **Outcome**: A report with highlights was created, and a follow-up survey with new questions to dig deeper was planned.
6. **Reflection**: The design of the questionnaire created overlapping answers such as the ones from the question: how did you hear about Radio Ambulante?
7. **Method**: It was already chosen.

## Results

The survey had **802** responses. The following are highlights of the analysis and take-aways from the survey:

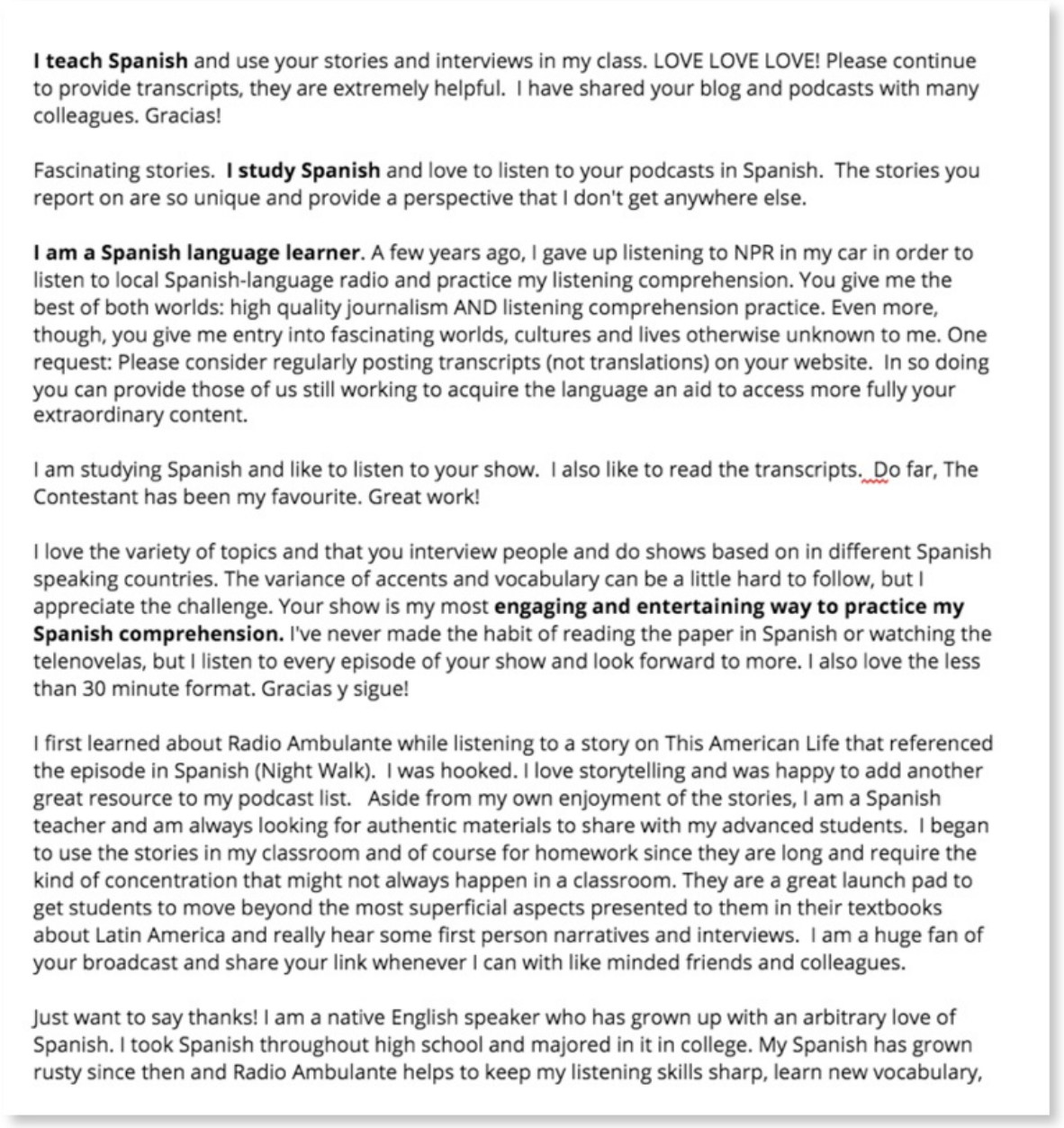

Demographics
53% women
43% men
60% live in USA
Source: survey 2014


SURVEY 2014
802 RESPONSES
270 responses in English
532 responses in Spanish
56% Latinos
33% Caucasians
How did you hear about Radio Ambulante?
30% Internet
20% Social media
15% Recommendations from friends
Where do you listen to the podcast?
60% website
20% podcast app
10% Soundcloud
10% iTunes
Education & Profession
College degree
60% employees in education or media
Age
65% 26-45 years old
Which other podcast do they listen to?
This American Life and none were main responses. This speaks about an audience that has not fully immersed in the podcast world.

# Key insights

The answers under **Do you have any comments section** provided key insights for the research and development of a new project: Radio Ambulante in the Classroom.

Here is a screenshot of a few instructive answers:



**I teach Spanish** and use your stories and interviews in my class. LOVE LOVE LOVE! Please continue to provide transcripts, they are extremely helpful. I have shared your blog and podcasts with many colleagues. Gracias!

Fascinating stories. **I study Spanish** and love to listen to your podcasts in Spanish. The stories you report on are so unique and provide a perspective that I don't get anywhere else.

**I am a Spanish language learner**. A few years ago, I gave up listening to NPR in my car in order to listen to local Spanish-language radio and practice my listening comprehension. You give me the best of both worlds: high quality journalism AND listening comprehension practice. Even more, though, you give me entry into fascinating worlds, cultures and lives otherwise unknown to me. One request: Please consider regularly posting transcripts (not translations) on your website. In so doing you can provide those of us still working to acquire the language an aid to access more fully your extraordinary content.

I am studying Spanish and like to listen to your show. I also like to read the transcripts. Do far, The Contestant has been my favourite. Great work!

I love the variety of topics and that you interview people and do shows based on in different Spanish speaking countries. The variance of accents and vocabulary can be a little hard to follow, but I appreciate the challenge. Your show is my most **engaging and entertaining way to practice my Spanish comprehension.** I've never made the habit of reading the paper in Spanish or watching the telenovelas, but I listen to every episode of your show and look forward to more. I also love the less than 30 minute format. Gracias y sigue!

I first learned about Radio Ambulante while listening to a story on This American Life that referenced the episode in Spanish (Night Walk). I was hooked. I love storytelling and was happy to add another great resource to my podcast list. Aside from my own enjoyment of the stories, I am a Spanish teacher and am always looking for authentic materials to share with my advanced students. I began to use the stories in my classroom and of course for homework since they are long and require the kind of concentration that might not always happen in a classroom. They are a great launch pad to get students to move beyond the most superficial aspects presented to them in their textbooks about Latin America and really hear some first person narratives and interviews. I am a huge fan of your broadcast and share your link whenever I can with like minded friends and colleagues.

Just want to say thanks! I am a native English speaker who has grown up with an arbitrary love of Spanish. I took Spanish throughout high school and majored in it in college. My Spanish has grown rusty since then and Radio Ambulante helps to keep my listening skills sharp, learn new vocabulary,

# Survey Analysis (2015)

This follow-up survey was sent at the beginning of 2015.

## Job to get done:

- **Minimize** the overlapping answers from a previous survey
- **Maximize** the results for a better understanding of our audience

## Overview

1. **Summary**: This is a follow-up of a survey we sent out in 2014. That survey was very successful, but it raised some questions which we wanted to clarify with this new version.
2. **Backstory**: We encountered some overlapping answers in the 2014 survey results that motivated me to create a new and complementary survey.
3. **Problem**: Overlapping answers.
4. **Solution**: New survey to clarify the issue.
5. **Outcome**: New survey with 1022 responses.
6. **Reflection**: Even though we had a better understanding about some habits we can not guarantee we have solved the overlapping issue because there is no way to know who replied to both surveys. We ended up treating it as a new survey.
7. **Method**: Survey.

We designed a new survey (preview it here) and promoted in social media, in a few episodes and in the website.

## Key insights

These are some listeners habits we discovered:

LET'S START LISTENING!
WHAT ARE LISTENERS HABITS
WHERE DO YOU LISTEN TO EPISODES?
HOME
PUBLIC TRANSPORT
WALKING
CAR
WORK
WHEN DO YOU LISTEN TO EPISODES?
16% NIGHT
13% EVENING
18% MORNING
53% DO NOT HAVE A ROUTINE

# Execute the job: put on your seat belt and start driving

After learning about the Radio Ambulante team's priorities and the audience users needs we decide to start driving. We agree on a route and the stops along the way.

In the jobs to be done approach this is represented by PREPARE, CONFIRM and EXECUTE steps.

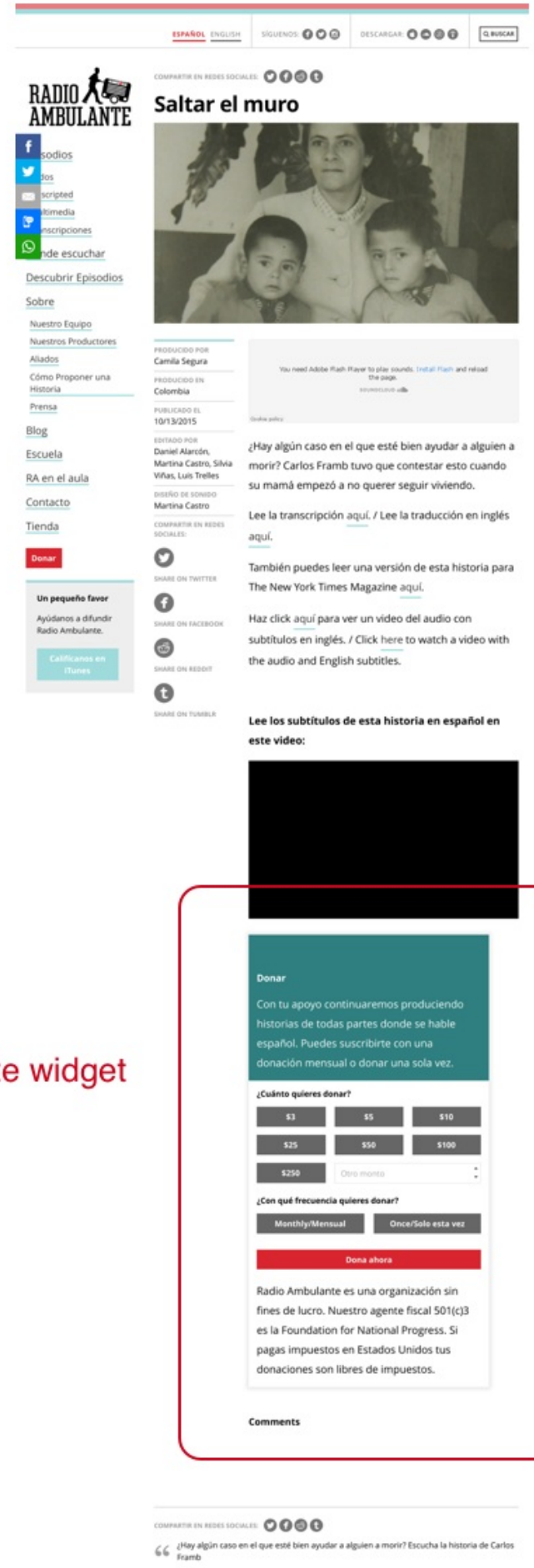
# Website redesign

## Job to be done:

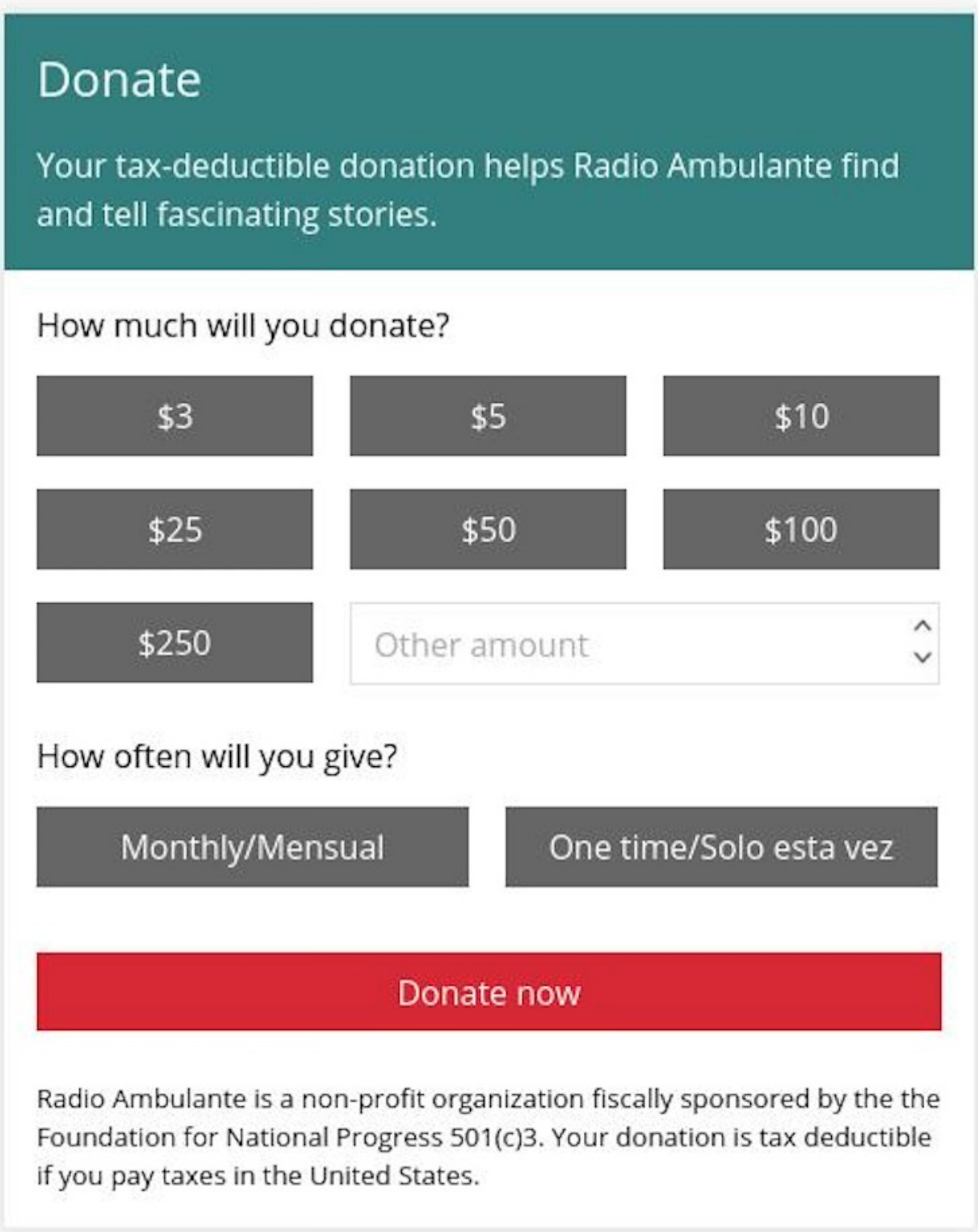
- **Minimize** the amount of useless features
- **Maximize** the user engagement

## Overview

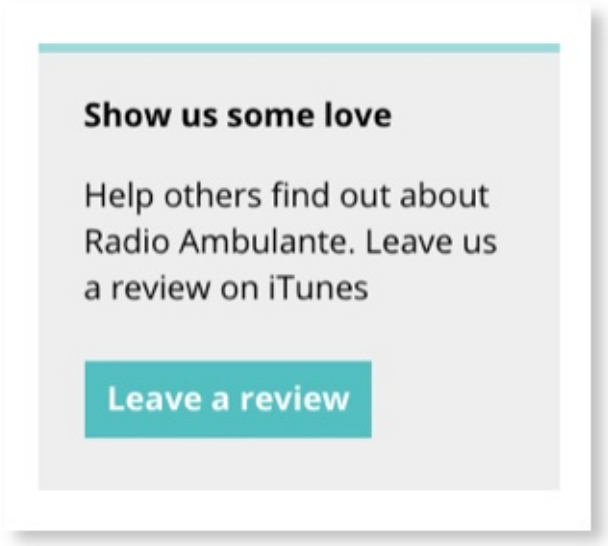
1. **Summary**: The website had some performance issues, and too many features that were not being used or were distracting for the readers and listeners.
2. **Backstory**: We wanted to increase performance and create an easy-to-use and less noisy website. We also wanted it responsive so it would be easy to browse on mobile devices.
3. **Problem**: Despite the fact that most of our audience downloaded our stories through third party applications (like iTunes), the website was our storefront. It was the first touch point for many new listeners, and if it worked correctly, had the potential to turn them into long-term audience members.
4. **Solution**: Redesign of website keeping the elements that perform well such as color palette and logo. **The new website was launch on August 10th, 2015.**
5. **Outcomes**:
    - The new design helped us **increase newsletter subscriptions** from 1,700 in March 2015 to 4,000 in March 2016
    - **Average page load** time went from 11.64 seconds to 3 seconds
    - Bounce rate went from 60% to 38%
    - New **social media display** links helped increase Facebook fans by 21% and Twitter followers by 48%
    - New **donation page** helped us receive over 100 new donations
    - We also created a donate widget which can be easily added inside posts. We also made sure to include a monthly subscription which was not an option in our old donation page. After these improvements, we received $8,000 in a donation campaign in December 2015.




Donate widget



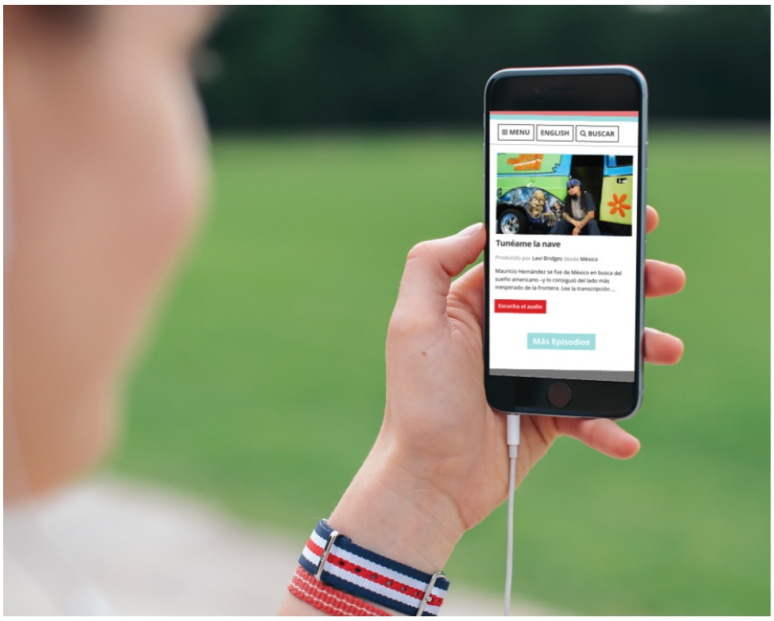

- New link to **iTunes** helped us receive 110 new listener reviews




- Through a special campaign we captured 1,694 signups for “La Escuela de Radio Ambulante,” a planned podcast training course

## Mobile-first redesign

We started with a mobile-first redesign to better support the growing use of our website by listeners on their phones and tablets.




We redesigned for mobile first because of the explosive growth and opportunity to better support our listeners on the mobile platform

## Simplifying the product

We minimize the number of pages and features but we also created new pages such as a Producers Page to showcase our Producer's work.

ESPAÑOL ENGLISH | FOLLOW: | DOWNLOAD: | SEARCH

RADIO AMBULANTE

- Episodes
  - All Episodes
  - Unscripted
  - Multimedia
  - Translations
- How to Listen
- Discover Episodes
- About
  - Our Team
  - Our Producers
  - Partners
  - How to Pitch a Story
  - Press
- Blog
- School
- RA in the classroom
- Contact
- Shop

Donate

Show us some love

Help others find out about Radio Ambulante. Leave us a review on iTunes

Leave a review

## Daniel Alarcón

Executive Producer

@DanielGAlarcon

http://danielalarcon.org

I was born in Lima, Peru and raised in the United States. I'm a novelist and journalist. I live in New York with my wife, Carolina Guerrero, and our two sons. I teach at the Columbia University Journalism School.

What is your favorite episode of Radio Ambulante?

The first story I fell in love with was The Fall of River Plate. The audio was so strong, so simple, but so passionate, and I just knew that we would be able to make something beautiful out of it. I think we did.

Which are you favorite podcasts?

This American Life, Radiolab, Football Weekly, Radio Diaries, Love and Radio, Reply All, Serial, Mystery Show, The Season, anything by the Kitchen Sisters.

What is your best talent?

Looking busy.

### Stories you have produced in other spaces

All Politics is Local

Harper's

How do you define gang member?

The New York Times Magazine

City of Clowns

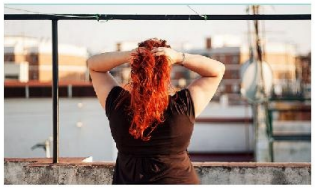
The New Yorker

The Executioners of El Salvador

The New Yorker

More info about Daniel

### Episodes produced by Daniel Alarcón



Postcard from San Salvador

In El Salvador, gangs snuff out a small act of self-expression. Read the transcript in Spanish here. / Read the English translation ...

Listen to audio

Finding the Words

Micah has spent a life pushing against the borders of a category most everyone takes for granted: gender. Read the English subtitles for this story ...

Listen to audio

The Contestant

Ruth Thalía Sayas Sánchez was only 19 years old when she went on a Peruvian game show, El Valor de la Verdad, determined to ...

Listen to audio

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Contact:

General: contacto@radioambulante.org

Producers: cronicas@radioambulante.org

Syndication: distribucion@radioambulante.org

Follow:

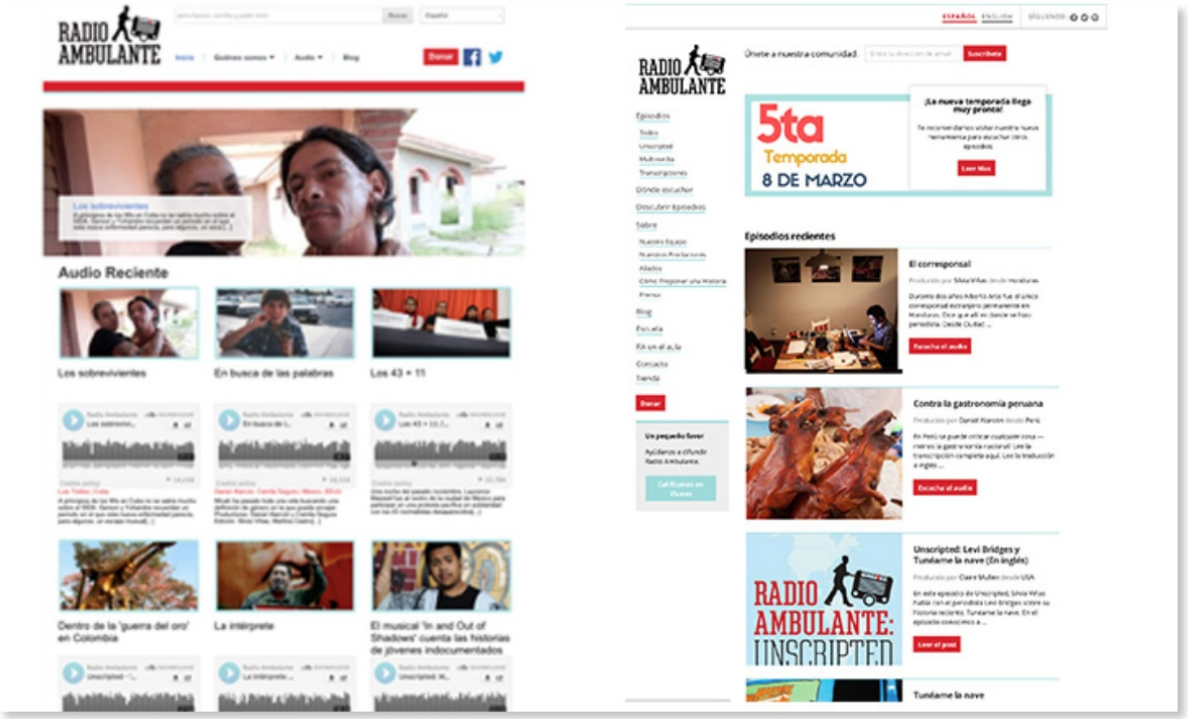
Facebook Twitter Instagram

## New website vs old website design: look & feel

Here are some highlights:

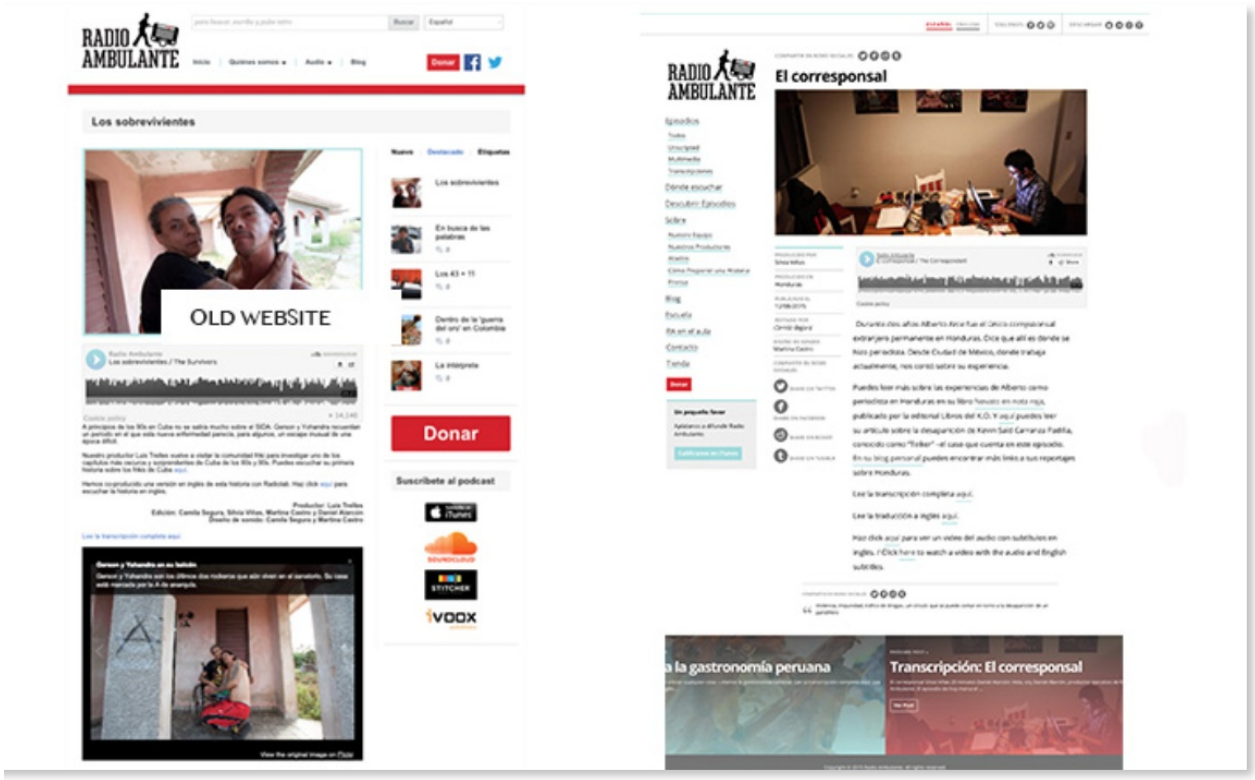
**Landing page: old vs. new**

The old landing page made it difficult for new and returning users to navigate and the find the stories they wanted to listen to. The new design emphasized recent stories and things our audience could do, but also made it easy to find other content on the site by searching or navigating our episodes pages.



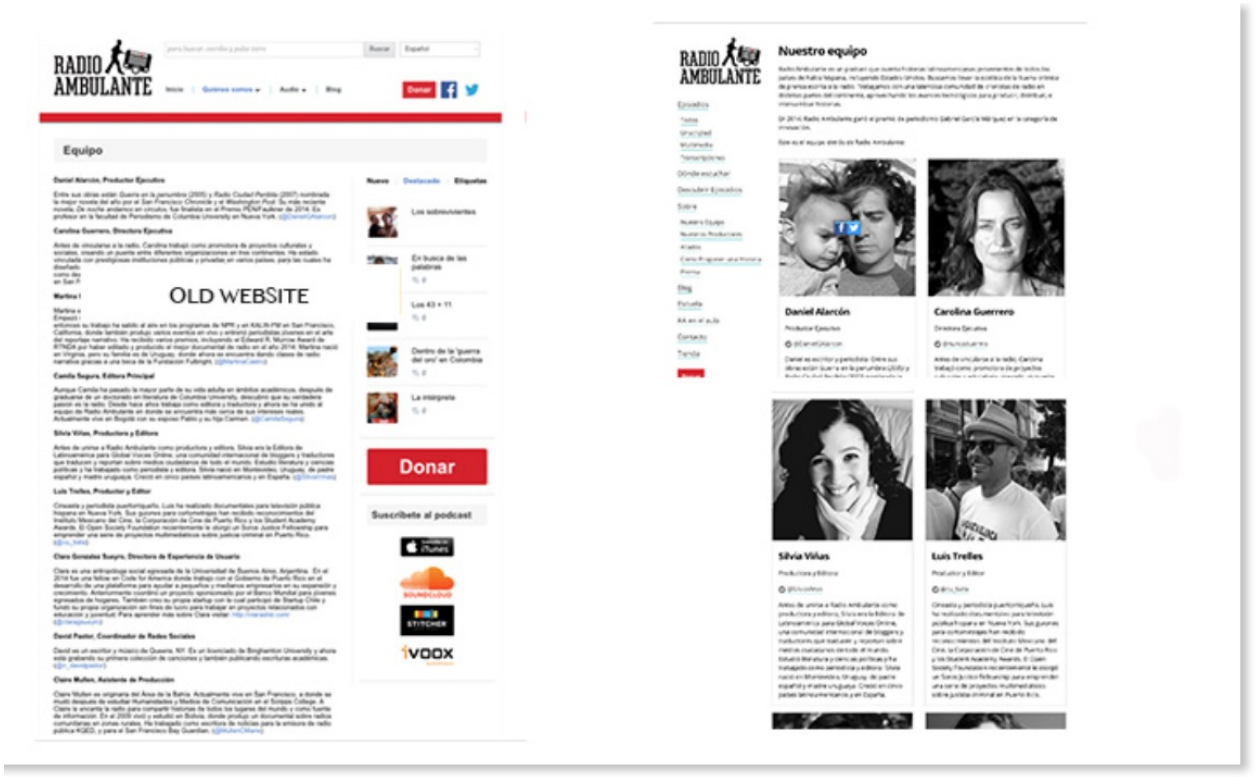

**Episode page: old vs new**

The old episode page was cluttered and noisy. Difficult-to-read typography and a useless sidebar made the page a dead end for browsing. The new design is simpler and cleaner, and offers listeners a variety of ways to find new episodes after they finish listening.




**Team page: old vs. new**

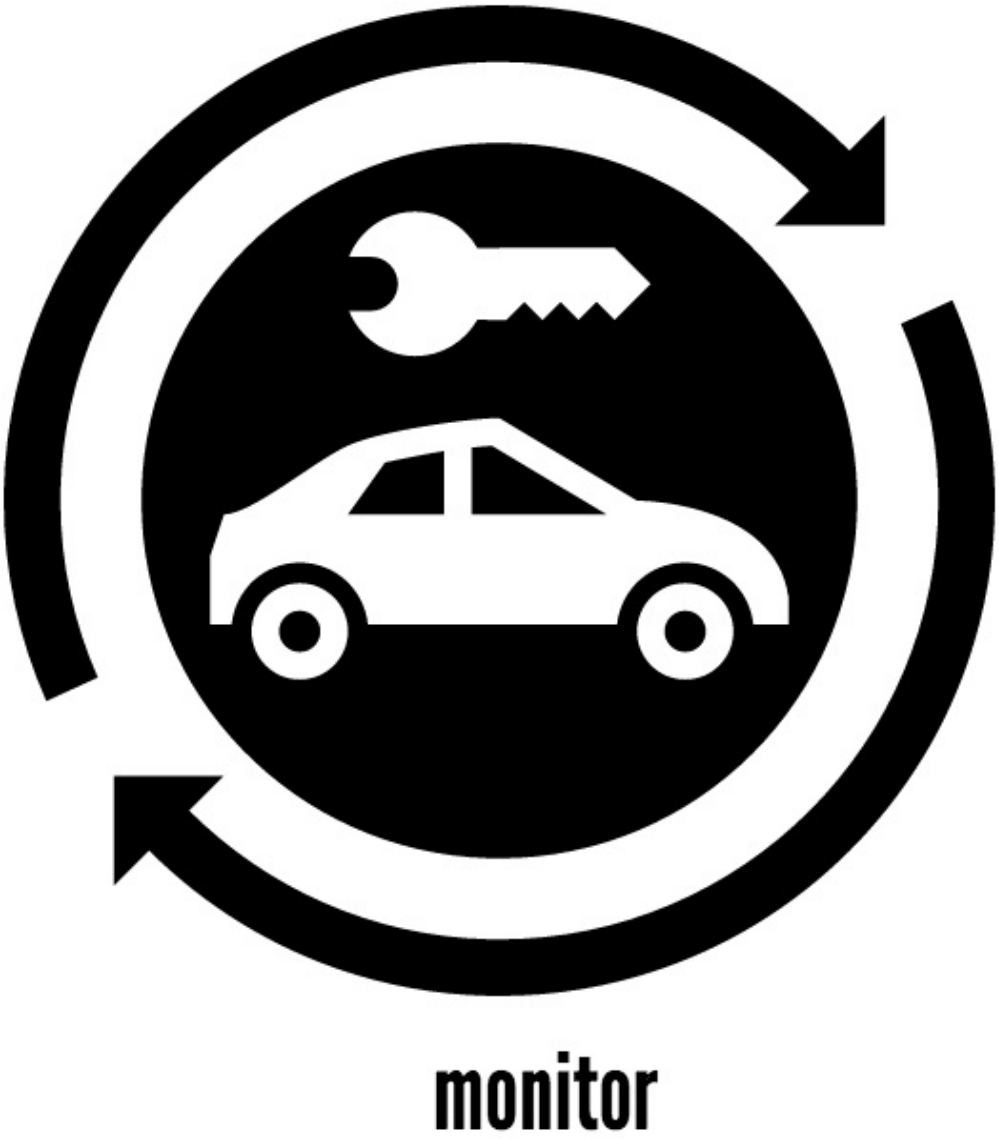
The old team page was text heavy and impersonal. It didn't provide photos or an easy way to see all of the people contributing to Radio Ambulante. The new page is welcoming and makes it easy to connect with the team members through Twitter.



# Make alterations to improve execution: stop in at the mechanic for tune-up

In this step we decide to perform some user testing and validation a check. We wanted to make sure the work we had been doing was making a difference, and solving the problems we attempted to define in our research. Is the equivalent to taking the car to the specialist for a quick tune-up.

In the jobs to be done framework this is the MONITOR step.



# Usability Testing

## Job to get done:

- **Minimize** the noise, distractions and bounce rate
- **Maximize** the delight and engagement of users visiting our website

## Overview

1. **Summary**: We had information from Google Analytics on certain performance issues such as high load time for most pages. This experience was even worse for users with slow internet speeds.
2. **Problem**: How are we performing according to real users?
3. **Solution**: Create a remote usability testing session to understand how real users experience the website and measure actual performance on tasks they want to accomplish.
4. **Outcome**: Recording of users performing specific tasks.
5. **Reflection**: We should have performed usability testing on the old website to be able to compare performance against the new redesign from our users' perspective.

## How we performed the tests

We performed usability testing in the new website to test 3 main tasks. We asked users these questions:

1. What is your first impression of the webpage? What do you think it is about?
2. What is the first thing you would like to do on this page?
3. What stood out and what frustrated you?

Based on their feedback from the testing, we found that users:

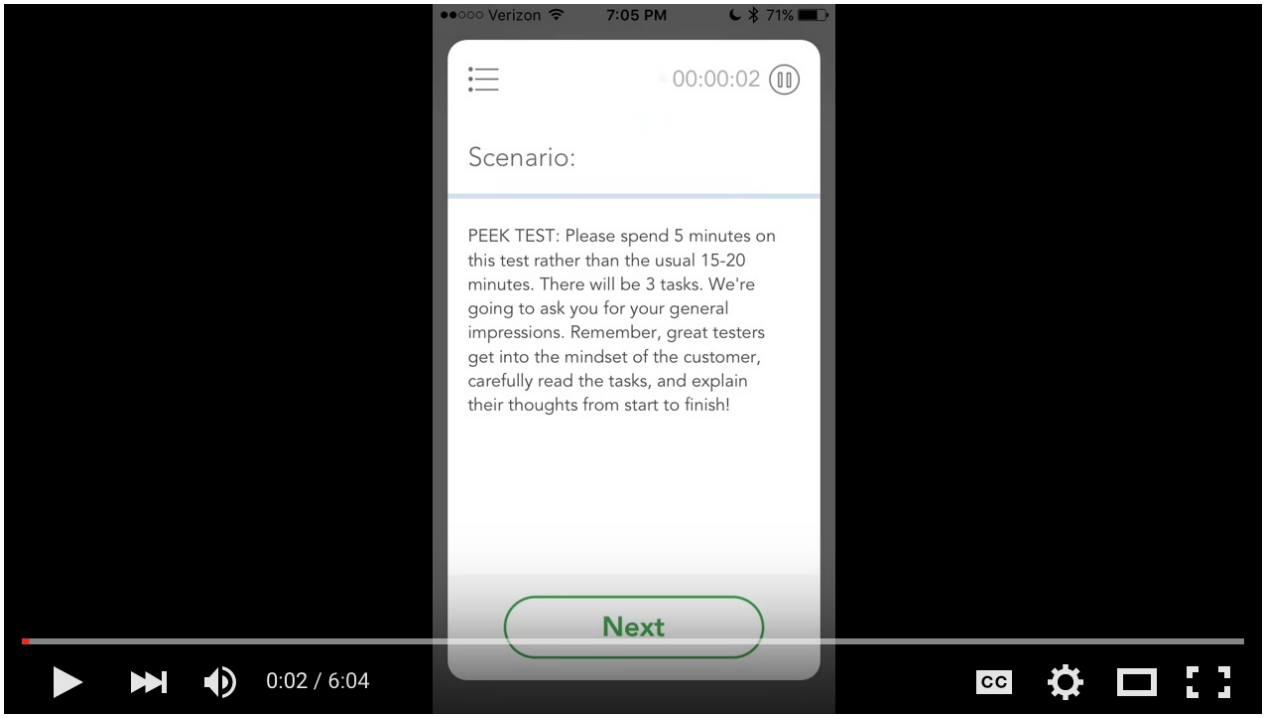
1. Enjoy the simplicity and easy to navigate website
2. Didn't fully understand what this website was (and what Radio Ambulante was) if they weren't already listeners of the podcast
3. Were frustrated by the value proposition of the podcast. Non-Spanish speakers were particularly confused because the English about page was lacking content.

We responded to this feedback in some of our future projects, but made some quick changes to address some of the concerns:

- We rewrote the About page to provide context about the podcast and its mission in

English and Spanish

- We added a short tagline explaining what Radio Ambulante was in a few words on the homepage (Un podcast que cuenta historias latinoamericana/A podcast telling Latin American stories)



# Verify you are ready to perform the job: invite friends for a ride

After the redesign and testing, we were now ready to re-launch the website and open it to the community to use and respond to. As feedback rolled in and as we analyzed usage data, we executed many small projects to help specific users accomplish jobs on our site.

In the jobs to be done framework this represents the VERIFY step.

# Radio Ambulante in the classroom

## Job to get done:

- **Minimize** the barrier for using the podcast in the classroom
- **Maximize** the utility of the Radio Ambulante for Spanish teachers and learners

## Overview

1. **Summary**: Through in-depth interviews and surveys we found out that teachers are using Radio Ambulante in the classroom as an ancillary resource.
2. **Problem**: Using the podcast in the classroom is a time consuming process.
3. **Solution**: Empower the teachers with tools to lower the barrier of entry.
4. **Outcome**: Tool to help with the discovery of the episodes and series, and a series of blog post where we invited teachers to share their experience and showcase their extraordinary work.
5. **Method**: In-depth interviews, surveys.

## Research

We started to research the use of the podcast by students and teachers. The design and production teams saw a great opportunity to grow the podcast's audience among this cohort of listeners. We wanted to empower teachers to do their jobs more easily by providing them with excellent Spanish-language content, and also grow our audience by connecting with new listeners in the classroom.

Our assumption was that we need to improve the user experience of the podcast for students and teachers. To this end, we interviewed 12 teachers who used Radio Ambulante episodes in their classroom to expose their students to hidden voices and new stories about Latin America.

## What we found

We found that teachers were using specific episodes at that same as they taught related content.

Teachers told us they had a hard time finding the right episode for the right topic in their classroom — the episode needed to be on the right subject, have the right content, and be the right length for the lesson plan.

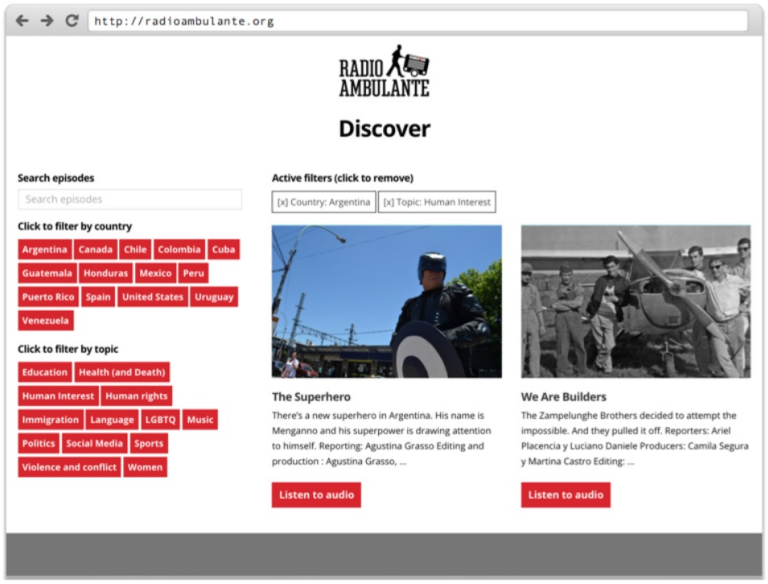
We also recruited eight of these teachers to work with us on a regular basis and to write a series of posts on our blog about using Radio Ambulante in the classroom.

## About the teachers

Who are these eight teachers who already use Radio Ambulante in the classroom? This spreadsheet shows information like the subject they teach, how often they use Radio Ambulante in the classroom, how they found the podcast, and more:

| Where do you teach? | What is the decisi | How did you discover RA | How do you access the podcast? | What additional material other tha audio do you use from RA? | Why do you use RA? (What value do the Radio Ambulante stories bring to your class | How often do you use RA? | Which episodes did you use? | When you use RA in the classr | How did you use those episodes? (step-by-st | On which of t |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| College / Advanced Spani | teacher decides | Barbara's presentation at ACT | downloads the mp3 and embeds it in | Does not want the students to know about the English version. Has | Authentic listening materials | Used 1 episode last semester | Caminata Nocturna | She uses it instead of a reading | She adapted Barbara's lesson plan for El equip | Speaking and l |
| College / Intermediate le | coordinators deter | Not sure. Probably through Da | Podcast app and website | transcripts (both the Spanish and English) to help as they listen. A | practice listening while also exposing students to valuable, challenging stories | Homework assignment | Students are given freedom to c | N/A | Students have to select some sort of program | (TV, radio) that |
| Senior, high school / Inte | teacher decides | Teacher recommendation | His computer and through speakers i | Transcripts. He says they're very useful. Didn't know about videos | Provide context about things that are going on.<br>Practice listening and speaking.<br>Make connections between what they're studying in class and what's happening in real world.<br>Real stories | Un mundo Ideal / Estudiante Re | supplement | Un mundo Ideal: Listened and discussed it as a<br>Estudiante rebelde: Listened, discussed as a cl | Listening and s | |
| College / Conversational i | teacher decides | Post in Facebook | iTunes and gives it to her students vi | Does not want the students to know about the English version | Listening development, current events, cultivating their ear for spoken Spanish. The v | 3 episodes last semester | Otro país / the story about Zel | supplement. Uses RA as the stor | Guided Homework Example: Listen 2x (acknow<br>Also: Find an article (google it) that you feel r | Listening, Spe |
| College / advanced Spani | teacher decides | Followed Daniel Alarcón's car | A computer with speakers in the clas | Transcripts and videos with subtitles | Make everythings come alive: culture meets history and diversity. | 3 episodes last semester | La palabra prohibida, el superh | supplement | Depending on topic, a pre-listening activity in<br>Background information<br>Let them thinking about the topic<br>They will listen to the audio at home with que<br>The next day we will listen to audio again and<br>If we can do a day or 2 we can continue discus<br>If the story is more than 10 minutes we will lis<br>She chooses the episodes because if 30 studen | Listening comp |
| College / advanced Spani | teacher decides | Via the podcast "On the Media | The website "ITunes is annoying" | Transcripts yes: students work with transcripts and audio<br>Video with English subtitles reinforces their English skills and not t | He is an applied linguist . RA dialogues as an example of a big integrated bali of form, | a couple of times | Miedo, La sentencia | Uses it in place of the book bec | Uses transcripts to help students identify form | He believes in |
| High school / intermediate | teacher decides | Followed Daniel Alarcón's car | downloads the mp3 and in the classro | Depends on the activity and level of class she will use transcripts or | Open students eyes around not mainstream topics. Also showcases authentic registries | 1 or 2 episodes | The interpreter | Complements the material in the | Depends. Pre-listening and segments in class | She believes y |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| college | I wonder if this behavior remains the same if they have to buy the material? | | | | | | | | | |

Barbara Sawhill, Spanish Language Cordinator for Radio Ambulante, had begun producing special resources that target teachers and students. We also made changes to the Radio Ambulante website. One change was a new section of the site which helps teachers find episodes most suited to their needs by search and filtering. (See the Discovery tool chapter below to learn more.)




We added a special section to the website named "Discover" to help students and teachers find episodes that suit their needs

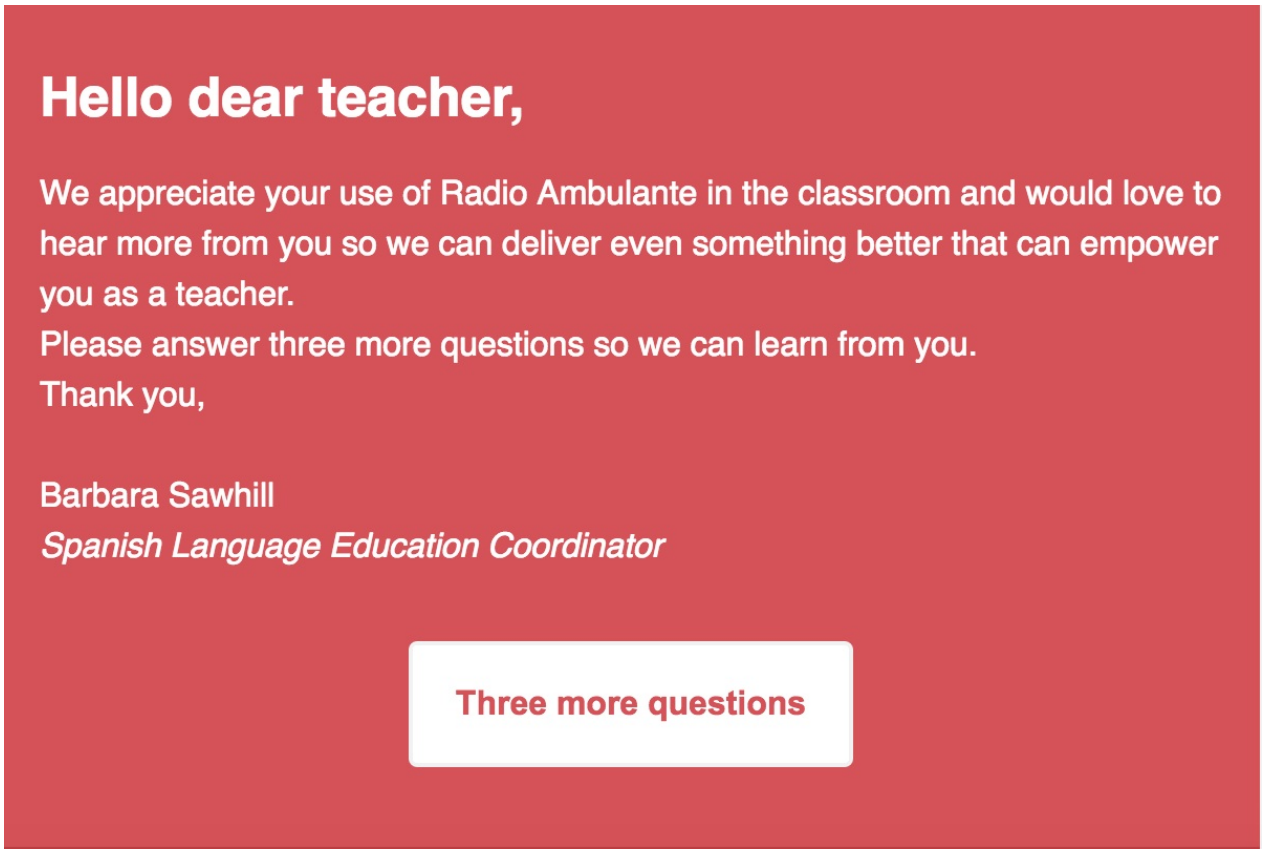
## Landing page

We wanted to gather teachers emails so we created a landing page where they could sign up for more information. We divided the users in 2 groups: those who had already used Radio Ambulante in the classroom, and those who had not used it yet but wanted to.

Each group was placed into a segment in our newsletter list in Mailchimp.

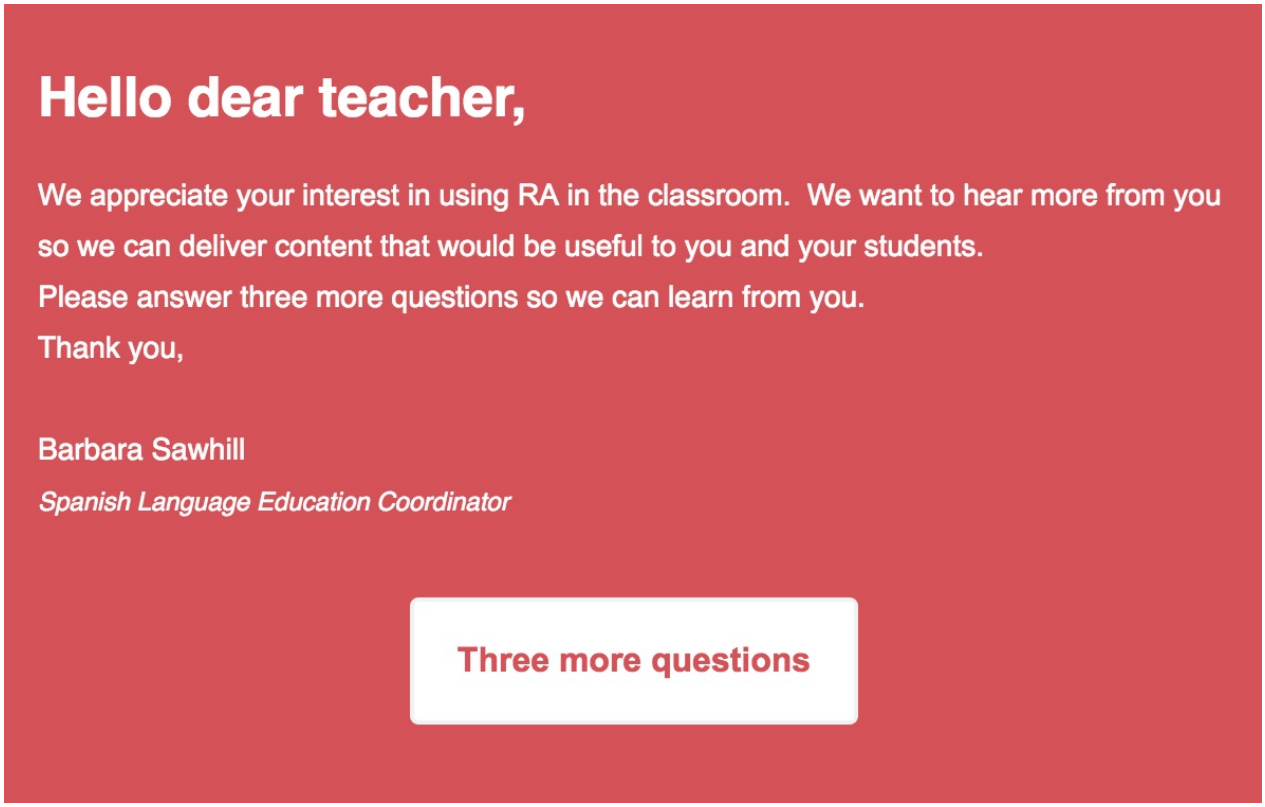
Every Friday we send a campaign to new subscribers that contains a link to a survey in Typeform where we ask specific questions about their experience using the podcast in the classroom or their interest if they have not used it yet.

**This is the newsletter teachers who had used Radio Ambulante received after they signed up.**




The email includes a link to a survey about how they use the podcast.

This is the newsletter teachers who showed interest in using Radio Ambulante received after they signed up.




The email includes a link to a survey about how they want to use the podcast.

Here a brief description of these teachers compiled from our survey results.

## The funnel for teachers who used Radio Ambulante

The funnel for teachers who use Radio Ambulante in the classroom looks like this:

1. 107 subscribers by end of 2015 - people who signed up for our mailing list
2. 54 survey respondents — the people who clicked the survey link and gave us their feedback (a 50% conversation rate)

## Testimonials

Some testimonials from teachers using Radio Ambulante in the classroom:

*"The main purpose of listening to Radio Ambulante in my classroom is for students to get first hand testimonies from people who are living the social situations we discuss in class. Radio and podcasts provide a level of intimacy that cannot be matched by any other medium, and it makes it easier to students to empathize with the problem at hand. The possibility of reading the script as we listen to the podcast makes the content more accessible to different level of students, and the stories Radio Ambulante are always thought provoking and spark great discussions. Thank you for all your work!*

**— Antxon Iturbe, ELL Department Chair - St. Anne's-Belfield School**

*"I am a PhD student in Hispanic Literature at UNC Chapel Hill. I teach undergraduate language classes and make an effort to meaningfully introduce my students to Hispanic culture while developing communication skills. As of now, I have used RA as a culture project (students are asked to listen to five episodes over the course of the semester and to reflect on each one in a journal) and, starting with “Todos vuelven," am in the process of developing lesson plans using episodes to practice listening. I use RA because the format of the episodes are accessible to language students and the content of episodes introduces students to a diverse picture of Hispanic culture."*

**— Sarah Booker, Department of Romance Studies- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

## The funnel for teachers who haven't used Radio Ambulante

The funnel for teachers who do not yet use Radio Ambulante yet looks like this:

1. 135 subscribers by end of 2015 - people who signed up for our mailing list
2. 59 survey respondents — the people who clicked the survey link and gave us their feedback (a 44% conversation rate)

These are some of the reasons teachers said have prevented them from using Radio Ambulante in the classroom:

MAIN REASONS
FOR NOT USING RADIO AMBULANTE
20%
LACK OF TIME TO CREATE MATERIAL
20%
LENGTH OF STORIES
40%
NOT APPROPIATE CONTENT FOR MY STUDENTS AGE AND LEVEL
20%
TIME TO FIT IN THE CURRICULUM
59 TEACHERS RESPONDED

# La Escuela de Radio Ambulante

## Job to get done:

- **Minimize the** risk of producing a podcast in Spanish
- **Maximize** Radio Ambulante experience and learnings on how to create a successful Spanish podcast

## Overview

1. **Backstory**: Carolina Guerrero, Executive Director, was selected to work on a challenge for the JSK Fellowship at Stanford and asked for help with the challenge.
2. **Problem**: How can we help Latin American journalists and storytellers produce long-form narrative radio journalism?
3. **Solution**: La Escuela Radio Ambulante: An online space for learning how to produce audio journalism.
4. **Outcome**: An online course where team members teach how to produce a successful podcast.
5. **Reflection**: Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the state of Spanish-language podcast journalism.
6. **Method**: Survey, In-depth interviews, Udemy course.

## The challenge

The Radio Ambulante team wanted to work on this challenge in partnership with Stanford:

*How can we help Latin American journalists and storytellers produce long-form narrative radio journalism?*

We decided to start with some In-depth interviews with Radio Producers.

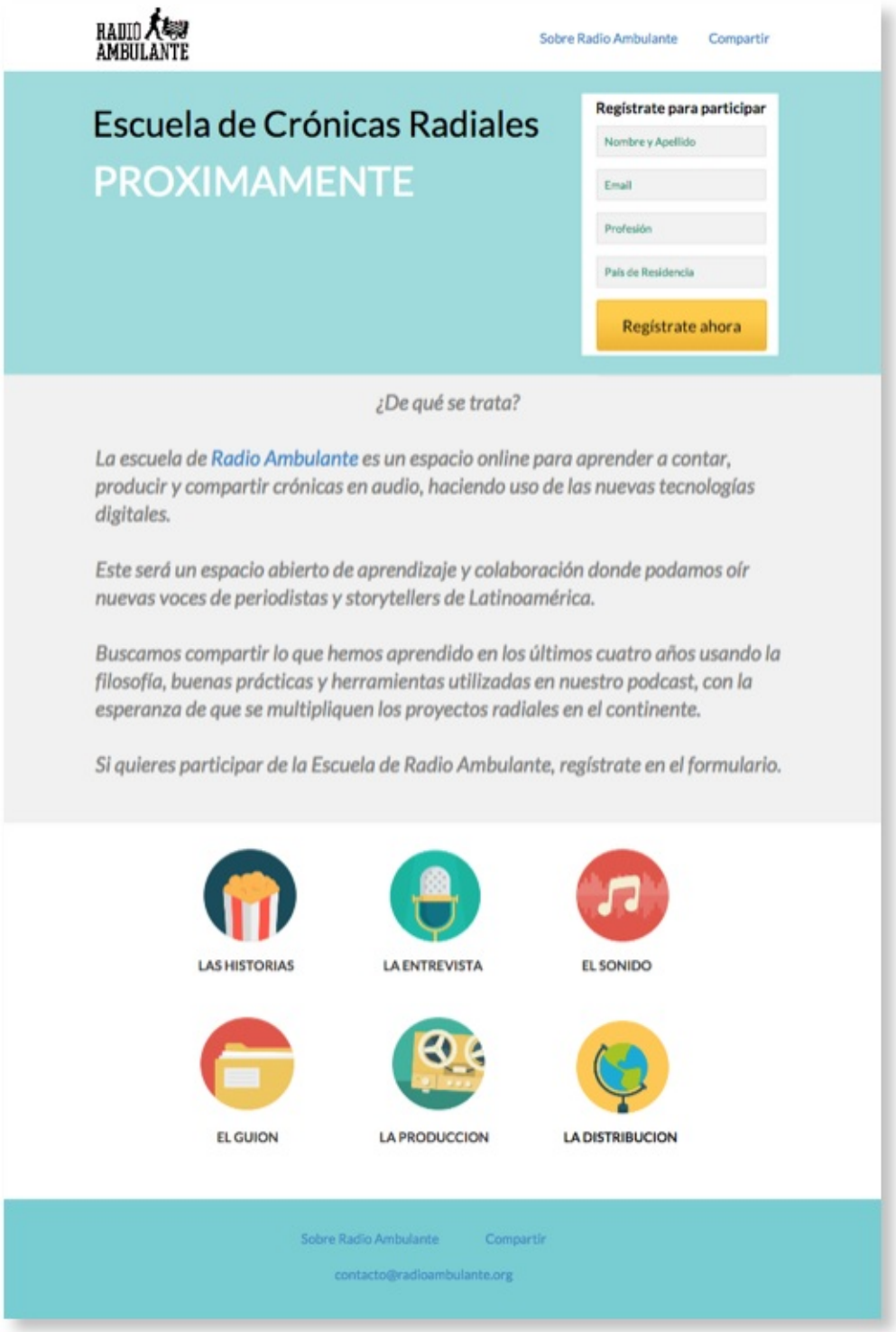
## How did we recruit?

We asked the team to provide information about radio producers who sent pitches in the past. We selected a sample of producers whose pitches had been approved or rejected.

We sent an email to all of the 65 selected producers. Of that group, 31 responded and we followed up with 27 to schedule a phone interview.

After the interviews, we prepared a presentation to share the findings with the team. At a high level, we found that many who submitted were journalists or connected to journalism. For the most part, they were working in print at newspapers but didn't work with audio or podcasts. They lived in Latin America and were largely unknown to the world.

The next step was to collect emails from all producers interested in participate in la Escuela. We created a landing page to collect those emails.



We have sent some newsletters to keep them updated. The Escuela is a work in progress.

# Social Media & Email marketing

## Job to get done:

- **Minimize** the barriers for acquiring new followers
- **Maximize** the use of social media to create brand awareness and engagement

## Overview

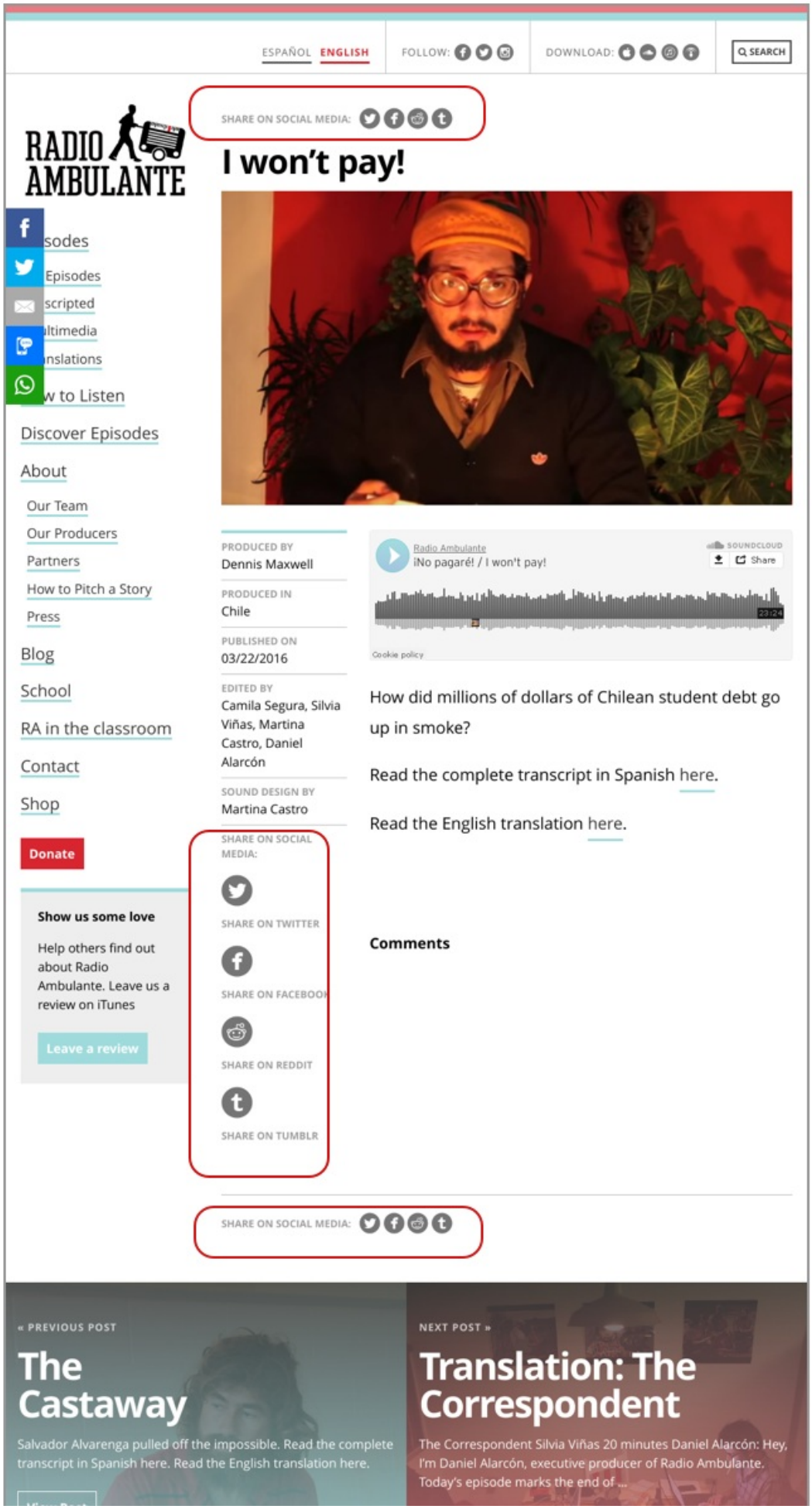
1. **Summary**: We wanted to find out how to better use social media to reach out to new audiences and engage our existing listeners.
2. **Problem**: How can we grow our audience and move from awareness to engagement?
3. **Solution**: One solution is to focus on inbound marketing with content in the blog and better use of visuals in Facebook and Twitter.
4. **Outcome**: We increased the number of followers in Twitter, Facebook, iTunes and subscribers to the newsletter.
5. **Reflection**: It is important to have someone committed to create and engage in conversations with listeners.

## Engaging and growing our followers

To engage and grow our audience we needed to focus on social media because of its unique ability to:

1. maintain relationships with your listeners
2. create more opportunities to convert first time listeners to long-term listeners
3. increase brand recognition and loyalty

We decided that sharing our stories needed to be easy. We added social media links in different parts of the episode page and tracked the performance of each position in Google Analytics to see which one was most effective.


ESPAÑOL ENGLISH
FOLLOW:
DOWNLOAD:
SEARCH
SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
RADIO AMBULANTE
I won't pay!
Episodes
Discover Episodes
About
Our Team
Our Producers
Partners
How to Pitch a Story
Press
Blog
School
RA in the classroom
Contact
Shop
Donate
Show us some love
Help others find out about Radio Ambulante. Leave us a review on iTunes
Leave a review
PRODUCED BY
Dennis Maxwell
PRODUCED IN
Chile
PUBLISHED ON
03/22/2016
EDITED BY
Camila Segura, Silvia Viñas, Martina Castro, Daniel Alarcón
SOUND DESIGN BY
Martina Castro
SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
SHARE ON TWITTER
SHARE ON FACEBOOK
SHARE ON REDDIT
SHARE ON TUMBLR
Radio Ambulante
¡No pagaré! / I won't pay!
SOUNDCLOUD
Share
23:24
Cookie policy
How did millions of dollars of Chilean student debt go up in smoke?
Read the complete transcript in Spanish here.
Read the English translation here.
Comments
SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
« PREVIOUS POST
The Castaway
Salvador Alvarenga pulled off the impossible. Read the complete transcript in Spanish here. Read the English translation here.
NEXT POST »
Translation: The Correspondent
The Correspondent Silvia Viñas 20 minutes Daniel Alarcón: Hey, I'm Daniel Alarcón, executive producer of Radio Ambulante. Today's episode marks the end of ...

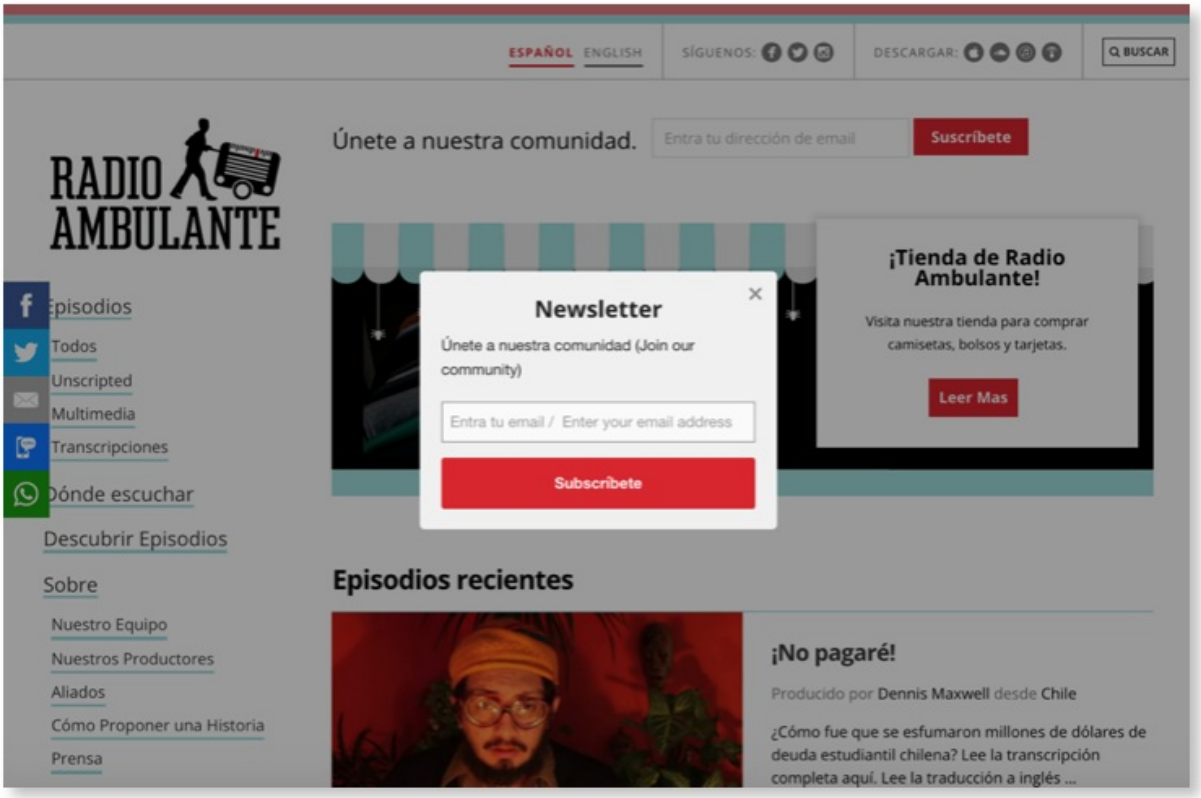
| | Event Action | Total Events |
|---|---|---|
| | | 895<br>% of Total: 0.12%<br>(724,238) |
| 1. | symbol TAG_social-button TAG_social-button-top | 520 (58.10%) |
| 2. | symbol TAG_social-button TAG_social-button-middle | 252 (28.16%) |
| 3. | symbol TAG_social-button TAG_social-button-bottom | 123 (13.74%) |

We also helped the team create new material to promote on social media. Visual content such as infographics and data visualization had high engagement.

*These infographics are few examples of the material we created. They tell the history of Radio Ambulante and promote old episodes.*

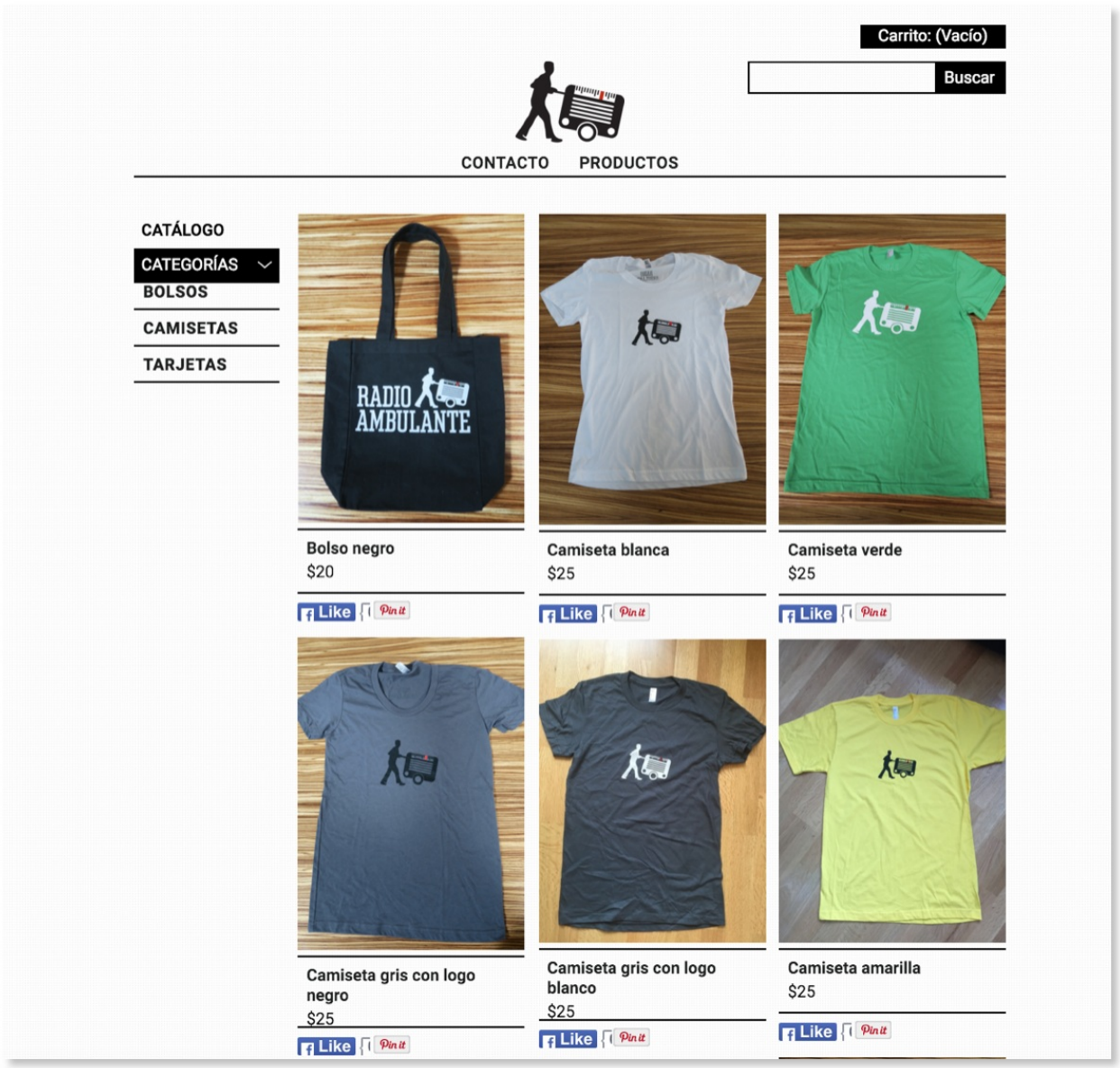
## Newsletter

We use Sumome as a third party service to increase traffic. The newsletter modal collected 1,863 emails in the first five months.



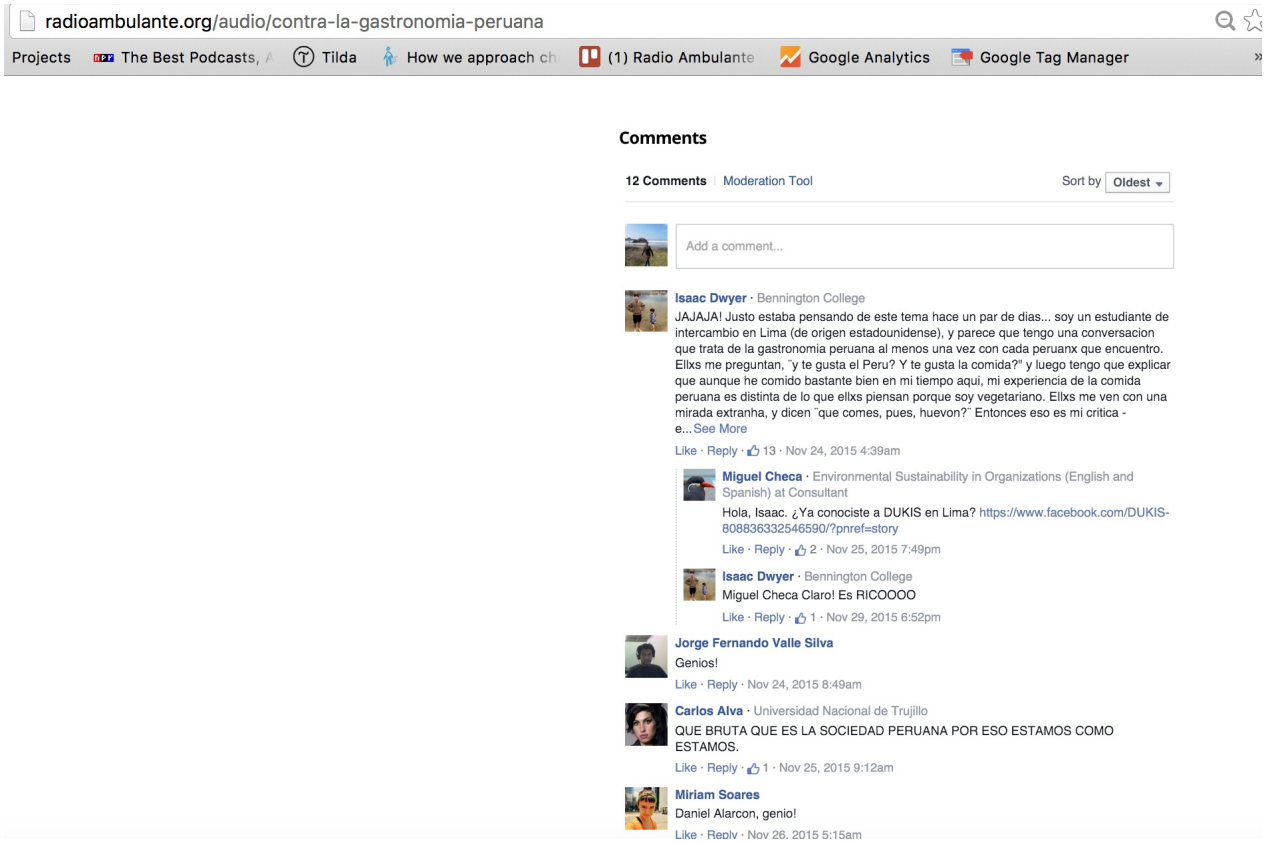

## Shop

We also created a shop to increase our online presence and promote our brand. We had over 40 orders from 500 visits (8% conversion rate)

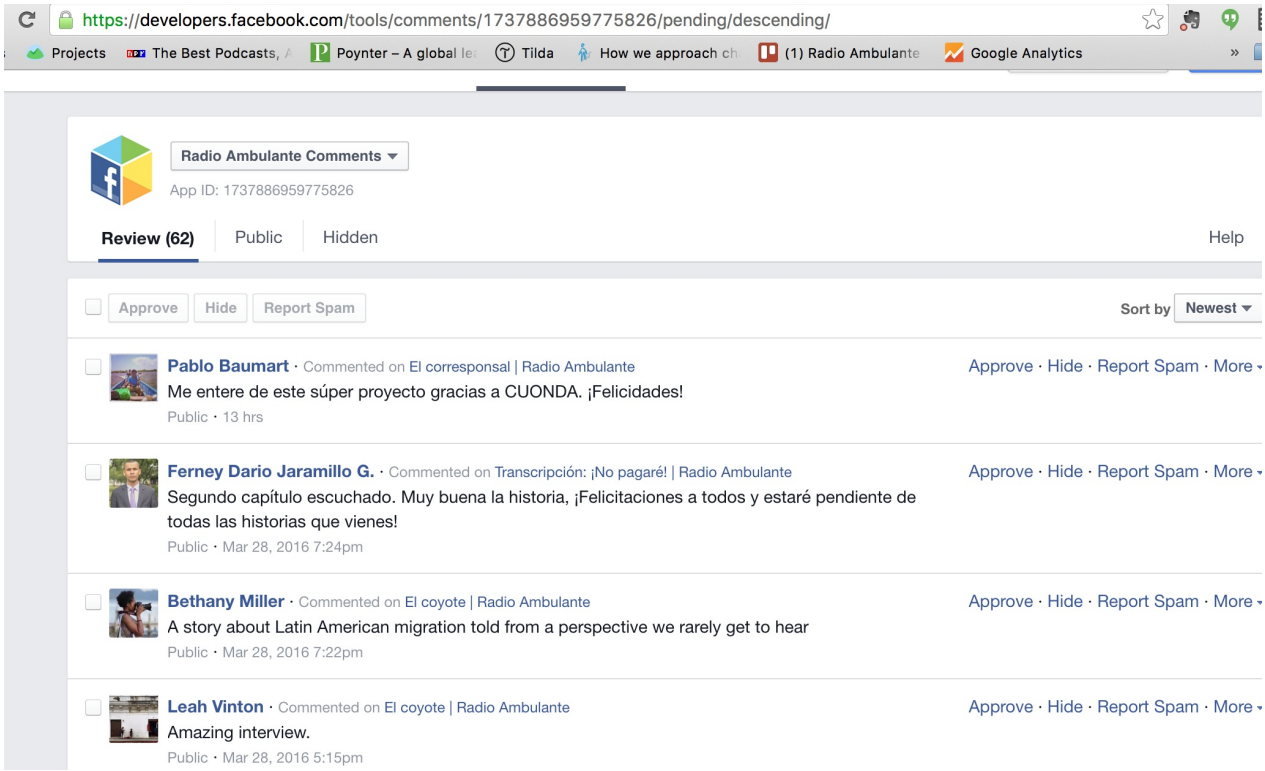



## Comments

The old version of the Radio Ambulante website had comments turned off. To increase engagement around individual episodes, we created a new comment section conected with Facebook.




In the first six months we had 62 comments.




# Performance

Our performance in 2015 was up dramatically from previous years. Here are some highlights:

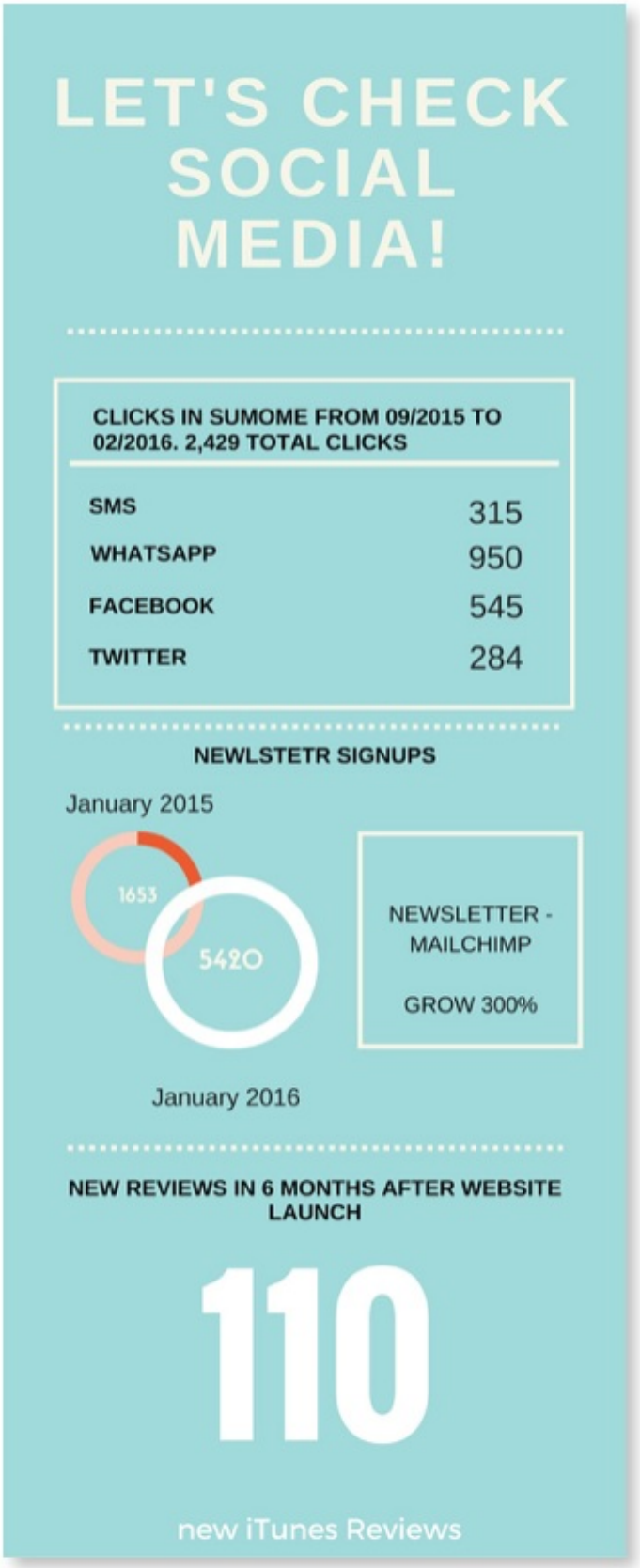
**Audience size in Facebook:** We grew from 9,000 likes to 16,011 in one year (a 78% increase).

Total de Me gusta de la página hasta hoy: 16 011

**Audience engagement:** Many more users shared episodes from the new new social buttons on our website. This graphic shows shares from the website since August 2015, when we launched the new share buttons.

| Event Category | Total Events | Unique Events |
|---|---|---|
| | 904<br>% of Total: 0.12%<br>(742,692) | 697<br>% of Total: 0.47%<br>(149,756) |
| 1. social button click | **904**(100.00%) | 697(100.00%) |

**Other performance metrics:**


LET'S CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA!
CLICKS IN SUMOME FROM 09/2015 TO 02/2016. 2,429 TOTAL CLICKS
SMS 315
WHATSAPP 950
FACEBOOK 545
TWITTER 284
NEWLSTETR SIGNUPS
January 2015
1653
5420
NEWSLETTER - MAILCHIMP
GROW 300%
January 2016
NEW REVIEWS IN 6 MONTHS AFTER WEBSITE LAUNCH
110
new iTunes Reviews

# Discovery tool

## Job to get done:

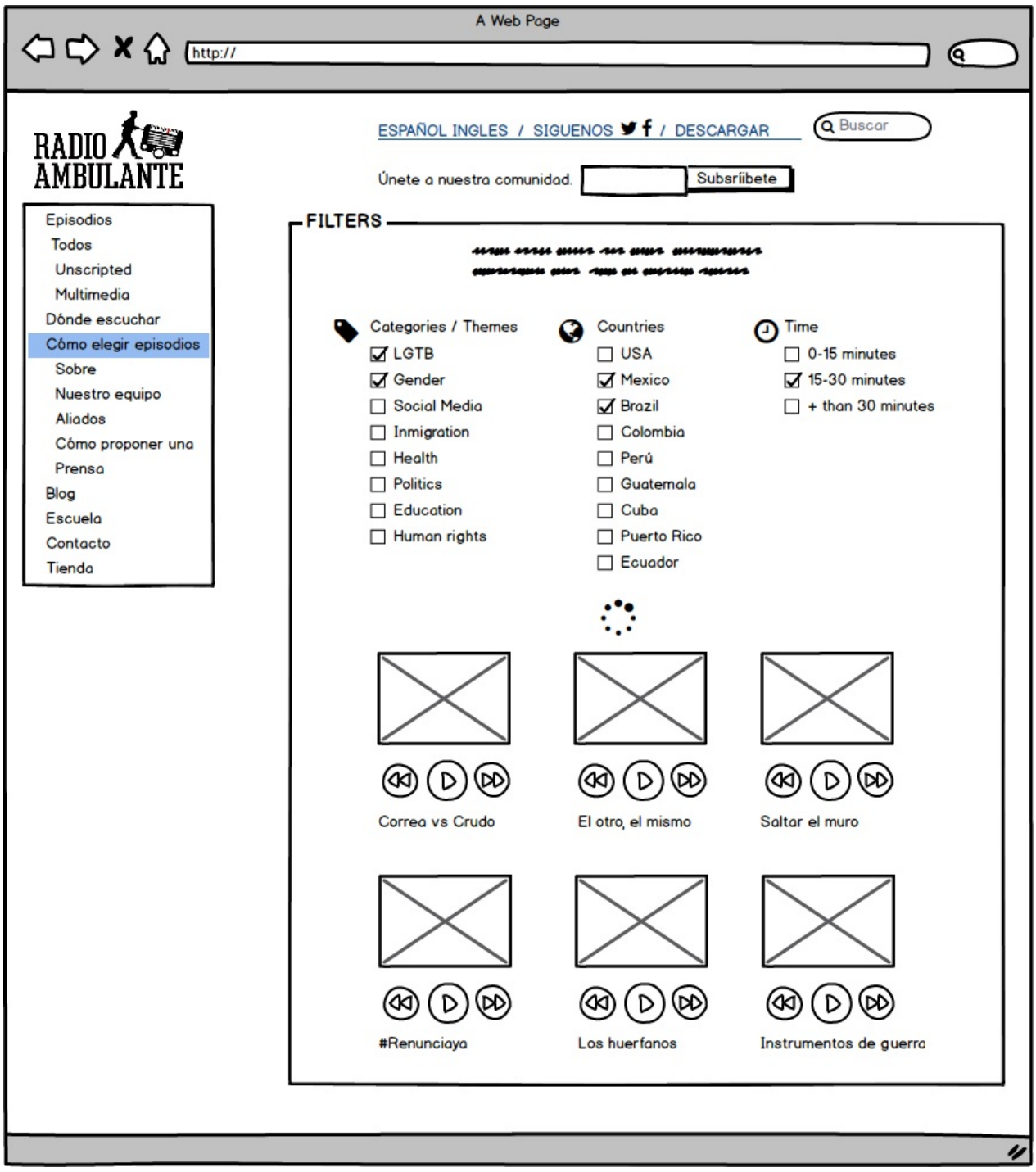
- **Minimize** the time spend in finding and selecting episodes for the class
- **Maximize** the use of Radio Ambulante podcast in the classroom

## Overview

1. **Problem**: From the 2014 survey and in-depth interviews with teachers we found the biggest obstacle to using Radio Ambulante in the classroom was finding the right episode for each class.
2. **Solution**: A tool to help teachers easily navigate through the episodes archive by topic, length and story location.
3. **Outcome**: More teachers using the podcast in the classroom.
4. **Reflection**: We need to create a feedback loop to constantly learn from teachers.

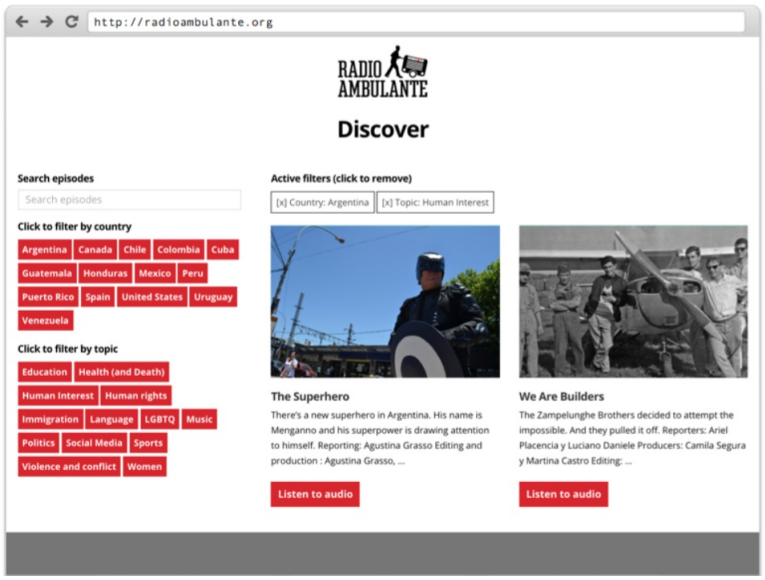
## Mockup

We designed a basic mockup showing the sorting and filtering functionality we created to help teachers find the right episodes for their class.




## The discovery tool

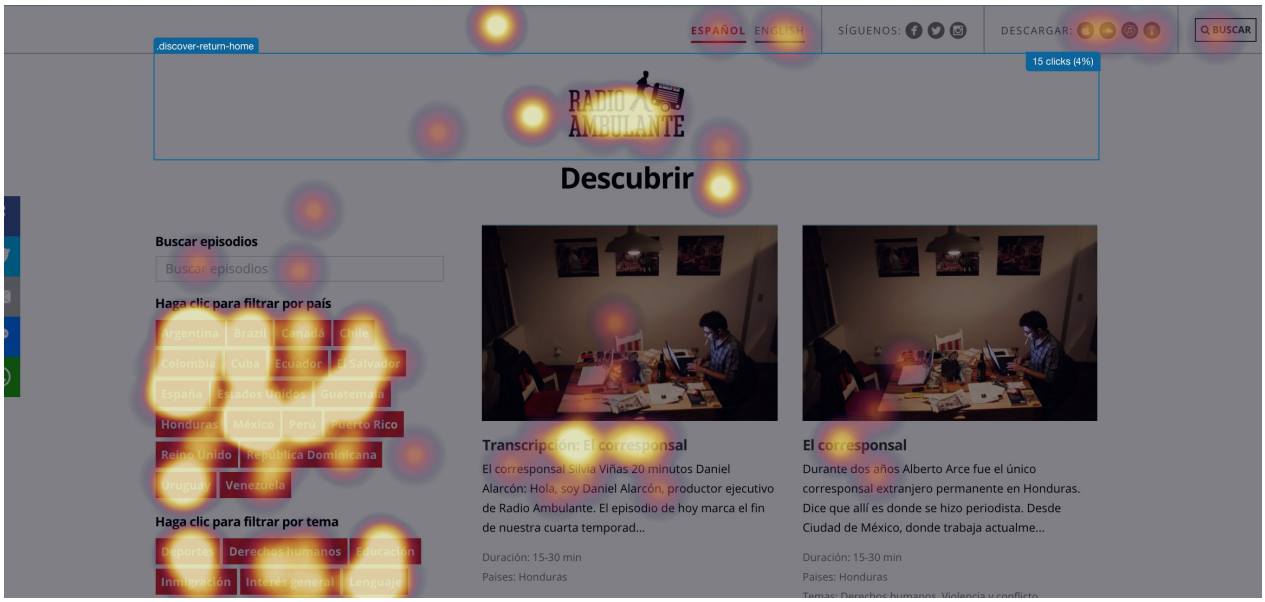
We turned the mockup into a live feature on the site. See the tool here.




We added a special section to the website named "Discover" to help students and teachers find episodes that suit their needs

## Tracking usage

We used heat maps from Sumome, a third party service, to track clicks. The first day we launched the tool in February 2016 we had over 1000 clicks.



# Conclude the job: become an expert driver

After researching our listeners, designing a new website, and launching new tools for specific audiences, we were ready to empower the Radio Ambulante team with all the knowledge and data we used to improve the listener experience. We implemented better communications and data software to help them continue growing.

In the jobs to be done framework, when you understand the job the user is trying to get done you are able to deliver a product that helps them accomplish their goals. This is the CONCLUDE step.

# Internal communications

## Job to get done:

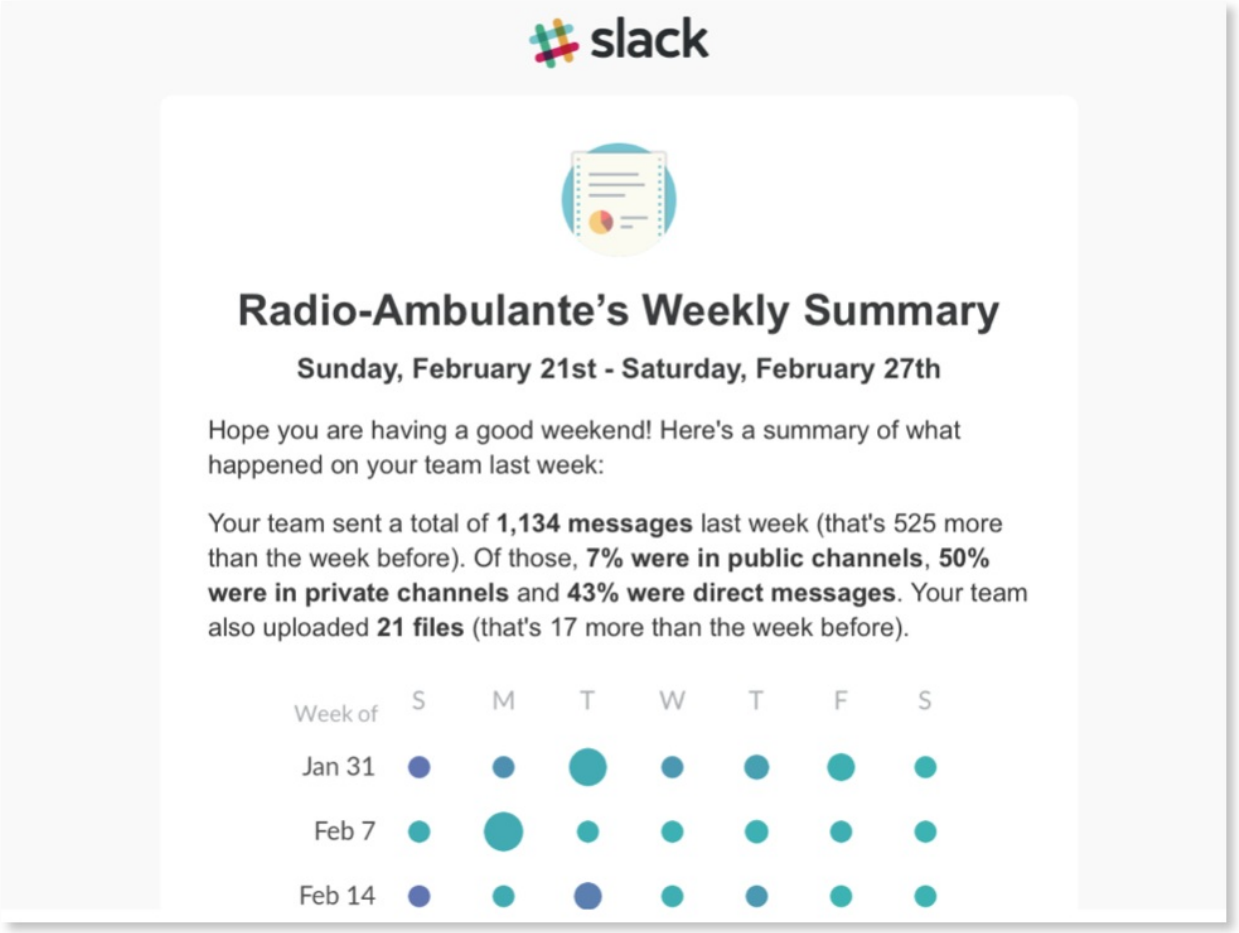
- **Minimize** confusion among team members about where to communicate with each other
- **Maximize** the advantages of remote work and make time spent together productive

## Overview

1. **Summary**: We are a remote team who has been using multiple channels to communicate.
2. **Problem**: We were using Skype, SMS, Whatsapp, email and phone to communicate with each other, making it time consuming and frustrating to find the right discussion channel.
3. **Solution**: Centralize most of the communications through Slack.
4. **Outcome**: One vibrant discussion channel for the entire team and many private channels for each story being produced and project in progress.
5. **Reflection**: When you have a remote team, improving the channels for communication should be a number one priority. It took us a while to figure this out.

## Consolidating our communication

We helped consolidate most conversations to a single place: Slack. We chose Slack because it is easy to use, has a mobile app, integrates with other services and easily brings the team together each day.




## How Slack helped the team be more productive

We asked the team if Slack helped them communicate more easily. These are some of their answers:

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*"As possibly the newest member of the team, I have found Slack to be extraordinarily valuable to help me understand who does what and how best to interact with those people. Messages can be sent directly, or conversations can be created (or help can be asked for, which I can see as a big benefit). And everything is archived. Perfect.*

*I am only privvy to some of the team conversations, but for my purposes, to NOT have to rely upon email (which I already have way too much of) has been a huge benefit.*

*I think we have only scratched the surface of how it could help the team work smarter and communicate more effectively."*

**— Barbara, Spanish Language Coordinator:**

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*"Slack has been good for us in terms of separating out conversations, much like email did. What's App was not capable of doing that, so it was a definite upgrade in that regard.*

*I also love being able to put a link to a google doc or a dropbox file into Slack and people are able to click on it and see it or hear it right away. Another thing that may or may not have been available to us in WhatsApp, but it wasn't used as much by us back then. But email did have that capability.*

*What I don't like about Slack is the constant connectivity of it. In that regard, I prefer email, when people were used to having some time off of it, when team members were more forgiving if answers weren't given right away.*

*Slack is imitating text messages a bit in this way, and what's app, in that people expect everyone to read the message as soon as it is sent. We have not been able to establish appropriate boundaries for our use of Slack, therefore some teammates sent messages at 10pm, and if someone else decides to answer, then a conversation begins, and sometimes even decisions are made, without waiting for everyone to weigh in. There is even frustration when all people are not weighing in, even though it's 10pm and really people should stop working. So in a company where those boundaries are not well-defined, I think it can lead to overworking. I also don't like the notifications. I'm not sure why when I have seen messages on my phone app and then click over to Slack on the website, it has to make the notification sound for the 30+ messages I hadn't seen on my desktop (but HAD seen on my phone). It results in a series of clicks and dings that is really annoying. I feel like Slack should have something built in so that it doesn't notify for every message missed. I haven't had this problem recently, so maybe this has been fixed already, but figured I would mention it anyway."*

**— Martina, Co-founder and Senior Producer**

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*"I love slack. I feel that it has substantially improved communication among the team. Not only because things stop being lost in the sea of emails but also because it helped us organize by topics. Creating different channels for different topics is great and also allows you to track the stories.*

*Overall I love it!"*

**— Camila Segura, Senior Editor**

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*"Slack has been fantastic. It was very confusing to communicate by email, especially because email @ radioambulante.org does not work well and we might get the emails 2 hours after we send them . For a while we tried to use Whatsapp, but it was also confusing*

*because everything was recorded in the same channel. What I like about Slack is having different channels for different topics."*

**— Silvia Viñas, Producer and Editor**

# Dashboard

## Job to be done

- **Minimize** the uncertainties around metrics
- **Maximize** informed decision making

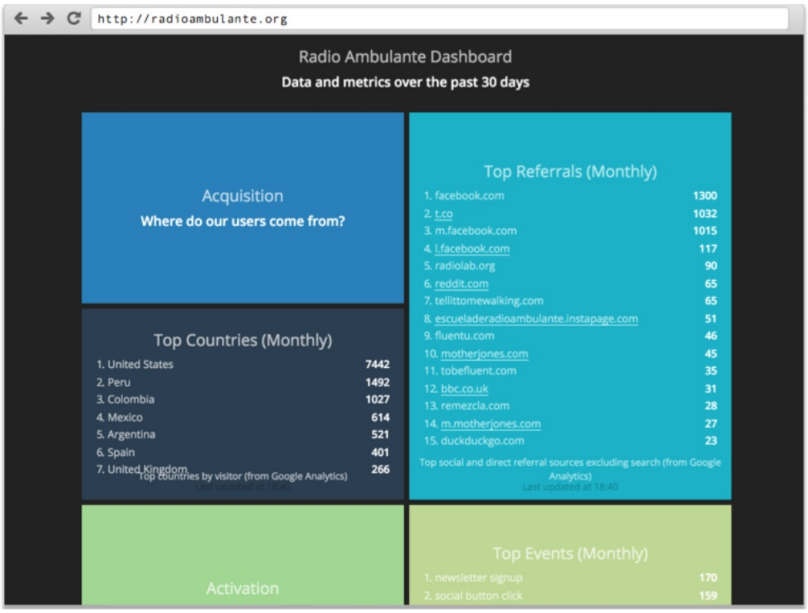
## Overview

1. **Summary**: This dashboard helps the team answer a few important questions about listener habits and usage, and will ideally help the them discover new questions over time.
2. **Backstory**: The team was looking at different metrics from different sources, a time consuming process.
3. **Problem**: There were many data sources and too many metrics to pay attention to.
4. **Solution**: A one stop dashboard with key metrics displayed in an easy-to-understand format.
5. **Outcome**: The team is able to get answers to their questions in a timely manner, and is asking new questions about listener habits.
6. **Reflection**: How can we maximize internal use of data to inform the decisions?

## Why we needed a dashboard

We created a dashboard to answer three main questions:

- Where are our users coming from?
- Are they engaged with our content?
- Are we growing our audience?




This dashboard helps the team better understand the Radio Ambulante podcast audience in order to improve decisions on content, design of the website, press relations, and partnerships

We wanted to provide the team with an easy-to-use tool to better understand how their work was reaching our audience. Dashboards can be powerful tool to build a culture that uses data to make better decisions.

We decided to take existing data and present it in a way that was easier to understand at-a-glance.

## Key metric: plays

A key metric to track for podcast creators is plays. Our audio hosting platform, Soundcloud, provides that metric for the users who listen within the Soundcloud platform. But we also wanted to measure how users were interacting with the Soundcloud player embedded on our website.

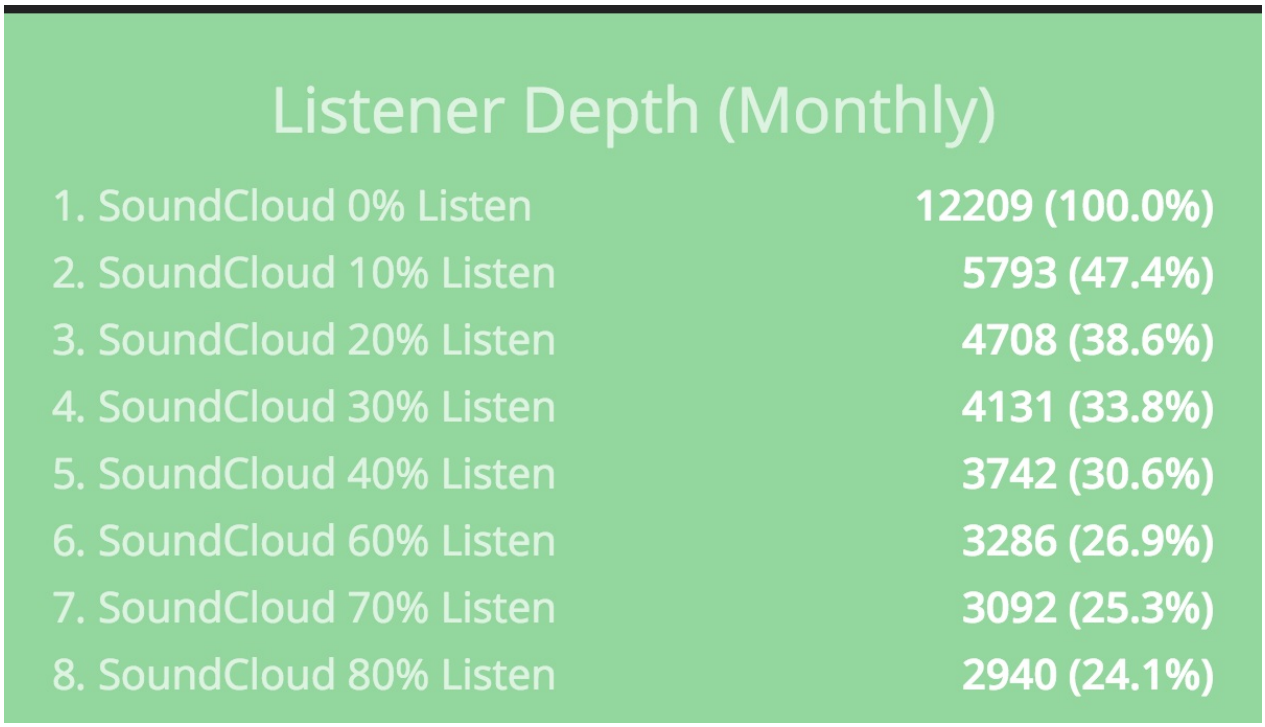
To do this, we created some JavaScript to track how listeners used the Soundcloud player embedded on episode pages on radioambulante.org. Combining these play metrics with data provided by Soundcloud created a more complete picture of how many people were listening to our episodes, and how deeply they were getting into our content.

These aggregated metrics helped the Radio Ambulante production team understand which episodes were popular and track overall engagement with their audio.

This screenshot is an example of how we measured Soundcloud performance on radioambulante.org with Google Analytics. The percentages indicate how deeply a user listened into a particular episode.

| | | 121,113<br>% of Total: 68.36%<br>(177,164) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. SoundCloud | 100% | **43,288** (35.74%) |
| 2. SoundCloud | Play | **17,993** (14.86%) |
| 3. SoundCloud | 0% | **12,641** (10.44%) |
| 4. SoundCloud | Pause | **11,991** (9.90%) |
| 5. SoundCloud | 10% | **5,989** (4.94%) |
| 6. SoundCloud | 20% | **4,875** (4.03%) |
| 7. SoundCloud | 30% | **4,279** (3.53%) |
| 8. SoundCloud | 40% | **3,897** (3.22%) |
| 9. SoundCloud | 50% | **3,645** (3.01%) |
| 10. SoundCloud | 60% | **3,404** (2.81%) |

And this is what that metric looks like in our dashboard:



# What could we have done differently?

Throughout the research and design process, we were learning. The design team hand't worked with a podcast before. We tried new techniques and applied our knowledge from other domains to the goals of Radio Ambulante.

At the end of the project, we reflect on the things we learned and could have done differently if we could start again from scratch:

## Follow jobs-to-be-done more closely

Near the end of the project, we discovered that the jobs-to-be-done framework was particularly helpful in understanding the different motivations of Radio Ambulante listeners. We started the project using traditional personas — which focus strongly on demographics — and ended the project focusing on the job stories. The job stories, focused on motivations and outcomes, helped us reconcile some similar personas and created a clearer picture of the users we were trying to help.

## Create a strategic research plan

The research process was fitful. We didn't always have the opportunity to ask the right questions and test for the right outcomes as we completed individual projects. It would have been very helpful to focus on weekly and monthly goals, allowing us to sync up our efforts across teams and get more done.

## Spend more time reflecting on the research

We should have taken more time as we finished milestones to reflect on our research and learn from the feedback we were getting for that specific project. This would have helped guide future projects, and connect the dots between all of our work to help us stay focused on big-picture goals.

## Build better feedback loops

As we launched new projects, we didn't always have an ongoing connection to the users were trying to help. We would have been more productive and validated our hypotheses more quickly if we had an ongoing relationship with these users that allowed us to do rapid user testing.

## Have standups with the team

In the end, Slack helped play a big role in keeping the lines of communication open between teams. But it was still hard to know what each member of the team was doing. Daily standups would have been great not only to connect on a more personal level but also to get an idea of each team member's projects. Standup meetings aren't universal — not all teams and industries work this way. But we could have made a better a better effort to introduce the concept.

## Celebrate quick (and slow) wins

To build a strong team culture, we could have shared our success better and celebrated it with the whole team. We saw a big uptick in engagement, especially in our newsletter and on social platforms, and heard a lot of positive feedback about all of our projects. Sharing these exciting results on a regular basis would have brought us closer together.

# Recommendations

As these targeted audience engagement projects come to an end, we think it's important that the Radio Ambulante team continue their great work to connect with users and grow their audience.

Some recommendations to keep the improvements going:

## Create a content development role

The person who takes on this role will create a content strategy alongside a researcher. This strategy will focus on the promotion of Radio Ambulante's work on social media, optimizing the content on the site for SEO and personalizing it to meet listener and reader needs. It is important to have a social media strategy to track followers and grow the community.

## Create a data analytics role

Data will play a big role in helping Radio Ambulante identify trends, share successes and shape strategy. This person will monitor trends with the dashboard, fine tune the metrics displayed, and play a key role in decision making.

## Have daily or weekly standups with the whole team

The whole team should meet every day to share a quick status update. Standups are a way for teams to stay connected and up-to-date with the work everyone is doing. They help teams:

- **Share understanding of goals.** Teams are most effective when each member is working toward the same goals.
- **Coordinate efforts.** More collaboration amongst team members creates better outcomes.
- **Share problems and improvements.** Team members should help each other overcome obstacles and share knowledge.
- **Build and identify as a team.** When you share goals and frustrations among team members, it fosters a strong sense of belonging. This is even more important with remote teams.

## Define and clearly communicate weekly or monthly goals

All of these recommendations share a common thread: the Radio Ambulante team works best when they're working toward a big goal together. Having a clear vision and mission, and sharing that frequently in team updates and when discussing new projects, will keep everyone on the same page and motivate them to keep working hard together.

# Appendix: more about us

## Clara Gonzalez Sueyro

I'm a anthropologist, UX Researcher and mom based in Oakland, CA. I help nonprofits, government agencies, and corporations bring clarity and focus to their research problems.

Most recently, I was the Director of UX at Radio Ambulante, and prior to that I was a 2014 fellow at Code for America. Next, I will be a 2016-2017 JSK Fellow at Stanford working on a challenge around podcast journalism.

# My background with audio-stories

As a professional anthropologist I have been studying, recording and sharing the stories of others for over a decade.

In 2011, together with a friend and colleague, we decided to create what later could have become a podcast about journeys of immigrants arriving to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

We created Tesoro Sonoro. Tesoro Sonoro which translated means “Audio Treasures” is a project that audio-records and shares the stories of the people of Buenos Aires. The goal is to contribute to the creation of the intangible memory of the city by creating a virtual exchange of stories and preserve them for future generations. The radio show “This American Life” and Story Corps had a large influence since we found in radio documentaries a way to spread stories combining the power of the internet and strengthening the imagination of the audience.

Check the site to listen to some stories.

Tesoro Sonoro was declared of Cultural Interest by the Government of Buenos Aires.

## Clients

I've worked with nonprofits, government agencies, corporations including: Code for America, Government of Puerto Rico, Unilever, World Bank, Nature Valley and many more. Check my portfolio at claraslist.com

Want to see more about what I've been up to professionally? Check out my LinkedIn profile.

## Why do I do what I do?

Maybe it all began when I was 11 years old, and my mom gave me a subscription for a magazine call "Muy Interesante", la revista para saber mas de todo (Very interesting, the magazine to know more of everthing) Every month I will receive the magazine and travel through time to go to ancient societies and discoveries around science, medicine, technology, etc.

For over 27,000 years when the first cave paintings were discovered storytelling has been one of our most fundamental communication methods. I have a vivid memory of an specific article about paleolitic art in Cave of in Spain. This type of discoveries and stories were key drivers on my desire to study originally Archeology to later transfer to Anthropology and from Anthroplogy to UX Research. I love storytelling, I love research and I love the power of them combined: using storytelling to create compelling experiences that build human connections.

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### David Robert Leonard

I'm a design technologist. I make things on the internet for companies and causes I care about. I use front-end development, user research and UX design to help teams solve problems.

By day I build websites and products at Code for America, a non-profit that's bringing government technology into the 21st century. By night (or late afternoon, mostly) I consult with and make things for non-profits and companies like Radio Ambulante, The Human Utility and Open Architecture Collaborative.

# My background in journalism and storytelling

I love great stories.

I started my professional career in high school, as editor of the school paper. I fell in love with storytelling, design, and the smell of fresh news print over late nights in the paper's basement office.

I was bitten. I took freelance writing gigs for $20-a-pop at the city paper, writing and editing photos from aging my pickup truck in parking lots across Southern California. I covered everything from sleepy government meetings to high-profile murder cases.

In 2011, I joined Gannett, publisher of USA Today and hundreds of newspapers and websites in major media markets across the U.S. I started out in newspaper design and worked my way into product development, leading company experiments in publishing niche digital magazines focused on sports and local issues. I helped editors at major metro newspapers like The Indianapolis Star and The Cincinnati Enquirer tell better stories through visuals and launch new products.

### Shining light on hidden stories with Radio Ambulante

Today, I help governments and organizations simplify complex information and processes, design systems that make sense to normal people, and focus on little changes that make a big impact.

I care deeply about helping people dig into and connect with the places and people they care about. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to help Radio Ambulante build its audience and tell fascinating stories about unexplored and ignored topics.